

CONSENSUS BASED DECISION MAKING

Consensus is defined as the decision making process in which discussion and compromise are used to reach an agreement. One of the reasons we try to achieve consensus is that it ensures we follow our 9th Concept, —all elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making process.

Participation

All members of Narcotics Anonymous are welcome to attend and can be recognized by the Facilitator to ask pertinent questions or make a meaningful contribution to the discussion as nonvoting participants.

All committee members except the member acting as Facilitator may participate in decision-making during new business, and all other ASC decisions except those which were sent back to the groups for consideration. Only GSRs will participate in decision making on proposals that were sent back to the groups.

The ASC Facilitator acts as the discussion facilitator and not as a participant. Their primary objective is to achieve consensus for the proposal being discussed while observing the Traditions and Concepts. Their service to The Area is to ensure that all points of view are heard and to focus the best thinking of those participating.

CBDM Process

1. **Proposals are submitted in writing to the Facilitator.** Intent is included.
2. **The Facilitator opens the dialogue** - Begin with the maker of the proposal.
3. **Proposal Clarifying questions are taken** - This is when questions are asked to ensure that all participants understand the proposal. This is not the time for general discussion.
4. **Facilitator asks for concerns or reservations** - This is the time when general discussion occurs
 - a. This is when modifications may be made to the proposal in an effort to address expressed reservations or concerns.
 - b. Maker of the proposal as well as other participants may offer modifications.

5. Facilitator may ask for consensus at any time during the process.

a. There are four positions a participant may take on a proposal

Assent – agree with the proposal

Assent with reservation – although there are reservations or concerns, the individual will trust and go along with the body's decision.

Stand Aside – based on strong personal reservations which prevents support for the proposal. This is essentially a "NO" vote.

Block – based on spiritual principles expressed in our Traditions or Concepts.

1. A block must be followed by speaking to the specific Tradition or Concept which would be violated.

2. A block will prevent a proposal from being adopted.

b. Consensus is reached when 80% of the participants are in Assent or Assent with reservation. The number which represents 80% shall be determined based on the number of participants present.

c. A block may be overridden by the body.

1. If the validity of a block is not questioned, the block will stand and the proposal is not adopted.

2. If the validity of a block is questioned, the body must reach consensus on whether the block should stand. The same process is used for this as for reaching consensus on a proposal.

3. If the block is overridden, the Facilitator will again ask for consensus on the proposal.

If consensus is not reached, the proposal may be dismissed, the proposal may be sent to a reconciliation committee - or perhaps to the original author - for rewriting to work out the objections, or be tabled for the next ASC.