

CA London

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Policy Owner: Chair, Charity Trustees Committee, CA London

Next Policy Review Date: Feb 2025

Introduction

Bullying and harassment is unlawful and should not be tolerated within the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous London (CA London). No one involved in CA London should suffer discrimination and instances of bullying and harassment may, in extreme circumstances, result in the member being asked to leave that meeting at the discretion of the committee.

CA's traditions and spiritual principles are designed to ensure group meetings, committee meetings and events are free from harassment and bullying, and ensure that everyone who comes into contact with CA London is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or family status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, culture, religion or belief, age or disability. Striving to ensure that CA meetings, committee meetings and events are free of harassment and bullying is central to upholding CA's values, traditions, principles, concepts and ethos.

The policy is intended to support this commitment in practice by providing information for group members and committee members on how to recognise and handle concerns of bullying or harassment.

This policy is intended to provide information only and is not intended as prescribed actions.

The policy should be read in conjunction with CA London's ratified document "When Trust is Lost" (the text of which is appended to this document); CA's World Service Manual; and CA London's Policies on Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults, and Health & Safety

The policy complies with the Equality Act (2010).

How to understand bullying and harassment

Bullying may be characterised as:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as:

- Unwanted conduct related to age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered being firm, open and honest by another. Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment but it is sometimes the 'grey' areas that cause most problems.

Some examples of this include:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behavior, including via social media
- insensitive jokes and pranks
- lewd or abusive comments about appearance
- copying messages that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- overbearing sponsorship style or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- making threats
- deliberately undermining by constant criticism

CA London's policy on bullying and harassment

We do not tolerate bullying or harassment in our group meetings, committee meetings or events, whether the conduct is a one-off act or a repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not. Neither shall we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying.

We should take appropriate action if any of our members are bullied or harassed by people they come into contact with while undertaking CA meetings or service, as outlined in the CA London ratified document "When Trust is Lost"

It is suggested the emphasis should be on trying to restore unity to the group, rather than punishment of the individual, as this reflects CA's traditions and principles

Allegations of bullying and harassment should be treated seriously. The facts need to be established quickly, fairly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially.

A process for the resolution of such issues is outlined in the CA London ratified document, "When Trust is Lost"

Support for victims

We should always try to support victims of bullying or harassment who in extreme cases may consider contacting outside agencies to provide specialist advice and support.

Anyone who makes allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith should not be treated less favourably as a result. However false accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals, so we all have a responsibility not to make false allegations.

Police Involvement

CA London should always report incidents of harassment to the Police where there is a clear threat to the safety of other people within the Fellowship or the general public.

Policy Review and Update

The policy has been approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees (CA London's Charity Trustees Committee), by CA London's Policy Review Committee, and by CA London's Area Service Committee (by Group Conscience). The policy will be reviewed annually, or as and when CA London becomes aware of changes in best practice or legislation.

Approved by the CA London's Area Service Committee on Mar 2021

Reviewed: Feb 2024

Signed:

Chair: Alex Royffe

APPENDIX 1 - When Trust is Lost and Keeping What We Have

An article the World Service Board of Trustees (Approved by WSC in August 2006 and CA London Area in May 2020)

The issue of the appropriate response of the CA fellowship and respective service boards (districts and/or areas) when trust in a member is lost due to some actions or inactions of the member who is in a service position unfortunately occurs upon occasion within our CA fellowship. Many times, this concern stems from issues around money, while less often the concern relates to issues around performance of service obligations, behavior issues, and even loss of sobriety.

A careful analysis of this broad issue leads to the conclusion that the matter really has two segments which each need to be explored. The first segment is preventative in nature and establishes some guide- lines related to money handling and also service standards and behaviors. The second segment is a suggestion as to how a service body might respond after there is a breach of trust, theft, behavior issues, or an even a dispute between service members.

Preventative Measures and Guidelines

It is our collective experience that when certain preventative measures and guidelines are in place, there is less likelihood that problems might arise or perhaps remain within any level of the CA service structure

Preventative Measures Around Money Handling

Theft and problems around CA funds can be avoided by consistently and diligently following re- sponsible financial practices and principles. The angst caused when one of our fellows steals from the fellowship or misuses funds, as well as the loss of those funds

that might have gone to help the still- suffering addict, point clearly to our responsibility to do everything we can to prevent these types of problems in the first place.

Most of these challenges have occurred when preventative measures are not in place or are in place but not fully followed. Sometimes we have not wanted to use these preventative measures because we might know the treasurer or other servant personally, or we might believe we would insult that person by asking that the measures be followed, or that the measures may be too cumbersome or troublesome to fully implement. However, our experience is that the very best preventative measure against any type of problem is to remove all chances to have a problem in the first place. Eliminating the opportunity to steal or misappropriate funds may be the best safeguard our fellowship has.

The preventative measures aspect of this matter has two parts, actually. The first deals with how we select trusted servants who are responsible for the management and handling of funds. The second part relates to the checks and balances necessary in these types of matters.

Concepts 9, 10 and 11 are related at some levels to responsible financial management by the respective service bodies at all service levels. In keeping with the spiritual principles of these concepts, guide- lines related to money handling should be carefully developed and followed. These would comprise any of a number of appropriate checks and balances, which might include and/or all of the following: two signatories on the bank account, not having the treasurer be a signatory, duplicate copies of all bank statements being sent to the treasurer and service body chair, yearly audit of all accounts, possibly only writing checks at business meetings with someone besides the treasurer holding the check book in the interim, monthly treasurer reports,

and regular reconciliation of original bank statements. Note that many of these suggestions are further detailed in the CA World Service Manual - see 2006 Manual page 14. Further, the World Service Conference Finance Committee has developed Financial Guidelines for CA, which set forth additional preventative suggestions.

There is a wise saying which provides that an addict alone with fellowship money is in bad company. Hence, it is crucial that all money handling procedures at all levels be monitored by at least two people: two people count receipts; two people make the bank deposits (immediately if at all possible, not the next day); two people reconcile the original bank statements; and two people are always present when funds are disbursed and/or when cash proceeds are involved. Note please that other fellowship assets such as convention merchandise, literature, memorabilia, or office equipment should be treated similarly.

At all levels of our service structure, we need to make sure that money handling guidelines are in place, preferably in writing or at least locatable in the service body's minutes. These guidelines should reference what is expected of the trusted servants in terms of money handling procedures, audit procedures, accounting expectations, checks and balances and the like. The service body might in fact include a statement that theft, misappropriation, or misuse of fellowship funds will not be tolerated at any level and might even consider the process that the service body might follow if such an event occurs. It follows that servants who are aware of these guidelines in their entirety are most likely to follow them and behave in a responsible manner.

Other Clearly Articulated Expectations of What the Service Body Expects of the Trusted Servant

It is often hard to judge the performance of a trusted servant where there are no clear guidelines of how the servant is expected to serve. Accordingly, it is suggested that the service body implement standards for performance by trusted servants. These could complement and supplement the service body's financial and money-handling guidelines.

These performance standards could include those referenced in the CA World Service Manual and those adopted as bylaws of the service body after participation and group conscience including all trusted servants to be affected by the standards. These standards might need to be updated from time to time as service positions change and evolve. Fortunately, there are now several service bodies within our fellowship that have such standards in place and are more than willing to share their experience, strength and hope if asked. Three very common standards relate to loss of sobriety, behavioral challenges and attendance (or the lack thereof) by the trusted servant at service body meetings.

Selection of Trusted Servants

Bill W. wrote an article which was published in the April 1959 edition of the Grapevine entitled "Leadership in AA: Ever a Vital Need." Other writings by Bill and others in 1961, 1966 and 1972 helped to further refine this initial writing. Bill's initial article is inserted directly into the Twelve Concepts for World Service in Concept 9 which provides in part: "Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety..." So first, we must describe what the trusted servant's duties and responsibilities will be; then we must develop a set of requirements both in terms of sobriety as well as applicable service and real-life experiences that match the duties and responsibilities.

The writings seem to emphasize the needs of the service body which is tasked with making selections after being fully informed of the strengths and weaknesses of the

respective candidates. At a minimum, a service resume should be created and circulated; additional specific questions can be asked as a supplement to the service resume or during an interview, if one is held.

In addition to the tangible qualifications of the possible trusted servant, there are some “intangibles” to consider. One is whether we can “trust” the trusted servant. Another is what kind of a service leader the person might be. As Bill stated:

“Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source.... Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can obtain, sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility.”

Response When Trust is Lost

If the safeguards related to money are followed and/or the behavioral and other expectations of the trusted servant are spelled out and then followed, it makes it nearly impossible for problems to still occur. Occasionally, though, even if these safeguards and expectations are complied with, there may be situations which cause trust in a particular trusted servant to be lost. When these unfortunately occur, the service body and members of the fellowship are often faced with the dilemma of how to proceed. This is another reason why clear standards and guidelines are helpful, as they establish a standard to compare to when potentially harmful situations arise. Other factors to

consider are: a sliding scale based upon the severity of the action; also the service body

is encouraged to look at the levels/efforts of restitution and remorse by the person involved; another issue is whether the action is an isolated incident or part of a pattern.

In any event, when these types of problems occur, we must ask whether all financial guidelines and procedures were followed or, if applicable, whether the expectations which were set forth were reasonable for the trusted servants and whether they were in fact met. If either answer is no, the service body should bear part of the responsibility for the problem and the existing procedures and safeguards should be reviewed and modified appropriately.

If, however, the service body can answer that its guidelines were followed completely and that every- thing possible was done to prevent a problem with money or that its expectations of the servant were clear, set forth and understood by the servant and the result is that there still are missing funds, theft, misbehavior, or breaches of the service body's guidelines, then great care must be taken as to how to proceed. When any or a combination of these actions occur there is often a mixture of reactions from the fellowship, ranging from 'forgive and forget, after all we are all addicts and this is how our disease manifests itself and we do not want to run the servant out of the rooms of recovery into a possible relapse,' to something like 'let's sue or prosecute.'

Whatever the reaction is, we need to be mindful that we are charged with first finding out exactly what happened and why. We do not want to overreact, nor do we want to insufficiently react.

Our program of recovery affords all members of our fellowship the chance to behave responsibly in these types of difficult situations, to face our fellows and make amends. This process often starts the healing for the entire fellowship.

However, this is not to say that theft, misuse of funds, other problems with money, loss of sobriety, misbehavior, or failure to fully meet clearly articulated service commitments should be taken lightly or that the service body should sit idly by waiting for the servant to make amends, change and/or apologize. The service body should instead encourage a review process which is responsible, spiritual and fair to all involved. In any event, we are always mindful of our Tradition of placing principles before personalities, especially in these types of situations

If it becomes clear that funds are missing or that a servant has breached his or her duties as clearly set forth in the applicable service guidelines, the service body should make every effort to contact the individual to schedule a meeting where the servant is fully informed of the date, time and location of the meeting and that at such meeting, the servant will be provided the chance to present his or her version of the events. At such a meeting, it is recommended that the format allow adequate time for all involved to express their respective feelings, concerns and solutions. This allows all in attendance to provide their input and may afford a 'cooling off period' to occur. Thereafter, a short break is suggested to allow the participants the chance to connect with their own Higher Powers, focusing on spiritual principles and solutions, before reconvening to conscience on the next course of action.

In these instances, the servant is encouraged to present his/her side of the matter and to find a solution for both the servant and the particular service body. Only if there

is no solution should any of the other possible options be explored. Again, it might also depend on whether there are guidelines in place or detailed expectations which have not been followed to an acceptable level. If these items are in place by the service body, the inquiry and solution might be easier. If not, perhaps more difficult.

If the servant appears at such a meeting and admits to the theft, misuse of funds or failure to follow the financial guidelines of the service body and agrees to pay the funds back, a restitution agreement can be created which might include regular periodic payments in such amounts and in such intervals as acceptable to all involved. Most such agreements specify a weekly or monthly payment until all funds are repaid. Our experience indicates that such agreements need to be written, signed by both the member and a trusted servant of the service body, and perhaps drafted with the advice of counsel if possible. The restitution agreement should have a provision which states that if the agreement is not followed, the service body reserves the right to take whatever legal actions it may be entitled to both under the agreement as well as under the underlying theft statutes applicable to the jurisdiction where the service body is located. A periodic report about the status of the restitution agreement should be made to the service body until the agreement is paid or satisfied in full.

If the issues are around loss of sobriety, misbehavior, or failure to comply with the guidelines in place within the service body, then the inquiry turns to appropriate consequences. These might range from removal from that service position to something less than removal, depending on the circumstance and contriteness of the servant. We are mindful here of two of the warranties within the Twelfth Concept: that no action by the service body ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; and that all actions of the service body should be democratic in thought and in action.

A sample provision to be placed in the service body's bylaws or guidelines might include the following:

Problems of Misbehavior, Loss of Sobriety, or Misuse of Fellowship Funds

Response by the service body when there are questions about the trusted servant's misbehavior, loss of sobriety, failure to follow other guidelines of the service body, or where there are accusations of theft, misuse of fellowship funds, and/or mishandling of such funds.

The following actions will lead to an investigation and possible further sanctions as warranted by the service body.

A. Loss of Sobriety: Complete abstinence is a requirement! Anything other than complete abstinence constitutes an automatic resignation. Further requirements are stipulated under each position's description.

B. Misbehavior: It would be virtually impossible to contemplate all possible events of wrongful behavior by the trusted servants. Wrongful behavior would include, but not be limited to, verbal abuse or physical violence directed toward a fellow trusted servant or CA member. Incidents of wrongful behavior should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis.

C. Misuse of Fellowship Funds: The Eleventh Concept establishes that the sole absolute priority for the use of CA funds is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. The 12 Concepts give the service body a mandate from the CA groups that calls for total fiscal accountability. With this in mind, any misuse of funds by trusted servants

cannot be tolerated. Definition: "Misuse of funds" includes, but is not limited to, theft, embezzlement, or use of funds for any purpose not expressly authorized by the applicable service committee or subcommittee. This includes theft of cash, checks, any financial instrument (i.e., refunds from vendors to the CA. fellowship), or asset (i.e., equipment, supplies or inventory).

1. Interim Action - Suspension

a. Should any trusted servant be suspected to have misappropriated or misused fellowship funds, to have lost sobriety, or been accused of misbehavior, the members of the executive committee of the service body which initially put the trusted servant in place will contact each other, in person or by phone, to discuss and begin an investigation of the allegations made. Upon outcome of the initial investigation, the Executive Body may vote to immediately "suspend" the member(s) involved from their applicable service position(s). Suspension in this instance is not disciplinary action; it is a pause in active service to allow time for further investigation of the incident.

b. A suspended trusted servant may no longer represent him/herself to the fellowship or service body as the holder of that trusted servant position. Additionally, a member, upon notification of being suspended, may not be reimbursed for any service-related expenses incurred during the course of his/her suspension.

c. The presiding officer of the service body, immediately upon calling the next successive service

body meeting to order, must report all interim suspension decisions made by the Executive body, fully disclosing the alleged misappropriation or misuse of funds, misbehavior or other wrongful actions, and name the individual(s) involved. Any member suspected of misappropriation or misuse of funds, or of any other wrongful acts, may exercise their Fifth and Tenth Concept rights to redress at this time.

d. The service body may discuss continuing the investigation or moving to action.

e. Any other member who participates in or who had knowledge (without notifying the committee) of the suspected misappropriation or misuse of funds or other wrongful behavior, shall be subject to the same actions taken against the suspected person(s).

2. Action - Reinstatement/Removal

a. The service body may vote to reinstate the member(s). Upon reinstatement, said member's suspension will be lifted and he/she will resume his/her role as a full participant of the service body.

b. This matter can be brought to the applicable overseeing service body if the action occurred at a subcommittee level. If the service body votes to further investigate or to suspend a member, the subcommittee, if there is one, will report these actions to the applicable overseeing service body and ask for its guidance and recommendations. The suspected person may exercise their Fifth and Tenth Concept right to redress at this time at the overseeing body level. (Here, for example, if the action occurred at the Area H&I Committee, the Committee would have the right to bring the matter to the Area.) If the matter involved a trusted servant of the Area or District, the body which placed that servant in the service position shall have ultimate authority to act in such instance.

c. If the subcommittee or overseeing service body votes to remove the trusted servant with cause, said individual's participation within the service body is immediately terminated. Additionally, any member removed from office and/or committee by the service body for misappropriation or misuse of fellowship funds may not hold any District, Area or Regionally- elected position, or handle any fellowship funds of the Area, District or its subcommittees for a period of three (3) years.

3. Restitution

a. A member removed from a service position for the misappropriation or misuse of fellowship funds may be subject to other sanctions by the service committee.

b. Members removed from office for the misappropriation or misuse of fellowship funds may, at the discretion of the service body, be asked to sign a promissory note and make restitution in lieu of prosecution.