

**Families Anonymous
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of
Directors
February 18, 2023**

INTRODUCTION

1. **Call to Order:** 12:02 pm EDT, by Maria S, Chair
2. **Roll Call:** by Maria S.

<u>Name</u>	<u>WSB Role</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Monthly Report</u>
Maria S	Chair	P	W
Marcia C	Vice Chair	E	E
Cindy C	Treasurer	P	W
Jan B	Secretary	E	W
Barbara S	BMAL	E	E
Ann P	BMAL	P	W
Bob S	BMAL	E	W
Chris Y	BMAL	P	W
Chris Z	BMAL	P	W
Clive W	BMAL	P	W
Helen L	BMAL	E	W
Jeff S	BMAL	P	W
Mike B	BMAL	P	L
Sarah T	BMAL	P	L

Attendance Key: P=Present, A=Absent, E=Excused, LOA=Leave of Absence

Monthly Report Key: W= Submitted by deadline, L=Submitted after deadline,
N=No report submitted, E=Excused for extenuating circumstances, LOA = Leave
of Absence

3. Acceptance of Published Agenda:

- Cindy moved to accept the Agenda, Ann seconded, voted on and accepted.

4. Tradition One:

- Read by Ann: *“Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity.”*

5. Approval of January 2023 WSB Minutes:

- Mike moved to accept the January WSB Minutes, Ann seconded, voted on and approved. Jan to distribute.

6. Chair's Report:

- There were no other comments or questions concerning the Chair's Report.

7. Treasurer's Report:

- Cindy provided the monthly financial reports for January 2023 as part of her monthly report.
- There were no other comments or questions concerning the Treasurer's Report.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>
SC-1 Public Information	Jeff S
SC-2 WSO	Maria S
SC-3 Literature	Ann P
SC-4 Serenity Messenger Newsletter	Robert S
SC-5 Bylaws, Parliamentary	Barbara S
SC-6 International Groups	Helen L
SC-7 Budget Committee	Cindy C
SC-8 Sponsorship	Helen L
SC-9 Group Outreach	Marcia C
SC-10 Financial Oversight	Chris Z
SC-11 Technology	Chris Y
SC-12 Long Range Planning	Mike B

AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>
AH-1 Convention Liaison	Barbara S
AH-2 Intergroup Support & Development	TBD
AH-3 Document Review	Ann P

AH-4 Education
AH-5 Literature Access Initiative

Marcia C
Maria S

- Other than the information provided in the monthly Board Reports, there were no additional updates from the Committee Chairs.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

TABLED ITEMS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. MOTION LC-1 (February 2023)

MOTION: The LC moves that the WSB *rescind* the portion of Motion LC-3 (January 2023) concerning the distribution of 800+ obsolete copies of #1013 *A Recovering Addict Comes Home* to professionals and community leaders.

RATIONALE:

1. There are perhaps some on the WSB who are unaware of the origin of the extensive updating and revising of wording that the LC has been undertaking. Below is the original impetus. It is an email received by the WSO in September 2021 from Timothy H. Timothy's email is well researched, well stated, and emphatic in its request. If you're unfamiliar with it, please read it below.

-----Original Message as received by the WSO and forwarded by Nicole-----

From: Families Anonymous <wordpress@familiesanonymous.org>
Sent: Friday, September 24, 2021 12:25 PM
To: dmc@familiesanonymous.org
Subject: Families Anonymous

Name: Timothy H.
Email: connect@widewonder.life

Message: Will you please consider not using the word, "abuse" or "abuser" in your communications. The word "abuse" carries a negative connotation, especially as it's commonly connected to harm inflicted on another, as in child, domestic or sexual abuse.

Fortunately, decades of research have given us a deeper understanding of what drives an individual's

compulsion to continue using drugs or alcohol despite negative consequences. This deeper understanding has also shone a light on the harm caused by negative labels.

Surprisingly, research has shown that even some medical professionals judge a person differently depending on whether they've been labeled as a substance abuser or as suffering from a substance use disorder.

In a 2016 paper he co-wrote for the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) entitled 'Changing the Language of Addiction,' Michael P. Botticelli states, "Stigma isolates people, discourages people from coming forward for treatment and leads some clinicians, knowingly or unknowingly, to resist delivering evidence-based treatment services."

An article in U.S. News & World Report by Ruben Castaneda quotes Dr. John F. Kelly, director of the Recovery Research Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School as stating that avoiding stigmatizing labels "can save lives." Kelly cautions that calling someone a substance abuser unfairly labels them as deliberately choosing to continue misusing a substance, "which some people believe should be punished, not treated."

A research paper published in the International Journal of Drug Policy supports Dr. Kelly's conclusion. Over 500 mental health practitioners attending a conference completed a survey asking for their treatment recommendations for two individuals who had relapsed. The patients were identical except one was described as a substance abuser and the other as having a SUD. The clinicians who evaluated the "substance abuser" recommended a "more punitive" approach, including jail or community service rather than continued treatment.

Mental health professionals have long argued that labeling someone as a substance abuser is defining the entire person by their disease. However, when a person is said to have a substance use disorder, it is understood they have a medical problem that does not define their entire person. Just like a person with cancer or heart disease is far more than their diagnosis, a person with an alcohol or drug use problem has an entire identity apart from their illness, no matter what their label.

As Botticelli writes in 'Changing the Language of Addiction,' "This is not just about being politically correct. There's scientific evidence to show that language matters. We know stigma plays a huge role in why some people with substance use disorders avoid or delay seeking treatment."

The 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) data found that of the 21.7 million people aged 12 or older who identified as needing substance use treatment in the past year, only about 2.3 million people received treatment. The majority of those not receiving treatment said they didn't feel they needed it. The survey identified some reasons for not seeking treatment as including the fear that others would view them negatively and that the perceived "stigma" could interfere with job or personal opportunities.

The Mayo Clinic warns that "stigma can lead to discrimination." According to their website, the harmful effects of stigma may include:

Reluctance to seek help or treatment

Lack of understanding by family, friends, co-workers, or others Fewer opportunities for work, school or social activities or trouble finding housing Bullying, physical violence, or harassment Health insurance that doesn't adequately cover your mental illness treatment The belief that you'll never succeed at certain challenges or that you can't improve your situation It's clear there's a great need for raising awareness on the harm caused by negative labels and that stigmatizing those suffering from a substance use disorder, or any disorder, is unfair, traumatic and may threaten their decision to seek help.

2. The LC did its own research on this topic, which verified the validity of Timothy's assertions and request.
3. The board and the fellowship went so far as to modify FA's bylaws last year to address this new reality.
4. It is beyond time that FA stop disseminating *any* out-of-touch literature.
5. Specifically with regard to the distribution of obsolete copies of #1013 to professionals, these are the very people who, according to Timothy's email and the LC's research, have found the old terminology to be objectionable, harmful, stigmatizing, punitive, and a deterrent to people with substance use disorder who might otherwise seek and benefit from treatment.
6. The LC has been working diligently to accomplish revising all our literature and would very much appreciate the support of the board in the following:
 - a. facilitating timely publication of newly revised, updated material
 - b. retiring any material that is obsolete in content or wording when updated editions become available for publication
 - c. discarding, and not further distributing, obsolete inventory, especially inventory in which FA has no residual investment, as soon as replacements are completed
7. Our printed literature needs to present FA in a positive light and as a relevant, current fellowship worthy of attracting referrals from professionals.
8. The accuracy of our printed literature is critical as we use the written word as a tool for fulfilling the purpose of the fellowship, which is to assist families trying to deal with seemingly impossible situations with loved ones who are sick with substance use disorder.

FEASIBILITY:

1. The WSO can be directed to discard remaining items of obsolete literature when a replacement has arrived from the printer.
2. Specifically with regard to obsolete copies of #1013:
 - a. FA has no residual investment in the remaining inventory.
 - b. The WSO can discard the remaining inventory at no cost to the fellowship.

- c. The WSO can be directed to do so.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Upon approval of this motion, the Literature Committee will:

- a. make appropriate adjustments in the FA Literature Catalog
- b. prepare a "Spotlight on Literature" for the *Serenity Messenger* announcing the new edition
- c. direct the WSO to discard the obsolete copies of #1013 at no cost to the fellowship

DISCUSSION:

Ann: The LC was disturbed by the WSB decision to distribute obsolete copies of #1013 to professionals who would see this as a sign that FA is out of touch with current thinking and terminology. She thought that many on the WSB might not have seen the email from Timothy H that instigated all the revisions, hence the inclusion in the motion of that email.

Maria: Was one of the ones who felt last month that recycling the old versions to rehab facilities was best, but now sees how that could make a negative impression, that FA is in the Dark Ages.

Mike: Suggested we learn from this not to over order literature. He agrees to not distribute to professionals but maybe use them for nonprofessionals who have yet to change their wording. Later showed that Caron still uses the word addiction on their website.

Ann: 1. Ordering much fewer copies in general since sales dropped off in 2019. 2. Does not make sense to make old versions available for free, because then why would someone pay the \$.80 to buy the new? Would undermine sales. 3. If you compare the old to the new, it makes the old look not good at all.

Jeff: Does not see a reason to not use the old version, does not see it as a deterrent, feels it still serves a purpose.

Ann: Clarified that the LC already has a new version of #1013 and that at first the committee planned to give out 15 old copies with a purchase of one new and would promote it that way in the *Serenity Messenger*, but it just did not make sense to the committee. We want to promote, and for people to buy, the new.

Maria: In her thinking process, came to believe that the best way to approach someone new and get the word out about FA would be with the electronic documents that Cindy is creating which leads them to the FA website and to potentially buying more literature there.

Ann: Suggested it would be good to give some printed copies of the electronic documents to professionals as well as the electronic document which they can then pass out to their clients.

Sarah: Suggested giving the older versions to Medicaid offices or other places where lower income people could benefit from them.

Motion made by Ann, seconded by Maria, vote was 2 in favor, 6 against, the motion did not pass. The old copies will not be sold, will not be recycled, will not be promoted in the Serenity Messenger, but will be kept in the WSO for use by members who decide to use them.

2. MOTION LAI (February 2023)

Motion: Move that the WSB approve #7014E *Are You At Your Wits' End*.

Rationale:

- The remit of the LAI is to increase the visibility of and access to FA literature by using e-commerce and e-technology. This e-publication is based on an existing, free-downloadable FA document and would help to raise awareness of FA through electronic communications.
- The e-document was shared with the LC and their feedback was considered in the version presented to the WSB.

Feasibility:

- This e-document, which allows for a user-friendly, interactive reading experience, was created using ISSUU, an electronic publishing platform. Our paid subscription to ISSUU also includes an ad-free platform for publishing our e-documents. [Click here to access "Are You At Your Wits' End?"](#)

Cost:

There is no incremental cost associated with the publication of the e-document. The WSB previously approved the subscription to the e-publishing platform, ISSUU.

Implementation:

Once approved, the e-document can be:

- Downloaded and posted on the FA website
- Posted on the FA FaceBook page and other social media
- Shared with the fellowship via an e-mail blast
- Shared outside the fellowship by asking members to email the e-document to their contacts in the recovery community and appropriate local agencies.

Discussion:

Maria noted that Ann found that when scrolling down to the end of the publication, other publications that might be of interest were suggested, some of which were offensive and with whom FA would not want to be associated.

Ann added that there were at least a dozen other publications offered, which violates the FA Tradition of no affiliation, and would be drumming up business for publications that have nothing to do with FA. Ann asked if there is a way to pay a bit more in order to not have other publications show up?

Cindy responded that she is not sure yet, may be prohibitively expensive.

However, she is working with Nicole to see if embedding it in the FA website will solve the problem. LAI will return to WSB with resolution to the issue with ISSUU.

Motion* made by LAI, seconded by Clive, voted on and unanimously approved.

***Motion approved dependent on resolution of no affiliation issue described above.**

3. TABW Audio Book (Clive):

- Is this something the WSO supports in principle?
YES, always thought it would be prohibitively expensive to do in the US.
- How to handle copyright issues (eg., issue a license)? Bob spoke to a person from the RNIB about entering a license agreement with them so that FA retains full ownership of the document. However, the representative from RNIB asked for a license agreement before giving us an estimate of what they want in return for doing the translation. Bob sent them the size of the book and the number of pages, and is hoping to get an estimate prior to putting together the agreement. Clive stated that the RNIB is a well established charity in the UK. There are many questions still in the air. Bob and Clive will discuss, talk to the RNIB and come back to the Board.

Other points that Clive had suggested for consideration by the WSB:

- Interest in the US (readings would be in an UK accent)
- If of interest in the US, would the WSO want to contribute to the donation
- Any red lines associated with the sales of the audio version by the UKSO / RNIB
- How this might be used in any on-line posting on FA social media accounts either in UK or US – eg posting the daily reading as an audio clip

4. Nomination Committee:

- volunteer needed to assist with election which will be held in June at ABM.
- plan for recruiting volunteers for the World Service Board - Maria explained that the WSB can have up to 24 members and we are at 14 currently. Recruiting new members has always been difficult, same in the UK according to Clive.

Ideas for recruiting new board members:

1. Go back to our groups to ask for volunteers.
2. Go to anyone who has contributed to the Serenity Messenger
3. Go to anyone who has worked on a Convention, or attended

- one.
4. After the article in the Mar/Apr Serenity Messenger describing what the WSB does, put in a full page ad asking for volunteers.
 5. Come back to March WSB meeting with more ideas.

CLOSING

1. Announcements/items forgotten to mention:

Sarah asked if the vignettes project can get the WSB endorsement. Board members only received her proposal this morning, so it was decided that Maria will create a shared Google Doc where the WSB can share ideas and after Jeff and Sarah speak, the vignettes will be on the agenda for next month's meeting.

2. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mike, seconded by Ann, voted on and passed (1:15 pm EST).

3. Closed with the Serenity Prayer