

LAA INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

EXTRAORDINARY INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Location: IBM Zoom ID 842 1001 4666 PC: 375920

Date: 9/10/2022

LAA IBM Agenda

Extraordinary IBM meeting, September 10, 2022. 10:30 am pst

Persons in attendance: Katya, Cynthia, Lindsey Warner, Mel, Mindy in LA, Alexey, Amy A, Beatrice B, Chris Estus, Christine, Dave, Diane L, Farhana, Jeff, Joy, Kaye, Laura Lovgren, Mary, Nancy R, Rachel, Rich, Susan P, Vincent

Meeting Service Positions:

Chairperson- Katya

Secretary/notetaker – Cynthia

Screen sharer – Mindy

Empath – Melanie

Time Keeper – Dave (1 minute shares, but if reports take longer, we can push this out.)

I. Opening Verse: Serenity Prayer (Extended version):

II. Approval of last IBM minutes from 9/3/22: All approved (23 participants)

III. Discussions/Motions:

1. Editing Safety Statement & Protocols (Melanie)

Melanie: Motion to have a safety protocol for handling various things that have come up. The wording for the safety protocol from 2 diff groups (AA and Coda). I would like to bring these up:

AA guidelines: https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/smf-209_en.pdf

CoDA guidelines: <https://coda.org/wp-content/uploads/FSM-Part-1-Structure-and-General-Information.pdf#page19>

There is a specific part on dealing with Safety. It clarifies things what can be done and the reason why we have it - Group Safety. It also helps keep the focus on the primary purpose, which is love addition. Coda has specific section on healthy communication. The lack of safety has been on communication style. Coda has definition of what the bullying description is. I would like to adopt removing people temporarily from wags, rooms, meetings, etc. Bullying examples (screen shot from the site):

Co-Dependents Anonymous does not accept harassment, bullying, CoDA implied definition of 13th stepping or expressed intolerance of any kind. No person should be the subject to unwanted verbal or physical conduct which intimidates or shows hostility towards that person because of, for example, their gender, class, age, appearance, national origin, skin color, disability, language, sexual orientation, or pregnancy. Anyone may request assistance from the Issues Mediation Committee (IMC). Please see the "Disagreement, Mediation, and Resolution in Our Group Conscience Process" below for more information.

Note – applicable definitions:

Bullying is the belittling or threatening behavior directed at an individual or a group of individuals. It includes any conduct that is threatening, humiliating, intimidating, prevents work from getting done, and includes verbal abuse.

Harassment is as an act of systematic and/or continued unwanted behaviors and actions from one party or a group, towards another party or a group. The purposes may vary and includes biases, prejudice, personal malice, an attempt to force someone to quit a job or grant sexual favors.

Expressed Intolerance is defined as treating a person differently than others based upon that person's gender, sexual preferences, age, national origin, skin color, disability, language, pregnancy, and/or any other legally protected classification.

13th Stepping includes using CoDA authority for personal sexual, electoral, financial, et al, gain.

If you are being bullied or harassed, you might:

- be less active or successful
- be less confident in your work
- feel scared, stressed, anxious or depressed
- have your life outside of work affected, e.g., study, relationships
- want to stay away from doing service
- feel like you can't trust the people who you work with
- lack confidence and happiness about yourself and your work
- have physical signs of stress like high blood pressure, headaches, backaches, sleep problems

Katya: let's discuss and see if we want to discuss this?

Susan: because I have been around 18 years, I want to speak out for our traditions. We always write our own literature and we do not always copy. When we adopted the 12 steps, I had to set up a relationship with the author to see if we could use under free usage. That is when people can use literature that someone else wrote. If you like parts of this, we have to get permission from those programs to use them.

Dave: I agree in the case of copy writing that we need consent. I see these are generic, however I do not object going to AA or Coda - or we adopt our own.

Katya: Has anyone looked into copy writing?

Susan: they are very strict on copy writing. They do not believe in using outside literature. Coda may be more open, however.

Joy: We are all concerned about bullying. It may only happen in after hours. I have seen a little bit of it, but it was taken care of. Can we make it more simple? Posting big rules seems to destroy spirit.

Katya: we are seeing it happening in Wags, business meetings and before meetings. I appreciate the clarity that Mel introduced.

Mary: I am speaking as a member from different fellowships, and a lot of the differences in the statements between other fellowships were in the group name. It only differentiated by the group name, but the language is similar. Because it was 12 steps it was okay and respected. It is important to discuss this topic.

Katya: Beatrice posted in the chat the fair use policy (CoDa) [Fair Use Policy - CoDA.org](#). We can rephrase it, adopting the same spirit. Form a group to reword it, developing our own communication to keep the exchanges safe. No bullying No harassment. I think there are so many common terms we should be able to use, but adopt format and rephrase via group conscious.

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2. When the material is intended to be used for commercial purposes.
3. When an individual wants to use a work in its entirety.

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Chris: I like keeping this simple as well. This isn't the right meeting to put this together. Someone can bring a specific proposal to this meeting. Is this something that will be read during the meetings out loud? We cannot vote on this today. We need the 2 documents posted in the chat, so we can review in advance of voting.

Melanie: we need a policy to have a way to handle things that come up. This covers all type of 12 stepping. All types of communication at all times.

Katya: Chris did put the LAA meeting guidelines for us to review. They are not covering, because we have a lot of this behavior going on now, and we need to address this.

Dave: refer to the website for the rules

Beatrice:

Susan: The issue is not the guidelines. The issue is enforcement. We came up with a bill of rights before. It gives hosts authority to do something, but they get bullied for taking action. A lot of us are CoDependent, because we are afraid of hurting feelings.

Meeting Hosts' Bill of rights: A disruption is anything that being said or done at a meeting of LAA to make others feel uncomfortable. This includes the after-hours meetings.

1. The meeting host has a right to enforce the LAA Guidelines without being attacked.
2. The meeting host has a right to ask anyone to be considerate of group safety.
3. The meeting host has the right to mute anyone who is being disruptive.
4. The meeting host has a right to remove disruptive people form a meeting.
5. The meeting host has the right to ban someone from future meetings for a week.
6. The meeting host has the right to ban someone permanently after a discussion with Intergroup.

Katya: that is the next part of our agenda – enforcement.

Chris: Coda language can be as it is? Meeting guidelines have the bill of rights that Susan was referring to, which is LAA's current way. It is pretty solid. Leave it up to the group safety committee that we can have that is solid for going forward.

Mel: Bullying/disruptive behavior also includes texts, emails and messages to members, and not just WAGs, Meetings etc. I like the Coda one (below), because it covers this. We do not debate whether someone belongs here. We do not try to control what someone does. We do not try to minimize another person, etc. We do not refer to someone by name.

Crosstalk

Please respect our crosstalk guidelines because they help keep our meetings a safe place. Examples of crosstalk may include, but are not limited to:

- Giving unsolicited feedback
- Advising
- Answering
- Making “you” and “we” statements
- Interrogating
- Debating
- Criticizing
- Controlling
- Dominating
- Minimizing another person’s feeling or experiences
- Referring to someone present by name

Vincent: Another fellowship cannot use Tony A’s 12 steps (these have not been given permission to use by the copy right holder). However, ideas contained in them can be used if re-worded as that does not breach copywrite law.

Susan: I want to validate what Vincent is saying. The idea is great. We want to stand on our own and write our own literature. We are going to grow, and we need to take the time for the literature committee to draft something and bring it to the group.

Katya: We do not have a safety committee, however.

Dave: I recall two IBMs ago, we have nominated the committees, and thought Mel was part of this?

Mel: I was part of the WAG safety group. I am requesting that instead of calling it a WAG safety, we can call it safety for all meetings/communications. I motion that we let go of the WAG safety committee, and instead transform it to Safety in LAA Committee.

Dave: I would like to move to vote on this.

Chris: Wrote the movement in the chat: Motion to form a Safety Committee and appoint a Chair.

Katya: Does anyone oppose? No one opposed, so this motion is approved. Mel volunteered to be the chair of this committee. Dave 2nds. Katya asked if anyone opposed. No one opposed. 11:13 am pst.

Mel: I would like to have the purpose. The safety committee comes up with a similar version of the Coda document. We have a short and long version. The Short can be read in the meetings.

Susan: I agree with what Mel is saying. I would like to join the committee. I would like an email of when the committee meets.

Katya: anyone else like to vote to be on the committee?

Dave: it is one thing to create a committee, and another to decide what is discussed under that committee.

Katya: What are usual protocols on that committee?

Susan: The protocol is the chairperson is elected and need to have qualifications for who is on the committee and who wants to be on the committee.

Chris: is this an adhoc committee? In other fellowships, it is whomever wants to be on the committee is on the committee. Mel is wanting to write up safety guidelines with a shorter version to be read in meetings. That part can be sent to the literature committee for things that can be changes, in order to be more comprehensive. We may want to take a universal look at the script.

Katya: it would be good for us to have some volunteers to work with Mel on this. We have Susan. I am happy to volunteer. Aya also volunteered. Rachel also volunteered. Literature is responsible for editing the script. On top of creating the safety statements, we also need to write out the protocols for removing people if they offend.

Dave: What constitutes an offence? Detailed outline of what is an offense, such as bullying – need guidelines before removing someone.

Katya: Editing Safety Statement & Protocols (Melanie)

- A. Who is responsible for editing our Script?
- B. Protocols for removing a repeated offender from participation in the fellowship.
 - 1. How to determine removal
 - 2. For how long
 - 3. How to enforce removal

Mel: Removal... Since each group is autonomous each group has its own rule. If there is a disruption, we can decide when someone can be removed, based on the guidelines of each autonomous group. Some AA meetings removes 24 hours or a week, but we need to make those determinations as well via group conscious.

Katya: we do have an agenda item below of what constitutes each group.

Chris: Mel, this is what her committee is to determine, and then bring the draft to the committee for comments/voting.

Susan: over the years, we have had 25 diff scripts. In terms of our tradition, we have let each meeting decide what script they would adopt. I think each group should decide for themselves what they prefer to use. I have it in word available to share.

Dave: we have 4 minutes left in the meeting. I have to leave at 2:30 est.

Vincent: South African meetings do have a diff script.

Katya: we have a lot of clarity of what we are still working on, so the other items we will need to work through later. I would like to propose we meet once a week, until we get these critical items worked through and voted on.

Dave 2nd the motion of continuing once a week for an hour.

Mel: I opposed, because Saturday is tuff for me, because I am a comedian. It is difficult. If I cannot make it, I will sympathize with what is discussed.

Katya, since you are a critical Chair, what is an alternative?

Mel: Wednesday after the regular meeting? I am unavailable on Saturday mornings.

Chris: This safety item is really pressing. When will Mel's committee have something to bring to us? That can determine when we meet on it again.

Mel: are you asking if you want us to come up with something before the next IBM?

Chris: Yes, as that would make the most sense.

Dave: I see Chris' point. The committee that Mel is chair for needs to get the document for us to review first.

Chris: The committee comes up with something solid to present and get it out a week or 2 before the meeting as something to digest.

Katya: Mel is to come back to us, when the document is ready, and we will then schedule a meeting to discuss? Yes.

Dave: Mel's committee works on the document, and then comes back to the IBM. The information should be posted a week before the meeting. Someone move to when the next IBM meeting is, so we can attend to the other items on the agenda.

Katya: I propose we continue Extraordinary meetings every Saturday morning at 10:30 pst. We will have another Extraordinary meeting for the safety issues when that group has time to work on those. Dave 2^{nds}.

Chris: Oct 1st, we are going to do the ODDAT meeting.

Katya: We will waive the IBM meeting for that ODDAT meeting.

Vincent: ODDAT meeting is not at the same time.

Katya: if we can do ODDAT in ½ hour, we could do both.

Vincent: Ordinary meeting 1st Saturday of every month at 10:30.

Chris: it is not written in stone.

Susan: I thought the next IBM meeting was at 11.

Katya: we voted that Chris would be the facilitator for the ODDAT meeting, and he will keep it at 30 minutes, so we can continue to have the LAA IBM meeting every Saturday at 10:30 am pst.

LAA Closing Prayer at 11:41 am pst. All.

The Group Safety Committee with Mel as Chair, as well as the following attendees: Susan P, Katya, Aya & Rachel will work on the Group Safety guidelines and protocols:

1. How to determine removal
2. For how long
3. How to enforce removal
2. Group conscience vote to remove current group safety/health offenders
 - A. repeated bullying
 - B. hijacking afterhours to dump, argue for limitations and with program practices

These items below will be tabled for the next extraordinary business meeting:

3. Literature Committee

A. Discussion: Does LAA International want to use Susan Peabody's Literature for Love Addicts Anonymous? If so, which literature? How is what is adopted decided upon?

1. Meeting Scripts
2. Meeting Literature

3. Basic Text & Step Workbook

4. Articles

B. What is “Conference Approved Program Literature” versus “non-Conference Approved/ Outside Literature”

1. How is this determined/decided upon? It is currently divided up this way on our website.

C. Is one monthly meeting of Literature Committee going to be enough at this time or should they meet more frequently?

D. Are there enough Lit committee members? Mindy has offered to join. Do we need to edit the requirements? Does everyone on every committee need to meet all the requirements or should, perhaps, only the chairs' have to meet them?

4. What constitutes autonomous LAA groups? LAA IBM, LAA ODAAT, LAA South Africa, LAA Christians? (Katya)

5. Do we want to hold more Extraordinary IBMs to catch up with transition responsibilities?

IV. Tabled Discussion Items and Motions

V. Necessary Service Positions to fill:

1. Back-up substitutes for all service positions

V. Closing Prayer

LAA Closing Prayer

God, we pray for inner strength and wisdom to do together what we cannot do alone. Thank you for the courage to change. Show us how to open our hearts and eyes to your unconditional love for us and teach us how to love ourselves and others in a healthy way. May we find hope for a brighter tomorrow and pass that on to others in need. Thank you for a better way to live.