

Greater Queensland

Service System Tools

Group Support Forums

Adapted from draft tools created for the service system field test.

The original material is available from <https://www.na.org/?ID=servsys>

These tools were intended to help communities adapting the ideas from the Service System Project for their local use.

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# Group Report Form

# Report Form from GSF to LSC

## GSF Basics

###### The Purpose of the GSF

Since the early days of NA, our service manuals have described the ASC as responsible to both support groups and provide services. The group support forum (GSF) and local service conference (LSC) divide the responsibilities of our former Area Service Committee.

The GSF is intended to help groups better carry the message within their meetings by separating out the group support function from the “business” of providing NA services. The GSF gives groups the opportunity to share problems they may be encountering and to seek solutions from each other, to talk about what’s working well, and to have informal workshops on topics of their choice while avoiding the distraction of discussions about complex services provided outside their groups. The GSF functions as a discussion-based gathering of the local NA community and may be an easier or less intimidating way for some members to get introduced to service. The GSF is intended to be a community or neighbourhood gathering.

###### What Happens at GSF Meetings?

Welcome and outreach to new groups and members Informal discussion of group issues and sharing of solutions

Information sharing (e.g., upcoming events, new literature, discussion topics) Checking accuracy of meeting information and creation of local meeting list if needed

Introduction to service (e.g. introduction to service literature, traditions, concepts, etc.) Informal training and mentoring

Some GSFs may provide options for groups to order literature and contribute funds to other levels of service

In some circumstances, GSFs may be involved in some service delivery (e.g., putting up flyers in the community or supporting a local H&I meeting)

Selection of a GSF delegate (or delegates) to attend the LSC Reporting from the GSF on discussions at the LSC

Gathering of any GSF input on LSC discussions for the GSF delegate to bring these to the LSC

###### Keys to a Healthy GSF Discussion

 Share our experience, strength, and hope

 Listen to one another and respect each other's ideas

 Everyone is welcome to attend and everyone can participate

 Take turns: One person speaks at a time, and no one person should dominate the GSF  Try to stay focused on the issue at hand and avoid repetition

 Remember – honesty, trust, and goodwill are the foundation of our service efforts

**GSF Agenda and Facilitation Tips**

**Before the meeting**: The facilitator and recorder should create a list of issues needing discussion. Issues for discussion can come from the groups, the GSF facilitator, the LSC or interested members. In some cases the facilitator will prioritize issues for the GSF; in other cases the GSF itself will prioritize issues. Regardless, part of the facilitator’s job, so to speak, is to keep the GSF on task and help the body set realistic goals for each meeting. There may not be time to talk about everything in every meeting. The facilitator can help the body be mindful of how much time there is for the GSF meeting and what the body can expect to accomplish.

Groups may want to turn in their reports before the GSF meeting to help the facilitator develop a list of discussion topics. Group reports may also ensure meeting and contact information is up to date. Any flyers or other information material is placed in a central location for collection before the end of the meeting. If the GSF facilitates groups ordering literature or making contributions to the LSC, then these should be handed to the trusted servant responsible for this.

**Introductions**: Everyone introduces themselves and says which group they are from, whether they are a trusted servant from the LSC, or whether they are a visitor, etc. – new members/groups are welcomed.

**Topics from previous meetings**: These could include topics where more information was needed, or issues that were not able to be addressed at the previous meeting due to time constraints. The GSF can choose to address topics that weren’t covered at the previous meeting first or it can prioritize these topics alongside any new issues, depending on the preference of the GSF.

**New suggested topics**: The recorder may write these down at the front of the room on a large post-it, white board etc. so everyone can see them. Topics can range from issues individual groups would like help or feedback about to more general topics like a discussion of a tool or pamphlet. The GSF’s primary function is to support the groups and so assisting groups in areas where they are struggling should be the top priority, but in most cases, there will be plenty of time to address other issues as well, if the GSF wishes.

**Prioritizing**: The facilitator can prioritize issues for the body before the meeting or those attending the GSF can prioritize issues. This can be done by a simple show of hands. One possible method is for each member to have two opportunities to raise their hands.

**Discussion**: Each topic is presented and discussed one at a time, beginning with a brief explanation of the topic by the group or individual that suggested it. The facilitator asks if anyone needs any clarification of the issue.

The facilitator may want to ask the body 3 questions to help consider the topic:

1. Does anyone else have experience with this topic? (The GSF may want to keep a log of previous topics and solutions to group issues in case the same topics resurface over time.)
2. What does our literature say? (Possible sources include *The Group Booklet*, *Treasurer’s Handbook*, Tradition and Concept essays etc.)
3. Where can we get more information about the topic? (Possibilities include the LSC/ASC, regional body, state/nation/province body, and NA World Services.)

For more involved discussions the Basic Facilitation Guide can be used.

(**Note**: The recorder keeps a simple record of the outcome of any discussions and any solutions to group issues reached. The recorder’s notes will also be helpful in the annual environmental scanning assembly.)

**Workshop**: Examples include Building Strong Home groups, Tradition or Concept discussions, or general service or recovery topics.

**Sample GSF Agenda**

This sample agenda may be helpful. Your GSF will have its own personality and needs, and the ideal agenda will grow from that. Perhaps this sample may be a starting place to adapt for your local needs.

 Meeting Opening:

* Moment of silence and NA prayer
* Read GSF Purpose and Ground rules
* Introductions and welcome

Report from LSC/ASC delegate

Discussion of Suggested Topics (See list on next page)

* Further discuss topics from previous meetings if needed
* Facilitator reads off the topics and issues that remain from previous meetings and the new ones that were submitted before this meeting and may suggest two or three to discuss.
* If there is general agreement, discuss selected topics one at a time.
* If there is a need, prioritize the issues as a group and then discuss the top two or three priorities one at a time.

Report on any local service work that the GSF may be participating in.

Workshops (See list on next page)

* If there is a workshop scheduled for the GSF meeting, introduce that facilitator and topic
* Have small or large group workshop
* The LSC may want to schedule workshops throughout the cycle for the GSFs, highlighting different aspects of service work and introducing GSF members to some of what happens at the LSC.

Closing

* Announcements
* Remind everyone of next GSF meeting date, time, and location
* Close meeting with Just For Today and My Gratitude Speaks

## Sample GSF Topics

The list of things a GSF could talk about is potentially endless. We offer you this grab bag to inspire you and to give you an idea of the sorts of things that are possible fodder for discussion.

Group issues/challenges

* not enough money taken in through passing the basket
* “too much” money taken in through the basket
* members disrupting or dominating the meeting
* need to find a new meeting place
* many new comers, few members with time/ availability of sponsors
* challenges with NA language or identification Group successes/ideas to share
* positive changes to group trusted servants, group time, location, etc.
* format changes
* good experiences in business meetings
* new group practices (e.g., going out regularly after the meeting) General topics for discussion
* A specific IP or service pamphlet
* A Tradition or Concept
* Sponsorship
* Sometimes a question can generate a great conversation, like “Is there such a thing as too much service?” or “What impression do newcomers get at our meetings and how can we improve it?”

Workshops

* Issue Discussion Topics
* New tools or literature/ NAWS projects
* LSC-coordinated topics such as carrying the message to institutions, doing public relations works, working on our website, putting on events, and so on.

## Basic Facilitation Guide

###### The Role of a Facilitator

The role of a facilitator is to help the body move through their intended agenda, reach decisions that all participants can support, and help ensure that these decisions are in harmony with the principles of the NA program. A facilitator will need to know several basic pieces of information to be effective:

Have a clear understanding of the purpose of the gathering, whether it is a GSF meeting, Local Service Planning Assembly, etc.

Have a general idea of the experience level of those attending. For a group of less experienced individuals more explanation of basic information may be needed, while more experienced members may be able to move more quickly through the set up phase of a discussion.

Have an awareness of any relevant resources, such as local guidelines, service handbooks, tradition and concept essays etc., and make these available when required.

###### Setting Up a Discussion Session

Remind all participants of what the meeting is intended to accomplish, and how everyone will work together to achieve that aim:

State the purpose of the meeting, review the agenda and ground rules, and remind everyone how much time is available for the meeting.

Ask everyone for their help in facilitating discussions and following the ground rules for the meeting.

###### Key Techniques

There are some simple ideas for facilitators that can have a positive influence on a session: Make eye contact, smile, be enthusiastic

Be who you are – let your own style come through

Remember that communication isn’t just the spoken word – for example, try to avoid “closed” body language such as crossing your arms or turning your back on your audience

 Remember that listening is a key part of successful facilitation

There are several techniques that a facilitator can employ to aid in their process. These can be broken down into three main areas:

1. Gathering information:

 Make sure everyone has a chance to participate so all the necessary information is available, remembering that some participants are shy so may need encouragement

 Try to keep the discussion focused on the topic and get to the root cause of any issues, asking for more details in order to gain clarity if needed

Key questions include:

 What have we tried before that works?  What would happen next?

 Is that what you mean?

1. Organizing information:

Group common thoughts and ideas together Avoid repetition, but don’t lose the details

Don’t lose good ideas that are off topic – record these for use in the future

Key questions include:

Are these ideas similar?

What would happen if we tried these ideas together? Can anyone add anything to these ideas?

1. Connecting ideas:

Rephrase ideas so they relate to the issue we are discussing Combine ideas to build solutions

Key questions include:

How can we use that idea to help with our issue? What can we do today that will make a difference?

Can we see some solutions or next steps emerging from our ideas?

###### Wrapping Up a Discussion Session

Summarize any solutions offered or decisions made, making sure everyone is clear on what has been decided and what will happen next.

If more information is going to be sought outside those in attendance, be sure that everyone knows who is responsible for this and when it will happen.

Remind everyone how important it is to involve ourselves in these discussions and how we are a part of the solution today.

Don’t forget to thank everyone for coming, and ensure everyone knows when and where the next meeting is.

Group Report Form

Group Name: Group Delegate Name and Contact: Meeting Day and Time: Meeting Location:

Meeting Format:

Trusted Servant Topics:

Atmosphere of Recovery Topics:

Financial Topics:

Other Topic

**Report Form**

**Group Support Forum To Local Service Conference**

**GSF Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**GSF Delegate Name and Contact Details:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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**GSF Meeting Day and Time:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ GSF Meeting Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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**Group Names, Days, Times, Contacts:**

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**New Group Names, Days, Times, Contacts:**

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**Topics to Bring to LSC:**

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