

2006 – 2008

Fellowship Issue Discussions

How are leaders identified, cultivated, and supported?

As many of you know, we've spent the last two years having fellowshipwide discussions about leadership in Narcotics Anonymous. World services has also had numerous discussions about ways to encourage and develop leadership, and we've had follow-up discussions with delegates at the World Service Conference. We've received valuable input, and we've been working on ways to develop a more systematic approach to encouraging leadership in Narcotics Anonymous.

Many of us already encourage leadership through some form of training and mentoring. "Leadership cultivation" is simply a way to make these practices a standard part of how we function. What follows here are some ideas of what we think a leadership-cultivation system in Narcotics Anonymous would look like—yet, we know we can only do so much. We also need your real examples of how you mentor members in your area or region, in your home group, or with your sponsees.

What seems most clear is that leaders are cultivated through the support and mentoring of other members.

Send us your experience with cultivating leaders and let us know what you think of the leadership strategies outlined.

Leadership Cultivation

Training: This approach would allow members to attend sessions that provide training in how to be an effective facilitator, how to have productive discussions, and how to encourage participation in these service discussions.

Leadership identification and development: An identification method would not only delegate to local members the responsibility of finding leaders within their NA communities, but also encourage teaching and mentoring to take place throughout the service structure. This approach would also create opportunities for people to get involved and provide ways for trusted servants to match talent to task.

Communication tools: This approach is designed to improve the ways we communicate. We can provide tools that help members share their best practices. We can also discover and frame the kind of information that is most needed.

Train-the-trainer: A train-the-trainer strategy would help members work with one another to teach leadership, facilitation, and communication skills.

We know that we can only accomplish this through a partnership with regional delegates, and we anticipate providing RDs with support and a number of tools to begin implementing these approaches. Supporting leaders in NA requires all of us to begin thinking of ourselves as mentors, trainers, and teachers. After all, one of the goals of an effective leader is to nurture and support other leaders. We look forward to hearing how you've been a teacher or mentor to others in Narcotics Anonymous.



Go to www.na.org/discussion_boards.htm for all the latest info on Issue Discussion Topics, and participate in Online Issue Discussion Bulletin Boards!

There will be session profiles to help with facilitating these discussions and electronic forms to submit information; both will be available at www.na.org. These tools are routinely updated, so be sure to check the website for new information.