Resources for

chapter five
Media

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Suggested Flyer Guidelines

A random viewing of an NA flyer may be the first exposure a potential member or nonmember has to Narcotics Anonymous. If we keep that in mind, we are more likely to present an attractive and effective flyer. Trusted servants can consider the following ideas when preparing a flyer for an NA event or an event open to the public:

- Remember to include all pertinent information about the time, date, and location of the event.
- State the purpose of the event as briefly and as clearly as possible.
- Add information about refreshments, wheelchair accessibility, etc.
- Prior to distribution, have the committee or trusted servants review the flyer for accuracy of information and typographical errors.
- Distribute the flyers where they will have the best chance of getting into the hands of the audience you want to reach.
- Be careful not to include potentially offensive or off-putting material. One person's idea of a joke may be offensive to someone else. Avoiding controversial images, slogans, and comments can help ensure the flyer is not considered offensive. For public events, avoid NA slang or jokes that only NA members would understand. Also, to avoid potential legal conflict, be careful not to include any copyrighted materials such as song lyrics, professional cartoons, etc.
- When it comes to public events, it helps to use language that will attract that audience. If NA is participating in an event with another organization (such as county fairs, health fairs, etc.), using the words "in cooperation with" on the flyer will help make clear that there is no implied endorsement or affiliation with the other organization.
- If trusted servants are planning to leave flyers at professional offices, hospitals, etc., be sure to get permission from a person who is authorized to give such permission. This kind of communication can help to ensure that NA flyers are not merely thrown away.
- Proofread, proofread, and proofread!

These suggestions are offered in the sprit of our primary purpose. Creating flyers that portray NA in a positive light can only help us continue to present NA as an attractive choice for still-suffering addicts.

Posters, Billboards, Bus Benches, and Transit Signs

Many NA service committees choose to inform the public with posters, billboards, bus benches, or transit signs. With these types of ongoing messages there are considerations for the area service committee and for the groups, including maintaining consistent phoneline volunteers, updated meeting lists, and a possible influx of new members to groups.

General planning tips

- Coordination among the area subcommittees who are responsible for the phoneline volunteers and meeting list will be important.
- Budgetary considerations and area resources should be considered. Often these PR efforts may affect the overall area budget and should be thoroughly discussed at the area service committee meeting.
- Once an ASC approves a plan of action, GSRs should prepare their groups for a possible influx of new members.
- Any phoneline service provider, like an answering service, should be informed of the PR effort so they, too, can prepare for any increased call volume.

Content consideration

- All signage should include our full name, Narcotics Anonymous.
- The message should be simple, direct, and easy to understand while being attractive, tasteful, and in keeping with NA's positive message of recovery. Example: Recovery from drug addiction happens at NA meetings.
- To increase visibility in the layout and with the artwork, consideration should be given to maintaining a simple, effective design.

Poster tips

- The committee will want to research places for distribution, develop a plan for distribution, and receive permission from the organizations where posters will be hung.
- Hanging posters is usually a team effort. Two trusted servants work together, and this is an opportunity for a newer member to be paired up with an experienced member.
- It will be helpful to plan for any follow-up actions that the committee will take, such as mailings of information packets to professionals and community organizations.
- Poster visibility is a key factor with distribution. Keep in mind that placing posters in high-traffic areas will allow for maximum exposure.
- Refrain from placing posters on public telephones, trees, public restrooms, etc. Many communities have ordinances concerning this type of activity. Check with the local authorities regarding such ordinances.

Suggested signage placement

- police stations/courthouses
- health clinics/hospital emergency rooms
- welfare offices
- colleges and schools
- libraries/post offices
- youth facilities (YMCA, boys & girls clubs)
- stores (grocery, drugstores)
- civic auditoriums
- churches/places of worship
- laundromats
- factories

Sample posters/signs

IF YOU WANT TO USE DRUGS,
THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS!

IF YOU WANT TO STOP,
THAT'S OURS!

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
CAN HELP!

CALL THE NA HELP LINE:

Place helpline number here

Drug Problem?

We Can Help!

CALL

Narcotics Anonymous®

Tel:_____

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

HELP LINE

24 HOURS 7 DAYS

Place helpline number here

IF YOU WANT TO STOP USING WE CAN HELP

Introductory and Thank-You letters for PSA placement

Feel free to modify this sample letter as needed.

Date

First and Last Name, Position Title
Organization Name
Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Public Services Director [use the person's name and title, when this information is known]:

We are writing to request that you air Narcotics Anonymous public service announcements. We have identified your radio station as one which may have a segment of your audience that would benefit from the information provided in those announcements.

NA is a multilingual, multicultural self-help organization. In 2012, there were more than 61,800 meetings in 129 countries speaking more than 77 languages. During our nearly 60 years as an organization, NA has developed, and translated into various languages, literature that helps guide addicts through their recovery and drug-free life.

NA is a member-driven organization that holds recovery meetings within your station's area on a regular basis. There are no dues or fees for membership. We believe that drug addiction is a grave concern, and we are here to help people to recover.

Community awareness of the services we provide is the primary purpose of this correspondence. We hope you will help us by airing our thirty (30) second public service announcements. We will be happy to provide you with proof of our status as a nonprofit organization upon request. [This only applies if you have some legal status.] We can be reached through our regional/area service telephone number: _____, or through our helpline number: _____. In either case, please leave a message for our public relations coordinator, _____.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Contact name
Committee
Phone number

Print this sample letter on your service body's letterhead or include your complete return address and contact information.

Date

First and Last Name, Position Title
Organization Name
Address
City, State Zip Code

Feel free to modify this sample letter as needed.

Dear _____:

On behalf of the _____ Committee of Narcotics Anonymous, we wish to thank you for airing our public service announcements on _____ (name of station). We appreciate your willingness to help us carry the message that Narcotics Anonymous is available to help the still-suffering addicts in this area.

If you have any questions or desire additional information about Narcotics Anonymous, please feel free to contact us. We look forward to a continuing relationship with your community-minded organization.

Sincerely yours,

Your name

Subcommittee and/or area/regional committee name

Contact information

Print this sample letter on your service body's letterhead or include your complete return address and contact information.

Radio PSA Scripts

Radio PSA #1

Organization: Narcotics Anonymous
(_____ Area Service Committee)
0000 Every Street
Anytown, State 69696
000.000.0000

Contact: John Doe
Public Service Director
000.000.0000

Reading time – **10 seconds**

Voice/Over 1

Freedom from active addiction happens in NA meetings. It is possible to stop using drugs.

Voice/Over 2

Call Narcotics Anonymous. We can help.

(insert area/region name & phoneline number)

Radio PSA #2

Organization: Narcotics Anonymous
(_____ Area Service Committee)
0000 Every Street
Anytown, State 69696
000.000.0000

Contact: John Doe
Public Service Director
000.000.0000

Reading time – **10 seconds**

Voice/Over 1

It is possible to stop using drugs.

Voice/Over 2

Call Narcotics Anonymous. We can help.

(insert area/region name & phoneline number)

Radio PSA #3

Organization: Narcotics Anonymous

(_____ Area Service Committee)

0000 Every Street

Anytown, State 69696

000.000.0000

Contact: John Doe

Public Service Director

000.000.0000

Reading time – **20 seconds**

Voice/Over 1

I wanted to stop using drugs. I reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous.

Voice/Over 2

With the support of recovering addicts, I realized I could stop using drugs.

Voice/Over 3

Recovery from drug addiction happens at NA meetings.

Voice/Over 4

Call Narcotics Anonymous. We can help.

(insert area/region name & phoneline number)

TV PSA Scripts

TV PSA #1: Basic Text

30-second PSA

Title: Basic Text

- "I was searching for a way to stop using drugs. I reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous …
- … I went to my first NA meeting and didn't know what to expect …"
- "Supported by recovering addicts, I realized …
- …that I was not alone; I heard them talk about feelings—feelings that I was afraid to talk about …
- …and recovery from drug addiction—something I was afraid to dream about."
- "It is possible to stop using drugs."
- "Call Narcotics Anonymous …
- … We can help."

TV PSA #2: Man in Phone Booth

30-second PSA

Title: Man in Phone Booth

- "I remember feeling scared and desperate. I didn't know which way to turn. I was sick and there was no one who wanted to see me anymore. I remember a former friend telling me about Narcotics Anonymous. I picked up the heavy telephone handle, took a chance, and called Narcotics Anonymous."
- "If you want to stop using drugs, contact Narcotics Anonymous."

Frequently Asked Questions
Media

This resource can be used when interacting with the media in general. These frequently asked questions are meant to help trusted servants provide clear, consistent, and informative responses. In an effort to gain an understanding of the information here, trusted servants can discuss and rehearse the questions and answers below.

When responding to questions, it is often best to paraphrase our literature, using your own words and referring to the appropriate piece of literature to provide support for your response. We illustrate specific literature to help persons better understand our program of recovery. In that same light, when we use NA-specific terminology such as "home group," it may be helpful to explain the meaning for the audience.

What follows are possible answers to questions frequently asked by the media, which includes print, television, and radio reporters:

Q&A 1

What was your drug using like?

My using was similar to what's described in our Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous*. In essence, I used drugs every day and only thought about getting more drugs and the money to pay for the drugs. What we have found most important in recovery is that we identify with each other in meetings, focus on recovery from addiction, and do not compare our use of drugs. Many addicts had the same feelings while using drugs, and this is a source of identification for members.

Q&A 2

Are all addicts alike? Do you all do the same things when using drugs? Do you all live in poor, run-down housing when using drugs?

Our fellowship is made up of people from a variety of backgrounds and who have had different experiences in their using. What we all share is a feeling of degradation and isolation when using drugs. Some addicts come court-referred, while others come voluntarily; some addicts are homeless, while others come earning large salaries. NA is for anyone with a desire to stop using drugs.

Q&A 3

What is an NA meeting like?

An NA meeting is where two or more addicts gather for the purpose of recovery from the disease of addiction. Members offer each other peer support by sharing experiences about how they manage life situations without returning to using drugs. Some meetings have speakers who share their experience with getting and staying clean, while others have structured formats that focus on NA literature (our Basic Text, informational pamphlets, or our *Just for Today* daily meditation book). All meetings focus on recovery and supporting each other in recovery.

Here are some other things that can occur at an NA meeting:

- ☞ During the course of a meeting, a basket is passed for our members to contribute money to support the cost of the meeting facility and other NA services such as literature distribution. One of our traditions speaks to our self-support through our own contributions.
- ☞ Meetings often open and close with the Serenity Prayer or some other NA prayer.
- ☞ Some meetings also provide keytags to recognize days, months, and years of continuous abstinence from drugs.

Q&A 4

Are most of your members heroin addicts?

It is possible that when NA first started, the majority of our members used heroin. Today, as indicated in our *Membership Survey*, our members use a variety of drugs, including alcohol. Interestingly, 78% of those surveyed list alcohol as one of the drugs used on a regular basis. This survey also provides information about employment status, occupation, gender, and age. Our basic tenet about addiction is that it is a disease, and not related to a particular substance.

Q&A 5

What is the "amend step"?

Recovering addicts are encouraged to work the Twelve Steps with a sponsor. The Twelve Steps help addicts learn how to incorporate spiritual principles into their daily lives. One of these steps, frequently referred to as the "amend step," asks members to correct the harm they've caused and work to change their behavior.

Q&A 6

How does a sponsor work?

As explained in our book and informational pamphlet, *Sponsorship*, this is a relationship between two members of NA—a more experienced member helping a newer member learn how to live life without the use of drugs and how to incorporate the principles of the Twelve Steps.

Q&A 7

What do you mean by "clean and not sober"?

By referring to our recovery time as "cleantime" and identifying ourselves as "addicts," we are able to keep NA's message focused on recovery from addiction and not the drugs we used.

Q&A 8

How many NA members have been incarcerated? How many NA members have been convicted of sex-related crimes?

We do not collect that type of data.

Q&A 9

What's your opinion on the current administration's drug policy?

Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on the current administration's drug policy as this is outside our scope. We offer no opinion on any outside issues, including drug policy, so as not to divert us from our primary focus – one addict helping another to recover from the disease of addiction.

Q&A 10

What's your opinion on methadone?

It may be useful to have Bulletin #29 available, or provide NAWS website link at www.na.org. In general, we cannot assess anyone's desire to abstain from drugs, and NA has no opinion on drug replacement therapies used by professionals in the management of addiction.

NA is a program of total abstinence. This provides the foundation for recovery from drug use and for further personal growth. Narcotics Anonymous has only one membership requirement: a desire to stop using drugs. Drug addicts who are participating in drug replacement therapies are welcome in NA meetings.

Most meetings ask that people under the influence of any mind- or mood-altering substances listen (rather than speak) during the meeting, and speak to members on an individual basis before and after the meeting. Meetings that follow this practice do so to preserve an atmosphere of recovery in the meeting. Additional information may be found in the *Public Relations Handbook*, page 67.

Q&A 11

Can we come to your convention and take photographs?

Typically, no. We're an anonymous fellowship and we do not permit photographs of NA members. However, you may contact the convention information committee to make arrangements to photograph our event or to cover this event for an article with a photo in a way that maintains personal anonymity. We ask that you attend our event escorted by a designated member of the convention committee. Our desire is to allow members to feel comfortable while attending this celebration of recovery without fear or distraction of outside photographers.

Q&A 12

Has a certain celebrity been attending meetings?

In the spirit of anonymity, we are not at liberty to confirm whether someone has been attending meetings or if they are a member of Narcotics Anonymous.

Q&A 13

Are there NA meetings around the world?

As of 2012, Narcotics Anonymous exists in 129 countries, speaks 77 languages, and has over 61,800 weekly meetings worldwide.

Q&A 14

What treatment centers do you work with?

Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with any outside enterprises. We do not operate any treatment centers, sober living homes, rehabilitation, or detox facilities. We do, however, work cooperatively with these establishments to let them know that Narcotics Anonymous is a community resource for their clients.

Q&A 15

Where do you get your funds? Are you federally or state-funded?

Narcotics Anonymous is self-supporting through its own member voluntary contributions.

Q&A 16

Is there a spokesperson I can contact?

Narcotics Anonymous does not have a spokesperson. However, if you have any further questions you may contact NA World Services to speak with the public relations manager. Phone: 818.773.9999; or visit our website: **www.na.org**. Locally, you can contact NA at _____.

Q&A 17

Can we come to your meeting and film a documentary on NA meetings?

No, this would not be in harmony with our traditions. You may attend an "open" meeting (meaning open to the public) to gain an understanding of an NA meeting. However, filming is prohibited.

Q&A 18

Can I take a picture of you for our article?

In the spirit of anonymity, I would not be comfortable having a full-face photograph taken.