

Literature L: Discuss Plain Language Big Book review process

Since the release of the Plain Language Big Book (PLBB) on November 1, 2024, we have received a variety of feedback. This feedback ranges from concerns about the content to intentions to submit Proposed Agenda Items (PAIs) requesting changes. Additionally, we have heard compelling stories about the effectiveness of the PLBB as a tool in settings such as corrections, treatment programs, and home groups.

It is important to address the need for a credible and productive process to consider suggestions for changes to the PLBB. This process must respect the Conference process, prior actions from the 71st, 73rd, and 74th Conferences, and the fact that the PLBB is a translation designed for accessibility and relatability purposes, rather than a typical piece of literature. Any modifications intended to clarify the content could potentially affect the integrity of the translation, making the material less accessible and relatable.

It is essential that the amendment procedure accurately represents the collective voice of the AA Fellowship. Therefore, it may be prudent not to consider modifications until the 77th GSC in 2027, allowing the Fellowship time to gain experience with the PLBB. This timeframe ensures that any proposed changes are grounded in a comprehensive evaluation and extensive experience. For context, the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" historically updates its editions at an average interval of 21 years.

Furthermore, it is prudent to assess the financial impact of changing the PLBB before taking any action. To achieve accessibility and relatability, engaging a qualified translation specialist would be needed to ensure that the "Plain Language Big Book – A Tool for Reading Alcoholics Anonymous" meets its intended objectives.

A procedure and flowchart are being proposed to assess proposed modifications to the PLBB. This baseline is designed to promote an in-depth discussion by AA, ensuring that the fundamental elements of the PLBB are maintained.

Questions to discuss:

- How does your group feel about the proposed process for reviewing revisions to the Plain Language Big Book?
- Should changes be delayed to allow more experience with the book?
- How should the need for updates be balanced with translation costs and workload?

GSR Report back

Finance F: Consider a request to remove the phrase, “A group may also decline to hear reports from a GSR at all” from page 10 in *The A.A. Service Manual*.”

This item asks that the last sentence on page 10 of our Service Manual in English and Spanish regarding GSR Reports be deleted. This sentence is: "A group may also decline to hear reports from a GSR at all." The background mentions Concept 3, the Right of Participation, where the responsibility of the GSR is to inform the group.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you think this chapter of *The A.A. Service Manual* (The Group and its General Service Representative) accurately reflects the rights and responsibilities of GSRs within their groups and the General Service Structure?
- How does A.A.'s Tradition of Group Autonomy fit into this?
- Should any changes be considered to ensure clarity on GSR participation and their role in keeping the Fellowship informed?

12 & 12 & 12

Literature J: Consider a request that the Twelve Concepts for World Service and essays on the Twelve Concepts for World Service be included in the current publication, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

While the Service Manual has historically been the primary source for members to access the concepts, it is not a widely used book, and is rarely used by those new to A.A. The 12X12 is one of the most widely distributed publications. There was a total of 330,202 12X12s sold in 2023. There were 20,814 copies of the service manual sold in the same time period. There were 15 times as many 12X12's sold as Service manuals.

Note for Spanish versions: 28,701 12X12; 12,967 Service Manuals; twice as many 12X12 sold.

Questions for discussion:

- Would this change help increase understanding and discussion of the Concepts in A.A.?
- Is the current placement in *The A.A. Service Manual* sufficient?

Report & Charter — Item A.3

Consider a request to remove the word "woman" from the Concept IV essay.

This item considers a request to remove the word "woman" from the Concept IV essay in *The A.A. Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Service*. This change would be in the 2026-2028 Service Manual. The request comes from a district in Area 03 that believes the language no longer reflects the current composition of GSO staff. Similar updates have been made in the past to ensure accuracy in the essay on Concept XI. GSO Staff members are no longer all women. The sentence in the English Service Manual currently reads "New volunteer corporate directors will ask why any paid woman staff member should also be a corporate director and thereby have a vote as good as their own." The word "woman" is not in the Spanish Service Manual in this sentence.

Questions for discussion:

- Should the word "woman" in the Concept IV essay be removed to reflect the current composition of GSO and keep the language relevant today, or should it remain unchanged to preserve historical context?
- Why or why not?

Literature K Update Living Sober

Literature K: Consider Request to update the book, Living Sober

7 PAIs have been submitted.

The need to update Living Sober to reflect the ways we access Alcoholics Anonymous and the tips and tricks used to stay sober in early sobriety due to technological changes, ways of communicating, and inclusive language for choices available to specialized groups.

Several changes were made in 2012 to address archaic language.

Living Sober is one of the most popular resources for newcomers since its publication in 1975. The Financial Conference Report (73rd) shows that Living Sober booklet is sold more often than any other.

Questions for Discussion:

- Do you believe *Living Sober* should be revised to reflect changes in A.A. and society since its publication in 1975?
- What updates, if any, would make the book more relevant and useful for newcomers today?

Corrections E, Trustees G: Update Appendix IV of Big Book

Corrections E: Consider request to update Appendix IV in the book Alcoholics Anonymous to include other awards and commendations received by AA since 1951 (EDW forward from Literature)

Update Appendix IV to include all awards AA has received since 1951. The Appendix has not been updated since the 3rd Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous. An example being the Library of Congress The Most Influential Books of the 20st Century.

This will make the book Alcoholics Anonymous more current.

It will help CPC/PI (Cooperating with the Professional Community/Public Information) with their public facing objective.

Trustees G: Consider the request to include the version of AA Comes of Age, Lasker Award text in the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

The text of Appendix D (page 301) from AA Comes of Age is more explicit and details the Lasker Award in its entirety. The proposal would be to update Appendix IV in the book Alcoholics Anonymous to read the exact same as Appendix D of AA Comes of Age.

There is plenty of room on the page for Appendix IV in Alcoholics Anonymous to include the whole writing on the Lasker Award from AA Comes of Age.

The American Public Health Association presented a Lasker Award in 1951 to Alcoholics Anonymous in recognition of its unique and highly successful approach to the age-old public health and social problem, alcoholism.

Questions for discussion:

- Would including the extended version of “The Lasker Award” story in Appendix IV of the Big Book be useful or add value?
- Would including other awards in Appendix IV be useful or add value?
- Why or why not?

R&C B P&A E How to deal with Founders Writing Change Requests

Report & Charter B: Consider a request to expand Article Three in the Conference Charter to protect the co-Founders' writings.

Policy/Admission E: Consider a request that a Super majority of voting members worldwide be required to change or amend Founders' Literature.

The 2021 General Service Conference made two changes to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

1. The phrase "opposite sex" was changed to "partner."
2. The sentence, "No one wants to be angry enough to murder, lustful enough to rape, gluttonous enough to ruin his health" was changed to "No one wants to commit the deadly sins of anger, lust, or gluttony."

Both Proposed Agenda Items cite these changes in their background and note the turmoil and disunity that was experienced amongst the fellowship following the revisions.

Currently, the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and Six Warranties are protected in Article Three of the Conference Charter by requiring a threshold that no change can be made with less than the written consent of three-quarters of the A.A. groups worldwide, a super majority.

The first item suggests making a change to Article 3 of the Conference Charter, requiring that a three-quarter majority of all AA groups worldwide, a super majority, be the threshold met for any changes to be made to Founders' writings.

The second item proposes an Advisory Action be issued that would require any future motion voted on by the General Service Conference that would change or amend the Founders' Literature, meet a threshold of a three-quarter majority of all A.A. groups worldwide, a super majority.

The definition of Founders' Literature is expanded in both the items to include pre-1972 books and articles written by Bill W, Dr. Bob S, other A.A. Founders, and non-alcoholic Friends of A.A. The first 164 pages, Dr. Bob's Nightmare, and the appendices in the Big Book and the 12&12 are among books listed.

Action taken at General Service Conference is not binding, meaning a later Conference may revisit the same issue and come to a different finding. The current threshold to make a change to A.A. literature, outside of the protected Steps, Traditions, and Warranties, is a two-thirds majority of voting members of the General Service Conference, substantial unanimity. These two Proposed Agenda Items, with comparable but different methods, propose to both define and add additional protection to the writings of A.A.'s founders.

Questions for Discussion:

- Should revisions to our Founders' writings require a higher approval threshold or input beyond the General Service Structure?
- If so, what threshold would be appropriate? Changing the Conference Charter? Increasing the approval threshold from two-thirds (substantial unanimity) to three-fourths (super majority)?

Reaffirm effect of inflation

Finance A: Consider a request to reaffirm the 1975 Advisory Action that delegates emphasize to the groups the effect that inflation has had on the contribution of dollar and the necessity for adjusting contributions accordingly, to support services provided by the General Service Board.

This item asks delegates to emphasize group support for the General Service Board. Inflation has taken a toll and contributions have not been on pace with the rate of inflation. The background includes a report from the trustees' Finance Committee emphasizing the importance of educating groups on self-support and the rising costs of A.A. services. This is a reaffirmation of the 1975 Advisory Action.

Question for discussion:

- Do you feel it is still necessary to encourage groups to adjust their contributions in response to inflation?
- What more can be done to educate members on the impact of rising costs of A.A. services?

PI C: Review progress report on the development of a GSO Podcast

Work on the GSO Podcast began following an Advisory Action of the 71st General Service Conference. It was suggested that the podcast would serve as a new format for service material, similar to Box 4-5-9. 8 Episodes have been produced so far.

The primary goals of the GSO Podcast are:

- To communicate to Fellowship and external audience about the General Service Office and how it supports A.A. members to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous
- To inform A.A. members and the general public about A.A.'s Service Structure, its history and how the General Service Office supports the work of the General Service Conference
- To improve GSO's connection to the Fellowship
- To engage listeners and provide accurate, compelling stories about Alcoholics Anonymous.

KEY MESSAGE(S)

- Alcoholics Anonymous members have found a solution to help problem drinkers stop drinking and stay stopped one day at a time.
- The A.A. program is free and welcomes anyone who has a desire to stop drinking.
- A.A. is a diverse Fellowship, filled with members from all walks of life. What they share is a common solution.

Question for Discussion:

- Do you believe GSO is meeting its goals for the podcast and effectively conveying its key messages?
- Do you have any suggestions for better reaching the intended audience?

CPC Shared Experience in informing professionals

CPC E: Discuss shared experience in informing professionals how A.A. can serve as a resource for unhoused and neurodivergent alcoholics.

The 2024 Conference Committee on CPC considered the request to develop a pamphlet for the unhoused alcoholic in A.A. and took no action. The committee felt that a pamphlet would not be an effective tool to carry the message to the unhoused community. The committee suggested that the trustees' Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment-Accessibilities Committee consider exploring methods of how to better serve the unhoused population.

The committee recognized that pamphlets are not being utilized by professionals and that Infographics and audio-visual and other media are being used more widely.

Questions for discussion:

- How does your group or local CPC committee think A.A. can better inform professionals about unhoused and/or neurodivergent alcoholics?
- What outreach methods—such as digital tools, videos, infographics, or direct engagement—would be most effective in carrying the message to professionals who work with one or both of these populations?

CPC D Effective use of CPC videos

CPC D: Review progress report on the effective use of CPC videos on aa.org

In October 2023, trustees discussed updating CPC videos available on aa.org targeted at professionals, considering content, cost, and other factors. They highlighted the need to refine the language to better address both professionals and those in supporting roles. In January 2024, they reviewed a proposal to revise three CPC videos. The estimated production cost is \$3,000 for editing (with six rounds of revisions), \$2,000 for stock music, and \$1,000 for translation.

The three videos are:

- A.A. Video for Healthcare Professionals
- A.A. Video for Legal and Corrections Professionals
- A.A. Video for Employment/Human Resources Professionals

Questions for discussion:

- How do you feel about updating these CPC videos?
- Are there any concerns or suggestions to improve their effectiveness and relevance for professionals and those in supporting roles?

CPC A: LinkedIn

CPC A: Review progress report on AAWS LinkedIn page

LinkedIn page was created as a result of a 2018 advisory action. There are an average of 3 posts per month. The page was created to offer a digital AA resource for professionals, broaden the reach of the AA newsletter for professionals, offer platform where our professional friends can recommend AA, raise awareness of CPC staffed exhibits at professional conferences, expand the network of professional friends, deepen the pool of Class A trustees, reinforce continuing relevance and efficacy of AA to professionals.

- Total page views: 10,743 (24% increase from last year: 8,660)
- Unique visitors: 4,288 (25% increase from last year: 3,443)

Top three posts:

1. August 22, 2024 The video PSA “Sobriety in AA: My Drinking Built a Wall”
2. January 25, 2024 Attending one of these national conferences?
3. February 16, 2024 Are you a professional looking for more information about Alcoholics Anonymous?

Questions for discussion:

- Do you have suggestions of content that should be included on this page?
- Is this a resource your local CPC committee is aware of?

Grapevine and La Viña — Item D

Review the progress report on a plan for a more effective La Viña subscription procedure, fulfillment process and customer service experience.

The Grapevine and La Viña Conference Committee will review a progress report on La Viña Subscriptions and Customer Service. The 2024 General Service Conference asked the AA Grapevine Board to make it easier for people to subscribe to La Viña, receive their magazines on time, and get better customer service. To do this, a special team was formed to find and fix problems. Feedback from La Viña workshops shows that these changes are making a big difference, and members are excited about upcoming books and new ways to subscribe. The following changes have been made:

- Updated order forms
- LV Representative training
- How-to subscribe Videos on YouTube
- Bulk Shipments are now shrink wrapped
- Expanded Customer Service Training
- Hired more Spanish speaking customer service representatives

Subscription numbers have increased from 5,584 in January 2023 to 7,947 in December 2024

Questions for discussion

- Have your group members noticed improvements in their experience with La Viña customer service and the subscription process?
- Do you have feedback on the changes made so far?
- How can our districts and area actively support La Viña and help increase subscriptions?

Contribution Limits

Finance C: Review the Conference-approved level of \$10,000 for individual bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. members.

Finance D: Review the Conference-approved level of \$7,500 to the General Service Board from an individual A.A. member.

Bequest levels have increased 75% on average every 7 years. The last time the amount increased was 2019 and is currently at \$10,000.00. The Conference Committee on Finance is requesting this amount to be reviewed.

Individual contributions levels have increased 70% on average every 8 years. The last increase was in 2024, and is currently at \$7,500.00. The Conference Committee on Finance is requesting this amount to be reviewed.

These amounts are reviewed annually by the Conference Finance Committee.

Questions for discussion:

- Do the individual contribution level and bequest levels align with the A.A. principles of financial prudence and corporate poverty outlines in the 7th Tradition?
- Do they take into consideration A.A.'s current economic outlook?