

MOTION: That CNCA continue the work of the Accessibilities Sharing Session by creating an Accessibilities Sub-committee. The main purpose is to continue the sharing session and support accessibilities work at the district level. – presented by the Accessibilities Sharing Session

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION: Each of us is aware of what access to AA's message has meant to us. So we need to ask: Is AA's message accessible to everyone who needs it, and are we really available to everyone who reaches out for help?

When physical, mental, geographic, cultural, ethnic, spiritual and emotional challenges are present, the committee created by this motion could assist by sharing our collective experience, strength and hope. Our members face specific difficulties in many realms, such as visual and auditory, housebound or chronic illness, living with the effects of brain damage or stroke, as well as other less visible challenges. Childcare issues, physical limitations, language translations and gender biases are subjects presently recognized across many of our Districts. These issues cause our members and potential members to experience less unity and additional isolation because there is little or no official support.

The most efficient means of being responsible to those we serve, who experience challenges for inclusion in Area 06, is through the creation of this Accessibilities committee to more effectively share information and resources at every level of service. Our Delegate serves on the Treatment & Accessibilities Committee for our General Service Conference. What better opportunity than now to recognize the need and service of this aspect of our support structure?

We need an effective method of communication and service between the operations of our Area, financially and with the support of committed Area Officers, with the continuity and structure that a full committee provides, to ensure that everyone can share a solid connection for the hand of AA always to be there.

Barriers exist. As the Accessibilities Guidelines printed by AA and available on aa.org states, "while there are no special alcoholics, there are those who face additional personal barriers to accessing the AA message."

Our Traditions guide us to greater unity, inclusion of all members, personal and group availability to carry the message, as well as the creation of committees to better serve. Our best option when anyone who has access challenges reaches out for help is through the creation and work of this committee: brainstorming solutions; sharing experiences, quandaries, successes and failures; consistency of communication; and offering the structure and regularity of participation and education.

- Jo M., Recording Secretary, District 13

ARGUMENT AGAINST THE MOTION: At first glance, this motion sounds great. Who wouldn't want to make AA more accessible? But this motion isn't about the merits of accessibility. It's a motion on if our area needs a sub-committee for accessibility issues, and that's not as clear cut.

Districts are better suited to address accessibility issues in their districts better than an area sub-committee. Especially in Area 06, which has such wide ranging diversity between districts. Fortuna has completely different accessibility issues than San Jose for example.

District 40 in metropolitan Santa Clara County has a linguistic overlay sub-district, which probably wouldn't be as effective in District 15, a more rural and spread-out district encompassing Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. Tradition 4 states "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole." With that in mind, it is up to groups to decide if they want to provide

things like childcare, ASL interpretation, or a sound system, just to name a few of the things that could make a meeting more accessible. By creating a subcommittee, the Area is standardizing what access should mean to Districts, reversing the upside down triangle structure of AA.

Currently at the Area Committee Meeting all sharing sessions meet from 10-11 am and all standing and sub-committees meet from 11-12. There are 4 sharing sessions and 6 committee meetings as of now. Adding another committee meeting could create a logistical issue since there are only a limited number of rooms for meetings.

Possibly the strongest argument against this motion is quite simply that nobody has given adequate reason to make our accessibilities sharing session into a sub-committee. Based on the presentation of this motion at the Pre-Conference Assembly, continuing the accessibilities sharing session is better suited to accomplish their stated goal of inviting districts to share and look for solutions together. There have been no reasons presented why there is need for the structure or budget of a sub-committee.

As recently as August 2018, the attendees of the sharing session felt that there wasn't a need for a sub-committee, and I have to agree, at least until there is adequate reason given that a sub-committee addresses our accessibility needs better than a sharing session.

- Scott H., Alternate DCMC, District 40