VIRTUAL AA OIG TOWN HALL – Session 4 – October 28, 2020

Topic: Reaching out in the time of COVID-19

Facilitator

Opened Meeting 6:30 with the serenity prayer.

- The pandemic has changed the way that we live in the world and attend meetings
- We need to stay unified while honoring Tradition 1, Tradition 5, and Tradition 3
- Questions to ask ourselves:
    - With meetings being held virtually, what else can we do for the next suffering alcoholic?
    - How the responsibility statement translates during these times?
    - How are we reaching out to newcomers?
    - How well is it working?
    - What more can we do?
- Guest speakers:
    - Newcomer who had largely gotten sober during COIVD
    - Member who also works at local treatment center
    - Central Office Manager will share statistics
- Poll to see how many people had gotten sober during pandemic
    - Results: If they returned after relapsed and were able to get in recovery again ?
    - Results: Members are attending 93% more meetings than before the pandemic and online meetings.

Guest Speaker Newcomer

- Got sober June 6th
- His first meeting was on Zoom on June 8th
- Found many other websites to go to meetings 24 hrs./day 7 days/week
- Great for fellowship and incredible for a newcomer
- Zoom format very user friendly
- Far easier to get sober and find a fellowship through the meetings on Zoom.
- He and sponsor meet once a week over Zoom.
- Extremely grateful for the whole AA community and feels very connected.
- Can go to meetings any time all over the world
- Helped to feel that I am not alone and in AA.
- The support guidance is incredible, and AA has saved his life.
- Zoom has made a profound impact on his sobriety and recovery

Guest Speaker – Member who works at Treatment Center

- As a e professional working in field of substance abuse most important things are safety.
- Treatment has been changed and way we offer treatment as a result of the Pandemic.
- It has been a cultural shift and it has taken a while to change.
- We were moving at a slower pace to get into telehealth, but we needed to speed up due to COVID.
- Residential attendance is from 64 to 8 clients
- Working with some of the other agencies to re-establish our relationships 12-step community
- Our whole world has changed with how we related to the rest of the world and work with Alcoholics Anonymous
- He knows importance of the AA program and working on re-establishing ourselves with the 12th step communities. We even have residential classroom within we have remote services gong on. So many changes as a result of the pandemic.
- The first positive case turned into about 16 cases over a period of time. Chronically sanitizing and counseling other clients the importance of how to protect themselves
- I attend Zoom meetings and have found so much value in them and is such a benefit that we have this today. We will be working even harder to partner with

Central Office Manager – Statistics/Charts

- Thanked all for attending the meeting
- Presented data, statistics, and charts from the OIG volunteer activity
- Giving round numbers and how we gathered data
- The info is from march till October 3,097 - 297 came after hours and only
- How we were reaching the newcomer since of June
- 53 12 step calls
- 96 people as newcomers and 37 handles with after hours calls
- 40 newcomers were helped with HELP CHAT and grateful bobo got us to do this
- We have also had 67 people say that they needed help with Zoom and OIG

Volunteer for Oahu Central Office

- Experienced phone angel was told that we could be the first contact for someone calling AA
- Need to know what to do and how to listen and
- Assess who they are and who to refer them to.
- Sometimes people just need to talk – although we don't counsel
- Usually walk them through zoom and treatment centers.
- Most want help for their loved ones that have a drinking problem
- Have much gratitude for being able to help and refer them to AA

Newcomer with 164 days

- Got clean and sober during the pandemic.
- He had never been in AA; it was just talked about at treatment
- Lives of island where they don't have a lot of meetings.
- Homegroup and new service commitment is for a meeting on Oahu
- The fellowship has saved their life
- Knows it's one day at a time program
- So grateful for AA

Member just moved to Hawaii

- Thanked OIG for helping to get connected to AA
- Was worried about relapse after recent move from CA
- Grateful to have gotten into service in Hawaii even if I have never set foot in a meeting.

Newcomer with 18 days

- Grateful for the amount of zoom meetings
- It has made accessibility to meetings and other members easier

Member who works with homeless population

- Challenge – many clients don't have access to smart phones or computers
- They have limitations they can only go to one hour
- They used to be able to go to other meetings by their home but now they only have access one a day

Member that attends Oahu meetings daily

- Seeing a large numbers of members counting days
- Happy Hour meeting inspires with all of its experience strength and hope.
- Didn't know OIG offered help with Zoom – so valuable for senior citizens

Member from Happy Hour

- They have had 73 newcomers, 29 regular visitors and 18 new homegroup members in service.
- We announce sponsorship and encourage them to stay after the meetings
- We can create break out rooms for women or men
- We have at least 809 members that always give out their phone numbers on chat
- We try to see how we can shower them with love and support and not let them fall through the cracks

Member who moved off island

- Came to Oahu meetings for 3.5 months – has 11 months now
- Lives in San Jose but the county but Hawaii let me connect to where I'm from
- Attends Happy Hour
- Knows 15 of the participants who are on the meeting tonight
- Never thought could have so many connections with so many people virtually
- Had contempt prior to investigation about on-line meetings, but now has virtual homegroup and is of service there
- Feels lucky to have those in person

Long time AA Member

- Never been prouder of the fellowship for the way we have handled the pandemic
- Impressed we are still able to reach out to the newcomer
- The intergroup to pulling things together and keeping the hand of AA out there with face to face not happening.
- Not sure how to accommodate homeless and mentally ill

Member question about Intergroup Finances

- Central office Shared the 3rd qtr. review – we are $2k above projected budget
- Continue to need more individuals and groups contributions
- One group decided to have an October dance to also support central office

Facilitator

- Discussed how elections for service can be ran virtually
- Facilitator shared other software to see if we could use or make sure that it would still be in the spirit of the traditions

Member of 12 coconuts

- Congratulated newcomers
- Suggests making an online pamphlet/meeting guide to give to treatment centers
- Puts name and number in Zoom to reach out to newcomers
- Glad to hear people are getting sponsors through Zoom
- Volunteers at central office and has helped people connect to Zoom and the OIG website

OIG IT Support Member

- Holds a Slack Training for OIG volunteers every Tuesday night at 5:30pm if you are interested
- Tech team can help with Zoom training and even show those how to dial in with regular phones for meetings that allow that feature

San Diego Resident

- Witnessed a park meeting with a group of no less than 50 people elbow to elbow no masks and giving out chips with sponsors - in San Diego it is breaking the law.
- AA is only vulnerable from our own members.
- Glad to hear about so many newcomers that were speaking
- There are also meetings that are going underground, holding meetings indoors
- We need to give up selfishness and self-centeredness in order to maintain our unity.

Facilitator

- Thanks to tech group and to the entire Intergroup Steering committee.
- Thanks to all of the guest speakers and for all of the participation of the members.
- If you have suggestions for other town halls, please forward to Oahu central office

Closed with the responsibility statement