Rural Service Web Meeting 2 December 2016, Notes Pods

**GENERAL PR SERVICE CHALLENGES:**

Limited number of trusted servants:

• Trusted servant burnout

• Wide range of services all needing support

• Lack of experience in relation to applying principles of the Traditions

Geographical (distance and terrain) and climate challenges equal low participation at service meetings and commitments

Limited internet access makes it difficult to utilize technology

Rural groups feel underserved by urban-based service bodies that they are a member of

Denial of the existence of a drug problem within rural communities

Challenging to establish and grow NA in smaller communities particularly when AA may be already well established

Wanted to add in rural communities we have diverse members and at times the challenge is relating culturally

Change in general can be challenging for us--change to PR "umbrella," change to task-based services.

**GENERAL SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES:**

Utilize planning in order to prioritize PR efforts and more effectively utilize limited resources

Food and/or recovery activity at service meetings

Open participation at service meetings

Short term service commitments

Collaboration between PR/PI, H&I, and FD committees – consider using an Umbrella Structure as discussed in Chapter 3 of the PR Handbook (page 24) as it has proved effective in smaller communities

Question: is this sort of umbrella structure useful in rural or isolated communities? It can be quite valuable in establishing relationships with professionals and institutions. PR isn't just about presenting information. It's about building relationships. Can get more work done, more quickly by being able to tap into people's talents more flexibly because of the collaboration.

Some places have created a more all-inclusive umbrella structure that includes more than just the PR/FD/H&I work. That can be a way to do more with fewer people.

Change can be scary particularly when it means revising guidelines.

Sometimes it helps to talk with similar communities to get a sense of what they are doing. What works in an urban community may or may not work so well in a more isolated or sparsely populated place.

When there already is a great deal of collaboration between subcommittees it may make more sense to use an umbrella structure so that the communication and collaboration can happen with fewer subcommittee meetings. It also may encourage folks to step up and do related work—H&I folks might hang posters; PR folks might take a panel into a facility. Allows for cross-training as well.

Participate in the NAWS PR Web Meeting to meet other PR trusted servants from all over the world while gaining insight on a variety of topics related to PR service in NA. Topics for discussion can be suggested before each meeting.

Online technology to facilitate communication and virtual attendance, e.g. Skype

Continue to mail hard copies of minutes and reports for members without internet access

Consider how the location of a service meeting might enable members to attend – rotation or central location?

Use core PR principles from PR Handbook for guidance, e.g. attraction, self-support, cooperation, and communication

Review list of addenda in PR Handbook for potentially useful resources

Utilize PR Basics and H&I Basics as resources – workshop materials for these are available from NAWS

Using an 800 number for a larger area (e.g., all of the Hawaiian Islands)

Get people involved early--helps them feel some ownership

Task-based services can help people take on smaller pieces, get involved, feel a sense of satisfaction. Utilize resources wisely.

It's important to have good administrative folks involved--keep a record, have historical documents that help keep track--don't have to reinvent the wheel. Can keep track of what has happened and worked so that work can continue to progress and not review the same ground over and over.

**CHALLENGES WITH INSTITUTIONS:**

High demand for H&I service in rurally located jails where there are few or no NA groups

Limited financial resources to supply literature for inmates

Tendency for AA to be more available to do service, which may overshadow NA in institutions

Sometimes can't reach members or potential members even when there is an H&I meeting because some members can't sit in a meeting with others

**SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES FOR INSTITUTIONS:**

Special one-time H&I events if resources don’t allow for a regular panel, such as phone connections to enable inmates to hear shares at unity days or convention meetings.

Regularly send literature and meeting lists to local jails if resources for a panel aren’t available.

Shared services between neighboring communities

Ask for support from area and regional service body – trusted servants, literature, funds, and experience

Sponsorship behind the walls service work. NAWS has a quarterly Inmate Step Writing Web Meeting for folks who are starting up new committees or working on established committees. Next meeting is scheduled for early February. If you want to get the announcements, email pr@na.org.

Financing of Literature (Solution) - We have found that some of the stress for literature expense can be alleviated by having conversations with the facilities and how they can best spent their institutional monies most effectively. IN addition we have found that in our local jails that Inmates and clients can receive NA Books AS LONG AS the books are send directly from a dot com...Like Amazon or a vendor of choice or if family/loved one purchases from na.org and literature is sent directly from NAWS.

Bring in Audio tapes to create an NA Speaker Audio Library so that if inmates want to listen to a speaker tape as an individual or group they can send a request and set a time to listen to an audio tape

**CHALLENGES WITH NEW MEMBERS:**

Lack of PR with local treatment facilities or drug courts leading to meetings being overwhelmed with new members who are not oriented to NA and can be disruptive or inappropriate and can also get alienated by their own expectations.

What to do when your PR efforts have been a success? Are groups prepared for an influx of new members?

Large numbers of clients from rurally located treatment facilities and other institutions on medication-assisted treatment attending small meetings.

In a small community, it can really damage the image of NA and may do irreparable harm to meetings, when just a couple members relapse and/or bad mouth NA.

**SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES FOR NEW MEMBERS:**

“Newcomer” meetings that provide an introduction for new members. The meetings have a specific format wherein trusted servants explain certain aspects of NA, our emphasis on total abstinence, the language of NA recovery; how meetings function, the NA program, sponsorship, etc. (Chapter 6 addenda from PR Handbook.)

IP #29 can be helpful to explain NA etiquette to new folks as well.

Check the “basics” of local meetings to ensure they are ready to serve an influx of new members, e.g. meetings are opened consistently, have a good atmosphere of recovery, etc.

NA Groups & Medication service pamphlet can be used as a resource for groups to discuss how to best respond to members on MAT.

PR resources, including “Narcotics Anonymous and Persons Receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment” PR pamphlet

PR work with facilities that refer members. For instance, regular meetings with pre-release center staff. Outreach to explain what NA is and what we do and what our expectations are.

**CHALLENGES WITH ANONYMITY:**

Personal anonymity in small communities making it difficult for some addicts to serve in certain capacities

Many local members also work in local treatment facilities or institutions, making it difficult to maintain a separation between NA and the institution or to provide NA services to those institutions

**SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES FOR ANONYMITY:**

Ask for support from area and regional trusted servants

PSAs on local media

Question: What are some successful strategies for getting program managers to run our radio PSA's? We have had more success with our TV PSAs.

Chapter 7 of PR Handbook – page 70

H&I Dos and Don'ts

People need good training and good boundaries to learn how to hold dual roles (a recovering addict and a professional who works with addicts)

Ideas: 1) An H&I newcomer orientation Video for the Drug Courts and 2) a newcomer Orientation Video and GSR Orientation for new participants in our Area Service Committee (ASC) to post on our local and regional web sites

January 12 next PR web meeting 2pm PST

January 26 next H&I web meeting 4pm PST

Dec to Feb/March next inmate step writing—date to be determined

If you want to join, send an email to pr@na.org and let us know which meeting you're interested in and what aspect of PR service work you are involved in and what is your area/region.