

Washington State East Area 92 | COVID-19 Reopening - Service Piece

The purpose of this document is to provide information for groups to **CONSIDER** as they move toward reopening in-person meetings.

Due to the dynamics of the current situation, it is extremely important to have a group conscience meeting to plan & decide how reopening a meeting is to happen in a safe and spiritual way.

This service piece can be used for home groups, District meetings, Area meetings, Central Offices, and meetings brought into facilities such as treatment or correctional facilities. *It will be updated regularly so please check back as things continue to change. More will be revealed!*

As all members are aware, gatherings present a special risk for increasing the spread of COVID-19 during this public health emergency. While each group is autonomous Tradition Four further states "except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." *Area 92 groups/meetings may consider, and accept or reject the following thoughts and practices from Areas across the U.S. and Canada, consistent with their own group conscience.*

What you will find in this document:

- [Getting Started](#)
- [Suggested Topics for Discussion as you Plan for Reopening](#)
- [Our Traditions](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Resources](#)

It is suggested that each group be prepared in advance for reopening. Group members are encouraged to meet virtually & create their own reopening plan. In communities deemed by regional/local authorities to be significant mitigation areas, the risk to the larger community of resuming in-person gatherings can be taken into account and virtual options considered.

- Discuss with your landlords or facility contacts:
 - If they are ready for meetings to return (& be prepared to consider other options if the group will not be able to return to the space)
 - If there are facility-specific procedures
 - Let them know the group's safety procedures (sanitizing, social distancing, masks, etc.)
- [Check statewide regulations, regional regulations & CDC guidelines](#)
"The law of the land does not stop at the door of AA."
- [Refer to guidance from Area / GSO / etc.](#), and reach out to District & Area with questions
- Do a walk-through to create a checklist of surfaces to disinfect & other safety procedures
- Consider creating a service position specifically for this responsibility
- Once a homegroup has created their reopening plan through an informed group conscience, they may consider posting the reopening plan in a visible location at the meeting/event.

Suggested Topics for Discussion as You Plan for reopening

- **Meeting Procedures**
 - Safety protocols if someone comes to the meeting & is sick:
 - It is strongly encouraged that sick individuals do not attend meetings, to protect the well-being of other attendees, their families, the meeting space, etc.
 - Provide them with phone numbers, Zoom meeting info, & other resources in a plastic baggie to take home with them
 - Announce anonymously at the meeting that the group may have been exposed
 - Consider collecting email addresses to alert members
 - [Consider contact tracing \(see below for more info on contact tracing\)](#)
 - Meeting scripts can be adjusted to include:
 - Group & facility safety guidelines - explain that these are for everyone's safety.
 - How to stay connected if not able to come to in-person meetings
 - Where group members can find [GSO, Area & District resources & guidelines](#)
 - An explanation of [contact tracing](#) if your group decides to implement it
 - Coffee / snacks:
 - Consider suspending all beverage and food service for the time being
 - Or consider a BYOB policy - "Bring your Own Beverage"
 - If food and/or beverage is offered, discuss the following;
 - Purchase individually wrapped food items, or other individually wrapped and sealed products.
 - Disposable coffee cups, cup lids, coffee stirrers and plasticware
 - Individually wrapped sugar, sweetener and creamer packets
 - Consider having one person handle all hospitality while wearing PPE (face mask & gloves). This may limit gathering around coffee pots. This could be another service position.
 - Literature:
 - Consider a BYOB policy - "Bring your own Book"
 - Change format from passing the book to one person reading.
 - Place all shared literature in plastic sleeves and disinfect before and after the meeting.
 - Discuss eliminating all sharing of paper documents
 - Consider alternatives to sharing copies of Grapevine / La Viña (or have at least a 72 hour quarantine period for pre-owned or donated literature)
 - Newcomers:
 - Pre-printed sheet of group members & phone numbers
 - Literature, phone numbers, pamphlets, & other resources can be placed in a plastic ziploc bag
 - Anniversaries:
 - Consider how to handle coins, cake, cards, etc.
 - Seal coins in plastic bags and hand directly to recipient
 - Eliminate cards
 - Provide pre-packaged food items

- Accessibility:
 - [Virtual option](#) to increase accessibility
 - Small in-person meetings for homebound individuals & how to do so safely
- Finances:
 - Some of the items that the group discusses & determines to be requirements for reopening may require money (for example, the purchase of cleaning products or hand sanitizer). Ensure the group members and treasurer are informed of this.
- Healthy hygiene practices, cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation
 - Consider posting signs on how to **stop the spread of COVID-19** and encourage everyday protective measures, such as **washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes** ** See **resources for website link for free printable Healthy Hygiene posters**
 - Discuss the cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces before and after meetings/event
 - Groups may wish to avoid the use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected, ie. chair cushions, baskets, Kleenex boxes.
 - It may be helpful to increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, etc.
- **Meeting Delivery Format**
 - Discuss whether your meeting will continue as an online meeting, meet in person only, or a combination of both.
 - Consider offering an online meeting at a day/time that does not conflict with other meetings
 - Consider adding a service position for chairing online meeting(s)
 - Update your meeting information with the Area / District in order to be listed accurately on area92aa.org and the intergroup / central office or district [phone services](#)
- **Accessibility - In-person Meetings with Virtual (online) Component**
 - Consider costs & availability of technology, i.e., Wi-Fi, technical knowledge, etc.
 - Consider whether the group will purchase their own account / technology or use a group member's
 - Consider adding service position(s), e.g. virtual meeting host(s), "spiritual bouncer" for Zoom bombers, and/or technology chair
- **PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)**
 - Consider use of a [face covering](#) at all gatherings and when in the building by everyone except children age less than 2 years old. Not using a face covering may also be appropriate at times for some individuals who have trouble breathing or need assistance to remove their mask.
 - Should the group conscience determine face masks to be required, those not wishing to wear a face mask could be brought outside the meeting space by two homegroup members to talk or be given a list of phone numbers & virtual meetings
 - Meetings could provide masks - purchased or made by group members - for free or at cost
 - Make hand sanitizer available to attendees
 - Provide gloves to trusted servants who handle meeting materials, 7th tradition, coffee servers etc.
- **Social Distancing**
 - Maximum number of meeting attendees:
 - Limit the size of gatherings in accordance with the guidance and directives of state and local authorities.
 - Consider overflow space if too many people show up

- Have 2 homegroup members go to overflow space with attendees
 - Check with facility on whether this is an option
 - Space out seating for attendees to at least six feet apart.
 - Consider mitigating the risk of transmitting [COVID-19](#) posed by close physical contact among members during area 92 meetings/events through [no physical contact](#) such as hugging and the joining of hands
 - Greeters: no handshakes or hugs
 - Consider how to end meeting with a socially distant circle
 - Consider moving fellowshiping before / after meeting in parking lot outside of meeting space
 - Consider virtual meetings/events
- **Contact Tracing**
 - What is it? *Trace & monitor contacts of infected people. Notify them of their exposure. Support the quarantine of contacts. Help ensure the safe, sustainable & effective quarantine of contacts to prevent additional transmission.*
 - Consider how your group would inform other members and attendees if someone attended and tested positive for COVID-19
 - Consider if / how your group will participate in contact tracing
 - Have a sign in sheet at the entrance- obtaining contact information, sanitize pens after each use
 - Consider how your group will handle confidentiality / anonymity
 - Consider adding information in the meeting script to explain contact tracing
- **7th Tradition - How to Pass the Basket**
 - Consider having one group member carry the basket around
 - Provide gloves to the Chair / Treasurer (or whoever handles the money)
 - Consider [digital options](#) of contributing
 - https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/SMF-223-FAQonVirtualBasket_en.pdf
 - ○ Options for Virtual Baskets & How to Set Them Up:
 - PayPal: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIAo43FEj-l>
 - Square: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqnKxrMo_uQ
 - Stripe: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxJB0QPtcnk>
 - DonorBox: <https://donorbox.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360020293192-How-To-Create-a-Donorbox-Org-Account>
 - Cashapp: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LpC_5Ke5HE
 - Google Pay: <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://pay.google.com/about/&sa=D&ust=1594180691734000&usg=AFQjCNERQAMasThWGzFZVpPgwbUVQjxqxA>
 - Post digital basket info in virtual meeting chat box
 - Digital basket info may be printed on meeting schedules
 - The group may wish to plasticize a card with digital basket info printed on it. These can be sanitized prior to handing to a member

Our Traditions

Above all, each group is asked to consider the AA principles as the guiding force to a group conscience &, in particular, to pay close attention to the following Traditions:

Tradition 4 Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups, or A.A. as a whole.

Tradition 5 Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Tradition 7 Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Tradition 10 Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition 11 Our public relations policy is based upon attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio & films.

Tradition 12 Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Glossary

- GSO - General Service Office
- CDC - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- DOH - Department of Health

Resources

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
 - Contact Tracing - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/open-america/contact-tracing.html>
 - Healthy Hygiene Posters- <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/resources/posters.html>
- WA State DOH Call Center 1-800-525-0127 Press # after the prompt or <https://www.doh.wa.gov/>
- Education & Information - www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus
- Safe Start Washington - A Phased Approach to Recovery <http://www.governor.wa.gov>
- MT State DOH Call Center 1-888-333-0469 <https://dphhs.mt.gov/>
- ID Idaho COVID-19 Hotline 1-888-330-3010 <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/>
- OR State DOH - <https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>
- Text the word “coronavirus” to 211-211 to receive information and updates on your phone
- GSO: Safety in AA https://www.aa.org/assets/en_us/smf-209_en.pdf
- GSO: Safety Card https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-211_SafetyCardforAAGroups.pdf
- GSO: COVID Guidance https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/update-on-covid-19-coronavirus
- Grapevine: <https://www.aagrapevine.org>