

Round Table Topic: Young People in A.A.

Date: 3-1-2019

Moderator: Michelle, Area 17, dcm11@area17aa.org. **Secretary:** Tim

Identified Topics:

1. **How can we serve young people in current or new panels?** Subcommittee member for literature said there are two pamphlets available: (a) Too Young? (b) Young in AA. Some people did not know what “YPAA” is. Others said they’d never read the pamphlets. Another said that when they got sober, they only had pamphlets. The pamphlets should be digitized so they can be emailed. There are two YPAA groups in the state (which state not identified). What constitutes and older person versus a younger person? What can we provide these people? Raise the exposure of young people in AA as a whole. “I am responsible;” it’s our job to reach out in person, through Public Information, and Alateen. Our YPAA group struggled with low bottom cases. I couldn’t commit to reading the Big Book; I read every pamphlet in circulation, so printed literature was really important to me when I got sober at 17. Printed ads are good media to raise awareness, not to promote AA.

2. **How are we carrying the message to people in treatment? How can we aide meetings that have low attendance?** We should ask treatment centers to provide contributions, regardless. We should use mid-meeting smoke breaks to do 12th Step work, reaching out to the newcomer and treatment center attendees. We should coordinate with H & I and provide flyers. We stopped buying coffee, food, Big Books, etc. so we could pay out rent. We eventually moved. We should utilize people in AA that work in treatment in order to outreach. We gave out sobriety marbles instead of chips because they were cheaper. We need to find locations that are sustainable and supportive. We need to avoid “us versus them” scenarios for people in treatment versus AA. A diversity of meeting styles and types is important in carrying the message. We should use “Bridge Packets” when speaking in treatment centers and H & I.

3. **How do we reach teenagers?** We should stick to alcoholism, not necessarily one’s gender or age. Whether you are 16 or 60, the disease is the same. I don’t try to condescend to anyone because of their age. There is a recovery high school in Seattle, Washington that takes students to meetings. We should utilize book study meetings to emphasize issues relative to young people, through Back To Basics workshops and reaching out to Hispanics. I was involved in H & I, where I was the youngest by 40 years on a juvenile panel. If you don’t have a criminal history, it’s so easy to get involved. Do it! What works best with young people is to speak from the heart. There’s no bigger turn off than when I feel someone is talking down to me. Just because I’m young doesn’t mean I’m a high-bottom drunk. I was denied as a sponsee because I was 16 and people didn’t see the liability.

4. **YPAA and General Service: What does this look like?** In January 2019, San Diego/Imperial County (Area 08) agreed to have a Young People’s Committee participate at the Area level. It started with an ad hoc committee in 2017. Be patient, don’t push it, or overstep your own value to get it done. We should avoid the mentality of “Sit down and shut up” in General Service to young people. What does the YPAA Standing Committee do, what’s the niche, why does it exist? It allows coordination and identifying liaisons with other Standing Committees in the Area. Since ad hoc, multiple GSRs of YPAA groups and group numbers for

YPAA committed. We were stubborn and persistent. There are a lot of questions about General Service at the Area Committee level. What if the gays want a committee next? We had to sit at the Assembly and prove why the committee was important. We had General Service workshops that YPAA committees would hold and coordinate with other committees, especially Accessibilities. If we aren't a Standing Committee, it doesn't matter. I can still do the same work. Area 05 just started a ad hoc CYC (?) committee. A number of attendees were opposed to this. This is just General Service, an extensive service for young people to reach our rooms. YPAA should not be labeled as a separate and different experience. More young people get involved in General Service at the District level. Are we listening to them, the Area and its trusted servants? Otherwise, we get backlash. Area 09 formed a YPAA Standing Committee last January. We should have had an ad hoc committee first. Service sponsorship is vital in this because there was resistance and many opinions.

5. How do young people get the message of AA to young people? We should utilize the Intergroup, exciting them and communicating the message in a fun way. We need people with experience in General Service for young people to be attracted to General Service. Committees and conferences need to work on outreach to young people in different areas. Is there a depository/resource online for troubleshooting different issues?