

# Guide to "Behind The Walls"

We Need You!



Florida Region  
Narcotics Anonymous

## **Third Step Prayer**

**Many of us have said,  
"Take my will and my life.  
Guide me in my recovery.  
Show me how to live."**

### **Vision for *Behind the Walls***

To ensure Narcotics Anonymous meetings are available to all addicts while incarcerated. To carry “The Message” to the addict that still suffers. Our message is that any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life. Our message is one of hope, and the promise of freedom from active addiction.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to establish a guide on how to identify the need for Narcotics Anonymous (“NA”) meetings inside correctional facilities. This is generally done through one or more of the following:

1. The staff at a correctional facility contacts Narcotics Anonymous (at the World, Regional or Local Level) and asks for information about NA, Meetings, and Literature etc.
2. An incarcerated member from a facility reaches out and asks for information about NA, Meetings, and Literature etc.
3. A family member or friend of an inmate contacts NA and asks for information about NA, Meetings, and Literature etc.

A little research is done to identify the appropriate staff to contact – Warden, Assistant Warden of Programs, Chaplain or the Substance Abuse Counselor(s). The Florida Regional Hospitals & Institutions (“H&I”) Resource Coordinator makes contact through an introduction letter sent to the Staff at the facility and may include an Information Package (IP’s, Meeting Lists.....). Next a date is set to conduct a *Behind the Walls* presentation at the facility.

The Florida Regional “H&I” Resource Coordinator asks for NA members to attend and participate in the presentation at the facility. These NA members have been cleared for entry into correctional facilities and have been assigned a “PIN” (Personal Identification Number) by the Department of Corrections.

## Definitions

1. *Behind The Walls* - an NA meeting held inside a correctional facility by incarcerated members, open to “Cleared” NA members
2. Florida Department of Corrections - (“FDOC” or “DOC”)
3. Federal Bureau of Prisons—(“FBP”)
4. *Informational Package* – selected literature to be sent to the facility by the Regional Service Office (“RSO”) of NA, including the following:
  - *Institutional Guide Handbook* which shows how the members can establish an NA meeting inside the facility and how to prepare a letter to be sent to the local area of NA in order to be fully recognized as an NA group.
  - *Behind the Walls* booklet
  - Selected Information Pamphlets (“IP’s”) including *Staying Clean on the Outside*, *Sponsorship* and others as appropriate.
5. *Presentation* – brief meeting with the warden, assistant warden, security, chaplain and or substance abuse counselors as appropriate to further explain what we can make available to the population in the facility.
6. *Fast System* – a Department of Corrections (“DOC”) state wide database that allows facilities to verify volunteers current status (recent/annual NCIC background check, orientation etc.)

## **Definitions (continued)**

6. Personal Identification Number (“PIN”) – DOC identification number to be used by NA members to gain entry into the facility.
7. Area Travel Group – cleared members from different NA Areas with the willingness to commit to a Behind the Walls meeting.
8. Orientation (DOC/FBP) – all members of NA are required to attend a “Volunteer Orientation.” It is generally a 3-4 hour presentation given by the institution on the Institutions Rules and Volunteer Conduct.
9. Guidelines – Various Do’s and Don’ts from the NA H&I Handbook and practice common sense at all times; be courteous to staff at all times.
10. Sample Introduction Letter – see attached
11. Sample PIN Data – database information to be forwarded to the incoming H&I Regional Resource Coordinator including the name of the NA member, their contact phone number, PIN and the facility that they are participating in.
12. Sample Facility Data – includes the name of the facility, the name of the contact person inside the facility, contact information for that person and the NA liaison to that facility.
14. *Confidentiality Statement* – statement that insures that all personal information was sent to the proper channels for clearance purposes only. This information will rest with the

H&I Regional Coordinator until the member is cleared. At that time the information will be destroyed.

15. Liaison— an NA member from the surrounding local area of the facility that is the primary contact between the NA Fellowship and the facility.

## **Presentation**

Introduce our members, thank the staff for the opportunity to be of service to their facility and to our members (inmates) currently incarcerated in their facility. Ask if the Information Package (IP's, Meeting Lists.....) was received, and if they had time to review any of the information.

Explain in simple detail what Narcotics Anonymous does and what NA has to offer their facility:

1. *H&I Panel Presentations* are generally for facilities that house members on short term commitments (hospitals, treatment facilities, county jails.....). A panel is formed and the presentation(s) are done in such a manner as to introduce Narcotics Anonymous to the interested population. H&I Panels are formed from the local area of NA and are part of the H&I subcommittee for that area.
2. Supply literature and a panel of NA members (*Behind the Walls* Members) to go into the facility and show the members how to start and run a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous.
3. *Behind the Walls* meeting of Narcotics Anonymous.

## **Presentation (continued)**

Members of the local area that have clearance for the correctional facility (county, state or federal) help to create a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous. This meeting would be held regularly at the facility at a pre-determined time and location within the facility.

At this time each of the panel members spends a few minutes sharing their experience, how they got involved with H&I and why they are committed to helping to establish *Behind the Walls* meetings of Narcotics Anonymous. The Florida Region H&I Resource Coordinator then asks if there are any questions of either the facility staff or the panel members. If the facility wants Narcotics Anonymous to establish one of the above types of meetings. The H&I Resource Coordinator must leave with some or all of the following information, so he or she might better inform the local members of NA.

The following information needs to be identified during the presentation:

1. Day(s) of the week that the facility has available for this meeting
2. Frequency (weekly, every other week, once a month). As an example, the frequency of a meeting can begin as every other week until we establish a solid group of outside members that can attend as well as the overall participation of the incarcerated members.
3. We also can let the facility know that we can establish this meeting on a temporary basis (example 6 months to



## **Presentation (continued)**

see how the meeting is received by the staff and the Inmates)

4. Approximate time(s) that the meeting can be held
5. What is the length of time permitted for each meeting (hours permitted for volunteers on-site)
6. Are there mentorship programs (The availability of working one on one – Step Work)
7. What is criteria to be eligible to enter their facility (What makes someone ineligible)
8. What paperwork / background checks need to be completed to enter their facility? This includes Orientations, Badging etc.

The H&I Resource Coordinator then approaches the members of Narcotics Anonymous in that local area normally at their monthly meeting. The H&I Resource Coordinator presents the information and identifies the members that have the willingness as well as the day(s) of the week and times that the members are available and those that might have a clearance for that type of facility.

Once the H&I Resource Coordinator has compiled the information he or she meets again with the appropriate facility staff and begins to fine tune the date & time of the first and subsequent meetings at that facility. Here is when the H&I Resource Coordinator provides the facility with a list of NA members that have been cleared or the required

documentation to get members cleared. A Liaison is selected from the local area NA members and becomes the main point of contact in between the facility, the H&I Resource Coordinator and the other Behind the Walls participating members of NA.

### **Ongoing Identification of Needs**

Once a *Behind the Walls* meeting is established , the Liaison is introduced to the facility / staff. That person must follow up on each meeting and assist the group with their needs. This includes discussing with the facility the availability of NA literature through the Regional Service Office (RSO) Literature Order Form.

The Liaison will also ask the local area and H&I subcommittees to assist with providing NA informational pamphlets, coordinate book drives and help support the meeting through the attendance of pre-approved NA members.

At the bi-monthly Regional Service Committee meeting, a presentation will be made to inform the regional body on how to introduce the *Behind the Walls* program, to present guidelines for facility staff and to discuss status of any *Behind*

## **Sample Introduction Letter**

The following letter is an example of an introduction letter that is sent to the warden, assistant warden, chaplain or substance abuse counselor, once we have been approached by an incarcerated member or by the facility staff:

June 6, 2011

Warden, Assistant Warden, Chaplain or Substance Abuse  
Counselor

State or Federal Correctional Facility

Via email: @mail.dc.state.fl.us or @bop.gov

Dear Sir/Madame:

In reference to our conversation, here is the information we discussed. The purpose of this letter is to increase awareness of the Narcotics Anonymous program and to offer services that we feel might be of benefit in your facility. We hope to create a better understanding of our fellowship so that we might be of value to the people currently incarcerated at your facility and that you will know how to contact us for further information.

## **Introduction Letter (continued)**

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. By following the program of recovery offered in Narcotics Anonymous, our members have found a way to live clean and become responsible and productive members of society. We are non-professional, believing that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.

Our local area service committees strongly support hospitals and institutions such as jails and prisons. The committees are comprised of volunteers from each of the local NA communities. We are interested in being able to reach those individuals who are incarcerated by the Florida Department of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons, whether through Hospital and Institution (H&I) Panel Presentations or through “Behind The Walls” meetings held within the facilities. One of the greatest advantages of Narcotics Anonymous is that there are meetings in most local communities for the individuals to attend the day they are released, so that they may continue to practice what they have learned while incarcerated.

Narcotics Anonymous was founded in 1953 and is an international fellowship that has grown to conduct over 58,000 meetings per month in 125 countries throughout the world. In the State of Florida there are over 1,600 regularly scheduled meetings and 387 institutional meetings each week. NA in Florida is organized locally via 32 area committees covering all 69 counties in the State of Florida.

## **Introduction Letter (continued)**

The primary purpose of all Narcotics Anonymous groups is to carry the message to the addict that still suffers. One of the ways we do this is through Hospitals and Institutions subcommittees. H&I subcommittees bring Narcotics Anonymous presentations to addicts who do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Another way is through helping the inmates to set up and establish a regular NA meeting within the facility, which would be attended by the inmates and outside members of Narcotics Anonymous who have been cleared for access through the prison system.

Fortunately the Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous has a process in place to clear our members to gain access to Florida State Prisons. Once cleared the FAST system tracks our cleared members through their PIN number. This may assist with establishing either an H&I presentation or a regular meeting of NA within Coleman's Penitentiary, Correctional facilities.

We would like to discuss the possibility of providing NA meetings for inmates in your facility. Please let us know when you will have time to meet with us so we can more fully explain what we have to offer. In the meantime, we are sending a packet of information for your review.

Yours in service,

H&I Resource Coordinator  
Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous  
Resource Coordinator telephone number and email address

## **Introduction Letter (continued)**

Follow up the introduction letter by scheduling a presentation to the facility staff. Invite the Public Information and H&I Chairs as well as cleared members from the local NA Area to participate in the presentation. Include information packages from the NA Regional Service Office.

**God grant me the serenity to  
accept the things I cannot  
change;  
courage to change the things  
I can;  
and wisdom to know the  
difference.**

