

Knowledge Based Decision Making
Also known as KBDM

Understanding the KBDM Process
Reaching an Informed Group Conscience

Robert's Rules vs. KBDM: There are procedural differences:

Robert's Rules: topic was introduced, often with **some background**, and then a **motion was made** with some end in mind--an action, a resolution, etc. Then the **motion was discussed** and debated, and a vote was taken for or against the motion. Led to a lot of **word smithing**.

KBDM: **information is exchanged prior to meeting** in a **Framing Document**

1. Framing the topic (or a Charge)--this includes:

- **Background** [the events leading up to a situation; information needed to understand a problem or situation] on the topic,
- **Context** [the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs; environment, setting], and
- **Relevance** [relation to the matter at hand; practical and especially social applicability]. In most cases this framing information would be made available to all decision-makers prior to the meeting.

2. Discussion precedes Motion.

- Do we need to do anything?
- Are we ready to make a Motion?
- Is there more information which we need?
- Has all necessary information been disclosed?

3. Consistent with our Spiritual Principles.

1. Shared Leadership
2. Tradition One-All here because we Love Al-Anon [Presume Goodwill]
3. Tradition Two-Acceptance and Support for the Group Conscience
4. Warranty 3 of the General Warranties of the Conference-Concept Twelve Consensus- substantial unanimity
5. Concept Four-Participation
6. Concept 5-Minority Voice

4. Four Essential Elements

KBDM has four essential elements:

Open Communication between leadership and membership. There is a two-way flow of communication between our membership and leadership.

Dialogue before Deliberation. Sometimes discussions go on over long periods of time before any decision for a motion or action is made. All points of view, including minority opinion, are considered at each stage of the decision.

All decision makers having common access to full information. The members of the group assigned to make a decision will have access to the necessary information required to make an informed decision.

We exist in a Culture of Trust--Presume Goodwill. Al-Anon provides us with a loving environment in which we can try new things until we have built our faith and learn to trust one another. Each of us would never knowingly do anything to hurt Al-Anon.

5. Four KBDM Questions

Brainstorming starts with everyone answering the 4 KBDM questions: Thought Forces & Task Forces

1. What do we know about our fellowship needs, wants and preferences that is relevant to this discussion/decision? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
2. What do we know about the “capacity” (resources) and “strategic position” of our fellowship that is relevant to this discussion/decision? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
3. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of our fellowship’s environment that is relevant to this discussion/decision? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
4. What are the implications of our choices? (Pros cons other) What do we wish we knew, but don't?

6. Thought and Task Forces, and Work Group

1. Thought Forces:

“A **thought force** is a temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity. It uses the resources available such as the perspective of members of the thought force and Staff knowledge. For example, a

problem identified could be a lack of clarity regarding roles. Strategies that are suggested might include writing job descriptions (the idea, not the actual job description); components of a guideline; or adding text to a portion of the *Service Manual* to clarify. The objective is to identify the potential idea not to write the actual text itself. The thought force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions. If there are facts that are unknown, they can be flagged in the KBDM question, "Things we don't know but wish we did." (Contact the Area Delegate for specifics regarding KBDM questions.) A thought force may lay the foundation for the work of a task force. Sometimes they offer recommendations resulting from their findings. A thought force presents its information to the originating body to move forward. Thought forces are "thinkers," not "doers." - 2022 – 2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, page 70

2. Task Forces:

"A **task force** is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity. It uses available resources such as perspective of members of the task force and Staff knowledge. For example, a task could be to choose one of the suggested strategies from the thought force. If the task force chooses writing job descriptions, for example, then it would write the job descriptions. The objective is to complete the job description and present it to the originating body to move forward. A task force may fulfill the recommendations made by a thought force. Task forces are the "doers." - 2022 – 2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, page 71

"None of these groups is a decision-making body, but they may make recommendations. Each body's objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body, to move forward.

Reaching consensus on WSO committees, work groups, task forces, and thought forces is done in the same manner as it is done at the group level. Members need access to all the information about the issue, they need clarity in what their discussions hope to accomplish, and they trust each other's motives and capabilities. Committee decisions take time, but it is necessary to take the time to hear from all members who want to participate so that an informed group conscience evolves. Each member puts forth his or her ideas, willing to sacrifice them, believing that the best outcome will come from the discussion." - 2022 – 2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, page 71

Resources:

1. 2022 – 2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual
2. 2006 World Conference Summary
3. 2008 World Conference Summary
4. 2014 World Conference Summary

Framing Document

The Tuesday morning, New Beginnings meeting started meeting in March 2022 with approximately 6 members. The meeting has seen continuous growth over the last 3 ½ years and we are now averaging 18 members per meeting.

About 8 months ago, a member from Hoboken, New Jersey moved into our area and began attending our meeting. The new member is a long-time member and has become very active in our group and has held a couple of service positions.

During general conversation before and after meetings, the member mentioned that the Knickerbocker AFG in Hoboken had coffee at their early morning meetings. Members started talking about the possibility of having coffee at this meeting as the meeting is at 7:00 a.m.

At the last business meeting, the members decided to formally purchase a coffee pot/maker. At the suggestion of our Group Representative, she suggested that we use the Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) process

KBDM - Questions

1. What do we know about our fellowship needs, wants and preferences that is relevant to this discussion/decision? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
2. What do we know about the "capacity" (resources) and "strategic position" of our fellowship that is relevant to this discussion/decision? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
3. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of our fellowship's environment that is relevant to this discussion/decision? What do we wish we knew, but don't?
4. What are the implications of our choices? (Pros cons other) What do we wish we knew, but don't?

THOUGHT FORCE

TASK FORCE