



CAWSO

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Dear members,

The last few months have been difficult for C.A. and its members. Most C.A. meetings have closed, some have moved online. Some members have lost jobs or been furloughed, struggling to make ends meet. Unusual regulations and restrictions have altered our way of life. Tragic losses have been suffered. Some have lost loved ones. Groups have lost members. This Board has lost two of its eleven members to Covid-19. No one has been unaffected.

On a positive note, the Fellowship has adapted quickly to the situation with hundreds of online meetings opening throughout the world. This has allowed for us to meet up across continents and time zones. Meetings have started where none previously existed. It is hoped and expected that in due course these will convert into face to face meetings and so new Areas will flourish.

Not all have been able to take advantage of online meetings, particularly newcomers, and some of our members have remained isolated. As local lockdowns ease, there will be a desire to return to "normal", but some things may stay changed. Not all meetings will reopen, not all will be at the same location. Some will remain online, and some members will favor those. Some new groups will form. As meetings restart, we must take care in how we proceed.

We have some general suggestions regarding the conduct of reopened meetings but remind members to be aware of and follow local rules. Our Traditions do not override local law. This has not hit everywhere the same, nor in the same timeframe, but in general:

- Follow local rules on gatherings. Your venue may also have rules; follow them as well.
- Follow local orders regarding masks, gloves and such, social distancing, and capacity limits.
- Members should not go to a meeting sick, or if family members are sick. Find an online meeting instead.
- If you or a family member is in a high-risk group (e.g. immune-compromised), consider online meetings.
- Consider the needs of members when setting out food and coffee or tea.
- Should a locale or venue require logging of all meeting participants, the resulting loss of anonymity is a matter of some concern. We suggest that in such a situation the meeting be held in a venue without that requirement, if possible, or held online.

Please bear in mind that individual circumstances may be quite different and where one member may be comfortable with physical contact (such as hugging or holding hands), another may not. They may be vulnerable themselves or live with a vulnerable family member. They are not obliged to explain their situation. We hope that love of our fellows and tolerance of different circumstances and views will allow all those who wish to attend a face to face meeting to do so.

Some existing meetings that moved over to an online presence may wish to continue offering online access even after they return to physical meetings. Such Groups should allow physical attendees to protect their anonymity, with any camera aimed so that members do not have to appear.

As we go forward the future is uncertain, and some things will stay changed. Always remember our common purpose and our common welfare. The Steps and the Fellowship brought each of us through worse times than these, often the worst times in our lives, and they will get us through this, too.

Be well,

Your World Service Board of Trustees