

Group Reconvening Considerations

Categories	Items for considerations	
Meeting Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will the location allow the group to reconvene? • What criteria has the location established for allowing the group to reconvene and are additional supplies needed? • How many group members will be allowed to attend each meeting? • Will the group have access to the location kitchen and bathrooms? • Will the group provided access to storage cabinets for books and coffee related items. • Will location opening and closing procedures be the same? • Will additional cleaning procedures and supplies be required? 	
Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What health suggestions and procedures will the group make and how and when will these suggestions be conveyed to the membership. How does the group work with members who don't respect these health suggestions and procedures? • With limitations on attendance, can the group maintain its current schedule of meetings and meeting content? • If attendance is limited, how does the group determine who may attend. • Does the group continue with Zoom meetings after it reconvenes to provide for the membership not able to attend because of any limited attendance criteria and for members who cannot attend a live meeting, and does the group have the technical capability to provide these meetings on Zoom? • Does the group continue giving the membership the option of donating electronically? • If willing to sign court cards can the group do it electronically or some other safe method? 	
Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the group continue to serve coffee and what procedures can help eliminate sharing of coffee related items • Does the group continue to allow cake and other sweets to be present? • Does the Group provide books in the same manner as before or provide reading content in some other format. • Does the group require masks and/or gloves and does it provide either or both. • Does the group supply hand sanitizer. • Does the group pass the basket and collect cash at the meetings. • How will any new cleaning procedures be implemented? 	
Local, State and Federal Health Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Guidelines for Places of Worship can be found https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/Epidemiology/HealthOfficerOrderCOVID19.pdf • Imperial County Guidelines for Places of Worship http://www.icphd.org/media/managed/2019coronavirus/guidance_places_of_worship.pdf • California Contact Tracing information https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing (Right mouse click link and choose "Open Weblink in Browser") 	
Local, State and Federal Legal Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings held in a restaurant or coffee shop- County of San Diego Dine In Guidelines https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/Epidemiology/HealthOfficerOrderCOVID19.pdf • Meetings held in a Community Center- Community Centers remain closed Meetings held in private spaces or public buildings are not permitted- SD County Order https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/Epidemiology/HealthOfficerOrderCOVID19.pdf 	
AA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will reconvening procedures conform to AA Traditions and Concepts? 	
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the group continue to send contributions to AA organizations according to the percentages it is currently using. • Will payments to the location for use of the facility be the same? 	

Considerations for an Informed Group Conscience About Re-Opening Meetings

We know that many members are excited by the prospect of meeting in-person again. There is a temptation to rush to re-open meetings. Intergroup has put together suggested guidelines for your groups to consider when making an informed group conscience about how to re-open safely once our respective jurisdictions allow it.

Your group may want to consider the following draft of guidelines and questions, as you consider opening when government restrictions have been lifted:

PROTECTING A.A. AS A WHOLE:

"Each group is autonomous," we often recite when making group decisions. The second part of the 4th Tradition is just as important: *"except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."* Tradition 1 tells us *"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."* **These traditions remind us that we must ensure that our group decisions do not negatively impact our fellow members or A.A. as a whole, and that we as individuals act in ways that ensure our common welfare.** Traditions 1 and 4 are important now more than ever. We have to consider the health and well-being of other A.A. members, as well as protect the positive reputation and goodwill of A.A. in the community.

ABIDE BY THE RESTRICTIONS IN YOUR LOCAL JURISDICTION:

- A.A. must abide by the mandates of local jurisdictions where our groups meet. As an organization and as individuals, we are not exceptions to the law.

ABIDE BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF OUR CHURCHES & OTHER FACILITIES:

- Groups should also be aware of the restrictions and guidelines churches and facilities have in place by state order, as well as each facility's individual requirements. Here are some of the public health safety guidelines recommended for Faith-based institutions:
 - Limiting the number of people into the space
 - Recommended distancing of 6 feet between individuals
 - Wearing face masks
 - Non-contact temperature taking at the doors (preferred) or voluntary temperature taking at home
 - Sanitizing contact surfaces before and after each meeting

CONTACT TRACING

- [Contact Tracing is a control measure employed by local and state health department personnel as a key strategy for preventing further spread of COVID-19.](#) Public health staff work with a patient to help them recall everyone with whom they have had close contact during the timeframe while they may have been infectious.
- Why should groups be concerned with contact tracing? To ensure that our common welfare comes first, groups that meet in-person should have a contingency plan in place if a member tests positive for COVID-19. This can be accomplished effectively while maintaining everyone's anonymity.
 - Contact tracers already practice a version of our principle of anonymity. They must abide by HIPAA laws, which means that when someone tests positive for COVID-19, contact tracers warn others of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible, while protecting patient privacy and identity.
 - If A.A. members test positive, they do not have to break others' anonymity when talking with contact tracers. Instead they can say they were at spiritual gatherings or community meetings or use another generic term.
 - To ensure our common welfare, in-person groups can list attendees by first name and phone number for each meeting. That would make it easier to alert everyone about the potential for infection. Group should later destroy each meeting list after enough time has passed.
 - The church or facility where the group meets should also be informed of the person's illness. Likewise, if a person is tested and is awaiting results, we recommend that the group secretary or primary contact alerts everyone at the meeting and notifies the church as well. In the event that a person's test is negative, the group should notify members and the church of that as well so people can be released from self-quarantine. We can do all of this in a way that assure anonymity and is compliant with HIPAA.

HYBRID MEETINGS:

- Some groups have talked about the possibility of combining in-person meetings with Zoom meetings to form a "hybrid" meeting. If your group is leaning toward this option, here are some considerations:
- Is everyone at the in-person meeting comfortable participating in a video Zoom meeting? Would it be better to disable the video capability but allow the phone function?
- While Zoom meetings **should not** be recorded, it is still important that groups abide by the electronic communication portion of the statute to be safe. This means everyone participating in the meeting must give their consent before any electronic communication is started.

CONCURRENT MEETINGS:

- Some home groups may not choose to create a hybrid meeting and might split into two meetings at the same time: one in-person and one online.
- If your group decides to host concurrent meetings, will they have the same name in the directory and on the meeting list? Or will they become two separate groups?
- Is this a permanent change?

OTHER WAYS TO CARRY THE MESSAGE THAT WE HAVEN'T CONSIDERED?

Fortunately, newcomers have been getting sober in Zoom meetings. What this pandemic has taught us is that there are many ways to connect—not just locally, but internationally—and there are lots of ways to carry the message. While we all miss meeting safely in person, we have more tools available to us to stay sober. We can attend meetings anywhere in the world; we can invite speakers from afar to chair our meetings; we can attend workshops, round-ups, and other events from the comfort of our homes. Phone and online meetings do not replace the need for in-person meetings, but they've added to all the ways that we can carry the message of hope and recovery to still suffering alcoholics. So, our decisions to re-open should be made carefully and deliberately. A higher power guides us through this process if we ask for help.