

## Conference Committee Report Corner

### Conference Literature Committee (CLC)

#### **CLC Mission Statement:**

The Conference Literature Committee (CLC) fosters quality literature in support of S.L.A.A. recovery; guides the planning, writing, and editing of literature from writers, writing groups or service bodies within S.L.A.A.; and approves draft literature prior to submission for full Conference approval.

#### **How We Conduct Our Meetings — CLC Code of Ethics**

The CLC is guided by the **LCEP (Literature Creation Editing and Publishing) workflow** as we work with active projects and as new proposals are received.

Occasionally we face a challenge when working with literature that originated prior to the conference approval of the LCEP process, but we find its place in the workflow and go from there.

The Style Committee (SC) is a subcommittee of the CLC. Their mission is to work in collaboration with the designated **Production Editor** to prepare the draft literature for publication. This effort involves bringing the document in alignment with the **S.L.A.A. Guide to Usage and Style**, as well as ensuring clarity and readability.

When the SC has completed a review, the draft literature may be returned to the WG for further revisions, or, if the draft is completely ready, it will be recommended to the CLC for a vote to forward it to the Conference as an IFD or a Motion.

CLC members are eligible to vote on literature if they have attended four of the last six meetings, and they must have read the material that is being voted on.

The Conference Literature Committee and the Style Committee are always seeking new members to support this important process of creating quality program literature. The CLC meets on the 4th Saturday of each month, and the SC meets almost every Monday evening. IF you are interested in joining, please contact the CLC via the **Conference Literature Committee page** on the F.W.S. website.

#### **The following items have been sent to ARS for 2024 ABM:**

- CLC-004 Framework for Living - **Motion** Accepted
- CLC-053 50 BTS - "Motion has been conditionally approved;" we expect it to be accepted
- CLC-054 Sex and Love Addiction in the Digital Age - **Motion** Accepted
- CLC-068 Anorexia 10-11-12 - **Motion** Accepted
- CLC-073 Making the Most of Meeting - **Motion** Accepted
- CLC-078 Characteristics of Fantasy Addiction **IFD** Accepted
- CLC-087 Anorexia: Social, Sexual and Emotional (revised pamphlet) **Motion** Accepted

- CLC-088 Signs of Recovery from Fantasy Addiction IFD Submitted to ARS; acceptance pending

**The following item is expected to be sent to ARS after the May 25 CLC meeting:**

- CLC-060 Strengthening Sobriety Through Sponsorship IFD

### **Conference Steps, Traditions, and Concepts Committee: Questions from the Fellowship**

*The CSTCC welcomes Questions from the Fellowship concerning the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. Our responses are individual, and neither binding nor authoritative. We do not speak for the whole of S.L.A.A.*

#### **Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2024-1):**

Is it against Traditions for a meeting to have their meeting information listed on a non-S.L.A.A. website that clearly indicates it is NOT affiliated with S.L.A.A. (or any program)? The meeting has come to the decision by group conscience to have it posted there, and the non-S.L.A.A. website has helped many addicts find the meeting.

#### **Response #1:**

Interesting question. It concerns anonymity, autonomy, public relations, carrying our message, and the ultimate authority of group conscience. The Traditions are not rules or commandments but suggestions to guide us out of the darkness. We are not a secret society. We have an obligation to reach out to sex and love addicts who may be suffering. As long as anonymity at the public level is protected we are consistent with the Traditions. Not publicizing our meetings in the wider community would be contrary to the spirit of the Traditions.

#### **Response #2:**

I think that each group is autonomous so they get the right to make the decision to have it shared. It is still carrying the message to the sex and love addict. Also, it's actually like this: if the church, recovery center, social media or newspaper is sharing meeting information they are choosing to affiliate with us. So, I totally support that.

#### **Response #3:**

There is nothing in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions or Twelve Concepts that directly or indirectly prohibits posting a meeting time/location at any particular location.

From the information provided, it appears the meeting utilized Tradition Two and came to a group conscience decision.

They also exercised their autonomy as per Tradition Four. It seems unlikely that a meeting posting would affect another group and it even less likely that it would affect the

fellowship as a whole, so the decision to post on a non-S.L.A.A. website would be in keeping with this Tradition.

Per Tradition Five, the primary purpose of the group is to carry the message to sex and love addicts who suffer. Getting the word out about a meeting is one of the best ways to help the still suffering addict that has not heard of our fellowship. So, the posting would seem to be in alignment with the intent of this Tradition.

Historically, before the internet and websites existed, many meeting locations were posted at the building / room they occurred in. A good example is an Alano Club. Alano Clubs are privately owned and managed. They are, by design, non-affiliated clubs that host meetings of many Twelve Step fellowships. Today, many meetings are included on the websites of those same Alano Clubs. I have never heard anyone express concern about these postings, either prior to the internet or since the internet.

**Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2024-2):**

Is it in alignment with the Traditions for an Intergroup to refuse to post a meeting's information on that Intergroup website and kick that meeting out of the Intergroup because, for one week a month, the meeting is an OPEN meeting available to professionals and others seeking information?

**Response #1:**

All groups, including intergroups, are autonomous. The Traditions do not protect us from bad behavior, but if we follow the guidance of the Traditions bad behavior can be avoided. It appears that this Intergroup is not behaving within the spirit of the Traditions, but they have the right to be wrong. I suggest that we all spend more time studying the Concepts as well as the Traditions. More discussion leading to substantial unanimity is always a positive. Avoiding acts of government is a good idea. Not providing services to our members and member groups is a failure of our service bodies. There are open meetings and closed meetings; the health of our fellowship requires both.

**Response #2:**

Per Tradition Four, each group (including Intergroups) is autonomous. So, the decision to de-list an individual meeting is ultimately up to the local Intergroup.

However, there are other Traditions that also apply to this situation.

Tradition Five instructs us that our primary purpose as a group (including Intergroups) is to help the suffering addicts. De-listing a meeting would make it harder for an addict to find the meeting, and therefore it would be counter to this Tradition.

Tradition Three provides the basis of an S.L.A.A. group. There only needs to be two or more people gathered together with a desire to stop acting out in the disease. This

meeting would seem to qualify as a legitimate S.L.A.A. group. De-listing a legitimate S.L.A.A. group would not be in keeping with this Tradition.

Tradition One is the key to our success as a fellowship. Our common welfare must come first, and our recovery depends upon unity. Removing the meeting from the website and Intergroup is not a unifying action.

So, while the Intergroup certainly has the authority to de-list a meeting, it would not seem to be in keeping with the overall spirit or intention of the Traditions.

From a personal perspective, 99% of the S.L.A.A. meetings I have attended have been open to everyone, identified as sex and love addicts or not. My experience is that some newcomers are not yet ready to identify, and we have allowed them to work through the process. Also, I fully support having professionals in the meeting. By bringing more awareness of our disease and program to the professional community, I believe that we are potentially helping addicts find our program.

**Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2024-3):**

In what circumstances might “reputation” be a “matter concerning other groups” (referencing Tradition Four) such that an individual autonomous meeting might need to seek Intergroup approval before making changes to its own format?

For example, could a group decide to become a "top-line focused, we get sober by juggling meeting" (which could potentially change the "reputation" of an S.L.A.A. area) without getting prior approval from the local Intergroup?

**Response #1:**

Just as an S.L.A.A. member is a member if they say they are, an S.L.A.A. group is an S.L.A.A. group if they say they are. An intergroup is a service board or committee is directly responsible to those they serve. An intergroup does not "give approval." An intergroup does not — or should not if they are practicing the Traditions and Concepts — govern. We have no central authority that imposes discipline.

We may object to the behavior of a meeting, but unless a meeting is engaging in illegal activity an intergroup or other service structure has no power to order them to behave differently.

The Traditions are based on self-sacrifice. Our common welfare depends on open and open-minded communication and especially a commitment from each individual and each meeting to the welfare of our entire fellowship. Tradition Four is a refinement of Traditions One and Two. Four expresses the trust we have for each other. It expresses the respect and love we hold for our fellows. We are reminded as we practice the principles of the Traditions that they are guides for our behavior. They are not rules, commandments, laws, or regulations. I trust that a meeting that does not practice the Traditions will in time pass away. The same goes for an intergroup and even an entire fellowship.

### Response #2:

It would seem to be a quite a stretch to consider "reputation" as a matter affecting another group in the context of Tradition Four. The intent of the second half of Tradition Four is to stop significant and egregious Tradition violations occurring at one meeting from affecting other groups in the area or the entire fellowship.

The Alcoholics Anonymous illustrated pamphlet titled "The Twelve Traditions - A Distillation of A.A. Experience" gives some examples of actions that could affect other groups:

- (1) an individual meeting taking over all the public information work for an area without consulting any other groups in the area;
- (2) a group deciding that Tradition Eleven is an outdated technicality and engaging in vigorous promoting.

Concern over "reputation" sounds more like an ego issue, and not a Tradition violation. The Intergroup would be better off avoiding comments or decisions concerning a meeting format (even if the meeting format is odd) unless there is an actual and serious Tradition violation occurring.

### **Question from the Fellowship (Committee Reference #2024-4):**

I am a member of a group that utilizes S.L.A.A. literature in our format (the S.L.A.A. steps, traditions, characteristics, and signs of recovery). We have an S.L.A.A. speaker share once a month and have monthly group conscience meetings and have contributed close to \$500 to F.W.S. We also reference the value of an S.L.A.A. sponsor, bottom lines, and a dating plan in our format. However, our group was recently ejected from the local Intergroup because, each month, during the non-speaker meetings, we read a two-paragraph excerpt from the AA Big Book.

The AA Big Book and AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are explicitly referenced in our S.L.A.A. Basic Text and S.L.A.A. was birthed out of our founder (Rich) recognizing the need to apply the Twelve Steps to his sex and "love" problem. Furthermore, it is our group's understanding that every group is autonomous and can vote to use whatever literature it wants. I feel that our local Intergroup is not compliant with Traditions One or Four and am seeking input on this issue. Thanks in advance for any insights you can provide.

### **Response #1:**

In general, this local Intergroup is not compliant with the Traditions nor with the Concepts. The spirit, the direction, and the guidance of our three legacies (Recovery, Unity, Service; that is, the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts) aims for open mindedness, tolerance, and flexibility. Instead this Intergroup is attempting to govern. This intergroup's behavior, in this case, is autocratic.

I avoid using the word "violate" when talking about the Traditions — the Traditions are not laws or commandments — but this Intergroup is clearly not following the guidance of the Traditions. They are governing rather than serving (Tradition Two). They are establishing requirements for membership rather than welcoming all who have a desire to be sober (Tradition Three). They are not being responsible to those they serve (Tradition Nine).

Of course this Intergroup has the right to be wrong. As an autonomous group (Tradition Four, again) they have the right to ignore the Traditions even though in doing so they cause harm to our Fellowship, our groups, and most perilously to themselves.

#### Response #2:

Our local Intergroup has had many S.L.A.A. meetings over the years that have read AA literature as part of their format including: the Big Book, Drop the Rock, AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (especially since we haven't published ours), A New Pair of Glasses, Steps and Stories, The Language of Letting Go, The Steps We Took, Facing Love Addiction, etc.

Our area briefly had a secular meeting which many did not agree with, but they were autonomous and included on the meeting list. The meeting was attended by sex and love addicts and the core S.L.A.A. documents were read in support of a focus for S.L.A.A. members. I am not an alcoholic but the amount of wisdom I have gained from reading the AA books and digesting them with other S.L.A.A. members has been priceless to my recovery.

Many of the Traditions apply to this question as I interpret them.

- 1 – Unity (unity trumps opinions)
- 2 – Authority (the only authority is a loving God, not an intergroup)
- 3 – Requirements (there is only one requirement, a desire to stop living out a pattern)
- 4 – Autonomy (each meeting is autonomous and can read whatever they vote on by group conscience)
- 5 – Primary purpose (they are still carrying the message)
- 6 – Endorse, finance or lend (we are a group built on the foundation of another 12-step group. AA and S.L.A.A. both follow the 12 steps. I don't see this as a conflict or endorsement)
- 10 – We have no opinion on outside issues (I have no opinion on AA or people who work two programs in one meeting)
- 12 – Principles before personalities (These principles come before what I think about this meeting or the group that started it)

Although combining S.L.A.A. with AA may dilute the S.L.A.A. message, the message and the solution are still there.

Response #3:

The decision by the local Intergroup to de-list the meeting is in keeping with Tradition Four as the intergroup is autonomous and the decision would not appear to affect any other intergroups.

However, the decision appears to be in conflict with Tradition Five as it would limit the ability of suffering addicts to find the meeting.

It would also seem to be out of step with Tradition Two. Our leaders are trusted servants, they do not govern. The decision sounds somewhat arbitrary and heavy handed, both of which are hallmarks of ego based governing.

Tradition One provides some overall guidance as well. Our common welfare must come first as our individual recovery depends upon Unity. De-listing a meeting for reading non-conference approved literature is not be a unifying action.

From a personal perspective, I have attended meetings that read other programs literature, and meetings that read literature from self-help authors. None of it was conference approved, but all of it was agreed upon by the group conscience of the meetings. Each meeting is autonomous, and the reading of non-conference approved literature seems unlikely to affect any other meetings, so those groups decisions were in keeping with Tradition Four. None of those meetings were de-listed by Intergroup, nor was there ever any discussion at Intergroup about doing so.

Response #4:

It may be helpful for this meeting to find another Intergroup to join, as I'm certain many Intergroups would be grateful for their contributions and participation. Per Tradition Four, Intergroup is autonomous that can make its own decisions, but the individual group is also autonomous and can decide how to run their meeting. Per Tradition Two, only God is in charge, and no one can force either the Intergroup to re-accept the meeting, or the meeting to change its format.

Response #5:

Each group and Intergroup are autonomous under Tradition Four. Each body is free to decide which Intergroup they want to join and concordantly which groups they want to include. If a group is rejected by a particular Intergroup then it is advised that group "vote with one's feet" and find an Intergroup that is in line with that group's values. No group or Intergroup has the authority to govern each other. There is no right or wrong in this equation, just divergent needs on the part of the group seeking membership and the Intergroup that rejected it.

Response #6:

In my humble opinion, this Intergroup decision violated Traditions One through Five.

In addition, Page 122 in the Basic Text (Chap. 7 – Starting an S.L.A.A. group) reads "First, there was never a doubt, not even at the very beginning, that the principals

worked out on the hard anvil of A. A. experience were to be our guiding principles. These principles had safeguarded the A. A. Fellowship during a time when alcoholism was thoroughly stigmatized in society's view. We believed that these same traditions would serve us equally well, if we observed them. We knew that our "condition" of sex and love addiction was no less stigmatizable, in contemporary society, than alcoholism had been in the 1930's and 40's. Nor were we, as individuals, any less ego-driven than the early A. A. pioneers had been."

I believe the decision made by the local Intergroup is not right and is against the Traditions and spiritual principles.