

Cooperation with the Professional Community
Consider retiring the pamphlet “A Member’s Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Introduction

- Cooperation With Professional Communities, or C.P.C., came into being as a distinct entity in 1970 when the trustees’ committee was formed as an outgrowth of the Public Information Committee. In 1971, the Conference C.P.C. Committee was established. Today, many local communities, areas and regions consider C.P.C. an activity separate from public information, treatment or corrections work. In some places, though, there is overlap. Members of C.P.C. committees inform professionals and future professionals about A.A. — what we are, where we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do. They attempt to establish better communication between A.A.s and professionals, and to find simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating.

-Part of the responsibility of the literature and subsequent committees that have oversight over literature, such as CPC with this pamphlet, is to look for redundancies within all the printed materials we have, to make sure they are in line with the AA message and current with the times, and that we are not wasting valuable resources like the AA dollar frivolously.

- Currently the CPC handbook cites 10 pamphlets for CPC outreach; “Faith leaders ask about A.A” - “Alcoholics Anonymous in your community” - “A.A as a resource for health care professionals” - “Problems other than alcohol” - “The A.A member-Medications and other drugs” - “Information on Alcoholics Anonymous” - “If you are a professional” - “Is there a problem drinker in the workplace?” - “A.A and the armed services” - “Member’s-Eye view of Alcoholics Anonymous”

Background on proposed agenda item

-The committee discussed the pamphlet “A Member's-Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous” and noted some concerns on the relevancy and usefulness of this pamphlet as a C.P.C. tool to communicate to professionals about A.A. The committee noted that some of the text could be offensive to those of varying abilities and may lead to an appearance of A.A. aligning with a specific religious doctrine. The committee agreed to forward a suggestion to the 2023 Conference committee on C.P.C. to discuss retiring this pamphlet.

-For clarity - “The Committee” that has forwarded this request is the trustee’s CPC committee. This means that the Conference CPC committee, comprised of delegates and trustees, will have the say whether this makes it to the floor of the conference or not. If brought to the floor, this item will enter into a discussion amongst the body of the Conference as a whole and be voted on there.

-Throughout AA’s history pamphlets have been retired for various reasons. CPC focused pamphlets began to be altered or retired as far back as 1963 and over the years there have been 5 advisory actions that have sought to amend or retire CPC focused pamphlets. Most recently was the pamphlet “Three talks to Medical Societies by Bill W.” In 2017.

Considerations

1. This pamphlet opens with this statement:

“This pamphlet is designed to explain to people in the helping professions how A.A. works. Though the A.A. program relies upon the sharing of experience, strength and hope among alcoholics, the recovery process itself is highly individual, adapted by each member to meet his or her needs. Therefore, the program is described here as it appears to one member; but the pamphlet does reflect Fellowship thinking since it has been approved by the A.A. General Service Conference.

The author of this paper delivered it first before a class on alcoholism counseling at one of our large universities. A.A. World Services, Inc. wishes to thank him for his generous permission to reprint and distribute this talk.”

Do we feel this is the best way to present AA to professionals, through the lens of one individual member’s experience and observations?

2. All text that is brought forward in the background as potentially contentious or offensive is either biblical quoting or overtly Christian in nature. At one point the speaker does clarify that they have been a practicing Catholic of varying degrees for their entire life.

Does one member referencing their own religious background, and stories from that religion, look at bit too much like affiliation of A.A and this religious body?

3. The CPC handbook has marked this pamphlet as best used in reaching out to Clergy alongside the pamphlets (a)“Alcoholics Anonymous in your community”

and (b)“Faith Leaders Ask About A.A.”

(a) - “AA in your community” contains very general information about what AA is and isn’t, what is an AA group and how does it function, who is a member of AA etc....

(b) “Faith Leaders Ask About A.A” is a lengthy pamphlet that shares viewpoints from many different faith leaders and communities including a priest, rabbi and an Imam almost immediately. The pamphlet also address general information about Anonymity, the 12 Traditions, AA meetings(open vs closed and where they are held) and a part on how faith leaders(including military chaplains) can cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Looking at these 3 specified pamphlets, are we getting redundant with the inclusion of this transcribed presentation?

4. Do we feel that one member’s viewpoint is the best way to communicate with professional communities given that we have other pamphlets that do this in a general way? Is there a real need for this pamphlet to continue to be printed as a CPC tool?

Closing

- I encourage all GSR’s, and anyone with a genuine interest in CPC, to read this pamphlet in order to answer potential questions posed from your groups and to better understand the proposed action of this agenda item. As I prepared these considerations I kept coming back to a few simple thoughts...Does this pamphlet serve the intended purpose of CPC?; Do we have other literature that may be more generalized, and perhaps more effective, in sharing information about A.A to professionals?; Are we crossing any of the guiding principles within our 12 traditions?

- I hope this is useful and helpful and provides clarity around this agenda item for our upcoming 2023 General Service Conference. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

In Love and Service,
Devin Collins SENY CPC Chair Panel 73