These notes and questions have been put together to help individuals and study groups review the Twelve Concepts. Under each section are brief summary notes touching the major points of each concept. You or your study group may wish to use the note questions, among others, to ask yourselves about how NA services work and how the Twelve Concepts might be applied in your locale.

**First Concept**

*To fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf of NA as a whole.*

The primary responsibility of an NA group is to conduct its recovery meetings, carrying the message directly to the addict who still suffers. Groups join their strength in the service structure, ensuring that other services—H&I, PI, literature development, for example—are fulfilled effectively and without distracting the groups from their own primary responsibility.

**Study and discussion questions**

1. Does your group hold regular business meetings? (See *The Group Booklet*, pp. 9-10.)
2. Does your group regularly talk about how it can better fulfill its primary purpose?
3. After paying the expenses for literature, refreshments, and meeting-hall rent, does your group have enough money to conduct other services on its own?
4. Can your group perform a variety of organized services like PI work, H&I panels, phoneline management, and literature development while still attending to its recovery meetings?
5. Does your group send a representative to your local area service committee? Do you contribute money to your ASC on a regular basis?

**Second Concept**

*The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.*

The groups have final responsibility for and authority over the service structure they have created. By fulfilling their responsibility to provide their service structure with the conscience, ideas, people, and money it needs, the groups also exercise their authority. Conversely, the service structure must always look to the groups for support and direction.

**Study and discussion questions**

1. Does your group have any way of letting your area committee know whether it’s meeting your needs? How?
2. Does your group’s GSR regularly take part in ASC meetings? Do you regularly contribute to the ASC? Do these things give your group any say about the way NA services are administered? How?
3. How frequently is your group consulted on service matters by the ASC? The RSC? The WSC? Do you want to be consulted more often? Less often?
4. What does the Second Concept say to our service boards and committees? Does your group believe that message is heard and understood by our service structure? If not, what can your group do about it?
Third Concept

The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.

In day-to-day matters, the groups have given our service boards and committees the practical authority necessary to do the jobs assigned them. This is not a blank check issued to the service structure; the group’s final responsibility and authority, spoken of in the Second Concept, still apply. To make Concept Three work, we must carefully select trusted servants.

Study and discussion questions

1. In general, what does your group think about the concept of delegated authority?

2. If your group were consulted on every decision that had to be made by every service board, committee, or subcommittee at the area, regional, and world level, would you still have enough time and energy to address your own group’s business? Would your group have enough information to be able to offer intelligent advice on such matters?

3. If the service boards and committees serving your group could act only after consulting your group, would they be able to act swiftly enough in performing the duties your group has given them?

4. In the essay on the Second Tradition in our Basic Text (p. 60), it says “We are mismanagers and not one of us is capable of consistently making good decisions.” If this is true, how can we responsibly delegate to our trusted servants the kind of authority called for in the Third Concept?

Fourth Concept

Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.

The trust necessary to confidently delegate authority is founded on the careful selection of trusted servants. Leadership is very important to the welfare of our fellowship. True, our leaders are but trusted servants, not governors; yet we also expect our trusted servants to lead us. If we select them carefully, we can confidently allow them to do so. The essay on this concept describes an array of leadership qualities to be considered when selecting trusted servants.

Study and discussion questions

1. Read NA’s Second Tradition. Does NA have leaders? If so, what kind of leaders? Does a fellowship that makes collective decisions need leaders?

2. Does your group have leaders? If so, who are they? In what sense can they be called “leaders”? Could your group do without leaders? Could a service board or committee do without leaders?

3. According to this essay, what are some of the skills and personal traits we seek when selecting trusted servants? What is the real foundation of NA leadership?

4. “Effective NA leadership knows not only how to serve, but when it will serve best to step aside and allow others to take over.” Discuss rotation of leadership.

5. What does NA leadership have to do with recovery? With selfless service?
Fifth Concept

For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.

In defining a single point of decision for each service assignment, we eliminate confusion about who has authority to do what. We also clarify accountability for our services: whoever is given the authority for a particular task will be held accountable for the fulfillment of that task.

Study and discussion questions

1. Does your group assign particular tasks to particular people? Does this help ensure that important jobs actually get done?

2. Does anyone in your group know of a situation, either in the group or in a service board or committee, where more than one person or subcommittee were given responsibility. If three different people are all given equal authority in a particular service matter and the work is not done, who can be held accountable?

Sixth Concept

Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.

Group conscience is the means by which we bring the spiritual awakening of the Twelve Steps to bear in making service-related decisions. It is fundamental to our fellowship’s decision making process. It is not, however, merely a euphemism for “voting” and is not itself the NA decision-making process.

Study and discussion questions

1. What do we mean when we say that NA is a spiritual society? Does a spiritual society approach the decision-making process differently than other organizations?

2. Is “group conscience” just NA’s way of saying “voting”? (As in, “Let’s take a group conscience on that.”) In what way is group conscience distinct from our decision-making process? In what way is group conscience a fundamental part of that process?

3. Read NA’s Second Tradition. Does the Sixth Concept conflict with the Second Tradition, or help clarify it?

4. Read NA’s Twelfth Tradition. How does the practice of the Sixth Concept help us focus on “principles, not personalities” when we make service decisions?

5. Besides decision making, in what other areas of our fellowship’s life can we see group conscience at work?
Seventh Concept

All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body’s decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes.

Who should take part in our decision-making processes? The participation of all members of a service body provides the broadest group conscience and the soundest foundation for service decisions.

Study and discussion questions

1. Right now, who participates in your ASC meetings? Why?
2. Who participates in your group’s business meetings? Why?
3. Do all the members of your ASC bear substantial responsibility for the NA services delivered in your area? Do all the members of a particular subcommittee bear substantial responsibility for that subcommittee’s work? Are there any differences in the way members participate in area committee meetings and in a subcommittee meeting? Why, or why not?

Eighth Concept

Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.

Regular communication is essential to the fulfillment of all these concepts, and to the integrity and effectiveness of our services themselves.

Study and discussion questions

1. How does regular communication support the Second Concept? The Third Concept? The Fourth Concept? The Sixth Concept?
2. How could a lack of regular communication undermine those concepts, and the integrity and effectiveness of our service structure?
3. Does your group receive regular communication from the trusted servants, service boards, and committees that serve it? Does your group regularly communicate with those trusted servants, service boards, and committees? How has this communication—or lack of communication—affect your group? The service structure?
Ninth Concept

*All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.*

To check judgment, to guard against hasty or misinformed decisions, and to invite the sharing of new ideas, our services must consider all viewpoints when making plans. This is essential to the development of a fair, wise, balanced group conscience.

**Study and discussion questions**

1. “An effective group conscience is a fully informed group conscience.” Why is it important to make sure all viewpoints are considered when making service decisions?

2. In your group, area, or region, how can an individual member voice his or her viewpoint on a service decision at hand?

3. Do NA services make the effort they should to seek out new, different viewpoints? Do NA services stifle opposing viewpoints?

4. How do you know when it’s time to speak up against a decision of the majority? When it’s time to accept a decision and surrender to group conscience?

Tenth Concept

*Any member of a service body can petition that body for the redress of a personal grievance, without fear of reprisal.*

The Tenth Concept encourages us to treat each other with respect in the service environment, and provides us with a means of making amends when we wrong others. The essay describes ways in which an individual who feels he or she has been wronged can go about seeking redress of his or her grievance.

**Study and discussion questions**

1. Do you know of anyone who has been wronged in service? Has that wrong been made right?

2. “Together, the Ninth and Tenth Concepts support an atmosphere in which our members feel free to express themselves frankly on matters at hand.” Have you ever been afraid to speak your conscience in service meetings? Do you know of anyone, in your area or elsewhere, who has been afraid to speak freely? If so, why? Would the Tenth Concept ease such fears?

3. When is it appropriate to apply the Tenth Concept? When is it not appropriate?
Eleventh Concept

*NA funds are to be used to further our primary purpose, and must be managed responsibly.*

The Eleventh Concept establishes the sole absolute priority for the use of NA funds: to carry the message. The importance of that priority calls for total fiscal accountability. Direct contributions to each level of service help us focus on our primary purpose and enhance accountability.

**Study and discussion questions**

1. What is money used for in your group? Your area? Your region? Your world services?

2. Rank the following group budget priorities: • group reserve • service donations Why did you rank them in the order you did? Does your group have standing budget priorities, or does it handle such questions from month-to-month?

3. Do you know of instances where NA money has been spent frivolously at the group level? In an area or regional committee? In world services? What was “frivolous” about the way that money was spent? How should it have been spent instead?

4. Are NA funds well-accounted for in your group? Your area and region? In world services? If not, what kinds of financial reports would you like to see instead?

5. “Direct group contributions to our service structure encourage responsible management of service funds and help our services maintain their focus on NA’s primary purpose.” Does your area or region depend on NA fundraisers for a significant portion of its income? Is that wise? How does it affect the relationship of the ASC or RSC to your group? Would that relationship be any different if groups contributed directly to each level of service? Would our service boards and committees be able to operate solely on income from direct group contributions?

Twelfth Concept

*In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government.*

Within the context of the Twelve Concepts, as a body, this concept serves much the same function as Tradition Twelve does in the context of the other traditions. The Twelfth Concept brings our consideration of concepts for NA service back to the spiritual root of selfless service. A structure based on that foundation could only be one of service, never of government.

**Study and discussion questions**

1. What is the difference between service and government?

2. The difference between a governing organization and a service organization is often not of structure but of spiritual foundation and purpose. What is it about NA’s primary purpose and its spiritual identity that says “our structure should always be one of service, never of government”?

3. The essay on the Twelfth Concept talks about how gratitude, humility, communication, and selflessness help our structure remain “one of service, never of government.” Discuss these things.

4. Discuss how the Twelfth Concept applies to each of the eleven other concepts.