

MINUTES: EDRG Group Conscience - March 7, 2024

Open with Serenity Prayer - 83 members in attendance

1. **Group Rep Report-** Amanda B. for Laura B.

Laura B is attending Assembly this Saturday and will bring that report to us in April.

2. **Treasury Report-** Bill R. – as of March 1st

- \$582.00 in the treasury.
- \$397.99 was collected in February.
- \$65.99 was expended for Zoom in February.
- \$166.00 contributed to GEA.
- \$166.00 contributed to WSO-AFG.
- No other expenses in February.
- \$250.00 kept in prudent reserve.

Bill is working on creating a budget – to consider cash flow for all group expenses: Monthly Zoom - Domain name – Web Hosting. **Budget review will be added to agenda for April Group Conscience.**

3. **Group Secretary Report-**Jen R

- Thank you to Bill for emailing the Treasury numbers in advance, it is very helpful.
- This is Jen R's last GC as Group Secretary - Welcome to incoming Group Secretary Sammy !
- Rotation went really smoothly from her point of view. Really appreciate the group effort to announce and members for stepping into service. Progress not perfection.
- Welcome Jeannette – new Phone List Coordinator.

4. **Group Conscience Chair Announcements-**Amanda

- Service rotation out May last meeting, new GC Chair will begin June 1 – Welcome Dustin!
- Description of Service Position: Group Conscience Chair
 - 1-year commitment conducts GC on first Thursday of each month. 8:30-9:30-10 am
 - Completed previous service commitment to EDRG and has attended GC (reviewed minutes) because we use KBDM. Rooted in discussion and trying to achieve substantial unanimity.
 - Chat information will change starting May after GC

2. Responding to crosstalk during meeting

Our meeting format states “When you share, please refrain from crosstalk, which is generally defined as commenting on others’ shares. In keeping with our tradition of anonymity, who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here. “

Member bringing to topic GC presented the situation which prompted them to to bring this to GC. A member shared in a meeting along the lines of, “someone mentioned blue and I wanted to say something about blue” after which another member put the word “crosstalk” into the chat followed by other members replying ‘yes’ ‘totally’ ‘completely’. This felt like shaming behavior and brought up concerns about the impact on a newcomer and this not feeling like a safe meeting. It was close to the end of meeting when chat was open. Could be a one-time fluke but felt it important to bring to GC.

Question for discussion: If a member feels there has been crosstalk, how should that be communicated?

Discussion/Comments:

- It’s always good to talk about this. The crosstalk language was one of the first things put into the format along with closing the chat during the meeting. In the format, the Chair is directed to only say thank you after members share. Extra improv stuff isn’t the format.
- Unfortunately, we have a 5-min window at the end and there is that opportunity when the chat is open. Unless we close the chat for the entire meeting it’s likely we’ll have some incidents of crosstalk.
- As chair, sometimes the chat was open after the meeting, the chat was open and got cross-talky quickly, outside issues. Which is why the chat is closed in the after-meeting format.
- Extra comments are cross-talk.
- Sometimes the Chair receives direct messages. Response is for Chair to remind people of the meeting format.
- Aware that Crosstalk doesn’t exist, not in our literature or index. However, we all use the word. Autonomous. Perhaps we talk about what Crosstalk is? HP talks through other members. Someone mentions their mom, gets me thinking I talk about my mom, that isn’t crosstalk. Thinks there should be a better group definition explanation while remembering obedience to the unenforceable.
- Member shared following from alanon.org.za in the chat:
<https://www.alanon.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Service-Tool-6-Crosstalk-Loving-Interchange-1.pdf>
- On this topic also sees Chair issuing comment after share: thinking of you, sorry for your loss, as cross-talk.
- Al-anon is a loving environment. Grateful for the space. Loving interchange very important to Al-Anon. Guiding principle. People who are having a tough moment may forget that.
- If there are any derogatory things in the chat – discriminatory or hurtful in the chat that the host/chat host has ability to remove the chat. Do we want chat-host to remove the remark?

GC Chair addressed question. “Yes, chair/chat have authority to remove offensive chats.”

- After the meeting in the parking lot, share struck her. Tried to share that the person's share struck her. The chat exploded with 'crosstalk'. Luckily, she had enough recovery to not take it personally. No Crosstalk is for the meeting after as well. Concern for newcomer. Glad we are talking about it. There appears to be some confusion about 'rules' in parking lot

GC Chair addressed confusion. We maintain the same guidelines in the after-meeting as during the regular meeting.

- Has also heard advice giving, once. And did react to it in the chat. Probably was someone new to the rooms.
- Can happen innocently by a newcomer.
- Thinking about the response as something gentle. Perhaps adding language to current crosstalk statement. i.e., 'commenting on others' shares ', **either positively or negatively**'
- Comfortable either way in the after meeting as long as established/consistent.
- It's good for me to feel uncomfortable. When I realize I'm having a reaction to something happening in the meeting I get to take my discomfort to my Higher Power in the face of 'you should do this or hey leader why aren't you doing your job, I should say something. Being uncomfortable is good, recovery is there if I can sit there.
- Time in the program does not equal recovery.
- Remembering how she learned in face to face. She was gently reminded by sponsor after meeting or another member with more experience. Zoom is different. More anonymous
- Home group discussed and came up with a definition in our group conscience. It still didn't cover everything...KISS mtg defines crosstalk as advice giving, asking questions to the leader or member who is talking, having a private conversation during a traditional in person meeting or messaging a person while they are actively sharing in a zoom meeting. Also giving specific members name and sharing another member's history.
- When they were a newcomer, they did crosstalk. There was so much chaos in her brain she couldn't hear or understand the crosstalk guidance in the format. She kept coming. Months later she 'came to' and realized she was breaking the guideline. No one had said anything and she'd been allowed to come to her own learning. Her world was made up of rules and consequences and she is filled with warmth that she was allowed to have her own experience. Rules feel like safety, if we see someone breaking a rule, we jump on them.
- What we're really talking about is how to enforce the unenforceable. We could include something in the chat
- Came into program in Zoom and started in service very early. Would say, "Great share, great share." Then she was contacted privately and got offended. Luckily, she was able to be grateful for the person and grow and learn.
- Even hitting the reactions signal is crosstalk and not allowed in some other meetings

- Criticism, advice giving, it's all over our literature. It explains why we should not put up a heart. Why isn't it appropriate for chair to say 'my heart goes out to you' a member that doesn't get the reaction feels less than. Why didn't I get a heart? Fellowship of equals.
- The occurrence is Seldom. Who gets to be the arbiter of crosstalk? No one expresses themselves in a perfect way. I identify. Already in a box as to not offend. Don't mention in another fellowship. In an in-person meeting no one gets to bark out CROSSTALK in the middle of the meeting. Felt bad when it happened.
- As far as format changes, changing settings. That would be a separate discussion. Things have come up around settings in the after meeting
- Reactive and triggered, guilty of crosstalk the last year. Even as chair this has made comments on people's chair. Hearing review of Guidelines humbling. Finding chairing very stressful.
- I'm always learning about how I was affected by the disease and getting a better understanding of what a judgement is and the difference between observation and an evaluation. Revisiting or commenting positively or negatively about someone's share is crosstalk. Didn't realize. It's a process.
- There's a flow in a meeting, themes organically evolve through the shares. Saying, 'as another member said' this is evocative doesn't consider that crosstalk.

Crosstalk is subjective. EDRG currently has a definition in our format. We can consider changing that language which would be a topic for a future Group Conscience.

Closed with the Serenity Prayer 29 members in attendance.