

Roundtable Meeting Summary Notes

September 15, 2024

3:00pm Central Time via Zoom

Attendees: Laura B (Organizer and Meeting Leader), Valerie (ISB), Megan C and Theresa (IIG), Kathy G, Katina (ILC), Gaylynn (New Meeting), Ronda and Laura M (Retreat), Traci (Website), Ru and Laura F (Tools Workshop)

Notetaking: Laura B and Laura F

Meeting was opened with the Serenity Prayer.

Laura B welcomes attendees to the roundtable and asked for volunteer to read the 12 Traditions of ISA **Read by Kathy G?**.

Laura B then reviewed ground rules for the meeting which were also distributed to attendees (see attached). It was noted that each Committee would have five minutes to present on their work, needs, etc. and that questions would be saved until the end of the presentation. Presentations then began.

ISA Service Board

Valerie represented the ISA Service Board and shared that the Board are servants of the Members there to assist the ISA Community in maintaining consistency and upholding bylaws and principles of the Community. She shared that a current Board member is an attorney which has been helpful with bylaws pertaining to the corporation not the organization; the board is also exploring the possibility of consulting an external attorney regarding the bylaws. ISB has been using a new non-profit accounting software that provides more flexibility to track expenses such as that of the retreat, literature, and tokens. At some point, we may be able to budget in an effort to be proactive vs reactive and if/when this occurs the board will be requesting budgets from each committee. The Board is considering creating/documenting the responsibilities for roles on the board such as for Secretary and Treasurer positions so people know what they are getting into when committing.

Some action items include: ISB will hold a special meeting with Dawn to obtain and document the history and original purpose for creating the Intergroup. There has been a request for permission to use the ISA 12 Steps and the ISA 12 Gifts for a new qw step group for betrayed partners. ISB will be discussing this request at the next Board meeting and will likely be reaching out to related committees. Valerie also reminded the group that to contact the Board, anyone can go to the ISA web site, click on the link, and the request will go to the ISA Board Secretary who sends out to all Board Members.

Intergroup

Theresa then presented on Intergroup stating that Intergroup is comprised of 20 representatives and alternates, serving 17 of the 19 current ISA meetings. There are two officers, Megan C, who has been the Chairperson since IIG began and Theresa, who took on the role of Communications Officer this year. In the Fall of 2021, Intergroup began with attempting to lighten the workload of

the ISB by overseeing the service Board elections. The original vision was to create a committee that could help ease the workload of the ISB by addressing issues directly affecting the meetings and fellowship, while allowing the ISB to focus on managing the overall operation of the organization. The goal of the Intergroup was to give ISA members a voice on matters impacting the fellowship and to foster greater transparency. According to the ISB, the Intergroup exists to represent individual ISA meetings, while the Service Board safeguards ISA as a whole, including its Steps, Traditions, Gifts, and overall structure.

This committee has faced a lot of challenges as they are attempting to identify what issues currently exist and are seeking input as the best way to move forward. Megan C reported they plan to meet with Dawn as well to better understand what the original vision and intent was for the group, what need existed that the Intergroup was formed to meet/address to see if this need even still exists and then can begin considering current needs and who/how best to address. They want to serve the Fellowship as a whole, be liaisons for the Fellowship but as mentioned have run into issues attempting to address what are perceived needs only to at times learn that the need is already being addressed. The example was given of New Member Committee which was a crossover as Intergroup was unaware that Gaylynn was leading that effort. Gaylynn shared that she looks forward to talking more with them so that they can collaborate accordingly.

Literature Committee

Katina thanked Laura B for coordinating this meeting as it has been very much needed. She then shared that this group has been active since May of 2022, though there have been other Literature Committees since 2012. One draft ISA book was created in 2019. There are currently 11 members and they hold monthly meetings on the first Thursday with usually 6-8 attendees and minutes are posted on the ISA web site under Service, Literature Committee. Currently the committee is working without a chair and alternating responsibility among the meeting attendees. The purpose of the committee has been to create new materials where needed. The founder of ISA drafted the ISA Steps, Traditions and Promises that were used until AA reviewed them a few years ago. The Tools Workshop was also drafted in the first year of ISA's existence. The WHO, WHAT, HOW document was the first article approved by our fellowship. One of the current committee's efforts was revising/creating The 12 Gifts of ISA based on feedback from AA that the original Promises would not be approved for use. They also created the *Who What How* document on the web site and have been reviewing and updating the Tools Workshop materials as well. They often review materials from other 12 step communities, taking what meets ISA principles and they ensure a focus on betrayal trauma. They also regularly obtain feedback beyond only the committee members.

Kathy G reported that completed projects so far include first approval of the approval process for literature which is now in revisions, the 12 Gifts of ISA as mentioned, updated universal meeting scripts, and a draft Step 1 of the 12 Step Workbook. In the next few months they are redrafting the approval process, will be completing the updated Tools Workshop Participant Guide, and Step 2 of the 12 Step Workbook.

New Meetings

Gaylynn shared that there are four additional Members who want to help with this committee. She reported that the first ISA meeting ever was in 2011 in Bellaire, Texas, which then moved to Sugarland, Texas. It was approximately two to five years before another new meeting was formed then in one year the Community exploded resulting in the Board being created and filing for 501(c)(3) status. There are 22 meetings now. Historically, someone on the Board contacted each meeting once a year to gather a pulse and report back to the Board on number of attendees and stats such as that. The process of forming a new meeting has been that all interest emails that are received are asked to take it to a HP then come up with a place and time. At that point we would put them on the website. There is a button on the web site to complete a form. Gaylynn was responding to inquiries, then it might have been Jessica; currently Erin O responds to inquiries. Gaylynn just recently sent out a survey to meeting contacts to gather the following information:

- Approximately how many people attend every week?
- Approximately how many people are signed up to receive group messages in your group's preferred way of communication (i.e. Group Me)?
- When did your meeting start. If you don't know - please guess.
- Do you want an ISA to contact you for support or to answer questions?
- What is going well with your group?
- What is your meeting's biggest challenge?
- What is your meeting reading from?
- First Name and Last Initial of the person answering the meeting inquiry email.

8 out of 22 meetings responded with the information that the meetings are going well and numbers are manageable. The biggest challenge is identifying volunteers to lead meetings and attendance can be a problem. Most read from *The Language of Letting Go* and the Dallas Serenity Sisters group reads from *Surviving Betrayal* and Al-Anon books. The suggestion made is to have this committee check in more so that any issues such as what to do if someone shows up impaired or suggestions identified can be addressed in a timely manner.

Retreat Committee

Ronda reported that the 2024 Retreat Committee conducted the 7th Annual Texas Women's* retreat at Camp Allen this past February. (In 2020, we couldn't reserve Camp Allen and did a Co-ed summer retreat in Houston. All other retreats have been women only.) There were attendees from 13 states and 3 countries. Our speaker was well received, a new workshop model was introduced, and the 19 committee members worked with 26 other named volunteers to cover the tasks needed to be done. That was the 2nd year we have done our own registration and the first year that cancellation refunds were offered. The committee continues to collect donations and funds private scholarships for ISAs in need.

Our feedback survey was answered by 73% of our attendees, who indicated 100% satisfaction with the ISA Story presentation, 99% approval of the Camp Allen facility, 98% approval of the Speaker, 97+% approval of the agenda, format, activities offered and informal time. Other highlights included In-person ISA meetings, exercise, somatic movement, creative/art workshops, fellowship hike, game night, shared meals and letters to self & journaling workshops.

2021 was the first year a Retreat Committee was formed...prior to that, retreats were handled by the ISB. That year, Camp Allen allowed us to reduce our contracted amount during the Covid "season" and numerous cancellations occurred even though all rooms were filled by the waiting list. The ISB took the extra money received and endowed the 2022 Retreat Committee with \$2500 and created it's status as a "stand alone Meeting"... meaning that the Retreat must conducted with it's own funds, and that it must be financially supported by those who attend and may not depend on ISA to use funds collected by ISA as a whole.

Since only the ISB can sign contracts, the Retreat Committee votes on future contracts for retreats and must request the ISB endorsement. This committee pays all deposits for current and future contracts. At the end of the 2024 retreat, our balance was around \$16,000. One deposit for 2025 was paid last spring & another was just paid. Our remaining \$8000 will also be used to pay a deposit in March for the 2026 retreat. The committee has asked the ISB to enter contracts for 2027 & 2028, and the committee will pay those deposits when due.

Laura M reported that there are 19 members with 5 new this year; they held their first meeting this week in preparation for the Feb 7-9, 2025 Retreat. The speaker has been confirmed and will be announced when registration opens. The retreat will use the workshop model again to reach participants in all levels of trauma and recovery. The committee is reaching out to ISA women who are planning to attend who may be interested in learning about leading a workshop at the retreat or sharing their recovery story at the retreat. Workshops ideas include, but are NOT limited to:

- healing art projects
- Journaling styles
- Nature walks or exploration
- Yoga or other forms of healing movement
- Meditation
- How to sponsor
- New healing games or activities

We have added a Newcomer Meet and Greet the first night to further reach out to those in their early stages of recover.

Tools Workshop Committee

Laura F shared that some feedback was shared recently that Members were thinking that there had been no Tools Workshops in a few years so she wants to remedy that by catching up this group on some data as well as finding a way to better communicate on-going. She shared the following data with the group: Laura F reached out to former and current facilitators to see who may want to remain on the list so there are about 12 currently. There have been 7 facilitators who participated in 5 Workshops since January 2024. There were 0 Members who responded to the call for new facilitators earlier this year. There are 36 people on the waitlist, 36 female and 0 male. There were 3 male Members who attended a recent Workshop. Laura F additionally shared that a new Co-Coordinator Role model is being piloted and Rus has agreed to work with her. Rus was introduced to the group. Division of responsibilities could look something like one person focuses on scheduling Workshops (securing facilitators, create rsvp/registration) and the other manages waitlist, coordinates communication with the fellowship regarding Workshops, sends

the confirmation emails, sends out survey, etc.. Laura F then shared that regarding the butterfly tokens, Workshop participants are asked via the confirmation email and as part of the Feedback Survey if they would like to receive a token after completing the Workshop, they provide the address to where they would like them mailed, and Laura F mails them accordingly. Regarding the Feedback Survey, the survey is sent out to Participants post Workshop completion. Responses are summarized in aggregate and communicated to facilitators; about 30% actually complete the survey. We are currently reviewing the survey for possible update to content and distribution process. She also reported that she has received feedback that Members are not receiving replies when they email about the Workshop and wanted to assure you that she is responding to all inquiries received and encouraged anyone who may have more information about this to please share with her so that she can research any issues. She further added that if an inquiry is generic and not clear if it is from an active ISA, she does follow up to ask how they heard, which meeting(s) might they be attending and the like, sometimes hearing back and sometimes not, still adds them to the waitlist with a notation; these are not included in the waitlist number shared earlier.

Web site Committee

Traci L is the only Member and welcomes anyone to please join. Gaylynn used to maintain the site until Traci L took it on and revamped the whole site. Traci L shared that she sees her role as more setting up the behind the scenes inner working of the site, not the creative side. Currently receives about one email/week; each inquiry, each navigation to the site increases traffic and the more traffic the higher the site will go in searches for this topic. She shared that Committees have shared a desire to have their own pages so some are currently posted and others can be created if the Committee chooses. She is happy coordinate.

Question and Answer:

Question was asked of Gaylynn as to what the process is for starting a new meeting. She responded that once she receives the inquiry, she encourages the Member to take the idea to their Higher Power, create an anonymous email, and identify the time/day/location/name/description. When they get back to her, Gaylynn sends the materials to the contact and then proceeds with additional screening to ensure consistency among groups as there are specific components that are required in order to identify as an ISA meeting.

Laura B asked when should something go through Intergroup vs Meeting Contact in order to reach meetings and members? Megan said that Intergroup has completed the Board elections, since they only meet four times per year, they can now look at New Member Committee efforts to transition over to Gaylynn, can consider things like how to get feedback from meetings with no Intergroup contact, and can identify what needs ISA has and is Intergroup the most appropriate to address and get clarity on what Intergroup should be. Gaylynn mentioned that she knew that Laura M is part of another Fellowship's Intergroup and has shared with Intergroup Committee about her experience so would she be willing to share with Roundtable. Laura M shared that in that Fellowship there is a meeting every quarter where each Committee reports; representatives from each meeting attend so they both obtain information to take back to their individual meetings/Fellowships as well as take questions and issues from their individual meetings/Fellowships to the quarterly meeting. She went on to say that while content is different

Fellowship to Fellowship, there are some systems that may have enough in common that ISA can adopt from those Fellowships as we have in other ways.

There were also questions and suggestions made for Laura F including feedback that the web site area which notes “Upcoming Tools Workshops” may need to be revised so that it speaks more clearly to what happens when someone engages the “click here.” Some suggested that this be a link to registration; Laura F noted that because there is a screening as well as the need to give waitlisted persons a chance to register first, this may not be an optimal solution. Another suggestion is to have a button on the web site that links the user to a Google Form that automatically adds them to a waitlist; Rus asked if this could potentially result in an overwhelming amount of traffic for us and Traci L shared that she did not think that would be the case. We agreed to continue to think on this. Laura F will work with Traci L to revise the verbiage in this section so that it is more clear. The suggestion was also made that Laura F send the Workshop information to the meeting contacts even when it is not open to all Fellowship so awareness is created that they are happening. Laura F thanked everyone for their ideas and encouraged to send any additional.

Theresa asked Gaylynn is anyone can start a new meeting and Gaylynn said yes, any ISA Member can start a new meeting; it is suggested that they have another person to help.

Laura M shared that they are always looking for Members to share their story at the Retreat. Gaylynn said that she is planning to have a Workshop in October focused on how to write your story. She has a format and also was given the format used by Celebrate Recovery.

Ronda shared that there is a ‘Lifecycle of an ISA’ document which shows first attend a Tools Workshop, then get a Sponsor or Accountability Partner, complete the 12 Steps, then write your story. She went on to say that there are a lot of Step groups but sponsorship is low. She and Laura M may revamp the Sponsorship Workshop taking elements from another Fellowship. A concern was expressed about plagiarism and Katina reminded all that you just need to site sources and it would not be considered plagiarism.

Gaylynn shared that it seems like the biggest challenge at this time is Intergroup; she does not like to see them struggling and wants to know how we can help. Theresa said that in their last meeting the thought is to reach out to each Committee and ask how Intergroup can serve so not only at an individual meeting level.

Kathy said that her understanding is that the meeting contact is more to assist and help new persons coming in to navigate into the meeting.

Traci L said that her understanding is that the Intergroup contact is more for taking new meeting content, process, materials, or such back to their individual meetings and giving feedback from Fellowship on those things. They are the voice of the individual meeting but then elections occurred, confusion happened, and that is why they are going to meet with Dawn.

Katina said that she very much appreciates history and was the one who originally said that the ISB doesn't dictate to Intergroup unless it falls under the ISB so is that where it should be?

Laura M said that the needs of ISA have to be determined.

Gaylynn said that Dawn patterned Intergroup idea after SANON.

Traci L said it is a good to meet with Dawn for continuity and since everyone kind of had their own idea of what this should be.

Ronda was on the Board when Dawn started Intergroup. It was an inverted triangle where the Board was at the bottom, Fellowship at the top and Intergroup in between. They wanted Fellowship's approval of the literature so thought Intergroup contact was to do this; if they aren't then just need to figure out how we are to accomplish that?

Kathy reported that they are rewriting the approval process because it didn't go as well so want people to vote within their groups, vote, and take that vote to the Intergroup and/or ISB.

Laura M raised the issue that the problem is that not every meeting has a contact on Intergroup so that would leave out the feedback of many.

Laura B said that Intergroup should plan on elections being an annual event from now with board members rolling off in small groups to help with continuity and avoid having too many new members starting at once.

Ronda reminded that the group conscience is one of the best tools for admin; it is used in Retreat and Literature Committees regularly.

Kathy asked if possible for the meeting contact to become the Intergroup contact if a meeting group does not have an Intergroup contact? Or can a meeting group opt out if they do not want to participate in voting type process in an instance.

Final Thoughts, Takeaways, and Should This Be a Regularly Held Meeting

Laura B then invited the group to share their takeaways from today.

Laura M shared that she loves the Committees she is on, how the group conscience is used and things run so smoothly and how she really appreciates how hard the Retreat Committee especially all works so well together.

Ronda shared that she is always grateful to be an ISA, that the hard work and efforts of people such as gathered is truly for the benefit of new members. The newcomers are served by what was done here today. We do it for the newcomer, for our friends, and for ourselves. My heart goes out to

Traci L who is a Committee of one. She hope this is yearly, not sure biannually wouldn't be a bad thing either.

Laura F shared that she is also grateful and honored to remain a part of ISA, that efforts such as these and the continued ways in which processes are created results in sustainability that an organization aspires to for years to come, and that she was struck by the focus today of we are trusted servants, holding principles

Valerie shared her observation that each Committee can have different cadence, different structure and still be true to needs of ISA; she would also like this to be a regular meeting

Gaylynn reports always reminded that some groups do not have Intergroup representation and also what is a meeting contact vs intergroup representative. She asked to confirm if how to hold a group conscience is on the web site and Traci L confirmed it is.

Theresa shared that she was not initially in favor of Intergroup being at the Roundtable given that they still figuring out what it is; she's glad they participated and it's been good to see that we want to be going to the greater Fellowship to see what is needed and what should be happening with Intergroup. Biannual would be good.

Traci L said she is Committee of one and welcomes anyone to join in helping out. She said she appreciates all who join to have their voice and come together in common goal.

Laura B shared how reminded she is of how hard everyone works and how great it is to come together in this way. She had a bit of nervousness and is excited that it actually exceeded expectations. She said they will review how often the Roundtable should meet, thanked everyone for being here, and lead the group in closing Serenity Prayer using Us and We version.