

INTERGROUP 101 – Questions and Answers

“Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Intergroup But Didn’t Know Who to Ask”

1. WHAT IS AN INTERGROUP?

An Intergroup is a partnership among AA groups in a community with the sole purpose of carrying the message of AA to the alcoholic who still suffers.

2. ARE INTERGROUPS A PART OF AA AS A WHOLE?

Yes. In fact, according to the AA Guidelines for Intergroups, at the time the General Service Conference was formed, there were already well-established Intergroups/Central Offices throughout the US and Canada.

The AA pamphlet: “The AA Group – Where It All Begins” states: “Although local intergroups operate independently of AA’s worldwide service structure, they are a vital part of the Fellowship.” (Page 35)

The AA Service Manual, p. S37, states: “Central offices (Intergroups) provide local services; general service committees maintain the link between the A.A. groups and the A.A. General Service Board by means of the Conference. So these two separate but vital service structures coexist in mutual cooperation and harmony.”

In addition, Intergroups are listed in the AA Directories published by AA World Services, as well as in AA Area Directories.

3. WHY DO WE HAVE AN INTERGROUP IN THE GOLDEN ISLES?

Intergroup exists solely to aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. In 1966, there were two AA groups in Glynn County. At the suggestion of T.C.H, the original group (the Brunswick Group, founded in 1948) hired an answering service for AA and began publishing a newspaper ad in the Brunswick News classified section: “If you want to drink, that’s your business. If you want to stop, that’s ours. Alcoholics Anonymous: 265-0892”. This ad ran for many years and was responsible for many alcoholics finding their way to AA.

By 1982, AA in Glynn and McIntosh Counties had grown to nine groups and the need was apparent for coordination of many areas of 12-Step work. Up until that time, the Brunswick Group had been solely responsible for paying for the answering service and newspaper ads, and it was time for the other groups to share the responsibility. Don L. requested a meeting to discuss forming an Intergroup. The meeting was held at the Alco Service Club, with approximately 40 people attending. It was decided to form an Intergroup, and the Glynn County Intergroup was born. The individual groups began contributing toward the newspaper ad and answering service fees, and the new Intergroup began to publish a meeting schedule and a newsletter. PI/CPC, Institutional and other Committees were formed to carry out 12 Step work.

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In 2007, the AA Groups in Wayne County requested that their meetings be included in the meeting schedules, and they thus became members of the Intergroup. To reflect our growth, Glynn County Intergroup’s name was changed to “Golden Isles AA Intergroup”, to include Glynn, McIntosh and Wayne Counties.

By 2010, there were 35 groups in Intergroup’s three-county area. The AA telephone hot-line number has remained the same since 1966 and still serves as the initial contact point for many alcoholics seeking help.

4. HOW DOES INTERGROUP CARRY THE AA MESSAGE OF RECOVERY?

Some of the ways Intergroup carries on 12-Step Work for the groups:

1. Maintains a 24-hour telephone hot-line to handle 12 Step calls and inquiries about AA in the community.
2. Keeps an up-to-date list of AA members willing to answer the phone and handle 12-Step calls.
3. Prints and distributes current AA meeting schedules at least twice a year.
4. Carries AA meetings and AA literature and information into local treatment facilities and correctional institutions.
5. Cooperates with the professional community by providing information about AA to physicians, nurses, judges, lawyers, law enforcement personnel, employers, teachers, clergy and others who might come in contact with the suffering alcoholic.
6. Provides AA literature to public libraries, doctors’ offices, hotels and motels, public health clinics, colleges and schools.
7. Publishes a newsletter, and sends out flyers for group activities via e-mail.
8. Maintains a web site to publish meeting and other information for the general public.
9. Hosts events – such as an annual Picnic and Christmas Party - so that all AA groups in the community can come together to celebrate sobriety, and so that the newcomer can see that there is such a thing as “sober fun”.

5. WHO PAYS FOR ALL THIS?

A.A. groups contribute voluntarily to finance the activities of Intergroup. A group may choose to make their contributions by setting aside fixed sums from their regular collections. Some groups pledge a fixed amount, which is paid periodically. Some pay a percentage of their group treasury after paying operating expenses and setting aside a “prudent reserve”. Individual AA members may also contribute on their own, if they wish. This assures the Intergroup of a regular income, and helps it to meet its obligations on behalf of all the groups. More information on contributing to Intergroup can be found in the AA pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix”, pages 7 and 12.

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6. IS THERE A CERTAIN AMOUNT THAT GROUPS WHO CONTRIBUTE ARE REQUIRED TO GIVE?

No. Each group is autonomous and may contribute whatever amount their informed group conscience dictates. In the “Self Support...” pamphlet there are some suggested percentages that groups might send to the various components of the AA service structure, but these are merely suggestions. Group contributions may be given to Group Reps to take to Intergroup meetings, or may be sent directly to the Intergroup Treasurer at P.O. Box 397, Brunswick, GA 31521

7. DOES A GROUP HAVE TO CONTRIBUTE TO INTERGROUP IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE SERVICES?

No. Occasionally there are groups that do not support Intergroup. In these cases, the spirit of contributing voluntarily, which prevails throughout A.A., applies. If groups do not pay their share of the costs, they are not denied the services of the Intergroup. They are listed in the meeting schedules, are represented as part of AA in the community via the website, and are encouraged to take part in Intergroup activities, etc. Intergroup adheres to the philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous, and is always inclusive, never exclusive.

More information on contributions is available in “AA Guidelines: Central or Intergroup Offices” AA Publication 5M — 1/08 (PS), and also in the “Self Support” pamphlet mentioned above.

8. HOW CAN I HAVE A SAY IN WHAT GOES ON AT INTERGROUP?

Each group is encouraged to elect a Group Representative (Group Rep) to participate in Intergroup meetings and activities. If your group does not have a Group Rep, you could find out why and encourage them to do so. Intergroup meets on the 1st Tuesday of every month at the Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce on Glynn Avenue in Brunswick. All AA’s are welcome to attend and participate in Intergroup business, but only Group Reps have a vote. A copy of the Intergroup By-Laws is available on the website: www.goldenislesaa.org.

9. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN INTERGROUP AND A “CENTRAL OFFICE?”

The terms are used interchangeably, and mean the same thing. In larger cities, the Intergroup actually maintains a physical “office” (Central Office) staffed by AA members, where the hot line is located, and various AA materials and information are sold and/or distributed. In Glynn County, we have tried twice – once in the early ‘80’s and again in the late ‘90’s – to maintain and staff an office, but it turned out both times to be unfeasible because we were unable to staff the office properly. Perhaps this is something we will re-visit in the future.