

Visiting groups as a DCM¹

"From the beginning, communication in AA has been no ordinary transmission of helpful ideas and attitudes. Because of our kinship and suffering, and because our common means of deliverance are effective for ourselves only when constantly carried to others, our channels of contact have always been charged with the language of the heart." – As Bill Sees It, p. 195

The DCM plays an essential role in communication within our general service structure. A lot of information is given to the GSR at the Sub-District meetings each month², not just at the District. The GSR can plan to attending each of the District and the Sub-District Meetings and to attend the Area Assemblies, so the members of their home group will get the information it needs to participate in AA as a whole. If a work commitment keeps you from a Sub-District Meeting please get an Alternate GSR to attend this Sub-District Meeting, and bring back information and handouts to the GSR for inclusion in reports to your group.

Getting Started: Important Communication with The Groups

- Reaching out to groups who are not registered with the General Service Office.
- Reaching out to groups that are not represented by a GSR or who may have an inactive GSR who is not attending the Sub-District meetings and/or District Meetings and Assemblies.
- Helping GSR's within a Sub-District³ understand the importance of communicating information from all levels of General Service with their groups.
- Helping to answer GSR's questions about General Service and their role in our service structure.

¹ GSR may accompany DCM;

² Some areas have no sub-district.

³ Written in Area 06, with sub-districts.

Separate SMF to be created for the "Newcomer Kit: Suggested Content" to include Gv Subscription form and Birthday Envelope, Newcomer meeting info, used sample copy of Grapevine or LaVina.

- Help GSR's understand the importance of and prepare for sharing sessions, gathering group consciences, and preparing to present those at the district and area.
- Inform on the timeframe for General Service activities, including agenda topics, area assembly business meeting motions, and district business meeting motions.

Visiting Groups

"The unique ability of each AA to identify himself with, and bring recovery to, the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, eloquence, or on any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety." – Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 150-151

Preparation: It is important to prepare to visit the group. You should have a method for keeping track of the groups that have been visited, and when they were last visited. A list of groups that are listed on the meeting schedule but are not registered with GSO is important as well. Have information about whether the group has a GSR who is active, a GSR who is registered but may not be currently service, or if the group does not have a GSR. If possible, plan to arrive early and find out when would be the best time to discuss this with the group. Typically, it is important to at least make a short announcement at the recovery meeting even if a longer presentation is made at a business meeting or steering committee meeting. If a group has a commitment coordinator it is helpful to check in with them as well.

What to Bring⁴

- *Circles of Love and Service* (P-45)
- District handbook/GSR Orientation Booklet
- District newsletter or bulletin

⁴ edited to include Contribution flyer for Address to GSO, SMF-176 Services provided by GSO/AAWS; Self-Support; May be edited by a different District , depending on need or availability of content to take on a visit. Two or more may visit the unconnected Group.

Separate SMF to be created for the "Newcomer Kit: Suggested Content" to include Gv Subscription form and Birthday Envelope, Newcomer meeting info, used sample copy of Grapevine or LaVina.

- Agenda topic information
- New Group Forms/Group change forms – with info. To get the forms to the local or Area registrar and to please not mail directly to the General Service Office. Local District P.O. Box address or better instruction.
- The A.A. Service Manual Combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service (BM-31), if funded in the DCM budget.
- Flyers for upcoming events; unity days, assemblies, agenda topics workshops, etc.
- **How to Conduct a Sharing Session (SM F-111)**
- **Is Your Group Linked to AA as a Whole? (SM F-104)**
- AA Grapevine News; and a flyer about how to get a Group Gv Rep.
- ***The GSR – May be the most important job in AA (P-19)***
- Your D.C.M. (F-12)
- ***The AA Group... Where it all begins (P-16)***
- CNCA Comments, the English Area newsletter at <http://www.cnca06.org>
- An example of something that has come about because of General Service, such as the 4th Edition of the Big Book or a new pamphlet.
- A short statement explaining what General Service is, why it is important to the group and the future of Alcoholics Anonymous. A good example of this can be found in this excerpt from the pamphlet "Circles of Love and Service"
- Flyer we still have to make about the Beginner Meeting (Primary Purpose is to have information to give to the newcomer, to help the still suffering alcoholic.
- Article you type about how to make the Newcomer Kit: a manila envelope with two or three newcomer pamphlets, a schedule of meetings, a phone list, a flyer about the newcomer meeting.
- The flyer you create with the address of GSO, for contributions to GSO/AAWS
- SMF-176 'Services Provided by GSO/AAWS'

Separate SMF to be created for the "Newcomer Kit: Suggested Content" to include Gv Subscription form and Birthday Envelope, Newcomer meeting info, used sample copy of Grapevine or LaVina.

- Flyer you make about "Having a Group Grapevine Rep", encouraging people to have a subscription to the AA Grapevine, our meetings in print.
- Copy or URL Link written to Box 4-5-9, ("the newsletter of the General Service Office")
- A school type folder with two pockets, to hold the information you give the group.
- The Helpline or Hotline number for your District, Intergroup, Central Office.
- Where to find additional Sobriety Meetings, including a newcomer meeting.
- Suggested Content, Instructions for a Newcomer kit (Ask GSO to Make a SMF-Newcomer Kit Information Sheet to include the Subscription Forms to Grapevine/LaVina and a Birthday Envelope for Contributions to GSO.... a used Grapevine Magazine and a subscription form, phone list, meeting schedule, and 2 or 3 pieces of newcomer information all in a manila envelope to give to a newcomer. We put the women's phone list in the women's Newcomer kit and one for the men in the Men's Newcomer Kit and elect a Newcomer Rep in the Group to handle these. We add the Flyer to the Newcomer meeting and that subscription form will increase subscriptions to the Grapevine. Spanish version of this will have a subscription form to La Vina.

"All parts of our Fellowship – group meetings, committees, offices, Conferences, and group jobs, service meetings – share one common purpose: to help the alcoholic who still suffers. The Intergroup might laugh about General Service but without General Service work and the services done by the G.S.O., there is no connection of the Group to AA as a whole. Tell the unconnected Group they will like the information coming in from a GSR. Their anonymity is not meant for topics affecting AA as a whole. They may participate in the general service structure so their Groups' opinion may be heard at our Assemblies. Elect their GSR to participate."⁵

⁵ Paragraph added 2016, Feb.

A.A. is made up of interconnected circles of people within the Fellowship, who work together to carry A.A.'s message of hope. But in order for A.A. to run itself without bosses or rules, in accordance with our Twelve Traditions, we need a system of communication for finding out how A.A. as a whole feels about its world affairs, and how it wants to operate.

For A.A. to run its own affairs, each A.A. group needs to make its voice heard on overall A.A. policies. This starts with a group's general service representative (G.S.R.), who represents the voice of the group conscience and has the job of linking his or her group with A.A. as a whole. G.S.R.s make sure their groups receive services from the U.S. and Canada General Service

Information to Gather

- Does the group have a GSR?
- Is there an alternate GSR?
- Does the group have a business meeting?
- Is there a contact person for the group? (This is used in the interim when there is no one available to serve as the GSR.
- Would the group like a more in depth presentation in the future?

Questions to Answer When Visiting A Group

- What is General Service?
- New Word document showing online updated resources for the Group:
 - Web sites: aa.org, aagrapevine.org, local, district Web page, Area Web site; Link to a local GSR Handbook; link to the Group Resource page and more than one location for AA events for local, area, and aa.org calendars.
 - The online Self-Support information page for charts, graphs, information. Addresses for the Contributions. The Group Service

number from the Registrar, to be on all contribution checks to GSO, the General Service Office.

- Why should my group participate? Is there a need?
- What is the typical eligibility, time commitment, and expectations of a General Service Representative?
 - Travel Time (varies)
 - Reading, prep time
 - Time for group report.
 - District Meeting (times vary by District)
 - Sub-District Meeting (also called the GSR Sharing Session), an hour each month (approx.)
 - Our Area has 4 Assemblies a year (April, May, Summer & Fall)
 - (Optional) – Visits to the Area Committee meeting or to a DCM Sharing Session.