

## Guiding Principles: Putting Our New Traditions Workbook to Work

**Session materials:** *Guiding Principles* notes sheets x 3, Tradition Five handout, copies of *Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions*, ground rules, facilitator’s instructions, Traditions and Concepts summary sheet.

### Introduction to session

10 minutes

(Slide 1) The 2016 World Service Conference overwhelmingly approved our new Traditions workbook, *Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions*. Our hope is that this new resource will improve the understanding and application of the Twelve Traditions throughout Narcotics Anonymous as members study ways to practice these principles in their personal lives and recovery, in NA groups, and in service to NA at all levels. This workshop is designed to introduce members to this new piece of literature and provide an opportunity to participate in the sort of discussion the book aims to inspire.

### (Slide 2) What’s in the Book?

The Traditions workbook has pieces and parts designed to work together or separately. (See Tradition Five handout.)

Each chapter...

- Begins and ends with short readings on one Tradition
- Includes two introductory exercises:
  - “Word by Word” encourages a focused look at words and phrases that make up each Tradition.
  - “Spiritual Principles” invites us to explore some of the principles associated with each Tradition in writing or discussion.
- Contains three main sections, each applying a Tradition to a different area of our lives in recovery:
  - “For Members” includes an essay on the applications of a Tradition to our personal recovery, followed by questions suitable for writing or discussion.
  - “For Groups” essays will be most relevant for groups as they seek to understand and apply the Traditions. It includes questions that may be useful for a group inventory.
  - “In Service” sections look at the Tradition from the perspective of service bodies. The questions in this section are intended to prompt discussion in service workshops.

### Large-group icebreaker

20 minutes

(Slide 3) Using the “Spiritual Principles” exercise in the workbook, let’s take a few minutes to consider the principles within Tradition Five. Ask a volunteer to read Tradition Five and the text below from the Tradition Five handout.

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Each Tradition embodies a variety of spiritual principles. The list of principles and values below may be useful as we consider applications of this Tradition. Explore them in writing or discussion with your sponsor or other NA members. If other principles or values not listed below seem relevant for you, include those as well.

integrity, responsibility, unity, anonymity, commitment, empathy, service, purpose, open-mindedness, surrender, fidelity, consistency, vigilance, passion, compassion, security, hope

*Example: consistency*

Consistency is a spiritual principle that keeps us doing what we do. It begins with the refrain, “Keep coming back!” Coming to meetings regularly helps us stay clean, and it also carries a message of hope: We keep coming back because it works. The group depends on its members, and members depend on the group being true to its purpose. Showing up consistently, sharing honestly, and treating others with respect all further our primary purpose. A consistent message is powerful. When our actions and message are clear and consistent, our groups cannot fail.

(Slide 4) Go around the room picking from the list of principles and discussing how it can be applied to homegroup service.

### Small-group discussion

30 minutes

To practice making use *Guiding Principles*, divide the room into three sections and ask each one to discuss the question on their notes sheets from the “In Service” section of either Tradition One, Two, or Three. [It may be helpful to divide the room in advance of the workshop by placing the notes sheets for one of the three Traditions on each table.] (Slide 5) Remind everyone that discussions like this could be part of any service meeting or NA event, or take place before or after a recovery meeting.

Have each group choose a facilitator and a recorder and remind them to review the ground rules and facilitator’s instructions. Let everyone know that we will be collecting the notes from their discussions, so ask them to write clearly.

Ask a member to begin each table’s discussion by reading the Tradition and the Tradition excerpt from the handout. (Each of the excerpts is the first paragraph of the “In Service” section of *Guiding Principles* for that Tradition.) Each member then takes turns briefly sharing their experience and ideas in response to the question. The facilitator may ask members to clarify or expand on their thoughts, but should allow everyone to share before any cross talk, debate, or discussion.

**Tradition One:** Discuss: Does our NA community work together in a spirit of unity? How can we build or enhance a spirit of unity?

**Tradition Two:** Discuss: What does a good group-conscience process look like? What would an observer notice about decision making in our service body?

**Tradition Three:** Discuss: Who is missing from our meetings? How and why do outside issues affect opportunities for addicts to recover in NA in our community?

### Small-group feedback

30 minutes

Call on as many tables as time allows to share some of the high points of their discussions.

Remind each table to leave their discussion notes so their responses can be compiled.

(Slide 6) Remind everyone that in workshops they may do in the future, they can take pictures of their notes with their phones and send them to [wb@na.org](mailto:wb@na.org).

Resources for this and other workshops can be found at [www.na.org/IDT](http://www.na.org/IDT).