

## SHARING FROM D.C.M.s TO A NEW D.C.M.

So now you're a District Committee Member (D.C.M.) Congratulations, and welcome to this new and challenging service role! As leader of the district committee, you will bring the group conscience and thinking of the district to the area committee. This is an essential link between the group General Service Representatives (G.S.R.s) and the area delegate. The pamphlet "Your D.C.M.," available from the General Service Office, provides basic information on this service position, and you may also be given locally produced material by your area.

If you're reading this, it's likely that you have received your D.C.M. kit from G.S.O., which is an excellent place to begin. As a suggestion, read "The A.A. Group," all the Guidelines, *The A.A. Service Manual*, *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, the Big Book, and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

I was taught that, as in any other endeavor, the success of a D.C.M. depends on the leadership of the person occupying the position. If a D.C.M. loses interest, it will trickle down to the rest of the district, but strong D.C.M.s create strong and active districts.

Sometimes we have good knowledge coming in as D.C.M.s, but this is not always the case. As a new D.C.M., I soon realized I needed a better grasp of the Concepts, so I started a monthly Concepts study. Interested G.S.R.s join me at our local intergroup office to read a concept and discuss it each month. This has enriched our personal knowledge and our service to our district.

If you feel like you are coming in cold, remember that you can learn a lot during the D.C.M. meeting at the area assembly. In our area, this roundtable group is composed of the D.C.M.s, alternates, and is chaired by a past delegate. We go over problems within our districts, review functions of the position from the *Service Manual*, and are given information to relay from the area, delegate, or G.S.O. The dispelling of misinformation and the dissemination of new and correct information comes through the D.C.M. and out to the groups. The D.C.M. meetings help me understand my role and to discover what is working for others.

If there are area-sponsored D.C.M. Workshops throughout the year, calendar them in! Before long, you'll be more confident and may find yourself conducting district workshops, assisting groups with local problems, supporting the implementation of P.I., Treatment, Special Needs-Accessibilities, Corrections, C.P.C., or other district-specific programs/activities, and coordinating activities between districts.

A past delegate suggested that we D.C.M.s avoid comparing our district to others and that we should focus on doing one thing well. Over time, I have learned that not only are districts different, but each area in my region does things differently. It has been important for me to accept that fact and to learn more about our area and our procedures and guidelines.

Several years back, a new D.C.M. suggested that we G.S.R.s car-pool to many of the area events. Now that I'm the D.C.M., I have the privilege of driving my van with a bunch of G.S.R.s. We meet for breakfast, have a sort of A.A. meeting along the way and enjoy some excellent fellowship, too. These road trips are *great* experiences, especially when we have a new G.S.R. in the van.

Get to know other D.C.M.s. See if your area website has an email address for the D.C.M.s. Usually this mail can be forwarded to your personal email. The area may also maintain a list of contact information for D.C.M.s and area committee chairs/officers. I kept my list of D.C.M. contact information on hand, but never thought I would use it. Then, about four months into being a D.C.M., my district decided to hold a “Unity Service Day.” We had never done this before and so I called the other D.C.M.s to gather sharing. As a result of this calling around, our district was invited to attend another district’s annual service day and we learned a great deal. The members of that district supported our service event, so we ended up helping one another!

Feel free to invite area committee chairs and officers to attend as many of the district and group service events as they want – from district meetings to workshops and sharing sessions. You would be *amazed* at the amount of interest and enthusiasm this can generate in the district.

As the incoming D.C.M., I received the district’s group list from our area registrar. It used to be that at our district meetings we were lucky if we had 50 percent attendance. My service sponsor suggested that I visit each group to introduce myself to the group G.S.R. and invite them to the next district meeting – this must have had an effect because now we are up to 90 percent participation! Now I send gentle reminders by email to remind the G.S.R.s about the district meeting and to see if they need anything placed on the agenda. I call those who do not have email.

We started the new panel year by taking a district inventory to help improve participation at district meetings and address what we saw as district apathy. We kept it simple. It brought us together and surprised a few, but good changes came out of our inventory.

My district has the custom of giving projects to the outgoing D.C.M.s. Some have been willing to be a resource on district history. That way they stay involved and we avoid reinventing the wheel. I always thought they should just rotate completely out of district service, but now that I am a D.C.M., I see the wisdom of having them stick around.

Encourage all G.S.R.s and groups to suggest topics for district meetings. Inviting the local intergroup/central office liaison to the district meeting can help foster unity and communication. Remember to send the delegate and alternate a copy of the minutes.

Share the “where & when” of area general service activities with the G.S.R.s and don’t be afraid to encourage them to attend.

Communicate changing phone numbers and email addresses to the area registrar as soon as you get the information – perhaps you can even set aside a special folder just for this information. Finally, when you become the *outgoing* D.C.M., remember to prepare the necessary change forms for forwarding to G.S.O., the area registrar and the area delegate.

As I prepare to rotate, I thank you for this opportunity to share my D.C.M. experience with you. I am grateful for the opportunity to be of service and I sincerely wish you all the best!

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**Note:** *The experience collected here reflects excerpts of sharing from various D.C.M.s.*