Notes from July 14th Contact List Town Hall

Eighteen people came together to discuss the current state of the SMR contact list and offer suggestions as to how we might move forward to create a system that is more workable, offers as much security and anonymity as we can, and continues to support healthy interaction between members of our community.

The discussion was thoughtful and reflective. Ideas were brought forth about the Contact List and other ways SMR might build more positive engagement. Gratitude to everyone who shared and/or held space for this discussion.

Issues Discussed

- Timeliness. Having dates on the list

  - In the current list, there's no way to know when a person put their name on the list. Some names are people who have not attended the meeting in a long time.

  - The list is ungainly, messy, old.

  - Put a date on when we join the list and have the name expire after a certain period of time

  - Clear the old list and create a new list once a year

  - During the month of September (or some other month), people can sign up for the new list

  - Archive the old lists with dates of when active

- Anonymity. Help people understand they can have an email used only for 12-Step purposes

  - This could be explained on the sign up page with information on how to do it.

  - Even with special emails, there is the possibility of misuse. That needs to be stated clearly

  - In the Newcomer section, we suggest a separate email

  - **Facebook sometimes suggests names of others in the SMR group. How does that happen?

- Use of the list

  - It is still being used

- Knowing it's there helps people who are shy.

- It gives Newcomers the feeling they are not alone.

- It's easy to miss people reaching out in the chat, or have the chat disappear before you get a chance to respond to a chat.

- The feeling was the contact list is an important part of our meeting.

- However, the contact list does not in itself build community. It is not a Sponsor list, but seems transactional rather than relational. Why do we have/use the contact list?

Pros/Cons

- Pro

  - Helpful for people who are shy or do not catch the chat

  - Created feeling of community, belonging

- Con

  - Anonymity and privacy. Does require effort to make an anonymous email

  - Must have a trusted servant to maintain.

  - Large, cumbersome and a person must commit to a timeframe and job to create the list. Not easy to get savvy volunteers to serve.

WhatsApp suggested as an alternate

- One participant with experience administering a WhatsApp thread said it is not difficult to administer

- People can join as they please and leave as they please

- The group has strong boundaries on acceptable behavior. Any admin can remove a person who is causing trouble.

- Admin creates the group then Admins other trusted servants. There are guidelines posted in the description. Anyone not adhering to the guidelines is removed and cannot rejoin the group.

- Another person belongs to a WhatsApp group and it seems self-monitoring

- How does the naming in WhatsApp work? Can it sustain 100s of people? Possible maximum on a list is 400.

- They can be set up where someone has to request to join. More security.

- A negative is that you have to join up with your regular phone number, you cannot have an anonymous phone number.

Next Steps

- Clear the old list. Send an email to current mailing list to announce.

- Make a motion to create a once a year contact list, but the details of how it will be done will come from the comments posted on the website.

- Link the availability of the contact list to having a person in the position to create/ maintain the list.

- ASK whether a contact list is still needed either in the body of the motion or in the actual vote itself.

  - NOTICE. If you feel we no longer need a contact list, please say so in your comments and give us your reasons.

- Rethink the Contact list or the idea of Contact. How do we encourage community and relationship?

  - What exactly needs to be on a contact list?

  - People voting on the Contact list will be voting based on the OLD list. Is that what we want?

- We may need another meeting to formulate how the list would work. Possibly a committee to finalize the motion before voting.