

Making Decisions in Al-Anon

Making decisions is a responsibility and a function of any group or fellowship. To make decisions in Al-Anon, we use an Informed Group Conscience Process that is respectful of our principles and our purpose.

As outlined below this process provides the means for:

- background and current information to be made clear
- questions to be asked and answered
- discussion where all voices may be heard
- Participation by all who wish to be heard
- Expression of the minority voice
- Focusing on the issue at hand, keeping principles above personalities, so that decisions are made for the good of Al-Anon as a whole.

The Virginia Area Assembly uses an Informed Group Conscience process to make decisions.

- First, background information on an issue is presented to the Assembly.
- Next, members ask questions to be sure all aspects of the issue are clear and needed information is known.
- When there are no more questions, then members may express their opinions without judgement.
- The Informed Group Conscience Process reflects the principles of:
 - Talk to each other. (Equality)
 - Reason things out. (Patience)
 - Participate in discussions. (Honesty and generosity)
 - Be open minded. (Understanding and compassion)
 - Show respect. (Acceptance and trust)
- Once the Assembly has enough information to make a decision (usually determined by taking a consensus), the motion is ready for the actual vote to be taken.

INFORMED GROUP CONSCIENCE PROCESS

April 2016 - VAWSC

FRAMING A MOTION

TOPIC: Can be the CHARGE if this is from a committee.

BACKGROUND: (Brief history relevant to the topic.)

QUESTIONS:

1. What do we know about the Fellowship's needs, wants, or preferences that is relevant to this discussion?
2. What do we know about the ability of the Area to support this topic?
3. What do we know about current and future items or trends that is relevant to this discussion?
4. What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons?)
 - a. Pros:

 - b. Cons:
5. What do we wish we knew, but don't?

MOTION

The motion can go here following the framing.

Decision Procedure in an Informed Group Conscience

- The framed motion is available before the time of voting.
- After the motion is presented and seconded,
 - The Chair explains the ensuing process.
 - All discussion is at the microphone. This allows everyone to hear what is asked or shared.
 - When you go to the microphone, introduce yourself by your name and your District name and number.
 - Each person can have one two minute turn at the microphone per discussion topic.
 - When you get in line to ask a question, carry your *Service Manual* so that the Chair can recognize you first.
 - Asking a question does not count as your one time at the microphone.
 - When there are no more questions, then members may share their viewpoint or opinion without judgment.
 - Begin and end each discussion session on time.
 - No side conversations.
 - No cell phones.
 - No distractions.
 - No applause.
 - Stay on topic.
 - If someone has already expressed your opinion, do not repeat it.
 - Follow the agenda.
 - Be courteous.
 - Agree that everyone wants what is best for Al-Anon, regardless of whether you agree or disagree with them.
- The Chair reminds everyone of the time allotted for this process.
- The question and discussion periods then follow.
- When it seems there has been ample opportunity for expression, or if time has run out,
- The Chair asks for a consensus. “Do you have enough information to make a decision?” (A voice vote is usually adequate for this response.)
- If the consensus is that there is enough information to make a decision, then the motion is repeated, and the vote is taken.
- The motion may pass or be defeated.
- If the consensus is that there is not enough information to make a decision, then the motion is referred back to the originator (ad hoc committee, individual, Long Range Planning Committee, or VAWSC) for additional information or work.
- Then, move on to the next item of business.
- If time runs out and the group has not reached a consensus for having enough information to make a decision, then the Chair may close the discussion with the provision that it may be continued later in the session if time allows, or it may be continued at the next meeting.

NOTE: The same process is followed for a topic as well as for a motion. The framing, questions, and discussion may or may not result in a motion. The discussion may lead to the consensus that no decision is desired or necessary.

Voting on a Motion

- the Chair reads the motion, and
 - If it is a voice vote, asks for all in favor, all opposed, and all who abstain to respond in turn.
 - If it is not clear from the voice vote whether or not the motion is carried or defeated, then the Chair facilitates a counted vote by asking all in favor to stand and count off, followed by those opposed, and those abstaining.
- If there is an amendment to the motion and a second to the amendment, the originator of the motion and the person who seconded the motion must agree to have the amendment incorporated into the original motion.
 - If the motion originator and the person who seconded the motion do not agree to have the amendment incorporated into the motion, then the amendment is killed, and the motion is voted on as presented.
 - If the motion originator and the person who seconded the motion agree to have the amendment incorporated into the motion, then the amendment alone is voted on first.
 - It may pass, or it may be defeated.
 - If the amendment passes, then it is incorporated in the original motion, and
 - The Chair read the motion with the amendment incorporated into the motion.
 - The Chair facilitates the vote.
 - It may pass or it may be defeated.
 - If the amendment is defeated, then the original motion is voted on as originally presented.

NOTE: If the motion is a recommendation from the VAWSC, the Long Range Planning Committee, or any ad hoc committee, the amendment needs to go to their next meeting for a decision of acceptance or not. However, if the members are present, they may, as the discretion of the Chair, caucus, make their decision, and report back to the Area Chair. Other business will be addressed while they are in caucus.