



KBDM Guidelines

"As we use Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) for reaching an informed group conscience, we know that all voting members of the Conference, regardless of our different perspectives and responsibilities, will listen to all ideas and opinions, so the vote will be based on an informed group conscience. Our group conscience can only be totally informed if we all take seriously our responsibility to share all facts and opinions."

~2015 World Service Conference Summary, p. 12

"We seek spiritual guidance for our groups in the same collective wisdom. We call this a 'group conscience', the voice of the majority of members. We believe it represents the greatest good for the greatest number."

~How Al-Anon Works, p.108 - 109

There are 5 key elements to the KBDM process to reach an informed group conscience:

1. Open communication between leadership & membership

Equality

"We need only contribute our personal experience, strength, and hope honestly; listen to each other respectfully."

~Paths to Recovery, p.133

2. Common access to full information for all decision-makers

Honesty and Generosity

"These group conscience decisions involve discussion and sufficient time for members to become informed about the matter, express their opinions, offer ideas, and whenever possible, reach an unanimous decision."

~Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2006 - 2009, p.38

3. Dialogue before deliberation

Patience

"I must consider all of the facts and examine the possible consequences. I have to learn to take time and think things through."

~Paths to Recovery, p. 151

4. Existence in a culture of trust

Understanding and Trust

"We start by trusting a Higher Power and continue by learning to trust each other."

~Paths to Recovery, p.145

5. Confidence in the competency of our partners

Acceptance and Trust

We "(s)hare as equals and presume goodwill. Everyone involved has Al-Anon's best interests in mind, even though their opinions may differ."

~Talk to Each Other - Resolving Conflicts within Al-Anon

Why use KBDM?

- Allows thorough examination of issues without an end action in mind
- Uses information and principles not just opinions
- Allows for decisions to be more important than who makes the decision
- Avoids a "for and against" atmosphere
- Allows for a conversation
- Is a unifying process
- Supports Al-Anon's Three Legacies
- Provides for on-going thinking & idea development
- Helps keep us flexible in carrying out our work
- Allows time and effort in collection of information to help us make decisions
- Sometimes just having information lets a group know if it wants to move forward on an issue or not

**Decisions are not always necessary-
Information is.**

KBDM Process Overview

Step One: Framing the Topic

Bring the topic to the group using the Framing Worksheet. The group will have the opportunity to gather more information or move directly to Step 3.

Step Two: Gather Information

This may include forming a committee to gather information, answer the 5 KBDM Questions and disseminate information to the decision-making body.

Step Three: Informed Group Discussion on Topic

The group will have the opportunity to ask & answer questions and discuss & deliberate on the topic.

Step Four:

Coming to an Informed Group Conscience

Once the decision-making body is ready, a vote may be taken.



KBDM Guidelines

Step One: Framing The Topic

Framing provides background history, relevance (why we're discussing the topic) & context (how it fits current circumstances) to a topic which brings clarity, focus and perspective when presenting the topic to the group. The goal is for all meeting members to have the same information for review prior to discussion of the topic at the formal meeting and to provide sufficient information for good discussion.

The framing worksheet must be completed to the best of the submitter's ability and given to the Chairperson prior to the meeting to provide time for clarification of materials, if needed.

General Guidelines for filling out the framing worksheet:

- Avoid drawing any conclusions - set the background so the conclusion can come from the discussion.
- Consider personal thoughts or experiences if they assist in clarifying, lending credibility or illustrating a point. Please keep it simple and consider the AI-Anon Legacies.

Framing The Topic Worksheet

1. Create a title for your topic. It can be a question or a statement that needs clarification.

Topic for discussion: _____

2. Summarize why you brought this question/topic forward to the group. Relevance and Context - Why are we having this discussion now? Why is this discussion important?

Summary: _____

3. Include any available background information on the topic. Sources could include but are not limited to WSO, AWSC, Group Records, CAL (Conference Approved Literature), our AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual or past meeting minutes which may include relevant past motions or discussions related to the topic.

Historical Background Information: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO CHAIRPERSON

DATE SUBMITTED: _____
(To be filled out by Chairperson)



KBDM Guidelines

Step Two: The 5 KBDM Questions

The group has decided to pursue the topic further. **The 5 KBDM questions** are used to gather information to provide further insight into the topic and a common basis for discussion within the group. The 5 KBDM Questions may be completed by an individual or a committee. The 5 KBDM Questions and all relevant background information must be completed and submitted to the Chairperson. The Chairperson will distribute this information to all members of the decision-making body. The goal is for all meeting members to have the same information for review prior to discussion of the topic at the formal meeting and to provide sufficient information for good discussion.

General Guidelines for filling out the 5 KBDM Questions:

- Remember to keep an open mind. Answering these questions may bring out different aspects and insights that many of us didn't think about before.
- Avoid drawing conclusions - set the background so the conclusion can come from the discussion.
- Resources for answering questions may include WSO Guidelines, The Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, other member's experience, past meeting minutes, Area and district records, and Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

The 5 KBDM Questions

Question 1: What do we know about our members' or prospective members' needs, wants, and preferences that is relevant to this topic?

Thoughts for answering this question: What purpose would it serve? Is it necessary? Is it helpful?

Question 2: What do we know about our resources that is relevant to this topic?

Thoughts for answering this question: What are our finances and can we afford it? Do we have enough volunteers to make it happen? Do we have any background information in our archives that can help us answer this question? What about membership participation?

Question 3: What do we know about our current realities and our fellowship's environment that are relevant to this topic?

Thoughts for answering this question: How would this affect our meeting? How could this affect our fellowship? Newcomers? Al-Anon as a whole? Does technology play a role? What do we know about the evolving dynamics of the world? Has this topic been discussed previously and what was that discussion?

Question 4: What are the pros and cons? In other words, are our choices consistent with our spiritual principles?

Thoughts for answering this question: The advantages of this might be...? The disadvantages might be...? How do our three legacies apply? What are the implications?

Question 5: What do we wish we knew about this topic?

Thoughts for answering this question: Is it legal? Will it help us fulfill our primary purpose? Have other Areas, districts or groups discussed this? Do we need additional information before moving forward? If so, what?

To assist in answering these questions, reaching out to group members, speaking with your service sponsor or reviewing the KBDM Examples on pages 5 - 7 may be helpful.



KBDM Guidelines

Step Three: Informed Group Discussion Step Four: Coming to an Informed Group Conscience

Step Three: Informed Group Discussion on Topic

The following is the suggested format for running a an informed group discussion on a topic.

Present the Topic

The KBDM Topic Presenter (Chairperson or appointed presenter for discussion) will:

- present the topic
- inquire if all members have received background and framing documents
- provide documents if necessary

Ask & Answer Questions

During the verbal information exchange, the KBDM Topic Presenter will:

- invite all members to come to the microphone to ask questions as needed to gain clarity on the topic
- answer questions if they can, request a specific member to respond to the question or allow anyone who has direct knowledge to answer the question
- encourage members to hold their thoughts or opinions until the Discussion & Deliberation section

Members shall:

- ask questions in the form of Who, What, When, Where, Why, How, Is, etc. to gain clarity
- refrain from expressing opinions

Summarize the Information

Once all the questions have been asked, the KBDM Topic Presenter will call for summation by asking members what they have heard. Often, new questions arise during summation. The KBDM Topic Presenter will answer questions if they can, request a specific member to respond to the question or allow anyone who has direct knowledge to answer the question.

Discussion & Deliberation

During discussion & deliberation, the KBDM Topic Presenter will:

- invite members to the microphone to share opinions, feelings or concerns on the topic
- read the recommendation from a committee concerning the topic if applicable
- answer questions if they can, request a specific member to respond to the question or allow anyone with direct knowledge to answer the question

Members shall:

- share their opinions, feelings or concerns on the topic
- limit their sharing to two minutes and one time at the microphone
- ask questions at any time for clarification

Step Four:

Coming to an Informed Group Conscience

The following is the suggested format for coming to an informed group conscience decision on a topic.

After discussion, the Chairperson may ask the following questions:

- Has everyone asked all the questions needed for clarity?
- Have your ideas been voiced in this discussion?
- Have all minority opinions been heard?
- Does everyone feel they thoroughly understand the topic?
- Does everyone feel that an informed group conscience decision can take place?
- Is it clear?
- Is it accurate?
- Can you live with it?

If responses are yes, the Chairperson will ask:

- Is the group ready to take some action?

If responses are no, the Chairperson will ask:

- How does the group wish to proceed?

Action Examples

Some examples of possible actions may include:

- writing a motion
 - to accept...
 - to approve...
 - to amend...
 - to insert or add...
 - to strike out...
 - to strike out and insert...
 - to recommend that...
 - to authorize...
 - to table...
 - to call the question
- assigning a committee to further research the topic or make a recommendation
- taking a consensus to maintain status quo (choose to do nothing)
- tabling the topic by motion to another date
- approving action that requires additional action (For example: The Alateen Requirements document is approved; additional action requires approval from the WSO with the possibility of Area approval of any suggested changes from the WSO)



KBDM Guidelines

Example One: Coffee Maker

This example is intended to demonstrate how the guideline might be used by a group (*be it at the group, district or Area level*) to reach an informed group conscience. As with all guidelines these are only suggestions.

Step One: Framing the Topic

There's a topic that a member wants brought to the group. First, fill out the Framing Worksheet. Then give the Framing Worksheet to the person who creates the agenda for the meeting. That may be a Secretary, District Representative, or Chairperson for the group.

Guidelines for filling out the framing worksheet:

- Avoid drawing any conclusions - set the background so the conclusion can come from the discussion.
- Consider personal thoughts or experiences if they assist in clarifying, lending credibility or illustrating a point. Please keep it simple and consider the AI-Anon Legacies.

Framing The Topic Worksheet

1. Create a title for your topic. It can be a question or a statement that needs clarification.

Topic for discussion: The group would like to purchase a coffee maker

2. Summarize why you brought this question/topic forward to the group. Relevance and Context - Why are we having this discussion now? Why is this discussion important?

Summary: Members requested it at last month's business meeting.

They offer coffee at other meetings. We had one and miss it.

It could attract new members and/or be seen as welcoming to new members.

3. Include any available background information on the topic. Sources could be from WSO, AWSC, Group Records, CAL (Conference Approved Literature), our Service Manual or past meeting minutes which may include relevant past motions or discussions related to the topic.

Historical Background Information:

The group had a coffee maker a couple of years ago.

It broke and was never replaced.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO CHAIRPERSON

DATE SUBMITTED: _____
(To be filled out by Chairperson)

Answering the 5 KBDM Questions

1. What do we know about our member's or prospective members' needs, wants, and preferences that is relevant to purchasing a coffee maker?

- Members are requesting it.
- Hospitality - may be more welcoming to newcomers.
- It may be an opportunity to give a group member a service position.

2. What do we know about our resources that is relevant to this topic?

- We currently have \$163 in our budget, plus \$50 ample reserve. We have 12 regular members and four of those currently hold service positions. In 2003, our group purchased a 12-cup coffee maker for \$50. It broke in 2011 and was never replaced.

3. What do we know about our current realities and our fellowship's environment that are relevant to this topic?

- Members have come to expect coffee at meetings.
- Membership in our group may have dropped because we don't offer coffee.
- Prospective members may find coffee to be welcoming. Other meetings serve coffee and have seen an increase in membership.
- We checked with facility the and we can have consumer grade (as opposed to industrial) coffee maker.

4. What are the pros and cons for purchasing a coffee maker? In other words, are our choices consistent with our spiritual principles?

Pros:

- Create service opportunity - Concept 10
- Attract new members - Tradition 11
- Fellowship and happy members - Tradition 1
- People might come earlier and on time because they're not stopping to pick up coffee before the meeting - Tradition 1

Cons:

- Supplies cost, would be an added group expense - Tradition 7, Warranty 1
- Need someone to come early to make coffee - Con. 4
- Not everyone is interested in coffee - Tradition 1
- May need more storage space - Tradition 7

5. What do we wish we knew about this topic?

- What size coffee maker would be needed.
- Would our members support a new service position?

Step Two: Gather Information

After the topic has been placed on the agenda, the group will review the topic for discussion. The group may decide to have discussion after reviewing the Framing Worksheet. In that case, the group would skip Step Two and move directly to Step Three.

However, the group may decide more background information on the topic is needed. In this case, the group may decide to form a committee or ask for a volunteer to gather information, answer the 5 KBDM Questions and present that information back to the decision-making body.



KBDM Guidelines

Example One: Coffee Maker Con't

Step Three: Informed Group Discussion on the Topic

At the first meeting, the framing for the purchase of a coffee maker was introduced. Group members had several questions and suggested forming a committee to answer the 5 KBDM Questions. Prior to the second meeting, responses to the KBDM Questions had been distributed to the group members.

The following verbal exchange is an example of what may have taken place at the second meeting. Questions (Q) and Responses (R)

The Chair presented the topic and asked if all members had received the background and framing documents.

Group Response - Yes from everyone.

Questions were then asked by individuals in the group.

Q1 - Is it really necessary to have a coffee maker?

R1 - For the past five years we have not had one, so it isn't necessary unless we want to consider the possible benefits discussed in the KBDM Questions.

Q2 - Is there anyone who would be willing to serve as "Coffee Person"?

R2 - A show of hands, 2 members volunteered

Q3 - If we decide to purchase a coffee maker is a 12-cup machine sufficient since we currently have 12 members?

R3a - Prior to 2011 it was sufficient.

R3b - I work for a small appliance store and there are 20-30 cup coffee makers available.

Q4 - What price range would those larger coffee makers fall into?

R4 - The cost could be well under \$50.

Q5 - We have enough money; I think we should purchase it.

R5 - Please hold that thought until we start our discussion/deliberation.

Q6 - Are there any other questions at this time? Hearing none, would someone please summarize what you heard?

R6 - We don't really need a coffee maker. We have a few people who are willing to serve if we decide to purchase one. A 12-cup machine has worked in the past but a larger machine would fall in a price range under \$50.

Q7 - Thinking about costs to the group, is anyone willing to donate some of the supplies (coffee, cream, cups, etc.)?

R7 - A show of hands indicated yes.

Step Three Continued

Chair - Are there any other questions?

As no one else raised their hand, the Chair moved to Discussion & Deliberation.

The Chair asked for opinions, feelings or concerns by individuals in the group.

Sharings from the group included:

- I don't think it's necessary or practical to purchase a coffee maker because the costs will create an ongoing expense.
- I think we should try it to see if we get more members.
- It's an expensive thing to buy just to try it.

Q8 - If it doesn't work out, what would we do with the coffee maker?

R8 - We could donate it to the Area or this facility.

- I don't drink coffee but I'm willing to try it if that's our group's decision.
- I think it's a good idea because it could give us more fellowship.

Step Four: Coming to an Informed Group Conscience

Once all questions were asked and members had voiced their opinions, feelings or concerns to the group, the Chair moved to Step Four.

Chair - Any other comments? Has everyone asked all the questions needed for clarity? Have your ideas been voiced in this discussion? Have all minority opinions been heard? Does everyone feel they thoroughly understand the topic? Does everyone feel that an informed group conscience decision can take place? Is the information clear? Is the information accurate? Can you live with a decision to purchase a coffee maker if that is our group conscience?

Group Response - Yes from everyone.

The Chair indicates the need for a motion.

Motion: To approve the purchase of a 12-cup coffee maker for under \$50. After a second, a member asks if it is necessary to stipulate it be a 12-cup maker? Responses were that it wasn't necessary. Motion: To strike the words '12-cup'. After a second, a vote was taken on the amendment followed by a vote on the motion.

What do you think the group decided?



KBDM Guidelines

Example Two: Consignment Literature

Step One: Framing the Topic

There's a topic that a member wants brought to the group. First, fill out the Framing Worksheet. Then give the Framing Worksheet to the person who creates the agenda for the meeting. That may be a Secretary, District Representative, or Chairperson for the group.

- Things to remember when filling out the framing worksheet:**
- Avoid drawing any conclusions - set the background so the conclusion can come from the discussion.
 - Consider personal thoughts or experiences if they assist in clarifying, lending credibility or illustrating a point. Please keep it simple and consider the AI-Anon Legacies.

Framing The Topic Worksheet

1. Create a title for your topic. It can be a question or a statement that needs clarification.

Topic for discussion: Consignment of Literature for NH Area 35 Convention

2. Summarize why you brought this question/topic forward to the group. Relevance and Context - Why are we having this discussion now? Why is this discussion important?

Summary: There is a need to provide CAL at our Area Convention. In order to receive

CAL (Conference Approved Literature) on consignment from the MA-LDC, the Assembly

must approve taking responsibility for full payment for material not returned or lost.

The Assembly must authorize the Chair to inform the MA-LDC of our intention.

3. Include any available background information on the topic. Sources could be from WSO, AWSC, Group Records, CAL (Conference Approved Literature), our Service Manual or past meeting minutes which may include relevant past motions or discussions related to the topic.

Historical Background Information: The MA LDC has graciously allowed NH to consign

literature each year for our Convention. The consignment policy

through WSO has several limitations. The only risk involved is lost or

stolen material which would be paid for by us at a loss. This risk has been

minimal in the past with no more than \$50.00 worth of material lost years ago.

\$1000 worth of CAL is usually consigned. This has been approved each year.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO CHAIRPERSON

DATE SUBMITTED: _____

(To be filled out by Chairperson)

Step Three: Continued

Q1 - What is MA-LDC?

R1 - That stands for the Massachusetts Literature Distribution Center. They sell CAL from their Mass store.

Q2 - What dollar amount does the Convention Committee need to have approved?

R2- \$1000 should be sufficient.

Q3 - Has any literature been lost or stolen in the past?

R3 - Yes. However, the Convention proceeds have been able to cover the cost of the lost literature.

After asking if there were any other questions, the Chair asked a member to summarize what they heard.

R- The Area needs to approve the consignment of literature from the MA-LDC in the amount of \$1000 to be sold at this year's Area Convention and that we are responsible for paying for any CAL not returned. This is what we have done in the past.

The Chair asked members to share their opinions, feelings or concerns. Only one member shared:

• I think we should approve this request from the Convention Committee

Step Four: Coming to an Informed Group Conscience

Chair - Has everyone asked all the questions needed for clarity? Have your ideas been voiced in this discussion? Have all minority opinions been heard? Does everyone feel they thoroughly understand the topic? Does everyone feel that an informed group conscience decision can take place? Is the information clear? Is the information accurate? Can you live with a decision to consign literature for the convention if that is our group conscience?

Group Response - Yes from everyone.

The Chair entertained the following motion which was made and seconded:

To authorize the Area 35 Chairperson to inform the MA Area 25 Literature Distribution Center that NH Area 35 is aware that they are providing \$1,000.00 worth of Conference Approved Literature for sale at the NH Area 35 Convention to be held on (date of Convention) and that we are ultimately responsible for full payment for the material not returned to the Area 25 LDC.

What do you think the group decided?

Step Two: Gather Information

In this example, when the topic was presented to the NH Area 35 Assembly, it was felt there was no need for additional information. (i.e. the KBDM Questions were not needed to come to an informed group conscience.) The Chair moved directly to Step Three.

Step Three: Informed Group Discussion on the Topic

The following verbal exchange is an example of what may have taken place following the decision by the group to move forward with an Informed Group Discussion concerning the consignment of literature. Questions (Q) and Responses (R)

The Chair asked if there are any questions.