



PI Service News

*“Easy does it.....
but do it!”*

Shared Service Experience



April 2020 Extra Part 2

Please pass on this newsletter to your friends in the Fellowship, either by forwarding via email or by printing copies to take to your local meetings. Anyone who wants their personal copy of the newsletter should send us their email address to the address below. You can also drop a line to GSO with any items for inclusion.

Please note the contact address: aainformation@gsogb.org.uk

Revival of a Guide for Telephone A.A. Meetings from Home – contributed by *Bob P.* from **Tuscon, Arizona.**

We believe that going to a regular face-to-face A.A. meeting is the best, but sometimes that may not be possible. What do we do then? Some people don't have access to the internet, and some people aren't familiar with online meetings, but most A.A. members have a phone of some kind. We would like to share our local experience with A.A. meetings on the telephone. This guide is only our own experience, strength and hope. It is not endorsed by or affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. or any other A.A. entity. One Kind of Telephone A.A. Meeting In our town, experience with A.A. meetings on the telephone goes back at least to February, 1992. It was between three people. Vicki was recovering from surgery and was under doctor's orders to stay home. Chuck and Bob were in the same home group. All three of them had been sober for years, and they were very active in A.A. They arranged a day and time for the telephone meeting. They were each in their own homes. Bob was the linking person for the meeting. First he called Chuck. When Chuck answered the phone, Bob pressed the "add call" function. Then Bob called Vicki. When Vicki answered, Bob pressed the "merge call" function. With that, they were on a conference call. It was just that simple! They used a format similar to the one found later in this guide. The meeting lasted about half an hour. When it was over, each of them said how much like a regular meeting it was. They all agreed that it was much different than two people talking on the phone. Two or three years later, Bob sent the story of their first telephone meeting into A.A.'s monthly magazine the Grapevine. Here is a key paragraph from that article: "When I told them I would be writing to the Grapevine, Vicki and Chuck asked me to include some of their thoughts. Chuck said, 'Maybe the original motive was to

help Vicki, but that day I really needed a meeting. I had a terrific resentment about my house being robbed. For that half hour, I was able to be someplace else.’ And Vicki said, ‘Just talking about it brings a tear to my eye. It was a godsend. I couldn’t drive, and I hadn’t been to a meeting for. . .well, too long. Isolation is dangerous for an alcoholic.’” [From the article “Reach Out and Touch Someone” Grapevine, August 1995.* You can find the full story on the official Grapevine website www.aagrapevine.org] How does it work? Here’s some good news! Even if you don’t know how to use conference calling, only one of the three people in the meeting needs to use this feature. That one “linking” person can call the other two people, and they just answer the phone like it was any other call. That one linking person calls the first person. When the first person answers the phone, the linking person presses the “add call” button and calls the second person. When the second person answers the phone, the linking person presses the “merge calls” button. At that moment, all three are on the same conference call. Most phones, whether they are wired landlines or mobile cell phones, have the ability to make conference calls (sometimes referred to as three-way calling). Each kind of phone is different, so we won’t try to give any directions on this. You can contact your service provider and/or phone manufacturer for details. Page 1 of 8 Some Words of Caution Telephone meetings are not a good fit for everybody. Newly sober people should not participate in telephone meetings without talking to their sponsor about it first. If you don’t have a sponsor, it is strongly advised that you get one. There is an A.A. pamphlet called “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” which you can read on the official A.A. website www.aa.org. You have their permission to print one copy at no charge. Phone plans can be very different. If you are the linking person and you pay according to the number of minutes you use, then you might be charged for the minutes for both people you call. If you have unlimited minutes, that might not affect you at all. Check with your service provider on this. The other two people don’t need to worry about all that. It is just like any other call for them. Personal Safety Never give your home address, your physical location or any other information that could put your safety at risk. In general, if you wouldn’t say it from the microphone at a large, open speaker meeting, don’t say it in a telephone meeting. If you are not at home, make sure your location is a safe one for talking on the phone. Be sure to read the A.A. service piece “Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare.” It can be downloaded from the official A.A. website www.aa.org Getting Started How do you find people who would like to hold telephone meetings? You might call A.A. friends and members of your home group. Your local district or intergroup may have suggestions. Many of the 93 A.A. delegate areas in the U.S. and Canada have committees for accessibilities, special needs, or remote communities. To find A.A. near you, try https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources More Options We wanted to keep this guide as clear and simple as possible, but there are other possibilities to consider. Conference calls are not limited to only three people. With more experience, you may want to add more people to the meeting.

Experience of *Oliver H* :-

“About 3 weeks ago I was lucky enough to be added to a **Skype meeting**. I was particularly keen for a meeting because the virus really took hold while I was already away in Africa and in all I’d gone about 6 weeks without a meeting. The longest break yet in my sobriety. We none of us knew one another much in that first meeting and we mostly shared similar reflections on how AA had prepped us well for these devastating circumstances. There was great uncertainty about how this might play out and how much worse things would get before they began to improve but we buoyed one another up with positive reflections and

perspectives as AAs always have. I attended a meeting a day, often twice a day and gradually, though the membership increased the numbers began to dwindle. As luck would have it I was invited to a **Zoom meeting** and I was impressed with the environment.

The next day I set about establishing my own Zoom meeting to cater to the overflow of folks I had seen who could no longer access the old Skype rooms. It's been a baptism by fire but I have been hosting **Get Up Shut Up** now for approaching two weeks and today I had 33 grateful meditators tuning in. It brings me so much peace and satisfaction to know that I'm **providing a space for Alcoholics to come together and I hope to be able to continue as long as the internet allows!"**

Get Up Shut Up London 9am AA □□

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4248226111?pwd=cjlHTFk5V0tUR2tqSTZYZUNzRINvQT09>

Alcoholics Anonymous Daily Open Meeting

ISOLATION – *Wendy's experience :-*

My name is Wendy. I am an alcoholic living in Cumbria. I went into self-isolation three weeks ago because of my great age (70-something) and because of a heart problem. Closing down our two local meetings was a really sad event, but I packed up a load of literature, and that's been ready for people who want it. Besides that, we have set up an email link site for local members so that we don't lose touch.

All along, we have been thinking about newcomers, people who badly need support in early recovery. I know, from the state of shelves in local shops, that lots of people have turned to booze for some kind of solace in this difficult time, and we must keep help available by phone, email and socially-distanced one-on-one meetings. But proper actual meetings have been such a part of my recovery over the years, that it's hard to imagine life without them. We must recognise that it may be months before any kind of normality is restored. My own life - living alone, but with plenty of contact and support from friends - has been incredibly busy. I make sure that I keep things that way, with gardening, cooking and work on a massive dissertation on local history to make up a daily list of tasks. At the end of the day I am glad to sit down with some knitting and telly. I so miss the meetings, but this emergency may change our way of life completely, giving more recognition of technology (on-line meetings, chat-rooms, etc) and the importance of keeping in touch with each other by phone, text and email, in the road to recovery. It's all just a day at a time.... All the best, Wendy xxx

Safety in Zoom Meetings.

A guide has been put together by members of the Fellowship to help people make the most of Zoom, protect individual anonymity and prevent the meeting from being hijacked. Download it here: <https://afiles.org/file?4o9vWrJ8VwkXIR0KEEuPcu9hdzG48gU4>

For current information, check Coronavirus News here:

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Coronavirus-News>

12 Stepping Experience -Highland & Island RPILO *Marion Mc* reports “ I received a call from the **Helpline** to **12 Step a newcomer**. I phoned the lady and spoke to her sharing my ESH and advised her of the **AA Online Meetings**. She was not keen as she did not like the sound of them. I suggested our **Chat Now** facility. Happy to report she regularly uses Chat Now and has kept in touch with me.

(**P.S.** It is the intention that the **Chat Now** responder puts the newcomer in touch with a **12-Stepper** for continued help with recovery, leaving the **Chat Now** line open for other newcomers).

ARTICLES from members sharing Experience, Strength and Hope concerning this pandemic, particularly relating to public information and our primary purpose, are invited for publication in PI Service News.

PLEASE pass on your experiences to the address below. PI Service news is fortunate to receive a great deal of information from throughout Great Britain and Continental European Region.

If anything you have sent hasn't appeared, please try again.

INTERGROUP SECRETARIES – please pass on **Public Information Service News** to **Group Service Representatives**, by e-mail or hard copy.

Please note the contact address: aainformation@gsogb.org.uk