

Issues and Concerns submitted by Sunday BDA Phone (group #968)

on Sunday, March 29, 2020 via

<https://debtorsanonymous.org/fellowship-services/issues-and-concerns/>

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1. We think we're using up our most motivated service volunteers too quickly. We would prefer to see a service progression, encouraging members to focus on individual and group service for the first five years of solvency, Intergroup and WSC service for five years and beyond, and ACM and GSB service for ten years and beyond. It would still be up to each member and group to make their own decisions but revising the suggested qualifications could start us on a path to greater health and recovery at each level of the service structure.
2. We think we're not focused enough on the Steps in our service structure. We don't think it's enough to "be actively working the 12 Steps of DA." For all service positions beyond the group level, we believe the nominees should have completed all 12 Steps in DA. We think "having had a spiritual awakening" should be the minimum baseline for IR, GSR, and ISR representation of groups at Intergroups and WSC.
3. We think the GSB makes too many decisions on our behalf, undermining the service triangle and the 12 Concepts. There are times we're feeling governed, and we've noted lots of confusion about the difference between initiatives that are conference-approved and GSB-approved. We would like to see our GSRs and ISRs engaged in decision making on a more regular basis. We understand that it might be unwieldy to engage all GSRs and ISRs, but what about engaging the Committee and Caucus Chairs? Or some other representation of the fellowship? Perhaps quarterly WSC mini-convocations by phone and/or videoconferencing?
4. General Service Board (GSB) members are not welcome at World Service Conference (WSC), within the service structure, after six years of service, yet there are GSRs and ISRs who have been to 10 ... 15 ... 20 conferences. We think GSRs and ISRs should be encouraged to the same six-year (and sometimes seven) conference limit and strongly discouraged from additional years of registration. If they want to stay engaged, they can volunteer to be an ACM, or Board member, or become a service sponsor to new GSRs at home.
5. We would like to see an opportunity for GSRs and ISRs to interact with new GSB members before they are elected at convocation. To add this element to the WSC schedule, perhaps one half of the Open Forum time could be repurposed for the GSB Nominations Committee to introduce GSB candidates and for the candidates to briefly introduce themselves, their service histories, their reasons for wanting to be board members, and their interactions with the GSB and WSC thus far. Bottom-line, we think the delegates voting at convocation should have the opportunity to know who they're voting for or against. The additional benefits of the above might be more transparency about the nominating process, engagement of the fellowship, and more GSB Trustee volunteers.

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6. We would like to see more direct leadership of the fellowship's Public Information efforts from WSC and GSB PI to groups and Intergroups. GSO is still collecting names of PI reps as part of registration and re-registration of groups and Intergroups. We would like to see those names used to connect group and Intergroup PI reps with WSC and GSB. Perhaps a monthly or quarterly teleconference with lots of time for Q&A?
7. We ask the GSB and WSC to encourage groups and Intergroups to buy and distribute conference-approved literature — at least pamphlets, if not books — at no cost to members. We would like to see our DA and BDA fellowship move forward into more generosity with our newcomers. We believe this would also move the onus of funding our literature back to our members, and group and Intergroup treasuries, and remove the burden of "buying our solution" from newcomers. As an example, two of our group's long-term members have made provision of DA books (*12, 12, and 12* and *Currency of Hope*) and both BDA pamphlets to newcomers who request them. The financial obligation is minimal, and the newcomers keep coming back and participating in our meetings and activities. We provide 2-3 books and 5-6 pamphlets per month at an average monthly cost of approximately \$60. These are dollars gratefully spent.
8. We ask all GSB and WSC Committees (and Caucuses) to better understand the similarities between phone, online, and face-to-face meetings and the distinctness but not separateness of BDA. As the phone and online DA and BDA communities grow, we interact mostly like face-to-face groups, except with the use of modern technology. We're suggesting normalizing the phone and online meetings, rather than making notes and statements that separate us from the rest of the fellowship.

Ironically, our suggestion about BDA is exactly the opposite. We think BDA should be mentioned specifically and distinctly in both our in-reach and outreach initiatives and materials throughout the DA and BDA fellowship. Our experience is that BDA may possibly be the largest opportunity for growth of the fellowship. Our home group's weekly BDA meetings and monthly BDA workshops, for instance, average attendance in the high 30s, low 40s. Our group participation over the course of any month, where most members attend every other week -- we have 10 core group members who attend every week -- reaches attendance in the high-60s, low-70s. We simply encourage more mention of BDA whenever possible. The more BDA groups and members feel seen and a "part of" the greater whole, the more likely we will be to contribute time, money, service, and outreach.