



AL - ANON

Rhode Island Al-Anon Family Group Thought/Task Force Chair Guidelines



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All members of the Thought Force or Task Force are considered to be equal, although the Chairperson will have additional responsibilities. When the Chairperson calls the first meeting, members will discuss the “charge” making sure everyone understands the assignment. This will be a time for choosing a Secretary, for brainstorming, and assigning any outside tasks and research. The Chairperson may use the suggested Knowledge-Based Decision Making (KBDM) questions to assist in the process. Members will set a time-schedule for deadlines, the number of meetings they will have, how and when they will meet, and will be in agreement with their final presentation. *(In the event there is a concern that the traditions are not being adhered to and outside affiliations are being discussed, then the thought/task force has the responsibility to remind the member(s) to uphold Tradition 4).*

DEFINITIONS

A Thought Force:

- Is a temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity
- Uses the resources available such as perspectives of members of the thought force
- Is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions
- May lay the foundation for the work for a task force
- They are the “thinkers”, not the “doers.”

A Task Force:

- Is a temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity
- Uses the resources available such as perspectives of members of the task force
- May fulfill the recommendations made by a thought force
- They are the “doers.”

The Charge:

- Is the single defined task or activity that a thought or a task force is assigned to work on and complete.

Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM):

- Our founders taught us how to reason things out with one another and encouraged us all to have an informed group conscience before decisions were made.
- Using the knowledge and understanding that our Past Delegates and Current Delegate gained from attending the World Service Conference they learned the KBDM process assists us all in the introduction of topics for discussion.
- Whereas Robert’s Rules of Order required that a motion be introduced before any discussion took place, KBDM is discussion before deliberation.
- See attached for the KBDM questions

THOUGHT/TASK FORCE CHAIR ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The chair should not be a member of AA
- Gets the charge from Area/Assembly and asks for any clarification before moving forward
- Receives Thought/Task Force Chair Guidelines/KBDM from Area Chair and reviews the information
- Plans the date/time/location and agenda of the **initial** meeting*
- Throughout the process, remains mindful of maintaining anonymity of all group members and assumes the responsibility to communicate with the group directly
- See attached for an example of a meeting agenda

Prior to Meeting:

- Builds the agenda for the **initial** meeting
- Selects “location” of **initial** meeting - one that is approximately mid-way between committee members - or uses teleconference or zoom (virtual**)
- Communicates via email in advance to Area re: meeting day and time
- Utilizes available distribution methods to get the word out about meeting*
- Sends an email reminder to the current committee members prior to meeting
- Sends out the agenda prior to the meeting
- See attached Thought/Task Force Etiquette

Day of Initial Meeting:

- Reviews the charge with the group and asks for questions/clarification
- Members choose a secretary for the thought/task force
- Reviews the meeting etiquette
- Discusses future task force meeting schedule with the group - ongoing day, time, frequency of meetings, length of meetings
- Gives the group “homework” to do any relevant research on the charge

Between Meetings:

- Communicates with Area as to future meetings, even if they’re being set one at a time***
- The thought/task force has the autonomy to decide at which point to stop announcing meetings

**If there is not already a list of committee members, chair will need to announce, invite, and encourage participation by using the links of service (i.e., Area, Districts, Groups, & Lifelines), and a separate email account can be created as a point of contact to protect anonymity.*

***Please meet (via Conference Call, Google Hangout, Zoom, etc.) and use whatever technology works for all.*

****Continues to encourage participation by using the links of service (i.e., Area, Districts, Groups, & Lifelines)*

During Meetings:

- Keeps the discussion on topic
- Helps the group maintain a sense of unity by allowing everyone to talk
- Allows time for brainstorming
- Assigns any outside tasks such as research or surveys
- The Chairperson may use the suggested KBDM questions to assist in the process.

THOUGHT/TASK FORCE SECRETARY ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Writes down key ideas and other information
- Asks for clarity when needed
- Assists the Chairperson as requested
- In accordance with the role of the Area Secretary, it is suggested that a draft of the minutes be sent out no later than *two weeks* after the meeting to every member on the thought or task force.

THOUGHT/TASK FORCE FINAL PRESENTATION

- Have all materials prepared prior to designated “due date” and email to the Area Secretary and CC the Area Chair for distribution*
- Determine how much time will be needed for presentation, including questions/discussion/vote
- For actual presentation: Start off by stating the charge
- Thought Forces: Share findings and suggested strategies for solving the charge. The strategies/recommendations could also include the pros and cons.
- Task Forces: Share suggested solution(s) for solving the charge and any additional resources necessary.
- The strategies/recommendations could also include the answers to the five KBDM questions.

**If being presented at an Assembly material is required 6 weeks*

Approval Date: _____ November 14th, 2020 _____

Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) Questions

1. What do we know about our members' or prospective members' wants, needs, or preferences that are relevant to this discussion?
2. What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue?
3. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion?
4. What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)? This includes consideration of how the Legacies apply.
5. What do we wish we knew, but don't?

Task Force Committee Meeting on Thought/Task Force Guidelines

Location:

Date:

Time:

SAMPLE AGENDA

OPENING:

- Moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer
- Read the 12 Traditions
- Introductions: First name and home group

THE CHARGE:

- What is the charge
- Questions or clarification around the charge

SECRETARY POSITION:

- Members choose a Secretary for this and all future Task Force Committee Meetings
- Questions or clarification around the role and responsibilities of the Secretary Position

TASK FORCE ETIQUETTE:

- Review Task Force Etiquette (TFE)
- Questions or clarification around TFE

FUTURE TASK FORCE MEETING SCHEDULE:

- Discuss ongoing meeting day and time & set a schedule (day, time, # of meetings, frequency of meetings, & meeting length)

“HOMEWORK” PREPARATION FOR NEXT MEETING:

- Read through all the KBDM information sent
- Be prepared to discuss what you found interesting or helpful from the readings at next meeting

CLOSING:

- Date of next Task Force Meeting
- Motion to adjourn
- Al-Anon Declaration

TASK FORCE ETIQUETTE

- Start and end the scheduled meeting on time.
- Stick to the Agenda.
- Stay on topic. Discussion is limited to the current topic before the Task Force.
- All Task Force members have the right and responsibility to express their opinion. However, if someone else has expressed a member's perspective, it is not necessary to say it again. Alloting a reasonable amount of time to each item helps keep the discussion moving along.
- In the event that the meeting is a phone/virtual meeting, be aware of your surroundings so that you're not distracted during the discussion. Also, make sure you are in a private and secure area to maintain everyone's anonymity.
- Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) will be used to ensure that all viewpoints, including minority opinions, are heard.
- Keeping our cell phones off demonstrates consideration for those around us.
- Practice spiritual principles and presume goodwill.

Based on Al-Anon sources (World Service Conference, RI Assembly Guidelines, & Task Force on Thought/Task Force Chair Guidelines)