

Motion from the Report and Charter Committee for the 2017 Winter Assembly

The Report and Charter Committee moves that the NIA 20 Assembly approve the revised service manual titled the "Northern Illinois Service Manual – Area 20".

Background Material:

The abridged and unabridged versions of the NIA Service Manual were originally a combination of documents created by several past trusted servants and most recently maintained and updated by our NIA Service Manual Custodian Judd W., whose efforts were significant in providing and printing copies to distribute to all GSR's and trusted servants. After many area discussions and motions about what to use and distribute, in 2014 our Area Chair asked the Report and Charter Committee to review the abridged and unabridged versions of the NIA Service Manual and create a document that could serve all purposes.

Since these manuals were a combination of several different documents, there were important parts in both that were worded in different ways, each for their intended audience. Putting the pieces back together, updating the processes that had changed and formatting the information so that it flowed in a sequential manner was difficult. Even though we had 7 or 8 different pairs of eyes, each with their own perspective, knowledge and level of experience, after almost three years of review we feel that it is ready for the NIA 20 GSR's and trusted servants to put this material to use, knowing that it may not be perfect. The additional changes you may see will be in your hands as you work with these guidelines provided to complete the service work that keeps our program alive in NIA 20 for us and future generations.

This document is posted on NIA 20 website on the bottom of the Area Guidelines page in a new section, "Draft Guidelines": <http://aa-nia.org/guides/>. Thank you all for the continued service and support.

Yours' in service,

Carol H., Report and Charter Committee Chair
Bill E. - GSR District 28
Bill W. - Member at Large
John C. - Past Delegate
Larry S. - Past Delegate
Melissa V. - Member at Large

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Moved that the name of the Special Needs Committee be changed to Accessibilities Committee. – Tina

Background material:

From John R., Deaf Access Committees - Deaf Community Liaison: "Special needs' was created by the parents of developmentally delayed (retarded) children. This was meant to stop the kids from picking on these children.

"AA and other groups want to call every person "special needs" who have barriers to overcome. For Deaf we have a language and cultural barrier to access the AA message and program. As a blind Person the barriers are different - access may be finding the right room where the meeting is. Accessibility takes focus off "disability" and puts it on the solution to accessing the AA message and program."

The term "special needs" is simultaneously too restrictive and too broad. At first it commonly referred to dealing with certain kinds children in an educational environment. It's use gradually expanded to include almost anyone with a disability, but in a much broader sense everyone has special needs. The term has also become somewhat offensive to many people with disabilities in part because of its somewhat negative connotations.

In AA the General Service Conference Treatment/Accessibilities committee focus has historically been on the effective delivery of the AA message to all alcoholics. In recent years the gradual recognition of the wide range of human needs has resulted in changes of committee names, activities and output. For example, in 2016 the committee recommended that "the term 'Special Needs' be removed from the name of the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and throughout the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure."

At this moment aa.org days the Accessibilities desk at GSO deals with "matters regarding carrying the AA message to those who have significant barriers that must be overcome to insure full participation in A.A. These could include mental, physical, geographic, cultural, ethnic, spiritual or emotional barriers." Changing the name of our Special Needs committee to Accessibilities would reflect our intention to carry the AA message in the same way.