

2024 Conference Committee on Corrections

ITEM A: Consider updated Singleness of Purpose text to replace the existing paragraph in the pamphlet “A Message to Corrections Professionals.”

Background notes:

2022 Conference Committee on Corrections:

The 2022 Conference Committee on Corrections made multiple suggestions for revision and update to the “Corrections Workbook,” including a change to the “Singleness of Purpose” section on page 5.

October 2022 meeting of the Trustees’ Corrections Committee:

The committee requested that the terms “substance abuse” and “chemical dependency” be replaced with “substance use disorder” in the “Corrections Workbook.”

The committee also discussed the importance of consistency as it pertains to all A.A. literature and requested that the secretary forward a memo to the Publishing department and request that they consider updating A.A. literature, where applicable, to replace the terms “substance abuse” and “chemical dependency” with “substance use disorder.”

January 2023 meeting of the Trustees’ Corrections Committee:

The secretary presented to the committee a suggestion from GSO Publishing that when revising the section “Singleness of Purpose,” we remove professional labels to eliminate the need to update the literature as professional terminology changes. The change would be from:

“Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as “substance abuse” or “chemical dependency.” Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Nonalcoholics may attend open A.A. meetings as observers, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings.”

to:

“Some professionals refer to alcoholics and drug addicts using the same professional terminology. Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to

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A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Nonalcoholics may attend open A.A. meetings as observers, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings.”

The committee approved this revision to be applied to the “Corrections Workbook” and the pamphlet “A Message to Correction Professionals,” and agreed that the final wording be decided by Publishing. The staff secretary will send a memo to Publishing requesting this change.

Considering the importance of consistency as it pertains to all A.A. literature, the staff secretary will send a memo to the committee secretaries who have literature items that also contain this paragraph.

December 2023 Interim Meeting of the Trustees’ Committee on Corrections:

The Trustees’ Committee on Corrections reviewed and amended the language provided by Publishing, and agreed to forward the following language to the 2024 Conference Committee on Corrections:

“Some professionals refer to alcoholics and drug addicts as a single group when using professional terminology. Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Nonalcoholics may attend open A.A. meetings as observers, but attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking.”

Additional literature items that contain this paragraph:

Faith Leaders Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous	P-25
A.A. As a Resource for the Health Care Professional	P-23
How A.A. Members Cooperate with Professionals	P-29
If You Are a Professional...Alcoholics Anonymous Wants To Work With You	P-46
Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace	P-54
Information on Alcoholics Anonymous	F-2
Treatment Committee Workbook	M-40i
Cooperation with the Professional Community Workbook	M-41i
A.A. Guidelines on Cooperating with Court, D.W.I. and Similar Programs	MG-05
A.A. Guidelines for A.A. Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field	MG-10

Background:

1. [A Message to Corrections Professionals...](#)

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2024 Conference Committee on Corrections

ITEM C: Review the video “Carrying the Message Behind These Walls” for effectiveness, relevance, and intended audience.

Background notes:

From the Trustees’ Corrections Committee — January 27, 2024, meeting report excerpt:

The Trustees’ Committee on Corrections reviewed the Corrections video “Carrying the Message Behind These Walls” for relevance and usefulness. The committee noted that the video addresses multiple audiences over an extended duration; and that shorter, targeted presentations could be more effective.

The Trustees’ Committee on Corrections considered that the videos “A New Freedom” and “A.A. For Legal and Corrections Professionals” address topics and audiences which overlap with the “Carrying the Message Behind These Walls” video.

The Committee agreed to forward to the 2024 Conference Committee on Corrections a suggestion that the video “Carrying the Message Behind These Walls” be reviewed for relevance, effectiveness and intended audience.

Background documents attached:

1. [Carrying the Message Behind These Walls | Alcoholics Anonymous \(aa.org\)](#)

2024 Conference Committee on Corrections

ITEM D: Consider a request to develop a pamphlet on the transgender alcoholic in A.A.*

*2024 EDW distribution

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the October 28, 2023, trustees' Literature Committee meeting report:

The committee considered a request to develop a pamphlet entitled "Experience, Strength, and Hope: A.A. for the Transgender Alcoholic" and agreed to forward to the 74th General Service Conference.

Background:

1. Proposed Agenda Item (PAI) Submission Form - PAI 30
2. Presentation to Area 06 assembly (2019)
3. "LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A." pamphlet

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(1) Submit a clear and concisely worded motion. PAI #30

Area 06 (California Northern Coastal) requests that a pamphlet entitled "Experience, Strength and Hope: AA for the Transgender Alcoholic" be produced.

(2) What problem does this proposed item address?

Gender identity and expression is different from sexuality, and the unique barriers of transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, gender-fluid, and gender non-conforming alcoholics could be better addressed in a separate pamphlet.

(3) What level of group conscience, if any, discussed the proposed agenda item? Make it clear who is submitting the item (an individual, group, district, area, etc.).

Note: While all items are received equally, experience has shown that ideas greatly benefit from the value of a broader group conscience. Consider if and with whom you would like to have a group conscience discussion on the proposed agenda item prior to submitting.

This proposal was discussed at Queer Femmes: A Meeting for Trans Women and Queer Femmes of All Genders, a group in Oakland, and then forwarded to the District in Alameda County North, where discussion occurred for the better part of 2018 and passed the District with substantial unanimity. At the suggestion of the Area Chair, members of District 07 waited to present this motion to the Area until the revised pamphlet for the LGBTQ alcoholic (published in 2018) was available for their review. After the pamphlet was published, members of the District strongly felt that there was still a need for a separate pamphlet. The motion was then presented at our Pre-Conference Assembly in California Northern Coastal Area 06 in April 2019. The Area had fruitful discussion over the course of the next two years at four separate assemblies. Because of the pandemic, the discussion stretched over two years. The motion passed with substantial unanimity in April 2021; the vote was 166 in favor, 5 opposed, 13 abstentions. There was no motion to reconsider after the minority opinion. Our Delegate at the time submitted a proposed agenda item, at which point the Trustee's Literature committee discussed the proposed agenda item and took no action. The committee agreed that due to the overwhelming number of pamphlets currently in development or in revision, as well as the projects carried over from the 70th and 71st General Service Conferences, new pamphlet requests cannot be addressed at this time. The trustees' Literature Committee invites the submitter to consider resubmitting in the future for consideration. The proposal was submitted again last year, again resulting in no action.

The Area Grapevine/Literature/La Vina sharing session discussed this proposal again this year and requested a sense of the room at our most recent assembly in August 2023 on whether to re-submit this proposal for a third time, emphasizing the continuing need for this pamphlet. The Area voted again with substantial unanimity to submit this proposed agenda item.

Members from several other Areas attended our sharing session and emphasized the importance of producing literature for the trans alcoholic.

(4) Provide background information that describes and supports the reasoning for the proposal. List background material(s) included with the proposal:

Attached: Presentation to the Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous of California Northern Coastal Area 06 April 13th, 2019 by Grace L. from District 07 (Alameda North)

The attached presentation from the makers of the motion outlines it best, but to recap some of the issues unique to this community: restricted access to gender-focused meetings; confusions arising from the informal AA tradition in which men sponsor men, and women sponsor women; lack of access to gender-neutral facilities in AA meetings; for those who transition after getting sober, the informal tradition of resisting “making any big life choices in the first year of one’s recovery,” which can sometimes sound like an attempt to stop people from transitioning; difficulties of disentangling trans life from alcoholic patterns of action; confusion and sometimes outright hostility concerning trans people’s identities and lives; confusion within the Fellowship concerning the nature and purpose of hormone replacement therapy for trans people; gendered language in AA scripts that some trans people find off-putting. Statistics show this community has a higher rate of alcoholism and is more likely to encounter discrimination.

While some in our Area felt current literature was adequate or that this could be addressed through better 12th step work at individual and group level, it was our Area conscience that an ever-growing and strongly expressed need from members of our Fellowship warrants the creation of a separate pamphlet. Pamphlets are inexpensive to produce, serve as invitations to welcome new and potential members, and help educate their sponsors and others.

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(5) What are the intended/expected outcomes if this proposed item is approved?

That a separate pamphlet be created for this community, which would also serve to educate the Fellowship, and could be used as a resource for doctors and counselors who refer people to AA. Some stories could also remain in the LGBTQ pamphlet.

We understand that as part of the Conference process, if this were to become an advisory action, the final title could well be different from that in our motion. As always, the goal is to be respectful and inclusive.

(6) Provide a primary contact for the submission.

Eric L. Panel 73 Delegate, CNCA 06

(7) Final comments:

Area 06 strongly emphasized that they were resubmitting this agenda item because the need for a pamphlet continues, and that sexual orientation and gender identity are not the same thing. This was a multi-year discussion that resulted in an informed group conscience.

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Presentation to the Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous of California Northern Coastal Area 06

April 13th, 2019

Grace L. (District 07)

Dear Fellows,

The primary purpose of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is to carry the message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers. In order to better fulfill that purpose, our Fellowship has from time to time considered circulating pamphlets addressing particular groups within our communities, whose particular needs or barriers to recovery may need particular address. In assessing whether or not to consider a new group for such a pamphlet, we have often applied the standard of *demonstrated need* that is, we have investigated whether there is a particular need for a pamphlet among the group we are considering addressing. If ever there were such a need, it exists among the group I am addressing today: transgender, transsexual, non-binary, genderqueer, Two Spirit, and gender non-conforming people, whom, for the sake of concision, I will refer to as "trans people." For this reason, on behalf of District 07 it is my privilege to propose to this Assembly that we request that a pamphlet be produced entitled "Experience, Strength, Hope: AA for the Transgender Alcoholic."

The demonstrated need for recovery among our community is strong - indeed, it is far stronger than among other groups that have been the subject of AA pamphlets. There has been a wealth of scientific research published on trans people and alcoholism, and the findings are uniform, trans people experience significantly higher rates of alcohol abuse than the rest of the LGBTQ community, which itself experiences significantly higher rates than heterosexual people. Among LGBT people, the rate of alcohol abuse is 25%; among heterosexual people it is 10%. Among trans people, perhaps in the region of 50%. These statistics do little to convey the struggles that individual trans people have with alcohol - struggles that all of us in this Fellowship can remember well. Perhaps this statistic will do so more clearly: 48% of trans people in the UK have attempted suicide. Trans people are dying of alcoholism every day, and we have a message of recovery that can help.

Alcoholics Anonymous has already registered this material need, and has indeed begun to address it. A recent pamphlet entitled "Experience, Strength, Hope: LGBTQ Alcoholics in AA" contained moving and inspiring stories from trans alcoholics in recovery. Says Chris, a trans man quoted in that pamphlet, "I had always known that I was in the wrong body, and alcohol helped push that thought to the recesses of my mind. It was hard living a lie and pushing the masculinity bar further and further to fit in with what society told me I had to be. But like I said, alcohol helped

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me live a lie.” (p 14) Chris's words resonate with many recovered trans people in our community, for whom alcohol served just such a purpose. Moreover, a recent note in “Box 459: News and Notes from the General Service Office of AA,” a couple of fellows, Jesse and David, talk about

their experiences as trans people in recovery. Yet Jesse also puts his finger on an important issue: “although Jesse appreciates the LGBTQ pamphlet, he still feels there should be one specifically created for transgender and gender-non-conforming members.” (Winter 2018, p.2) Jesse is right.

Since District 07 began discussing the possibility of a trans pamphlet in early 2018, we have conducted research to determine the particular barriers that trans people face when trying to access recovery. We believe that, at present, the best way to address these issues is through the creation and circulation of a new pamphlet. Those issues are: confusion within the Fellowship concerning the nature and purpose of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for trans people, usually testosterone (a controlled substance) for men, and estrogenating hormones for women; restricted access to gender-focused meetings - e.g., women's meetings in which trans women are welcomed; men's meetings in which trans men are welcome; confusions arising from the informal AA tradition in which men sponsor men, and women sponsor women. Trans people seeking recovery may either find such principles to be inappropriate, or (especially for those people who are trans but not male or female) inhospitable; lack of access to gender-neutral facilities in AA meetings and Fellowships; for those of us who transition after getting sober, the informal tradition of resisting “making any big life choices in the first year of one's recovery,” which can sometimes sound like an attempt to stop us from transitioning; for those of us who were already out when in active addiction, the difficulties of disentangling trans life from alcoholic patterns of action; confusion and sometimes outright hostility concerning trans people's identities and lives; gendered language in AA scripts that some trans people find off-putting.

None of these problems is, alone, insurmountable and I stand before you with my trans siblings in recovery to attest that we are here, and we do recover. The point is that these are barriers that impede our ability, as a Fellowship, to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. And we have an opportunity to alleviate those conditions, and to demonstrate to trans people that AA is a place where they belong.

Over the last two years, a number of meetings focused on trans people have emerged in the Berkeley and Oakland area, as trans people have come together to save our own lives. My own home group is the meeting for “Trans Women and Queer Femmes of All Genders,” which meets at the Rockridge Fellowship at 8pm every Tuesday; other groups for all trans people, as well as special groups for trans masculine people, exist in our area. We are active members in service to our local Fellowship, and we are each of us profoundly grateful for the gift that AA has given us, the gift of a power greater than ourselves that can restore us to sanity. For some of us, myself included, the sanity my higher power had in mind for me was a gender transition—a difficult, costly,

CONFIDENTIAL: 74th General Service Conference Background

and frightening step that I took with the support of a caring sponsor and many loving Fellows. We bring you this motion with gratitude in our hearts.

There are at present 1.5 million trans people in the United States alone, and the rates of alcohol addiction among that group are extremely high. That community is proportionately under-represented among our Fellowship. Our primary purpose here is clear: let us produce a pamphlet, and carry the message of a spiritual solution directly to trans alcoholics, living and dying of alcoholism today.

Grace L. (Berkeley, CA)

Background notes:

The content listing for the pamphlet P-32 “LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.” on aa.org says:

Thirteen LGBTQ alcoholics chronicle their experience before and after joining Alcoholics Anonymous, and how – despite their trepidations about A.A. – they discover that the tie that binds us all together is freedom from alcohol. Includes stories by recovering alcoholics who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and transitioning, and queer.

Background documents attached:

1. [LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A. | Alcoholics Anonymous \(aa.org\)](#)
2. [SP – Los Alcohólicos LGBTQ en A.A. \(aa.org\)](#)
3. [FR - Les alcooliques LGBTQ des AA](#)