

## Your Role as a Leader in NA: We Are All Connected

### Welcome and Introduction: 15 minutes

#### **Session leader's instructions**

*Thank the group for their time and commitment to service. Lead brief self-introductions (only if necessary).*

*Have the group introduce themselves if necessary, stating their current service position. If the group is large or time is short then run through a 'service position countdown' to give an outline of the experience in the room.*

### Session Focus and Outcomes

This is the second session on leadership concepts that we are doing. The First focuses on the Traditions and Concepts. This session focuses on the service structure and leadership roles within it.

"Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous." So states our 4<sup>th</sup> Concept.

Leaders help us organize, focus our energy and resources, and act in unity. Without good leaders—at all levels of our service structure—it will be challenging, if not impossible, to achieve our goal—to carry the message of recovery to all addicts who suffer.

The purpose of this session is to gain valuable perspective on our role as leaders in Narcotics Anonymous, including:

- what guides us as leaders,
- how the position we have is a critical link to others in the service structure,
- what others expect of us and need from us,
- a chance to focus on a few key skills all leaders should work to improve.

#### **Session leader's instructions:**

*Review length of session and other important logistics. If necessary, explain small group process: groundrules & facilitator guidelines. Each group should choose a facilitator and recorder. Stress the need to share ideas and experience, to stay focused, to learn with an open mind and heart, etc.*

### Overview of NA Service Structure

#### Materials - Worksheet #1 – side one

#### **Session leader's instructions:**

*If there is time or the need, you can review some of the information with attendees. Explain that the information on the handout gives an overview of the roles of the different parts of the service structure and represents the connection they all have.*

#### **Stress these points to the group:**

As leaders we operate within a structure.

Each part of the NA service structure has a unique and complementary function.

Despite the differences in these functions, all parts of the NA service structure work together to achieve the *single* purpose of Narcotics Anonymous as communicated through the NA Vision.

As leaders, we are ultimately responsible for how effective and efficient the structure is and how well it serves its purpose.

Each component of the service structure is accountable to those they serve. This means good communication is required to be successful.

<b>Group</b>	The foundation of the NA service structure whose purpose is to carry the message of recovery directly to the suffering addict
<b>Area</b>	Administers the services of a local NA community
<b>Region</b>	Pools the experience and resources of areas and groups to address service issues
<b>World Services</b>	Unifies and ensures the common welfare of NA worldwide

**The Primary Roles of Leaders and Leadership Groups within the NA Service Structure**  
**Materials - Worksheet #1 - side 2**

*Depending on time, or need, review some of the information on the handout with attendees. Explain that the information on the handout gives an overview of leadership roles and leadership groups in service.*

**Functions of All Leaders in NA**

Regardless of the leadership role or position, all leaders in NA have some common responsibilities:

- **Planning/Organizing/Prioritizing:** helping service bodies to set goals and stay focused on them
- **Oversight and Evaluation:** tracking progress toward goals; evaluating how effective the service body is in fulfilling its purpose, how efficient it is in operating, and how well the team works together
- **Communication:** articulating the goals and vision of NA; encouraging involvement and showing the value of involvement for individual recovery and for NA as a whole
- **Leadership Development:** helping all members find ways to serve and contribute their talent; matching that talent to task and bringing out the best in others (coaching and mentoring)
- **Creating an Atmosphere of Recovery:** making the connection between service and recovery

**Large Group Discussion - We Are Connected: 15 minutes**  
**Materials – Worksheet #2**

Because we are all connected—at every level—around a common purpose, what we do as leaders and how we do it impacts others and their ability to do their service job.

**Session leader's instructions:**  
*Using Worksheet 2, have a large group discussion about "pairs" of service bodies within the NA service structure. The pairings on the worksheet are: Group/Area or Region; Area/Region; Region/World Services; World Services/Group; World Services/Area. You will want to choose those pairings most relevant to the members at the workshop. For instance, if you are doing this session at a GSR assembly, you will probably want to talk about Group/Area and World Service/Group.*

**Ask the group:**

What are the ways these two levels of the service structure support or impact each other in fulfilling their functions?

**Session leader's instructions:**  
 Pull from the suggested answers to Worksheet 2 below **only** if there are items that are important to cover that did not come up in the discussion.

Groups in the NA Service Structure	<b>Discuss the relationship between the two service bodies assigned. Identify ways these two levels of the service structure support or impact each other in fulfilling their functions.</b>
<b>Group ↔ Area/Region</b>	<p>Groups must provide accurate meeting information in order for areas or regions to develop useful meeting lists, help lines, and websites</p> <p>H&amp;I &amp; PI efforts require communication to Groups regarding resource needs including people and money</p>
<b>Area ↔ Region</b>	<p>Region provides opportunities and a forum for sharing of information between neighboring ASCs. Examples might include PR efforts, upcoming events, any best practices or challenges.</p>
<b>Region ↔ World Services</b>	<p>The RD is the primary World Service conduit, so all local meeting and service committee information stored in World Service database is dependent on this connection.</p> <p>RDs partner with World Services in communicating NAWS activities.</p>
<b>World Services ↔ Group</b>	<p>Groups can take responsibility to ensure their meeting information in the World Service database is accurate.</p> <p>Groups get a free subscription to The NA Way to help them stay connected with the entire NA Fellowship and NAWS.</p>
<b>World Services ↔ Area</b>	<p>ASCs can help make the World Service database as accurate as possible.</p> <p>World Service has a variety of resources to help ASCs in their efforts, including the FTP site.</p> <p>ASCs need to share their locally developed resources with World Service.</p>

**Session leader's instructions:**  
 Throughout the discussion, emphasize how all service bodies are connected as part of a larger organization, as well as how each action taken at any level has an impact on furthering the NA vision. Emphasize that the connections above are human ones and are vital parts of NA leader's roles.

### Summarize with the following key points:

Because of the roles we play, a leader's perspective is different than a member's. A leader sees:

- **The Whole:** how our actions as a service body support and impact the entire organization.
- **The Vision:** how we are continually working toward our goals and the ultimate impact we strive for – our Vision, the reason we do what we do.
- **The Future:** how we can best meet the needs our fellowship today, while anticipating and preparing for the needs they will have tomorrow; how we can make the group, area or region more effective and more efficient in providing service.

A leader must have an unwavering focus on how our service, our actions and our decisions will make a difference for the fellowship, our service structure, and for NA, today and in the future.

## Leadership Roles: Leader as a Facilitator and Leader as a Conduit of Information

Introduction: 5 minutes

Materials – Worksheet #3

There are some leadership roles in NA that require specific skills or experience (example: a Treasurer should have good math skills and some experience with budgeting) but one skill that *all* NA leaders need is communication.

### Leadership Communication Skills

Our 8<sup>th</sup> Concept states: “Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.”

Leaders in NA must be effective communicators at different levels:

- **One-on-one with individual members:** in this capacity the leader acts as a mentor or coach,
- **Within a team:** in the capacity the leader acts as a facilitator, helping the group make decisions, brainstorm ideas, solve problems, etc.,
- **Within the Service Structure:** in this capacity the leader acts as an information conduit between bodies in the service structure, making sure that other parts of the service structure have the information, input and feedback they need to perform their functions.

For the remainder of this session we will focus on two of these leadership skills—the leader as facilitator and the leader as conduit of information.

One side of Worksheet #3 talks about the Leader as Facilitator, and the other side talks about the Leader as Conduit of information. In a minute, we will break into small groups and you will have a chance to discuss one of these roles, but first, let's review why these roles are both so important.

### The Leader as a Facilitator

Concept 7 tells us how important it is for a leader to generate dialog, discussion, and input within our service groups

As a facilitator a leader fosters group conscience to guide discussion and decision-making

A leader must know how to build consensus and productively manage conflict within the group so that all points of view can be considered, but so that the group can ultimately make a decision

### The Leader as a Conduit of Information

Leaders within the NA service structure are responsible for carrying forward the needs and concerns of the fellowship, and for sharing their thoughts and ideas.

To be an effective conduit of information, leaders:

- Must have a clear understanding of the roles and functions of the other parts of the service structure they are communicating with
- Must know what information is most important to deliver to these service bodies and what information to take back to their own group from these service bodies
- Must deliver the information in the most efficient way possible

When we are effective conduits of information for our group, we broaden their understanding of the bigger organization they are a part of, we give them new ideas and thoughts to consider in achieving their goals, and we support development of future leaders for NA.

Now keeping in mind those points, take 20 minutes to discuss one of these two roles in your small groups.

### Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

#### Materials - Worksheet #4

#### **Session leader's instructions:**

*Split the room and assign one leadership role to each side of the room.*

*Ask groups to spend a few minutes reviewing the bullet points on Worksheet #3 about the particular role they have been assigned (facilitator or conduit of information.)*

*Read the following scenarios and have the groups discuss the question for their scenario. Remind everyone to refer to Worksheet #3 for tips and that they have 20 minutes for this discussion.*

### The Leader as a Facilitator Scenario

**Scenario:** *“The Program Committee of the convention is discussing the main speaker choices. There is a fair amount of disagreement among members about who should be chosen and why. In the end, some strong personalities on the committee that were the most vocal during the discussion are shaping the group’s opinion. As the Chairperson, you fear that decisions will be made that do not reflect the group conscience.”*

**What could the Chairperson have done to better manage this discussion?**

### The Leader as a Conduit of Information Scenario

**Scenario:** *“You are serving as the RD/RCM/GSR of your region/area/group. You have just spent a week/weekend/afternoon at the WSC/RSC/ASC and you are excited and filled with information to report. You have spent a long time putting together a detailed report that outlines all of the discussions from the service meeting. You are only part way through giving your report when the chair of the region/area/group business meeting interrupts you and asks if you can please wrap it up. ”*

**What could you have done to better communicate the information?**

## Reporting Back to Large Group: 25 minutes

### **Session leader's instructions:**

*When the groups are reporting back, keep the points on the worksheets in mind and offer them if they do not come up in the reporting.  
Remind groups not to repeat points already made by other groups.*

## Session Close: 10 minutes

### Call to Action

Leadership is a unique experience that has many rewards. As leaders you both embody the values of those you serve, and yet at the same time help shape those values by modeling good leadership.

Never underestimate the impact you have as leaders. You may think that you can have but little impact because you are one of many leaders the group has had, or are a leader for just a short period of time. But remember . . .

- How we exercise leadership has an impact beyond our level in the service structure, and beyond our term in the position we hold.
- Changes and improvements we help make in how our group operates will benefit those who follow us as leaders for years to come.
- The services we put in place to help the suffering addict, will impact their lives for decades.

The personal rewards of taking on a leader role in NA are enormous and can be a major part of our continuing recovery.

### **Session leader's instructions:**

*This can be a good place to personalize the role of a leader by sharing some personal benefits.*

### Individual Activity – “Leadership is Action, not Position”

#### Materials – Worksheet #5

### **Session leader's instructions:**

*Give each attendee a “Call to Action” worksheet. Ask them to reflect a few minutes on what was covered during the session and to identify two or three specific actions take in the coming year to improve their effectiveness as leaders in NA.*

If there is sufficient time, ask attendees if anyone is willing to share what they have come up with.

Thank attendees for their time and participation. Wish them good luck in their leadership roles in the coming year, and offer any continued support they need to be successful.

Remind them to ask each other for support and to share experiences with each other – peers are often the best resource.

Remind them to use the World Service FTP site which has locally developed orientation material, presentations and workshop resources.