

FACTS

about

I N T E R G R O U P

A. A. GROUPS OF NEW JERSEY

Foreword

"What is Intergroup?"

This question concerning the "Clearing house" for the A. A. Groups of New Jersey, is asked just as often by the member who has been around a while, as it is by the comparative newcomer. Because of such inquiries for information about Intergroup, this booklet has been prepared at the suggestion of the Chairman, Edward S., and the members of the Advisory Committee.

We hope the question, at least in part, may be answered by explaining some of the work of the Intergroup Committee as well as the functional duties of the Intergroup office, 944 Broad Street, Newark 2, N. J.

The "Articles of Agreement," along with a few timely observations by Bill and a look into some of the duties performed by the office of the Secretary has been included.

It is sincerely the hope of the Committee that the information here presented may give to the reader a better understanding of Intergroup, what it is, and what it is trying to accomplish.

Advisory Committee of Intergroup

Lord, keep my memory green.

A Letter from Bill

"Nowadays in A. A. there is a lot of current fear about organization. I hope people keep right on being afraid of anything that would really organize Alcoholics Anonymous. But the average A. A. doesn't yet distinguish between the desirability of organizing Alcoholics Anonymous and organizing the few simple services it will always take to propagate the message to distant people."

Bill W. wrote this in a letter to a member in May, 1948. The letter was occasioned when the member, after listening to Bill stress the need for providing simple services of propagation during a talk at a West Coast regional conference, wrote to the foundersaying he was "scared" Alcoholics Anonymous was becoming "too organized."

"Since the very beginning, A. A. has always organized its special services of contact and propagation," wrote Bill. "Personally, I'm glad we did this even though it entailed risk and trouble. Had we not done this," he wrote referring to the decision made in 1937* to write and publish the book Alcoholics Anonymous, "there would be a great many dead or utterly miserable drunks in this country who to-day are A.A. members. Maybe you are one of them."

() The book "Alcoholics Anonymous" was actually published in 1939. To Jerseyites there is an added attraction regarding "The Book." The articles and all the material which went into it were compiled in Newark. It is also interesting to know the movement took its name from the title of the book.*

Continuing to this member who voiced his "fears" respecting an organized A. A., Bill went on to say: "Even your group probably has a secretary. The secretary is a service person whom you had to choose. To that extent you had to organize for service. That too, evolved some elections and so some headaches. But your group is willing to take the trouble, for it knows it cannot effectively propagate itself without such aid. But in order to propagate effectively, you feel it worth the trouble. In other words, the special services are worth more than no such services at all. You know this, because experience tells you so. Nor does A. A. in your town stop growing because you have a few squabbles about how things are to be run. It keeps right on growing, and the faster, because you do have these services.

"If your group happened to be in a large city, it would presently find that the area made it necessary to have a small office, a contact point where the flood of inquiries could be handled. In other words, your area would need a few inexpensive and simple services. If it delayed in providing these, the area would find out sooner or later that these simple services must be provided. And why? Just so that other guys like you could get their chance too.

"Up until now, Doctor "Bob" and I have been the chief guarantor of these services. We want these overall services continued. We owe it to the hundreds of thousands of alcoholics who do not yet know the answer. It certainly isn't going to get there by word of mouth or by haphazard publicity and communications. But shall we let fellow alcoholics throughout the world go on dying like flies because we are too timid to provide

these simple things? I should hate to take the responsibility of saying 'no, let's let things drift from here on out.' That simple services could ever organize A. A., or cost it any real money, is inconceivable. To provide for service, for your own benefit as much as for the newcomers, certainly isn't asking much when your own earning power was restored by reason of what A. A. did for you.

"I do hope this has cleared up some of your fear and that now you can share some of my hope. What about it?"

As ever,
(Signed) BILL

Intergroup Comes Into Being

Five years ago the New Jersey A. A. Groups realized that, working-to-gether, certain things could be done which could never be accomplished working separately. Moreover, it became plain these things simply had to be done. What were they?

First of all, the Jersey area had to have an office with somebody constantly on the job. Otherwise people in need of A. A. would continue to have difficulty in making contact for aid and hospitalization. There also had to be some place where people could get reliable information on A. A. There was great need for a clearing point through which groups and individuals could quickly communicate with each other. Somebody had to be on tap to handle constantly arising and often delicate problems peculiar to every densely populated A. A. area. Clergymen, doctors, editors, police officials, judges, social workers; all these had to be given the A. A. story straight,

without garbling. Formerly these area problems were everybody's business and often nobody's business. Working at cross purposes, groups and individuals, naturally enough, had sometimes bungled such affairs. So it became plain that Jersey must have some sort of head and tail. Members owed that much to themselves, to newcomers and to the general public.

Because this meant an office, a paid secretary, and a modest amount of money, some sort of organization had to be set up among the groups to look after these things.

A start was made. It was called the Intergroup Committee of the A. A. Groups of New Jersey. The infant Intergroup Association consisted in 1945 of only a few A. A. groups, each represented by two delegates. These delegates met, adopted a tentative charter and hired a full time secretary.

To-day sixty Jersey Groups are members of Intergroup which now has its office at 944 Broad Street, Newark (Market 3-7528). This office is now the scene of intense activity. Its phone is listed in some forty Jersey cities, hence anybody in Jersey can make instant and effective contact with Alcoholics Anonymous.

The first Monday of each month, a meeting of the Intergroup delegates is held where every member group can make its voice and opinion heard and felt. An Advisory Committee selected (geographically) by the chairman, assists the Secretary in handling much of the area problems arising between Intergroup meetings, rendering Intergroup a full report each month asking approval,

and requesting direction for the month to come. Special problems or occasions such as the annual dinner are delegated to other appropriate committees.

Moneywise, this valuable and vital activity comes dirt cheap. Each member group makes its own voluntary contribution to Intergroup, bearing in mind of course, the current expense budget. Though there is no rule, the yardstick for group contributions is figured at fifty cents per A.A. member per month. This is surely inexpensive insurance - the insurance that our record is kept straight with the public and that our life line is always out to the new man in distress.



PART TWO

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION



WORK EXPLAINED

The A. A. Groups of New Jersey established the first Intergroup Committee about five years ago, setting the pattern for others which were to follow later in the more heavily populated areas throughout the nation.

Numbered among the handful of groups then in existence were certain members who looked toward the future and realized that with the expansion of A. A., the principles and ideals of Alcoholics Anonymous, if they were to be preserved and propagated, keeping within the fundamental concepts as laid down by the founders, had to be perpetuated through the co-ordinated and cooperative effort of all groups; that adherence by individual groups to a policy of strict isolationism and self-sufficiency would not be conducive to the best interests of the A. A. movement.

With such thoughts in mind, an exchange of ideas contributed through a spirit of group participation was deemed essential for successful growth. On the premise "We cannot do it alone," which every A. A. member can accept without equivocation, the members advocating the formation of an Intergroup Committee, suggested the individual groups select two of their number for the purpose of forming such a Committee. The groups that were interested did so, and at subsequent meetings "Articles" setting forth the aim and purpose of the Association were drawn up and approved by the participating groups. Means were provided for all member groups, through their representatives, to have a voice in the conduct of Intergroup affairs and except for a few amendments later incorporated, the Articles of Association are still in effect as originally adopted.

Here are the "Articles" with the amendments thereto:

"Articles of Association"

ARTICLE I - NAME - The representatives of the member groups shall serve under the name of "Intergroup Committee of A. A. Groups of New Jersey."

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE - The purposes of this committee are charitable, and its activities limited to aiding in the work, and assisting in the effective co-operation between member groups.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP - Regular representation on this Committee shall be by groups. Any Alcoholics Anonymous Group may apply for membership and shall be admitted to such membership upon the vote of a majority of the Intergroup Committee, which majority shall include at least the vote of one representative from each of a majority of the member groups.

ARTICLE IV - SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP - The Intergroup Committee may grant special membership. Such "special" members shall be entitled to have two representatives on the Intergroup Committee, which representatives shall have all of the rights and privileges of the representatives of regular members, but shall not have the right to vote.

ARTICLE V- GOVERNMENT- The management shall be invested in an Intergroup Committee. Each member group shall choose two representatives to be members of this Intergroup Committee. Each representative shall have one vote. A majority of the members of the Intergroup Committee shall

constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A representative shall hold office until his group has notified the Intergroup Committee, in writing, that a successor has been appointed. In the absence of any representative his co-representative shall be his proxy to vote for and in his stead.

(Amendment, adopted November 3, 1947) The group may appoint one alternate who shall have all the powers of voting granted to the duly authorized representatives in the absence of such representative.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS - The Intergroup Committee shall adopt by-laws for its government and shall elect a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and such other officers as in its discretion it shall deem necessary. The Chairman shall perform such duties as are usual to his office. In his absence the Intergroup Committee may select a Temporary Chairman to take over the duties of the Chairman. The Chairman shall hold office for one year and shall not be eligible to succeed himself. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Intergroup Committee and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to that office.

(Amendment, adopted November 3, 1947) The Secretary and the Treasurer may be elected to succeed themselves. A duly authorized alternate shall be eligible to be elected Chairman.

(Amendment, adopted March 1, 1948) The office of Secretary to be permanent with the following exceptions: (a) He shall be subject to immediate removal for misconduct in office. (b) He shall be subject to removal by a vote, in writing, of two-thirds the member groups of the Association.

(Amendment, adopted March 1, 1948) Candidates for Chairman shall be nominated by a nominating committee at the January meeting so that their qualifications may be weighed before the election in February.

ARTICLE VII - MEMBERS - The Intergroup Committee shall prescribe the time and form in which member groups shall certify their membership to the Secretary. Special members shall make such contributions toward the support of the Association as shall be determined by agreement between the Intergroup Committee and the Special Member.

ARTICLE VIII - REPORTS - Full and complete reports of all activities of the Association shall be promptly made by representatives of the Intergroup Committee to their respective groups.

ARTICLE IX - INDEPENDENCE OF MEMBER GROUPS - This Committee shall have no control over the internal affairs, management, or the conduct of any member group. The intent of these Articles being to gain the strength and unity necessary to meet problems where group cooperation is desired, and at all times to preserve the complete independence of each individual group. The member groups pledge themselves to support in good spirit the activities undertaken by the Intergroup Committee.

ARTICLE X - RESIGNATION - Any group may withdraw from this Association by giving written notice of such desire to withdraw, to the Chairman of the Intergroup Committee, stating that at such a meeting of such a group, called for that purpose, a majority of the group voted to so withdraw. Such withdrawal shall be effective from the date of such notice.

ARTICLE XI - ADMENDMENTS - These Articles may be amended by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members of the Intergroup Committee at any meeting called for that purpose. At least fourteen (14) days notice shall be given for the holding of any such meeting and a copy of the proposed amendment shall be attached to the notice for the meeting.

Group Independence Preserved

A reading of these Articles through which the Intergroup Committee functions, brings out a few things which warrant further emphasis.

Article 9 makes it clear that the Intergroup Committee does not enter into conflict with the management or internal affairs of any member group. As stated, its aim and purpose is to gain the strength and unity necessary to meet problems where group co-operation is either desirable or essential while still preserving the complete independence of the individual group. While it accents the desirability of voluntary action and complete independence within the keeping of A. A. traditions, it emphasizes the importance of pooling our group knowledge, making use of this knowledge for the best interests of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

As to the work of Intergroup, its functions are widely diversified. One of the more important things with which it is concerned has to do with the attitude of the general public as it affects our movement. Intergroup maintains a public relations

policy which stresses, among other things, the need for A. A. members to stay in their "own backyard," avoiding controversial issues by refusing to become involved in things with which, as members of A. A., they have no concern. It constantly emphasizes that all members respect the anonymity of its members and cautions that no piece of literature or letter or card be sent through the mails so addressed as to identify another member with the A. A. movement. But probably one of the most important phases of its work, and the least understood, is in the handling of requests which come into the Intergroup office for information or help, Strange as it may seem, while many members are acquainted with the Intergroup office as a referral center and are somewhat aware of the role Intergroup played in putting them in touch with the movement, it is surprising how many others there are to-day active in the A. A. fellowship who do not know Intergroup was responsible, directly or indirectly, for establishing their first group contact.

From one of the forty or so listings in the New Jersey telephone directory, under which Intergroup is indexed under Alcoholics Anonymous, Groups of New Jersey, help or information was requested either personally or by someone directly concerned, and help was given. This is Alcoholics Anonymous. It is as it should be. Intergroup does not ask credit nor does it seek compliment. It is just setting forth a few facts, attempting to shed some light on the things it is trying to do-things which many of our members, especially the newer ones, may think and wonder about but do not understand.

Telephone inquiries for help by the individual with a personal alcoholic problem is so handled through the Intergroup office at 944 Broad Street, Newark, that direct contact is established through the secretary of the group in the vicinity, or by the individual member designated by the group to handle such matters. When requests for information is sought by non-alcoholics concerned with the welfare of others, the manner in which the groups function is explained and A. A. literature is given the inquirer along with the name of the group and meeting places in their respective localities. When occasion demands it, followup letters are sent to the individual concerned with duplicates of the letter sent to the group secretary for their information. Much of this work is of such an intangible nature that immediate results are not often seen in direct evidence, but at least, the story of A. A. is presented and seed sown for the future.

Case referrals, while of the utmost importance, constitute but a small part of Intergroup's work. As a clearing house for member groups, innumerable telephone and in-person calls are handled daily in which other pertinent information is given out - requests for names of group secretaries, chairmen, time and place of meetings, group locations, in and outside the state, calls relating to hospitalization and calls for other information which only A. A. members themselves can fully appreciate. Yet, no information is ever given out which would tend to destroy the anonymity of our members or jeopardize their social or business relationships.

Intergroup also publishes its own "At Last A. A." pamphlet and compiles the list of meeting places, keeping this record as complete and up-to-date as co-operation by group secretaries will permit. Preparing schedules and the secretary's list is also a part of the work. Meetings are sponsored each week by Intergroup in the State Institutions at Greystone and Marlboro and at the Essex County Hospital at Overbrook. Just recently Intergroup initiated the starting of groups within the New Jersey State Reformatories at Bordentown and Annandale Farms. In these latter two institutions, shortly after being organized, the groups elected their own secretary and chairman. This step was suggested by Intergroup to help them establish their own group identity and to develop individual group consciousness. Soon they will be completely on their own, conducting their own affairs with a minimum of outside interference or influence. But should it be needed, Intergroup will be found standing by.

A monthly mass meeting is also held under the auspices of the Intergroup Committee. Here many fine speakers, members and non-members, men of medicine and men of the cloth, have given exceptional talks to A.A. audiences.

All this is only a part of what Intergroup tries to contribute by way of service toward a finer A. A. fellowship without sacrificing any of the underlying principles upon which the movement has been founded. Although voluntarily supported by the individual member groups, Intergroup places no premium upon its efforts.

Even though a group may not financially contribute toward its maintenance, the benefits of Intergroup are shared by all groups. Intergroup's work, in a sense, has only begun. Through the continued support and co-operation of the individual groups, we shall, as the Intergroup Committee, continue with the work already under way so that by giving unswerving devotion to our own A. A. fellowship, Alcoholics Anonymous may blaze a trail that others well may follow.



To All Secretaries:

When a change of officers in your group occurs, or your place or date of meeting's is changed, please notify, in writing, the Intergroup secretary in order that our office records may be efficiently maintained to insure the best possible services for all groups by providing accurate information.

It is suggested also, similar information be sent to the Alcoholic Foundation, P. O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y. In this way pertinent A. A. information relating to all groups, locally and nationally may be made available.

Your N. J. Intergroup office is located at 944 Broad Street, Newark 2, N.J. (MArkET 3-7528), but it is preferable that all Intergroup correspondence be addressed to P. O. Box 575, Newark 1, N.J

EVERY A. A. Member wants every Alcoholic in the world to have the chance he has had.

Every A. A. member wants unity for our movement.

Every A. A. member wants the good opinion of medicine, religion and the general public. We know we must have these things or that new man may never get his chance.

The Intergroup Associations are the best insurance we can have that our life lines to the hundreds of thousands yet to come will never break or tangle. Let us always be generous. Let us warmly support Intergroup.

BILL

FACTS AND FIGURES

A. A. Groups in New Jersey	84
• • •	
Affiliated With Intergroup	60
• • •	
Approximate Membership of Affiliated Groups	1452
• • •	
Direct Referrals to All Groups in 1948	906
• • •	
Pieces of Literature Distributed by Office	3144
• • •	
Hospitalizations	90
• • •	
Speakers Assigned to Meetings of Service Clubs, etc.	53
• • •	
Attendance Annual Intergroup Banquet 1948	1009



INTERGROUP COMMITTEE
 A. A. GROUPS OF NEW JERSEY
 944 Broad Street, Newark, N. J.
 Telephone MARKET 3-7528