

PRAASA PRESENTATION 2024

Panel #2 - " Utilizing the AA Membership Survey data in 12th Step Work – at the home group, district, Area, and PI/CPC Committees",

I am an alcoholic, and my name is Alex Wheatley. Currently I have the honor and privilege of serving MSCA 09 as their Delegate. My sobriety date is 1-4-13 and my home group is the Shut up and cross talk group in Torrance, CA. We meet on Tuesdays at 8pm at TLC if you're ever in town we would love to have you. A year prior to getting sober I was 16, I wrote my mom a letter. My mom Puerto Rican, normie and clueless as to how to help me read it and felt what many feel. Powerless. She had no tools, no education, no knowledge of how to help me. We failed her, we fail parents, wives, husbands, brothers, sisters, doctors, therapists, every day. If you are here you know there is an option available to those who are desperate for a solution. The survey conducted by Alcoholics Anonymous in 2022, reveals the current state of our fellowship based on the responses that were given by the random selection of groups sent out by GSO. Its purpose is to provide a wealth of data about the demographics, experiences, and needs of the fellowship. This data holds immense potential to inform and strengthen 12th Step Work across various levels of AA's service structure. This essay explores how different committees, individuals and groups can utilize the survey data to enhance their outreach, support, and effectiveness in carrying the message of recovery. Letting those who will listen know that we too are an option.

Over the course of several months, delegates frantically utilized their area servants in assistance in reaching out to groups to collect information. The most common roadblock I personally experienced as I assisted my Delegate was the number of meetings that no longer existed. I wondered, was it a mistake or did we have the wrong information ? When we did get groups that responded. They were eager to inform us how much things had changed or transformed since their inception. I pondered on this experience, as we are simply understanding our area but curious how other areas turned out. This survey had 6,000 members in the U.S and Canada as participants. To be clear it's not a census but a source of information for those who care to know how to better understand where we are at and where we would like to go. In 1968 “ The Alcoholics anonymous survey” was our very first attempt at this. 11,355 AA members answered questions about themselves. The delegates gave this recommendation, and it was taken up by 466 groups. In 1968 our purpose was to enable AA to furnish more accurate data about the fellowship and its effectiveness to the growing number of professionals, doctors, physiatrist social worker, law enforcement officials and others working in the field of

alcoholism, and to provide AA with more information about itself so that members can work more effectively in helping the many millions of alcoholics who still suffer throughout the world. They made sure to note this was made up of 5% of the groups in the U.S And Canada. As always, we have been given the greatest help to advance our cause by Non alcoholics and this survey is no exception. Being commenced from Dr. Jon L Norris, a Non -Alcoholic trustee chairman of AA board of trustees.

Following the success in 1978 we published a pamphlet called“ Where is AA”, It read the largest age group of members sober were 31- 50 we see this trend stay at a steady rate throughout the years from 51% to 36% in 2022. Those under 30 however, saw a considerable decrease in membership. In 2022 our members under 21 showed .2% when in 1986, 1989 we were steady at 3%, and on the higher end from 1992 - 2014 it ranged from 1% - 2.% . Did they grow up and make it into the next age bracket 21 - 30? Well in 2022 we decreased membership by 3%, reflecting a 9% membership rate. Where did they go ? The average age is now 52 versus 48, in 2004. The survey also reveals changes in our older demographic. They make up 19% from previous years at 18, 12 and 11%. One thing continues, more than 89% of our members have a homegroup and 80% have a sponsor. We still love our in-person meetings, but 19% love both equally. 75% have been to an online meeting. So, if you're in the 15% that haven't checked out a meeting, I dare you to give it a try.

Let's go back to the story of when I wrote my mom a letter asking for help. How did you get here ? How do many of us get here ? It was a year later of dying from the disease of alcoholism, approaching the gates of Hell, that I found myself as a senior in Highschool being admitted into a \$30,000 dollar adolescent treatment facility after typing into google “ how to stop drinking and snorting Adderall” As an uninformed future member of A.A, I was grateful that over the course of 30 days I was taken to this fellowship and my solution was revealed. I've been sober ever since. A group in my area was taking CPC presentations to middle schools, informing the students and teachers of Alcoholics Anonymous. I commend the many who take A.A into schools. Most recently we got to go to Pepperdine university sharing the great news. Our real challenge is utilizing the present means of communication to get people in touch with AA. Type in “How to stop drinking” what pops up ? 1% are finding us on the #1 thing we use on a minute-to-minute basis. The internet. Additionally, professionals such as the Medical, the Clergy and or judicial system make up the lowest amount. May this be the kick in the but to join

your local CPC and PI committee. Having a committee being able to anticipate future needs and adapt their strategies to stay relevant and effective in a changing landscape, is the focus I hope this fellowship shifts in.

A couple years ago I was in my homegroup, when a young woman in her early 20's shared an insight into her experience in Alcoholics Anonymous "she stated, "she didn't know Asian Americans were alcoholics too", she went on to express the following, "I have never seen another Asian in a meeting before, so I didn't know we were allowed in, I didn't know we also got sober, I didn't know it was okay for me to come and stay" Grateful this young woman shared her experience with us, our group went on to ensure she felt welcomed and a part of. Our homegroup looked for ways to better understand her on aa.org, left empty handed we held on to her words. We had been equipped with an experience that would march our feet to the next looking for a way out. On page 6 it states 1.2% of Alcoholics are Asians, 3.6% are Black or African American, 7.3% are Hispanic, 2.8% Native American and 87.7% Caucasian. The U.S and Canada have been founded on flocks of demographics creating communities. We go where our people are. I too didn't know Alcoholics Anonymous was in Puerto Rico where I was born. I am happy to say we are alive and well. In the 12x12, Bill said "Was it credible that A.A was to have a divorce rate lower than average", looks like we are keeping that true with 42.% married, 23% Divorced. And they say 50 % of marriages end in divorce well not in A.A. The present times reveals another update with 63% male, 35% women, .46% non-Binary and .15% other.

By effectively utilizing the AA Membership Survey data, committees at all levels can gain valuable insights and direction to enhance their 12th Step Work. This ultimately leads to a more informed, efficient, and impactful fellowship, better equipped to carry the message of AA to the still suffering alcoholic. Remember that data is a tool, not an end in itself. The ultimate goal is to use it to improve service delivery, enhance outreach efforts, and strengthen the fellowship's ability to carry the message of hope and recovery to all who need it. Is literature the problem or the way in which we provide literature? In speaking with professionals, the feedback remains the same " A.A has yet to catch up with the advances in technology." So, I challenge those to seek more of the how then the why. We have a lot of work to do. The only question I have left is when do we get started ?