

Thought Force Topic: Sponsorship

Background Info: Sponsorship is one of the major tools of the Al-Anon program. In our 2012 Area Inventory there was a significant desire to hear more about Sponsorship at our Area meetings.

Charge: Brainstorm ideas about Sponsorship and ways we can highlight this to encourage open and informative discussions. Remember, you are not a DOING group, you are an IDEA group – come up with as many ideas as you can...and use the Knowledge Based Decision Making Questions below to keep on track. Discuss, write, share – brainstorm!

Five KBDM Questions

- 1. What do we know about our membership's needs, wants and preferences that is relevant to this topic?**
 - We need to be aware of resources
 - Keep anonymity
 - Maybe make some guidelines
 - Newcomers can be hesitant
 - Variable time needed to consider sponsors
 - Temporary sponsor could work for some
 - Members need to reach out to newcomers
 - Ask for willingness

- 2. What do we know about our resources (finances, member participation, etc) that is relevant to this topic?**
 - Most groups have sufficient funds for pamphlets and/or bookmark
 - Email is free, could use instead of printed lists
 - Often not enough open discussion about Sponsorship
 - Many men don't volunteer to Sponsor because there are less men than women

- 3. What do we know about the current realities (membership, culture, etc) and our fellowship's environment (technology, geography, demographic, etc) that is relevant to this topic?**
 - Some groups have members that gather afterward informally. This can be a good time to talk about Sponsorship
 - Elements of Fear and Trust need to be considered
 - Guidelines are helpful, but they are not rules
 - Knowing what to look for in a Sponsor is tricky
 - Remember that Sponsorship is a process

- 4. What are the ethical implications of our choices – what are the pros and cons? Will our decision be consistent with our spiritual principles?**
 - Anonymity is important
 - We have to respect boundaries
 - Do we know enough about our Legacies to be guided?
 - How can we ensure/encourage protection for the Sponsor and Sponsee?

- How can we avoid having Sponsorship look like favoritism or clicques?
- 5. What do we wish we knew, but don't? (use the back if necessary)**
- How do online and telephone meetings work out sponsorship?
 - What to do if the Sponsor learns something that may have legal implications?
 - What are the basics of being a Sponsor?
 - How can people learn to be a good/excellent Sponsor?
 - What are the needs?
 - How can we encourage more sharing about Sponsorship in meetings?