Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach An Informed Group Conscience

KBDM Quick Reference Tool

Before you begin discussing the issue, the group:

- Announces topic at least 2 weeks in advance
- Decides who will call on people, take notes, and who will summarize (this could be the same person or several people). Decides time overall to spend on discussion, time per share, how and when people will be called upon. (Use a timer or not?)
- Adopts guidelines like: Start and stop on time. Stick to the agenda. No side conversations. No cross talk. Be polite and courteous. Listen: **if someone says what you were going to say, don't repeat it.**
- Your individual part? Participate in the dialogue. Practice our principles. Assume good will. The issue may require more than one group conscience: practice patience and humility. "Let it begin with me."
  (See our *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for guidance regarding *Group Business*.)

How It Works (What do we actually *do*?)

– Discussion and information gathering before deciding –

1. ***Framing the Topic***: The issue is first **"framed"** or introduced by someone familiar with the topic. It might be introduced by a Thought Force, Task Force, or a Committee. The "Framing the Topic Worksheet" can be used.

2. ***Gather and Exchange Information***—everyone has equal access to the same:
   a. Printed material (e.g. *Service Manual*, past motions, archives from meeting, etc.), and
   b. **Explore the issue using the 4 KBDM questions** (below) as a guide (or this can be assigned to a Thought Force, Task Force, or a Committee).
   c. **Ask questions** *before* giving opinions. There may be questions that have to be answered *before* moving to opinions.

3. ***Summarize*** what you learned (from the printed material and questions) before moving onto the discussion.

4. ***Informed Group Discussion of Topic*****,** listening to all *opinions*
   a. Discuss *based on information already exchanged* and on experience, strength, and hope.
   b. Additional questions may be asked at this time.

5. ***Summarize.*** A decision or solution *may* arise through the discussion. Then, *before* making a decision or offering a solution or "motion":
   - Has everyone asked all the questions needed for clarity?
   - Have all opinions, including the minority opinions, been heard?
   - Does everyone feel they thoroughly understand the topic?
   - Does everyone feel that an informed group conscience has taken place?

6. ***Make a Decision*** (3 possibilities)
   a. Further research or deliberation may be needed about the issue.
   b. Suggestion/Motion may be made (e.g. informal show of hands, or motion/second, if large group).
   c. Status Quo (leave as is).

Four KBDM Questions

The answers to the questions below can provide a basis for discussion. They provide common information so everyone can be on the same page. Gather information to these questions. Everyone can add to them. We may find that we have to do additional work or research to help us make a sound decision.

1. **What do we know about our members' (and prospective members') needs, wants and preferences that relate to this issue? What do we wish we knew, but don't?**
   (*How important is it? Is it what our current members want? What purpose would this serve? Is it necessary? Is it helpful? Might our decision have unintended consequences?)*

2. **What do we know about the resources and our vision for Al-Anon and our meetings that are relevant to this issue? What do we wish we knew, but don't?**
   (What are our resources? Can we afford it? Do we have enough volunteers to make it happen? Do we have any background information in our archives that can help us answer this question?)

3. **What do we know about our "culture" and "environment" that is relevant to this discussion?** In other words--Will our decision be consistent with our principles, policies, and legacies: the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts? What are the implications of our choices? **What do we wish we knew, but don't?**
   (How would this affect our meeting? How would this affect our fellowship? Newcomers? Al-Anon (and A.A.) as a whole? Does our Service Manual provide any guidance about this issue? Pros/Cons: What might the dis/advantages of this change might be?)

4. **What are the ethical implications of our choices? Would we be practicing our "principles in all our affairs"? What do we wish we knew, but don't?**
   (Is our decision legal? Will our decision help us fulfill our primary purpose? If we decide to take an action, will it be the "right" thing to do?)

After our best efforts to answer these questions,
and through listening with open minds and hearts,
we trust in each other and our Higher Power,
and make a decision.

Once a decision is made, the entire group supports the decision.