American Association of Suicidology
Planning Session Notes: 10-06/07-22

Participants: Judy Albelo, Jim Byrne, Jacque Christmas, Tony Coder, Hudson Harrison, Molly Klote, Pam McKie, Tracy Oeser, Shawn Mahoney, Pata Suyemoto, Don Wright, Tami Wright. Staff: Amelia Lehto, Tony Wood. Consultant: Jacqui Romer-Sensky

Setting the Context for Determining Future Priorities
The AAS staff prepared context-setting information for the Board’s review. The information is designed to baseline the “current state” and provide data and trend analysis to help inform future priorities. It was noted that there are difficulties with the data due to years of neglect. However, it was emphasized that there has been proper oversight of financial transactions.

Discussion:
• Relationships are the key to building trust.

• Financials:
  o There is a Request for Proposal out for an audit. AAS has always used an outside CPA firm.

• Staffing:
  o Contracts for PTE staff and other contractors have been updated.
  o The Board would like to review staff compensation, including salaries and benefits to determine future capacity.

• Membership:
  o An important consideration for AAS’ operations is to determine if it really is a membership organization. Are the people involved with us really members? Are they customers? Are they part of a network? Let’s consider the frame, for example, community management is not a membership benefit; it is a program.
  o When establishing categories of organizational members, AAS should consider using criteria based on employee count versus the current revenue levels.
  o Consider how to ensure that the AAS membership staff can write “R” which assists with data queries. AAS not sure if this is currently the case.

• Accreditation, Training, and Certification:
  o AAS provides post-training and yearly evaluations for accredited crisis centers. However, to fully demonstrate the outcomes of its accreditation, training, or certifications, additional quality controls and evaluations are needed.
  o What drives the AAS training portfolio? What criteria determines the selection on what trainings will be pursued?
  o A future training opportunity exists around mobile crisis training, protocols, and certifications.
  o Do we offer “train-the-trainer” trainings? Should this be part of the portfolio for some training offerings?
  o It was clarified that training offerings listed on the website show if the training secures Continuing Education Units (CEU). AAS routinely secures CEUs from APA, NASW and CME.
  o Consider if building out AAS accreditation for call centers not directly associated with suicide prevention is a viable and appropriate strategy.
  o Continue research to understand the scope of government requirements associated with securing AAS accreditation.
The organization’s underpinning is accreditation, both in terms of drawing organizational memberships and reputation.

- Annual Conference
  - To secure conference sponsors, we need a better case for support and then better treatment of sponsors.

- SLTB Journal:
  - The Journal’s “impact factor” is 4.65 (“3” is considered good.) 125 journals are classified our genre, and The Journal ranks 45th out of 125. Thomas Joiner has a significant H factor.
  - How is the Journal – its featured articles/research – tied to training offerings?

The Board also heard a report out on findings from Board member and stakeholder interviews and two, membership surveys.

**Strategic Planning Elements**

**Mission Statement Definition:** A mission is an enduring statement of purpose for an organization that identifies the scope of its operations and reflects its priorities. It should reflect:

- What you do (primary job)
- Who is served (clients)
- What is achieved (to what end / outcome / why)

The Key Market – Who is your target audience? ...

Your Contribution – Outlining your contribution or effort. ...

Distinction – What makes us distinct that it isn’t a generic statement of purpose ...

- Current AAS Mission Statement
  To promote the understanding and prevention of suicide and support those who have been affected by it.

- Proposed AAS Mission Statement
  AAS reduces suicide by advancing science, providing education, awarding accreditation, and supporting those impacted. *(Final wordsmithing needed. Ensure wording is clear that AAS is not a direct-service organization?)*

For consideration:

- IASP Mission Statement: IASP is dedicated to preventing suicidal behaviour, to alleviate its effects and to provide a forum for academicians, mental health professionals, crisis workers, volunteers, and people with lived experience.

- AFSP Mission Statement: AFSP's mission is to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide. We fund research to improve interventions, train clinicians in suicide prevention, and advocate for policy that will save lives.

Action Item: A small group will review the draft proposal and develop an updated proposal for full Board final consideration. Volunteers to participate: Pata Suyemoto, Tracy Oeser, Pam McKie
**Vision Statement Definition**: A concise, word picture that sets the overall direction for what the organization strives to attain in the future. It describes a desired state that can be achieved if aggressively pursued. It creates positive tension on goals and helps explain the “why” of what the organization pursues.

- **Current AAS Vision Statement**: We are an inclusive community that envisions a world where people know how to prevent suicide and find hope and healing.

- **Proposed AAS Vision Statement (2 proposals) (final wordsmithing and consolidation to come)**

AAS is the (leading / expert) international organization focused on reducing suicide and providing forums for all involved in suicidology.

AAS leads the world as an expert organization focused on reducing suicide, convening key stakeholders, and empowering a healing community.

Additional Board member input for consideration The previous version had been widely vetted. What is gained from changing? Our Name is “American” Association of Suicidology so why going to international? What is our primary lane?

**Action Item**: A small group will review the draft proposal and develop an updated proposal for full Board final consideration. Volunteers to participate: Pata Suyemoto, Tracy Oeser, Pam McKie

**Priorities**
The Board worked diligently to identify its one-year strategic priorities. The Board arrived at the following priorities for 2023.

1. Ensure the competent onboarding of a new Chief Executive Officer and core staff, support their efforts to develop necessary operational capacity, and monitor and support their progress toward administrative and programmatic improvements.

2. Elevate the quality and profile of AAS accreditation and align programming to support this effort to advance the crisis services continuum of care while supporting the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline workforce development and system.

3. Develop and implement robust communication plans to elevate the brand, foster transparency, pursue resource development, and enhance connectivity relationships with members, partners, and influencers in the field.

4. Pursue 9-8-8 and national behavioral/mental health opportunities, including maximizing Conference options.

5. Establish appropriate Board structure and governance, member expectations, and other reporting and communication procedures to ensure best-practice stewardship.

Each priority will ensure accountability and Board support by establishing necessary Charters and identified Champions/Point of Contacts by October 24th.

The Brainstorm list of priorities is listed in the Notes Addendum for future reference if needed.
Board Operating Principles
By consensus the Board agreed to operate by the following norms as more robust Charters and procedures are established.

a. Meetings may move forward and be chaired by the assigned staff member or another Board member present if the Chair cannot participate.
b. If three or more members are in a meeting, the committee may move forward.
c. Committees should have a charter with a clear scope of work and deliverables.
d. When Board member accepts an action item, the expectation is that the action item will be completed.
e. Move to every other month full Board meeting, with the expectation that Board committees will meet in the off month.
f. The Board intranet will be completed expeditiously to facilitate Board organization and communication.
g. Each committee will generate notes, supporting documents, and post in the intranet.

Next Steps
Board staff will polish goal proposals and develop specific objectives and performance metrics for each goal to bring back to the Board for further consideration.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Generate Bylaw proposal / strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Staff compensation, salary range, benefits # to Board</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>10-28-22</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Finalize accurate revenue and expenditure charts form 2022 and projections for 2023 for Board presentation</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>12-7-22</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Share cost for Board intranet development.  Be prepared to expedite implementation.</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>10-28-22</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Prepare proposal on Board implementation role in five priorities; where committees needed with Charters, Board roles, Immediate/short-term action item needs by October 24.</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>10-28-22</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Serve on ad hoc committee to develop mission/vision proposal for full Board consideration</td>
<td>PS, AL, TO, JRS</td>
<td>10-31-22</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Secure Treasurer approval of intranet contract and proceed with implementation</td>
<td>CEO</td>
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PARKING LOT
a. Identify new communication pathways for Board: issues, cadence, vehicle, etc.
b. Develop formats for Board reports, perhaps start with financials, but all status reports on strategic plan implementation, conference issues, etc.
c. Pursue conversation/legal research on if a member vote on an organization’s mission statement and or on goals/priorities is legal.
d. Determination if Bylaw updates must happen now or if other priorities should be completed, i.e., has Bylaws become a false fight?
e. Consideration of how AAS engages end users
f. How to improve membership information: who votes for what in membership?
g. Clarifying fund raising roles for Board. General role? Specific role for conference? Role of new CEO?
h. Pursue legislative track in conference. Invite NCSL contacts.
Brainstorm proposals for reference:

1. **Accreditation**: Position AAS as the premier, high-quality accreditation body for crisis services and capitalizes on the expansion of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline network.

2. **Training & Certification**: Produce a staff report on the go-forward training and certification portfolio and strategies that capitalize on demand and increases AAS position in the market.

3. **Conference**: Implement a sponsorship/marketing campaign.

4. **Journal**: Improve the connection between the Board and The Journal’s Editorial Board to increase the value of the Journal.
   - a. To raise academic submissions through the promotion and support of the journal's impact
   - b. Given other priorities; why spend time on this?

5. **Each Board member pursues the AAS fund-raising goal via established commitments.**
   - Stakeholder relations
   - Varying financial commitments
   - Sponsorships
   - Grant making

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<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>One-Year Priorities</th>
<th>Who</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accreditation: Ensure we the premier, quality accreditation agency for 9-8-8.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Make sure we are the premier, quality accreditation agency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Increase/Expand market share.</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Expand the mobile crisis accreditation to state and local.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Technology accreditation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Connection to 9-8-8, Medicaid mobile crisis billing</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Baseline government requirements and establish a go-forward strategy.</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Training &amp; Certification: Produce a staff report on the go-forward training and certification portfolio and strategy that capitalizes on demand and increases AAS position in the market.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Make sure we are the premier, quality training organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Increase the number of classes delivered</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Increase the number of training offerings/modules</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Redesign the marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Systemic update of materials/programs</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Promote CEUs and fulfillment of professional development; partner with agencies, universities, hospitals to be more targeted</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Establish “scale” standards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Staff report on future opportunities for growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference: Implement a sponsorship/marketing campaign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Reboot around theme and market</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Document/Establish the conference processes (transfer from Annemarie)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Secure sponsorships for financial underpinning</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Organize tracks</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Keynote framing (orienting toward impact/better outcomes and participation)</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Conference publication/proceedings; goal is new voices at AAS, research highlighted at conference</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Centralize AAS store (membership, trainings, AAS 24 conference, accreditation registration, merchandise)</td>
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H | Professionalize sponsorship program, seek ongoing commitments

**Journal:** Improve the connection between the Board and The Journal’s Editorial Board to increase the reach of the Journal.

A | Pursue actions appropriate to maximizing the Return on Investment

B | Voices focus within the Journal going forward; nontraditional source articles, etc.

C | Examine AAS role in science; how do we promote/apply beyond Journal articles?

E | Invite Thomas Joiner to present to the Board.

| Board involved |

Parked Ideas
- Partner with advocacy groups (lend our cache/information) to advance the cause.
- Networking / Communities of Interest/Practice