

Introduction to the Twelve Concepts for SAA Service

Having our own Twelve Concepts has been a dream for some of our members since at least the 1990s. For others, the AA Concepts were deeply beloved and seen as irreplaceable. After all, we had used the AA Concepts for decades to guide our principles of service. Eventually, a Twelve Concepts subcommittee of the Conference Steering Committee was created in 2015 to explore this issue.

At first glance, some thought we could just replace the phrase "AA" with "SAA" and otherwise copy AA's Twelve Concepts, but with our service structure so different from AA's, and respecting AA's desire for us to write our own concepts rather than adapting theirs for our fellowship, it became clear that we indeed needed to commit to the long process of creating our own concepts for service.

In developing our own concepts, we made it a practice to study the Twelve Concepts and corresponding chapter explanations from a variety of other twelve-step fellowships, including AA. This was useful in gaining both a broad and deep understanding of the principles underlying the concepts and how to apply them to the specifics of our own program.

As we considered our service structure and the spiritual ideas we felt needed to be included in our concepts, we spent significant time discussing whether our job was to write the concepts to reflect the current state of our fellowship, or to write them looking towards an ideal - what we as a fellowship aspire to be. We found we straddled the delicate line between describing our unique service structure and holding a vision of international service at its most inspirational.

Since AA has three legacies — recovery, embodied in the Twelve Steps; unity, embodied in the Twelve Traditions; and service, embodied in the Twelve Concepts — and since the steps and traditions are based on both practical experience and spiritual ideals, we decided to write our third legacy, the Twelve Concepts for SAA Service, in the same spirit.

We realize that as our fellowship matures, we will continue to build on our unique strengths as we move closer and closer to the ideals expressed here. We believe that study of the Twelve Concepts should be viewed as a guide to what service in our fellowship, at its best, can look like.

Although primarily written with service at the international level in mind, the Twelve Concepts are meant to embody spiritual principles that will be useful to members doing service at any level. Our concepts build on the spiritual principles embodied in the steps and traditions such as unity, humility, and servant leadership. Added to these are spiritual principles unique to the concepts that inform service beyond the group level, such as right of decision, right of participation, and right of appeal.

SAA is unique in history and structure, and our particular application of the concepts, though originally taken from AA, has grown organically over time. This document helps to preserve our history as well as point to our future. Our hope and wish is that studying these concepts will help future trusted servants to learn from the mistakes and successes of the past, ensuring that SAA will always be there to serve the sex addict who still suffers.

Principles Associated with Each Concept

Concept 1: Unity, Responsibility, Authority

Concept 2: Authority, Delegation, Conscience

Concept 3: Right of decision, Trust, Leadership

Concept 4: Right of participation, Harmony, Equality, Humility

Concept 5: Right of appeal, Consideration, Respect

Concept 6: Delegation, Responsibility, Authority, Servant Leadership,
Stewardship, Prudence

Concept 7: Empowerment, Legal vs. Spiritual Authority, Balance,
Responsibility

Concept 8: Communication, Inclusivity

Concept 9: Servant leadership, Wisdom, Vision, Humility, Fairness, Ability,
Good judgment, Rotation

Concept 10: Accountability, Clarity, Efficiency, Empowerment

Concept 11: Rotation, Humility, Efficiency, Dedication

Concept 12: (preliminary) Prudence, Balance, Humility, Equality, Harmony,
Mercy, and Democracy

THE TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR SAA SERVICE

1. The final responsibility and ultimate authority for SAA service rests in the group conscience of the member groups.
2. The SAA member groups delegate to their service boards and committees the authority necessary to fulfill their assigned responsibilities. The groups have empowered the Conference to be the active voice and effective conscience of the whole Fellowship.
3. Granting each service entity in SAA the right of decision, within the scope of the defined authority entrusted to that entity, makes effective leadership possible.
4. Carefully balanced participation guides SAA service at every level. Our traditional "right of participation" ensures effective decision-making on the basis of group conscience and is the key to harmony in all our service work.
5. Throughout the SAA service structure, there is a traditional "right of appeal," which encourages clear processes for the consideration of minority opinion and for handling grievances.
6. At the level of our international services, the Conference acknowledges that the Board of Trustees holds primary responsibility for the fiduciary, legal, and administrative actions of the ISO.
7. The Bylaws of the International Service Organization is a legal instrument, empowering the Trustees to manage and conduct international service affairs. The Conference also enjoys legal rights and responsibilities, insofar as the Bylaws establish Conference delegates as members of a non-profit corporation with all of those rights and obligations. However, the Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon the spirituality of our traditions and the power of the SAA purse for its final effectiveness. Thus, the Conference exists as a legal entity established by the Bylaws, yet governed by spiritual principles as set out in the Charter.
8. Our service structure depends on open and transparent communication throughout the fellowship, drawing on the spiritual principle of inclusivity.
9. Effective leaders in our organization exemplify servant leadership at every level. Well-chosen leaders with sound leadership qualities, as well as fair and appropriate methods of selecting those leaders, are indispensable to the functioning of our fellowship.
10. The responsibility for each service task needs a well-defined scope, a single point of decision, and mechanisms for accountability. In this way duplication of effort is avoided, while at the same time service committees are responsible for keeping those they serve informed of their work.

11. The Board of Trustees of the International Service Organization, and by extension the administration of the ISO as a whole, should always be assisted by the best possible standing committees, executives, staffs, and consultants. Serious care and consideration will always be given to the qualifications, selection, rotation, authority, and responsibility of all volunteer and appointed committee members; and to the compensation, selection, rotation, rights, and duties of all paid staff.
12. General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the Conference shall observe the spirit of the SAA Traditions: taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Sex Addicts Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action. (The warranties are also referenced in Section IX of the SAA Conference Charter. These warranties are adopted with gratitude from the AA Twelve Concepts for World Service.)