



Newcomers International Group Safety Statement Oct 2024

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I. AA Safety Overview

A.A. and Safety : Alcoholics Anonymous is a microcosm of the larger society within which we live. Problems found in the world can also make their way into A.A. As we strive to share in a safe environment, alcoholics can focus on maintaining sobriety and the group can fulfill its primary purpose — to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. There is no government within A.A. and no central authority to control or direct its members, but we do share the experience of groups and members in applying A.A. principles to issues that have arisen. As expressed in Tradition Two and Tradition Nine, it is through an informed group conscience that individual members and A.A. groups find solutions to group matters as they relate to safety. Service entities such as areas, districts and intergroup/central offices are available to help provide A.A. services and shared experiences.

--- from *Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare* <https://www.aa.org/safety-and-aa-our-common-welfare>

“A.A.’s 1st Tradition states in its long form, “Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.”

--- from *“Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare.”* <https://www.aa.org/safety-and-aa-our-common-welfare>

"Some groups have developed plans for addressing disruptive behavior and have established procedures through their group conscience to ensure that the group’s welfare is protected."



--- from Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare <https://www.aa.org/safety-and-aa-our-common-welfare>

II. Newcomers International Group Safety

Newcomers International group has, in accordance with AA Guidelines, created suggestions for helping the group foster a safe and welcoming environment that will allow us to

1. Fulfill our group's primary purpose stated in Tradition 5: To carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and
2. Uphold Tradition 1: That our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity. When this unity is threatened, the group suffers and could die, and thus is not available to the individual.
3. Respect Tradition 3: The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Below are suggestions for group members.

*Note: **This is a WORKING document.** This is NOT a comprehensive list of possible problems, nor should it be considered Rules of Law. All items in this document should be considered as general guidelines to be considered.*

III. Problems with Individuals or the Group

A. What to do if you have a problem

First, determine if the problem is with **an individual**, or is it with **the group or group decisions**? Often people in the group are taking actions to support a group decision. Please ask questions to find out if the person is supporting a group decision.

B. What to do if you have a problem with an individual

Take it to your sponsor. If you have a problem with anyone in the group, it is asked that you take it to your AA sponsor and follow their suggestions. If you do not have a sponsor, ask someone in the group to help you find one.

C. What to do if you have a problem with the group itself, or votes or practices of the group:

Newcomers International Group is operated by the Newcomers International Group Bylaws. People in service to the group should be trusted to uphold group decisions. If you have a



problem with the way the group is doing something, the action to take is to propose an “agenda item” for the bi-monthly group conscience meeting.

D. What NOT to do

Gossip about the person to other home group members. This hurts unity. Recognize that you may not have all the information about something.

The group asks that you do NOT post any problems with any individual or the group in any of the WhatsApp groups. This can create a negative environment and affect unity.

E. What if another person is having a problem

Encourage the person to discuss it with their sponsor, or suggest they read this document for suggestions on solving the problem or determine if they should contact the Steering committee.

IV. Newcomers International Steering Committee

Newcomers International operates with a steering committee that acts as the informed group conscience as outlined in the Newcomers International Group Bylaws. The committee handles issues of Safety for the group.

A. Steering Committee Concerns

1. What Concerns the Steering Committee Handles

The Steering Committee reviews concerns related to the AA 12 Traditions and Safety Concerns as defined by the Home Group and supported by AA Safety Statements in the US and UK (linked below). It addresses concerns that affect the group as described in Tradition 1 and that can prevent the Group from fulfilling its Primary Purpose described in Tradition 5.

Examples of concerns the Safety Committee may address (if personal resolution hasn't worked; see Process):

AA 12 Traditions Violations

<https://www.aa.org/the-twelve-traditions>

Gossip



Gossip kills. People believe headlines and newly sober alcoholics often take things personally that aren't personal, which is why work with a sponsor is strongly encouraged. If someone is gossiping in the group, please encourage them to stop and read this document for how to handle problems.

(Further definition of what constitutes gossip is in process)

Predatory Behavior

Unwanted sexual attention or financial predation.

Harassment / Unwanted Communication

If someone specifically asks you to stop contacting them and you continue to contact them.

Bullying

Definitions of bullying include:

1. The repetitive, *intentional* hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online'. <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/understanding-bullying/definition>
2. - Bullying is a repeated aggressive behavior where one person (or group of people) in a position of power *deliberately* intimidates, abuses, or coerces an individual with the intention to hurt that person physically or emotionally. Acts of bullying can be physical or verbal.
3. While these interactions are unpleasant, there is a clear line between conflict and bullying.

Incidents of bullying must include all 3 of these characteristics:

- a) Intentional- the behavior was aggressive and a deliberate attempt to hurt another person
- b) Repeated- these aggressive actions occur repeatedly over time to the same person or group of people
- c) Power imbalance- the person bullying has more physical or social power than the [person or persons] being bullied. <http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/what-bullying>

Discrimination

Any form of discrimination will not be tolerated in the group and includes but is not limited to racial, sexual, sexual identity, gender, disability-related, religious or cultural.

2. What the Steering Committee Does Not Do

Committee members are alcoholics with their own programs, lives, families, sponsees, etc. Committee members are not here to resolve personality conflicts or complaints that should be addressed with a member's sponsor, or for group-related issues, through the group conscience.

The committee is not here to play referee, sponsor, or crisis counselor. The committee does not resolve personality conflicts, dissatisfaction with how someone does a job in the group,



complaints about another person's program or lack of program, or other people's business that doesn't involve the person making the complaint.

The main goal of having the committee is to give the group a way to handle issues of safety that could hurt the overall group and detract from the primary purpose in such a way that newcomers in the group can focus on their recovery, and not on group problems.

B. Process for Involving the Steering Committee

If you feel there is a group safety concern, and your sponsor suggests it, you may send an email to the Steering Committee using Safety@newcomersinternational.com to have the issue reviewed at the steering committee meeting.

The Steering Committee asks that you **include the following in your email** in order to hear your concern:

1. Describe how you have talked to your sponsor, and if and how you tried what they suggested. If you do not have a sponsor, you may ask a member of the steering committee to help you find one.
2. Outline specific *actions* that occurred and if you have evidence. Please include your own actions.
3. Include only objectionable behavior that *happened to you personally*.
4. Describe how the concern is a group problem, and not just a personal problem.
5. Describe how the offense is indeed a safety-related matter, and not just a personality conflict or other issue that involves working your program with a sponsor.

If the above points are not addressed, the committee may not consider the item.

The committee asks that you describe *specific actions that occurred*, not to speak in generalizations, or vague or insulting language, but to describe *actual events* without disparaging comments towards other home group members or the group.

People with concerns are encouraged to bring items to the committee singularly to prevent damaging gossip; however, if another person witnessed a safety-related event firsthand, and gives permission to be named in the email, it's possible they may be asked to submit a statement of support. That statement must also describe the action that occurred.

Items sent to the email are reviewed at the committee meeting where next steps are determined. If a problem is deemed an emergency, the committee may meet sooner to handle an issue.



C. Actions Taken by the Steering Committee

Examples of actions the Safety Committee members may take:

WhatsApp Groups If someone violates safety guidelines in the WhatsApp groups or posts in a way that suggests problems with another person or the group, the person is asked to stop posting to the WhatsApp Group, and the message may be deleted. If the person doesn't stop posting, they may be removed temporarily from the WhatsApp Group.

At the Meeting It is Newcomers International Group's policy not to allow someone who has taken a drink to share in the main meeting. They are invited to stay after the meeting, and the Security team has guidelines for how to handle them. If anyone is disruptive or abusive in the meeting, they may be removed from the meeting and the Steering Committee will review the details.

Removal from the Home Group When serious safety issues have occurred after careful investigation and review, a member may be removed from the home group. They are welcome to attend the meeting according to the 3rd tradition as long as they are not disruptive, or if it would not pose a safety concern for a home group member.

Involve a Member's Sponsor - handling alcoholics especially newer in sobriety can be delicate. The sponsor has a relationship with them and may be engaged by the Steering Committee to help handle issues.

D. Accountability to the Group Conscience

The Steering Committee handles issues, so the Group is not distracted from its primary purpose, and to protect individual privacy, so as not to cause harm to personal reputations. The committee will decide how to communicate issues to the group if it is deemed the group should know how a situation is handled.

V. Examples

Someone is muted before the meeting starts and you are upset.

Questions to ask: Did it happen to me?

Ask Is this a personal problem? Is it a problem with the individual or the group?

Is it a group policy to mute people before the meeting if they are talking over greeters?



What to do?

1. Talk to your sponsor
2. If your sponsor suggests, raise an agenda item for the Group conscience.

What not to do:

Complain to other home group members, slander any home group members.

Someone is gossiping about another member, slandering them.

What to do?

1. Tell them gossiping hurts the group, and you do not want to participate in gossip.
2. Suggest they contact their sponsor.

If their comments sound like there could be a safety concern, ask them to review the process in this document.

VI. To Learn More

AA 12 Traditions

<https://www.aa.org/the-twelve-traditions>

AA Safety Statements

In the US:

Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare <https://www.aa.org/safety-and-aa-our-common-welfare>

In Great Britain

Safeguarding <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Safeguarding>