

Knowledge-Based Decision-Making

(copied from page 14-16 of the *NC/Bermuda Area Policies and Procedures Handbook*)
2025

In Knowledge-Based Decision-Making, background information is introduced to frame a topic and then full discussion of the idea takes place before a motion is presented. The goal of the discussion is to ensure that the group conscience is fully informed. Sometimes these discussions continue over several meetings before any decision for a motion or action is made.

There are **five key elements** of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process for reaching an informed

group conscience:

1. Open communication to ensure flow of information
2. Dialogue before deliberation as we talk with one another and consider options
3. Common access to full information for all decision-makers (Group Representatives) ensures information is not used as a tool to forward a personal agenda
4. Existence in a culture of trust as we presume goodwill and trust each other's motives
5. Confidence in the competency of our partners as we work to achieve the best decision for our fellowship as a whole

The use of KBDM ensures our Higher Power's will is expressed in all group conscience decisions. Al-Anon strives to handle its business affairs to ensure our spiritual principles are followed.

We agree that:

- Open-mindedness - every voice is heard
- Equality - every voice is important
- Humility - the good of the group comes first
- Unity - the outcome is the greatest good for the greatest number

Process

The KBDM process begins with information exchange – written and verbal. Written information is compiled and accessible by all members. Research using the AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, past related motions, Conference Approved Literature (CAL), historical perspectives, and experience offers valuable information. The four KBDM questions listed below can be used for information gathering.

The verbal information exchange begins with a framing of the issue for relevance, purpose, and focus.

Members are allowed to ask questions, i.e. Who, What, When, Where, Why, How, Is, etc., and receive answers for clarity before deliberation. Members are not timed at the microphone when asking or responding to questions and may go to the microphone multiple times, if necessary. Members with direct knowledge answer the questions. Once all questions and answers have concluded, a random member involved in the discussion summarizes what was heard and confirms that the same was heard by all. As a result of the information exchange and summation, the issue becomes clearer.

The next step is deliberation of the issue. Discussion is limited to speaking once on the topic and limited to 2 minutes. Members express pros and cons. At the conclusion of deliberation, a random member involved in the discussion summarizes what was heard and confirms that the same was heard by all. As a result of the deliberation and summation, decision-making becomes clearer.

There are three choices:

1. A motion reflecting the deliberation may come to the floor for a vote.
2. No action is taken because the deliberation and thorough understanding of the issue does not warrant a change.
3. The issue is sent to a Thought Force for discussion of issues resulting from the deliberation.

The Four KBDM Questions

The background information used to frame a topic is usually gathered after the four KBDM questions below have been answered.

1. What do we know about our current or prospective members' wants, needs, or preferences that is relevant to this discussion? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
2. What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
3. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
4. What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)? This includes consideration of how the Legacies apply. Identify both pros and cons. What do we wish we knew, but don't?

Spiritual guidance is found through the collective wisdom of our members. We have agreed to be bound by the group conscience even if it differs from our individual opinion because we believe that our Higher Power gives guidance when every voice has been heard.

Thought Forces (ThF), Task Forces (TF), and Work Groups (WG)

Thought forces, task forces, and work groups are not decision-making bodies. They may make Recommendations. Each body's objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body

(Assembly or Area World Service Committee). The Area Chairperson writes the “charge” which provides the background, objective(s), and known resources. The Area Chairperson may appoint the Chairperson of the ThF/TF/WG and/or the members. The Al-Anon / Alateen Service Manual provides definitions within

Groups at Work under “WSO Committees.”

Definitions

- A Thought Force:

- o is a temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity. o is not expected to have all the answers, or to provide the final solutions. o uses the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions, primarily “Things we don’t know but wish we did.” o are the “thinkers.”

- A Task Force:

- o is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity.

- o implements a strategy developed by a thought force. o are the “doers.”

- A Work Group:

- o is a unit of people established to meet an ongoing need of the originating body.

- o can be considered a permanent part of the originating body which has formed it.

- o can be an originating body which means a thought or task force may evolve from a work group.

Roles of the Members

All members of the ThF, TF, or WG have equal voice. Ideas expressed are given the same weight as each member brings different perspectives with various experiences and/or understandings of the issue.

- Chairperson:

- o Planning the meeting

- Ø builds the agenda—a plan of action

- Ø reviews the agenda with the group and asks for input on clarity of purpose

- Ø sets ground rules for discussion

- Ø sets up meeting times, dates, methods of communication, and the tentative purpose of each meeting

Ø ensures that the job is done to accurately meet the charge, including submission of paperwork to the originating body for consideration

o During the meeting

Ø helps the group maintain a sense of unity

Ø keeps the discussion on topic

Ø confirms group agreement on the outcome

• Recorder / Secretary (member selected within the group):

Ø records key ideas and other information

Ø asks for clarity, when needed

Ø assists Chairperson, as requested

• Members:

Ø understand the charge

Ø ask questions and get clarity

Ø follow the charge without personal interpretation

Ø brainstorm and share the work with each other

Ø stay on track

Ø respond to the Chairperson in a timely manner

Ø accept constructive criticism when the project is up for review