

AA District 7th Tradition Workshop

Facilitator Guide (45 Minutes, Single Panel)

Workshop Overview

This workshop explores Tradition Seven, self-support, not as a bookkeeping exercise but as a question of faith, trust, and fear. It is built from the District's Tradition Seven materials and features a single 3-person panel discussion, giving members a chance to hear directly from people who have served as treasurer, GSR, or in other roles that affect the group's finances.

Total run time is 45 minutes. All times below are elapsed time from the start of the workshop and can be shifted to match your actual start time. Because of the shorter format, there is no scheduled break, so plan to start on time and keep segments tight.

Roles and Responsibilities

Give each person below their own copy of this guide, highlighted to their section, at least a week before the workshop.

Role	Responsibilities	Who / How Many
Facilitator (MC)	Opens and closes the workshop, keeps the schedule on track, delivers the short teaching segment, and hands off to the panel moderator. Should know the Tradition Seven material well.	1 person, ideally the District Treasurer or a Traditions-focused member
Panel Moderator	Introduces the three panelists, asks the prepared questions, manages time, and opens the floor for audience questions. Can be the same person as the Facilitator.	1 person
Panelists	Members with direct experience handling group money, ideally a current or former group treasurer, a GSR, and a member with general service experience. Send them the panel questions a week ahead so they can reflect, not script an answer.	3 people
Resource Table Volunteer	Sets up and staffs a table with the Self-Support pamphlet, the Financial Guidance handout, and the 12 and 12 for anyone who wants to look or take a copy.	1 person
Timekeeper	Optional if the Facilitator wants a dedicated person. Gives a quiet warning before the panel segment ends so it doesn't run long.	1 person, or the Facilitator doubles up

Materials and Room Setup

- Sign-in sheet and name tags at the entrance
- Chairs arranged so the audience can see the panel table clearly, plus a small table and 3 chairs at the front
- Wall clock or visible timer for the Facilitator and Timekeeper
- Printed copies of the panel questions for the moderator and each panelist
- Printed Financial Guidance Quick Reference (see below) as a handout
- Resource table: Self-Support pamphlet, The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book)
- Notepad or index cards at each seat, if you want to collect audience questions in writing

Run of Workshop

Time	Segment	Length	Lead
0:00 to 0:05	Welcome and Opening Frame	5 min	Facilitator
0:05 to 0:15	Presentation: Money, Fear, and Faith	10 min	Facilitator
0:15 to 0:35	Panel: Self-Support in Action	20 min	Moderator + 3 Panelists
0:35 to 0:40	Audience Q&A	5 min	Moderator
0:40 to 0:45	Closing Reflection and Wrap-Up	5 min	Facilitator

Resources

- Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix (AA pamphlet, order from GSO)
- The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
- Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book)

Pre-Workshop Checklist

- Recruit 3 panelists, ideally a current or former treasurer, a GSR, and a member with general service experience, at least 2 weeks out
- Confirm the Facilitator and Panel Moderator (these can be the same person)
- Order the Self-Support pamphlet from GSO for the resource table
- Send panelists their questions 1 week ahead so they can reflect, not memorize a script
- Reserve the room and confirm seating for the audience, plus a small panel table up front
- Prepare the Financial Guidance Quick Reference handout
- Print this guide for the Facilitator and Moderator, and print the panel questions for each panelist
- Set up the resource table with the Self-Support pamphlet, Big Book, and 12 and 12
- Prepare a sign-in sheet and name tags if needed

Workshop Format

Welcome and Opening Frame (0:00 to 0:05)

The facilitator opens with the Serenity Prayer, if your group uses one, then reads Tradition Seven aloud.

Hello and welcome. Let's start by reading Tradition Seven together: Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Take a second and think about that. What does self-supporting actually mean to you? Why do we decline outside contributions? What would happen if we didn't?

Tonight, we're going to look at how money in AA is not really about money. It's about fear, control, and faith.

Here's how this workshop goes. We've got a short presentation, one panel discussion with people who've handled group money firsthand, and time at the end for your questions. Let's get started.

Presentation: Money, Fear, and Faith (0:05 to 0:15)

The facilitator delivers this teaching, grounded in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions essay on Tradition Seven. Read it in your own words rather than word-for-word if you're comfortable.

Believe it or not, this Tradition gave AA more trouble than almost any other. Let me tell you about two moments from our history that shaped it.

In 1940, John D. Rockefeller Junior, an early friend of AA, hosted a dinner to introduce the fellowship to some of his wealthy friends. A few early members hoped this might set AA up for life. But Rockefeller himself said, "I am afraid that money will spoil this thing." At the dinner, his son Nelson stood up and told the room, "It is our belief that Alcoholics Anonymous should be self-supporting so far as money is concerned. It needs only our goodwill." The guests gave a modest \$2,200 that night, and no wealthy patron ever followed. That evening is one of the reasons AA stayed poor on purpose.

Then, in 1948, a woman died and left AA \$10,000 in her will. At the time, the Foundation was broke and genuinely needed the money. The trustees debated it hard, and then they declined it. They adopted a policy that all such gifts from non-alcoholics would be declined going forward. Bill W. called this the moment "the principle of corporate poverty was firmly and finally embedded in AA tradition."

So why would a broke organization turn down \$10,000? Because large gifts come with strings attached, spoken or not. Whoever pays the piper is tempted to call the tune. A well-funded treasury can tempt a group to stop checking in with its own members. Staying self-supporting keeps the responsibility and the ownership right here in this room. Ask yourself: Are we trusting AA, or the balance in the account?

Here's where this shows up today. A group treasury that grows well past a prudent reserve, with no plan for the extra money, is fear wearing the mask of responsibility. And groups that never talk about money leave newcomers unaware they're expected to contribute at all, which quietly puts the burden on one or two people. Silence about money is not humility. It's discomfort.

If your group needs a simple script, try this: We are self-supporting through our own contributions. If you're able, please help us keep the doors open and support AA as a whole.

On the other side of fear is faith. Sending excess funds on to District, Area, and GSO is how a group trusts and supports the structure instead of holding on to feel safe, the same choice those early trustees made. We give it away because it was given to us.

So what are we actually supporting when we do this? Someone answers the phone when an alcoholic reaches out. Literature gets written and printed. Meetings start where none existed before. AA stays available worldwide. You are not paying dues. You are participating in something that saved your life.

Now I want to bring up a few people who live this every day. I'll turn it over to (insert name) to introduce our panel.

Panel: Self-Support in Action (0:15 to 0:35)

Three panelists with direct experience, ideally a current or former treasurer, a GSR, and a member with general service experience. The moderator briefly introduces each panelist, then reads this framing before working through the questions below, leaving room for panelists to build on each other's answers.

Thanks. Tonight, we've got three people who have been in the room when these decisions get made. I'll introduce them, and then we'll work through a few questions together. Feel free to jump in and build on what the others say.

- Have you seen a group avoid talking about money? What happened, and who ended up carrying the group?
- How do you decide when a group has excess funds to distribute?
- What's the difference between keeping a prudent reserve and hoarding? How do you know when a group has crossed that line?
- Why does AA decline outside contributions? What have you seen happen when that line gets blurry?
- What would you say to a newcomer who doesn't know they're expected to contribute?
- What does it look like when a group operates from faith instead of fear around money?

Add or remove questions as time permits.

Invite questions from the audience during the last few minutes, or move directly into the Audience Q&A segment below.

Audience Q&A (0:35 to 0:40)

The moderator keeps all three panelists up front to field audience questions.

Let's open it up to the room. All three panelists, please stay up front. Who has a question?

Closing Reflection and Wrap-Up (0:40 to 0:45)

Facilitator returns to the podium.

Thank you all for coming. We hope you leave with a better sense of what self-support really means, not as a rule, but as a form of faith.

Before we close, let's do a quick reflection together. Where does fear show up in your group when it comes to money? What would change if your group operated from trust instead? What does just enough actually look like for you?

Here's a quick reference to take with you. A prudent reserve is one to three months of group expenses. Many districts suggest splitting distributed funds something like 40 percent to the District, 30 percent to the Area, and 30 percent to GSO, though this varies, so check with your own district.

And if you're wondering about personal giving, AA members can currently give up to \$7,500 a year to the General Service Board, a cap that exists so no one, however generous, can buy influence in AA.

Tradition Seven is where money stops being money. It becomes a question. Do we believe this works, or do we need to protect ourselves just in case?

Thank you again to our panelists and volunteers for making tonight possible. We have the Self-Support pamphlet available at the resource table if you'd like to take a look.