Meeting Re-opening Challenges Across Our Zone and Beyond

Adam CT: Meeting re-openings are happening and there is a lot of debate amongst members as to where we fit in. The State has not been forthcoming with information. At one meeting, the church was not very happy with how the homegroup handled re-opening. They were moving tables, members’ attendance exceeded capacity and not everyone attending was wearing masks inside the building. The basket was passed around and readings were handed out. Basically, the suggested guidelines were not being followed. Both members of the meeting and church were not happy. Someone from the church came the next day and saw the tables had been moved, which shouldn’t have happened.

Dennis NNY PR: As long as you have an internet signal, you can bring a laptop or ideally a snowball microphone or camera. Just have an internet connected device on site. My Homegroup did a hybrid meeting using a phone as the connection, so people could login in to hear and participate if they chose too. We have one hybrid meeting. All of the groups are on a limited capacity at the facilities. One facility is allowing people upstairs and downstairs. The homegroup is using a virtual platform to connect both levels. This allows more space for members to attend. If you go to the NA virtual outreach, there’s a Video available showing useful equipment for doing Zoom meetings.

What is a Hybrid Meeting?

A hybrid meeting is an in-person NA meeting that uses a virtual platform to allow recovering addicts to participate in the meeting from a different location. It may also represent a virtual meeting being held simultaneously to an in-person meeting by the same homegroup.

As NA communities re-open, they are considering modified versions of face to face meetings. A Hybrid meeting is an example of one modified version. For more information on virtual meetings, you can visit – https://www.na.org/?ID=virtual_meetings

You can also contact your Regional Delegate for more resources.

(continued on page 2)
Ben Maine FD: Some home group members are holding private meetings not on a meeting list. There is a meeting in Portland that has been holding a meeting outside of the church. There have also been problems with reporting meeting status as open or closed because of frequent changes. A meeting in Raymond plans to reopening in the parking lot of the meeting facility. No meetings have opened in doors.

As the FD Chair, I shared re-opening information with Area and other virtual events however no one was interested in hearing about contact tracing and there was little interest at Area about re-opening guidelines. They felt groups were autonomous and could do what they pleased. In Maine, the government determined that 12 Step meetings were part of the medical community, not religious and social. Meetings could have remained opened throughout the pandemic with a limit of ten people. The stipulation is that contact tracing is required for any agency related to medical designation. This begs the question of whether Maine PR needs to contact the Maine Department of Health to get clarification on contact tracing requirements. There is real resistance in the Maine fellowship towards contact tracing reporting.

Jim Western NY PR: I’ve been a part of the strategic planning in my capacity outside the fellowship. Part of the response in WNY for reopening meetings is that it is not a one size fits all. It is unique to each county specific to the public health orders. I find it interesting that there is debate when it comes to public health orders when it comes to the county and the state. We’re paying specific attention to Erie County of Department of Health COVID 19, New York State Department of Health COVID 19 and what is referred to as The Governor’s Plan as it refers to all the phases. We’re paying attention to the NAIS code designation that identifies the group’s phase and if they can open. I have challenged the state and the county and only verbal but no written confirmation on any of the orders has been provided. The designation for NA has been under a social group, but under a social group, you can’t open in Western NY. However, if guidelines pertaining to religious or faith-based groups are followed, groups can get together, no more than 25 in a group. Social distancing, masks, sanitizing and contact information will be needed if there is a case of COVID identified as positive. It is a matter of group conscience whether they reopen, but we don’t want to be the group that turns away the 26th addict. We are sticking to the virtual platform right now and making sure that information is available on the web.

Kathleen M. Pocono, PA: We currently have some in person meetings, Virtual meetings, and hybrid meetings. Some were concerned of anonymity; the one hybrid meeting keeps the camera on the Chair because of these concerns. Still, there are people who are uncomfortable with the whole idea of the use of virtual platforms. Our home group has a person capacity to 20. Also, it was group conscience that a home group member would leave the in-person meeting in the event capacity is reached and a newcomer shows up. The home group member could then join the meeting virtually. Signs on Meeting Safety are posted at all entrances. It is suggested to bring your own literature and there is a greeter at the entrances. Updated information on meetings is sent to the Webservant. There is an Area document available for the groups with suggestions and best practices. Our Area has been meeting monthly on a virtual platform. There are only a few meetings that closed due to the pandemic.
**Did you say Fellowship Development?**

Yes!! Simply put, Fellowship Development responds to the needs of the Fellowship through a scanning and planning process. Things like workshops on service, writing reports, Area, Regional planning process and this awesome Newsletter. It’s a response to our fellowship’s needs through collaboration and innovation.

The newly approved Fellowship Development (FD) Committee of the NEZF has been working on a Human Resource Pool (HRP). Benefits from FD and HRP can be compared to a phonebook or a Help Center. You make the call, FD acts as the operator to hear your service needs, and we connect you with member(s) or service body that best fits your needs. Fellowship Development doesn’t have involvement with your project; we just help you build your team. The HRP is the “yellow pages”, we’re the operator, and You, the member/service body is the caller.

Member(s) & service bodies will have greater access to experienced members throughout our Zone, the fear of taking a service position becomes less; you can get help and gain experience from members from members in multiple Areas, Regions, and even States now!

You can request help on a project using the link below: [https://forms.gle/ZDdSNT7ndqijZMpq9](https://forms.gle/ZDdSNT7ndqijZMpq9)

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**Summary of Decisions June & August 2020**

The Fellowship Development (FD) subcommittee was created and the NEZF Guidelines were amended to include the FD subcommittee. The voting members of the Zone adopted the FD Guidelines and Strategic Plan.

The Northern New England Region presented a Proposal requesting member regions of the NEZF consider contributing seed money for NESSSNA. Discussion will continue in August.

Wilvena G. elected as Public Relations (PR) Chair

The Northeast Zonal Forum physical meeting which normally takes place during a weekend in October will be a weekend long virtual meeting. The schedule will follow the normal Zonal schedule from 8pm Friday through 1pm Sunday.

Election for Fellowship Development Chair will take place in October. In the meantime, the ADHOC FD will begin its work with the same point person between now and October election.