

Business Tools to Support CPA Meeting Unity Handbook



*“... a fellowship for those with
chronic pain and chronic illness.”*

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Introduction

The resources in this Business Tools Handbook provide details about ways to keep our Chronic Pain Anonymous (CPA) meetings strong and effective. This compilation of documents offers tools and guidelines to help us implement the principles of the Twelve Traditions in our meetings. These different tools can guide us in making decisions together and building unity. The Handbook can be printed whole or in sections as individual documents are needed.

“Group Business Meeting” describes how to address various issues for the optimal functioning of a CPA group. It includes how practical matters may be discussed and how actions are determined using the group conscience process.

“Group Conscience” explains the process we use to make our decisions. A group conscience expresses the collective viewpoint of the group membership. It is a spiritual process of inviting the knowledge and loving guidance of our Higher Power’s will.

“Group Inventory” defines, describes, and provides suggestions for the process of preparing for a Group Inventory.

“Suggested Business and Group Inventory Format” offers examples of how to hold group business and inventory meetings.

“Suggested Group Inventory Questions” provides a starting place for a group inventory.

“Suggested Guidelines for Challenges in CPA Meetings” reflects the collective wisdom of CPA members for ways to deal with difficulties that may occur in our meetings.

Each group can explore how to use the information in this Handbook to keep their meeting a safe place for all. It is suggested that members also reference *Our Common Welfare: Practicing the Twelve Traditions in All Our Affairs*, which will broaden understanding of the spiritual principles of these guidelines.

Group Business Meetings

What Is a Business Meeting?

Business meetings are held to address various issues for the optimal functioning of a Chronic Pain Anonymous (CPA) group. The practical matters that affect a CPA group are discussed using the group conscience process (see the "Group Conscience" section for details). Any member of the group can suggest topics to be discussed.

Some of these issues concern the operations and health of the meeting, such as:

- changing the format
- determining when the meeting is held and how long it lasts
- selecting literature to study
- establishing committees or task forces
- resolving conflicts
- selecting a Group Representative (GR) or World Service Conference (WSC) Delegate
- rotation of service positions
- meeting challenges such as gossip, crosstalk, starting and ending on time, etc.
- any other matter that affects group unity (Tradition One)

Business meetings allow members to work together to keep the meeting focused on effectively carrying the CPA message, which is the primary responsibility of the group (Tradition Five). This promotes harmony within CPA as a whole (Tradition Four). Groups that make time to hold business meetings ensure that meeting operations are efficient, that any conflicts are resolved, and that our primary purpose is fulfilled.

If a group decides to take a group inventory, the decision, type of inventory, and frequency are established at a business meeting. Some meetings schedule a group inventory once a year. Then, a special business meeting is held for the specific purpose of taking the group inventory.

When Do Business Meetings Occur?

Because Tradition Four states that each meeting is autonomous, the members of each meeting can decide how often they will hold a business meeting. Groups may hold them once per month (such as the second Tuesday of the month), once per quarter, or on an “as-needed” basis. This enables members to plan their attendance. The business meeting can take place before, during or after the meeting.

The group determines how long the business meetings will last. If the participants have not completed the discussion and resolved the agenda items within the allotted time, then different options are available. The attendees can hold a group conscience to decide whether or not to extend the meeting time and for how long. Or the meeting can strictly adhere to the time limit and move the agenda items to the next business meeting. The date, time, and topics of the business meeting are announced in advance. Many meetings include this announcement in the meeting format, so it is read at each meeting. This provides members with sufficient time to review and understand the issues on the agenda and come prepared to participate. This in turn helps the group make better decisions and promotes group unity.

If any urgent issues arise that cannot wait for the next scheduled business meeting to be resolved, then the group can decide to schedule a special business meeting. This may be necessary if any service positions need to be rotated immediately, meeting logistics must change, or for many other reasons. In addition, any member may request that a business meeting be held at any time.

Who Attends Business Meetings?

All members of CPA can attend a group’s business meeting and have a voice. Some members may think it is not important to their personal recovery to attend their group’s business meeting. However, by going to the business meeting, sharing viewpoints, and voting, a CPA member is doing service. It is vital to the group and our personal recovery to participate in service. By doing so, we share the responsibility for the healthy functioning of our group (Tradition Seven).

Each group can discuss who is eligible to vote on group matters. Some groups request that only members who regularly attend that meeting vote at the business meeting. It is especially helpful for those who regularly go to a

particular meeting, a “home group,” to attend that meeting’s business meeting. Members who regularly attend more than one recovery meeting may want to decide at which group they will vote for issues affecting the fellowship as a whole. Since our principles are spiritual, voting on an issue that affects CPA as a whole more than once could be considered as trying to control or dominate the outcome.

How Business Meetings Work

When the meeting time announcement is made, the agenda and discussion topics are also announced. Any member can volunteer to research and provide additional materials about the issues, looking at both the pros and cons. This allows members to make an informed decision by reading background materials and thinking about the issues in advance.

There is no right or wrong way to hold a business meeting. It usually needs some structure, just as any meeting needs a format. A suggested format is available in this Handbook. At the meeting, the chair initiates discussion of each item on the agenda. Sometimes, there is an allotted time for each issue. Members present pros and cons and share their views. Discussion continues until the group believes that all facets of the topic have been explored and that all participants have had a chance to express their perspective. The group conscience process is used to resolve issues as guided by our Higher Power (Tradition Two).

If the discussion becomes heated, or if some members seem reluctant to participate, it is important to remember that Tradition Twelve guides us to place “principles before personalities.” Because Concept Four encourages each participant to contribute their voice, the chair invites each group member to speak about the issue.

The group Secretary or a volunteer takes notes and produces meeting minutes that are made available to all group members. The minutes include a list of the issues, the decisions made, and if available, the date of the next meeting.

Relevant Traditions and Concepts

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CPA unity.

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CPA as a whole.

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to people living with chronic pain and chronic illness.

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Concept Four

The "Right of Participation" ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process. Participation is the key to harmony.

Group Conscience

What Is a Group Conscience?

A group conscience is the process we use to make our decisions. It is the collective viewpoint of the group membership and thus represents substantial agreement on issues involving the group. The group conscience is used for decision-making at all of our business meetings, whether a group, Intergroup, committee, task force, board, or World Service Conference.

A group conscience is a spiritual process of inviting the knowledge and loving guidance of our Higher Power's will. We practice seeing things differently, adjusting our perception, and trusting the group conscience process. In this way, we can come to a collective agreement for decisions and actions.

The group conscience is the will of the group and is based on members' use of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service as guides. We maintain "principles above personalities" and share information as equals. Groups and service bodies may find it useful to study the Traditions and Concepts regularly.

Below are some Steps, Traditions, and Concepts that help us understand the importance of the Group Conscience:

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others with chronic pain and chronic illness, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on CPA unity.

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to people living with chronic pain and chronic illness.

Concept Four

The "Right of Participation" ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process. Participation is the key to harmony.

When Do We Take a Group Conscience?

A group conscience is usually taken during the business meeting of the group. Sometimes an impromptu group conscience is taken during a meeting to address a single issue or an immediate need. Any member of the group may ask for a group conscience. Each group decides when the group conscience will be held and how it will be conducted.

Providing notice of the meeting and agenda topics a few weeks in advance is a good idea so those attending may have time to think about the items, read background material, and find relevant information when appropriate.

Some examples of topics to bring to a group conscience:

- group participation in World Service Conference, service boards, or special events
- holding group elections
- scheduling regular group inventories to keep meetings healthy
- donating to Intergroup or CPA Service Board
- establishing committees or task forces as needed
- management of the meeting, such as changing the format or meeting topics
- addressing group conflicts

How Do We Take a Group Conscience?

Every voice is important for this decision process. Because all members of the group are equal, we achieve unity by treating each member with respect and learn by listening to one another with an open mind. We keep shares brief and on topic so that all have an opportunity to share their perspective to reach a mutually acceptable course of action. As a group, we humbly listen to our Higher Power's will in our collective voice and proceed united in fulfilling our primary purpose.

Usually the group conscience process is moderated by the leader of the group business meeting. Because each group is autonomous, either before or during the group conscience process, the members need to decide what

percentage of votes is required to reach a decision and determine what is substantial unanimity.

Often, people choose a home group, and this is the only group they vote in during group conscience. Each group decides who has a voice and who has a vote. We honor the concept of one voice, one vote.

Tradition Twelve emphasizes anonymity and placing spiritual principles before personalities. This means that while suggestions are offered by individuals, the final decision belongs to the group. Experience has shown that when a minority opinion is expressed, a group conscience may reassess. It is important that even members with a minority opinion speak up. Although we may disagree with the group conscience decision, we will honor, respect, and support it to ensure the unity of the group.

It is important to include the consideration of all CPA Steps, Traditions, and Concepts that are relevant to the issues at hand. As members of a spiritual program, we invite our Higher Power to guide us throughout this process. When we treat each member with respect, learn by listening to one another, and make compromises, we can achieve unity and help groups fulfill their primary purpose.

Suggestions for Taking a Vote

Before a vote is taken, it is essential that the members be given all facts relevant to the issue at hand. Whether in big or small matters, arriving at an informed group conscience is a process that may take some time. It is important that minority, or dissenting, views be heard along with those of the majority; these viewpoints may end up changing how the vote turns out. We practice the private discipline of accepting that our own views are just that, our own views, and listening with an open mind to the views of others. We are prepared to see things differently, to adjust our perception, and to yield to the group conscience to arrive at a group consensus. Each of us is responsible for attempting to be free of our own will so we may be open to the good of the whole.

To finalize decisions, a vote is taken. Sometimes, it may seem that a vote is not needed after the discussion because the group conscience becomes apparent. In this case, the meeting leader can ask if there are any opponents. However, in most cases, a vote is required.

The group decides in advance if a majority is more than half, two-thirds, or possibly three-fourths of members voting yes on the motion. The size of the group may determine how the vote is taken. When sufficient discussion has taken place or the allotted time has passed, one member makes a motion for the vote, including the statement of the decision voted upon. Another member seconds the motion. Often, the meeting leader takes the vote by asking people to raise their hands, such as, "All those who are in favor," and then, "All those who are opposed." However, each group can decide their own voting procedure.

If the vote is too close for approval, further discussion can continue. If time for this discussion has run out and members believe that additional consideration of the issue is needed, the matter may be tabled until the next business meeting. A vote may be part of the ongoing process of coming to agreement through the group conscience process.

Group Inventory

This section of the Handbook provides information about the process of preparing for a group inventory, including the “Business and Group Inventory Format” that guides the group through the process, and the “Questions” document, that provides suggested questions for the inventory. Many groups choose to use these easy-to-follow guides provided by the CPA fellowship; however, each group can decide what works best for their members.

What Is a Group Inventory?

A group inventory is a way to take stock of a meeting. We periodically assess how well the group is fulfilling its primary purpose, which is to carry its message to people living with chronic pain and chronic illness. Many groups take an inventory to help keep the group healthy and strong. Members can use the suggested format and questions to discuss what has been beneficial to the group and individual growth and what needs to be updated, discontinued, or improved.

How Will It Benefit Our Group?

Group problems may appear that can interfere with unity. Maybe only a few members are doing service. Maybe newcomers attend one meeting but never return. Possibly there are members who do not respect the meeting’s boundaries, making the meeting feel unsafe. These problems may be easy to spot but can be difficult to solve in a regular business meeting. Just as a Fourth Step inventory enhances recovery in our personal lives, a group inventory can enhance the health of our group. An inventory helps to show both strengths and weaknesses.

Some groups take their inventory by examining CPA’s Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to them. Some groups use the questions in *Our Common Welfare: Practicing the Twelve Traditions in All Our Affairs*. Some groups have a set list of questions they review each time. CPA offers suggested questions in this Handbook.

Preparing for a Group Inventory

We begin by introducing the idea to the group at a business meeting and suggesting the group consider doing an inventory. If your group does not have regular business meetings, suggest scheduling one to discuss a meeting evaluation. Like business meetings, inventory meetings are led by a trusted

servant facilitator in a fair and inclusive manner. Some meetings ask a trusted CPA member outside their group to chair the inventory.

It helps to discuss ahead of time the basic idea of a group inventory for the benefit of members who are unfamiliar. Explain how we keep the meeting spiritual, safe, and inclusive. Describe how it is different from shares at a meeting and explain the value of participation.

Once the decision is made to hold a group inventory, announce the meeting details well in advance so that all interested members can make plans to participate. It is important that all members feel welcome and respected.

Questions to Consider as We Plan the Group Inventory

- When will we meet?
- Will we meet more than once? What will the length of each session be?
- What format will we use?
- What questions will we answer?
- Who will facilitate? Would it be helpful to invite a non-group member to facilitate?
- How will we conduct the meeting? For example, will it be round robin style, will the facilitator call on those with raised hands, or will we use some other method?
- Is there information or materials the group members need ahead of time? If so, how will they be distributed?
- Do we need a note-taker?

Suggested Group Inventory Guidelines

- Members agree to keep CPA's primary purpose uppermost in mind at all times.
- Common meeting etiquette applies. For example, members do not interrupt when someone is speaking, and sharing guidelines are predetermined, ensuring room for discussion.
- Members agree to treat one another with dignity and respect. We practice principles before personalities, as suggested by Tradition Twelve.
- Everyone is equal and is invited to speak.
- All members agree to work together to complete the inventory.
- No decisions will be made; this is not a group conscience meeting.
- Keep in mind that these are suggestions. You know your group best. Take from this what works and leave the rest.

After the Group Inventory

Usually no new business is discussed at the group inventory meeting. However, there may be action items that are brought to the next business meeting for follow-up, which can lead to strengthening our personal recovery and the group's ability to bring recovery to people who live with chronic pain and chronic illness. The group may decide to schedule a regular interval for the group inventory.

Suggested Business and Group Inventory Format

Please Note: This suggested format was created by CPA members for CPA members. Each meeting is autonomous and may adapt the format to meet its own needs. Please review the format before chairing the meeting. For further detail, please see the following documents in this Handbook: [Business Meetings](#), [Group Inventory](#), [Group Conscience](#)

1. **OPEN THE MEETING** promptly at the appointed time.
2. **READ:** "Welcome to the meeting of _____. My name is _____ and I will be chairing the meeting today. Please join me in a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer."
3. Consider including the following:
 - Read the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.
 - Ask a volunteer to be secretary to take minutes and record action items.
 - Ask for a volunteer to keep time.
4. **READ:** "Everyone here is welcome and invited to speak no matter how long we have been in CPA." Concept Four states that participation is the key to harmony.

Suggested Tradition One guidelines to ensure a safe and effective meeting

- We place CPA unity above our own desires and opinions.
- All members share responsibility for the healthy functioning of the group.
- CPA group unity is enhanced when our members participate in the decision-making process. Every perspective benefits the group.
- We practice respect and kindness toward one another, ensuring a safe environment.
- Everyone is encouraged to share, but if desired, can pass.

Suggested meeting etiquette

- Honor the discussion process (such as round robin, raising hands, etc.).
- We listen to each other without interruptions.
- It is helpful to express our ideas. Different views help the group make an informed decision.
- Our tone of voice and body language can communicate more than our words. Please use "I" statements.

- We take turns sharing and are respectful of our allotted time so every member can contribute their ideas.
- Anyone can call for “30 Seconds of Silence” by saying, “30 seconds.” The discussion is immediately paused, and silence is observed. The timer keeps track of this time. We can say the Serenity Prayer before resuming discussion.

For the Business Meeting

READ: “Business meetings are held to discuss various issues pertaining to the optimal functioning of a Chronic Pain Anonymous group. The guiding principles for all business meetings are the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service. Unity of each CPA group is essential, and business meetings are held to ensure the essential principle of unity is practiced in our group.”

READ: “The group has decided to have this business meeting to discuss practical matters that affect this group. Today we will discuss: _____ (list agenda items).”

DESCRIBE: (Refer to Business Meeting and Group Conscience Documents for guidance)

- a. Time allotted for each agenda item
- b. Sharing time limits
- c. Define substantial unanimity
- d. What to do if time runs out before all issues are addressed
- e. Conflict resolution methods
- f. What to do if a resolution cannot be reached

AGENDA ITEMS: Proceed through agenda items including discussions, votes, and defining action items.

CONCLUDE THE MEETING: 5 minutes before the end of the meeting

READ: “That is all the time we have for our meeting today. Thank you for your participation in this process and caring about the well-being of our group. Let’s discuss and decide if there will be another meeting and when.”

CLOSE THE MEETING with the Serenity Prayer

For the Group Inventory Meeting

(Refer to Group Inventory and Group Conscience Documents for guidance)

NOTE: If someone outside the group is leading the group inventory, they can read, "I am _____, and it was the group conscience of this meeting to have a third-party chairperson. I am here to facilitate this process as a neutral party."

READ: "This Group Inventory is like a Fourth and Fifth Step for our meeting. It is a way of 'cleaning house.' The intention is for the group to explore and assess how well we are fulfilling our primary purpose as stated in our Fifth Tradition."

READ: "We will use the questions selected at our business meeting on _____ to guide the discussion as we evaluate the strengths and areas that need to be strengthened for our meeting. The secretary will take notes during the meeting for future review."

AGENDA ITEMS: Proceed with the inventory questions, discussion, and action items.

CONCLUDE THE MEETING: 5 minutes before the end of the meeting

READ: "That is all the time we have for the meeting today. Thank you for your participation in this process and caring about the well-being of this group. Let's discuss and decide if there will be another inventory meeting and when."

CLOSE THE MEETING with the Serenity Prayer

Suggested Group Inventory Questions

As a member of the group...

1. Do I make a point to welcome new members and offer my contact information?
2. Do I reach out to newcomers in fellowship or outside of the meeting and answer questions?
3. Do I make sure newcomers are aware of all the resources available on the CPA website, including meeting information and available CPA literature?
4. Do I include all members and treat them equally?
5. Do I interrupt members who are sharing? Do I carry on a side conversation while another member is speaking?
6. Do I crosstalk?
7. Do I keep to the topic of the meeting, or does my sharing lose focus?
8. Do I offer my own experience, strength, and hope, sharing the CPA program of recovery?
9. Do I focus on the solution rather than the problem?
10. Do I think about what I can bring to a meeting or just what I can get from it?
11. Do I remember not to offer advice?
12. Do I put pressure on the group to accept my ideas? If so, do I do this because of my previous life experiences or my time in CPA or other Twelve Step fellowships?
13. Do I practice principles before personalities, as stated in Tradition Twelve?
14. Do I practice anonymity and equality by not sharing professional titles, religions, political preferences, health specifics, etc.?
15. Do I remember to practice anonymity by not sharing who I have seen at a meeting? Do I refrain from repeating what others have said?
16. Do I put the interest of the group ahead of my own, practicing the principle of unity, as stated in Tradition One?
17. Do I wait until announcement time to make CPA-related announcements?
18. Do I criticize or gossip about others in the group or repeat something personal I have heard at a meeting?
19. Do I connect with other members for mutual recovery support, or do I connect generally to complain?

20. Am I only interested in my own welfare, or am I concerned for my fellow CPA members as well?
21. Do I allow my resentments and hurt feelings to create dissension and division in my meeting or CPA as a whole?
22. Is it difficult for me to realize that my point of view may not always be the same as that of the group conscience? Can I accept disagreement and differing points of view good-naturedly?
23. Do I honor "obedience to the unenforceable"?
24. Do I have a sponsor to work the Steps? If not, what do I need to do to find a sponsor? Have I considered sponsoring others if I am able?
25. Do I offer to help my group with things like setting up, cleaning up after the meeting, or helping with aspects of a virtual meeting?
26. Do I offer to share in supporting CPA as a whole, through service work at all levels?
27. Do I volunteer to chair a meeting?
28. Do I come prepared to the meetings I chair?
29. Do I feel no one can lead a meeting as well as I can?
30. Do I follow the meeting format to the best of my ability?

As a group in CPA..

1. Does the meeting start and end on time?
2. Are all attending, especially newcomers, greeted and made to feel welcome and accepted?
3. Do we talk with newcomers before and after the meeting? Do we give an overview of CPA? Do we tell newcomers how to obtain literature and find meetings and contact information? Do we mention the Newcomers Meeting? Do we respect their need to share fully, even if it is about specifics?
4. Is CPA informed of all meeting details and changes so that people can find the meeting?
5. Is the meeting a safe place for all members?
6. Do members return? If not, what can we, as a group, do?
7. Does the meeting focus on the CPA message of recovery through Conference Approved Literature?
8. Does the group participate in the primary purpose of CPA—to carry the message of hope to all who live with chronic pain and chronic illness?
9. Are all members given the opportunity to share at meetings?
10. Does the group practice anonymity by reminding members not to repeat who is seen or what personal sharing is heard at a meeting?

11. Do we take the time to explain to all members the value to the group of keeping up with the essential service positions suggested in our Twelfth Step?
12. Are all service positions filled? If not, what can we do to fill them?
13. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do better?
14. How often does our group rotate our service positions? Is everyone encouraged to participate?
15. Are we conscious that the Seventh Tradition applies not only to financial contributions but also to service contributions?
16. Does the group contribute financially to CPA as a whole per our Seventh Tradition? Do virtual meetings ensure that attendees and members have information on how to make individual Seventh Tradition contributions?
17. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive meeting place, such as keeping a clean space or following suggested etiquette at virtual meetings?
18. Do we avoid crosstalk and giving advice? How do we deal with crosstalk if it happens?
19. Does the group use and follow the meeting format selected by the group conscience?
20. What has the group done recently to carry the CPA message to professionals in the community—physicians, clergy, therapists, pharmacists, and others who often see people with chronic pain and chronic illness and are in need of help?
21. Does the group hold regular business meetings?
22. Do we model how the Steps and Traditions guide our behavior in our meetings?
23. How does the group address conflicts, such as when the Traditions are not honored?
24. Does the meeting take group conscience to resolve issues within the guidelines of the Traditions?
25. Are group inventory meetings held regularly?

Is Our Group Aligned with the Twelve Traditions?

Some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these principles.

Listed below are the Traditions followed by questions to consider for both meeting and fellowship time. These questions are relevant for us as group members and a way to assess how our group serves the primary purpose as a whole.

TRADITION ONE: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CPA unity.

1. In what ways is CPA unity important to our group?
2. How does our individual recovery depend on CPA unity?
3. Does the way in which our group uses fellowship time support unity?
4. In what ways does the group foster unity within our group and in service work?
5. Does our group put the interests of any individual above the welfare of the group or of CPA as a whole?
6. Does our group discuss non-CPA events and activities? If so, is this in accordance with our group conscience?
7. What does "common welfare" mean to our group?
8. When and how do we place "common welfare" first? When do we not?
9. Does our group have guidelines for fellowship time?
10. How do we contribute to unity in our group?
11. Do we encourage and support harmony within the group?
12. Does our group encourage mutual respect?
13. How can we focus on the solution when conflicts arise?
14. Do we avoid specifics of our health treatments and conditions?
15. Is our group informed about CPA as a whole?
16. Do we compare CPA groups?
17. Do we speak negatively about other groups?

TRADITION TWO: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

1. Does our group do anything that misrepresents the conscience of the majority of the group?
2. Do we understand the service flow under which our trusted servants operate?
3. Do any individuals control the group?
4. How do we support the group's business and functioning?
5. Does our group hold business meetings? If not, how can we encourage this practice?
6. Do our members participate in the group conscience process?
7. How do we ensure the group conscience is informed?
8. Do we accept that decisions of the group conscience are guided by each member's Higher Power as the ultimate loving authority in the group's decisions?

9. Do we yield to the group conscience with serenity and work well with others?
10. Do we support the group's trusted servants?
11. How do we contribute to the group and to CPA as a whole through service work?
12. Do we rotate positions in our group?

TRADITION THREE: The only requirement for CPA membership is a desire to recover from the emotional and spiritual debilitation of chronic pain or chronic illness.

1. How do we create a safe and caring environment in our meetings?
2. Does our group exclude anyone from attending the group?
3. How do we welcome newcomers? What can we do specifically to help them feel welcome?
4. Do we accept newcomers unconditionally?
5. Do we create an environment that treats all members of CPA with kindness and compassion?
6. Do we make it clear to everyone that if they decide they are a member, they *are* a member?

TRADITION FOUR: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CPA as a whole.

1. How does our group consider the impact of its decisions on other groups and on CPA as a whole?
2. In what ways does our group consider the welfare of the rest of CPA?
3. Does our group do anything that does not conform to CPA principles, thereby affecting other groups or CPA as a whole?
4. Are we available to help newcomers understand the Traditions?
5. Does our group take responsibility for its actions?
7. Are we aware of other CPA meetings, and do we keep the lines of communication open?
8. How do we practice "obedience to the unenforceable"?
9. How often does our group turn to a Higher Power to help us make decisions?
10. Do we insist there is only one right way of doing things?
11. How do we seek to understand the different ways there are to look at an issue?

TRADITION FIVE: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to people living with chronic pain and chronic illness.

1. How do we understand the primary purpose of CPA?
2. Does our group do anything that conflicts with our primary purpose of carrying the CPA message to those who live with chronic pain and chronic illness?
3. How does our group fulfill our primary purpose?
4. What does it mean to “carry the message”?
5. How does our group carry the CPA message?
6. When we share and interact with others, what is the message we carry? How can we strengthen it?
7. Do we share our knowledge of CPA tools with others?
8. Do we remember that everyone in CPA suffers, from newcomers to longtimers, and that we can learn from and be of service to everyone?

TRADITION SIX: A CPA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the CPA name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

1. What does it mean to not endorse, finance, or lend the CPA name?
2. Does anything we do affiliate, endorse, or bind the group, in an actual or implied way, to any organization or outside enterprise?
3. Does our group use materials other than Conference Approved Literature?
4. Do we leave our other affiliations outside the meeting?
5. Do we inform group members that we don’t promote a business or an outside enterprise in a meeting?

TRADITION SEVEN: Every CPA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

1. What does being fully self-supporting mean in our group? How does our group remain self-supporting?
2. Does our group receive donations from anyone other than a CPA member?
3. Are the group’s funds being used wisely?
4. Do we respect the group Treasurer and the job they do?
5. Does our group contribute to the Chronic Pain Anonymous Service Board (CPASB)? If we are a virtual meeting, do we encourage our members to donate regularly to CPA as a whole?

6. How does our group manage finances, such as rent, literature, donating to CPASB, etc.?
7. Is our group aware of CPASB's operating expenses and budgets?

TRADITION EIGHT: Chronic Pain Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

1. Do we remember we are members of CPA and not experts? Do we treat others in our group as experts?
2. How does our group remind members that health treatments and expertise are left to professionals, and that we are not in CPA as health professionals?
3. Do we remember we are not experts on recovery? Do we know we don't have to be a perfect model of recovery?
4. Do we assess others based on their outside affiliations, titles, or professional roles?
5. Does our group understand and support the need for paid professionals, such as bookkeeper, editor, lawyer, etc.?

TRADITION NINE: CPA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

1. Is there a governing individual or exclusive group authority that dictates organization to our group?
2. Is everyone in our group encouraged to participate in service work, in the group or on service bodies, task forces, committees, etc.?
3. How does our group prepare and support members for service positions?
4. Does the group introduce new members to service opportunities?
5. How does our group support CPA's service bodies?
6. Are we aware of the importance of rotation of service and put it into practice?
7. Are we familiar with the CPA service flow structure? Do we understand how communication flows in CPA?
8. Are we familiar with the Twelve Concepts of CPA?

TRADITION TEN: Chronic Pain Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the CPA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

1. Does our group do anything that publicly states an opinion or takes sides on any issues or controversies that are outside of CPA?
2. How do we focus on common bonds and not differences?
3. Do we refrain from discussing outside issues in a meeting or promoting businesses, healthcare treatments, etc.? What might be an outside issue for our group?
4. Has this ever come up? If so, what did we do? What can we do if someone brings up an outside issue in a meeting?
5. Are we behaving courteously and respectfully to those outside of CPA whom our group interacts with?

TRADITION ELEVEN: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion, we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, television, film, and the Internet.

1. At the general public level, does the group publicize any individual CPA member's name or image as a self-appointed representative of CPA?
2. What does our group do to let those in our community know about our group? How do we share about CPA with others?
3. Do we tell others about CPA in such a way that we make it seem attractive?
4. How do we maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, television, film, and the Internet?
5. When we represent CPA, do we focus on the principles of recovery and not any individual?
6. Does our group understand that public outreach does not break anonymity?

TRADITION TWELVE: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

1. What is our group's understanding of anonymity?
2. How do we protect the anonymity of our group members?
3. Do we actively participate in keeping our meetings safe for all by practicing the Traditions?
4. Does our group give personal distinction to any CPA member, either among other members or the general public that puts their opinions above the conscience of the group or CPA as a whole?
5. How do we practice placing principles before personalities? How does this contribute to unity by seeing each other as equal members?

6. How has study of the Traditions benefitted our group and CPA as a whole?
7. Which principles are most challenging for our group to practice?

Is Our Group Aligned with the Twelve Concepts?

It may be helpful to have the Service Manual available for reference in reviewing these questions below.

Concept One: The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for the CPA Service Board should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

1. Does our group have an active General Representative (GR) directly responsible to those they serve?
2. Do we feel that our group is part of CPA as a whole? Do our group's decisions and actions reflect that?
3. Do we hold regular group business meetings, encouraging everyone to participate?
4. Do we pass the result of our group conscience on to service bodies as needed, such as Intergroup or the World Service Conference (WSC)?

Concept Two: The CPA groups delegate complete administrative and operational authority to their World Service Conference and its service arms.

1. Do we have an understanding of the WSC and how it fits into the service structure?
2. Does our group's WSC Delegate report back to the group on the highlights of the WSC?
3. Is our group meeting its wider Seventh Tradition responsibilities, both financially and in service?
4. Does our group support the group conscience decisions of the WSC, even when we are in the minority?

Concept Three: As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship among the groups, the World Service Conference, the Service Board of Trustees and its service corporation, staffs, and committees, and of thus ensuring their effective leadership, it is hereby suggested we endow each of these elements of World Service with a traditional "Right of Decision."

1. Do we understand what is meant by the "Right of Decision"? Do we grant it at all levels of service? Do we understand that we don't instruct or demand?

2. Do we trust our trusted servants: GR, Intergroup Representative, Delegate, Board of Trustees, staff, WSC, etc.?

Concept Four: The “Right of Participation” ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision- making process. Participation is the key to harmony.

1. How do we understand the spiritual principles underlying the “Right of Participation”?
2. How does our group value each member’s thoughts and opinions?
3. How do we understand what “equality of opportunity” means?
4. Do we understand when it is appropriate for CPA paid staff to have a vote at the WSC or in our local service structure?
5. Do we expect that, because we are CPA members, we should be allowed to vote at any group, even if we are not active members of that group?

Concept Five: Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances will receive careful consideration.

1. Do we encourage the minority opinion, the “Right of Appeal,” to be heard at our group?
2. Has our group experienced the “tyranny of the majority” or the “tyranny of the minority”?
3. Does our group understand the importance of all points of view being heard before and after a vote is taken?

Concept Six: The World Service Conference recognizes the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters can be exercised by the trustee members of the WSC acting as the Trustee Board.

1. Are we familiar with how our trusted servants, such as the GAC and Board of Trustees, serve CPA?
2. Can we see a direct link to our group?

Concept Seven: The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the WSC are traditional.

1. Do we act responsibly regarding the “power of the purse”?
2. Do we realize that the practical and spiritual power of the WSC will nearly always be superior to the legal power of the Chronic Pain Anonymous Service Board (CPASB)?

Concept Eight: The Trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. The Service Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management to its executive committees.

1. Do we understand the relationship between the CPASB and the General Service Virtual Office (GSVO)?

Concept Nine: Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service, the Service Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.

1. Do we discuss how we can best strengthen the composition and leadership of our future trusted servants?
2. Do we recognize the need for group officers? What is our criteria for election?
3. Do we set a positive leadership example in our group?

Concept Ten: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

1. How do we understand "authority" and "responsibility" as they relate to group conscience decisions by GRs, Intergroup Representatives, and our Delegates?
2. Why is delegation of "authority" so important to the overall effectiveness of CPA? Do we use this concept to define the scope of "authority"?

Concept Eleven: The General Service Office is composed of the General Advisory Council, selected committees, and staff members.

1. Do we practice rotation in all our service positions?

Concept Twelve: The Conference shall observe the spirit of CPA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserves be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform authoritative acts of government; that, like the Fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

1. How do we guard against becoming a "seat of perilous wealth or power"?
2. How does our group practice prudent use of our Seventh Tradition contributions?

3. How does our group ensure the spiritual liberties of all CPA members by not placing any member in the position of absolute authority over others?
4. Do we try to reach important decisions by thorough discussion, vote, and (when possible) substantial unanimity?
5. As guardians of CPA's Traditions, are we ever justified in being personally punitive?
6. Are we careful to avoid public controversy?
7. Do we always try to treat each other with mutual respect and unconditional kindness?

Suggested Guidelines for Challenges in CPA Meetings

Introduction

The Twelve Traditions guide CPA members, both as individuals and as groups, to interact with integrity, purpose, respect, and compassion as we face the challenges that sometimes arise. Although kindness and harmony are norms in CPA, we are human, so conflicts and difficulties will occur. Our Traditions and their underlying principles guide us together in unity, recovery, and service. They support our primary purpose and our roles as trusted servants.

CPA members have written these guidelines for meeting chairpersons and group members to maintain unity and safety in meetings. There is an underlying presumption of goodwill in CPA. We seek to be inclusive and to help all members understand the principles that guide our meetings and our fellowship. The suggestions shared here embody the Twelve Traditions and can assist each of us when disruptions arise in meetings. Our members offer this information as suggestions.

Although there are no rules in CPA, we find that our recovery is *dependent* on the “optimal environment” of our group, and our groups are stronger when they operate from the principles of our Traditions. Tradition Four ensures the autonomy for each group meeting: each group is unique and is free to decide what is necessary for it to successfully meet challenging issues. If there is a consistent problem that is disturbing the unity of a meeting, members may bring concerns up in a business meeting, to the Intergroup or to the General Advisory Council (GAC). In this way, members can learn how others have dealt with similar problems.

Virtual meetings, such as videoconference and telephone meetings, will have different ways of dealing with disruptions that threaten safety than those of physical meetings. In videoconference meetings, for example, the chair or a selected host retains the ability to mute an individual. At a physical meeting, it is important that everyone feel safe, and actions need to be taken should someone be physically or verbally aggressive or a danger to members. It is important to discuss these concerns at a business meeting to help the group decide how to approach them.

TRADITIONS

It is our intention to treat others with kindness, patience, and love. Although a behavior may be inappropriate, we need to remember this is a person who is struggling. CPA has no formal policies about behavior in meetings; however, we can go to the Traditions for guidance. Our book, *Our Common Welfare: Practicing the Twelve Traditions in All Our Affairs*, helps us to identify elements of the Traditions that support our meetings.

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CPA unity.

The optimal environment for our recovery is to be in a loving spiritual community that is safe and accepting. We take care of the individual members by taking care of the group and working together. (p. 1)

Tradition Three: The only requirement for CPA membership is a desire to recover from the emotional and spiritual debilitation of chronic pain or chronic illness.

Being a member of CPA creates a feeling of connection and belonging, of safety and togetherness and being aligned with a deeper purpose. We become part of something larger than ourselves. (p. 47)

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to people living with chronic pain and chronic illness.

It is comforting and motivating to know we have a primary aim of carrying the message of hope to others, and together we fend off anything that interferes with our purpose. This singleness of purpose guides all our choices as we reach out and help those who are suffering. We support each other in keeping this focus and avoid anything that diverts from it. (p. 85)

Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

When we focus on principles and not our unique personalities, our unity becomes clear. We are united for one purpose: recovery from the effects of living with chronic pain and chronic illness. The spiritual action of Tradition Twelve, for some of us, is sacrifice. We learn to give up our personal desires in service of our primary purpose—we find this is the only way for us to recover and that it supports CPA on all levels. (p. 231)

NEWCOMERS

If someone is new to CPA, we find that until they become familiar with the Traditions and our meetings, we want to be kind, compassionate, and welcoming, understanding that none of us have the message of CPA recovery to share when we first arrive. We come because we are devastated by the effects of chronic pain and chronic illness. It takes courage to come to our first meeting, and we support newcomers by encouraging them to remain for fellowship time and ask questions. Then, we can gently explain the guidelines, format, meeting etiquette, and how we all keep our group effective to help us recover in CPA.

CHAIRPERSON

What Is the Role of the Chairperson?

The chairperson leads the meeting. When we chair, we keep in mind that our primary purpose is to carry a message of hope and recovery. The chairperson, using the principles of the Twelve Traditions, helps to maintain a safe space and is not in an authoritative position. We are trusted servants and do not govern or enforce rules. There is only one ultimate authority—a loving God as he may express himself.

How Members View Their Role as Chair

“As chair, I try to surrender to my Higher Power for guidance. It is not my responsibility to do anything other than chair the meeting. I follow the format and provide an emotionally safe atmosphere.”

“As a chairperson, I want to support meeting unity. I remember our common welfare should come first.

“I use the tools of the program to guide me when I am the chairperson.”

“I give myself permission to ask for help. I remember as chairperson I am not isolated; I am part of a fellowship. I can feel free to ask for assistance at any time.”

“I remember there is but one ultimate authority. No one is in charge of the group.”

“I ask how I can bring the breath and power of a Higher Power into the meeting.”

How Members Prepare to Lead a Meeting

“Before I chair, I pray and make sure I am in the right mind. I pray that I give more to this meeting than I take from it.”

“As chair, I strive for unconditional acceptance of self and the others in the room. I practice being loving and accepting. I can remind myself to put my ego in my back pocket.”

“My home group provides training for new chairs, and I found that very helpful.”

“Chairing a meeting merely requires me to read and follow a prepared format. I found seasoned members especially generous when I made mistakes, and after doing this for the first time, the fear of being of service was lifted. It engaged me as a new member and provided me with a simple way to feel part of CPA early in my recovery—one where I could decide right before the meeting began if I was capable of doing it.”

“I keep a list of people who can step into chair so I know if I’m having a bad day someone can fill in for me.”

Suggestions for Ways to Respond When a Problem Arises during a Meeting

We have found in our meetings that sometimes problems present themselves. Some are more disruptive than others. Issues can include crosstalk; talking about outside organizations, politics, religion, or treatments; talking about health specifics and repeating “sickalogues” or “traumalogues”; angry outbursts during a meeting; or attacks on members and/or blaming.

Each group is autonomous within the bounds of the Traditions and can decide how to respond when issues arise. The suggestions offered here can provide guidance for chairpersons to respond when they perceive the atmosphere of a meeting has taken the group away from the primary purpose and unity.

People may feel very uncomfortable if someone comments, either positively or negatively, on their share. It also becomes unsafe and upsetting when a chairperson attempts to control how people share. In general, it is highly suggested that we don’t interrupt anyone while they are sharing. When

possible, if there is a problem, it is best to speak to the person privately after the meeting. This can be done by the chair or a member of the meeting. Remember, what we say may be different for a newcomer than it is for a longtime member. When speaking to someone, it is suggested to use "I" statements rather than "you" statements so that no one feels singled out or defensive.

We each have different levels of comfort and skill in the role of chairperson. Some chairs offer reminders of the meeting's guidelines, such as, "Gentle reminder, we try to focus on CPA recovery," or "Gentle reminder, in this meeting we try to..." When a chairperson does not know how to respond, they can ask other members for guidance. The chairperson also has the option of passing the meeting format to someone else and then stepping outside or going to a virtual breakout room with a member who is struggling.

It is always best to approach someone about a sensitive issue one-on-one after a meeting. If that does not resolve the issue, then it may be necessary to hold a group conscience. This allows for everyone to have a voice, asking for our Higher Power's will to keep the meeting tolerant and supportive. The chairperson also has the option to ask for a brief break or use the Serenity Prayer or a short time of quiet reflection to refocus the meeting.

How Members Respond as Chairperson When There Is a Problem

"As chair I don't interrupt people, but after their share I gently say, 'I'd like to remind everyone that...' and use the words from the format or sharing guidelines."

"After the share, if someone is in great distress or talks about suicidal thoughts, I invite them to stay after the meeting for fellowship time."

"If someone is asking for input, I say, 'We appreciate your share, and we can address problems after the meeting.'"

"In fellowship time, I can suggest that the person speak about the issue(s) with their sponsor."

"In a physical meeting, I can say, 'You are welcome here. We are glad you found us. Your actions are not creating a safe environment and according to Tradition One unity is important for us.' My last resort is to escort someone out of the meeting as kindly as I can."

GROUP MEMBER

Since we are all responsible for the unity and atmosphere of goodwill in our meetings, it is important to address how we apply the Traditions as a group member. We want to be welcoming, kind, and compassionate to each other, particularly to the newcomers. We want our meetings to be warm and safe. We are all doing our best by sharing our experience, strength, and hope and carrying the message of recovery. We don't have to share perfectly. Sharing unburdens us of our secrets and invites others to relate. We all crosstalk occasionally or get lost in our mess. When this happens, we need only notice it as quickly as possible, have compassion for ourselves, and return to the meeting.

How Members Apply the Traditions When There Is a Problem in a Meeting

"Before speaking, I ask my Higher Power if I should speak and pray for guidance about what to say that will share the recovery message."

"I keep in mind, attraction, not promotion. I can be an example of recovery in what I share."

"If needed, I can interrupt and say I am not feeling safe right now. I ask, 'Can we say the Serenity Prayer?' Also, I remind myself that I am free to leave the meeting at any time."

"Sometimes all I can do is speak from the heart in a kind way."

"There are resources available. I can communicate with the Group Representative or the Intergroup Representative. If someone is domineering, I can ask for support through the General Advisory Council or the Intergroup, or talk to my sponsor. I can ask about how to address the issue when it is not an isolated one but a consistent problem. I don't have to carry this alone."

"If someone is talking about their feelings and is distressed during the meeting, I can invite them to stay for fellowship, get their contact information and reach out."

"I often send a private message in a videoconference meeting and offer my contact information. I might say, 'It is good to hear you. Keep coming back.'"

“As a member, I am willing to take a risk and speak up. It strengthens the meeting to provide feedback and keep our meetings safe and welcoming.”

“I can ask an impartial CPA member to come to our business meeting to help facilitate a group conscience and be a neutral voice.”

FELLOWSHIP TIME

The fellowship time after a meeting is a good time to explain how the Traditions work and how the suggested guidelines are applied. If someone is struggling during a meeting, we can invite them to stay for fellowship, which is often a time when newcomers can share personal information and ask questions. It is also a possible time to address issues that have arisen during the meeting.

CHALLENGING TOPIC: SUICIDE

There is a topic that we want to address in detail—speaking about suicide. This can trigger both the chairperson and members, and we are not always sure about how to respond. We provide some suggestions that can guide us and give us confidence that our meetings are a safe place to share unspoken, persistent thoughts and feelings and our vulnerability.

It is paramount that people are heard. One member shares, “When I am distressed and agitated, validation and permission to speak keep me connected to myself and others. It is okay to have my feelings, and the meeting can be a safe space to share difficult feelings.” We don’t shy away from the topic of suicide, but neither do we focus on it.

However, it is not acceptable to speak about suicide as a treatment option. Just like all treatments, we do not discuss them in meetings nor include them in our shares.

Members share:

“In CPA some of us have felt suicidal. I have, and I felt relieved I could say what I was thinking.”

“When I don’t talk about my suicidal ideation is when I am in trouble. I think about it because I want relief and the pain to stop. But this doesn’t mean I have a plan. When I speak about these feelings, it is a healthy sign that I want to connect, not isolate and make a plan.”

"In a meeting early in my CPA program, I heard someone speak about taking their life, and it was hard to listen. After I had more recovery, I came to be grateful that we can speak about our feelings and thoughts, even if they are difficult."

"Someone at a meeting I attended recently voiced at that moment they didn't want to live. I reached out and helped the member through a difficult patch. I'm glad they could share openly. They were grateful that someone was understanding, and they received comfort."

"I have shared about suicide. It was part of my healing from the emotional and spiritual debilitation. I didn't truly want to kill myself. It helped to share these scary thoughts with others. Being heard was what helped me. Just being able to have my experience validated helped me."

"I am grateful that in CPA we can talk about suicide as a topic, not a treatment. We don't freak out or panic. We can share about it. These are feelings and thoughts that we have, and we can share them with others and get comfort and understanding."

"It is not appropriate to give our personal opinion or advice. I can share my own experiences of feelings around suicide and how I regained hope."

"I do not intervene when someone is sharing about suicide. It is not a taboo topic. However, I would interrupt if specifics about how to do it were shared."

"I feel hopeless when suicidal and need help remembering these are feelings that will pass. So I have empathy for others who are going through the same and share how these thoughts have decreased in my recovery in CPA in a short time."

"When someone is emotional and sounds like they are serious about suicide, as chair I would let them know someone heard them. 'I am so glad you are here, please stay for fellowship and get contact information. I'm glad you are here; you are in the right place.'"

CONCLUSION

The Suggested Guidelines for Challenges in CPA Meetings provide members with ideas about how to speak and act when there are disruptions and we are at a loss about how to respond. Regardless of how difficult or disturbing a situation may seem at the time, we can apply the Traditions to create and maintain a safe harbor for all who desire to recover from the debilitating emotional and spiritual effects of chronic pain and chronic illness. In this way, we can maintain unity and harmony, creating a caring and supportive environment where recovery for the greatest number of people is possible.

The Twelve Steps of CPA

1. We admitted we were powerless over pain and illness—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with chronic pain and chronic illness, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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The Twelve Traditions of CPA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CPA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for CPA membership is a desire to recover from the emotional and spiritual debilitation of chronic pain or chronic illness.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or CPA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to people living with chronic pain and chronic illness.
6. A CPA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the CPA name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every CPA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Chronic Pain Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. CPA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Chronic Pain Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the CPA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, television, film, and the Internet.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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Twelve Concepts of Service

1. The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for the CPA Service Board should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
2. The CPA groups delegate complete administrative and operational authority to their World Service Conference and its service arms.
3. As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship among the groups, the World Service Conference, the Service Board of Trustees and its service corporation, staffs, and committees, and of thus ensuring their effective leadership, it is hereby suggested we endow each of these elements of World Service with a traditional "Right of Decision."
4. The "Right of Participation" ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process. Participation is the key to harmony.
5. Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances will receive careful consideration.
6. The World Service Conference recognizes the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters can be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the Trustee Board.
7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.
8. The Trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. The Service Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management to its executive committees.
9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service, the Service Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.
10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
11. The General Service Virtual Office is composed of the Executive Director, selected committees, and staff members.
12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of CPA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserves be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform authoritative acts of government; that, like the Fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

General Warranties of the Conferences

- Warranty One: "that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power"
- Warranty Two: "that sufficient operating funds and reserves be its prudent financial principle"
- Warranty Three: "that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others"
- Warranty Four: "that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity"
- Warranty Five: "that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy"
- Warranty Six: "that it never perform authoritative acts of government; that, like the Fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action."

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