
St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup

LISTING AN A.A. GROUP ON THE INTERGROUP WEBSITE & IN THE PRINTED DIRECTORY

Occasionally we get a request to list a group that we are unable to honor. Hopefully we can explain the how & why of that decision.

First, it is important to note that we are not making any kind of value judgement on the group itself. Our decision is based on our responsibility to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole and to all the A.A. groups that we serve.

There are many ways to get sober, many facilities and organizations that assist in that quest, and a plethora of publications intended to provide guidance and support in that effort. Each, in its own way, may be extremely helpful to an A.A. member—depending on their circumstances. We have no opinion on any of these. Our best wishes go out to those who find them helpful.

Unfortunately, in recent years the term “recovery” has often been linked with “sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous.” While the recovery term is certainly utilized in our Big Book, the idea that anything described as being part of “recovery” is automatically connected to Alcoholics Anonymous would be incorrect. This is the heart of the matter here.

In order to be listed in the Intergroup printed Directory and the Website Group Directory, we require that Conference Approved A.A. literature be the focal point of the meeting (this includes the A.A. Grapevine). That is not to say that other items may be not utilized during the meeting (although we think it may not be the best approach as it may confuse the newcomer). The basis for this is Tradition Four of our Twelve Traditions. These are the Traditions our Board of Directors is, by its Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, obligated to uphold.

In Tradition Four we find the following statement: *“Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that as a group they have no other affiliation.”* (page 147, bottom, *Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions*)

The use of non-Conference Approved literature (including non-conference approved Big Book Study aids) as the focal point of a meeting creates an affiliation with the author, their philosophy or the publisher. An affiliation which the newcomer may understand as being a part of the A.A. way of life. In so doing we fail to practice our own principles, and therefore provide a poor example of Step Twelve, in addition to creating confusion regarding what AA is and what it does.

In Tradition Four we also find the mention of “autonomy”—a favorite of alcoholics. However, there is an exception to this granting of autonomy. It is contingent on not *affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole*. When a new person visits a meeting, we ought always remember that what they see at their first meeting, or in those early meetings, will be their understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous going forward. This definitely meets the “affecting” criteria. That perception will impact the very next group they attend!

Lastly, our goal, as stated by our Primary Purpose (stated in our By-Laws) is to ensure that those who follow us have the opportunity to be presented with the clarity of message that we so greatly enjoyed receiving from those who preceded us.

608 Seventh Street W., St. Paul, MN 55102

P: 651.227.5502 F: 651-290-0209

lifeline@aastpaul.org
