

## **Service Sponsors and Our Trusted Servants**

Many of us have sponsors who are invaluable for our personal recovery. For some of us, a sponsor is a guide to steer us through the insanity of the painful self-will that kept us from finding a better way to live. What is a service sponsor and why may we need one? A service sponsor is similar to a personal recovery sponsor. This would be a member who has and continues to do service, studies the traditions and concepts, and applies them to their service work. We may see something in them that could help us grow in service and in recovery. We may want to ask ourselves a few questions.

### **Do I need a service sponsor?**

- Am I doing service?
- If so, do I work well with others in service?
- Am I struggling in a service position?
- When doing service, do I always try to get my way thinking I know best?
- Does my desire to be a perfectionist sometimes lead to control issues?
- Do I use the word "I" when trying to prove my point?
- Have I studied the traditions and concepts in depth to get a better understanding of them?
- Am I familiar with the Guides to Local and World Services and how they apply in service?
- When I problem-solve, do I look to the principles for answers?

By reflecting on service and service relationships, you may decide you need a service sponsor. Some recovery sponsors may be willing and have the knowledge to also be your service sponsor. A discussion with your sponsor can help you decide.

### **What should I look for in a service sponsor?**

Someone who

- practices the traditions and concepts in their service work.
- has the ability to problem solve during a group conscience.
- uses the guides to find answers and shares that knowledge with others.
- encourages sponsees and others to find answers for themselves.
- seeks solutions rather than dwelling on the problem, and
- is a team player who respects others' opinions even when they don't agree.

You may not feel a service sponsor is necessary, but you may find being of service can enhance your personal recovery. Learning how to work with others and how to deal with difficult people can extend beyond service relationships and apply to our lives outside the program.

### **Why may we need a service sponsor?**

- To help us find answers in our principles
- To help us learn how to deal with struggles in service bodies and committees
- To show us why traditions and concepts help us
- To challenge us to do better

When we service-sponsor ourselves, we have the same self-will steering the ship.

Just like a personal recovery sponsor, we should not put our service sponsor on a pedestal. False expectations of a sponsor can lead to resentments. It is appropriate to have a conversation to discuss our needs and hear what a service sponsor may expect of us. We are all equal in Nar-Anon. Service sponsors should reflect humble service. Their role is not to give us the answers, but rather show us how to find the answers and encourage us to look to our traditions and concepts in all our service affairs.

### **A member shares:**

*Just as being a sponsor is an honor, so is service sponsorship. It is an honor to help someone who has seen something in me they want. When someone asks me to be their service sponsor, I ask why they feel they need one. Sometimes they tell me the service work they are doing is difficult, from self-willed individuals to ideas that go against our traditions or primary purpose. With my personal recovery sponsees, I have requirements. If they are doing service, as we work through each step, they read the corresponding tradition and concept. My hopes are to expose them to the tools they may need in the future. With my service sponsees, I also have a requirement. I tell them to go to the literature for the answers. I tell them I am human and have opinions, but the literature will keep us on track. I remind them if I tell them something they disagree with, to challenge me with the traditions and concepts that support the conversation. Sometimes we agree to disagree. It's okay. In the end, we build a better relationship, a stronger bond built on respect, because we can be honest with each other no matter our differing opinions. Some of the healthiest relationships in my life are within my service network. The people close to me in service, who use the traditions and concepts and work the steps with their sponsors, make for an amazing group of individuals who truly do want the best for Nar-Anon.*

## Selecting Trusted Servants

*Concept Four: Effective leadership is highly valued in Nar-Anon. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.*

Evaluating the qualities needed helps us select qualified trusted servants. While professional experience helps in other areas of our lives, becoming trusted servants in Nar-Anon goes beyond our skills at work. Practices in other areas such as work, church, and other organizations may conflict with the spiritual principles of humble service and anonymity. Do we select our service members simply because they are willing? Willingness is essential, but in what? Willingness also encompasses going beyond our current skills and learning new ones, such as respecting the group conscience and applying traditions and concepts. If we are hired for a job, we have expectations, and so do our employers. They expect us to do the work, and we expect to be trained to do the job. Do we offer to be a mentor to an incoming service member who may not be familiar with Nar-Anon's principles?

### **Qualities to be considered when selecting trusted servants.**

- Do they have a sponsor?
- Have they begun working the steps?
- Have they studied the traditions and concepts and applied these principles in their service?
- Are they familiar with the Guides to Local and World Services?
- If not, would they be willing to read these guides and refer to the guidance these materials offer?
- Do they participate in group conscience discussions to make well-informed decisions?

### **A member shares:**

*In my region, a warm body in the position has been the norm for service. This practice has not worked out very well. For example, the service body thinks the work is being performed. Conflicts happen because we didn't have a group conscience discussion before making a decision. If we don't offer to mentor a willing member, they may accept a responsibility for which they are not prepared. Often we didn't retain service members because everyone was doing their own thing, putting their own spin and willingness to the role. Many were not reading the guides to understand the roles and responsibilities. Personalities got in the way of the principles when members tried to make the service position fit their previous outside experience. To resolve the situation, we started having region service round table meetings. Some topics we covered were reading our positions and getting clarity on our roles, discussing the purpose of a Regional Service Committee, discussing the concepts and how to be of humble service. Additionally, we read together and studied a few traditions and concepts. The members learned they had resources, such as the guides, traditions, concepts, and other service boards. The results were members who had a better understanding of their roles within the Nar-Anon principles, which in turn, led to a more unified service body. Our trusted servants became more accountable to the roles in which they serve.*

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