

DA-HOW Phone Meeting Intergroup Meeting

Friday, August 8, 2014

Minutes

Present: Five participants. In the tradition of anonymity, names will not be used except to identify specific service positions. All attempts were made by the meeting secretary to get down everything that was said, or at least be absolutely clear on the spirit of that statement.

Opened with Serenity prayer

Old Business & Updates

- 1) Treasury Report – Treasurer, Allison H.
 - a) Purpose of treasury is to have someone from DA-HOW to represent us at World Service Conference
 - b) Account opened. No fees. Need to add additional people to the account (ownership can be transferred to anybody). Has Tax ID# so it's not associated directly with Participant 3.
 - c) Need an additional signer in case treasurer gets hit by a bus.
 - d) \$25 in account so far. Has sent out information and no one else has.
 - e) Concerns Raised:
 - e.i) Participant 1: Read a prepared statement about her concerns with how this group is being run. After meeting, changed her opinion and has decided not to have her statement included here.
 - e.ii) Participant 2: Establishment of treasury raises concern for her. Gratitude for good intentions. Has fundamental disagreements with the purpose of this group. Do we even need to have an intergroup and send someone to conferences. Sufficient representation is lacking for a true intergroup. Need to follow regular structure of GSR, District, Area, etc. Larger scope of how that works in the framework of DA needs enough of a collection of people to get a good group conscience. Came to intergroup originally to work with people within community and is apologizing for not being here sooner but has basically withdrawn because in my opinion, this group has gone beyond its appropriate scope.
- 2) Sponsee Guidelines Report
 - a) Group has met twice, synthesized two documents that were floating around “out there” into one. Are going through line by line to determine the spirit of the guidelines, what abstinence looks like, etc. Lots of lively discussion on every point so it's taking lots of time. Have one more meeting scheduled so far to further discuss.
 - b) Concerns Raised:

- b.i) Participant 1: 2nd Intergroup meeting, voted to be completely separate from the live Minneapolis group. It seems like a few people are trying to be helpful, but nothing that comes from the Minneapolis face-to-face meeting, including any sponsee guidelines, should be included.
- b.ii) Participant 3: I don't always say "DA-HOW Phone Meeting Intergroup" because it's cumbersome. But my understanding is that this intergroup is optional. Any meeting is welcome to be a part of it. No one is required to be a part of it. The sponsee guideline documents the committee is working from were developed by phone meeting people. Each sponsor sponsors in their own way, but it's something that we all can use or not in our sponsorship.
- b.iii) Participant 2: Concern about "what does abstinence look like". AA needs the least possible organization. AA should never be organized at all. We don't take orders. Shouldn't be up to DA-HOW to establish rules.
- b.iv) Participant 5: HOW is not a separate organization. It's a way of working the program. We pass down what we have been given. We're not trying to legislate. We're just trying to give guidelines to not have the program watered down. The reality is there are any number of ways to work DA. All the so-called "rules" are just suggestions. But in HOW, we do things differently. If you want what we have, you do what we do. No one can compel anyone to work the program this way. But if you choose to do "take what you want and leave the rest", can you call it "HOW?" What would be the point of having a "HOW Concept" in that case?
- b.v) Participant 1: Tradition Four says "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other group or DA as a whole." If you do those six things*, you're not watering down. We talk to each other. We know who is really working HOW. Sponsee guidelines violates the 4th tradition. Everyone that works HOW does those six things. Beyond that we shouldn't be getting into the minutia or mandating things.
(*these "six things" were enumerated in Participant 1's statement, which does not appear in this transcript, as it was withdrawn).
- b.vi) Participant 2: went to first DA-HOW Meeting went to tools meeting. That's where she learned how to do HOW. Doesn't feel she needs any more specific guidelines. Does everything that's talked about in all of those tools. The time of the phone call isn't important. It's comes down to my relationship with my sponsees and my relationship with God as it relates to those details.
- b.vii) Participant 1: What is the definition of "being watered down?" as mentioned in committee report. Not clear what some people mean by that? Don't know, but it seems like four people are telling everyone else what "watered down" means.

New Business

- 1) Suggestion by Participant 3: Refrain from using the term “watered down.” It’s a “hot button” and feels judging. Focus on specific issues instead.
 - a) Participant 4: The term “watered down” is used in our meeting format.
 - b) Participant 3: Yes, but it is not defined, and this brings up a lot of conflict.
 - c) Suggestion agreed to by all participants.

- 2) Scope, jurisdiction and authority of this Intergroup
 - a) Participant 3: The purpose of forming this group was to try to help bring some sense of cohesion to the DA-HOW phone meetings and whatever meetings wanted to take part (the Minneapolis face-to-face meeting did not want to take part). We formed the intergroup using the DA pamphlet “How to Form a DA Intergroup.” This says that an Intergroup can sponsor an Intergroup representative to the world service conference if possible, which is why we started the treasury. We just started so we’re probably going to make lots of mistakes. We do not require any DA groups to participate. Nor do we say that any group has to agree with what the DA-HOW Intergroup says. We have at least two meetings at this point who have a representative. For those groups, these are the things we are agreeing upon.

 - b) Participant 1: Originally it was to just have an informal group to just have support for the meetings out there. Someone said it should be an intergroup. I’m part of the DA Intergroup. If we’re not a separate fellowship, how can you have separate intergroup? I can understand having an informal group. But this is fracturing the program. People are leaving because they feel like they’re being pushed under too many rules, etc. Everyone on the line is caring deeply about this. But maybe you’re only talking of people of like mind. We’re so going away from what the purpose of this was supposed to be. We just need to nurture and support each other. But if anyone feels that strongly that we need more rules, etc., form your own fellowship like they did in OA. Implore you to talk to others to see the damage you’re doing.

 - c) Participant 2: We need sufficient and adequate representation of our group. One thing I observe is the very small number of people who are here today. For me, the only authority that exists in the world which is that we’re forced to or that we agree too. It doesn’t seem like there aren’t enough people in this group to adequately represent DA-HOW. Doesn’t have a chance of being a true group conscience, representing the group. Does result in fracturing. It’s sad for me because we’re already such a small group of people. I love DA-HOW, I owe my life to DA-HOW. I don’t mind addressing tough issues if they don’t fracture the group. These just don’t seem to be necessary issues for the fracturing results we’re having. We’re creating a situation that wasn’t necessary.

 - d) Participant 5: Participant 3, can you please clarify the definition of an Intergroup? I’m not sure I understand the idea that if we have an intergroup we need a different fellowship.

- e) Participant 3: Read from DA pamphlet, text below.
- f) Participant 4: Thank you, first of all, for reading that to clarify that (I haven't read that within DA). Hearing a lot of concerns about fracturing within the DA-HOW program and questioning the structure within this meeting with calling ourselves "DA-HOW Intergroup" so there is an element of separateness. In other intergroups I've been on, the idea is to draw you to the whole rather than separate you from the whole. All it a DA Intergroup for DA-HOW Phone Meetings. We can draw ourselves to the whole, but still have the area of specialization, which we do have. Because we do have different needs, wants, desires. So it's important for us to have the opportunity to be part of the whole we're a part of.
- g) Participant 2: Really appreciative of that description of intergroup. Helps me be more clear than I was before. Views them as serving the group. DA-HOW, we don't need an intergroup to accomplish those things—each individual meeting takes care of all those things except maybe a central point of contact. What this group is doing, I don't think falls within the description that was just read. So to get clear about what this group is doing, we need to name it correctly, because I don't think this is actually an intergroup.
- h) Participant 1: Glad you read that. Really helpful. I think it would be a great idea to have an intergroup to have based on what's in the pamphlet. But I think this group is overstepping the bounds by telling people how to work their programs. I don't think this group is an intergroup as described in the pamphlet.
- i) Participant 2: I have deep gratitude for the fact that DA-HOW exists. That at some point without the intergroup, people got together and brought the idea of HOW sponsorship into the DA fellowship without controversy. It seems to have had really good origins and for me they're sufficient.
- j) Participant 1: Having a central location for information, website, etc. It is a good idea to have some place where people can get meeting formats and phone lists, etc.. But posting the rules out there is too much.
- k) Participant 3: In all of this discussion it seems that there are some pieces of the story missing. All this Intergroup is meant to be *is* this central location for information, website, etc. as described in the pamphlet. But at one meeting someone just asked about sponsee guidelines and we said "there are none" and thought well, let's look as what's out there. And we're just putting together a suggestion for the group. It is possible that any establishment or publication of sponsee guidelines oversteps the bound of this group. We will definitely consider that before adopting anything.
- l) Participant 1: So it's going to be brought back to the group for a vote on adoption?

- m) Participant 3: Yes.
- n) Participant 5: We're just trying to offer a service, not create a mandate.
- o) Participant 1: I think it should be in the tools meeting and between the sponsors and sponsees. Too few people to make a decision like this. I like the heart of this, and understand why you're doing it. I just don't think it's appropriate to do it.
- p) Participant 4: Has been very invested in this Sponsee Guidelines document so I could give it to my sponsees. But after this discussion, I'm starting to change my mind about it. It's starting to feel like a more sacred thing between sponsors and sponsees. Will bring that up to the committee.

3) Second signer for DA-HOW PMI Treasury Account – Tabled.

Meeting Rep Reports

- 1) Participant 2: Tuesday night meeting, Promises Meeting, doesn't have a rep.
- 2) Participant 4: Wednesday morning meeting is great. Well attended. 5-15 newcomers each time. Last business meeting, we decided to make business meetings a part of the regular meeting after a 3-month trial period. It's a very strong meeting.

Closing Remarks:

- 1) Participant 1: I came in with one opinion, but I'm glad I came here. I gained a much greater understanding and I'm grateful I got to express everything I wanted without judgment.

Closed with Serenity prayer

Excerpt from DA Intergroup Pamphlet

WHAT IS AN INTERGROUP?

A D.A. Intergroup is a group of D.A. members who represent D.A. groups that meet in a geographic area, such as a city and nearby suburbs. The Intergroup meets periodically, usually once a month, to provide services to the entire area. Intergroups play a vital role in carrying the D.A. message to the still-suffering debtor. The local Intergroup often receives the first contact from someone who is struggling with debt. Therefore, the primary purpose of a D.A. Intergroup is to support the local meetings and to help direct newcomers to those meetings.

INTERGROUP RESPONSIBILITIES

An Intergroup can be responsible for a number of activities that support meetings in the area, such as

1. Maintaining and distributing a list of current meeting times and locations.
2. Maintaining a telephone line, voice mail recording, and/or web site with meeting information.
3. Fielding inquiries about D.A. from the public and the professional community.
4. Purchasing D.A. and AA literature in bulk and selling it to groups.
5. Sponsoring workshops or special events.
6. Disseminating communication to the local D.A. membership from the General Service Office, the General Service Board, and the World Service Conference Committees.
7. Handling other inter-meeting communication, possibly but not necessarily including publication of a local Intergroup newsletter.
8. Sponsoring an Intergroup Service Representative (ISR) to the World Service Conference if possible.