



FORMING A SERVICE GROUP: A FIRST STEP TOWARD ORGANIZING OUTSIDE OF NORTH AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to be read alongside *Developing a Service Structure Outside North America*, which outlines the stages of forming a local service structure and, in Stage Two, identifies creating a service group as one of the first steps an area can take to begin organizing and supporting the growth of the local S-Anon community. This document focuses on the process of forming a service group in an area outside North America by providing practical guidance on how a service group might form, its operational needs, and its purpose.

When multiple S-Anon groups become established within a particular country or geographically connected region outside North America, members may find it helpful to create a service group to coordinate communication, services, and outreach. A service group connects local S-Anon groups, providing structure and resources that support the growth and effectiveness of the local fellowship.

This is not a one-size-fits-all document. It offers a flexible framework informed by the broad experiences over time of S-Anon International Family Groups and existing service structures worldwide.

UNDERSTANDING A SERVICE GROUP

A service group is a collaborative body formed by multiple S-Anon groups within a geographic area outside of North America, generally within a particular country or geographically connected region. A service group focuses primarily on communication, shared resources, and service coordination. The following might be key functions of a service group:

- Facilitating communication between local S-Anon groups.
- Providing newcomer and member support by maintaining a local contact email, phone line, and/or website.
- Maintaining a list of meetings and group contacts.
- Coordinating service efforts such as outreach and recovery events.

- Translating and distributing literature with necessary permissions from the S-Anon World Service Office.
- Assisting with group challenges by sharing experience, strength, and hope.

Each service group is autonomous in its operations while adhering to the S-Anon Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service to help ensure alignment with S-Anon principles.

IS YOUR AREA READY FOR A SERVICE GROUP?

Before establishing a service group, it may be helpful to assess whether your geographic area has:

- S-Anon groups that are interested in collaborating on an ongoing basis.
- Members who are willing to serve in trusted servant roles to coordinate and maintain a service group.
- A shared need for centralized resources such as a website, email address, event planning, or literature distribution.
- The ability to collect Seventh Tradition contributions to support basic operational expenses.

PROCESS FOR FORMING A SERVICE GROUP

Hold Discussions Among Groups

Invite members from all S-Anon groups within the defined geographic area, whether it is a particular country or geographically connected region outside North America, to discuss the interest and possibility of forming a service group. Consider the following:

- What needs do our groups share that a service group could help address?
- What resources or services could we more effectively provide collectively?
- Are there enough willing members to serve in key roles?

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Define the Purpose and Responsibilities

Clearly outline the scope of the service group's work. While this may evolve over time, consider starting with one or more of the following, depending on needs:

- **Newcomer Support:** Maintaining a central email and/or phone line for inquiries.
- **Meeting Information:** Keeping an up-to-date list of meetings in the defined geographical area.
- **Group Support:** Discussing experience, strength, and hope about any issues local groups may experience.
- **Literature:** Coordinating literature translation and/or distribution with permission from the World Service Office.
- **Communications:** Managing a website and/or outreach efforts within the geographically defined community.
- **Finances:** Establishing a process for handling the Seventh Tradition contributions and revenue from the sale of S-Anon literature, and for paying expenses incurred by the service group.
- **Recovery or Outreach Events:** Coordinating recovery or outreach events held in the geographical area.

Establish Trusted Servant Positions

A service group does not require a complex structure, but it benefits from selecting members to fulfill specific service responsibilities through a group conscience process. Suggested roles may include:

- **Chairperson:** Helps organize the service group's meetings and activities; may serve as the primary contact with the S-Anon Board of Trustees Global Coordination Committee and World Service Office.
- **Secretary:** Records meeting minutes and documents decisions made by the service group; maintains a contact list for service group members and the local groups.
- **Treasurer:** Manages Seventh Tradition contributions and literature sales proceeds and pays expenses; ensures financial transparency.
- **Communications Coordinator:** Handles email and phone inquiries, updates group meeting lists, and manages a website (if needed).

- **Literature Coordinator:** Oversees literature translation, distribution, and agreements with the World Service Office.
- **Outreach Coordinator:** Encourages and facilitates activities to increase membership and awareness of the S-Anon program locally.

Note: Consider having an alternate or an assistant for each position to support future rotation of service.

Determine How Decisions Will Be Made

Decide how the service group will make decisions. Some considerations include:

- Using a group conscience or other process for assuring groups have a voice in major decisions.
- Choosing the frequency and setting of service group meetings.
- Encouraging participation from all groups served by the service group.

Implement Basic Resources

While service groups operate using volunteer service and contributions, some basic resources may be necessary, including:

- A dedicated email address or phone line for inquiries.
- A small budget for literature or website hosting (if applicable).
- A bank account (if needed) for depositing Seventh Tradition contributions and proceeds from literature sales and disbursing expense payments.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE GLOBAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

The Global Coordination Committee, a standing committee of the S-Anon Board of Trustees, offers guidance to groups worldwide as they work to establish service structures in their respective countries. Members seeking to develop a service group can benefit from collaborating with the committee, which provides support on many topics, including the following items:

- Addressing questions about service principles and organizational structure.

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- Navigating translation and literature agreements.
- Connecting the service group with other international S-Anon service bodies.

The Global Coordination Committee can be contacted at globalcoordination@sanon.org.

CONCLUSION

Creating a service group is an important step toward strengthening S-Anon's presence and growth outside North America. By fostering connection and service, a service group provides essential support to groups within a country or regionally connected countries, helping ensure the message of recovery remains available to all who seek it.

As outlined in *Developing a Service Structure Outside North America*, a service group is an early stage of service structure development. Over time, some areas, guided by the spiritual principles identified in the S-Anon Twelve Concepts of Service, may decide to develop a legal

service structure (such as a General Service Office with appropriate local leadership and, where possible, non-profit registration) and a traditional service structure (such as a National Service Conference to keep the legal entity accountable to the fellowship). This progression is gradual and typically measured in years, not months.

As you begin your organizing efforts, we encourage you to keep the focus on simple, shared services: communication, newcomer support, meeting information, and basic coordination, allowing growth to be guided by and focused on local needs. As with personal recovery, progress is more important than perfection. Each service group will develop at its own pace, learning from experience and adapting to the needs of its local S-Anon community.

Note: The World Service Office recognizes only one registered service group per country or regionally connected countries to adhere to our Concepts of Service of avoiding double-headed management and conflicts with licensing agreements, and to prevent competition in selling or distributing S-Anon literature.

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International



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