



handbook **PUBLIC
RELATIONS**

Public Relations Statement

Why public relations is important to the NA member

The Narcotics Anonymous message is “that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live.” Our relations with the public enable us to share this message broadly so that those who might benefit from our program of recovery can find us. We perform public relations service to increase the awareness and credibility of the NA program. We share our message openly with the public at large, with prospective members, and with professionals. Maintaining an open, attractive attitude in these efforts helps us to create and improve relationships with those outside the fellowship. Establishing and maintaining a commitment to these relationships, can help us to further our primary purpose.

The spiritual principles of our steps, traditions, and concepts guide us in pursuing our public relations aims and our efforts to enhance NA’s public image and reputation. These principles apply to our community and service efforts as well as to the personal behavior and attitude of individual NA members.

Informing professionals and the public

The following statement can be used to inform the public about NA:

Narcotics Anonymous is a global, community-based organization with a multi-lingual and multicultural membership. NA was founded in 1953, and our membership growth was minimal during our initial twenty years as an organization. Since the publication of our Basic Text in 1983, the number of members and meetings has increased dramatically. Today¹, NA members hold over 72,200 meetings weekly in 143 countries. We offer recovery from the effects of addiction through working a twelve-step program, including regular attendance at group meetings. The group atmosphere provides help from peers and offers an ongoing support network for addicts who wish to pursue and maintain a drug-free lifestyle.

Our name, Narcotics Anonymous, is not meant to imply a focus on any particular drug; NA’s approach makes no distinction between drugs including alcohol. Membership is free, and we have no affiliation with any organizations outside of NA including governments, religions, law enforcement groups, or medical and psychiatric associations. Through all of our service efforts and our cooperation with others seeking to help addicts, we strive to reach a day when every addict in the world has an opportunity to experience our message of recovery in their own language and culture.

Public Relations Handbook

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preface

Welcome to the *Public Relations Handbook*!

In Narcotics Anonymous, public relations simply means taking a more conscientious approach to the relationships we create with the public. This is the subject of the *Public Relations Handbook*: NA's relationships with the public. These relationships are usually the result of members' interactions at meetings and events, members' performing specific service functions, and members representing NA (sometimes unknowingly) during the daily routine of their lives. The scope of public relations is broad. And because of that, this material is designed to help all of us in the many ways we interact with the public.

We can think about public relations as dynamic relationships. The ways we create and maintain relationships with the public will continue to change and grow over time. Because of these evolving needs, the principles and planning tools in Chapters Two and Three are the foundation of the *Public Relations Handbook*. When our relationships with the public change, the principles and planning techniques stay consistent. In addition, much of the handbook's support material will be updated regularly to meet the changing needs of our public relations service efforts.

The *Public Relations Handbook* is simply a place to begin; it is a tool members can use to become more aware and informed. You are the ones who will use this material to create a variety of inspired PR approaches in your local communities.

Public Relations Statement

Why public relations is important to the NA member

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¹ As of May 2023.

NA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The principle of service, critical to the application of our Eleventh Tradition, is not a passive principle. To be of maximum service to the still-suffering addict, we must energetically seek to carry our message throughout our cities, towns, and villages. ...We must take vigorous steps to make our program widely known. The better and broader our public relations, the better we will be able to serve.

Tradition Eleven, It Works: How and Why

The concept of public relations is not new to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. The above passage, from the essay on the Eleventh Tradition in *It Works: How and Why*, reminds us that active efforts to form strong relationships with the public are essential to NA's growth. Strong relationships with the public make it possible for more addicts to have the opportunity to experience freedom from active addiction. Our vision is for NA to thrive in every community around the world.

Why does Narcotics Anonymous need relationships with the public?

As a fellowship, we have already made remarkable advancements in our relationships with the public. Area service committees around the world bring meetings into correctional facilities, provide information to various professionals, and interact with members of the public over NA phonelines and in planning NA events. And yet, there is still room for us to grow.

We can grow by taking on a more active role in our relationships with members of the public. We can expand our ideas about which professionals might be able to help us fulfill our primary purpose. We can take even greater responsibility for the ways our personal behavior affects the public's willingness to refer addicts to Narcotics Anonymous.

Key topics

Why does NA need relationships with the public?

How can this handbook help members in their PR efforts?

What does PR mean for NA members?

Conclusion

The Public Relations Handbook has been created to help us do an even better job at carrying NA's message. It has been created to help us increase the recognition of NA and enhance the credibility of our program of recovery so that addicts seeking help don't have to continue to suffer from active addiction. Our ability to form long-lasting relationships with the public can help to ensure that NA becomes and remains a respected, credible, and accessible recovery choice for addicts.

How can this handbook help members in their PR efforts?

This handbook is written for NA members with varying service experience and clean time, as well as those who may have no prior knowledge of public relations or service in NA. Most of our public relations opportunities happen at the area level and, as a result, this handbook is geared toward those serving in area service committees. Yet, the material here can be adapted for use at any level of service and for a variety of uses.

The handbook is organized into two sections:

- Section One—Chapters One through Four
- Section Two—Chapters Five through Thirteen




About Section One

The first section contains conceptual information, such as a discussion of NA’s principles in Chapter Two, planning techniques in Chapter Three, and PR training ideas in Chapter Four. The remaining chapters contain practical information that applies to specific areas of service.

The handbook has been organized this way because practicing NA’s spiritual principles and creating a more reliable and responsive service structure is the foundation of our public relations service. Chapters Two and Three are resources for members looking to better understand NA’s principles, as they relate to service, and for new ways to plan and organize services. Remember, the material here is meant to be adapted and used in ways that make the most sense in the local area.

About Section Two

Each chapter in the handbook’s second section is organized into two segments: the first contains excerpts from some of the principles contained in Chapter Two that are relevant to the particular service area of that chapter. For example, the material from Chapter Two about anonymity in the press is excerpted in Chapter Five, “Media.” Practical information about the specific area of service makes up the remainder of each chapter.

ICON KEY	
	Practical experience
	Preparation and training tips
	PR principles for discussion

In an effort to make the material here more useful, we have provided a list of resources at the end of each chapter. For example, Chapter Four includes a sample correspondence letter, a referral letter, frequently asked questions, and a presentation format. This resource material is contained as addenda for each chapter.

Although the handbook is organized in a way that allows members to use sections as needed, we encourage you to explore all the information contained within the various chapters. The scope of public relations is broad; because of that, we have provided a range of useful information.

Find What You’re Looking For

Remember that there may be useful information in a chapter that might not contain the specific service focus you are looking for—for instance, the presentation techniques in Chapter Four may be valuable when planning a presentation for healthcare professionals.

What does “public relations” mean for NA members?

For our purposes in Narcotics Anonymous, the term “public relations” refers to all of the relationships we create and maintain with the general public, professionals, potential members, and each other in our groups and service communities. We have been establishing relationships with the public all along, whether we have made a choice to be aware of and participate in those relationships or not. It is time to look more closely at how we relate to the rest of society as well as to fellow members. It is time to gather our collective experience, and improve our service efforts so NA can continue to become a more reliable and recognizable program of recovery.

“Public relations” implies an ongoing relationship. We have many opportunities to build and sustain ongoing relationships with the public. We can follow up after a presentation, ask for feedback from an institution, and check in with the facilities where our meetings are held. Our ability to respond and participate in relationships with the public can only help to strengthen the public’s trust in our ability to help addicts.

“The actions we take in forming relationships with the public can have a profound effect on whether or not addicts can find NA.”

It’s easy to miss the positive influence our relationships can have on addicts finding NA. An area service committee may begin its PR effort with a presentation to nurses, doctors, and administrators at a local hospital. As a result of this initial contact, members may be asked to start meetings for clients within a unit in the hospital. And because of that, a nurse in the emergency room may think to give an NA helpline phone number to an overdose patient, and a doctor may feel confident about referring a patient

seeking help to NA. The actions we take in forming relationships with the public can have a profound effect on whether or not addicts find NA.

Many of us have experienced our most powerful PR opportunity when we least expected it. Maybe it was the time a property manager watched us thoroughly clean a facility following an NA event. In that instance, we may have left an impression that NA members are considerate and responsible. In other situations, we may make a more negative impact. Leaving a meeting facility in a loud and disrespectful manner, or fighting at NA events, can harm NA’s reputation. We have choices about the impression we leave on those around us. Our actions tend to serve as our strongest public relations message.

We can also think about public relations in terms of how we interact with each other. Do our service committees provide training and orientation for new trusted servants? Do we thank each other for doing a good job in a service position? Do we value and use the knowledge of more experienced members? The positive relationships we build with each other can only help our interactions with the public—which helps us better fulfill our primary purpose.

Many of us may be performing public relations without having been elected to a trusted servant position, without any prior service experience or any focused public relations efforts in our local area. These “public relations” are the relationships we build with the public through the individual impressions we leave. It is easy to overlook the impact of these brief personal encounters. The information in this handbook is meant to help us see the ways in which our relationships with the public are a part of everything we do.

Public relations goals

One goal spelled out in A Vision for NA Service is to “work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to support the groups in carrying our message of recovery.” Local NA communities can have a powerful impact on the larger communities around them. It is through the unity of members in their service efforts, and a cooperative attitude toward the public, that helps the NA message of recovery grow.

The following points are goals that we can strive to fulfill in making NA a visible and attractive choice for addicts:

1. **We clarify what services NA can and cannot provide to the community.**
2. **We make NA members more aware of their role in NA’s public image.**
3. **We aim for the public to recognize NA as a positive and reliable organization.**
4. **We develop valuable relationships with professionals and the general public.**

The first point in A Vision for NA Service instills us with the hope “that one day, every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in their own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life.” Many of us are aware of the struggles and challenges our founding members faced as each one of them sought to carry the message of recovery to suffering addicts. In the

“It is through the unity of members in their service efforts, and a cooperative attitude toward the public, that helps the NA message of recovery grow.”

1950s, the “worldwide fellowship” of Narcotics Anonymous was in its infancy; “the world” for those early members consisted of a few states in the United States of America. This is no longer true. Our growth exploded during the 1980s and 1990s, and we continue to grow. As a result, our public relations efforts can be more effective if we acknowledge the various geographic, social, religious, ethnic, political, and economic factors that affect an addict’s ability to

find NA’s message. The disease of addiction does not afflict any one particular group of people—its deadly grip knows no boundaries. And our message—the message we are all entrusted to carry—also knows no limits.

In conclusion

We know that, even with our commitment to addressing service needs in this handbook, something will be missing. Ultimately it is you, the individual member, who will breathe life into NA’s public relations efforts. Your own experiences are the best examples of NA’s effectiveness, making you the most valuable PR resource our fellowship has. The efforts undertaken by each member are absolutely essential to the success of our worldwide fellowship.

We can learn from those who approach challenges in unique and surprising ways. Don’t be afraid to share your ideas and experiences with one another. After all, “one addict helping another” is what our recovery program is founded on—and our service efforts can use that same principle.

CORE PUBLIC RELATIONS PRINCIPLES

Many of us understand the importance of NA's principles, but how do we go about applying those principles as we carry NA's message of recovery in a public setting? This chapter highlights NA's core principles and explores how to practically apply them in our public relations efforts. By understanding these principles, we are empowered to create services that are more reliable, responsive, and communicative.

Key topics

The spiritual foundation

Anonymity

Unity: "Together we can"

Attraction ...

Self-support

Cooperation, not affiliation

**Responsibility &
accountability**

Forever nonprofessional

Communication

The principles outlined in this chapter are contained in NA's steps, traditions, and concepts. Of course, all of the steps, traditions, and concepts have some bearing on our relationships with the public. We have simply highlighted the principles that seem particularly relevant to public relations service. The foundational principle of all our service efforts is the group's primary purpose described by our Fifth Tradition. As the Fifth Tradition essay in *It Works: How and Why* states, "carrying the NA message is so important to the survival of NA that it is called our primary purpose." We work to fulfill our primary purpose within NA's principles.

The spiritual foundation

This chapter illustrates the NA principles that apply to our relationships within the fellowship and with the public. When we truly understand NA principles, we are better able to act in a mature way when we are presented with unexpected challenges.

Our service efforts often provide us with opportunities to apply principles to what might appear to be insurmountable obstacles. We can approach these challenges with an open mind in order to discover possible resolutions. For example, we may find ourselves in a situation where two different subcommittees are interacting with the same correctional facility. Each subcommittee may be in contact with different people at the facility. What is needed in a situation like this one is good communication between subcommittees. Our public relations are strengthened when we can practice principles, work together, and keep each other informed.

*Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message
to the addict who still suffers.*

Tradition Five

As members of NA, we have a primary purpose to support. While groups focus on that primary purpose, the responsibility of supporting those efforts is delegated to an area service committee. For those of us performing public relations services, this means we approach our service with an attitude of humility: We are simply recovering addicts trying to carry a message of recovery—one that someone else freely shared with us—to other suffering addicts. Our job is to let others know that Narcotics Anonymous is a simple, spiritual, twelve-step recovery program that can help any addict find freedom from drug addiction. We confidently acknowledge what services we can and cannot provide. We approach public relations with the knowledge of what NA is to the community and what NA's relationship is with that community. The principles of humility and service can help us carry NA's message in a way that acknowledges NA's role in the community.

Anonymity

When a friend tells us about the struggles another person is having with addiction, we may want to let that friend know about Narcotics Anonymous and what it has done for us. When a coworker has a drug problem, we may want to share our experience with that person. None of us will want to indiscriminately trumpet the gory details of our addiction to everyone in town, nor will we want to disclose our NA membership to everyone we meet. When we think it may be helpful, however, it may be appropriate to share a bit of our story and the recovery we've found in Narcotics Anonymous.

It Works: How and Why

We do not break our anonymity when we share with someone, directly and openly, about our personal experiences with addiction and freedom in recovery. Many members share their recovery experiences with their former treatment counselors or probation officers. This could be considered public relations, as treatment counselors and probation officers are more likely to refer new clients to NA when they see that the NA program of recovery is working in the lives of these members. This approach creates opportunities for addicts to learn about NA, and it generates an attitude of goodwill toward our program.

In NA, the principle of anonymity encourages what our literature describes as “selfless generosity.” The principle of anonymity guides us to behave in ways that put the group's welfare ahead of our own: The “we” becomes more important than the “I.” When we accept our individual strengths and weaknesses, we are practicing humility—and humility is anonymity in action. We practice humility when we understand that the group is the strongest vehicle for carrying NA's message. We are all equal when we sit together in an NA meeting; anonymity asks us to carry that equality and selflessness into our relationships with the public.

In joining anonymously in a fellowship with other recovering addicts, placing the welfare of the group ahead of our own, our own spiritual growth is enhanced beyond measure, not diminished.

It Works: How and Why

The principle of anonymity encourages equality and a focus on the greater good of NA, rather than our own personal interest. In NA, we don't care who you are; we care about the therapeutic value of one addict helping another.

Many members view anonymity simply as not stating our last names. This would only be an issue of concern in a media setting. It is each member's choice whether or not to disclose a last name or personal information.

Anonymity supports our ultimate goal of focusing on our primary purpose instead of our individual concerns. The principles contained within our traditions encourage us to humbly join together in hope of forwarding the ideals of our fellowship.

Anonymity and confidentiality

We sometimes confuse anonymity with confidentiality—but they are not the same. It's helpful to remember that when we are sharing in an NA meeting, we are sharing in a public place. There is a good chance that members will identify with what is shared. Generally, there is no reporting of what has been shared in a meeting, even when a member shares about a criminal act. There is, however, no guarantee that what is shared in an NA meeting will stay in that meeting, despite an NA group's best intent.

Another part of confidentiality has to do with sponsorship. Unlike therapists, psychologists, and counselors, sponsors generally don't keep written records of what their sponsees share with them. Usually, a sponsor keeps what is shared confidential—but this is not guaranteed. Sponsors are recovering addicts, not paid professionals. Understanding this distinction can help members be more realistic about anonymity and confidentiality in NA.

Anonymity on the Internet

The Internet can often give the illusion that it is not a public sphere. As a result, the role of personal anonymity on the World Wide Web can be a confusing one. Many members, in enthusiastic efforts to carry NA's message of recovery, have set up personal websites or weblogs. One way a personal site could respect the principle on anonymity would be to state that the site does not represent NA; it speaks only for the individual. Personal sites can also provide links to a local registered website or to NA.org. Personal websites can further protect members' anonymity by using words like "recovery" instead of specifically stating that they are members of Narcotics Anonymous. Using "recovery" instead of "Narcotics Anonymous" will help the site avoid being recognized by a search engine if someone is looking for an NA meeting or information about Narcotics Anonymous. It can also help members maintain their anonymity in this public medium.

Anonymity with nonaddicts

Tradition Eleven emphasizes that no one personality is more important than another. When our Eleventh Tradition tells us that "we need always maintain personal anonymity," it does not say that we need to do so under all circumstances. Tradition Eleven says that "we need always maintain personal anonymity *at the level of press, radio, and films.*" This public is carefully outlined within our Eleventh Tradition as the press (print and electronic media), radio, and films.

If we are asked to participate in a radio talk show about recovery in NA, for instance, we are strongly encouraged to seek support from experienced NA members in our service community; discuss, plan, and rehearse our presentation with committee members; and represent Narcotics Anonymous with another NA member.

Anonymity is not in conflict with making the NA message more available and understood in our communities. Speaking about NA to a correctional facility to provide H&I information, or presenting the program of NA to a secondary school to inform an audience about recovery, are positive efforts of our service committees—actions that demonstrate NA’s message of recovery. These examples do not involve the public media, where maintaining personal anonymity is always encouraged.

There may be times when nonaddicts can help us protect our anonymity as recovering addicts in the public media. Those outside of NA often have the ability to enter media venues in a manner that can help further our primary purpose. For example, a judge may talk about their positive experience with NA, describing how hundreds of addicts have changed their

“Anonymity is not in conflict with making the NA message more available and understood in our communities.”

lives because they started to attend NA meetings, and speaking about the effectiveness of our program of recovery. We are not asking nonaddicts to carry NA’s message, we are asking them to speak *about* our message of recovery. The role of nonmembers is to simply carry information about NA.

A nonaddict professional helps members to retain their personal anonymity with the press and protects any individual NA member from being considered a spokesperson for Narcotics Anonymous. We don’t risk our program’s credibility as much, since a nonaddict is completely separate from our membership. Members can also maintain the focus of carrying NA’s message instead of becoming overwhelmed with representing NA in the media. Nonaddict professionals, like judges, are often inclined to discuss their experiences with our program. It is our responsibility to make sure that these members of the public are well-informed and that they have had a positive experience with NA.

If an area service committee has decided to use a nonaddict in a public media event, the area needs to responsibly address any possible challenges. One important concern is that an outside nonmember could possibly become associated as “the face of NA.” One way a local service body can ensure that they have been responsible in this type of situation is to make certain that they have clearly defined the nonmember’s role in and relationship to NA. Being responsible helps these relationships to be successful.

Each public event and opportunity is unique. The local service body is usually best equipped to make informed decisions about the appropriate use of nonaddicts. Evaluating the nature of the event and the relationship with the nonaddicts involved can help an area decide if including a nonaddict is appropriate for each situation.

The traditions describe a fellowship that takes collective guidance from spiritual principles rather than individual personalities. That kind of selflessness is what the Twelfth Tradition means by the word “anonymity.”

It Works: How and Why

Anonymity and equality

Anonymity gives every addict who attends NA meetings an equal chance at finding recovery. When members live by principles, it doesn’t matter how addicts look, where addicts came from, how educated or uneducated they may be, or how much money they have or don’t have. If an attractive newcomer begins attending a meeting and the members in the group give that newcomer more attention, then the group members would be

treating this newcomer differently. Would these members have behaved the same had the newcomer not been so attractive? Is this attractive newcomer receiving a certain type of attention that might prevent them from hearing the NA message? We try to treat all members equally, so everyone has a chance at finding the freedom our program offers.

In the final analysis, our personal differences make no difference; we are all equal. It's true that we all come to Narcotics Anonymous with our own personal histories, using patterns, backgrounds, talents, and shortcomings. But for the purpose of our own recovery, our occupational identity has no bearing on our ability to care for one another in NA. A college degree, a trust fund, illiteracy, poverty—these circumstances that so powerfully affect so many other areas of our lives will neither help nor hinder our chances at recovery. Likewise, they will not aid or impede our efforts to carry the message, one addict to another.

It Works: How and Why

The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.

Tradition Three

Narcotics Anonymous is open to anyone seeking freedom from active addiction and our public relations efforts need to support that inclusiveness. Our service efforts need to ensure that everyone is welcome in NA—from the householder to the convict. As our Basic Text says, our service efforts should strive to reach all addicts “regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion.”

Our Third Tradition also addresses the fact that no one can judge the desire of another addict. Desire is personal, eliminating the need for any standards on a member's desire to stop using.

Narcotics Anonymous offers recovery to addicts around the world. We focus on the disease of addiction rather than any particular drug. Our message is broad enough to attract addicts from any social class or nationality. When new members come to meetings, our sole interest is in their desire for freedom from active addiction and how we can be of help.

It Works: How and Why

Unity: “Together we can”

NA is more attractive when we are able to demonstrate our unity. Our unity shows when we use our diversity as a strength in our meetings and our services. When a group of addicts from different backgrounds and with varying beliefs serves together, they highlight our unity in a way that is extraordinarily attractive. When thinking about our unity in terms of attracting a variety of using addicts, we can ask ourselves the following questions:

- 📖 How do we demonstrate an atmosphere of recovery in our meetings?
- 📖 Are we open and welcoming to all those who attend our meetings?
- 📖 In our service committees, are we receptive to members in the fellowship and attractive to the public?


We are the ones who bring to life Narcotics Anonymous' simple message of recovery from addiction—a message that ensures freedom for any addict, from any background or age group, to experience recovery from active addiction.

In our efforts to fulfill the all-encompassing goal of remaining open to and inclusive of all addicts, members may want to take time to identify groups that reside in their local community and that are missing from NA meetings. Addiction crosses all cultural boundaries; the absence at our meetings of individuals from a certain cultural group doesn't mean that no one from that culture suffers from addiction or needs what we have to offer. Asking questions like *Who in our community is missing from our meetings?* and *Who in our community does NA need to reach?* will help to focus service efforts where they are needed the most. Having group discussions about the area's goals will help to focus PR efforts.

One approach for attracting potential members to NA is to create service projects specifically designed to reach those potential members. If members live in a community where the largest population is made up of retired citizens or those confined to convalescent homes, members of the area might consider creating a presentation that would show two important realities about NA: that there are older people clean and recovering in NA, and that those members participate in a fellowship with a diverse membership. This could be accomplished by asking some older members in the local area to participate in a presentation with a diverse group of NA members. These steps can illustrate both the diversity and the unity of our fellowship. Our public relations efforts are likely to be more valuable and effective when we take some time to plan the best ways to approach potential members.

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.

Tradition One

 Unity is the spirit that joins thousands of members around the world in a spiritual fellowship that has the power to change lives.

It Works: How and Why

Our collective service efforts help other addicts find recovery. NA has been growing since the 1950s because of members working together to further NA's primary purpose. Many of us are familiar with the group's power to carry the message of recovery to addicts coming to our meetings, and we use groups of members in service in the same way. We can see our First Tradition at work when members put their individual wants and needs aside for NA's common good. Working together to make NA more visible and viable in our local communities not only helps addicts find our program, it is also a powerful way of practicing the unity described in the First Tradition.

Attraction ...

The attractiveness of the behaviors and attitudes of individual NA members and the collective appearance of our fellowship is essential in making our public relations efforts more valuable. Attraction means that we function (as members and as groups) in ways that naturally draw others to us. When members act in a way that is attractive, newcomers and potential members are more likely to get a positive impression of NA.

We can also think about attraction as it relates to those—who may not be addicts—who help addicts find NA. Our individual attitudes have an effect on our collective appearance. How do we help professionals become aware of what NA has to offer? We cannot expect nonaddicts to fully understand addiction in the same way we, as addicts, do. What we can do is illustrate the power of recovery within the NA program to those who are not members.

What is likely to be attractive to the public and to professionals who interact with addicts is reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery. We can demonstrate the reliability of NA by showing up and fulfilling the obligations we make, whether it is to return a telephone call for information about NA or supplying meeting directories at a public library. We can learn to draw on the experiences of NA members to fulfill the commitments we make to professionals. In the event that something prevents us from our keeping an appointment, we can ask a fellow member to fulfill our commitment for us and notify the person with whom we have the commitment to let them know someone else will be coming in our place. We can also maintain good communication within our committee by staying in contact with the committee chairperson. We need other NA members to be truly successful in building and maintaining relationships with the public. Cooperation and collaboration in our areas and committees can help us provide an attractive message of recovery to the public.

... Rather than promotion

When thinking about the difference between promotion and attraction, it may be helpful to think about the difference between informing the public about NA and insisting that NA is better than any other recovery program. The essay on the Eleventh Tradition in *It Works: How and Why* describes promotion as “fanfare, overblown claims, [and] celebrity endorsements.” Informing the public that we are a credible program of recovery is a principled action, whereas comparing NA to other programs or approaches, offering recovery incentives, or making claims about our effectiveness can all be considered promotion. The only promise we make is the opportunity for addicts to experience freedom from active addiction; guaranteeing any other outcome is promotion.

Promoting Narcotics Anonymous doesn’t need to be an option for us because the program speaks for itself when we humbly and honestly share how NA is working in our lives. Consistently providing services to the community and to professionals, letting the public know about NA and what the NA program has to offer is a way for our service efforts to make our program more attractive to the public and to potential members.

As outlined in the essay on Tradition Eight in *It Works: How and Why*, we perform our service work energetically, and we seek to carry the message of recovery throughout our cities, towns, and villages. We take vigorous steps to attract still-suffering addicts to our program. We have faith in the effectiveness of our fellowship. We know that NA works because we have experienced it working in our own lives. We know that any addict seeking recovery in NA can find the same freedom we have found.

Self-support

Our first experience with the Seventh Tradition may be when the basket is passed at the meetings we attend. Our contribution in a meeting may have been the first time we experienced feelings of responsibility and a growing sense of belonging to something bigger than ourselves. Yet, a broader definition of NA's principle of being fully self-supporting means that our organization is sustained by our own energy through member donations and service efforts. We don't solicit for financial contributions from the public. When we practice the Seventh Tradition, the spirit of self-support encourages responsible actions, anonymity, and integrity in our relationships with the public.

Self-support and public service announcements

We are a not-for-profit organization; therefore, we are often offered charitable rates on things like group meeting-space rentals or public service advertisements, such as radio spots or public transit placements. We may fear that when we aren't charged for a thirty-second spot on a radio program or for an informational NA poster in a train station, we are not being self-supporting. Public service announcements are often available to charitable organizations. In these situations, the media is providing the public with a service through these announcements. Public service announcements do not compromise or jeopardize our principle of self-support. These are opportunities that the public creates for community service organizations. What we offer the still-suffering addict in NA has a benefit to society. Accepting charitable rates and discounts that are offered to other similar community service organizations is in keeping with the principle of self-support.

In fact, this example of public service announcements can be an opportunity for us to build a cooperative relationship with members of the public in our community. This offering of services to charitable organizations is a way that public organizations and businesses enter into cooperative relationships within the community. By combining our efforts with these organizations and taking a team approach, we demonstrate our ability to cooperate. We are not attaching ourselves or affiliating ourselves with these organizations. Rather, we can enter these relationships based on the spirit of cooperation.

Self-support and nonaddicts

Just as we are permitted to accept free public service announcements and discounted rates for meeting space, we may accept help from nonaddicts. This volunteering of services by nonaddicts may be considered a typical part of their community service. For example, a healthcare professional may offer to volunteer time to NA by sitting in on an inventory session to discuss challenges both parties are facing in finding ways for addicts to easily reach NA. In this example, there is a distinction between services that are normally billable (such as a nonaddict accountant offering to manage a local committee's bank records) and a relationship that benefits both NA and the outside party. When both parties are benefiting from the cooperative interaction, and are closer to reaching their mutual goals, then both parties involved equally support the relationship. NA is not being given any special treatment by accepting this volunteer service from a nonmember. Instead, NA is merely one of many not-for-profit organizations that can obtain a volunteer's time. When considering using a nonaddict volunteer, local NA communities can ask themselves the following questions: Will accepting this service give the person or organization undue influence over NA? Will accepting this service make us reliant on this person or organization? Undue influence can also be avoided by asking if the service being offered benefits both NA and the outside party.

In understanding the principle underlying the Seventh Tradition, practical simplicity walks hand-in-hand with our faith in a Higher Power. So long as we take direction from that Power, our needs our met. Likewise, the decision to decline outside contributions, meeting the group's need from the group's own resources, is based firmly in faith.

It Works: How and Why

Self-support and cooperation

Our experience has shown that as the public gains more knowledge about NA, they become more inclined to offer their support. Often this support is expressed through referring clients, family, or friends to the NA program. They refer people to us because they support our organization's mission. This type of rapport builds relationships with the public founded on trust and goodwill.

Often, we will find that the question we need to ask ourselves is if we are doing all we can do in the relationships we have formed with those outside of NA. It would be good if professional and community organizations that want to help addicts get clean feel that NA is available, willing, accessible, and helpful. Self-support means more than just carrying our own financial weight—it means that we fulfill our responsibility to provide information about our program and engage in meaningful relationships with others who have similar goals.

Another way that those outside of NA may lend their support is through helping us reach suffering addicts. Sometimes professionals help carry information about NA's message of recovery because they know that the NA program of recovery is credible.

“Self-support means more than just carrying our own financial weight—it means that we fulfill our responsibility to provide information about our program and engage in meaningful relationships with others who have similar goals.”

There are people outside of NA who help start recovery meetings in homeless shelters; there are professionals who help make recovery literature available to incarcerated addicts. Those outside of NA who share with others what they have seen working in the lives of addicts are a testimony to the power of recovery that our program offers. There are many ways to ensure that the NA message continues to reach addicts, and sometimes advocates outside of NA help further our primary purpose.

There are limits to the amount and kinds of support we can accept from the public. There have been times when family or friends of NA members have been so overwhelmed with gratitude for the recovery of their loved one that they have offered financial support to

NA. We understand this, and we appreciate their good intentions. But we don't accept financial contributions from nonmembers, even from the grateful members of an addict's family. We put ourselves at risk of compromising the autonomy of NA and the spirit of the Seventh Tradition when we accept monetary contributions.

There are, however, many other ways in which nonaddicts can help us fulfill our primary purpose. We can encourage them to buy NA literature and donate it to detoxification

centers, treatment centers, or correctional institutions. We can encourage them to volunteer at community agencies that serve addicts. And we can encourage them to help addicts they know by purchasing NA literature for them. These are all ways in which we can encourage our supporters to act on their compassion without compromising the spirit of our Seventh Tradition.

Cooperation, not affiliation

Cooperating means that we work together; it means that we associate with one another in actions that benefit all those involved. When we cooperate, we willingly help someone who requests our assistance. In NA, this may mean supporting a struggling committee from another area when they ask for help with our ideas and our time. We are here to support one another. When we work with each other and with our communities, we are able to take positive steps that help make our message more available.

How can we work with the public and other organizations without merging or affiliating with them? One of the ways in which we practice cooperation is by remembering that NA members are responsible for observing the principles of our traditions. Facilities and other organizations do not have this responsibility. We can practice this responsibility by following our own principles, relying on our service committees, and studying NA's traditions and concepts.

We are more likely to form productive and cooperative relationships when we simply and honestly review what services we can and cannot offer to others. For example, if we are forming a relationship with a treatment or correctional facility, we ask about their expectations of NA. Maybe they have requested weekly meetings and, after an honest assessment, we decide that we cannot meet their request. Instead, we can offer a meeting on a monthly basis. In this manner, we create a relationship that we can responsibly sustain over time. We practice cooperation by being honest about what we are able to provide, and we still find a way to respond to requests. As a result, public organizations learn to trust our members and rely on our program as a credible community resource.

Another aspect of cooperation is when organizations outside of NA want to research the effectiveness of our program. NA members may decide to cooperate in outside research projects. If this is the case, there are some points to consider. First is that healthcare

“We are more likely to form productive and cooperative relationships when we simply and honestly review what services we can and cannot offer to others.”

professionals rely on independent, objective data about effective treatment outcomes to make decisions about their patients' recovery options. When information about NA is missing from the databases relied upon by professionals, it is a stumbling block for referrals. Research has the potential to open doors for addicts, but NA has no control over what kind of data is collected or how it is used. We have much to learn about cooperating with outside research, and we don't have much experience to draw on. We can remain open to gaining more experience and to learning how to cooperate with those who conduct research.

On a rare occasion, an area or region could decide to conduct its own internal research of the NA program in its locale. Although members are free to participate in research, this is something an area can discuss. A service body can decide to provide a forum for members to discuss this issue if they are feeling uncertain about research that is occurring

in their community. Members are more likely to stay informed and aware about research of NA if local NA communities provide the opportunity for open discussion.

An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Tradition Six

Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition Ten

A big part of our credibility comes from the fact that we maintain our single focus of recovery from addiction. We can be seen as credible, and we can be present in an organization's decision making, but the only way we can be drawn into public controversy is if we offer an opinion on an issue outside the scope of our own program. If a facility wants us to endorse or lend our name to its program, or an organization requests our support on a piece of legislation, we refrain. If we become involved in an outside organization's decision-making process, such as sitting on a board for a nonprofit agency as a representative of NA, we offer no opinion on the organization's business practices. We do not take sides on an outside issue, and we do not put NA at risk or compromise the clarity of our message. If we took one side or another on a legal issue or a medical practice, we would undermine our credibility and our primary purpose. We work to avoid being identified as taking any side or giving an opinion in a controversy. We stay focused only on how we can help those suffering from addiction. This focus allows us to build relationships where our role is clear and free of controversy.

Our experience has shown that we have many nonaddict friends who can advocate for NA. If a professional wants to support NA by sharing about the effectiveness of our program, they are free to do that. What we can do is try to ensure that the nonmember's enthusiasm for our program doesn't misrepresent the addict-to-addict nature of our program. NA is not a program where professionals treat addicts, although professionals often want to advocate for NA's viability because they have seen recovery working for their clients or loved ones. The role of the local service body in a situation like this is crucial. The NA community can provide training and establish accountability with the nonmember supporter; this way the nonmember supporter can become an asset to NA in fulfilling its primary purpose.

One of our public relations goals is to build long-lasting relationships that further our primary purpose through the pursuit of those mutual goals we may share with other organizations. Compromising any of our traditions in an effort to build these relationships is never beneficial to individual members or NA as a whole. We maintain a consistent focus on our primary purpose with the public. By creating positive relationships with those outside of NA and with our own members, we foster unity and harmony with each other and the community around us. We put the common welfare of NA first, and we remember that we are only autonomous as long as our actions do not affect NA as a whole.

Personal responsibility as a member

Our personal interactions with the public have the potential to affect the way members of the public view NA as a whole. As recovering addicts, we interact with the public in our daily lives. And we are often faced with public relations opportunities when we least expect it. We may have decided to share our recovery with our doctor. Although we hadn't expected an NA service opportunity, it may dawn on us that the PI committee could target other local doctors in our community. We could bring this information to our local service committee and discuss how to proceed with this contact. A situation like this demonstrates how members can take responsibility to follow up with the local service committee on an unexpected public relations opportunity.

The accountability of our service committees

Our entire service structure is based on the spiritual principle of accountability. We go to the appropriate service body to seek direction for our public relations efforts. Service bodies, which were created by groups to provide services on their behalf, maintain accountability through their collective conscience and communication with NA groups. There should be no such thing as an unaccountable service body.

We can further foster accountability by working with others in service. We can perform these services in a way that gives a Higher Power an opportunity to work through our group conscience. Local committees can work together, through the process of a group conscience, to create opportunities for a Higher Power to influence services. By working with the area committee, we are less likely to let our personal agendas be the driving force of our service efforts.

There are responsibilities that accompany the principle of accountability. These responsibilities apply to all parties engaged in an accountable relationship. A committee has responsibilities to fulfill to the area service committee, and the area committee has a responsibility to its committee. For instance, if a convention committee is accountable to a regional service committee that means that the regional committee has agreed to take on certain responsibilities for that committee. If the committee encounters challenges such as financial crises or problems with NA's public image during an event, the service body needs to take constructive steps to help the convention committee. It is helpful for service bodies like areas or regions to understand and accept this responsibility before creating subcommittees. This understanding can encourage regions and areas to be proactive in their role with committees that are accountable to them. Requesting financial budgets and asking questions of committees encourages accountability and can help avoid larger problems in the future. Remaining within budget guidelines and maintaining accurate financial records may save an NA community the embarrassment of having to contact an accountant, a lawyer, or even the police. Accountability may also save us from having to cancel other services because we have overspent our budget.

Delegation is another aspect of providing accountable and responsible services. Just as groups have delegated responsibilities to service committees, those service committees can delegate appropriate responsibilities to members. When we delegate responsibility, we expect members or committees to be accountable and keep the larger service committee abreast of their activities. At the same time, the larger service body practices trust by not micromanaging or trying to control the responsibilities they have delegated to another body or another member. It may be in the best interest of a public relationship to have the point person who is in contact with the public remain in that position even after their term is up.

This could be beneficial both to NA and to the public organization. The area will be best suited to make this decision based on their needs.

Sometimes we fear that delegation will mean a loss of control over our services. Together, Concepts One, Two, and Three have been designed to help us maintain responsibility for our service structure without tying our trusted servants' hands.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

“Forever nonprofessional”

During a public presentation, we remember that we are simply trusted servants helping to carry the message of recovery. What does remaining nonprofessional mean in NA's public relations efforts? In NA it is defined as the equality we share. As members, we have an equal place within the fellowship and are equally valued in our efforts to carry the NA message. The principle of remaining nonprofessional also supports the groups' integrity—we are working in service of the group.

Most members may be able to provide information about NA to the public. However, we can also utilize the special skills and talents of certain members. Some of the members in our service community may have public-speaking skills or experience that better fits a particular audience. For example, a member who is also a doctor might better understand the philosophies and vocabulary of the medical community. Forming a panel of members with particular skills and talents, along with other members from various backgrounds, illustrates the range of membership in NA. Using a member's skills in our service efforts adds to how effectively we can communicate information about NA to the public.

Communication

Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.

Concept Eight

Communication is a two-way street. We strive to be effective, honest, open, consistent, and straightforward in our communications. We keep channels of communication open with those we are trying to reach in the public sphere. Communication is not just feedback. It is listening, accepting constructive criticism, and asking questions. Communication is verbal and nonverbal, written and oral, and it affects all of our public relationships. Good communication means listening to a member of the public after we have had an initial interaction. It is the quality of our correspondences and our awareness of various cultural environments.

Above all, our communications are strengthened when we demonstrate integrity, trustworthiness, consistency, and accountability. The principle of integrity applies to all of our service efforts. In our communications, integrity means we present information in a clear and honest way, even in very challenging situations. Trust creates unity in our service committees and confidence in the public. Trust is built when we are accountable for what we say and do. It is our behaviors and actions that communicate most clearly to those around us. Our integrity is expressed when we strive to practice NA's principles in all of our affairs; it is demonstrated in all that we do, and all that we don't do. We need to

remember that we communicate when we take no action. Communication is more than the words that come out of our mouths. Communication is listening, following up, and responding; it is how we carry ourselves through our service work and into the public.

Communication can be considered the foundation of all the principles that support our public relations efforts. As we begin dialogues with each other about how to bring the principles of our program into our services and daily affairs, our public relations efforts have already begun. The image we present to the public begins long before we contact an organization to make a presentation about Narcotics Anonymous. Often, the first impression of NA is made when a member of the public sees us standing outside a meeting facility. NA's image is affected by the ways individual members live their lives.

Taking a moment to reflect on the underlying principles of our program and how our actions can demonstrate those principles will provide our service efforts with a strong foundation. We can begin by opening our minds and initiating a dialogue with members in our areas. Working with a group of addicts to carry NA's message can be an incredibly rewarding and meaningful experience. When we come together and do the right thing for the right reason, we often begin to feel a growing sense of our own purpose and the purpose of NA as a whole.

Resource

Tradition scenarios

EFFECTIVE SERVICES

This chapter outlines ways to provide effective public relations services. Included here are a variety of **planning tools**, ideas for how to **structure services** more effectively, and **communication strategies**. These approaches are intended to help an area discover what they need in order to build effective public relations service. The idea is for areas to take what works for their local services and leave the rest.

The focus of this chapter is the area service committee, since members of the area committee are more likely to be the ones providing local services. The planning processes described in this chapter can be easily adapted for use by regions, zones, or any service body. Members are encouraged to modify and adapt these steps to fit their service body.

We offer this information to help areas provide public relations services that are less reactive and more proactive. Planning can help areas move away from thinking that there is only one “right” way to provide services for Narcotics Anonymous. We can all agree on the goal of service in NA: to reach still-suffering addicts. With this as our motivation, we try to identify the best way for *our* service body to achieve that goal.

If services are to be effective, then our efforts and goals need to be clearly defined and focused. Effective services mean that members understand their roles and responsibilities in meeting service goals. It means that areas have created service goals by first considering the needs of the community, current priorities of the area, and available resources. Effective services apply to how the entire area service committee and its committees organize and plan services.

Public relations planning

Planning means that we identify goals and clarify members’ roles in reaching those goals. It is much easier to provide effective services if everyone involved understands their tasks, their responsibilities, and the desired end result. An area may or may not need all of the following planning methods—they are provided so areas can make choices about which processes will work best for them.

Key topics

PR planning

Service structure and effective services

Communication and effective services

Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips

Inventory local services

Inventory current services

An inventory can help an area see its strengths and weaknesses. It can help identify what is being done well and what needs improvement. An area can use the inventory process to more objectively examine the services currently being provided. Through its inventory, an area may discover that they have a strong training and orientation process for phonline volunteers. Members may find that the phonline committee utilizes experienced members and performs mock phone calls in the training of new members. The area may discuss and decide to use some of the phonline committee's training methods for other subcommittees and projects.

Looking at what needs improvement is just as important. There are bound to be areas where the service body's ability to provide public relations service is weaker than others. Working to strengthen those weaker areas is an important part of providing effective services. The ideal is for our PR service efforts to produce results that strive to fulfill our primary purpose in our local community.

While the Eleventh Concept applies directly to the management of funds, it also has implications for the management of all our service resources. Most projects depend as much on ideas, information, conscience, and members' time and willingness as they do on money. If we have the funds needed to carry out a project but lack the time or the ideas, we'd best wait until we've gathered all the needed resources before proceeding. If we don't we will have wasted NA service funds. In responsibly planning and prioritizing our service efforts, we must consider the total resource picture, not just our finances.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Inventory where NA may be needed in the larger community

The area can gather information about the needs of the local community to create services that better meet those needs. This may mean evaluating helpline calls and discovering that there have been a number of requests for information about NA from local community colleges. The area committee may then decide that the priority is to form relationships with college administrators. The area can then work on providing information about NA to local colleges looking for student resources. This aspect of an inventory allows an area to determine if certain populations still need to be reached. If existing efforts are not meeting the larger community's needs, then the service body may decide to take action to reach a particular population of potential members.

Priorities

Prioritization involves evaluating which service projects seem most needed for furthering NA's primary purpose in a local area. Prioritization may require that, for the greater good of NA, members let go of service projects about which they are personally passionate. Inviting all interested trusted servants to participate in prioritizing an area's projects helps focus on the broader services needed, rather than the desires of individual subcommittees. Involving all of an area's trusted servants also helps to inspire in those trusted servants a sense of responsibility for the area's future projects.

There are several ways to prioritize. The following steps provide an example of how to prioritize service projects using a ranking system:

- 📄 Make a list of all desired projects. Place this list on a wall, on a chalkboard, or somewhere all participants can see it.
- 📄 Trusted servants then rank their top three projects with check marks.
- 📄 When members have ranked the area's projects, all participants review what seem to be the area's highest priorities.
- 📄 After members have had time to reflect on the area's priorities, a careful look at financial and human resources is needed.

Resources

Once public relations service projects are identified, the area will need to find out if there are enough local resources to carry out the prioritized projects. Looking at the human and financial resources needed for each project helps a service body create budgets, timelines, and training based on available resources.

- 📄 **Human resources:** A realistic picture of an area's human resources will help service projects be more successful. In order to assess human resources realistically, the area needs to look at the current experience of involved members and consider the learning curve for newly elected trusted servants. A learning curve means that although trusted servants have been trained for a project or position, they may still need time and support to adjust to their new responsibilities.

An area can also consider that there is often a natural decrease in trusted servants over time. This is often a result of the rotation of positions and the reality that members sometimes have to give up commitments early due to personal circumstances. Realistically considering human resources can help when planning service projects.

The area may discover that they need to recruit members for service projects. Recruiting members into service is an important component in building human resources. Following are some ways to build human resources:

1. **Strive to make service attractive—be a good example.**
2. **Identify members who may have skills, but not much experience, and support their involvement in service.**
3. **Encourage sponsees to participate in service.**
4. **Invite those members who may have been of service in the past to join in current local efforts.**
5. **Create a pool of former trusted servants.**

- 📄 **Financial resources:** An area can also examine local financial resources available for prioritized service projects. Looking at the area's budget at the beginning of the planning cycle will help trusted servants take the larger financial picture into account. The service body will want to determine if financial resources are available for prioritized service projects. One question to consider is if any projects will take funds away from a committee's routine finances (such as for phonelines). The area also needs to make projections about the amount of funding needed for the duration of the prioritized projects. Project timelines can be created to ensure that financial resources will be

available when needed at crucial points during the project. Getting a broader sense of the area's financial needs and resources helps trusted servants better plan for service projects.

“Looking at the area's budget at the beginning of the planning cycle will help trusted servants take the larger financial picture into account.”

Many areas raise money to fund service projects. Our ideal is for contributions to support our services, but many areas turn to fundraising to make service projects possible. Each area has to make a choice about whether or not to raise funds. The area can take time to discuss the question of whether fundraising is the appropriate and necessary action to take. If an area does decide to undertake fundraising, the area service committee should organize these efforts.

Committees are more likely to stay focused on providing services when they leave fundraising efforts to the area.

Once an area has determined its priorities and evaluated its resources, it is time to identify project goals. These goals are the final outcome of projects. They are the services an area wants to provide to help addicts find NA.

The public relations plan

Begin with a goal

Once an area has identified local PR goals, it will need to plan the actions necessary to reach those goals. One way to find out which steps are needed is to consider the ideal end result of the goal and then work backwards. It is difficult to identify the actions necessary to achieve a goal without having a strong idea about what the ultimate aim will look like. Remember that it is important to establish achievable goals that can be realistically accomplished. The following process can help an area establish the steps required to reach their service goals:

1. **Establish the goal of the project based on prioritized needs and available resources of the area.**
2. **Plan step-by-step actions or approaches to reach the identified goal.**
3. **Use the goal to measure the progress of the project.**

Sample public relations goals

Following are some examples of the kinds of PR goals an area could work toward. This is not a comprehensive list. These examples are just ideas for how to provide more effective PR service.

- 📄 **Goal:** Make healthcare workers aware of NA as a credible resource for their clients.
Steps to reach the goal: Trusted servants initiate a relationship with local healthcare workers by mailing an introductory letter and an NA information pack. NA members familiar with the field of healthcare give presentations at local healthcare events. Ongoing contact is maintained through written correspondence, email, and/or phone conversations. NA members regularly supply healthcare workers with meeting directories, NA literature, and reliable contact information. Feedback is gathered through an ongoing dialogue or an evaluation form of whether or not NA is an accessible resource. **Measure the progress of the project:** Review and discuss the

feedback from healthcare workers. Evaluate whether or not healthcare workers are aware of NA as a reliable and accessible option for addicts.

📄 **Goal:** Establish NA as a trusted resource for local high schools. **Steps to reach the goal:** NA members schedule several presentations at various schools in local school districts and meet with administrators and teachers prior to giving presentations. Trusted servants who got clean at a young age are trained to share information about NA for these presentations. Ongoing contact is maintained through a follow-up “thank you” letter and an evaluation form about the effectiveness of the presentation. NA members regularly supply schools with meeting directories, NA literature, and reliable contact information. **Measure the progress of the project:** Review and discuss completed evaluations. Plan ways to improve relationships and presentations in school settings.

📄 **Goal:** Give the public reliable, regularly updated Narcotics Anonymous contact information. **Steps to reach the goal:** Trusted servants are instructed to send their updated contact information through the local website. The website coordinator is in charge of updating the service body with new member contact information. The coordinator is also charged with the responsibility of proactively contacting members every three months to make sure the contact information is still accurate. **Measure the progress of the project:** Evaluate contact information every three months to ensure that it is reliable and updated.

📄 **Goal:** To provide local NA members with an education and training program in public relations service. **Steps to reach the goal:** The area service body creates written material for a training program. Experienced members train trusted servants. Short training sessions take place before service committee meetings. **Measure the progress of the project:** Evaluate attendance at training sessions on a quarterly basis, and review training program to ensure that it meets the needs of the area.

The above goals are meant to illustrate the process of identifying goals and creating the approaches necessary to reach those goals. In the practical application of local PR service goals, an area will need to add more detailed and specific directions for each approach. These details usually include timelines, scheduled reviews of progress, and the time necessary to take corrective actions. Corrective actions are steps that help bring the goal of the project back into focus. Adjusting a timeline, reviewing a project plan, and discussing unexpected challenges with the area are all considered corrective actions.

Service structure and effective services

The structure of our services differs from one area to another. This difference often depends on how many NA members are involved, how geographically spread out or close groups are, and what goals the service committee hopes to accomplish. Below are examples of how a variety of service structures can function in order to provide effective services. These are simply examples. It may make sense to use some combination of the examples below or none at all. The point is that local service bodies should coordinate services in ways that work best for them.

Each element of our service structure has its own role to play; all, however, serve together as a team, striving toward a common goal, “that no addict seeking recovery need die without having the chance to find a new way of life.”

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Subcommittee structure

A committee structure is common in NA. In a committee structure, there is usually an administrative committee that handles the business of operating the area meeting, area finances, and area records. Various subcommittees provide specific services for the area. Those employing this type of structure will want to make sure that subcommittees are communicating and supporting each other in reaching the identified service goals.

Some areas have combined two subcommittees in an effort to improve communication and maximize resources. In an instance like this, a function such as phonelines would be included with the public information subcommittee.

A committee structure may also use an **ad hoc committee** or **workgroups** to get specific service projects done. The work of an ad hoc committee or workgroup is limited to a specific period of time; the committee has a single focus, and is accountable to the area.

The use of **coordinators** can also help service committees to cooperate more directly with each other. Coordinators communicate information about current services being provided to each subcommittee. They do not necessarily provide hands-on services but serve more as a communication link between committees. Coordinators can also act as a communication link between regions and areas.

Umbrella structure

In an umbrella structure, services are provided under one overarching umbrella. This could be a total integration of the functions of all area committees (Hospitals and Institutions, Public Information, Phoneline, Activities, and Outreach). Or it may be a combination of two subcommittees that share one pool of resources. If an area uses an umbrella structure, then the service body discusses and decides which services to integrate. An umbrella structure may utilize coordinators (for instance, phoneline service coordinators) to assist with providing services, or an area may find that an ad hoc committee or workgroup would help complete prioritized service projects.

Public relations umbrella: The focus of a public relations umbrella structure is to provide services to those outside of NA. In this structure, members of an area work together to build relationships with public organizations. Instead of dividing into subcommittees, one group of trusted servants considers resources, requests from members and the public, and the NA community's overall needs. A chairperson or coordinator can bring the committee's recommendations to the larger service body for discussion, direction, and consensus. This structure can allow for a more unified and coordinated approach to providing services.

Fellowship development umbrella: This structure is similar to a public relations umbrella except that the focus is on supporting the growth of other NA service bodies. In a fellowship development umbrella, one group of trusted servants provides information, training, and support to other NA areas. This support allows each service body to provide services that best meet the needs in their local community. This structure may be useful in large geographic territories where each area needs to be empowered to provide effective services in their own community.

...We remind you that, of course, your NA community can organize its services in any way that seems fit. Examine the service needs among your areas, experiment, and find out what works best for you... However you decide to coordinate NA services in your community is perfectly alright, even if you don't see it described in an NA service manual, so long as it truly serves the best interests of your NA community and does not conflict with either our Twelve Traditions or our Twelve Concepts for NA Service.

A Guide to Local Services in NA

Flexible service structures

A flexible service structure can often be more effective in providing services. Flexibility helps meet local service needs. We have a common message and approach for providing services through utilizing NA's traditions and concepts. Implementation of services may differ depending on an area's abilities and needs. Every NA community has the ability to create a service structure that will best help them provide effective, efficient, and reliable public relations.

No matter how services are structured, it is important that the structure be accessible for both experienced and inexperienced members. Accessible services means that inexperienced members feel included and that training and orientation for those new to service is readily and consistently provided. It also means that the area has created ways for members with experience to share and pass on that service experience. An area is more likely to have a strong base of trusted servants if there is an accessible place for members to offer their support. An area's ability to be flexible can allow for more members to be of service.

Communication and effective services

Public relations and NA groups

An area's public relations goals can have significant impact on the groups. Thoroughly discussing public relations projects during an area service meeting will help group service representatives communicate the area's discussions and goals to their groups. Area projects may cause an increase in newer members attending meetings. Groups may need to prepare for this influx by developing meeting formats that better serve a large influx of new members. Successful PR projects depend on meaningful group involvement.

Group members should take the time to have step-by-step discussions about the area's PR efforts. GSRs are the communication link between the area and groups and can bring members' concerns or questions back to the area meeting. This link helps keep groups involved and informed. This link also provides a back-and-forth dialogue between the area and groups. Communication helps the area come together to further NA's primary purpose.

Who is the audience we want to reach?

Defining our public audiences can help make communications more effective. Communication is likely to be an essential component in an area reaching its prioritized service goals. Our audiences can be organized into three broad categories: members of the

NA community, potential NA members, and the external public. We will communicate in distinct ways for each audience.

The NA community: Our communications within the NA community can encourage members to be conscious of NA's traditions and concepts. One way to do this is through learning days. Learning days and service meetings can function in the following ways:

1. **provide education regarding the responsibilities of each service position;**
2. **encourage and support trusted servants;**
3. **demonstrate leadership and training; and**
4. **provide traditions and concepts workshops.**

Communication also includes communicating our experience in service with one another. One way for members to communicate their service experience is to have terms of service positions overlap. With overlapping terms, the departing trusted servant has time to train and orient the newly elected trusted servant. We can also contact previous trusted servants about their service experiences. We can create a contact list and keep them involved. The experience of former trusted servants is a valuable resource—they can offer newly elected trusted servants another training and education opportunity.

Potential members: NA members are one of the greatest influences in attracting new members to meetings. We do this by either providing information about the NA program or creating an opportunity for potential members to identify with us. If we are participating in an H&I meeting, we tell prospective members that they, too, can recover in NA if they have a desire to stop using drugs. If we are presenting information at a local high school, we inform students about what NA is and how NA functions. (There is a more in-depth discussion about presentations and building public relationships in Chapter Four.)

External public: Our communications with the external public can show that NA is an effective, reliable, and responsive program of recovery (the *NA Membership Survey*, for

“Honest and open communication with the external public helps NA retain its credibility and supports our ability to provide effective services.”

example, demonstrates that NA is effective in a variety of cultures, countries, and languages). Our communications should be informative and should directly address any misconceptions the public may have about our program. Honest and open communication with the external public helps NA retain its credibility and supports our ability to provide effective services. See Chapter Four for a thorough discussion about initiating relationships and creating presentations for the external public.

How do we communicate?





How we communicate is another crucial element in reaching our area's service goals. We can plan and target our communications for each identified audience. We generally communicate in four different settings:

1. with each other in our meetings and service committees;
2. with professionals and the general public when we are informing them about the program of Narcotics Anonymous;
3. with professionals and the public when we are utilizing their services—public service announcements, meeting space, bus benches—to reach potential members; and
4. directly with still-suffering addicts.

Of course, we are always communicating a message about NA with our personal actions. No matter with whom we are communicating, we are more likely to create a solid, reliable relationship when we plan and target our communications.

Below are possible components of a communication plan. During the planning process, an area may decide that strengthening communication efforts is what is most needed. The communication approaches that follow can be used as simple one-page checklists that address an area's communication needs.

Action plan: *A communication action plan helps trusted servants stay focused on the purpose and approach of each communication with the public.*

-  What do you hope to accomplish with this communication?
-  Who is the intended audience?
-  Why does the committee want to send a communication to this audience?
-  When does the area plan to send the communication?

An action plan can help an area anticipate the best time to communicate with the public. For example, sending newly trained treatment counselors a packet of information about NA before they are settled in their new positions may not be the best time to make this communication. A communication action plan also helps an area be clear about the goal of each communication.

Coordination strategies: Coordination strategies help us work toward a unified approach to providing services within the service community.

Coordination helps members of the NA community stay informed. Coordination strategies also ensure that groups are involved in communication efforts. A committee may decide to send an informational letter to local medical clinics. In planning for this correspondence, trusted servants can consider if they have the appropriate human resources in the event that they are asked to provide a presentation.

“Effective PR service depends on our ability to work together.”

Being prepared and having the necessary human resources are some of the benefits of a coordinated communication strategy.

Communication follow-up: Follow-up ensures that the area maintains an ongoing relationship with the public.

A follow-up checklist can help an area assign a trusted servant to be responsible for maintaining an ongoing relationship with the public. It can also be a record for future trusted servants about how often the area has been in contact with a particular individual or public organization.

Effective public relations service depends on our ability to work together. We can only do this by taking time to talk with and listen to each other. We can stay open to new ideas and encourage experienced members to share their knowledge about how to provide effective services. We can strive to get the most out of the ways our services are structured and the ways that we approach service endeavors. Once our local services have a solid foundation, we put our plans into action.

Resources

Area planning tool

Service delivery evaluation form and sample

PREPARATION AND TRAINING FOR INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC

This chapter focuses on how to prepare for and build relationships with any public audience. Contained here are training materials and general practices for trusted servants. Detailed information pertaining to specific audiences (such as criminal

justice, healthcare, etc.) is contained in later chapters. The information outlined in this chapter is essential in *any* public interaction. These are our best practices in forming valuable and lasting relationships with the public.

We can show a public audience that we are reliable and knowledgeable by preparing and training for our interactions with them. We want the public to know that we can follow through on our commitments and that what we say is accurate. Preparation and training can help our public interactions improve even if we consider ourselves as having experience with public relations service.

Key topics

Core PR principles
Preparing & training for
public interactions
Presentations
Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips

Core public relations principles

Establishing a common set of principles can help trusted servants learn how to interact with public audiences. Shared values, such as trustworthiness and respect, can guide us in a more unified approach to our public relations efforts. The following values or attitudes can be helpful to committee members who may coordinate and participate in public relations projects, and to trusted servants who will be trained to do specific public relations tasks.

Strong relationships are ongoing. An ongoing relationship includes consistent dialogue. If we have decided that forming a relationship with a local organization that helps addicts is a priority, then we continue to stay in touch with that organization after an initial presentation. We present accurate information about NA, follow up after the presentation, and provide the organization with reliable ways to make contact with members in the local NA community.

Strong relationships are flexible. Just as we may ask public organizations to respond to our needs with flexibility, we can work to adapt to their needs. We can listen to what is being asked of us and evaluate whether or not we are able to meet the organization's needs. In some instances, flexibility may mean finding a different way to provide services. We can ask members of the area service body for ideas about how to respond to requests. We always try to respond in a manner that

maintains the relationship with the public while still considering our own abilities and abiding by NA's traditions and concepts.

Strong relationships are trustworthy. The trust we build with the public is a result of consistent, reliable, and diplomatic service efforts. Our traditions and concepts guide our fellowship to act with integrity—we have one very clear goal of helping still-suffering addicts find freedom from active addiction. Our ability to act with integrity makes it easier for public organizations to trust our work. When members understand and follow NA's traditions, our relationships with the public are more likely to be based on this trust.

Strong relationships benefit both NA and public organizations. Effective public relations service comes from our ability to work with other organizations. If we are initiating a new relationship with the local police, then we keep in mind that one of the police department's goals is to make the community safer. Our goal is to help addicts find recovery. One result of addicts finding recovery is that the tendency of addicts to commit crime is lessened, often resulting in a safer community. We use these common goals as a basis of our relationships.

Strong relationships are respectful. When NA members treat each other with respect, that respect is carried into our relationships with the public. We learn about the values of the organization or individuals with whom we are interacting. That kind of respect makes it more likely that the organization will respect our values. If we have a conflict with an organization, we have our traditions, concepts, and a group conscience to guide us. We can inform the organization about our traditions in a considerate and respectful manner.

Preparing and training for public interactions

Preparing and training for relationships with the public includes considering who we are interacting with, and defining and practicing how we will be communicating in those interactions.

With whom are we interacting?

How we communicate depends on the audience. We consider the knowledge, values, and experience of our audience. We may communicate with an audience through written correspondence or through a presentation. Regardless of how we will be communicating (which will be discussed in the next section), we will need to find out about our audience. We can create correspondence and presentations based on what we find out about an audience. Taking time to learn about the organization with which we would like to form a relationship will help us communicate in a way that best reaches that organization.









As NA groups, service boards, and committees, we deliberately and energetically cultivate good public relations, not as a result of our normal activity but as a way to better carry our message to addicts.

It Works: How and Why

What do we know about them?

Just as NA has a primary purpose and set of traditions and concepts, we can research the mission or goals of the organization we will be interacting with. This information can help us to communicate in a way that takes into consideration the goals we may have in





common with a public organization. The following list can help members have a solid idea about the values and aims of an identified public audience.

-  We have identified the organization's goal or mission.
-  We understand the organization's professional practice or discipline (such as a legal practice, medical practice, etc.).
-  We have considered if the organization has known philosophical differences with NA's approach (such as a drug replacement approach to addiction, etc.).
-  We understand the organization's relationship with potential members—if they primarily interact with addicts, the ways they can affect potential members, and whether or not they are required to interact with addicts (such as criminal justice, healthcare, and schools).
-  We have researched the demographics of the organization—we know their culture and language.
-  We have learned if the organization serves various language groups.

After we have considered the previous points, we can decide if a mutually beneficial relationship is possible with this organization. We gain a better understanding about how to communicate with the organization and about whether the organization is likely to cooperate with us. We may also have a clearer picture about what the organization is likely to gain from a relationship with NA.

What do they know about us?

Thinking about what an organization knows about NA can help us communicate with our audience. The following list will help us get a clear idea about what information trusted servants need to include in their interactions with the public, what knowledge the audience already has, and perhaps some of the audience's hesitations about forming a relationship with us.

-  We know if the organization has relationships with other self-help programs or if they are familiar with the twelve-step approach.
-  We have considered the organization's knowledge and perception of NA.
-  We have researched if the organization has had experience with NA and how that experience might affect our current relationship.
-  We have thought about what the organization expects of us and have clarified the nature of our relationship with them.

Whom do we contact within an organization?

Once we have researched our audience, we figure out who is the best person in the organization to contact. First, we consider if there are NA members who may have experience with the organization. These NA members may know whom to contact and if it's best to make a phone call, send an email, or write a letter. A member who has experience with an organization may also be able to introduce us to an appropriate contact person.

We can also find ways to identify the decision makers in the organization, so we know the best people to communicate with throughout the organization. We can consider if the designated contact person is a decision maker and if we have friends (other than our initial contact person) inside the organization. We also want to understand the individual responsibilities of those within the organization. This may seem like a lot of work, but this planning can often be more important than the actual communication. Thoughtful

preparation can help build relationships and make our efforts become more effective in reaching addicts.

Our Twelfth Step says, in part, that “having had a spiritual awakening,” we individually “tried to carry this message to addicts.” Our collective service efforts arise from that same spiritual foundation. Having experienced the results of this program in our own lives, we join together to carry the recovery message further than we could individually.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

How will we be interacting?

Now that we’ve researched the organization we will be interacting with, we can use that information to shape the way we communicate. We can communicate through a written letter, email, a phone call, a meeting, or a presentation. Presentations require more in-depth preparation and training, but all interactions need to consider the following points.

Create a dialogue. One of the most important things we can do when initiating relationships with the public is to create a dialogue. A dialogue implies an exchange of ideas. We offer information about NA, and we listen to what the public organization has to offer us. We use a dialogue to create realistic expectations about our local resources and the kind of relationship that can be maintained. We set up clear roles between NA and the organization.

A dialogue also means inviting the members of the public to provide us with constant feedback about how we are doing. We can do this through consistent follow-up, asking questions like “Are we still meeting your needs?” “Have your needs changed?” Because keeping this dialogue going is so important, we can create an internal reminder system so we are sure to keep following up. This reminder system can be as simple as designating one member to be accountable for following up with public contacts. This member may want to store public contact information on a computer and program the computer to give periodic reminders to follow up with various public contacts.

Use familiar language. We want to communicate with our audience. We can do this by using language that an audience will understand. Language choices are critical in creating clear and effective communications for various audiences. We want to address any language differences between NA and the organization. We use respectful, clear, and direct language in our communications.

Whether we are sending a written announcement or meeting with the director of a public organization, thinking about what kind of language to use will help us speak to that audience. We will want to refrain from using “NA language” in our communications. Not everyone in a public audience will understand what we mean by “ASC chair” or “home group.” Someone who is not familiar with NA terminology should be able to easily understand our communications; we should work to be professional and courteous. This means that we may seek help from members who have some writing experience when preparing written communications for the public.

Appearance. There is a fine line between showing respect for an audience through our appearance and presenting ourselves as something that we are not. When preparing for an initial interface or an informational meeting, we want to choose clothing that suits the setting. Some of us feel that changing our dress is somehow compromising who we are. Another way to look at dressing appropriately is that clothing choice is a way of showing an audience respect. We can think about it like a job interview: We dress appropriately to make a positive impression. We gain credibility when we are able to play by the rules of those with whom we are interacting. An initial impression can be lasting. We want our audience to remember NA as a beneficial program of recovery. At the same time, we don't want to require that members dress a certain way and present a false image of NA. Inviting a variety of members for presentations would more accurately represent the diverse membership found in NA.

Rehearse. Preparing for introductory interfaces and informational meetings is another way of conveying NA's message to the public. Just as inappropriate attire may distract an audience from the NA message, confusing communications and unprepared meetings distract an audience from hearing what NA has to offer. If we read and reread the materials to be used in the initial interaction, we are more likely to be familiar with and knowledgeable about our material. We can role-play with a mock audience composed of NA members. Role playing can help us anticipate some of the questions that may come from the audience. The goal is to leave the public with accurate information about NA and assurance that our organization and its members are reliable and capable.

Presentations

The presentation material

The goal of presentation material is to leave the audience with two or three important points about the Narcotics Anonymous program. We can use repetition to reinforce important points. And we can prepare handouts that outline the primary messages we want to communicate. There are sample presentation formats in the resources section of this chapter.

We want to be aware of our language choices when presenting to a public audience. We want to be extra careful not to use NA language. For example, a public audience may not understand NA's meaning of the word "fellowship" as clearly as they would "NA members." The goal when creating presentation material is to make it appropriate to the audience. This is where our research will help us form tailored presentation material.

We can also use our research to make NA's message meaningful to an audience. A presentation to healthcare professionals should be tailored to that specific audience. We don't want to overwhelm the audience with too much information. Instead, we want to provide specific, meaningful, and timely data.

We can communicate information about NA more clearly if we create talking points. "Talking points" are the key ideas for a particular presentation (see the next section, "What we want to communicate about NA," for examples of talking points). We can make decisions about

"The goal when creating presentation material is to make it appropriate to the audience. This is where our research will help us form tailored presentation material."

which points are most important to an audience based on our dialogue with and research of that audience.

We want to be sure that supporting materials reflect what we say in the presentation. Supporting materials often include NA pamphlets, the fellowship survey, copies of *The NA Way Magazine*, and whatever else seems appropriate for a given audience. If local information is available (newsletters, surveys, etc.), then those materials would work best at local events. Audiovisual support aids can also strengthen a presentation.

Remember to keep the format of the presentation flexible. A flexible format will keep the audience interested and will help create a dialogue. For example, if members of an audience exhibit puzzled looks, then the trusted servants can ask if everyone is clear about the information being presented. The presenter may then need to explain certain points in a different way or offer new information. This kind of flexibility demonstrates responsiveness and allows for dialogue. Breaking up a large group for small-group discussions, or using question-and-answer sessions, will allow us to hear back from the public audience.

What we want to communicate about NA

Practicing what we want to say about NA is crucial in our public interactions. To be successful with public relations, we need a consistent, well-crafted message. We want to be sure to communicate information like the following to the public:

- 1. A short description of local NA history and NA's overall development;**
- 2. A description of NA—our primary purpose and our sole requirement for membership;**
- 3. The role of the NA group and NA's traditions (a general overview about how groups and service bodies work to forward NA's message of recovery);**
- 4. NA's steps—we provide a brief description of the role of the Twelve Steps in recovery. We explain that the steps contain the spiritual principles of our personal program;**
- 5. We discuss the name "Narcotics Anonymous." We dispel any notions the audience may have that the word "narcotics" in our name means NA is only for those who used opiates;**
- 6. NA is a spiritual, not religious, program; and**
- 7. Where to find NA (phoneline, service office, WSO, website, etc.).**

Communication also includes outlining what NA can and cannot do. We work to help those who are unfamiliar with our program of recovery to understand the principles that underlie the actions of our fellowship. We give nonmembers a snapshot of our traditions: principles like cooperation and self-support. We don't need the public to fully understand our traditions, but we work toward a relationship with the public that honors our traditions.

Providing information about our program of recovery is communication. We share information through our written communications, our recovery and service literature, and our presentations with professionals. We do NA a great service when we clearly state what the Narcotics Anonymous program is. We try to avoid making assumptions that those outside of NA understand our organization. We don't promise that NA will work for everyone, but we offer our experience in seeing the NA program work for many

people from varying backgrounds and experiences. We highlight the diversity of our fellowship and our program—that NA is a global, multilingual, multicultural fellowship.

Following are a few examples of talking points that members might use when communicating about NA to nonmembers in a public setting:

- 📄 *Twelve-step/sponsorship/mutual help:* A professional audience may understand NA as a twelve-step program or a mutual-help program. The Twelve Steps refer to what the program is based on, and sponsorship refers to how the Twelve Steps are applied. Mutual help refers to a peer approach rather than a professional-to-addicts approach.
- 📄 *Spiritual approach:* The NA program is based on the practical application of spiritual principles in everyday life. For example, a member may not believe in God but may gain their freedom and hope from active addiction with the Twelve Steps or the group.
- 📄 *NA is a program based on spiritual principles:* The principles of NA’s program are able to cross cultural boundaries. This is gained by working NA’s Twelve Steps. Through working the steps, each member can gain their own experience with principles like honesty or faith.
- 📄 *What a newcomer can expect at an NA meeting:* Meetings often function in the following fashion: A newer member may be asked to say their name, members might share about the program working in their lives, and groups usually close with a circle and prayer.

**“...we work toward
a relationship with the
public that honors
our traditions.”**

The presenters

It is important to choose a panel of presenters who represent a realistic picture of the NA community. We can do this by inviting a mix of members. We want to take a team approach in our presentations because we don’t want one person to represent NA. We work together and support each other when presenting NA to a public audience. We want the public to see that we are a diverse group of volunteers.

We need to consider who in our NA community is best suited to do the presentation. We try to match presenters with an audience. Some NA members will be better at presenting than others. Presenting is not simple; it takes time and preparation. We may decide to encourage people who lack presenting skills to volunteer for other service positions, or we may provide training for members so they can improve their presentation skills.

**“We want to take
a team approach in
our presentations...”**

Presenters can look at the Fourth Concept to be clear about the leadership role they are about to undertake. A question-and-answer session at the end of a presentation is a time when presenters may get asked questions that go beyond NA’s scope. This is a situation where leadership qualities can be important. If a presenter is asked to give a television interview or state NA’s position on an outside issue, they should be prepared to say “No comment” and briefly explain why. Rehearsed answers to these questions can allow presenters to say “no” in a way that is respectful.

Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Nonaddict presenters

Two points to consider if we use adequately trained nonaddicts to speak for NA at community events are that (1) they can help us protect our anonymity at local events, and (2) they can advocate for NA using the language of the public audience. We want to be careful of using the same presenters so much that they become the “face” of NA.

Exhibits and booths

If we are not presenting and we are staffing a booth at an event, we take the same considerations of preparation and personal appearance. We want someone to be at the exhibit or booth at all times. We can invite experienced NA members to come join in events, yet we want to be sure to limit the number of members at an exhibit so that the booth isn’t overcrowded; usually, three members are adequate. We provide local NA contact information to those who visit the booth. If a question to which we don’t have the answer is posed, we offer to contact a member in the local NA community to get the answer to their question. We can make it a practice to ask those who visit the booth for their business cards. Getting this kind of contact information will be most useful if we are sure to follow up by sending a letter and information packets about NA. We try to be helpful and reliable when providing information about NA.

The audience

The audience is the reason for giving presentations. We encourage audience participants to network and invite their own contacts. We can also create ways for the public audience to give us feedback on our presentation. An evaluation form that asks participants about the usefulness of the presentation, the effectiveness of the presenters, the values of the material handed out during the session, and if there was anything else that could have been included can help our presentations continue to improve. We can solicit contact information from attendees and be sure to follow up with that contact information.

We can ask NA members to sit in the audience. We can train members from the local NA community by inviting them to observe the presentation and listen to the question-and-answer session. NA audience members can ask the first questions in the question-and-answer session. They can also help set the tone and provide the presenters with encouragement and support.

One of the more important things we can do is to listen to the audience. By listening to the audience, we can respond with more relevant information. We can also get their feedback and begin practicing having a dialogue with this public audience.

Rehearsal and preparation

Practicing with NA members can be a fun way to prepare for presentations. Trusted servants can ask each other the most difficult questions they can think of in a rehearsed presentation. Practicing with a friendly audience of NA members can also help presenters build their confidence. Rehearsing in this way will also ensure that our presentation fits into the allotted time frame.

Another way to prepare for presentations is to rehearse a Q&A session and have prepared answers for what seem to be typical questions. Presenters may also want to find organizations in the local community that offer training in public speaking.

Finally, we will want to be sure that we are aware of the variables at the event: Do we know what to expect from the venue? Do we know how many people are expected to show up? Can we control the temperature and room setup? Are we aware of the presentation start time, so we can be punctual? Are we dressed appropriately?

Organizing presentations

Members who coordinate public relations events and presentations have to keep a broader perspective in mind. The following points can be important when organizing presentations:

- ✎ The local NA community could provide a questionnaire for NA members to find out who has presentation or organization skills.
- ✎ Make sure that the presentation tools and resources are current.
- ✎ Schedule presentations during the time of day most convenient for invited participants.
- ✎ Trusted servants will also want to be sure to coordinate with other committees so the local service body can offer unified support to an event.
- ✎ If the local NA community has decided to use nonaddicts to present, be sure to have oriented and trained them to communicate accurate information about NA.
- ✎ There may be opportunities to set up an exhibit or booth at a local event. We can use this opportunity to seek out future contacts by getting business cards.

Tips for how to make our presentations more successful:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Be prepared | 8. Listen |
| 2. Know your audience | 9. Learn to “read” the audience |
| 3. Keep it local—bring local materials | 10. Send a thank-you letter |
| 4. Be knowledgeable about NA resources | 11. Survey the audience |
| 5. Be enthusiastic | 12. Use feedback to improve for next time |
| 6. Keep the presentation within the allotted time frame | 13. Share information about NA and minimize personal experience |
| 7. Be simple and direct | |

Our interactions with the public can become even more successful when we take some time to plan and prepare for them. Our primary purpose is to carry NA’s message to addicts around the world—many members of the public are more than happy to help us fulfill this purpose. We can do our part by presenting clear, reliable, and meaningful information about what NA is and how NA can help addicts.

Resources

Suggestions for how to write effective PR letters

Information about NA form letter

Public relations presentation

Presentation evaluation form & survey

Frequently asked questions

Area/region roundtable packet

Sample invitation letter for roundtable

Organizational contact suggestions

Following is a list of general public organizations. Each chapter will provide a list of contacts that relate to the audience in that chapter (such as treatment, healthcare, and criminal justice).

- ❖ Industry: unions, employee assistance programs, human resource directors;
- ❖ Religious groups: check their church meeting times and office hours to find out when the best times are to make contact;
- ❖ Educational: teachers, colleges and universities, junior and senior high schools, guidance counselors;
- ❖ Service organizations: neighborhood groups, youth groups, social and cultural groups, service clubs, homeless and battered women's shelters, soup kitchens.

MEDIA

Our public relations efforts can be strengthened through the careful use of the media. This means that media projects are planned so that they address the area service committee's greatest needs. This also means that we strive to make our media efforts more responsive and proactive. We can be creative in the ways we use media to address an area's goal of making Narcotics Anonymous more visible. As a result, we are more likely to reach using addicts who may not know about the NA program.

This chapter covers the role of print and broadcast media in our public relations efforts (please see Chapter Ten, "Internet Technology", for information about the Internet). Print media in this context includes newspapers, local magazines, posters, outside advertising, news or feature articles, and opinion pieces. Broadcast media includes public service announcements (PSAs), radio, television (including cable), and film. The questions raised in the planning and preparation section can be used as part of an area service committee's inventory process (discussed in detail in Chapter Three) before beginning new public relations efforts.

Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & the media

**Planning & preparation for
areas & committees**

Putting your plan into action

**Discussing & addressing
known challenges in media**

Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips



PR principles for discussion

Anonymity with nonaddicts

Tradition Eleven emphasizes that no one personality is more important than another. When our Eleventh Tradition tells us that "we need always maintain personal anonymity," it does not say that we need to do so under all circumstances. Tradition Eleven says that "we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films." This public is carefully outlined within our Eleventh Tradition as the press (print and electronic media), radio, and films.

If we are asked to participate in a radio talk show about recovery in NA, for instance, we are strongly encouraged to seek support from experienced NA members in our service community; discuss, plan, and rehearse our presentation with committee members; and represent Narcotics Anonymous with another NA member.

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

Tradition Eleven

There may be times when nonaddicts can help us protect our anonymity as recovering addicts in the public media. Those outside of NA often have the ability to enter media venues in a manner that can help further our primary purpose. For example, a judge may talk about their positive experience with NA, describing how hundreds of addicts have changed their lives because they started to attend NA meetings, and speaking about the effectiveness of our program of recovery. We are not asking nonaddicts to carry NA's message, we are asking them to speak about our message of recovery. The role of nonmembers is to simply carry information about NA.

A nonaddict professional helps members to retain their personal anonymity with the press and protects any individual NA member from being considered a spokesperson for Narcotics Anonymous. We don't risk our program's credibility as much, since a nonaddict is completely separate from our membership. Members can also maintain the focus of carrying NA's message instead of becoming overwhelmed with representing NA in the media. Nonaddict professionals, like judges, are often inclined to discuss their experiences with our program. It is our responsibility to make sure that these members of the public are well-informed and that they have had a positive experience with NA.

- 📖 Why is anonymity important when representing NA in the media?
- 📖 How can we practice the principle of anonymity—our equality and the importance of our group over individual members—in our media projects?

... Rather than promotion

When thinking about the difference between promotion and attraction, it may be helpful to think about the difference between informing the public about NA and insisting that NA is better than any other recovery program. The essay on the Eleventh Tradition in *It Works: How and Why* describes promotion as “fanfare, overblown claims, [and] celebrity endorsements.” Informing the public that we are a credible program of recovery is a principled action, whereas comparing NA to other programs or approaches, offering recovery incentives, or making claims about our effectiveness can all be considered promotion. The only promise we make is the opportunity for addicts to experience freedom from active addiction; guaranteeing any other outcome is promotion.



- 📖 What is the difference between promoting NA and presenting NA as an attractive program of recovery?
- 📖 Have we confused the need for having strong public relations with promotion?

Self-support and public service announcements

We are a not-for-profit organization; therefore, we are often offered charitable rates on things like group meeting-space rentals or public service advertisements, such as radio spots or public transit placements. We may fear that when we aren't charged for a thirty-second spot on a radio program or for an informational NA poster in a train station, we are not being self-supporting. Public service announcements are often available to charitable organizations. In these situations, the media is providing the public with a service through these announcements. Public service announcements do not compromise or jeopardize our principle of self-support. These are opportunities that the public creates for community service organizations. What we

offer the still-suffering addict in NA has a benefit to society. Accepting charitable rates and discounts that are offered to other similar community service organizations is in keeping with the principle of self-support.

In fact, this example of public service announcements can be an opportunity for us to build a cooperative relationship with members of the public in our community. This offering of services to charitable organizations is a way that public organizations and businesses enter into cooperative relationships within the community. By combining our efforts with these organizations and taking a team approach, we demonstrate our ability to cooperate. We are not attaching ourselves or affiliating ourselves with these organizations. Rather, we can enter these relationships based on the spirit of cooperation.

-  How do we practice the spirit of self-support in our media efforts?
-  When accepting rates offered to community service organizations like ours, how can we ensure that we don't become reliant on or unduly influenced by an outside organization?

Public relations and the media

As discussed in Chapter Three, planning public relations projects will help trusted servants become more effective—and these steps naturally help with any media projects. Often, we initiate service projects because it is the tradition of the area. Instead, we can ask important questions such as: Does the area have enough human and financial resources for the project? Is the media project likely to reach the intended audience? Can the area effectively communicate the project to groups, members, and other service bodies? The questions below can help an area determine if it can sustain a media project and if such a project is the most effective way to reach suffering addicts in that NA area.





The primary purpose of our public relations efforts is to tell the story of Narcotics Anonymous and what our program offers to the still-suffering addict. Our practice of public anonymity is built on the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

It Works: How and Why

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

Does the project match the area's needs and abilities?

The first concern is how the area's needs and abilities match up with the proposed project. The following questions can help an area clarify whether or not a proposed media project forwards the area's goals and if it can realistically be supported by the area's current human and financial resources:

-  Is the proposed media project a result of inventorying the current needs of the community and the resources of the area?
-  Does the area have the human resources for the media project? Has the area considered the current experience of committee members and members of the local NA community?
-  Is the committee prepared for possible media follow-up requests as a result of the project?
-  Has the area communicated intended media projects to all committees and, if appropriate, to neighboring areas?

- ✎ Does the area have a plan for how to manage unfavorable coverage of NA in the media? Are there trained trusted servants who can follow up on negative coverage by providing accurate information about NA?
- ✎ Is the area's phoneline working and equipped with resources sufficient to receive an influx of calls as a result of the media effort? Does the area have members who are able to make Twelfth Step calls? (See the chapter titled "Phonelines" for more information about training phoneline volunteers and making Twelfth Step calls.)
- ✎ Are the area service committee's finances sufficiently stable to support the project? Has the project been factored into the ASC budget?
- ✎ Have ASC funds intended for media projects been lost or misspent before? How can current media efforts benefit from what was learned from those past financial mistakes?
- ✎ Will this project get the most out of the NA funds being spent? Is the project a smart business decision? How is this project a good use of valuable—and limited—NA funds? Does the area need to look around at other options or negotiate better rates?

Is the project likely to reach the intended audience?

The questions below can help an area discuss if a proposed media project is the best way to reach the audience it is meant to reach. These questions can also help an area evaluate which type of media venue is the best choice for a particular audience.

- 📄 Is there any group of addicts not being reached by current PR efforts? (If the area has done an inventory, look there to find out where the biggest need is.)
- 📄 What kind of media project will help the NA community reach that group? For example, a daytime PSA might be appropriate for addicts whose schedules keep them home during the daytime, such as students, whereas a bus bench ad may be more likely to reach addicts who rely on public transportation.
- 📄 How effective were past media projects? How can the area address known challenges or past failures as it plans the current project?
- 📄 What makes a certain broadcast or print venue suitable for this public relations endeavor?

Are NA groups involved?

Media projects can often significantly affect local groups. An area can use the following questions to discuss the impact a media project may have on local NA groups.

- 📄 Have GSRs been given an opportunity to discuss the proposed project?
- 📄 How have groups been informed about current media projects? Have GSRs been informed at the area service committee meeting? Have members of the ASC visited groups to inform them of current media projects?
- 📄 How are groups prepared to support the possible influx of new members?

Our public image consists of what we have to offer, a successful proven way of maintaining a drug-free lifestyle. While it is important to reach as many people as possible, it is imperative for our protection that we are careful about advertisements, circulars, and any literature that may reach the public's hands.

Basic Text

Putting your plan into action

Print projects

Newspapers and **local magazines** can be a cost-effective way to publish a local phoneline number, a list of local meetings, or the address of the local NA website. This project can be a simple way for an area to provide the community with information about NA. An area can often publish information about NA meeting locations at a relatively low cost (or sometimes at no cost).

Leaflets and **posters** are another inexpensive way to make NA more visible in the community. A poster campaign includes choosing where to place posters, contacting facilities to request permission to hang posters, and following up on placed posters. An area may decide to target local hospital emergency rooms or doctors' offices. Ongoing follow-up will ensure that phoneline information and contact information are up-to-date. We want to work with public contacts so that our PR efforts make a positive impact on the community rather than a negative one. This type of communication not only attempts to reach addicts in the community, but it fosters a relationship with the public that has allowed us to place these posters or flyers. These print projects provide people who think they might have a drug problem with a simple and anonymous way to contact Narcotics Anonymous.

An area can also consider if **flyers** for local NA events create a positive image of NA. Flyers containing offensive images and hard-to-read graphics have the potential to negatively affect a member of the public's perception of NA. Clear, simple, and straightforward information (with the NA logo) may help us create more positive relationships with the public.

Outside advertising, such as **billboards**, **transit signs**, and **bus benches**, is commonly used to inform the public about Narcotics Anonymous. Areas are encouraged to be creative in finding the most appropriate outside advertising locations in their community. Outside advertising (other than billboards and bus benches) is often used in various communities around the world. The following points are important considerations an area may want to discuss before deciding to use any of these print venues:

- 📄 Billboards, transit signs, and bus benches can be expensive. What is the cost of placing an announcement? Is the area able to afford this expense? Are these announcements likely to reach the identified group of addicts?
- 📄 What will the announcement say? Be sure to spell out Narcotics Anonymous and to mention drugs in general (for example, *Drug Problem? Call Narcotics Anonymous*). Will the announcement clearly and simply communicate information about NA?

Discussing these kinds of topics will help an area thoroughly plan for a large-scale print project. Thoroughly planning print projects can better help an area service committee achieve its intended results.

If a member, group, or committee is contacted by a **reporter** for an **article**, there are some approaches that can make these interactions more successful.

- 📄 Provide written information about the NA program: create talking points (simple, clear points of information about NA), use NA literature, and provide NA pamphlets or articles from local newsletters or *The NA Way Magazine*.
- 📄 Remember that we offer no opinion on outside issues. For example, if a reporter tries to question us about a needle-exchange program or medical marijuana use, we refrain from commenting.
- 📄 Have a group of addicts participate rather than one individual member.
- 📄 We can request to see an article before it is printed but we must remember that we have no control over how a reporter will depict what we say.
- 📄 We can cooperate with reporters by helping them find a point of view for their article that is in keeping with our traditions. For example, we can highlight the fact that the type of drugs used by an addict doesn't seem to affect that addict's chance at finding recovery. Paraphrasing NA literature can help these discussions.

The approaches above can help areas become more responsive in their interactions with reporters.

Discussing and addressing known challenges in media

Unfavorable media coverage

Planning for how to deal with unfavorable coverage of NA in the media can help areas in their public relations efforts. If the unfavorable coverage is a result of a lack of information, then providing accurate information may help to balance the coverage. In other situations, trusted servants may decide to do nothing and simply continue to provide consistent, reliable information about Narcotics Anonymous in other public relations settings. This may not directly amend the negative press, yet it may indirectly balance the public's perception of who we are and what our program has to offer.

Media and the addict working alone

There is some basic guidance that applies to most public relations efforts in media settings. The first is that members should not do this type of service alone. If a member is unexpectedly contacted by the media, a committee or area should be involved as soon as possible. Trusted servants also need to remember that one member's opinions can be seen as the opinions of NA as a whole. Accountability to a service body ultimately benefits our media efforts.

The situations described above can benefit from having a committee member contact the region or NA World Services.

Broadcast projects

Public service announcements and **public-access television** are ways to communicate with the public, usually at no cost. Both are community services provided by broadcasters or cable-service providers. Communities around the world may have a

variety of ways of including an NA phoneline number or website address on television. A public service announcement, or PSA, can be as simple as a television station announcer displaying a card with a local phoneline number and a script that states, “If you’ve been affected by addiction, you can call this NA phone number.” Trusted servants can explore other available broadcast resources to find creative PR opportunities in their communities. Following are considerations when undertaking a PSA or public-access project:

- 📄 The area service committee can discuss the best time to air a PSA. An ASC or committee can request that a PSA be aired after a documentary about addiction, but it is very uncommon to have any control over when a PSA is aired.
- 📄 Make sure that local members and local groups are aware of the media project and prepared for a possible influx of helpline phone calls or newcomers at local meetings.
- 📄 An area may want to contact the region or the World Service Office about PSAs for broadcast media. The cost of creating videos can easily overwhelm an area’s resources (see Chapter Three for information about how to inventory area resources and effectively plan projects).
- 📄 The information above can also be applied to PSAs that are used on radio shows.

If a committee decides to participate in a **radio** program about NA, one of the most important considerations is that NA is represented by a group of addicts. The following points need to be discussed before participating in radio shows:

- 📄 We prepare talking points about the NA program (see the section in Chapter Four, “What We Want to Communicate about NA,” and addendum material for examples).
- 📄 We also plan and rehearse what we will say if asked questions that fall outside of providing information about the NA program (Chapter Four has resources for interacting with the public).
- 📄 We are sure to invite NA members who are trained for PR opportunities like a radio interview (see Chapter Four for guidelines about how to train members for public relations opportunities). We consider if the panel of members accurately reflects the area’s diversity, including both men and women and offering varying clean time, age, and experience.
- 📄 We are cautious about sensationalizing addiction or sharing the details of our personal story. We can share some details from our personal story for the purpose of identification—but we keep the focus on what NA is and how to find us.

Television, video, and film are media venues where long-term planning and thorough consideration are especially important. Broadcast media can be an opportunity to establish long-lasting relationships where NA is seen as a reliable source of information about recovery from addiction. If broadcast professionals are well informed about the NA program, they are more likely to use NA as a resource. Looking at the needs of the community and the abilities of the area can help trusted servants avoid broadcast projects that seem exciting but actually have little likelihood of helping an addict find NA. The points below outline some of the issues connected with broadcast venues:

- 📄 Since addicts don’t use full-face images to represent NA, we can rely on nonaddict supporters if we are asked to participate in a TV interview. If an area has decided to participate in a TV, video, or film project using a nonaddict, they will want to be sure that the nonmember is trained and working closely with the area.

- Some NA members who have participated in TV or film segments have had success with using specific camera angles, like asking the camera person or producer to shoot from over a shoulder from behind or to take a longer shot from behind. Other members have worked with production companies to set up an interview in which members' voices are played over images that are not pictures of members. We will want to keep in mind that we have no control over how a producer, director, or reporter will actually depict or interpret Narcotics Anonymous. Sometimes, despite our best efforts to thoroughly educate inquirers about our program, information may still be blurred or misinterpreted for reasons that are simply beyond our control.
- If contacted by a reporter, we can always provide written information about NA. If members do decide to answer questions, we want to be sure to give clear and accurate information about the NA program. We can politely decline to answer questions that fall outside of our traditions or that sensationalize or glorify addiction. For example, we are cautious not to discuss the details of which drugs we used, but we can share, for the purpose of identification, some details from our personal story. It's always best to work with a committee when contacted by a reporter.
- An area avoids agreeing to the broadcast of any spots that require a sponsoring organization to be affiliated with NA. For example, we would not endorse a broadcast spot that states that a certain corporation sponsors the message from Narcotics Anonymous.
- If an ASC learns that NA will be depicted in a dramatic film or is contacted by a local production company or television program, then the area may decide to form a cooperative relationship with the filmmakers. If members do decide to participate, the area service committee can then decide what they are able to provide. Trusted servants may ask to read the film's script and discuss with the producers or directors what is wanted from NA. There are times when our principles are at odds with the interests and goals of the media. We do not take part in any media project that is in conflict with our traditions and our desire to effectively carry NA's message. Outside organizations (like production companies) are not responsible to uphold our traditions and there is always the possibility that they may disregard our requests. Working with the region or the World Service Office can allow the area to maintain its focus on supporting its local groups' ability to carry the NA message of recovery in their meetings.

[The Eleventh] Tradition goes on to tell us that we need to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. This is to protect the membership and the reputation of Narcotics Anonymous.

Basic Text

A **theatrical** production (professional, community, high school, or university) about addiction can be an opportunity for the area to cooperate with an outside organization. The area may want to provide information to a local playwright about addiction by clarifying the nature of recovery in NA and providing information about the NA program. The area can provide the production company with local meeting directories, or buy a spot on the playbill to provide the local NA phonenumber.

Planning our media efforts can make them more beneficial. Our interactions with those who work in the media can also help to establish NA as a responsive and trusted community organization. These outcomes will ultimately help us reach our most important goal: to make NA's message available to all addicts.

Resources

Suggested flyer guidelines

Posters, billboards, bus benches...

Introductory letter for PSA placement

Thank-you letter for PSA placement

Radio PSA scripts

TV PSA scripts

FAQ – media

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

This chapter contains information about carrying NA's message into various correctional facilities (including long-term, short-term, juvenile, and correctional psychiatric units). In the spirit of creating long-lasting relationships with correctional facilities, we encourage area service committees to research, understand, and engage with the personnel at the facility or institution. Our personal conduct—including the way members dress, speak, and interact with correctional personnel—has a powerful impact on NA's relationships with such facilities and NA's public image. Relationships based on mutual respect and understanding are likely to support NA's ultimate goal of reaching suffering addicts.

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & the criminal justice system

**Planning & preparation for areas
& committees**

Putting your plan into action

**Discussing & addressing known
challenges in criminal justice**

Drug courts

Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips



PR principles for discussion

This chapter also addresses ways to create relationships with drug courts. Many people convicted of nonviolent drug-related crimes are sent to Narcotics Anonymous as a result of court diversion programs. NA communities around the world are finding a growing number of court-mandated addicts attending local NA meetings. The material here contains practical solutions for interacting with drug courts and addicts referred to NA through the criminal-justice system, as well as discussion points for groups about how NA's principles can apply to this influx of court-mandated addicts. The specifics of court diversion programs may vary in different countries, but the principles contained in this section can be applied in almost any situation.



Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Attraction



The attractiveness of the behaviors and attitudes of individual NA members and the collective appearance of our fellowship is essential in making our public relations efforts more valuable. Attraction means that we function (as members and as groups) in ways that naturally draw others to us. When members act in a way that is attractive, newcomers and potential members are more likely to get a positive impression of NA.

We can also think about attraction as it relates to those who help addicts find NA (who may not be addicts themselves). Our individual attitudes have an effect on our collective appearance. How do we help professionals become aware of what NA has to offer? We cannot expect nonaddicts to fully understand addiction in the same way we, as addicts, do. What we can do is illustrate the power of recovery within the NA program to those who are not members.

-  Why is it important to conduct ourselves in a way that positively affects NA as a whole?
-  What can members do to make NA more attractive to the public?



Cooperation, not affiliation

How can we work with the public and other organizations without merging or affiliating with them? One of the ways in which we practice cooperation is by remembering that NA members are responsible for observing the principles of our traditions. Facilities and other organizations do not have this responsibility. We can practice this responsibility by following our own principles, relying on our service committees, and studying NA's traditions and concepts.

-  How can we work with the public and other organizations without endorsing or affiliating with them?
-  What is our experience (as members and as an area) with cooperating with the public?

Tradition Three

Narcotics Anonymous is open to anyone seeking freedom from active addiction and our public relations efforts need to support that inclusiveness. Our service efforts need to ensure that everyone is welcome in NA—from the householder to the convict. As our Basic Text says, our service efforts should strive to reach all addicts “regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion.”

-  How can we demonstrate the diversity of our program so that members from varying backgrounds feel welcome?
-  How can our service efforts better support the principle of inclusiveness?

Narcotics Anonymous offers recovery to addicts around the world. We focus on the disease of addiction rather than any particular drug. Our message is broad enough to attract addicts from any social class or nationality. When new members come to meetings, our sole interest is in their desire for freedom from active addiction and how we can be of help.

It Works: How and Why

Public relations and the criminal justice system

Correctional institutions, jails, and prisons









The purpose of bringing panels and meetings into institutions is to carry NA's message to those who cannot regularly attend outside meetings. Our approaches will vary based on the type of facility and the rules of each facility. The specific details of this chapter apply to facilities in the United States, but the underlying methods can be used and adapted to form

relationships with criminal-justice systems all over the world. Members can also adapt these principles and ideas to fit different types of facilities, such as correctional vocational centers and maximum-security institutions. The challenge is to build relationships that honor NA's principles and the facility's rules. Areas may want to seek experience and support from local regions, zonal forums, or NA World Services.

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

Committee preparation and training

Clear training methods can help a committee have a positive, long-lasting relationship with correctional facilities. Members should be accountable to a committee when establishing relationships with the criminal-justice system. The following items can help a committee that is planning to enter (or that has already established) a relationship with correctional facilities.

-  Prior to initiating a relationship, the committee has a pool of trusted servants who are willing to be of service. Considering how many members in the area are typically willing to take service positions can help a committee decide how frequently NA will interact with a facility. Trusted servants need to be realistic about the area's ability to provide service to a facility over time.
-  The committee has created a written document for trusted servants that clarifies and communicates the rules of the correctional facility and the guidelines of the committee. Sometimes NA guidelines are different from a facility's rules; be sure to establish guidelines that honor both the institution's rules and NA's principles.
-  The committee informs members that there can be challenges in filling out clearance forms. Clearance forms take time to process and can sometimes require fingerprinting or background investigations. A member is not automatically guaranteed clearance into a facility just because they fill out a form.
-  If a trusted servant cannot fulfill a commitment to a facility, then another of the committee can show up in their absence. If clearance is required for all trusted servants entering a facility, then the committee will want to have both members cleared and have made prior arrangements for the other member to act as a substitute, if needed; if no one is able to fulfill the commitment, then the trusted servant should inform the facility.
-  The committee regularly reviews and updates guidelines or training tools. Trusted servants may want to read portions of their guidelines aloud at each meeting to ensure all trusted servants stay informed. Learning days held on a regular basis can also provide members with training.
-  Clean-time requirements for sharing on panels are established and followed.
-  The committee ensures that there is regular communication between the facility contact person and the NA member coordinating meetings for that facility.
-  If the issue of panel leaders or members taking medication comes up, then the panel leader or committee member can refer to *In Times of Illness* for guidance. This issue is often best left between the member, their sponsor, and their Higher Power. In our public relations service, we may limit the participation of members on certain medications. We do this because we do not want the NA program to be misrepresented. We are a program of complete abstinence, but we want to be inclusive, so we treat these situations sensitively by taking members aside and sharing our own experience with medication and living drug-free.

Training and preparing trusted servants

Working with an area service committee, trusted servants can bring NA meetings into a facility. The goals of meetings are to create an atmosphere of recovery, share information about NA, and share a clear message of NA recovery. Training and preparing panel volunteers is essential for successfully carrying NA's message into correctional facilities. The following points can be helpful when training trusted servants in a criminal-justice setting:

- ✎ Trusted servants understand and agree to follow the facility's rules—including the facility's dress requirements. This often means no jeans and no shirts with logos, including NA logos.
- ✎ Members are asked to share a clear message of recovery in NA. This can mean avoiding old attitudes, like those that may have characterized their own experiences in correction institutions, or offering information other than their experience, strength, and hope of recovery in NA.
- ✎ Members understand that meetings are under correctional officers' control. Trusted servants are trained to follow the facility's guidelines regarding security risks; this may mean that trusted servants will be expected to report to correctional authorities about situations that pose a threat to NA members or that pose a general security threat.
- ✎ Many facilities require volunteers to attend an orientation session. Trusted servants should be prepared to attend one of these sessions, if required by the facility. It is becoming more and more common for facilities to require volunteers to attend these kinds of orientations.
- ✎ Trusted servants understand and follow protocols regarding sponsoring inmates. Some areas and facilities prohibit sponsoring because it may show inmate favoritism. Some facilities have rules concerning communication with inmates. These rules may not allow NA volunteers who regularly enter the facility to be on an inmate's visiting, correspondence, or phone list. In other areas and facilities, it is generally accepted that trusted servants can sponsor inmates. What's important is that NA members are willing to follow the guidelines of both the area and the facility regarding sponsorship. Trusted servants can also refer inmates to correspondence and sponsorship programs run by various NA communities (see the Fellowship Development chapter for more details on these programs).
- ✎ Speaker meetings, panel presentations, questions and answers, and literature-discussion formats work well in correctional facilities. NA speakers usually share their experience in a meeting format with a predetermined time frame. A rotating format can provide a balance between outside NA speakers and inmate participation.
- ✎ Trusted servants understand that any sexual relationship with inmates is totally inappropriate. The primary purpose of providing meetings in a criminal-justice setting is to carry a clear and consistent NA message of recovery. We want to avoid inappropriate sexual relationships or sexual harassment in NA meetings. We also want to encourage inmates to stay focused on NA's message of recovery, not on who is delivering that message.
- ✎ Those who provide service in a criminal-justice setting want to always strive to create an environment where the focus is on recovery, not a friendship between the trusted servant and the inmate.

- ✍ As inmates approach their release date, trusted servants may decide to give them a list of NA phoneline numbers or up-to-date NA meeting directories. Some facilities offer prerelease classes. If that is the case, trusted servants can arrange to provide information about NA during those classes (see information about newcomer workshops in the drug court section of this chapter).

Stand-alone meetings in correctional facilities

There is a distinction between stand-alone meetings following the *Institutional Group Guide* and meetings brought into an institution by outside members. A stand-alone meeting is usually preferable in a long-term facility. A stand-alone meeting or free-standing meeting is not the same as an H&I meeting, although there may be members from the outside who participate and help support the free-standing meeting. A facility will often require an outside NA member to host a group that operates an NA meeting inside an institution. One way to determine which format would be most appropriate at a given institution is to ask the staff about the needs of the inmates. Step meeting formats can help addicts in long-term facilities get a sense of the NA program of recovery through the Twelve Steps. Free-standing NA meetings in institutions can elect trusted servants. There have been instances where free-standing meetings have joined the nearest area service committee. Elected inmates can act as GSRs and may be allowed to attend area service meetings or consult with an outside member who serves as the GSR, or the institutional group could choose to elect an outside member to attend the area as the GSR.

Coordinating services

There are a variety of ways to coordinate services in correctional institutions. Some areas use the panel-leader format to bring meetings into facilities, while others use a project-based approach. Projects can allow an area to provide services to correctional facilities that are not limited to panels or meetings. Providing literature or meeting with correctional professionals may be the desired goal of an ASC or one of its committees. If there is not an area service committee, then service in correctional institutions needs to be the effort of one or more groups. The principle of accountability is important. Trusted servants should always be accountable to a committee or group. The point is for the area to structure services in a way that works toward meeting the area's goals.

The committee can encourage rotation of trusted servants while maintaining a consistent relationship with the correctional facility. The area can strive for a balance between applying the principle of rotation and the principle of continuity. This may mean that some commitments last six months to one year, while others may last longer. The area works to ensure that services are coordinated so that meetings in correctional institutions run smoothly.

Effective NA leadership knows not only how to serve, but when it will serve best to step aside and allow others to take over. An entrenched bureaucracy inhibits our fellowship's growth, while a regular influx of new leadership, balanced by continuity, inspires NA growth. The effective leader knows that, in order to maintain the distinction in service between principles and personalities, it is important to observe the practice of rotation.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Putting your plan into action

Interacting with facility staff

NA members will need to interact with the personnel at correctional facilities to establish a meeting, panel, or ongoing relationship with that facility. Those interactions are crucial to long-lasting relationships with local correctional facilities. It is often the manner in which we interact that is most important to our public relations. Our attitudes, our language, and our willingness to work cooperatively with organizations to reach more addicts are the foundation of our PR efforts. The following points can help members make those interactions more successful:

- 📄 Create a realistic picture of what NA can and cannot do.
- 📄 Make commitments that the area service committee can reasonably expect to fulfill.
- 📄 Maintain a dialogue with the facility. Make regularly scheduled check-ins so those who work at the facility are aware of NA's status. Be sure to update trusted servants' contact information with the facility and explain that, because we rotate positions, there may be different people coming into the facility.
- 📄 Ask to be introduced to the facility's staff and to be made aware of the facility's policies and procedures in writing, such as whom to notify in case of an emergency, whether personal identification is needed to enter the facility, when to sign in, etc. Be sure to share the information with those entering the facility.
- 📄 Discuss proposed meeting formats, and clarify whether correctional officers will be in attendance at the meeting.
- 📄 Inquire with facility staff about whether refreshments (such as coffee, tea, and snacks) are welcome at institutional meetings.
- 📄 Regularly ask the staff if NA seems to be meeting the needs of the inmates.
- 📄 Make the facility aware of free periodicals such as *Reaching Out* and *The NA Way Magazine* (provided through NA World Services) and NA literature available for purchase.
- 📄 If there are any problems with a panel in a facility, we can schedule a meeting with correctional staff to find solutions. A strong relationship with the staff helps us to better reach our goals of carrying NA's message, especially when problems arise.
- 📄 For more practical suggestions, see the "Dos and Don'ts" at the end of this chapter.

Juvenile-detention facilities and youthful offenders

Much of the prior information about correctional institutions, jails, and prisons applies to juvenile-detention facilities (including reform schools) and youthful offenders. Trusted servants entering juvenile-detention centers may want to review the training points listed in the previous section first. What follows is additional information that is especially important when interacting with this population.

Facility rules and local laws

It is important to be very clear about the rules and regulations of the facility and local laws. Minors are often under more restrictive legal protection. This may mean avoiding any sort of physical contact, including hugs. The best rule is to have no physical contact; this is

also true for most adult correctional facilities. The practice of women going into female institutions and men going into male institutions takes on even greater significance with youthful offenders. Due to the greater legal liability, and because of the age group of these offenders, staff is usually present during NA meetings. Members are usually required to defer to the facility's staff if there is distracting or inappropriate behavior in meetings.





Cooperating with parents and guardians

Working with youthful offenders may include interacting with parents or guardians. Members, in the spirit of cooperation, can inform parents and guardians about resources for family members of addicts. Nar-Anon is one of those resources, but there are also information lines, community services, and Families Anonymous, to name only a few. Cooperating with parents and guardians does not include delivering messages or gifts to incarcerated minors. The facility and area guidelines can outline the appropriate level of cooperation with parents and guardians.

Training and preparing trusted servants

Trusted servants who bring meetings into facilities where youthful offenders are housed may find that speaker-meeting formats work best. This is because facility staff is often present in meetings. It is best to create meeting formats that encourage clients to be careful about what they disclose and that help to keep the sharing focused on recovery in NA. Question-and-answer formats about the Twelve Steps, sponsorship, and the NA program can also be used as meeting formats in juvenile-detention centers. Trusted servants also need to be aware of possible behavior issues, such as distracting meetings with talking or comments, when youthful offenders who aren't necessarily addicts are forced to attend meetings.

The following considerations seem to especially apply when training trusted servants to enter a juvenile-detention facility:

-  Explain to juvenile offenders what to expect from the NA program and fellowship (NA members vary in age and ways they interpret the steps, etc.).
-  Avoid debates on addiction and facility practices.
-  Remember not to treat young people differently. Be careful not to demean these potential members or give them special privileges because of their youth.
-  To minimize distractions, set firm meeting guidelines. Meeting formats can explain that, in NA meetings, only one person speaks at a time and that we try to keep sharing focused on our personal experiences in recovery.

Discussing and addressing known challenges with juvenile corrections

Legal responsibilities

There may be legal liabilities if a minor shares in an NA meeting about being abused. The area can investigate local laws and take preventative measures. Meeting formats can be structured in a way that discourages sharing about abuse. Trusted servants can also educate facility staff about the limits of sharing in meetings. If a minor happens to share about being abused, the ASC or its committee needs to have a plan for how to deal with that kind of disclosure. Usually, abuse must be reported. A committee needs to be prepared to take responsible action in these situations.

Medication

Regardless of the personal opinions of its individual trusted servants, NA has no opinion about treatment methods such as the prescribing of medication. This can be a confusing area for trusted servants and for those attending NA meetings in an institution. Members often talk about our literature's message of complete abstinence from all drugs—but we have no opinion, as a fellowship, on medication. Our literature also says that we are not doctors and that we approach addiction in a spirit of nonprofessionalism. Our purpose is always the same: to carry NA's message to suffering addicts. Our message is best carried when we avoid engaging in controversies about topics like the use of medication. Members may want to refer to *In Times of Illness*, the essay on the Third Tradition in *It Works: How and Why*, and the *H&I Handbook* regarding this issue.

It is crucial that we do not advise anyone to stop taking their medication as prescribed. We are not doctors! Our approach is nonprofessional, and we have no opinion on outside issues. We must be very sure it is understood that we do not advocate going against a physician's advice—nor, on the other hand, can we endorse the use of any drug.






H&I Members' Experience

Correctional psychiatric units

We never know where there may be addicts who might benefit from hearing NA's message. Psychiatric facilities may house addicts with co-occurring mental health disorders or addicts who have used insanity as their defense and are in the institution under assessment. It doesn't matter to us why an addict is in a particular facility or what their other problems may be; what we care about is making NA's message available.

Training and preparing trusted servants

Panel presentations are often best suited for this population. These panels can be difficult, and trusted servants might get easily discouraged. The following points can help members be better prepared for entering these facilities:

-  These panels are more successful when trusted servants are experienced in recovery and in carrying the NA message in correction institutions. Understanding the challenges of those housed in psychiatric units can also help members in these settings.
-  Do not give anything to the clients or inmates; know the facility's rules.
-  The rotation of trusted servants should be minimal because consistency is the priority in these settings. NA representatives need to have a clear sense of what they are doing, and the consistency may be comforting to the clients.
-  Disruptive behaviors in meetings may be the norm. Experienced trusted servants can often ignore these disruptions. The committee can work with the facility's staff to find ways to minimize the impact of disruptive behaviors in meetings.
-  This population is often systematically medicated to control their behavior. Experienced members may be better able to handle questions that sometimes arise about the use of medication. Be sure to offer no opinion on medications. (For more information about the issue of medication when serving on panels, see the information above in the Juvenile-Detention Facility and Youthful Offender section.)

- ✎ Be sure to demonstrate that NA is not a part of the facility and that the members of NA are not a part of the facility's staff.
- ✎ Utilize a strict meeting format; formats should be exclusively about presentation. Recovery tapes can also be helpful when carrying the NA message into these facilities.
- ✎ The attention span of clients and inmates in this setting can be short; meetings can be shortened to accommodate this.

Carrying the message in these facilities is an especially sensitive type of service. Only the most experienced H&I members should be selected to participate. These facilities usually have extensive requirements regarding participation from the outside. Extra care must be taken to fully acquaint ourselves with the facility's policies and restrictions. You may wish to provide H&I members with the maximum amount of protection the facility staff can provide when working in these types of facilities.

H&I Members' Experience

Drug courts

What are drug courts?

Many people convicted of nonviolent drug-related crimes are sent to Narcotics Anonymous as a result of court diversion programs. Drug-court professionals added twelve-step programs as a part of this alternative treatment because they are effective and there is no cost. Twelve-step programs were a part of studies that resulted in NA being seen as a viable option for addicts. As a result of those studies, referrals to NA meetings from drug courts have increased significantly in recent years. Drug court programs (or similar programs) are being established around the world. The specifics of these programs may vary in different communities, but the premise is similar.

Drug courts (or court diversion programs) have made a significant impact on Narcotics Anonymous—so much of an impact that the World Board created Bulletin #31, "Meeting Attendance Cards." Addicts often hear NA's message of recovery as a result of the criminal-justice system. This does not mean that NA's relationship with drug courts is free of challenges. Groups and ASCs that take a proactive approach to their relationships with drug courts seem to be more successful in dealing with the impact of drug courts on the local NA community. This section focuses on ways in which groups and ASCs can build relationships with drug courts as part of their efforts to carry NA's message of recovery.

NA's relationship with drug courts

Being proactive means letting court officials know what the NA program is (and isn't) and what NA can (and cannot) do. We want to create cooperative relationships with drug courts while honoring our traditions. Having area discussions helps members become aware of the potential impact drug courts can have on local NA meetings. These discussions give members an opportunity to offer input and find solutions for how to handle attendance cards, accommodate numerous newcomers attending local NA meetings, and build relationships with drug-court personnel.

Area discussions about drug courts

Following are some points the ASC can consider when discussing ways to be more proactive with drug courts:

- 📄 Invite drug-court personnel to participate in a roundtable discussion with members of the ASC. These discussions can focus on ways to better help court-ordered attendees. Court officials can be educated about NA meetings and the NA program, and trusted servants get an opportunity to learn about drug courts.
- 📄 Drug-court personnel (including prosecutors, probation officers, parole officers, police officers) need to know that NA is a viable resource for addicts (since they often have initial interactions with addicts in the community). The area could place posters in police stations, probation offices, or parole office waiting rooms.
- 📄 Discuss which meetings might be best suited to handle a large influx of court-card attendees.
- 📄 Create newcomer workshops to help newcomers understand the NA program, especially at the courthouse, parole center, or other similar settings. Newcomer workshops can be helpful in smaller areas that may have NA meetings with fewer members. Newcomer workshops are similar to panel presentations in that trusted servants provide information about NA in a structured format. A committee can use the *Institutional Group Guide* to start meetings at drug courts that may later become self-contained and self-supported.
- 📄 NA members can discuss the role a judge may play in referring addicts to NA. A judge may monitor a client's recovery and be actively involved—this may mean that a judge requires a client to have a sponsor, do step work, and get a group commitment. If a judge attempts to require a sponsor to come to court, however, the boundary of cooperation has been crossed, because the sponsor is not under the court's jurisdiction. We can refrain from requests that conflict with either our traditions or our civil rights. Judges and institutions are not responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with our traditions—that responsibility falls on us.
- 📄 ASCs can sometimes participate in government training programs for drug-court officials. By participating in such training, giving presentations, or organizing an exhibit, a large number of new officials are given a clearer understanding of NA's role, challenges, and abilities.

What an area can communicate to drug-court officials

The ASC can communicate the following points to drug-court officials during initial interactions:

- 📄 Clarify that NA is a voluntary recovery program, not a treatment center.
- 📄 Describe what occurs during an NA meeting: We pass out keytags to recognize clean time, we practice sponsorship, there are various meeting formats, etc.
- 📄 Discuss the principle of the Seventh Tradition with court officials so they educate their clients about what this principle means in NA. This may mean that court-referred addicts help put away chairs or contribute money in the Seventh Tradition basket.
- 📄 Communicate with the appropriate court staff (often the court coordinator). These professionals usually decide how many meetings the court-ordered attendees need to attend, and judges usually monitor this decision. Communicate information about which meetings can best accommodate a large influx of attendees.
- 📄 Provide up-to-date meeting schedules and helpline numbers.

- 📄 Suggest that courts purchase NA pamphlets and other NA literature to give to their clients.
- 📄 Invite drug-court personnel to attend open NA meetings.

Desire is not a measurable commodity. It lives in the heart of each individual member. Because we can't judge the sole requirement for membership, we are encouraged to open wide the doors of our meetings to any addict who wishes to join. We are asked to extend to others the care and concern that helped each of us find a sense of belonging. The Third Tradition helps NA grow by encouraging us to welcome others.

It Works: How and Why

Meeting attendance cards and NA groups

There are several reasons why members seem to get uncomfortable about court-ordered attendees at NA meetings. One reason is that Narcotics Anonymous, as a fellowship, does not participate in the surveillance of its members; another is that the idea of forced attendance seems to go against some of our core philosophies. Many members, however, have found NA through parole and other forced-attendance programs, including treatment facilities. It is not up to us to decide if someone is ready to get clean or if they are a member of NA. Many addicts who did not initially want to attend NA meetings ended up staying in NA as a result of forced attendance.

There is also the very practical reality that drug-court referrals can affect a group's atmosphere of recovery and can drain a group's financial resources. It may be helpful to remember that our literature says that we don't care where an addict comes from. Groups can ask themselves if eliminating the attendance of those referred by drug courts is really the best solution. The following ideas can help groups discuss solutions to the real challenges they face with drug-court referrals:

- 📄 The group may want to take an inventory. This inventory could focus on how ready and able the group is for drug-court referrals. Although increased attendance can overwhelm the atmosphere of recovery, a group may want to consider its attitude toward those who are court referred. Is the group open and welcoming? Some court-mandated clients may not be addicts or may not be ready to admit that they are addicts. The group can ask themselves if they are practicing NA's Third Tradition.
- 📄 A group can look to see if the format of the meeting is suitable for a large influx of new members. A group that has a participation format may decide to structure the meeting format in a way that better serves newcomers, such as a newcomer workshop, speaker meeting, or question-and-answer format. Even after all these considerations, a group may decide that the meeting cannot accommodate those with meeting-attendance cards. The group would then communicate this to the ASC or the committee in contact with court personnel. NA groups that decide not to sign court-attendance cards can be listed in the area meeting directory so they aren't mistakenly attended by court-referred clients.

Tradition Three: *The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.* All addicted persons are welcome and equal in obtaining the relief they seek from addiction; every addict can recover in this program on an equal basis.

- 📄 The signing of cards is providing a service to addicts. The NA group is not participating in surveillance. In NA's early history, every meeting was under surveillance. Asking the police to stop surveilling meetings so that addicts would not be afraid to attend them was one of our fellowship's first cooperative PR actions; if we find that meetings are under surveillance again, we can take similar actions. In signing court-attendance cards, groups are verifying attendance as a service for addicts, not for the courts. The confidentiality of the addict will be respected; we strive to treat court-referred members in the same way that we treat other NA members.
- 📄 In some instances, members may be concerned that addicts with court cards are leaving meetings early. Fortunately, it is not our responsibility to monitor whether or not a court-referred member stays for the entire meeting. To discourage these members from leaving early, however, some groups collect cards when the Seventh Tradition collection is passed and return them at the end of the meeting. If the group is uncomfortable with signing cards, then they may want to consider alternatives like a group stamp.

The strength of our relationship with the criminal-justice system has the potential to make a difference in the lives of many addicts. Strong relationships are built on clear communication, reliability, trustworthiness, and ongoing dialogue. We practice our primary purpose of carrying NA's message to suffering addicts in our service efforts with the criminal-justice system.

Resources

- Criminal justice encouragement letter
- Criminal justice letter to professionals
- Frequently asked questions – Criminal justice professionals
- Criminal justice tracking form
- Newcomer workshops ideas
- H&I request for panel meeting letter
- Panel leader report to ASC
- Area H&I chairperson report form
- Criminal justice new group in correctional facility
- Criminal justice request for literature letter
- Professional referral letter

Organizational contact suggestions

- Drug courts
- Correctional facilities and jails
- Forensic units

Police/sheriff

Education/training (law schools, drug-court training, criminal-justice education programs, police academies, etc.)

Professional associations (specifically national and international)

Probation/parole officers

Addendum

“Dos and Don’ts” (adapted from *Hospitals & Institutions Handbook*):

Dos

- 👍 Make NA helpline numbers available to inmates so they can find NA upon release.
- 👍 Clarify the rules with whomever you bring into the facility.
- 👍 Start and end on time!
- 👍 Emphasize that NA recovery is available to all addicts, regardless of drug(s) used.
- 👍 Clearly state that Narcotics Anonymous is separate from the facility and from other fellowships and treatment methods.
- 👍 Screen all panel members, speakers, and chairperson(s).
- 👍 Attempt to get all agreements with correctional staff in writing.
- 👍 Cover any gang-related tattoos.

DON'TS

- 👎 Dress inappropriately (find out the facility’s dress requirements).
- 👎 Attend H&I meetings in facilities alone.
- 👎 Emphasize using days while sharing an NA message of recovery.
- 👎 Debate any issues involving facility rules, regulations, programs, or other fellowships.
- 👎 Discuss conditions within the facility or facility staff members with inmate(s).
- 👎 Wear flashy jewelry or carry excessive cash.
- 👎 Take messages or carry letters in or out of the facility.
- 👎 Bring an NA member who has friends and/or family in the facility.
- 👎 Ask what type of crime an inmate has been convicted of, or discuss guilt or innocence.
- 👎 Accept money or gifts from, or give money or gifts to, any inmate.

TREATMENT: INPATIENT, OUTPATIENT, AND RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS

The Narcotics Anonymous World Services *Membership Survey* suggests that over 52 percent of our members found NA meetings through the encouragement of addiction-treatment providers. Creating relationships with addiction-treatment professionals can be an important way to ensure that NA's message is available to addicts. When interacting with treatment facilities and professional-treatment associations, we strive to achieve the following goals:

- ❖ Increase the **visibility**, **reliability**, and **accessibility** of Narcotics Anonymous.
- ❖ Raise awareness that NA is a **resource** in the community.
- ❖ Demonstrate that NA is a **viable, self-sustaining organization** with no membership dues.

Regardless of the treatment setting, this chapter covers ways to build relationships that are more likely to help us achieve the goals stated above. Information about preparing a committee, training trusted servants, and developing approaches for how to interact in various treatment settings is contained in this chapter.

Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & addiction treatment

Planning & preparation for areas & committees

Discussing & addressing known challenges in treatment settings

Putting your plan into action

Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips





PR principles for discussion

Attraction



What is likely to be attractive to the public and to professionals who interact with addicts is reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery. We can demonstrate the reliability of NA by showing up and fulfilling the obligations we make, whether it is to return a telephone call for information about NA or supplying meeting directories at a public library. We can learn to draw on the experiences of NA members to fulfill the commitments we make to professionals. In the event that something prevents us from our keeping an appointment, we can ask a fellow member to fulfill our commitment for us and notify the person with whom we have the commitment to let them know someone else will be coming in our

place. We can also maintain good communication within our committee by staying in contact with the committee chairperson. We need other NA members to be truly successful in building and maintaining relationships with the public. Cooperation and collaboration in our areas and committees can help us provide an attractive message of recovery to the public.

-  How does our individual behavior impact the attractiveness of the NA program?
-  What can members do to make NA more attractive to the public?

Cooperation, not affiliation

We are more likely to form productive and cooperative relationships when we simply and honestly review what services we can and cannot offer to others. For example, if we are forming a relationship with a treatment or correctional facility, we ask about their expectations of NA. Maybe they have requested weekly meetings and, after an honest assessment, we decide that we cannot meet their request. Instead, we can offer a meeting on a monthly basis. In this manner, we create a relationship that we can responsibly sustain over time. We practice cooperation by being honest about what we are able to provide, and we still find a way to respond to requests. As a result, public organizations learn to trust our members and rely on our program as a credible community resource.




-  How can we work with the public and other organizations without merging or affiliating with them?
-  What is our experience (as members and as an area) with cooperating with the public?

Public relations and addiction treatment

As a result of an area planning process (see the resource to Chapter Three for the Area Planning Tool), trusted servants may have decided that building stronger relationships with local treatment facilities is a priority. The area service committee can then discuss what it is capable of providing, what the local treatment facility may have requested from NA, and what it believes is necessary to make NA's message available in local treatment settings.

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

In addition to the area's planning process, the following questions can be helpful when trusted servants are evaluating and deciding what kinds of services they can provide in treatment settings. These questions can help an area have broad discussions about ways to create strong relationships with treatment staff.

-  Are we interacting with treatment professionals in a spirit of **cooperation**? Are we approaching treatment facilities with an attitude that the NA program and a treatment program share the common goal of helping addicts stay clean, although our methods may vary?
-  Are we providing the treatment facility with **relevant information** about NA? Have we provided the treatment facility with a reliable NA contact? Have we given the facility the NA product catalog and/or an initial supply of NA literature? Are we regularly mailing up-to-date NA meeting schedules to treatment facilities?
-  How can the area (or committee) work with treatment professionals to ensure that clients are able to easily **access** NA; for example, have we made treatment professionals aware of NA meetings in the community?

- ✎ Often, treatment professionals ask for information about NA meetings that may appeal to a **specific population**. Have we identified local meetings that may be helpful to specific populations (for example, the hearing impaired, youth, gay men and lesbians, various language groups, etc.)?
- ✎ Given the area's **human resources** (members), how many meetings can the area reasonably bring into local treatment facilities, and continue to bring over time? What would be the best use of NA's human resources, and what would meet the needs of the community? Will trusted servants bring in meetings on a weekly basis? A monthly basis?

As addiction treatment changes, so will the way in which we provide services in those settings. We can keep in mind that there are many ways in which to build positive relationships with treatment professionals. Outpatient treatment settings and faith-based treatment approaches may require services other than just providing NA meetings. We can build relationships in these settings by providing information about the NA program, scheduling regular meetings with staff, and developing a solid relationship founded on cooperation and respect.

It may be that the most valuable service we can provide in treatment settings is a cooperative relationship. This means that we can offer accurate information so that these treatment professionals understand the NA program and are willing to refer their clients to NA meetings. Cooperative relationships also mean that our interactions are consistent and reliable. Creating a schedule to drop off updated meeting directories each month, or phoning various facilities with an updated NA phonenumber, can be integral in forming solid relationships.

Coordinating services

There are a variety of ways in which to coordinate services in treatment settings. Some committees use the panel-leader format to bring meetings into treatment centers, while others use a project-based approach to reach an identified goal (such as providing literature or regularly meeting with treatment professionals). If there is not an area service committee, then service in treatment facilities needs to be the effort of one or more NA groups. The principle of accountability is important. Trusted servants should always be accountable to a committee or an NA group. The point is for the area to structure services in a way that works toward meeting the area's goals.

If a relationship with another organization compromises our devotion to carrying the recovery message, we need not be afraid to let go of that relationship. Our strength is in the power of the NA program.

It Works: How and Why

Public relations in treatment settings is based on our ability to build positive relationships, provide relevant and consistent information, and make NA more accessible. Planning, training, and communicating can help us to make the NA program more available to any addict seeking recovery from addiction.

Committee preparation

Preparing for interactions in treatment settings is more likely to foster positive, long-lasting relationships. Trusted servants often respond to requests from treatment centers without considering the area's abilities and the greatest needs of the community.

Considering the best use of NA resources can help committees become more proactive in establishing and maintaining relationships in treatment settings. The following list can help an ASC or a committee that is planning to enter or that has already established a relationship with treatment facilities:

- 📄 The committee has trusted servants who are willing to be of service over a period of time.
- 📄 The committee is prepared to maintain ongoing dialogue with facility staff. This includes providing ongoing information, following up with information requested by staff, and asking for feedback such as how meetings are going, if trusted servants are following through on their commitments, and if the treatment center has updated meeting directories and a sufficient amount of literature.
- 📄 The committee considers providing services for outpatient treatment settings. Outpatient treatment is an often-overlooked treatment setting. The committee can provide meeting schedules, NA pamphlets, and local NA contact information. An outpatient setting can also be a good place in which to hold a regularly scheduled NA meeting that is listed in the local meeting directory, versus a meeting that trusted servants bring into the facility.
- 📄 The committee can make an effort to include presenters who are likely to create a sense of identification. This may mean including a younger panel member for a presentation to young people.
- 📄 Trusted servants who provide phonline service and maintain meeting schedules need to communicate with each other regularly. This can help ensure that information about NA is consistent and accurate.
- 📄 The committee has created meeting formats that are appropriate for treatment settings. Clients often benefit from shorter, more structured meeting formats. The committee can discuss the proposed meeting format with treatment staff to get their input and ideas.
- 📄 The committee can encourage rotation of trusted servants while maintaining a consistent relationship with the treatment facility. The area can strive for a balance between applying the principle of rotation and the principle of continuity. This may mean that some commitments last six months to one year, while others may last longer. The ASC works to ensure that services are coordinated so that meetings in treatment settings run smoothly.

We look for ways to help instead of judge. Our task is to fan the flame of desire, not dampen it. Any addict who walks into a meeting, even a using addict, displays a level of willingness that cannot be discounted. While maintaining an emphasis on the importance of total abstinence, still-using addicts are welcomed into our meetings with special encouragement to keep coming back.

It Works: How and Why

Discussing and addressing known challenges in treatment settings

The following topics can be discussed within the committee and at the area service committee prior to interacting with treatment professionals.

Drug replacement

Areas and groups often enter into discussions about drug-replacement therapies and the Narcotics Anonymous program. NA's Third and Tenth Traditions are essential to these discussions. We need to remember that we cannot assess anyone's desire to get clean and that NA has no opinion on drug-replacement therapies. However, the experience of NA members is that being clean means complete abstinence from all mood- and mind-altering

drugs, including those used in drug-replacement therapies. As our Basic Text states, "Complete abstinence is the foundation for our new life."

**"...the only requirement
for membership in NA
is a desire to stop
using drugs..."**

Raising awareness about our Third Tradition—that the only requirement for membership in NA is a desire to stop using drugs—can benefit discussions about drug replacement. Anyone is welcome at NA meetings,

even if they seem as though they don't know if they want to stop using drugs. A group must always maintain its primary purpose of carrying NA's message of recovery to addicts.

Although NA is a program of complete abstinence, nowhere does NA say a person has to be clean to attend NA meetings; we need to be aware of this when interacting with drug-replacement clients. Sometimes meeting formats ask those who have used drugs not to speak—but it is not our job to judge or evaluate if someone is clean or not. Our Third Tradition cautions us from judging another member's desire and encourages us to welcome any addict who comes into an NA meeting.

In our public relations service, we may choose to limit the participation of members on drug-replacement medication. We do this because we do not want the NA program to be misrepresented; we are a program of complete abstinence. Yet, we want to be inclusive, so we treat these situations sensitively by taking members aside and sharing our own experience with living drug-free. We can share that some members have tapered their drug use to abstinence through replacement methods (World Services Bulletin #29 can be a useful resource). We can also share that drug replacement may seem to help today, but our experience with recovery in NA means that we are able to live free from all drugs without the need to substitute one drug for another.

Use of NA's name

The area service committee can clearly outline the way a treatment center can use the NA name. The misuse of NA's name is a public relations concern because outside organizations can potentially affect the public's perception of NA. A treatment center can say that NA meetings are held at their facility, but they cannot say that this implies NA's endorsement of their facility, and they cannot pretend to have an affiliation with NA by saying that the presence of our meetings in their facility means that they are an "NA treatment center." If a treatment center has used NA's name inappropriately, then members can inform the treatment center, in a cooperative and constructive manner, that their use of NA's name in that way is not permitted. Trusted servants may decide to inform treatment centers about NA's traditions regarding this issue. If the treatment

center continues to use NA's name inappropriately, then the area can forward the issue to Narcotics Anonymous World Services.

Sponsorship and treatment

If a treatment center wants to place conditions on the role of a sponsor, then we can engage them in a dialogue. We can discuss the nature of sponsorship in NA using tools like the *Sponsorship* pamphlet; we can cooperatively give treatment professionals a realistic picture of sponsorship while honoring the autonomy of our members. Ultimately, it is each member's decision whether or not they want to sponsor in a treatment setting that may or may not require a sponsor to follow treatment center guidelines.

Group preparation

Treatment centers will often decide to send their clients to NA meetings in the community. Groups may want to prepare for this influx of new members. Members can make decisions about how to best welcome treatment clients through a group conscience. Some groups have a meeting greeter, while other groups hand out meeting schedules with members' phone numbers. Groups that are overwhelmed by a large influx of treatment-center clients can develop more structured meeting formats. A speaker meeting or question-and-answer format may be more appropriate for a meeting with a large number of newcomers. Group members can always focus on sharing about recovery in NA and the benefits of sponsorship to set a positive meeting tone.

The relationships we have with outside organizations are not based on the personalities of our leaders; our groups themselves are responsible for their cooperation with other organizations, making those contacts stronger and more effective.

It Works: How and Why

Training and preparing trusted servants

Training and preparing trusted servants is essential for successfully carrying NA's message into any treatment setting, whether it be outpatient, inpatient, spiritual, or vocational. The following points can be helpful when preparing to bring a panel or discussion meeting into treatment facilities:

- ✎ Trusted servants are oriented to the treatment setting and facility staff.
- ✎ The committee has guidelines for members who bring meetings into treatment facilities. These protocols include clarifying with staff meeting start time, day, format, how early to show up for meeting commitments, and procedures for canceling a scheduled NA meeting.
- ✎ Members are trained to share a clear message of recovery in NA.
- ✎ Clean-time requirements for trusted servants are established and followed; most areas have clean time requirements for those who speak in treatment facilities.
- ✎ Because the language and dress of trusted servants affect NA's public image, trusted servants are encouraged to speak and dress in a way that is respectful of the treatment facility.
- ✎ NA members offer no opinion on medications or treatment methods. NA is not in competition with treatment methods; we enter treatment settings with willingness to work together, to share an NA message of recovery, and to inform treatment providers about the NA program.

- ✎ During their training, NA members are made aware that many treatment clients are prescribed medication for illnesses like depression and anxiety. NA members are encouraged to welcome these clients at NA meetings. To gain a better understanding of how NA's principles relate to these issues, members can read and discuss *In Times of Illness* or the essays about the Twelve Traditions in the Basic Text or *It Works: How and Why*.
- ✎ Trusted servants are trained to provide regular reports to the committee about the status of meetings held in treatment facilities.
- ✎ The committee can work with the facility to establish mutually agreed-upon protocols for how NA members should interact with treatment clients. Clients may ask for their phone numbers, if they can sponsor, or if they are willing to take clients to local meetings in the community. It is each member's choice whether to interact with treatment clients in this way, as long as the treatment center's policies do not prohibit it. A committee can also establish client-interaction guidelines that consider the facility's policies.

NA meetings in treatment settings

Some NA meetings in treatment centers are for clients only. These meetings are usually a result of an area committee's service efforts and don't usually collect a Seventh Tradition. These meetings typically use a panel format, where panel leaders bring speakers into the facility.

There are also meetings held in treatment centers that are open to clients and NA members from the area. These meetings function like any other NA meeting and are usually listed in the area meeting directory. NA literature is usually read in the beginning of the meeting, a speaker or chairperson facilitates the meeting, a discussion format is often used, the meeting closes with a prayer, etc.

Our relationships with outside agencies exist to help us fulfill our primary purpose, not merely build our reputation or prestige. When we observe the spirit of anonymity, we seek nothing other than to carry the recovery message to the addict who still suffers.

It Works: How and Why

Putting your plan into action

Interacting with addiction-treatment professionals

The following points may be helpful when planning how to interact with treatment staff or professionals. Preparing what to communicate and addressing known challenges can further an area's goals of building positive, long-lasting relationships that benefit NA, the treatment center, and potential members.

- 📄 Communicate NA's philosophy about addiction and recovery, such as total abstinence, the twelve-step approach, focus on addiction rather than drug use, etc.
- 📄 Clarify what NA is able to bring into the facility. Don't be afraid to say that we cannot provide the number of meetings requested by the treatment center. Trusted servants can evaluate if NA resources are being used in a particular treatment setting to meet the needs of addicts in the community. If we decide that we can't meet all of the facility's needs, then we work with staff to come up with alternatives. One alternative

might be that individual NA members can pick up clients and take them to local NA meetings in the community.

- 📄 Clarify what NA does and doesn't do. For example, we don't provide professional counseling, but we do practice sponsorship.
- 📄 Be straightforward and honest about the likelihood of encountering members in meetings with prejudices toward clients on medication and drug-replacement therapies.
- 📄 In some communities, NA is started in treatment facilities. NA members need to be careful that NA is not seen as being affiliated with a treatment facility. NA meetings may be held in a facility, but an NA meeting is not a particular treatment center's meeting. A treatment center may also refer its clients to NA as a community resource; however, we need to clarify that while NA may be one resource for those leaving treatment, we are not a treatment center's official aftercare program.
- 📄 When working with treatment professionals, respect the anonymity of professionals and staff who may also be members of NA. Treatment centers are separate from NA; not all employees may be aware of their coworkers' involvement in NA.
- 📄 Members who are also treatment professionals may need to consider that their role as a treatment professional is separate from their role as an NA member. In the role of a treatment professional, an individual is usually following treatment protocols instead of acting as an NA member talking about their personal recovery in NA.
- 📄 Encourage treatment professionals—counselors, therapists, case managers, and those recovering in other fellowships—to attend open NA meetings to help them have a better understanding of NA. Treatment professionals may want to attend meetings other than those their clients attend; this is respectful of their clients' anonymity and may allow for a different understanding of NA based on members who are not their clients. Attending NA meetings may give professionals a greater sense of what NA has to offer their clients. As a result, these professionals may feel more comfortable referring clients to NA.
- 📄 Show treatment professionals examples of long-term NA recovery. Invite members with long-term recovery to presentations, and invite treatment staff to NA meetings attended by members with long-term recovery.

Interacting with addiction-treatment organizations

Interactions with professional organizations will benefit from a coordinated plan that allows for an ongoing, cooperative relationship. The following points can help area service committees prepare for interacting with professional organizations in the addiction-treatment profession:

- 📄 The area can develop a coordinated area plan for interacting with professional associations. A plan can help trusted servants understand their responsibility and the goals of the interaction. A coordinated plan ensures that trusted servants share the information they gain from their interactions with other trusted servants and members in the area. It also makes sure that the information an area provides to professional organizations is accurate; for example, helpline numbers and meeting schedules are up-to-date, and the area has reliable contact information.

- 📄 The area can develop criteria to prioritize what level of participation at these events (attendance, exhibit, or presentation) makes the most sense. One level of participation would simply be to attend, supplying meeting information, local helpline numbers, and NA contact information at the event. The area may decide to participate in a more interactive fashion by presenting information about NA to treatment professionals (social workers, counselors, case workers, etc.).
- 📄 Another option is for the area to begin cooperative relationships with agencies that work with or assist treatment clients. For example, these relationships can be with clergy connected with the spiritual-treatment approach, government agencies responsible for child and family services, or colleges and universities that have addiction certification or degree programs.
- 📄 There are a variety of professional addiction treatment organizations around the world. Some of the more recognizable organizations are the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions, the American Society of Addiction Medicine, chemical-dependency nursing associations, etc. These professional organizations have conferences that are held in different cities all around the world. An area can find out if a conference is scheduled in their part of the world. Professional conferences can be a great way for an area to begin creating relationships with those who are involved with addiction treatment. Areas can work with the region or NA World Services for guidance and support in these efforts.

The area can also consider hosting a local public-relations roundtable. A roundtable is a structured meeting where the local NA community provides information about NA to professionals and then listens to feedback from specific questions asked about NA (see the area PR roundtable format at the end of the chapter). The aim of a roundtable is to create a cooperative relationship that benefits all those involved. We can ask professionals about their experience with NA; it may be that the experience is not all positive. Trusted servants can remember that this constructive criticism is likely to help us improve our ability to carry NA's message of recovery. Roundtables can also be a place where we dispel myths about addicts and NA, and they can help us improve the ways we provide services.

Whether an area service committee is just beginning to develop relationships in treatment settings or if ongoing relationships are being strengthened, public relations is enhanced by reliable and consistent communication, accurate information, and cooperative relationships.

Resources

Frequently asked questions – Treatment professionals
Presentation kits
Handouts for professionals

HEALTHCARE

Healthcare may be a new term and a new service opportunity for some NA members, but many members have found Narcotics Anonymous because of a recommendation made by a professional in the healthcare field. Healthcare settings such as public health clinics and physicians' offices are opportunities for us to further educate healthcare professionals about how NA can help addicts. Our public relations efforts in these settings will benefit from clearly identified goals as well as training and preparation tailored for each project.

This chapter contains specific suggestions for building relationships in various healthcare settings. This includes ideas for training and preparing trusted servants as well as suggestions for how to interact **with healthcare professionals, hospitals, and various healthcare organizations.**

Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Cooperation, not affiliation

A big part of our credibility comes from the fact that we maintain our single focus of recovery from addiction. We can be seen as credible, and we can be present in an organization's decision making, but the only way we can be drawn into public controversy is if

we offer an opinion on an issue outside the scope of our own program. If a facility wants us to endorse or lend our name to its program, or an organization requests our support on a piece of legislation, we refrain. If we become involved in an outside organization's decision-making process, such as sitting on a board for a nonprofit agency as a representative of NA, we offer no opinion on the organization's business practices. We do not take sides on an outside issue, and we do not put NA at risk or compromise the clarity of our message. If we took one side or another on a legal issue or a medical practice, we would undermine our credibility and our primary purpose. We work to avoid being identified as taking any side or giving an opinion in a controversy. We stay focused only on how we can help those suffering from addiction. This focus allows us to build relationships where our role is clear and free of controversy.

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & healthcare

Planning & preparation for areas & committees

Putting your plan into action

Discussing & addressing known challenges in healthcare settings

Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips



PR principles for discussion

- 📖 How can NA benefit from forming cooperative relationships with healthcare professionals?
- 📖 When does a cooperative relationship become affiliation?

Our experience has shown that we have many nonaddict friends who can advocate for NA. If a professional wants to support NA by sharing about the effectiveness of our program, they are free to do that. What we can do is try to ensure that the nonmember's enthusiasm for our program doesn't misrepresent the addict-to-addict nature of our program. NA is not a program where professionals treat addicts, although professionals often want to advocate for NA's viability because they have seen recovery working for their clients or loved ones. The role of the local service body in a situation like this is crucial. The NA community can provide training and establish accountability with the nonmember supporter; this way the nonmember supporter can become an asset to NA in fulfilling its primary purpose.

- 📖 How can areas avoid affiliation (or the appearance of affiliation) when working with healthcare professionals?
- 📖 What actions can an area take when working with nonaddicts friends of NA?

Communication

Communication is a two-way street. We strive to be effective, honest, open, consistent, and straightforward in our communications. We keep channels of communication open with those we are trying to reach in the public sphere. Communication is not just feedback. It is listening, accepting constructive criticism, and asking questions. Communication is verbal and non-verbal, written and oral, and it affects all of our public relationships. Good communication means listening to a member of the public after we have had an initial interaction. It is the quality of our correspondences and our awareness of various cultural environments.

- 📖 How can we demonstrate integrity in our communications for healthcare audiences?
- 📖 What does an area need to carefully consider in order to communicate more effectively?

Public relations and healthcare

Our public relations efforts in healthcare settings should strive to be focused and planned. Clearly defined goals can help to focus and clarify the actions that need to be taken to make a project successful. Healthcare professionals tend to respond to information that is easy to access and that highlights practical outcomes. Each audience may require different approaches and different types of information about NA. The following information can help area service committees create and maintain strong relationships with professionals in the healthcare field.

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

Coordinating services

There are a variety of ways to coordinate NA services in healthcare settings. A committee may work together on specific healthcare projects, or it may select one or more trusted servants to carry out a specific project. Trusted servants should have the skills (such as communication) and necessary training to make projects successful. These trusted servants

may be responsible for regularly providing literature in a medical walk-in facility, bringing an NA meeting to an inpatient detox unit, or working on forming a more interactive relationship with healthcare professionals. The principle of accountability is important. Trusted servants should always be accountable to a committee. If there is not an area service committee, then service efforts need to be the effort of one or more NA groups. The area is free to structure services in a way that work toward meeting the area's goals.

For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Committee preparation

- 📄 The committee should prioritize and plan the order in which they will interact with healthcare professionals (see Chapter Three for details about how to plan and prioritize services). Trusted servants may choose to first work on a relationship with an emergency department; this could include providing information such as meeting schedules, informational pamphlets, and posters. The committee might then decide, based on their prioritized projects, to give presentations to hospital social workers or begin providing information about NA to pharmacists in the community.
- 📄 The committee defines the goal or purpose of each project. Defining the purpose of these relationships can help trusted servants have a clearer sense about the goals of their interactions. A committee's goal might be to simply introduce NA to those professionals who discharge patients in a hospital setting; another could be to form relationships with local physicians by giving a presentation and providing a regular supply of NA literature, such as informational pamphlets and meeting directories.
- 📄 The area can research various healthcare settings to find out who seems to be the best contact person in each setting, when to contact them, and the best way to reach them. This could be through either an email, a face-to-face meeting, or a telephone call. Many NA members are also healthcare providers and can provide valuable contact information.
- 📄 Clear, relevant, and concise information is likely to be more valuable in all PR settings, especially healthcare. Committees can create handouts and displays that are tailored to the specific audience. Healthcare professionals (such as nurses and physicians) often have limited time to spare. A single page of information about NA in the community, including reliable contact numbers other than the NA phoneline, may work best in these situations.
- 📄 Be sure that trusted servants follow up on each interaction. Sending a letter or an email or making a phone call can be the beginning of an ongoing relationship with those who work in healthcare settings.
- 📄 The committee can consider matching trusted servants with each audience. Members need to be informed and trained. Members who are unable to separate their personal opinions about issues that are likely to come up in a healthcare setting, such as medication, may not be best suited to interact with certain healthcare audiences on behalf of NA.

Training and preparing trusted servants

- ✎ Trusted servants should have information about the healthcare settings they will be entering. Researching the profession or philosophies of an audience can help members anticipate questions and communicate more effectively. (See Chapter Four for details about research and presentations).
- ✎ Trusted servants should be trained to interact in the various healthcare settings that exist in their community. Training guidelines could include updating all healthcare audiences with current NA contact information, as well as ways to respond to a variety of requests made by healthcare professionals. Each healthcare setting is different; training can be tailored toward the specific circumstances, concerns, and needs of the various settings.
- ✎ Trusted servants should be trained to use clear and concise language. This means that presenters avoid using NA jargon or slang. A committee may invite an NA member who is also a healthcare professional or someone who understands the healthcare profession, to give a presentation. We are more likely to reach an audience when we are familiar with their practices and philosophies.
- ✎ The area may want to identify particular qualities of an ideal trusted servant for healthcare settings. The ability to communicate articulately, presentation skills, experience in NA, and the ability to demonstrate recovery are some examples of essential qualities for providing service in healthcare settings. Committees can also review the Fourth Concept when identifying the ideal qualities of a trusted servant.
- ✎ Practicing a presentation for a nonaddict audience familiar with healthcare practices can help trusted servants improve the effectiveness of the presentation.
- ✎ Many facilities require volunteers to attend an orientation session. Trusted servants should be prepared to attend one of these sessions if required by the facility. It is becoming more and more common for facilities to require volunteers to attend these kinds of orientations.
- ✎ Healthcare professionals understand medical models. Trusted servants need to be trained to describe NA's approach as an abstinence-based program of recovery.

“Researching the profession or philosophies of an audience can help members anticipate questions and communicate more effectively.”

Members can educate professionals about our program's philosophy of complete abstinence using NA literature (such as the *Am I an Addict?* IP) and relevant materials created by the committee. Members can explain to physicians that NA views addiction as an illness and that we see this illness as affecting addicts physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Trusted servants can also explain that NA is a comprehensive, peer-support recovery strategy that allows many members to lead more productive lives.

- ✎ When explaining why NA is not a drug-replacement program, trusted servants can rely on NA literature. (As an additional resource, see Chapter Seven's discussion of drug replacement.)
- ✎ *NA: A Resource in Your Community* and the *NA Membership Survey* can be useful tools in healthcare settings. Trusted servants can order these materials by contacting NA World Services.

Putting your plan into action

Interacting with healthcare professionals

Healthcare professionals can include **physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, pharmacists, dentists, and nursing professionals.**

- 📄 The area service committee may consider hosting a public relations roundtable with healthcare professionals. These roundtables can be an opportunity for local areas to exchange information with healthcare professionals and can allow professionals to identify what they need from NA. Trusted servants can also use these roundtable discussions to dispel stereotypes about the NA program.
- 📄 Trusted servants can educate healthcare professionals about NA's successes. Providing statistics on the number of members around the world, the different countries where NA meetings are held, and the diversity of NA's membership (such as the economic, racial, and professional range in members) is likely to be particularly meaningful in healthcare settings. Professionals are often interested in outcomes. NA's membership survey can be used as support material.
- 📄 Trusted servants have an opportunity to share with medical professionals that NA is a program of complete abstinence and that our members often have special concerns about physicians prescribing potentially risky medications. At the same time, trusted servants can educate NA members that it is inappropriate to interfere with medication that has been prescribed to other members by healthcare providers. We can educate our members about the dangers of substituting one drug for another and we can educate the medical community about complete abstinence, but ultimately this is an issue between doctor and patient.
- 📄 Healthcare professionals such as physicians and dentists interact with a variety of people who use drugs. Following a presentation, trusted servants could suggest that physicians provide patients who they think may have a drug problem with the pamphlet *Am I an Addict?* Trusted servants could explain that the questions contained in that pamphlet are the questions members ask themselves when first coming to NA.
- 📄 Trusted servants can be trained to dispel myths about NA's name. Survey information outlining the range of drugs used by NA members can illustrate that NA is not just for those addicted to narcotics like heroin.

Discussing and addressing known challenges in healthcare settings

Harm reduction

Harm reduction is a treatment approach that may not promote abstinence yet claims to reduce harm to the individual and the community. NA is a resource that can be utilized within many treatment regimens and complements many professional treatment models. NA has no opinion on the effectiveness or validity of a specific model such as harm reduction. If requested, members can explain that NA is not in conflict or competition with approaches like harm reduction. Public health officials will often use statistical data to support various treatment models, including harm reduction. Trusted servants can explain that NA does not have statistical data that has been researched. Rather, NA uses self-reported information that is represented in the NA *Membership Survey*. Some areas and

regions have conducted research that shows members getting jobs, returning to school, and no longer committing crimes. This research is a valuable tool that can demonstrate the positive effect NA has in many communities.

Interacting in hospitals

Hospitals contain a variety of healthcare audiences. Some of these audiences include **medical detox units, emergency departments, psychiatric units, walk-in medical clinics** (such as urgent care), and **behavioral health** and **social service departments**.

- 📄 Hospitals can be a good opportunity to reach members of the community, including family members and friends of addicts. One level of interaction in this setting may be forming a relationship with emergency room staff so that trusted servants can place NA posters and meeting schedules where people from the community are likely to see them in times of urgent need.
- 📄 The format of meetings held in hospitals will vary depending on the unit. Clients in a behavioral health department, where there may be inpatient drug treatment units, may benefit from getting a sense of what a typical NA meeting is like through the use of a speaker meeting or a *Just for Today* meeting format. A meeting in a psychiatric unit, where clients usually have shorter attention spans, needs to be extremely structured to limit participation.

NA meetings in healthcare settings

In healthcare settings, there are two kinds of NA meetings: meetings that are for clients only and do not usually collect a Seventh Tradition, and meetings that are simply held at the healthcare facility and function like any other NA meeting. If a committee has decided to bring a meeting to a healthcare setting, such as an inpatient drug treatment unit, they need to

“If a committee has decided to bring a meeting to a healthcare setting, such as an inpatient drug treatment unit, they need to consider the needs of the audience.”

consider the needs of the audience. The meeting format can be modified so it is appropriate for those attending, such as patients who may have a shorter attention span. Hospital detoxification units and residential hospital programs will benefit from formats structured in different ways. A detox unit may benefit from a speaker meeting or an informational meeting, whereas a residential hospital treatment program may benefit from a structured participation format. Trusted servants should also keep in mind that staff may be in attendance at meetings. Trusted servants can communicate regularly with staff to clarify the day, time, and meeting format. The committee can discuss

benefits and drawbacks of open and closed meetings with staff before deciding what would be best for the patients. Trusted servants can offer a limited supply of NA literature and inform a hospital unit that additional NA literature is available for purchase.

Interacting with healthcare organizations

Healthcare organizations such as allied health (which includes medical assistants, nurses aides, and emergency technicians), Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), and professional medical associations (such as medical schools, associations for pharmacists, anesthesiologists, chemical dependency nurses, and social workers) are great opportunities for NA members to provide information about NA and build relationships.

- 📄 A committee may have prioritized an event or informational workshop for healthcare professionals. (See Chapter Four for details about giving presentations). Trusted servants should be sure to create formats and materials based on the specific audience.
- 📄 Many communities have local health fairs or healthcare provider forums. These events are excellent opportunities for area service committees to provide information to the community in a booth exhibit (see Chapter Four for details about exhibits and presentations). It also gives trusted servants a chance to network with healthcare providers who may come into regular contact with potential NA members.

Because healthcare professionals regularly interact with addicts, it is important for us to begin forming and maintaining cooperative relationships. Building relationships with healthcare professionals may be new for many of us. These relationships are another valuable way for us to carry NA's message of recovery to potential members.

Resources

- List of possible healthcare projects
- Handout targeted for healthcare audiences
- FAQs for a healthcare audience

PHONELINES

A call to an NA phoneline may be someone's first interaction with Narcotics Anonymous. These calls are vital; a phoneline call can make a major difference in whether or not an addict makes it to an NA meeting. We need to respond to callers in a way that makes them feel like they matter. We can encourage volunteers to bring all their experience and all their public relations awareness to this important service opportunity.

This chapter outlines ways an area can **evaluate its own resources**, choose a **phoneline provider**, **train and prepare phoneline volunteers**, and **coordinate services** in a way that makes local phonelines more successful.

Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Cooperation, not affiliation

One of our public relations goals is to build long-lasting relationships that further our primary purpose through the pursuit of those mutual goals we may share with other organizations. Compromising any of our traditions in an effort to build these relationships is never beneficial to

individual members or NA as a whole. We maintain a consistent focus on our primary purpose with the public. By creating positive relationships with those outside of NA and with our own members, we foster unity and harmony with each other and the community around us. We put the common welfare of NA first, and we remember that we are only autonomous as long as our actions do not affect NA as a whole.

📖 How can our phonelines be used to cooperate with various outside organizations (such as the phoneline service provider, an organization we may use as a referral, other public organizations in the community, etc.)?

📖 What cooperative actions can committees and groups take to ensure a smoothly running phoneline?

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & phonelines

Planning & preparation for areas & committees

Discussing & addressing known challenges in phonelines service

Putting your plan into action

Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips



PR principles for discussion

Attraction...

What is likely to be attractive to the public and to professionals who interact with addicts is reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery. We can demonstrate the reliability of NA by showing up and fulfilling the obligations we make, whether it is to return a telephone call for information about NA or supplying meeting directories at a public library. We can learn to draw on the experiences of NA members to fulfill the commitments we make to professionals.

- 📖 Are phonline volunteers trained to carry an attractive message for Narcotics Anonymous?
- 📖 How can we make phonline service an attractive NA commitment?

Public relations and phonelines

The way an area prepares its phonline volunteers is connected (in part) to the type of phonline service provider used. In order to determine the best service provider, trusted servants may want to first look at the needs of the area, such as the size of the local NA community and the geographic area, and how they can prepare NA volunteers to meet the needs of callers. This section focuses on ways to assess the area's resources and how to train volunteers. Ideas for how to choose a phonline service provider are covered later in this chapter. Preparing and training phonline volunteers can help a local committee to make a more informed choice about various phonline options.

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

Financial and human resources

Evaluating the area's financial resources is important in planning phonline service. The area needs to look at its budget to see what they can realistically afford. Trusted servants can evaluate the area's long-term financial ability before shopping for a phonline service provider. The area is more likely to maintain positive relationships with the public if the phonline service is consistent and reliable.

Evaluating the area's human resources can also help in deciding what kind of phonline service provider is the best for that area. An area that is financially healthy but lacks willing trusted servants may choose a phonline service provider with a professional answering service. An area with a larger pool of trusted servants may decide that a call-forwarding option will work best for them.

“More members may volunteer for phonline positions if the area considers the length of time slots and the flexibility of the system.”

An area can also think about ways to attract more trusted servants to take phonline positions. More members may volunteer for phonline positions if the area considers the length of time slots and the flexibility of the system. Maintaining volunteers for two- or three-hour slots may be easier than eight-hour time slots. The area can also choose a phonline service where trusted servants have the option of

forwarding the NA phonline to their cell phones. Using the area website to sign up for phonline slots can also encourage members to be of service. Flexibility and creativity can help the area find a larger pool of willing volunteers. The area can also remind members








that a phonline commitment can be done from the privacy of home. There are a variety of ways to attract phonline volunteers—a committee simply needs to discuss their options.

Most projects depend as much on ideas, information, conscience, and members' time and willingness as they do on money. If we have the funds needed to carry out a project but lack the time or ideas, we'd best wait until we've gathered all the needed resources before proceeding. If we don't, we will have wasted NA service funds.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Training and preparing trusted servants

When considering how to train and prepare phonline volunteers, we can look at who calls our phonelines: addicts (both potential members and current NA members), nonaddicts, family members and loved ones, and professionals. Our training and preparation can work to address the opportunities and challenges that arise with each of the above audiences. The following checklist can help an area develop training that empowers phonline volunteers to help addicts find NA and to provide information about NA:

-  Responsiveness is a key principle for phonline service. This means that trusted servants are trained to engage with callers in a sensitive, appropriate, and helpful manner.
-  Training for phonline service will include all those who represent NA on the phonline: trusted servants, special workers (if there is a regional or area office), and employees of an answering service (if one is used). The area can schedule continual and ongoing training.
-  The area can require that volunteers attend an initial hands-on training (see Chapter Four for details). This training can be supported by a written document of the area's expectations of phonline volunteers.
-  An ongoing training program might include providing NA literature (such as the *Am I an Addict?* pamphlet), discussing NA principles, practicing mock phone calls, and presentations to new volunteers by more experienced members. Once trained, volunteers can be provided with basic materials such as a brief description of NA, updated meeting lists, and community referral phone numbers (see referral section).
-  Employees of an answering service will most likely benefit from a current meeting schedule and a short, one-page training handout that is regularly updated. (See addendum material for an example.)
-  The area may want to identify particular qualities of an ideal phonline volunteer. Leadership qualities such as integrity, the ability to listen, and sound judgment (see the Concept Four essay in *Twelve Concepts for NA Service* for more details) are essential in providing phonline service. Other qualities relevant to phonline service are an understanding of the importance of public relations, the ability to relate well to other people, and the abilities to communicate and to stay calm under pressure. These traits are important because phonline volunteers often have to perform in higher-pressure situations and because they are likely to be the first contact that people have with NA.
-  Volunteer guidelines that address issues such as avoiding or explaining NA jargon (such as “it works when you work it,” “home group,” “get a sponsor”), how to get volunteer time slots covered, and how to respond reliably to requests from the public will help support trusted servants in their commitment.

- ✎ Volunteers can be trained to use NA literature to present an accurate and positive message of recovery as well as to clarify that the NA program is separate from treatment centers or other twelve-step programs.
- ✎ Clean-time requirements should be established. Areas that lack human resources may need to be flexible with clean-time requirements. A strong training program will help phonline volunteers who may not have the desired clean time.
- ✎ Phonline volunteers need to be instructed to make no commitments on behalf of the area, region, or NA fellowship. If a professional or member of the public contacts an NA phonline, volunteers should be trained to provide as much information about NA as they can, solicit information from the public contact, and follow up with the appropriate trusted servant such as a committee chairperson or the area's media contact person.
- ✎ The committee needs to train phonline volunteers on how to handle difficult calls, such as calls from addicts who are under the influence of drugs, prank calls, and calls from those who suffer from mental illness. One strategy is to continually bring the conversation back to how the caller can get to an NA meeting and end a problem call before the situation escalates.
- ✎ The committee can be prepared to quickly respond to a variety of phonline calls made by the public, including simple requests for information or calls made about problems created by the behavior of NA members.
- ✎ If phonline volunteers receive a call from a person in crisis, they should be very clear about where their responsibility ends. Phonline volunteers are not counselors or crisis workers. Threats to commit suicide, a drug overdose, or talk about being a victim of violence are all examples of crisis calls.

“...we also know that first impressions count and that the principle of attraction is important to an addict's ability to hear the NA message.”

Refusing to refer such callers to qualified outside crisis agencies could have legal implications, depending on local laws. An area may want to research local laws to find out about individual legal responsibility. See the referral section below for more information about referring callers to outside organizations.

The purpose of our services is to help the fellowship fulfill its primary purpose: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Honest, open, straightforward communication is essential to both the integrity and effectiveness of the NA service structure.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Discussing and addressing known challenges in phonelines service

Meeting recommendations

NA is frequently contacted by potential members and professionals looking for meetings they believe will allow for identification. Many volunteers have been faced with the question: Do you know a meeting that would help this person? We know that our traditions encourage a spirit of anonymity, and that anonymity allows us to meet equally as addicts. Yet,








we also know that first impressions count and that the principle of attraction is important to an addict's ability to hear the NA message. Trusted servants can respect callers' requests and recommend a meeting where they are likely to find addicts with whom they may identify. We do not, however, automatically assume that because someone is of a certain age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual identity, they will want a meeting recommendation.

Area service committees will probably want to discuss this issue and implement guidelines for how to recommend NA meetings to callers. Some areas have common needs meetings in which the group serves the needs of a specific population in that area, such as young people's meetings, women's and men's meetings, etc. These groups make it easier for an area to make meeting recommendations.

If there are no common needs meetings in an area but there are meetings where, for example, a larger population of young people regularly attends, then phonline volunteers can suggest these meetings to a caller asking for a recommendation. This may allow potential members to more easily identify and connect with NA. In making these recommendations, phonline volunteers can explain that many NA members feel a sense of unity within a very diverse fellowship.

Twelfth Step calls

A Twelfth Step call is usually a request for assistance to get to a meeting. We carry NA's message through Twelfth Step calls; this kind of service gives each member an opportunity to make the newcomer feel welcomed. The area can work to ensure that volunteers are willing and trained to do Twelfth Step calls. The most important concern is that NA members are safe. Before training volunteers to respond to Twelfth Step calls, the area should discuss and determine its policy on these calls. The following points can help areas consider how to create guidelines for responding to Twelfth Step calls:

-  A Twelfth Step call can mean that two or more addicts provide a ride to an NA meeting or that volunteers simply talk with the caller, helping the potential member get to a meeting on their own.
-  Trusted servants need to understand that any sexual interaction is inappropriate when performing Twelfth Step calls or when representing NA in any fashion on the phonline.
-  When possible, members meet those requesting a ride to a meeting in a public place.
-  In some areas, phonline volunteers do not perform Twelfth Step calls. Instead, there is a Twelfth Step call list containing the contact information of members who have volunteered to respond to Twelfth Step requests.
-  Due to the likelihood of being exposed to drugs and addicts who are under the influence of drugs, some areas require those who make Twelfth Step calls to have over five years clean.
-  The area will need to discuss what is appropriate for trusted servants performing Twelfth Step calls. An area may decide to create guidelines for the variety of requests often received during Twelfth Step calls (such as a ride to a meeting or to a detoxification center after attending an NA meeting).
-  The area may want to choose volunteers who have service experience and who have gained the ability to be productive members of society. This may reduce the likelihood of incurring legal problems. Those members under legal constraints (such as parole or probation) are usually not appropriate for making Twelfth Step calls. A guideline that requires trusted servants to have current auto insurance may be one way to prevent legal problems.

Referrals

Many phonenumber calls are from nonaddicts or potential members looking for services other than what NA provides. There may be liability issues, which vary between states and countries, that make it important for us to offer emergency numbers at a minimum. We don't give referrals to one specific treatment center or detoxification unit. That would cross the boundary of cooperation into endorsement. Instead, we can provide a list of any and all local treatment centers and not align or affiliate ourselves with one in particular, or we can inform members of generic treatment referral numbers, such as the National Treatment Referral Line in the United States. If a caller has a phone directory, we can direct them to the services listed there. The same principle is true for suicide prevention

“Area service committees can work to form relationships with other community organizations, since we often share similar goals of helping addicts live without the use of drugs.”

numbers and other community service numbers. If an area decides to provide community referral numbers, they will want to verify if the phone numbers are valid. Area service committees can work to form relationships with other community organizations, since we often share similar goals of helping addicts live without the use of drugs.

Family members and loved ones of addicts frequently call our phonelines. The area can decide to provide numbers for Nar-Anon and Families Anonymous or other similar information. We don't recommend one program over another or offer our opinions about any of these programs; we simply provide contact information. Not providing this

information can be harmful to our public relations. We run the risk of prolonging or spoiling a chance for an addict to find NA. The area service committee may want to create a document for trusted servants that describes why NA does not endorse or affiliate itself with outside organizations (see sample at the end of the chapter); we provide contact information for other organizations in a spirit of cooperation.

Coordinating services

When thinking about how we coordinate phonelines, we can look at how best to structure and support these services. The area may decide to delegate the responsibility of the phonenumber to a coordinator, who is accountable to the ASC. A phonenumber coordinator could be responsible for gathering and training volunteers and planning guidelines for following up on any NA requests made through the phonenumber.

Cooperation and collaboration with other committees, areas, and regions can also help in the coordinating of phonenumber services. Areas often work collaboratively with the region or other areas for support. In an effort to strengthen services, some area committees—such as public information and phonelines—merge into one committee. A phonenumber committee may also want to team up with the trusted servants (or the committee) who update meeting schedules to be sure that meeting information is accurate.

Areas can share their best phonenumber practices with other areas. Committees from neighboring areas can share what is working—and what mistakes they've made—with their phonelines. A trusted servant who regularly checks the phonenumber can report if the phonenumber service is functioning properly. Malfunctions may have to do with the answering service, training methods, or a shortage of volunteers. Working cooperatively within the area and with the region (or neighboring areas) can help to strengthen the way the phonenumber functions.

Multi-area phoneline service

Some areas have created a multiregional or multi-area phoneline service, sometimes called a cooperative phoneline service. Neighboring areas will combine their resources and share the responsibility of providing phoneline service. This usually eases the burden on one individual area's human and financial resources. Each area or region contributes financially to the phoneline so that financial accountability is shared. Meeting schedules can reflect all meetings in the multi-area.

There are some challenges with the multi-area model. One of the biggest challenges is establishing a single point of accountability. It is important to decide issues such as who will pay the phone bill and who will coordinate volunteers. Another challenge is that the involved NA communities may cross several area or city telephone codes. It is also a challenge to train volunteers to be able to identify meetings and services in neighboring areas. These multi-area models often recruit members in participating areas to train phoneline volunteers so that all are aware of the meetings and services in neighboring NA communities.

When we work to ensure the validity of NA, we're not working just for ourselves but for those yet to join us.








It Works: How and Why

Putting your plan into action

Phoneline service provider

Choosing a phoneline service provider depends on the needs of the area. (See Chapter Three, "Effective Services", for detailed information about assessing the needs of the area.) An area may be financially healthy but lack human resources; it may make more sense for that area to choose a phoneline system that may be more expensive but that can accommodate the lack of human resources. As always, an area will want to make a smart business decision when spending NA funds. One way to make an informed decision is to research the cost of various providers and evaluate if the various service providers accommodate the area's needs. An area can list the costs with the various advantages, disadvantages, and total monthly cost in order to get a picture of their choices.

Because of the ever-changing nature of technology, the following list is not exhaustive but contains some examples of the types of phoneline services an area may consider:

-  NA members answering calls
-  Call-forwarding service
-  Answering machine or voice mail
-  Answering machine or voice mail with pager
-  Answering machine or voice mail with live operator and/or pager
-  Professional answering service
-  Toll-free number

Each of the options listed above has various advantages and disadvantages, based on an area's human and financial resources. An area can decide which option is best, based on its needs and abilities. The following is an example of how an area can determine the pros and cons of various phonline options. This same process can be used for any type of phonline service being considered by the area.

NA members answering calls

Advantages <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellent ability to communicate with addict 2. Accurate information 3. Trained members handle calls 	Disadvantages <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requires major effort on part of ASC 2. Expensive 3. Reaching the majority within a geographic area in local calling adds expense 4. Requires significant fiscal responsibility and liability for area
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Total Monthly Cost: \$ _____

Answering machine or voice mail

Advantages <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accurate information 2. Least expensive 3. Requires minimal effort on part of ASC 	Disadvantages <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No ability to communicate directly with addict 2. Requires fixed location 3. Requires fiscal responsibility and liability for area 4. An answering machine or answering service is usually checked every two or three days. The area needs to be sure to indicate that in the recorded announcement.
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Total Monthly Cost: \$ _____

📄 When listing the phonline number in a local phone directory, be sure to use a geographical marker instead of the area's name; for example, instead of listing a phonline as "The Biggest Heart of NA Area," use the city or town name. We want those outside of NA to be able to locate the phonline number in their community. The names of our areas don't always communicate to those outside of the program the geographical location of meetings.

📄 TDD (hearing-impaired capability) may also be a consideration when choosing a phonline service provider. As technology changes, so will our phonline options. What's important is for the area to base its choice on a realistic assessment of its own abilities and needs.

📄 Areas may decide to list the NA phone number in the community resource or crisis section of a telephone directory. Listing the NA phonline in this section may require the area to undergo a more extensive process, but can add credibility to NA as a community resource.

Our ability to effectively carry the NA message greatly depends on strong local phoneline services. A strong local phoneline helps us help addicts. Our phonelines are an opportunity to form cooperative relationships that may benefit potential NA members. Our NA phoneline is a service that we provide on other people's terms. We have heard members share about how their first call to an NA phoneline either helped them find NA or made it more difficult. Our ability to respond to callers in a sensitive, caring, and helpful way can make a real difference in whether or not an addict gets clean and finds recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

Resources

Phoneline training session

Phoneline flowchart

FAQ: Phoneline volunteers' experience with calls

Referral form

Community referral list

INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

This chapter addresses Internet technology as it relates to our public relations efforts. Since a website is often one of the first points of contact for members of the public and potential NA members, this topic deserves thoughtful attention and planning. Whatever impression members of the public get from a website is likely to have a lasting effect. The material here is designed to help areas use Internet technology in a more useful and informative way.

This chapter is deliberately nonspecific since the rapid development of Internet technology makes this material likely to become dated. As a result, specific technology or products are not contained here. What is here—some of the fellowship’s current best practices with how to effectively use Internet technology to further our primary purpose.

Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Anonymity on the Internet

The Internet can often give the illusion that it is not a public sphere. As a result, the issue of personal anonymity on the World Wide Web can be a confusing one. Many members, in enthusiastic efforts to carry NA’s message of recovery, have set up personal websites or weblogs. One way a personal site could respect the principle of anonymity would be to state that the site does not represent NA; it speaks only for the individual. Personal sites can also provide links to a local registered site or to na.org. Personal websites can further protect members’ anonymity by using words like “recovery” instead of specifically stating that they are members of Narcotics Anonymous. Using “recovery” instead of “Narcotics Anonymous” will help the site avoid being recognized by a search engine if someone is looking for an NA meeting or information about Narcotics Anonymous. It can also help members maintain their anonymity in this public medium.

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & Internet technology


Planning & preparation for areas & committees


Discussing & addressing known challenges with Internet technology

Putting your plan into action


Resources


Key icons

 Practical experience

 Preparation and training tips

 PR principles for discussion

 How can members practice anonymity when using the Internet?

 How can an area use Internet technology to help carry the NA message?

Public relations and Internet technology

The Internet has had an enormous impact on the growth of NA. It allows for more regular communication and provides a vehicle for making information and service resources more readily available. An area's ability to use Internet technology depends on the skills of members, their financial resources, and the information they have about how to effectively use websites and the Internet. Remember, it may not be necessary for every area to have a website; planning and prioritizing which services are most important in the area can help trusted servants decide if a website is, in fact, the best use of their resources. Areas may want to consider communicating with the local regional committee to be sure there isn't a duplication of services. If an area decides to create a local website, the following information can help trusted servants use Internet technology more effectively.

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

The key to providing useful information on a website is to allow for clear, simple navigation to the relevant information. One way to achieve this, or to improve the effectiveness of an already existing site, is by clarifying the **purpose of the site**. For example, an area may determine that the most important functions of the website are to reach potential members and the public and to support area service. Clarifying the purpose helps identify the **audiences** the area is trying to reach. Identifying the audience and what the area is trying to communicate to that audience becomes the foundation for making decisions about the content that should be included on the site. Remember, a website will reach audiences beyond the local community. It is important to keep this in mind when identifying the site's potential audiences. Some examples of audiences an area may want to communicate with are:

- 📄 **The public** (including potential members and family and loved ones of addicts)
- 📄 **Professionals**
- 📄 **Existing members**

Another way to organize a website is to simply identify the audiences as **members** and **visitors**. Either way, knowing the audiences the site is trying to reach will allow the area to be clear about the content that would be most relevant for each audience. Some examples of the content that might be relevant for each identified audience are:

- 📄 **For the public** (including potential members and family and loved ones of addicts):
NA literature, meeting information, phonenumber, and possibly referral information.
- 📄 **For professionals:**
Information about NA, NA literature, meeting information, local surveys, and a contact person who is responsible for public interactions (such as a committee chairperson or a public relations committee member).
- 📄 **For existing members:**
Meeting information, service resources such as local guidelines, NA event information, information about how to be of service, and password-protected materials like committee minutes.

Once the purpose of the site has been established, it can be designed in a way that works toward achieving that purpose. This is where having experienced local people or sufficient financial resources can make a difference. Areas are encouraged to seek help from professionals in designing their websites—this may mean using services offered by a local

member who is also a web design professional or hiring a nonmember to design the site. The area can always use the purpose and the audience to make any decisions about how the site should be designed.

The following points can help an area in thinking about website design:

- ✎ Be sure to state the purpose of the site on the front page in a simple and clear way. The purpose of a local NA website may simply be to provide information to those interested in Narcotics Anonymous and to facilitate communication and support for local NA members. Remember, the website should capture the attention of the audience in a very short period of time.
- ✎ The front page of a site should also state what information can be found on the site and what information is not contained on the site. (For example, if the site only contains meeting information for the local area, be sure to indicate that the site does not contain meeting information for neighboring areas or regions, and provide a link to a regional site that does contain that information.) The area can also link to NA World Services to provide any information that is not contained on their local site.
- ✎ The area will want to avoid creating a website with great design but minimal content or one with poor design and too much content. The site should be designed in a way that allows for easy navigation to the relevant information.
- ✎ Remembering the site's audience can help the area design the site using the most universally accepted technology available. The area most likely wants to reach as many people as possible, and using common technology can ensure that.
- ✎ Free web hosting is not considered a best practice. A decision to forgo free web hosting helps to eliminate a number of problems, the most important being the possibility of an NA website having to provide advertising or links to inappropriate sites. Free web hosting also limits how much content can be contained on the site. Using free web hosting is often the reason why local NA sites end up with advertisements. Allowing advertisements to be placed on an NA site can lead to NA being seen as associated with outside organizations. When areas have no control over the kinds of ads that may be placed on a site, the problem of association is likely to lead to controversy.
- ✎ The area needs to consider that the website is a public forum, and certain information should be kept private. Password-protected areas can serve as a private space on a public website (privacy is not the same as security—secure websites can be useful but can involve more management and greater costs). Meeting minutes containing the names and contact information of members, for instance, may best be kept private through password protection.
- ✎ When trying to make a website more secure, trusted servants must be sure to keep track of passwords. That way, if a trusted servant leaves a committee under unfavorable circumstances, the area can change the website's password. Security issues can also be lessened by creating a simple website with less encryption, and by not using free web hosting.
- ✎ Areas can make decisions about whom to link to by considering if the intended link furthers NA's primary purpose. For example, sites that provide maps to meetings are often used on NA websites with a disclaimer stating that NA is not affiliated with the map site.

- ✎ One way to provide links to other NA areas and regions is by linking to the NAWS local phonelines and websites page (<http://www.na.org/?ID=phoneline>). By linking to the NAWS website, an area doesn't have to use its human resources to regularly check and verify links.
- ✎ A service committee may want to investigate which organizations link to the local NA site. Following up on sites that link to us by making sure that the information about NA is up-to-date and accurate can be a great way to strengthen public relations.

Domain name/website ownership and accountability

- ✎ To ensure continuity, website domains ought to be owned and paid for by the service body. The area budget can plan for this so that there are enough ongoing resources to sustain the site.
- ✎ Since the area is ultimately accountable for the NA website, the body should establish itself as the responsible entity for the website, rather than the website being tied to a single trusted servant. An area can usually establish itself as the accountable entity by providing a mailing address (this process is similar to obtaining a bank account in the area's name). Having the website tied to the service body allows for rotation of trusted servants and eliminates any questions about ownership of the site.
- ✎ The area's email address also needs to be tied to a committee. Trusted servants should have the responsibility to regularly check and respond to email. If an area receives email, members can respond to the email by letting the sending person know that a member is getting the information they requested and will get back to them as soon as possible. Inquiries can be discussed by the ASC and, if needed, delegated to the appropriate trusted servant or committee.
- ✎ In emerging areas where there is no formal area service committee, a group of addicts can be responsible for the local NA website. A group of addicts making decisions about the local NA website is often a more prudent approach than having the responsibility fall on one individual. These trusted servants can then establish accountability through local NA groups in the emerging area.

Web servant responsibilities

- ✎ The area can clearly define the responsibilities that will be delegated to the web servant. In defining the web servant's role, the area also needs to establish that the web servant is accountable to the area.
- ✎ Members of the area can make it a practice to review the area website on a regular basis as a way to ensure that the web servant is responding to the area's requests.
- ✎ As stated earlier in this chapter, an area is best served by a website that can be easily passed along to other trusted servants. If a website is difficult to maintain, it may be hard to find trusted servants who are able to take on the commitment.
- ✎ An area may want to divide web responsibilities among trusted servants. For example, a chairperson, who may or may not have the technical skills needed for web maintenance, could be in charge of verifying and updating information submitted to the website. Other trusted servants or committee members, who are delegated responsibilities through the committee, could manage the technical aspects of the website.

Discussing and addressing known challenges with Internet technology

NA members often self-publish through personal websites. A note of caution (as outlined in Chapter Two) is to avoid stating that a person is an NA member. Using language like “recovery” and “twelve-step program” can help a site avoid being mistaken as an area or regional site of Narcotics Anonymous.

If a member has used NA’s name on a personal website, then it is especially important not to use pictures of any members on that site, just as an area or region would avoid posting members’ pictures on its website. The use of members’ pictures in association with NA falls outside the principle of anonymity. If pictures are used on a personal site, the NA name should not be used, for the reasons described above.

Someone’s voice being heard on the web doesn’t compromise our anonymity in the same way that pictures can. Some NA websites post members’ sharing so that NA’s message can be accessed around the world via the website. This approach seems to maintain members’ anonymity better than a picture or video would. If a member chooses to participate in sharing that is made accessible via the web, it is important to remember that the share may come into public view. It also may be worth considering avoiding graphic descriptions of active addiction in shares posted on the web.

“It is important to remember that there isn’t the same kind of personal anonymity online as there is in an NA meeting.”

It is important to remember that there isn’t the same kind of personal anonymity online as there is in an NA meeting. In most cases, Internet communications can be tracked back to the user or individual computer and can be made available to outside parties or agencies (except when sophisticated encryption or other technologies are used). In an effort to keep private information out of the public’s view, message boards or chat rooms used for online meetings or service-related discussions should be made as private as possible. That way, the public cannot view the history or post to these forums. Passwords and other systems such as peer-to-peer instant messaging can provide a level of privacy. When considering personal anonymity and NA’s public image, it is important to keep in mind that having publicly available postings or messages means that whatever is posted online can be viewed by any Internet user in the world for long periods of time.

Putting your plan into action

Uses of Internet technology and NA websites

The following list contains examples of how areas and regions have used the web to communicate with each other and with the public:

- One of the most important uses of Internet technology is to **provide information about NA**. Websites are often the first glimpse someone will have of what the NA program is—whether the viewer is a professional, a family member, or an addict trying to find a meeting. When thinking about how to manage a website’s information, it is important to remember that misinformation can be worse than no information at all.
- Another use of NA Internet technology is **communication among service bodies**. Bulletin boards, chat rooms, and email lists are commonly used to hold service meetings, especially in areas encompassing large geographic distances. An unmediated forum,

however, is like a service meeting with no chair or facilitator—if there is no set agenda, the focus can easily be lost. Addresses for email lists can be created based on service titles instead of an individual's name—for example, vicechair@thebiggestheartofNAarea. This allows for continuity when members rotate service positions. The anonymity of members in these forums can be protected through the use of a sign-up process or passwords.

- 📄 If the area wants to post **NA literature online**, it should do so by linking to NAWs' website, www.na.org. An area should not reproduce and post any of the fellowship's copyrighted literature, including the steps or traditions, the readings, IPs, or lengthy quotes. For more information regarding the *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust*, visit www.na.org.
- 📄 If an area is thinking about posting **non-fellowship-approved information** such as flyers or local newsletters, trusted servants may want to consider how that type of information might affect NA's public image. Member-focused literature may not always be the kind of information an area wants to publicly display. A group conscience is a good way to make decisions about whether or not to post non-fellowship-approved information on a local website.
- 📄 Various **language groups**, like Spanish-speaking members who live in various countries around the world, have used the web for communication, including service workshops and translations efforts.
- 📄 Some areas maintain archival information such as past service projects or trusted servants' contact information in **databases**. However, the area will want to request that the person who is responsible for creating the database also be responsible for making the information transferable and easily accessible by other trusted servants, including future trusted servants. Any information in a database should be backed up and stored in a common place, not on someone's personal hard drive, and needs to be easily accessible through the most common technology available. Archiving and updating information contained in the database will help to keep a relevant record of the committee's practices. Remembering the purpose of the information and who the audience is can help the area make decisions about how to manage a database.
- 📄 Some **online NA meetings** are held in chat rooms and some are held through email lists. Again, member anonymity needs to be preserved through a sign-up process or some other protocol. It is important to remember that online NA meetings may come into the view of the public and have the potential to affect the public's perception of NA. One of the pitfalls of an online meeting can be overly casual conversation that doesn't seem to be driven by NA's primary purpose.

Internet technology is a valuable tool that has allowed NA members to communicate with each other and with the public in ways that were previously impossible. Taking some time to discuss and plan for how to best use this technology can help to ensure that the information we share with each other and present to the public is reliable, meaningful, and informative.

Resources

Steps for creating an ASC website

Sample webpage

EVENT PLANNING

We usually think of NA events as a way to celebrate our recovery or make NA attractive to newcomers, but our events are also an opportunity to make positive impressions on the public. During an event, a hotel staff person may be wondering if a family member could benefit from NA, or a group of medical professionals may be noticing how supportive and prepared NA members seem to be during a presentation. Trusted servants need to be aware of the impact NA events can have on our relationships with the public. That awareness can allow us to anticipate the opportunities and challenges that arise at NA events.

Events that are specifically designed for the public can be effective vehicles for educating the public about what NA has to offer. Community meetings that provide information about NA to the public can be the first step in forming meaningful relationships with the public.

This chapter focuses on both **internal NA events**, such as learning days and fellowship activities, and **external NA events**, such as community meetings and professional events.

Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & event planning

**Planning & preparation for
areas & committees**

**Putting your plan into
action**

Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips



PR principles for discussion

Attraction...

Another important consideration in making our public relations efforts more valuable is the attractiveness of the behaviors and attitudes of individual NA members, and the collective appearance of our fellowship. Attraction means that we function, as members and as groups, in ways that naturally draw others to us. When members act in ways that are attractive, this fosters identification and gives potential members a sense of belonging.



Has the committee considered the event's format (including speakers) as an important part of creating an attractive NA message?



How does our individual behavior impact the attractiveness of the NA program?

Accountability

There are responsibilities that accompany the principle of accountability. These responsibilities apply to all parties engaged in an accountable relationship. A committee has responsibilities to the area and the area has responsibilities to its committee. For instance, if a convention committee is accountable to a regional service committee, that means that the regional committee has agreed to take on certain responsibilities for that committee. If the committee encounters challenges such as a financial crisis or problems with NA's public image during an event, the service body will take constructive steps to help the convention committee. It is helpful for service bodies, such as areas or regions, to understand and accept this responsibility before creating a subcommittee. This understanding can encourage regions and areas to be proactive in their role with committees that are accountable to them. Requesting financial budgets and asking questions of committees encourages accountability and can help avoid larger problems in the future. Not only does requesting budgets establish accountability, but it establishes a reciprocal relationship and reinforces our second concept. Remaining within budget guidelines and maintaining accurate financial records may save an NA community the embarrassment of having to contact an accountant, a lawyer, or even the local police. Accountability may also save us from having to cancel other services because we have overspent our budget.

- 📖 In the planning of an event, how have trusted servants been accountable to a service body through consistent and accurate reporting?
- 📖 What measures are in place to ensure that the trusted servants coordinating an event will be accountable to the area?

Public relations and event planning







A committee will have different considerations depending on the audience, size, and purpose of each event. Events that are intended to train and educate members of Narcotics Anonymous will require planning that differs from events that are for educating professionals about Narcotics Anonymous. Different still are events that are for NA members to come together and celebrate their recovery. All NA events are an opportunity to directly or indirectly further our relationships with the public, and trusted servants can plan each event in a way that furthers our goal of NA being seen as a positive, credible, and reliable option for addicts.

It's also important to consider how we're viewed by society. When NA meetings first began in many places, it was illegal for addicts to meet under any circumstances. Even where meetings are legal, the public often views groups of addicts with alarm. Until NA has established a good public reputation, it may be difficult for addicts to find meeting places. If our behavior as NA members is still destructive and selfish, we will once again have difficulty meeting openly. We help protect our reputation as a fellowship when we use our meeting facilities with respect, keeping them clean and in good repair. We should take care to act like good neighbors, conducting ourselves respectfully. Even something as simple as the name a group chooses may reflect on NA as a whole. If the public reputation of Narcotics Anonymous is somehow impaired, addicts may die.

It Works: How and Why

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

Taking some time to understand what kind of event is most needed in an area will help trusted servants plan events that are more suitable for and tailored to the members and professionals of that area.

-  Planning an effective event means that trusted servants have considered the **needs of the area**. What kind of event would help the area reach its goal of making NA more available to suffering addicts? Do NA members need an opportunity to discuss local service challenges and ways to solve those challenges? These kinds of questions will help trusted servants create events that directly address the needs of their NA community. Events that are linked to an area's needs are more likely to be a conscientious use of NA resources and are more likely to further our primary purpose. An NA event should always work to forward NA's primary purpose.
-  The area will want to be sure to consider the **audience** of an event—for example, whether that event is a workshop for professionals or a learning day for NA members. The specifics of the event, such as location and materials, can then be created based on the needs of the audience members. For example, a workshop for healthcare professionals will require different scheduling considerations and different materials than a workshop for NA members.
-  Defining the **objectives** and desired **outcomes** of an event can help the committee clarify what it plans to accomplish. One way to define these objectives is through a vision statement and a mission statement. A vision statement presents a committee's ultimate aspirations and purpose. A committee's vision might be that one day all members of the public will know what NA is and how NA can help suffering addicts. A mission statement is what the committee hopes to accomplish with a particular event. For example, the mission of an event may be to thoroughly inform local healthcare professionals about what NA is and what NA has to offer the community.
-  The committee will also want to be sure to **cooperate** with groups, other committees, the area, or the region. For example, if a committee is thinking about holding an event at a local meeting facility, members will want to be sure to include groups in the planning process. Since it is likely that GSRs will have been involved in prioritizing an event, it is important to make sure there is enough time to remind groups of an upcoming event. Working to keep local groups involved gives members in the area opportunities to be of service and the ability to support local NA events.
-  Areas or regions can maintain an activity calendar that is distributed to each group service representative. Such a calendar encourages members of the area to support local NA events and helps to avoid duplication when planning events.
-  Individual members should not plan events alone—members should seek the support of the service structure. This ensures that an event is guided by a group conscience and that there is accountability to a group of NA members. There are, however, members in developing NA communities who must take the lead in planning NA events if any action is to happen at all. This note of caution is meant simply to encourage accountability and a group conscience.

We must remember that, wherever we go, we always represent NA to some degree. If we are seen acting poorly while we prominently display an NA logo on our T-shirt, we carry a distinctly unattractive message about our fellowship to the public. What we say and what we do reflects on our recovery and the NA fellowship. As responsible NA members, we want that reflection to be a source of attraction rather than a source of embarrassment.

It Works: How and Why

Once a committee has decided which events seem most needed in the area, **event preparation** can begin. The following points can help committees anticipate many of the challenges that arise when planning an event, whether the event is for NA members or the larger public community. Anticipating challenges can help make NA events into positive examples of how NA functions and what NA has to offer.

✎ Site-selection considerations (such as parking, public access, projected attendance, and whether the facility provides things like audiovisual equipment and is handicap accessible) should be considered when choosing a venue for the event. Trusted servants should also be sure to find out if the quote they have been given for the cost of a facility includes things like chairs, cleanup, and the use of a kitchen.

✎ A committee needs to be aware of and follow local regulations. These local regulations can pertain to selling merchandise or food, rules for hiring outside staff, union considerations, etc.

✎ Negotiating with local businesses for NA events usually requires patience and flexibility. Trusted servants who will be negotiating with local businesses have to balance any

“Trusted servants who will be negotiating with local businesses have to balance any delegated authority they’ve been given with accountability to a committee.”

delegated authority they’ve been given with accountability to a committee. Accountability can be demonstrated through thorough and frequent communication. Any contracts should be made available through written reports, and any legal document should be reviewed by the committee, and possibly a lawyer, before signing. Those members who will be negotiating on NA's behalf need to also remember that they have a responsibility to maintain NA's financial stability and that their behavior can have an effect on NA's public image.

✎ Trusted servants need to know whom to communicate with, both in NA and outside of NA. It should be clear who the designated decision maker within the committee is and who the managing staff person at the site is. Creating a relationship with the facility's staff by acting in ways that support their role will help ensure the success of the event and can enhance our relationships with the public. For example, providing front desk staff with information about NA in general (through IPs, a local meeting directory, etc.), as well as about the NA event being held at their facility, can generate a positive perception of NA and may motivate staff to be more helpful and supportive of the event.

✎ Our interactions with meeting facilities' personnel affect the way NA as a whole will be perceived. An NA event can be the occasion for us to make a lasting impression with members of the public and local businesses. Trusted servants should not assume that a facility staff member or professional knows who we are. When coordinating an event,

trusted servants can take some time to explain what Narcotics Anonymous is and what services NA provides.

- ✎ Trusted servants need to behave in a professional manner with those public businesses they interact with at events. Principles such as cooperation, respect, communication, follow-up, and adaptability are crucial to leaving a positive impression with those outside of NA.
- ✎ A successful event needs members with a variety of qualities and skills. Some ideal qualities are the ability to effectively work with people, resourcefulness, and wisdom to anticipate and solve unexpected problems.
- ✎ An event's success depends on having enough volunteers. There need to be enough trusted servants to plan and coordinate the event and enough trusted servants to set up and clean up an event. Having enough volunteers helps ensure that trusted servants won't become overburdened with too many tasks.
- ✎ Monitoring the progress of tasks that have been assigned to trusted servants is important to the success of an event. Tasks may need to be reassigned if members are not able to fulfill their commitments.
- ✎ A committee needs to have a plan for addressing security issues such as theft and crowd control. Sometimes a facility will require a professional outside service to act as security for an event. It's a good idea to purchase insurance for NA events. Trusted servants will need to research (asking the facility its policy) whether insurance is required for the event.
- ✎ A committee can create a strong communication link between the facility personnel and NA volunteers; inviting facility management or staff to a planning meeting at the facility can be a way to foster strong communication. Committees can hold an initial meeting and/or their final meeting at the facility where the event is to take place. Meeting with a facility's staff gives trusted servants an opportunity to introduce NA members to the staff, as well as time to address anyone's questions or concerns.
- ✎ Creating documents like a timeline (see addenda for a sample timeline), event guidelines, budget (including both human and financial resources), and a final checklist (which includes all materials needed at the event) will help in the overall coordination of the event. Members can create an effective timeline or event plan by beginning with the actual event day and then working backwards.
- ✎ If written materials such as press kits and releases will be used for an event, more than one person should review all the materials before they are released to the public. This can help to minimize errors in the written material.

Chapter Four contains detailed information about presenting to a public and professional audience. Committees planning for these kinds of events may want to refer to that section for more information. The following points are additional considerations when planning an event for an external audience:

- ✎ If the committee is putting on an event for professionals in the community, considering the relevance of the event to this audience is important. Often, professionals who attend NA events do so on their own time and at their own expense. Making convenient venue choices and scheduling the event at a time that is convenient for professional attendees respects the time demands of participants. Addressing these considerations will ultimately add to the success of the event.

- ✍ As detailed in Chapter Four, training and preparing for presentations to professionals should be tailored to the audience and purpose of the event. Training materials can be created as a way to clarify the focus of the particular event. Rehearsing with presentation materials such as audiovisual aids is essential.
- ✍ As stated in Chapter Four, be sure to match supporting visual aids with the audience and the material in the presentation. This means that visual aids may not always be the most appropriate tool. Be sure to consider who the audience is, what the content of the presentation is, and how best to engage the audience with that material.
- ✍ A community meeting is when NA members host an event for interested community members (such as concerned family and friends of addicts, religious leaders, etc.). Trusted servants can use these meetings as an opportunity to provide members of the community with information about NA as a community resource.

Putting your plan into action

Once event planning and preparation are complete, the following are considerations for the actual event.

- 📄 Our behavior at NA events has a direct impact on our public image. If the event is for NA members (such as a learning day), a committee can consider ways to raise awareness about how our personal behavior affects the public's perception of NA as a whole. Some events have included workshops on issues such as NA's public image in order to help members be more aware of how their behavior affects NA's public image.
- 📄 A written record of an event can be helpful for future events and for the committee's evaluation of an event. A written record should include a summary of what seemed to work and what didn't work, a planning timeline, a sample budget, copies of contracts, and the committee's experience with businesses and facilities in the community. A written record can help future trusted servants have a historical perspective about local events. For example, if a past committee planned an event for 400 people and only 200 attended, trusted servants can use that information to better plan upcoming events.

“...consider ways to raise awareness about how our personal behavior affects the public's perception of NA as a whole.”

- 📄 Event guidelines can also be important to the success of an event. These guidelines can outline the committee's procedures and protocols. They can also establish what the committee expects from specific trusted servant positions.
- 📄 Committee members may want to consider whether merchandise is appropriate for the event. An event can be a success without merchandise. If a committee decides to include merchandise as a part of an event, then the merchandise should be recovery-oriented. Careful consideration needs to be given to whether an event's financial stability depends on the sale of merchandise. The more financially dependent an event is on merchandise, the greater the risk. Planning and research into prior events' history with merchandise can help a committee make informed decisions about the role of merchandise in local events.

NA funds are to be used to further our primary purpose, and must be managed responsibly.

Eleventh Concept

- 📄 NA's traditions and concepts are our guiding principles—we can turn to them if we are in need of direction or guidance. A committee can work to understand and incorporate the spirit of the traditions and concepts in its service efforts. The Eleventh Concept is especially important for planning NA events. For example, if an area has identified an event as a priority, then funds must be spent in a way that aligns that event with our primary purpose.
- 📄 A committee will want to create some sort of follow-up for the event. This could include asking NA members and/or the public audience to evaluate the event. The committee will also want to take some time after the event to discuss and evaluate it based on input from members or professionals who attended.

Post-event actions

The points below can help trusted servants take proactive steps directly following an event. These actions can help the area learn from events and can help improve future events.

- 📄 Be sure that all reports are complete and on file with the area, especially the treasurer's report. Any contracts should be kept so that trusted servants can review them before future events.
- 📄 An inventory of any event merchandise should be taken by calculating total sales and total merchandise left over.
- 📄 Trusted servants may want to take some time to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the event's program. These discussions can be recorded and included in a committee's records for future events.
- 📄 Making sure that all bills are paid on time will help NA's public image.
- 📄 For events such as learning days, where the committee is responsible for cleanup, trusted servants can be sure that they have left the facility in excellent condition.

Our personal behavior affects the public's perception of NA as a whole. At NA events, we have an opportunity to influence the public's perception of the program that has saved our lives. We send a negative message about NA when our behavior is rude and inconsiderate. When we gather in groups and behave in a respectful and courteous manner, we may become the example that inspires someone to find recovery in NA or help a loved one find NA.

Resources

Sample learning day format
Sample community meetings format
Event planning workshop
Sample event timeline
Sample event budget

FELLOWSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This chapter covers fellowship development in its broadest sense—as providing supportive services to any NA member, group, service body, or NA community in need. The goal of any fellowship development effort is to communicate with and assist NA members and groups.

Some areas may already be providing what this chapter calls fellowship development as outreach. Other areas may be providing fellowship development service without creating a structured committee to do so. What we call this service is not as important as what we are doing to effectively reach out to our own members.

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & fellowship
development

Planning & preparation for
areas & committees

Putting your plan into action

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips



PR principles for discussion

There seem to be a variety ways to go about implementing fellowship development. One way is area service committees that reach out to individual groups or neighboring areas that have asked for their support. Another type of fellowship development is provided by regions and zones. These service structures often approach fellowship development in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion. Planning and prioritizing take on ever greater significance in these more complex efforts. Fellowship development gives us an opportunity to practice public relations with our own members. Long-lasting relationships, reaching out to other members, and working toward our primary purpose can make fellowship development an especially rewarding service experience.

Included in this chapter is information about providing support for **NA groups**, **developing areas**, and **incarcerated members**. Whether an area is providing a consistent and modest supply of literature to neighboring groups or multiple regions are developing a fellowship development plan for the next five years, this service is essential to NA's growth around the world.



Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Unity: “Together we can”



It is our collective service efforts that help other addicts find recovery. NA has been growing since the 1950s because of members working together to further NA's primary purpose. Many of us are familiar with the group's power to carry the message of recovery to addicts coming to our meetings, and we use groups of members in service the same way. We can see our First

Tradition at work when members put their individual wants and needs aside for NA's common good. Working together to make NA more visible and viable in our local communities not only helps addicts find our program, but is a powerful way of practicing the unity described in the First Tradition.

-  How do we put our individual wants and needs aside for the common good of NA?
-  In our service committees, how do we demonstrate that we are open and welcoming to members and groups?


Attraction...

Another important consideration in making our public relations efforts more valuable is the attractiveness of the behaviors and attitudes of individual NA members, and the collective appearance of our fellowship. Attraction means that we function, as members and as groups, in ways that naturally draw others to us. When members act in ways that are attractive, this fosters identification and gives potential members a sense of belonging.

-  How can areas practice the principle of attraction in their fellowship development efforts?
-  How can members make service more attractive in their fellowship development efforts?

Public relations and fellowship development

There are often a variety of barriers that prevent NA from growing and thriving in certain locations. These barriers can be a result of geography (such as mountain ranges separating NA communities), technology, culture, language, physical disability, economic disadvantage, or a result of members being detached from the service structure. What this service can do is help to make these detached groups aware of the support and resources available within the fellowship. Fellowship development is an opportunity for trusted servants to carry NA's message by building relationships with other NA members.

 Although we are autonomous, we may offer loving support to other groups by attending their meetings or offering other help. NA meetings thrive when groups look beyond their immediate needs to offer help to each other.

It Works: How and Why

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

A big part of planning for fellowship development projects is developing an understanding of the principles that can help ensure the success of these efforts. Members can also plan by considering what the best approach (or approaches) is to reach groups and areas that are in need, and what obstacles they are likely to face when reaching out to these groups and areas. Reviewing the planning steps outlined in Chapter Three can help with this planning process.

Fellowship development principles

Principles such as self-support, autonomy, carrying the NA message, and unity are essential to fellowship development service. Trusted servants can strive to find the balance between carrying the message and respecting individuals' and groups' autonomy. Members

often need to be encouraged to recognize their ability to support themselves and how their contributions are a part of NA's principle of self-support. Empowering members and groups with the necessary service materials and support is an important foundation of strong fellowship development efforts.

Approaching members with an attitude of goodwill and with a lack of judgment will help fellowship development efforts be more productive. Groups and areas may be operating in a variety of different ways. It is not the job of those performing fellowship development to manage these groups or areas. A group's way of creatively carrying NA's message can foster energy and excitement among group members.

There are times, however, when these creative ways can become even more useful to a group's primary purpose. Members can offer tools that allow groups to find their own solutions. Trusted servants need to approach this service without any preconceived ideas about members and groups that may not seem as "developed" as their own groups. Our ability to respectfully support groups and members gives them a better chance at more effectively carrying NA's message to suffering addicts.




"Groups and areas may be operating in a variety of different ways. It is not the job of those performing fellowship development to manage these groups or areas."

Coordinating services

Some areas have created a fellowship development committee or a similar kind of committee that is responsible for coordinating all the service efforts for that area. Other area committees delegate the responsibility of fellowship development to the administrative members of the area (usually the area chair, vice chair, treasurer, and secretary), while other areas have created a group liaison or coordinator position. Sometimes, neighboring areas and regions will join together to perform fellowship development service. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, some areas are already providing what is called fellowship development here as outreach efforts. Regardless of how an area coordinates services, supporting other members and groups is a responsibility of the entire area.

Approaches

There are a variety of ways to approach fellowship development. When an area is preparing for fellowship development, trusted servants can look at which approach is more likely to meet the needs of the members who have requested support.

-  Members can provide a way for NA communities to evaluate their own needs. Questionnaires or even informal inquiries through email, letters, or phone calls can help members discover what they believe is most needed. Having current and relevant information about the area's needs will help trusted servants decide which resources are likely to be most helpful.
-  Trusted servants may need to educate groups and areas about the resources available to them. Some members and groups have no experience with the larger service structure and the available support.
-  Fellowship development efforts benefit from prioritization and planning. Fellowship development can place a strain on financial and human resources. For example, a region looking to support a neighboring area may decide to fund trusted servants'

visits to the area. Without adequate planning, this support could cause the region to be in a position where they could, as a result of their fellowship development efforts, be unable to pay their regional phone bill. Planning can help areas and regions evaluate what they can realistically provide.

- ✎ As outlined in the section above, practicing spiritual principles such as open-mindedness and patience is an invaluable approach to any fellowship development efforts. Practicing these principles helps us live the Twelfth Step of our personal program. Incorporating spiritual principles into our fellowship development work allows us to behave in a way that is less likely to cause harm.

Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Obstacles and solutions

Before beginning fellowship development efforts, it is important to consider what may be some of the obstacles and solutions that are common in this kind of service.

- ✎ Giving groups and areas encouragement to move forward in their service efforts is often the most meaningful guidance trusted servants can offer. Letting members know that their approaches to service aren't violating any traditions or that their fears and challenges are similar to those faced by members around the world can be a huge relief. Fellowship development depends on members learning how to evaluate their service efforts and teaching them how to know for themselves when they've stepped beyond NA traditions.
- ✎ Respecting cultural differences, economic barriers, language barriers, geographic distance, and legal restrictions is crucial to finding effective approaches. Fellowship development efforts often begin after identifying a group of people that NA has failed to reach. It can be hard to attract an underserved population to NA meetings if there is no one in the

“Respecting cultural differences, economic barriers, language barriers, geographic distance, and legal restrictions is crucial to finding effective approaches. Fellowship development efforts often begin after identifying a group of people that NA has failed to reach.”

meetings these groups of people can identify with. One solution is to enlist the help of community leaders by informing them about NA and asking for their input about how to reach people in their community. Including NA members from a particular cultural or ethnic group in these fellowship development efforts is crucial to fostering identification and attraction. If language is a barrier, then trusted servants can find members who speak the same language or look into providing translations services, such as hiring a professional translator.

- ✎ One of the goals of fellowship development is to help local groups have the structures and information to solve their own problems. For example, if an NA group's funds have been mismanaged, members can provide a *Group Treasurer's Workbook*, sample guidelines, and the experience of other groups and areas. If there is a divide in the fellowship, the job of those performing fellowship development is not to manage conflicts or solve members' problems. Instead, their role is to give groups the tools to solve their own problems.

Practicing NA's principles and not letting personal opinions play a role is often the most helpful approach. Our focus is always NA unity and the primary purpose of groups.

✎ We always want to work toward unity in our service efforts. However, with the best of intentions, some members may have unfocused passion or inflexible ideas. Trusted servants can do their best to include these members rather than exclude them. Often, members will continue what they're doing whether they are included in the area service committee or not. Our role is to maintain an open attitude, a welcoming atmosphere, and easy inclusion for these members.

✎ NA members can often benefit from some direction about how to focus their passion for NA. Showing these members how to use their energy and passion for NA in a way that will help their community grow is often an important aspect of fellowship development.

✎ One challenging aspect of fellowship development is encountering groups that don't want to be part of the service structure. This is a different challenge from that of groups that aren't aware of the service structure and how it can support their primary purpose. Trusted servants can explain the benefits of being a part of a local area, such as having the ability to reach out to more potential members and providing a unified approach to carrying NA's message. Discussing NA's Twelve Traditions, the Twelve Concepts, and the primary purpose of our groups can help in these situations. If an area finds that a number of groups are hesitant about participating in the area service committee, the area can perform a service inventory. This inventory helps the service body identify its strengths and shortcomings. Addressing identified shortcomings may help attract groups back to the area service committee.

✎ Some members can misinterpret NA's traditions and concepts. These same members may also be resistant to change after they have established practices in the local NA community. One common issue is groups and members who do not practice a distinct separation between NA and other fellowships. This is a concern because our members may overlook a need to connect with other NA members, and more importantly, it can confuse newcomers about NA's message of recovery from addiction. NA members can approach these situations in a respectful manner and share their experience about what has been effective in their personal recovery and in their groups and areas. An attitude that lacks judgment and fosters goodwill can help members consider the traditions and concepts in a new way and be open to listening to the experience of other members. Learning days and workshops are another way to address this issue—a workshop format can allow this topic to be discussed in a more impersonal fashion.

✎ In many developing NA communities, meetings begin in treatment facilities. Trusted servants can help groups establish their independence by encouraging them to be self-supporting. The *Institutional Group Guide* can be a useful resource in helping members take steps toward creating more self-supporting groups. It is important to help treatment staff understand how an NA meeting functions and to help members establish NA with as little internal strife and conflict as possible.

“Trusted servants can explain the benefits of being a part of a local area, such as having the ability to reach out to more potential members and providing a unified approach to carrying NA's message.”

We encourage each member of the group to contribute thoughts and ideas. Our attitude of open-mindedness helps us remember that each group is part of a greater whole. Acknowledging that we are a part of something bigger than ourselves prompts us to look at still more new ideas. Our diversity can enrich us only when we are open to its richness.

It Works: How and Why

Putting your plan into action

NA groups and areas

There are many ways to help equip groups and areas with the resources they need to provide services. The following are some approaches that may be useful when providing fellowship development services:

📄 Regular **communication**—through mail, email, and phone calls—is often the only way to provide consistent service to some remote groups and areas. It is important to maintain ongoing communication—a committee may want to create a tracking log to make sure that contact is consistent. Friendships can be an effective way to reach out to a group or area, and they can be rewarding for the members.

📄 When possible, members, under the guidance of a service body, can **visit groups and areas** that may not be able or willing to attend a neighboring area’s service committee meeting. Members can also support recovery and service meetings by attending them on

“Members can also support recovery and service meetings by attending them on a regular basis.”

a regular basis. These visits seem to work best when a group of addicts, rather than one individual, reaches out. Visiting groups or service meetings on a regularly scheduled basis, even if it’s only every two months, is more likely to make a lasting impact. It is the consistent contact with other groups that is so helpful to groups and areas in need.

📄 **Workshops and learning days** are useful tools for strengthening groups and areas. (For information about how to conduct a newcomer workshop, see Chapter Six, “Criminal Justice”.) These events can help members find solutions and discover new ideas, and can provide a structured way to ask questions. Focusing on a specific aspect of service (such as translation questions) or specific needs (such as getting more trusted servants involved) seems to be the most useful approach for developing areas. Using brainstorming methods at these events can help the area or group find its own solutions. Including social gatherings, meals, and recovery meetings at these events can make service more attractive and create a sense of unity. Some areas and regions have created mobile or traveling workshops that are accountable to a service body. In planning for workshops, trusted servants can work with members who have asked for support to choose topics that best meet their needs.

- 📄 A committee can provide **orientations** for group service representatives. These orientations can be informal gatherings before an area service committee meeting or they can be more formal efforts, such as creating tailored training materials and providing presentations.
- 📄 An area may decide that sending **recovery** and **service material** is the most practical way to reach out to an isolated group or area. Sending resources like meeting directories of neighboring areas, NA literature, contact information for other groups and NA World Services, and recovery tapes or CDs can all be helpful approaches. Areas may also want to send resources that can be requested from NA World Services, such as area inventory guidelines, sample committee guidelines, and *A Guide to Local Services in NA*. Based on what is requested, an area may decide to create tailored resources that meet the specific needs of an area or group. The most important consideration is to find out which resources are likely to be most useful.
- 📄 An area service committee can provide ongoing financial support to fellowship development efforts by making it a regular part of the **area budget**. An area may decide to budget for a fellowship development travel fund. Travel funds can finance members' travel from a remote group or area to an area service meeting. Travel funds can also finance trips to groups or areas that have requested assistance. Budgeting helps trusted servants make realistic decisions about how much the area can afford to spend on a regular basis. Many areas are only able to budget for a small but regular shipment of literature or service material. A regular and modest supply of NA resources is often more helpful than a large one-time shipment that could end up becoming too expensive to maintain. Budgeting for fellowship development efforts will help areas sustain financial resources.

The next section, Incarcerated Members, concerns a specific fellowship development audience. Just as remote groups often request support from NA groups and areas, incarcerated members can often benefit from similar support.

Incarcerated members—inmate correspondence

An inmate correspondence program is another form of fellowship development. Reaching out to incarcerated members is not new to most trusted servants. Some fellowship development committees (or outreach committees) already provide this service, since trusted servants who actually bring meetings into institutions can run into challenges such as issues with inmate favoritism and facility rules. The following points can be considered when planning an inmate correspondence program:

- 📄 An area can define the purpose of an inmate correspondence program by answering some of the following questions: Is the purpose of the program to allow inmates to simply correspond with other NA members, or is it to provide sponsorship and access to formal step work? Should the correspondence program also respond to literature requests? Can the program address some combination of these requests?
- 📄 The area needs to decide who will be responsible for this function. Will it be a committee or area responsibility? How will members volunteer for this service opportunity?
- 📄 Using a PO box is often the only way to provide this service so that members can write to inmates anonymously. Safety issues can arise when inmates know where members live.

📄 If a committee is creating a step-writing correspondence program, it can develop written guidelines for members doing the corresponding (clean time requirements are often defined by these guidelines). This can help clarify the role of trusted servants who participate in this service.

📄 If the area decides that they will provide a correspondence or step-writing program, then they can attempt to define the nature of these relationships—usually, women write to women and men write to men. Step-writing programs can also include a disclaimer for inmates and members stating that mail is often monitored by correctional officials.

Inmate correspondence reaches a population of NA members who have to overcome very real obstacles. Inmates are often eager to work the steps and are just as hungry for recovery as groups struggling to grow in remote parts of the world. Sample guidelines can be obtained from neighboring areas, regions, or NA World Services.

Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Fellowship development can make a difference in NA's overall growth and effectiveness. Our ability to support those in need can mean the difference between a strong and thriving NA community and one that is isolated. Successful efforts can also make a difference in a new or incarcerated member's ability to connect with the NA program and find recovery. We can aspire to make it so that every action we take in service demonstrates our desire to carry NA's message of recovery.

Resources

Fellowship development inquiries

Sample letters

GOVERNMENT

Developing relationships with government agencies can help NA be seen as a more credible community resource. These relationships often result in staff of government agencies advocating for NA or providing opportunities for us to make

NA more widely known through programs like government-run public service announcements. In some parts of the world, the existence of Narcotics Anonymous depends on our ability to build and maintain positive relationships with the government. The most important thing is for us to patiently build solid long-term relationships so that more addicts have a chance to learn about NA.

This chapter offers general information about planning and interacting with **national** and **local government**, as well as specific information about interacting with **public service departments** and **police departments** (refer to the Criminal Justice chapter for information about correctional institutions, drug courts, etc.). Areas may want to review Chapter Four for general information about forming new relationships with any organization.

Key topics

Core PR principles

PR & government

Planning & preparation for areas & committees

Putting your plan into action

Resources

Key icons



Practical experience



Preparation and training tips





PR principles for discussion

Core public relations principles

This section is excerpted from Chapter Two.

Cooperation, not affiliation

Our experience has shown that we have many nonaddict friends who can advocate for NA. If a professional wants to support NA by sharing about the effectiveness of our program, they are free to do that. What we can do is try to ensure that the nonmember's enthusiasm for our program doesn't misrepresent the addict-to-addict nature of our program. NA is not a program where professionals treat addicts, but professionals often want to advocate for NA's viability because they have seen recovery working for their clients or loved ones. The role of the local service body in a situation like this is crucial. The NA community can provide training and establish accountability with the nonmember supporter; this way the nonmember supporter can become an asset to NA's primary purpose.

-  When building relationships with government agencies, how can the area ensure that they have not affiliated NA with this outside organization?
-  What are some ways that the area can cooperate with government agencies?

Public relations and government

Before attempting to build a relationship with any type of government agency, the area needs to be sure that this relationship can be supported through ongoing human and financial resources. Building these relationships can take a long time and can require substantial human resources. As stated in earlier chapters, prioritizing which services are most essential will help an area avoid taking on projects that might jeopardize their ability to provide basic services in their communities.

Planning and preparation for areas and committees

- ✎ Identifying the **purpose** of creating a relationship with government agencies can help an area make decisions about which government departments or agencies to contact. An area may decide to start with the local police department, for example, since they come into contact with addicts every day.
- ✎ When planning how to **communicate** with a government agency, trusted servants can highlight the kinds of resources NA can bring to the relationship. Communicating that NA is a viable (and free) community-based resource may make certain government agencies open to further discussions with us. Communication tools such as informational pamphlets, membership surveys, and *The NA Way Magazine* can also be helpful in establishing relationships with government agencies.
- ✎ As stated in Chapter Four, **researching** the organization we are planning to interact with is important—and this is especially true with any government agency we are planning to form a relationship with. Websites and referral directories can be a good place to begin this research.

“It is also helpful to keep up-to-date with the current government policies...”

Understanding these policies can help trusted servants know how best to approach a particular government agency.

- ✎ We can also research what would be the best way to **contact** a certain government agency. Contact could be made through a letter, phone call, email, or visit. An area’s research should show what would be the most effective way to communicate and whom the area should communicate with.
- ✎ Trusted servants can focus on the **long-term benefits** of building a relationship with the government. It is important to keep in mind that these service efforts may not produce immediate results. Although this kind of service requires patience, these relationships can have a profound effect on the ability of addicts to find NA in the future.
- ✎ When planning to make a presentation to a government agency, the area can think about which **trusted servants** are likely to be best suited for these presentations. Members who have some experience in working with government officials may help to ensure more positive results and can help train other trusted servants in how to interact with government agencies.

In order to serve well, each element of our service structure must make an earnest effort at effective communication. As groups, as trusted servants, as service boards and committees, we must share fully with others, and listen carefully and respectfully to their words.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Putting your plan into action

- ☞ Trusted servants can begin these relationships by establishing communication with one government department (for example, a health and human services department, criminal justice department, or a local police department). After an area has built NA's credibility through this initial relationship, trusted servants can ask who in other departments may be able to benefit from information about Narcotics Anonymous.
- ☞ One way to build a relationship with government agencies is to request an exhibit booth at a government-run conference or event. This is an effective way to begin a dialogue and can also be an opportunity for trusted servants to meet people who may not be accessible through correspondence or other general PR efforts.
- ☞ Part of establishing a relationship means that trusted servants must find common ground with the organization they are interacting with. An area may discover that certain government agencies have a negative attitude about addicts or addiction. A police department, for example, might not be instantly receptive to what NA has to offer since they primarily deal with addicts who commit crimes. It is helpful for trusted servants to understand where these attitudes come from and focus on where we do have ideas and goals in common.
- ☞ A very practical guideline for building a relationship with a government agency (or any relationship, for that matter) is to listen to the feedback that's being given. If a certain agency has declined an area's attempt to form a relationship, then it is best to respect that feedback by not continuing to make the same requests. We can always ask about an agency's reasons for not wanting to interact with us, and we can bring that information back to the area for discussion. The area may then decide to contact the department each year through an informational letter or make contact with a different department. We don't want to give up on these relationships, but we want to always be receptive and respectful to the feedback we are given.
- ☞ Visual aids can be a useful tool in presentations given to government agencies (a government presentation template is contained in the addendum to this chapter). These visual aids can help trusted servants stay focused on the presentation material and can be useful for inexperienced trusted servants. Visual aids that provide information about the global nature of Narcotics Anonymous can also have a powerful effect on the audience's perception of Narcotics Anonymous as an effective, global organization.
- ☞ If the area has a relationship with the local or national government and members from World Services are planning a visit to that local area, trusted servants may want to assess if it would be beneficial to set up a meeting. In some cases, government officials may be offended if local members don't offer to introduce member-representatives from world services. Valuing this type of hierarchical tradition may be part of a

government's culture. If a meeting is arranged, the involvement of local members is crucial to maintaining these relationships after initial contact has been made.


- 📄 We want to be sure to communicate to a government agency that NA does not endorse any sort of government policies or legislation.

Public service departments

Public service departments such as family and social services agencies can be good organizations to form relationships with. Public service agencies like these frequently interact with those suffering from active addiction. Trusted servants can train social service department workers in how NA can be used as a resource. Establishing a relationship using the techniques outlined earlier in this chapter can provide the area with an opportunity to give presentations (see Chapter Four for information about how to give effective presentations) so that the department is well informed about what NA has to offer their clients. Trusted servants can stay in contact with the organization by providing updated meeting directories and NA contact information.

Police departments

As many of us know, police officers frequently interact with addicts. Because of these frequent interactions, an area may decide to build a relationship with the local police department. Part of planning for a relationship with local police can be a discussion of members' concerns about whether police officers should observe meetings. These discussions can help trusted servants come up with solutions that the area can agree on. If an area then decides that interacting with local police would benefit addicts in the community, then they can begin the relationship by providing meeting schedules and NA literature. Trusted servants may also want to consider giving a presentation to officers at the police academy. As always, maintaining ongoing contact with local police departments can allow for more meaningful relationships. We can strive for having a local police department come to trust NA as a valuable community resource.

 To attract the still-suffering addict to our program, we must take vigorous steps to make our program more widely known. The better and broader our public relations, the better we will be able to serve.

It Works: How and Why

Building long-lasting relationships with government agencies requires areas to be consistent and patient. Yet maintaining these relationships can mean that Narcotics Anonymous becomes a trusted resource for those who often have a far-reaching effect on addicts in the community.

Resources

Audiovisual template for government presentations

conclusion

As it states in Step Twelve of our Basic Text: “The steps do not end here. The steps are a new beginning!” So it is with our public relations efforts. This “new beginning” is likely to take on many variations. Public relations means that we begin thinking differently about our personal behavior and about the ways we perform our roles in an area service committee. Some of us may begin acting as mentors to those newer to service. Others may take time to gain a better understanding of NA’s Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts prior to initiating relationships with the public. Public relations may simply mean leaving our home group facility better than we found it. Hopefully, this handbook helps us begin to act as NA’s ambassadors. We begin to become more aware of the ways each of us affects NA’s relationships with the public. And we begin to responsibly create long-term relationships with the public—relationships that allow for more and more addicts to find recovery in NA. We are the ones who can continue to help NA become a more viable and credible resource in our communities.

PUBLIC RELATIONS HANDBOOK

PUBLISHED RESOURCES

Area Planning Tool	October 2006
<i>chapter 2</i>	
Core PR Principles	March 2007
<i>chapter 3</i>	
Effective Services	June 2007
<i>chapter 4</i>	
Preparation and Training	March 2007
<i>chapter 5</i>	
Media	March 2007
<i>chapter 6</i>	
Criminal Justice	March/June 2007
<i>chapter 7</i>	
Treatment	March 2007
<i>chapter 9</i>	
Phonelines	March 2007
<i>chapter 10</i>	
Internet Technology	June 2007
<i>chapter 11</i>	
Event Planning	March/June 2007
<i>chapter 12</i>	
Fellowship Development	June 2007

Additional *Public Relations Handbook* chapter resources will be published and added as they become available. Enhanced versions are often posted on our website, www.na.org.

To view other PR related resources, visit our website,
www.na.org/?ID=PR2

AREA PLANNING TOOL

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AREA PLANNING TOOL

Purpose and benefits of planning

Why plan?

The one-sentence answer to that question is that planning helps us better carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Planning helps any service committee come together to determine where services are most needed and decide how best to move toward agreed-upon goals.

The aim of an area service committee (ASC) is to coordinate services on behalf of the groups served by that area. In essence, an area is the way in which all groups join together in an effort to further NA's primary purpose—to make our message of recovery available and accessible to everyone in their community.

When there is no planning, it's easy for areas to function in a vacuum. Often a service body will move forward in a status quo fashion—"this is the way we have always done it" may be the theme song. And with this theme song, areas may find that their committees do not work together with each other, with the group service representatives (GSRs), and with the administrative body.

This planning process is also beneficial for regions and zones. The focus here is on the area service committee, yet the planning steps can be applied to regional and zonal service settings. Whether the service body is an area, region, or zone, we encourage members to use the planning process.

Benefits of planning

T*o fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf of NA as a whole.*

First Concept

As addicts, we know how it feels when others make decisions for us. Many of us lived our lives by default in active addiction. Just as recovery allows us to become "acceptable, responsible, and productive" individuals, it also allows us to incorporate these qualities in our service efforts. Through planning, each member of the area service committee is better able to participate in responsible choice-making, and members' contributions are valued.

Planning helps us focus and coordinate service activities on behalf of the groups. We join together with the knowledge that our service efforts will help ensure that no addict seeking recovery need die from the horrors of addiction.

Who plans?

All trusted servants of an area service committee participate in planning; however, certain members need to be entrusted with the responsibility of setting the planning process into action. In many areas, this responsibility would fall to the administrative body of the area,

with the area chairperson typically facilitating the process. Some areas may choose to create an ad hoc committee whose membership is composed of various trusted servants along with the administrative body.

For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.

Fifth Concept

Why the administrative body? Those trusted servants are elected by the area and are accountable to the area as a whole. The area chairperson facilitates the discussion during the

Remember...

The planning process will benefit from a facilitator who is familiar with the planning steps, able to engage members, and able to keep the body focused on the task at hand.

ASC meetings and, often together with other members of the administrative body, is responsible for setting the agenda of the area meeting. Of course, there may be instances when an area body may choose a different member to facilitate the process, but for continuity and accountability, we suggest using the area chairperson. Your regional delegate or another experienced member not currently serving at the area may also be used, which allows the area chairperson to participate in these discussions.

Preparation

Once an area service committee decides to proceed with planning for its services, adequate time should be allocated. Trusted servants of the area, including the GSRs, should be given time to inform groups and members of the area about the planning process and scheduled meeting date(s). Providing an opportunity for everyone who desires to be involved in the process is an important aspect of planning. The process may benefit from the participation of experienced members who are not currently of service to the area and of new members.

There are things that need to be considered before members can actually sit down and plan. A few simple, straightforward actions can help the planning sessions to be productive and fulfilling for all members involved.

There are seven planning steps: gathering information, listing the issues, developing goals, prioritizing goals, creating approaches, prioritizing approaches, and developing an action plan. Each step is necessary to the overall development and creation of the plan.

- ♦ **Meeting space** — Is the size of the meeting room adequate? Does the meeting room provide for the creation of small groups during brainstorming sessions? Is the meeting space easily accessible—in a central location for most members of the area?
- ♦ **Communication** — Is there enough time to give adequate notice of the upcoming planning meeting? Have the days, times, and locations of planning sessions been communicated to members of the area?

- ♦ **Commitment** — The seven action steps to this planning process may occur in one meeting or over a course of two or three meetings. We want to inform the members of the number and dates of the planning meetings to help ensure that members participating in the process remain consistent throughout the planning.
- ♦ **Planning materials** — Each table will benefit from having paper and pens. As thoughts and ideas arise, we want to be able to write them down. The facilitator needs large paper or post-it pads and markers to record the information from the discussions so every member can read what is recorded.
- ♦ **Refreshments** — Has the area committee discussed providing coffee, tea, water, or snacks for the planning sessions? In this discussion, we may want to consider the volunteer commitment and the importance of creating a welcoming, hospitable atmosphere. Sometimes service bodies do not realize that providing refreshments helps to promote a sense of community.

The seven planning steps

Key topics

- ❶ **Gathering information**
- ❷ **Listing the issues**
- ❸ **Developing goals**
(identify “what,” not “how”)
- ❹ **Prioritizing goals**
- ❺ **Creating approaches**
(actions to reach goals)
- ❻ **Prioritizing approaches**
(a second look)
- ❼ **Developing an action plan**

1 Gathering information – step one

This can be accomplished through an area inventory, or through some other, more informal process. What’s important is that the planning process begins with trusted servants identifying what services are working, where improvement is needed, and whether services are absent. It’s essential for this step to address both how the area is functioning internally and how the area is interacting with the larger community—how this information is gathered is less important. The following four topics can help ensure that the area looks at itself, as well as outside of itself:

- ♦ How well has the area done this year in serving the groups, and how can it better serve them in the coming year?
- ♦ How well has the area committee served the larger community, and how can it improve?
- ♦ How well has the area functioned in the past year? Do area subcommittees and trusted servants understand the work assigned to them?
- ♦ How well has the ASC supported and collaborated with NA’s regional and world services? How can the area provide better support for these services?

Remember...

A key to this step is for the area to begin thinking about itself from a new perspective. For example, members may not regularly consider what the groups want from the area, and what might be lacking in those relationships. If groups don't participate at the area meeting, for instance, the area can use this step to think about ways to give those groups attention and support. In addition, this step can help the area to think about its relationships in the community, and whether or not NA is seen as a reliable and credible program of recovery. All of these relationships—both with each other in the area and with those outside of NA—help in the work of carrying NA's message to suffering addicts.

Every service committee or organization develops patterns of behavior over time. This is an opportunity for a frank discussion about what behaviors at the area meeting and with its subcommittees are working and what can be improved. Do new GSRs know what is expected of them? Is the area meeting welcoming and effective? Does the area understand and take responsibility for its subcommittees and the work they have been asked to do on the area's behalf?

Reviewing the area's relationships with regional and world services is also important to this step. Members may begin to recognize support that's been available but never used. Regional trusted servants, for example, may have experience that could help improve services and strengthen subcommittees.

This step allows the area to think about itself in a new way; looking closely at our relationships with those outside of NA, as well as the ties that bind us inside NA, helps to ensure a thorough planning process.

There is a sample area inventory in the addenda to this document. An area could consider sending an inventory such as this one to the groups, compile the information, and then proceed with step two. Or an area may want to begin gathering information in the area service meeting and move right on to step two. Some areas routinely take an inventory and will use that inventory for this step. There is no wrong way to begin this planning process.

2 Listing the issues – step two

Through the information-gathering process, the ASC has accumulated a wealth of information. The area now begins the process of identifying issues in order to resolve service areas that do not function well and improve services.

This step is usually best accomplished by using small groups with six to ten members in each group. In small groups, members can freely share ideas and brainstorm solutions. A time should be set, say, thirty to sixty minutes, to review the information that has been gathered and then to create a list of issues in each small group.

Facilitation tip

While the small groups are brainstorming issues, the facilitator can review the gathered information and create an initial list of broad categories. Broad topics might include *training and mentoring, relationships with the community, financial issues, cooperation among subcommittees, etc.* The facilitator then brings the entire group back together and asks members from the small groups to share the issues they developed during brainstorming. The facilitator lists each specific issue under the broad categories (for example, lack of informed GSRs can go under training and mentoring; meetings being asked to leave facilities can go under relationships with the community). If there are issues that fall outside of the already-created categories, the group can create a new category. There will likely be overlapping issues listed under the broad categories. **The goal of this step is for the group to identify the broad categories with a list of specific examples for each category.**

3 Developing goals (identify “what,” not “how”) – step three

Now begins the process of creating goals to address the broad categories and specific issues listed underneath. For example, if “training and monitoring” was listed as a broad category with several specific issues listed underneath, the goals might be *regularly scheduled learning days, overlapping terms for all trusted servants, GSR orientation, and area support is available to train group-level trusted servants.* Goals are clear, concise, and result-oriented statements that are achievable. The key is for the goal to be an outcome or a result. The body can again use small groups to create goals for the broad category that contains the identified issues.

Facilitation tip

Be sure to remind the group that setting goals does not include discussing how to achieve the goal. The task is simply to identify the outcome. Also remind the group that some goals can be met quickly, some will take a year to achieve, while others may span over a longer period. After the small groups have created goals, the facilitator can write out each identified goal with the issue it attempts to address listed underneath.

4 Prioritizing goals – step four

Remember...

If the planning process does not take place during the actual area service committee meeting, the planning group presents the plan to the ASC for full adoption.

Now the entire group looks over the list of goals and prioritizes the list. When considering which goal is a priority, it may be wise to consider the area's human and financial resources, as well as which goals seem most urgent to complete. Every member has a set number of goal choices (for example, each member will choose his or her top five priorities) and makes a mark (check, star, dot, etc.) next to each goal that is considered a priority. When all participants have made their choices, the facilitator will count and mark which goals have received the most choices. The goals with the highest number of marks become the priority issues for the area.

5 Creating approaches (actions to reach goals) – step five

What is an approach? An approach describes how to reach a specific goal—what steps an area has to take to achieve its identified and prioritized goals. The plan to reach a goal takes into consideration all current area efforts, the information that was gathered from the groups and area inventory sessions, and new ideas. In the interest of simplicity, members may want to limit the number of steps to achieve each goal to two or three.

In creating approaches, the group may recognize that the area already has some existing approaches for some of the identified goals. Areas often have steps to reach their goals, yet frequently haven't discussed these during service meetings or through any area planning process. If a current strategy is working, then include that under existing approaches.

Facilitation tip

Remember that this is often where we get stuck! We can agree on what needs to be done but argue about how it should be accomplished. Following are two options for how to proceed with developing approaches: **1)** The first option is for the planning body to break into small groups to develop approaches. In this option, each small group is responsible for developing ways to reach one goal and then reports their approach to all members present. Members of the large group can offer their ideas to the small group as each group shares their ideas.

2) Another option is for the area administrative body or area subcommittee to develop approaches to be presented at the ASC meeting. Asking a particular subcommittee to create approaches for identified goals, particularly if the identified goal pertains to that committee, can be a useful option, just as it may make the most sense to ask the administrative body to develop approaches that pertain to how the area operates.

6 Prioritizing approaches (a second look) – step six

The planning body now needs to consider prioritizing the approaches for each goal. Members review each goal and the identified steps, keeping human and financial area resources in mind. Are there enough willing members to achieve this approach? Will the area be able to continue providing existing services while adding this approach to achieve a stated goal? While considering the area's resources, members also think about whether this is the best approach to reach a goal and address whether this is a critical issue for area service provision.

This reprioritization process is deliberate and decisive. Members simply rank the developed approaches, clearly identifying their priorities using a number ordering system of 1, 2, and 3. Even though this may be difficult, a numbering system sets firm parameters, and these can be very helpful.

Remember...

An area should remain focused on its goals and the actions to achieve these goals, rather than be thrown off course with “new ideas” that could come up during a year. Sometimes unanticipated, seemingly urgent issues may surface during a year. For example, six months into the area plan, a GSR might make a motion to have an area convention. A plan gives an area a way to evaluate these issues or concerns more responsibly by reviewing them against the area's prioritized goals. A question to ask may be: *Does this idea, opportunity, or request fit within the goals and priorities an area has identified for*

a year? Answering this question helps an area service committee remain focused on its prioritized goals rather than be sidetracked by new ideas that may be raised.

7 Developing an action plan – step seven

The action plan is usually developed by the area administrative body or area planning ad hoc committee in a meeting that occurs outside of the usual area meeting. These trusted servants set time aside between meetings to develop the action plan.

This is the step preceding implementation. An action plan is created for each approach. In this phase, the administrative body (or ad hoc committee) identifies:

1. tasks that need to be done,
2. time frames for accomplishing the tasks,
3. trusted servants who are responsible for completing the tasks,
4. resources that are needed, and
5. a completion date.

The trusted servants on the ASC's administrative body are usually asked to complete this step because they, in particular the chairperson, represent the single point of accountability for the area service committee.

Remember...

An action plan helps members remain focused on the goal, on the approach, and on the completion date; in short, it is easier for members to be accountable. Everyone involved knows what needs to be done, who is doing the work, and when to anticipate each step's completion.

Communicating progress at each area meeting helps in monitoring the process. Even though a plan covers the year ahead, we do not want each step to take a year. Also, communication helps with troubleshooting—an area may see obstacles and be able to resolve them through discussion as they arise. For example, resources, human or financial, may not be adequate to complete an action step. Providing the area body with this information and discussing solutions guide members to make the necessary adjustments.

Maintaining the plan

Implementing and monitoring the plan

With the planning process completed and the area's plans and goals approved, the area body is ready to put the plan into action—goals, approaches, and action plans.

Goals and plans are usually given to area subcommittees for completion. For example, if a goal involves contacting community medical professionals, more than likely that goal and action plan would be forwarded to the public information committee. In areas where no specific

subcommittee structure exists, the area committee may create workgroups or ad hoc committees to complete the task. Each workgroup needs a clear purpose to help the area achieve its goals. However, not every goal requires a workgroup or permanent subcommittee.

Work plans

Once the goals with the action plans have been delegated to committees and workgroups, the members of these groups create their work plans. A work plan is more specific than an action plan. Members within each committee or workgroup accept responsibility for certain aspects of the action plan.

Work plans consider human and financial resources. Will it take a member sixteen hours to complete a task, or sixty hours? How much money will it take, and when will money most likely be needed? These two resource areas are included in a progress report to the area.

A work plan will also be more specific with time frames. If thirty-day milestones have been projected in an action plan, a work plan may show forty-five days to reach identified points because the committee members have identified more details and challenges than were considered when the action plan was developed.

Record keeping and reporting

Accurate record keeping and reporting can help an area improve its annual planning process. A committee reports its progress to the ASC on a regular basis, usually at every service meeting. This information captures an accurate picture of the time and money that are involved in accomplishing any area goal, and helps set the stage for more realistic planning in subsequent planning cycles.

Planning cycle

Each year an area committee should update its plan using the following steps:

- ◆ Review plan from last year and assess progress and remaining priorities
- ◆ Gather new information on members' needs, area's operational performance, etc.
- ◆ Review longer (two- to three-year) goals and establish new priorities and approaches for the upcoming year

Ideally, the decisions that an area committee makes during its planning process drive the focus of the work and use of area resources for the upcoming year. As a result, an area may consider setting its annual planning session as follows:

- ◆ as soon as the new ASC administrative body is elected
- ◆ prior to the development of the area budget
- ◆ prior to the development of goals from area subcommittees

Adaptations

Each area will need to determine how many meetings it needs to accomplish the planning process. We identified steps based on the notion that an area meets monthly, and this planning would be in addition to the business meeting. For example, if an area usually meets for two hours, they may choose to add a couple of hours to each business meeting over a

two- to three-month period. Other areas may choose to shorten their business meetings or to have the planning meeting separate from the area meeting and devote a full day to planning. Once the initial plan is created and approved by the area service committee, yearly updates should only take an hour or two.

Time frames are contingent upon the size of an area and the number of members involved in the planning. Of course, regions and zones may opt to meet over a weekend and target one full day for planning. This is fluid and flexible. Remember, as our Basic Text tells us, “If it’s not practical, it’s not spiritual.”

Area planning outline

All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body’s decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes.

Seventh Concept

I. Purposes and benefits of planning

- ◆ Improve efforts to fulfill NA’s primary purpose
- ◆ Involve diverse member interests and perspectives
- ◆ Build stronger consensus
- ◆ Provide clear priorities for use of resources
- ◆ Achieve greater consistency in direction over the short and long term
- ◆ Improve accountability for attaining goals

II. Preparing to plan

- ◆ Who should be involved
 - GSRs
 - area administrative body
 - committee chairs
 - interested area members
- ◆ Logistics for planning session
 - identify specific time for planning sessions
 - allow adequate time for information to be passed to members and groups
 - identify facility to meet planning needs
 - create productive environment for planning sessions

III. The seven planning steps

- ◆ Step one: Gathering information
 - types of information to be gathered
 - ❖ the needs and challenges of members and local groups
 - ❖ the effectiveness of current area services, activities, procedures, subcommittees, and operations
 - ❖ the quality of relationships with the public/community including perceptions of NA and the local area service structure
 - tools to help gather information
 - ❖ sample area inventory tool that follows this outline
 - ❖ area planning tool A: sample group questionnaire
 - ❖ area planning tool B: sample questionnaire for evaluating issues in the community
 - ❖ consensus of points raised during an area service meeting
 - review information gathered and issues to be addressed
 - ❖ distribute information and planning session agenda prior to planning meeting
 - ❖ review NAWS Vision Statement and purpose for an area service committee
- ◆ Step two: Listing the issues
 - discuss information gathered
 - develop categorized, prioritized list of issues
- ◆ Step three: Developing goals
 - define what makes a good goal (including the fact that goals can take more than a year to reach); provide examples
 - create goals for each key area (service and/or operational)
- ◆ Step four: Prioritizing goals
 - discuss importance of prioritizing – area's human and financial support
 - decide method for prioritizing goals
 - set priorities
- ◆ Step five: Creating approaches
 - define what makes a good approach; provide examples
 - integrate current area services and activities with new ideas
 - develop approaches for each goal (begin with priority goals)
- ◆ Step six: Prioritizing approaches
 - discuss importance of approaches and need to prioritize these
 - set priorities
- ◆ Step seven: Developing an action plan
 - explain the need for these plans
 - reach agreement as to who develops
 - develop an action plan

IV. Implementing and monitoring the plan

- ◆ Implementing the plan
 - use the area subcommittees (or workgroups) to effectively implement the plan
 - develop committee tasks and work plans, keeping in mind ASC budget and human resources
- ◆ Monitoring the plan
 - schedule committee reporting to ASC — how often and for what purpose
 - use area meetings to discuss progress and address issues
 - keep groups and members informed
 - develop ways to consider new area ideas once the plan is developed and adopted

V. Planning cycle

- ◆ Annual review of adopted plan
 - assess progress with goals and plan
 - gather new information from members
 - review multiyear goals — update approaches
- ◆ Scheduling the planning session
 - upon election of the new ASC body
 - prior to the development of the area budget and subcommittee goals

AREA INVENTORY

An area may want to send this inventory or a similar set of questions to the groups. Members or groups can answer each question with a number from one to five, using a scale such as:

①	②	③	④	⑤
Not at all	Needs improvement	Adequate	Outstanding	Excellent

When the numbers are totaled for each question, the area can see what most needs improvement (1) and what is going quite well already (5).

How well has the area served local groups this year?

- How well does the area communicate with local groups? _____
- How well does the area respond to the needs of local groups? _____
- How well is the area managing its donations and area treasury? _____
- How effectively does the area demonstrate responsibility and accountability? _____
- How fully does the area train and support members who serve on the area service committee? _____
- How well does the area service committee foster an atmosphere of courtesy and mutual respect? _____
- How completely does the area provide opportunities for communication about committee concerns to the local members and groups? _____
- How well is a sense of unity fostered within the area service body? _____
- How positively is a sense of unity shown within local groups? _____
- What is the area's experience with trusted servants? _____
- How well has the area fostered the willingness of the local fellowship to volunteer for service positions? _____
- How well does the area practice continuity and rotation? _____
- How well does the area function in maintaining a full complement of trusted servants, with no open commitments? _____
- How fully does the area create an environment where the conscience of the body guides the decisions and direction of the area? _____

How well has the area done this year in making NA's message more widely known in the larger community?

- How well is the area communicating with those in the community who interact with addicts? _____

- How completely does the area respond to the needs of the larger community? _____

- How well is the area using human and financial resources to carry NA's message of recovery in an efficient and effective way? _____
- How fully trained and supported are the trusted servants who interact with members of the community? _____
- How well has the area built cooperative relationships with those in the larger community? _____
- How easily can those in the larger community reach an NA member who is in a position to respond to their questions or requests? _____

How well has the area cooperated and collaborated with the region and NA World Services this year?

- How effectively does the area communicate with the region and with NA World Services? _____
- How well does the area respond to requests from the region and from NA World Services? How fully does the area share its needs and concerns with the region and NA World Services? _____
- How reliably does the area forward funds to the region and/or NA World Services?____

- How effectively does the area use resources (such as written materials or experience from other trusted servants) that are available through the region and/or NA World Services? _____
- How fully has the area formed a cooperative relationship with the region and NA World Services? _____
- How well is the area creating a sense of unity with the region and NA World Services?

Is there any particular area of service and/or area function that you perceive is outstanding?
Please identify: _____

Is there any particular area of service and/or area function that you perceive would need improvement? Please identify: _____

SAMPLE PLANNING SESSION AGENDA

Focus on task

20 minutes

- Review planning session purpose, format, and anticipated outcomes.
- Review NA Vision Statement, ASC purpose statement, traditions, and concepts.
- Briefly discuss the future of the area and the effect the area can have on the members, groups, and community at large.

Develop issues

45 minutes

- Review, clarify, and discuss the information from the area inventory.
- Create broad categories—list issues.

Set goals

45 minutes

- Set goals for each issue identified.
- Prioritize goals.

Develop approaches

45 minutes

- For each goal, review and evaluate current area services and activities.
- Brainstorm new items.
- Create and write down approaches for each goal.
- Prioritize strategies under each goal.

Take next steps

30 minutes

- Discuss what steps need to be taken to document information and approve the area plan.
- Identify next steps to: 1) prepare for plan implementation, including determining subcommittees and workgroups needed, 2) assign goals to subcommittees and workgroups, and 3) develop work plans.

As the title of this page indicates, this is simply a *sample* agenda, and the times next to each step are approximate. The amount of time for each step will vary with the number of members involved in the planning process, the depth of the information gathered from the area inventory, and the number of issues that are identified.

As we mentioned earlier in this document, these tasks may need to be carried out over two area meetings, and in some instances the area planning sessions may need to be extended to three sessions.

Regardless, we suggest that breaks—opportunities for members to stand, use the bathroom, get something to drink, etc.—be built into the process. A twenty-minute break for every 90 to 120 minutes of work is a good guideline.

ANOTHER OPTION FOR STEP TWO LISTING ISSUES:

1. Everyone gets three 5x8 cards and a marker; they are asked to write one issue per card
2. The facilitator asks randomly for the first card; the card is placed on the wall.
3. Other “like-minded” cards are also placed on the wall in a vertical line.
4. Cards will have varying levels of detail; the facilitator identifies one of the cards as the title card for that list, and also creates a sort of outline from the other cards based on subtopic and level of detail.
5. Some cards may need to move to a new category, as the group deems necessary; others may need to be put into a parking lot.
6. This process continues until all cards are on the wall. The result is five to eight general topics with various subtopic and detail cards below.
7. Participants are asked to prioritize the category title cards using dots; the result is a prioritized list of issues (title cards) along with supportive outline.

GOAL-SETTING WORKSHEET

Broad category: Training and mentoring		
Issue	Goal	Priority Rating
<i>Lack of informed GSRs</i>	Regularly scheduled & innovative learning days	

Broad category: Relationships with the community		
Issue	Goal	Priority Rating
<i>Meetings being asked to leave facilities</i>	Strong relationships with local meeting facilities	

GOAL AND APPROACHES (STEPS) TO REACH GOAL

GOAL: Strong relationships with local meeting facilities

Existing area practices, services, activities related to the goal	Overall Priority Ranking
1. Pay rent and check in with facility manager	
New ideas (approaches/strategies)	
1. Create open exchange with facility manager	
2. Invite facility representatives to attend open NA meeting	

Make additional copies as needed

RESOURCE FOR

chapter two

CORE

PUBLIC RELATIONS

PRINCIPLES

contents

Tradition scenarios..... |

TRADITION SCENARIOS

Before trusted servants begin public relations efforts, they may want to take some time to discuss the scenarios below. These are examples of the kinds of public relations situations that could require putting NA's Twelve Traditions into practice. This document is created so that committee members can improve their skills in applying NA's traditions through practice and role-playing. Keep in mind that these scenarios are simply examples; we encourage committees to discuss the traditions in the context of their own service situations.

Setup: Provide each participant with a copy of this document, and be sure each table has a copy of the *Public Relations Handbook*, *It Works: How and Why*, and the Basic Text. Pens and note paper can also be distributed to each table.

Resources: The tradition essays in *It Works: How and Why*, and the information contained in Chapter Two of the *Public Relations Handbook*, can be used as resources.

Facilitator: Ask each table to read the first scenario and discuss, amongst themselves, the example and the questions following the example. (10 minutes) Once each group has discussed the scenario, ask each table to report the key point of their discussion. Lead the group in a discussion that identifies a common understanding of the tradition illustrated in the example. (15 minutes) This process can be repeated for all tradition scenarios.



Note: When a committee decides to use their own service situations to discuss the traditions, the facilitator can invite the group to help create scenarios. Committee members can begin by identifying common service issues and the accompanying tradition. This identification of service issues can happen at a brief meeting before the discussion or by using email.

Real-life service examples help us discuss principles in a meaningful way. Some of the issues raised may pertain to the work of a specific committee and some may be more general public relations issues in the community. The discussions about all these issues, regardless of the identified committee, should be shared with the area. This action will help all involved gain a better understanding of our traditions.

Cooperation

A group has been holding meetings in the same facility for several years. Recently, group members have neglected to properly maintain the facility, allowing members to discard cigarettes on the property, leave coffee cups around the meeting room, and ride their motorcycles close to the entrance of the facility. The group shares the building with members of the public, and the facility manager is upset by complaints about NA from other occupants.

In a cooperative spirit, how could group members work with the property manager to restore a good relationship? How can the group discuss ways to cooperate with the property manager to restore the relationship between NA and this member of the public? For example, could the group clean up the entire property and then consistently maintain the cleanliness of the meeting space? What steps could the group take to amend the damage caused?

Affiliation

A group member sees a copy of a church bulletin and becomes alarmed because an NA group that meets in the facility is listed in the bulletin. The member brings this matter to the group's business meeting to discuss traditions that may have been violated. Members believe that a few traditions could be violated, including affiliation.

During the group's discussion, members are asked to consider if this listing is affiliating with the church, or if it is providing information to those who receive the bulletin. Are there additional organizations that meet at the facility listed in the church bulletin? How can we help to make members in our community aware that this is *not* affiliation or endorsement?

Endorsement

A public information committee would like to print the area's NA meeting schedule in a local newspaper to inform the community about NA meetings. Many members in the area service committee voice concerns that if the meeting schedule is published in that particular newspaper, it may be perceived that the newspaper is endorsing NA.

How can a local committee better inform the public that NA meetings are an available resource for addicts to recover? How do we help make our members aware that providing information relates to our primary purpose and is not affiliation or endorsement?

Self-Support

A local public information committee is offered a free exhibit booth at a health fair being hosted by a hospital. Many community providers (such as treatment centers, health screening tables, and social service agencies of the city) will be present; however, NA is the only organization being offered a free booth. The teenage son of the hospital's CEO is a member of NA, and the table is being offered free to NA because the CEO is so grateful.

How can the committee participate in the health fair and still remain self-supporting?

Anonymity

A local television station is producing a series on addiction and one of its featured segments is "Narcotics Anonymous—A Community Resource." In this segment, an NA member is featured as spokesperson for NA in the community and the interview is conducted showing the member's full face. The member who was interviewed has no problem with breaking his anonymity.

How can the committee work with the member and the television station to maintain personal anonymity?

RESOURCES FOR

chapter three

EFFECTIVE SERVICES

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SERVICE DELIVERY EVALUATION FORM

As an area or region implements an action plan that springs from its inventory and area planning, it may want to evaluate the progress being made toward the goals. Here is a sample tool that an area or region can use to do that type of assessment.

Reporting period:

Project _____ Committee _____

Chair _____ Vice-chair _____

Status of the identified project (Goal)





Check one "Status" box for each item in the action plan and explain, if necessary, in the "Explanation" box.

	Action	Status (4)			Explanation
		C	I	W	
①					
②					
③					
④					

C = completed; **I** = in progress/to be completed by (enter date in "Explanation" box); **W** = will not be met by end of term (requires explanation)

Additional accomplishments and activities

Identify other major activities and accomplishments regarding the project over this past reporting cycle. This is where a committee could list activities that have taken place, including the completion of one or more actions.

Project issues – Challenges encountered

Indicate below any needs or challenges you've encountered in attempting to complete your project, along with recommendations. Also indicate if any decision or action is required. Attach additional sheet if more space is needed.

Item #	Implementation need or challenge	Recommendation	Action needed

Project outcomes

Indicate below any outcomes of the project. Include planned and unplanned outcomes.

Outcome:
Outcome:
Outcome:
Outcome:

Final thoughts

Include any unaddressed issues or items of importance.

Chair _____
Signature Date

SERVICE DELIVERY EVALUATION FORM

SAMPLE

Report date _____ Committee _____

Chair _____ Vice-chair _____

Status of the identified project: Meeting directories updated and accurate

Action plan

Action #1: Recruit members from area service who are willing to visit meetings in the schedule (*for meetings whose GSR does not attend the area service meeting*). Status **I**

Action #2: Ask GSRs who attend the area service meeting to read their group's entry in the meeting schedule, make changes if needed, and initial. Status **I**

Action #3: Proofread meeting directories. Status **I**

Action #4: Develop schedule to review meeting directories on a regular, ongoing basis. Status **I**

Additional accomplishments

- ❶ New members from the area joined the schedule committee for this project.
- ❷ Attended more recovery meetings and interacted with more members while updating the schedule.

Project issues – Challenges encountered

Action #1

Challenge: projected that we would visit all meetings in the area within 30 days

Recommendation: change timeline to complete visiting meetings to 60 days

Action needed: support from ASC

Action #3

We found that we needed more than one person to proof the directory

Action #4

Challenge: develop schedule to review meeting directories

Recommendation: change to annual review rather than biannual

Action needed: consensus from ASC body

Project outcomes

Outcome: GSRs have updated their meetings and initialed (completed within 30 days).

Outcome: Meeting directories have been proofread.

RESOURCES FOR

chapter four

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

FOR INTERACTING




WITH THE PUBLIC

contents





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SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE PR LETTERS

When your committee decides to send information to professionals within your community (treatment directors, physicians, employment assistance directors, etc.), a sample letter from this handbook may be useful. In the event that a committee doesn't find one of these sample letters relevant, we have highlighted the following suggestions to consider when composing your own letter:

-  Prior to initiating contact, inform your ASC and RSC, as well as any subcommittees or NA groups that might be affected by an influx of telephone calls or potential members. This kind of communication is important to making these service efforts more successful.
-  Use the individual's full name and title; for example, Mr. Joseph Green, Executive Director.
-  Use first-class postage.

Creating the letter

-  Be brief and to the point. Professionals receive large quantities of correspondence and are more apt to read a short letter.
-  One model for letter writing is for the first paragraph to introduce the material you plan to outline in the letter; the body of the letter is to provide all relevant information; and the concluding paragraph is to recap the information provided in the body of the letter.
-  Opening of the letter: For example, an introductory paragraph might read: *We are writing to inform you about NA in your community. This letter will provide you with _____. We hope you find the following information and enclosed materials helpful.*
-  Body of the letter: When considering what information to include in the body of the letter, the following questions may be helpful:
 - ❶ What information will be most valuable to the reader?
 - ❷ What do you want the reader to know about NA? For example, if the reader already knows about NA and refers addicts to NA meetings, then contact numbers and information about upcoming events might be a good way to maintain an ongoing relationship. If the reader is unfamiliar with NA, then local meeting information, a brief history of NA in that community or as a worldwide organization, and member demographics can be useful. Enclosing a *Membership Survey* and the *Information about NA* pamphlet can support the information provided in the letter.
 - ❸ If the area wants the professional to consider scheduling an NA presentation at their facility or attending an NA event, the letter can explain the benefits of the interaction and ask them how, when, and where this would best work for them.

Following up



If the area does not receive a response within a month, a follow-up telephone call, email, or letter may be appropriate. Professionals are often very busy, so follow-up is usually necessary for initiating a relationship.

Clearly written letters that provide helpful information about NA can help build strong, ongoing relationships with those in the community who interact with addicts. These relationships are an important part of our efforts to reach addicts.

INFORMATION ABOUT NA FORM LETTER

Date

Individual Contact Name

Organization

Address

City, State Zip code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear ____:

We are writing in an effort to increase your awareness of Narcotics Anonymous. Since your organization may interact with people with drug dependence, we believe it is important for you to be aware of Narcotics Anonymous as a community resource. Please feel free to refer people with drug problems to our meetings or pass information about our program to those who may benefit from it. We hope you find the following information and enclosed materials helpful.

NA is a member-driven, international organization in which no dues or fees are charged for membership. All we ask is for a potential member to have a desire to stop using drugs. Members recover from the disease of addiction by application of the principles contained in the Twelve Steps. Our program is based on a set of spiritual principles, and we have no affiliation with any organized religion.

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step approach to recovery with the primary purpose of helping any individual stop using drugs. NA's program focuses on an addict's recovery from the disease of addiction, rather than any specific drug. Through our group meetings and the therapeutic value of one addict helping another, addicts learn how to live drug-free and productive lives.

Enclosed you will find Narcotics Anonymous literature, a meeting schedule, a product catalog, and local contact information. We are willing to provide your organization with a presentation to help better acquaint you with NA. Please contact us if you would like a presentation, or have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Contact Name

Area/Regional Information



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

PUBLIC RELATIONS PRESENTATION

The content and order of this session may vary depending on the event. We encourage service committees to consider any individual circumstances that would require modification. This is simply an outline and should be used for ideas. You will need to adapt this presentation to the needs of your local community and the audience of your presentation.

Goals of presentation

- » Introduce NA and explain the nature of the NA program.
- » Raise professional awareness of NA as a viable community recovery and ongoing peer support resource for relief from drug addiction.
- » Provide NA contact information and gather contact information from all present.

On tables are PR resource packets, which include Membership Survey, Information about NA, local meeting list, business cards, etc., session evaluation surveys, and hard copies (note sheets) of any PowerPoint slides to be shown.

Before the session begins

Prior to the event

- » As a committee, you will want to discuss and determine who is best suited to facilitate and/or present at the event.
 - 🌐 Match talent to task, and/or presenters with the audience. Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse! (We encourage you to read Chapter Four of the *Public Relations Handbook*.)
 - 🌐 Consider any issues that may arise with the need to maintain personal anonymity.
- » In your planning, make sure you have the materials that will be needed such as recovery literature and IPs, name tags, sign-in sheets, etc.

Once onsite

- » Consider the setup of the room
 - 🌐 Are there any sight barriers or hearing or lighting challenges to consider?
 - 🌐 Are there any other distractions that might need to be addressed?
- » Set up a literature table for handouts, IPs, or resource materials. Inform the audience where these materials are located.
- » Provide a box/basket for attendees to leave their business cards.
- » Be sure to be fully prepared to start the session **on time**.

**Leader
provides
presentation
setup
10 minutes**

Begin the presentation covering the following points:

Introductions

- » The lead presenter introduces all of the presenters for the session.
- » Introduce audience members or allow them to introduce themselves. Be sure to acknowledge any participants who helped to make the event possible, anyone representing the venue, and any dignitaries who are in the audience.

Logistical issues

- » Ask the audience to turn off the ringers on their cell phones.
- » Explain where the bathrooms are, when the breaks will occur, what refreshments are available, etc.
- » Inquire as to any special needs of any of the participants.

Setup

- » Offer a brief outline of the agenda, why the presentation is taking place, and what to expect from it. Let the audience know that there will be time for audience participation and questions at the end.
- » It is typical to ask at the beginning of the presentation: “How many are familiar with NA?” and “How many have had no exposure to or knowledge of NA?” This response may require you to adapt your presentation somewhat.

**Leader
begins the
presentation
20 minutes
maximum**

Begin the presentation with an explanation of our name.

♦ Origin of our name – Why “narcotics?”

- ☞ Terminology commonly used for all illegal substances at the time of our inception in 1953.
- ☞ NA is not a drug-specific program, but has universal appeal to all who have the disease of addiction.

♦ Historical background

- ☞ Adapted from AA; regular NA meetings started in Los Angeles, CA, in 1953.
- ☞ Explosive growth coincided with publishing of the book *Narcotics Anonymous* in 1983.
- ☞ In 2016, nearly 67,000 weekly meetings in over 139 countries, speaking 81 languages.

♦ What is NA? – A vital resource

- ☞ Therapeutic value of one addict helping another – peer support network.
- ☞ Process for change through the Twelve Steps.

- ☞ The NA meeting – primary vehicle for delivering the NA message of recovery; peer support system and an environment within which people can help one another stop using drugs and learn to live drug-free.
- ☞ Meetings promote atmosphere of recovery from drug dependence.
- ☞ Members share personal experiences with addiction and recovery.
- ☞ Experienced older members support newer members.
- ☞ NA meetings and services are self-supporting by members' contributions (no fees or membership dues).
- ☞ Guidelines on how to conduct an NA meeting are available.
- ☞ A range of NA literature available in many languages on display here – (name)

♦ **Is NA culturally adaptable?**

- ☞ Long-term NA communities: Indian subcontinent, Japan, Western Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Iran.
- ☞ New growth: Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Africa.
- ☞ NA literature published in over 52 languages.
- ☞ If you know that your audience has ideas or opinions about challenges to adaptability and growth in your community, address your response to those ideas here.

♦ **NA Membership Survey**

- ☞ Survey handout – provide background on how/where survey is conducted.
- ☞ This survey has been carried out biennially since 1996.
- ☞ Gender: male 59%, female 41%.
- ☞ 68% rated “Importance of first NA meeting” very important or important.
- ☞ Influence to attend first NA meeting: Highest four were (1) treatment facility/counseling agency, (2) NA member, (3) family, (4) NA service effort. This shows the importance of our working with these organizations and families.
- ☞ Meeting attendance: members surveyed averaged 3.23 meetings per week.

♦ **Cooperating with professionals**

- ☞ NA can assist with welcoming your clients to meetings.
- ☞ Presentations to professionals and clients.
- ☞ Printed material, audiovisual, helplines, websites.
- ☞ Subscription to NA publications (*The NA Way Magazine*), and literature useful for clients' introduction to NA.
- ☞ No charge or fee for your clients to attend NA recovery meetings or for NA presentations.

♦ **Benefits to the client** (*specific for treatment, healthcare, and correctional audiences*)

- ☞ NA assists with transition back into the community. Members can meet clients at meetings or provide rides to meetings. Often members will invite newer members to social gatherings such as dances or invite them out for refreshments following a meeting.
- ☞ NA can support clients while they are still in treatment. If clients have phone privileges, they can contact NA members and begin building their peer support network.
- ☞ NA provides a (peer based) support network and social community. Members maintain their support network through sponsorship, meeting attendance, and using a telephone network of recovering friends. This extends to the social community as members join together for movies, theatre, sports events, etc.
- ☞ NA provides drug-free role model reinforcement. Often clients have had minimal exposure to drug-free living. Members of NA provide that role model in their work and home environment.
- ☞ NA provides offers drug-free social environment through conventions, dances, picnics.

♦ **Benefits to the professional** (*specific for treatment and healthcare audiences*)

- ☞ Research states: improves retention of clients in treatment (*Each community will need to decide which researchers to identify for the audience. NAWS suggests studies conducted by J. F. Kelly, R. Stout, W. Zywaik [2006] and K. Humphries [2005] as two possible choices for you.*)
- ☞ Immediate access for clients.
- ☞ Valuable adjunct to treatment.

♦ **How to contact NA**

- ☞ Local contact information including phone numbers, websites, or any other relevant information.
- ☞ NA World Services, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409; website: www.na.org; phone: 818.773.9999; FAX: 818.700.0700.

Wrap up

15 minutes

- » Ask if there are any questions or comments.
- » If this is an audience that is familiar with NA and one that interacts with addicts in a professional capacity, you will want to make this portion as interactive as possible. The more you can derive from this type of audience and create a genuine exchange, the more effective the interaction will be.

At the end of the presentation

- » Point out the literature table, encourage the participants to take what they need, and to leave their business card.

- » Thank the audience for their attention, thank the dignitaries and the venue representatives again, and thank the other presenters.
- » Let the audience know that you will be available for additional questions after the presentation is over, and where you will be. (Prearrange this with the venue, and find out where the venue representatives want you to be, if it is different from the hall where the presentation takes place.)
- » Ask the audience to fill out the session evaluation survey if you have decided it is valuable, to determine the effectiveness of the presentation and any further questions that could be covered in subsequent presentations.

After the presentation

Onsite

- » Collect the surveys, sign-in sheet, and business cards.
- » Be sure the room is left in order; collect any unused or discarded session material.

After the event

- » Write thank-you notes to all who attended.
- » At regularly scheduled intervals, follow up with all who attended.

PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

This is a sample evaluation form to be used following a presentation. You may even consider using this evaluation tool during rehearsals. Many professionals are asked to evaluate and critique presentations regularly. Your committee may consider this form on a presentation-by-presentation basis. We suggest that this form only be used when it is important for you to receive comments from the presentation. Using this evaluation form at all presentations can become counterproductive.

PRESENTATION EVALUATION SURVEY

To help us with future sessions, please take a few minutes to complete this survey and return it to the presenters who participated in the session. Circle a number on the scale for each question and offer any comments. Thank you.

1. How useful did you find this presentation?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding				Inadequate

Comments _____

2. How effective was the presentation with helping to increase your knowledge about Narcotics Anonymous?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding				Inadequate

Comments _____

3. How effective were the facilitators at presenting the material?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding				Inadequate

Comments _____

4. How effective was the resource material you received during the session?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding				Inadequate

Comments _____

5. What aspect of the session did you enjoy the most?

Comments _____

6. What aspect of the session needed the most improvement?

Comments _____

7. Were there any other topics that you would have liked this presentation to cover?

Comments _____

8. Do you know of another professional who would benefit from receiving this information?

Name _____

Contact information _____

Email address _____

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL PUBLIC

This resource can be used when interacting with the general public in the local community (such as at a community meeting, local event, or local conference). 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.

Trusted servants can consider the following points when preparing for interactions with the public:

- ♦ Responding to questions in your own words often works best – the responses listed below can be used as a guide.
- ♦ Short, simple, direct responses work best. Audience members or those who stop by an exhibit booth usually have limited time and will appreciate a brief response.
- ♦ When we use NA specific language such as “home group”, please explain the meaning for the audience.
- ♦ Try to keep responses focused on the questions asked. Remember, the goal is to inform members of the public about Narcotics Anonymous – personal disclosure is usually not appropriate or helpful. (For example, sharing about the step you are working, how many members you sponsor, and your service commitments is not necessarily relevant.)

What follows are possible answers to questions frequently asked by the public:

Q&A 1

What is the difference between AA and NA?

AA helped start NA in 1953 by giving NA's founding members permission to adapt their traditions and steps. The primary difference between the two programs is that AA's focus is alcohol and alcoholism, whereas NA's focus is recovery from addiction. In NA we believe that use of drugs, including alcohol, is but a symptom of the disease of addiction.

Q&A 2

How can I find NA meetings in my neighborhood or in various countries around the world?

The easiest way to find NA meetings is by visiting NA World Services website, www.na.org. Since our members provide the data for the meeting locator, we cannot guarantee the information is completely accurate (some meetings may have changed locations, for example). Contacting local area and regional helplines or websites (also listed at www.na.org) will often provide more accurate meeting information. (Have a local meeting directory with you during the presentation.)

Q&A 3

Are most of your members heroin addicts?

When NA first started, it is possible that the majority of our members used heroin. Today, as indicated in our 2015 *Membership Survey*, our members use a variety of drugs, including alcohol. Interestingly, 79% 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 specific substance.

Q&A 4

What support does NA have for adolescents?

Adolescents are welcome at all NA meetings. If there are meetings in a local NA community specifically designated for young people, the meeting schedule will identify those meetings as such. Although any NA member is welcome at any NA meeting, specially designated youth meetings can help younger addicts find their peers.

Q&A 5

It was briefly mentioned that NA has a variety of recovery literature. What kinds of literature and recovery materials do you have, and how can I obtain these?

NA has seven book-length pieces:

- » *Narcotics Anonymous, Basic Text*
- » *Just for Today: Daily Meditations for Recovering Addicts*
- » *Living Clean: The Journey Continues*
- » *It Works: How and Why*, which contains essays about the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
- » *Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions*, a collection of tools and questions meant to facilitate discussions
- » *The NA Step Working Guides*, a companion piece to *It Works: How and Why*.
- » *Sponsorship*

We also have a host of informational pamphlets, booklets, and a quarterly journal called *The NA Way Magazine*. All of our literature and recovery materials can be obtained directly from www.na.org or by contacting the local NA area or region.

Q&A 6

How can we schedule an NA presentation?

At the end of this presentation, please provide us with your contact information and we will arrange for a presentation with you.

Q&A 7

Is someone who is still using drugs welcome to attend NA meetings?

Yes, they are more than welcome to attend meetings. Many of our members actually came to meetings while still using drugs and are now drug-free and recovering today. Often, if a member is still using, he or she will be asked to refrain from speaking during a meeting. Instead, these addicts are encouraged to speak with members during break or before or after the meeting.

Q&A
8

**What resources do you have for single parents?
Are children welcome at meetings?**

Most groups welcome children who are behaved and under the supervision of a parent. Sometimes a group will offer babysitting services for its members. Contact the local NA helpline for additional information or look for meetings in the local NA meeting directory that indicate childcare or that the group is children-friendly.

Q&A
9

I referred someone to NA who was taking medication, and NA members said they were not clean. Would you explain what you mean?

NA is a program of complete abstinence, and members refer to time (days, weeks, months, years) without using drugs as “cleantime.”

Since Narcotics Anonymous is an abstinence-based recovery program, persons who are taking drug replacement medication are not considered drug-free. These persons are encouraged and welcome to attend NA meetings; however, they are asked to listen rather than speak at meetings, and it is suggested they talk to members on a break, or before or after a meeting. Meetings that follow this format do so to preserve the atmosphere of recovery.

For members who have a need to take prescribed medication for medical or mental health issues, we suggest reading the booklet *In Times of Illness*. This piece provides helpful, experience-based information regarding medication and illness, and outlines the idea that the decision to take medication is left to the member, physician, and sponsor. This pamphlet was written to help members who have achieved total abstinence from drugs and are faced with a need to take medication.

Unfortunately, our members often voice their own opinions about the use of medication even though NA has no opinion. Although this may be a disconcerting issue for professionals, it can be equally as confusing to many members. Typically, members of NA make a distinction between drug replacement medication and medication that a person needs to take once they are completely abstinent from drugs.

Q&A
10

What happens at an NA meeting?

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. One of our traditions speaks to our self-support through our own contributions.

- » Meetings often open and close with the Serenity Prayer or some quote from NA literature. [In some communities this may require some explanation. The word “prayer” could be troublesome.]
- » Some meetings also provide keytags to recognize days, months, and years of continuous abstinence from drugs.

Q&A 11

Is NA connected with any religious organizations?

No. The NA program is based on a set of spiritual principles that are not associated with a particular religion. Although our steps call for finding and believing in a “power greater than oneself,” this is a personal decision for each and every member to make. Members choose their own “power greater than themselves.” Members’ beliefs range from nature to organized religion, from no belief that a power exists, to belief in the power of inanimate objects such as rocks. Members are free to choose a belief that works for them personally, and there is no opposition to anyone’s choice within the fellowship. We perceive this to be a strength of our program – the unconditional freedom members have with choosing their own personal belief – and in NA meetings one can hear members state that this was an attractive and safe aspect of the fellowship. NA doesn’t oppose or endorse any religion. Experience of our members has shown that the spiritual principles work for all members, from the devoutly religious to the atheist and agnostic.

AREA/REGION ROUNDTABLE PACKET

This packet contains resources for holding an area or regional roundtable. A roundtable simply means an interactive session where all participants engage in a dialogue. Below is a list of suggested audiences to invite to a roundtable meeting, with ideas as to why each audience may be relevant to an area or region's service efforts. Also included here are suggestions for how to plan a roundtable, as well as a sample roundtable format and invitation letter that can be modified as your community sees fit.

In your planning for a roundtable, it is suggested that Chapter Four of the *Public Relations Handbook* be read. In that chapter are helpful planning tips including choosing a day and time that are convenient for the audience, informing the invited professionals that their peers will also be in attendance along with any dignitaries, etc.

Whom to invite to an area roundtable

The following list outlines various audiences an area or region may want to invite to a local roundtable meeting. These professionals have probably had experience with Narcotics Anonymous and could offer trusted servants input and ideas about their interactions with NA. The purpose of a roundtable is to exchange ideas about building cooperative relationships rather than to simply present information. Areas or regions may choose to hold this kind of roundtable discussion in an effort to make NA more attractive, strengthen relationships with those who work with addicts, and ultimately increase the number of addicts referred to NA.

- ❶ **Treatment center professionals:** These professionals can work in residential as well as outpatient treatment settings. The service body will need to discuss and decide which professionals are most relevant to their service efforts. For instance, does it make more sense to invite the treatment center's executive director or the counselors and case managers? Does the service body want a mix of executives, clinical directors, and counselors?
- ❷ **Clergy:** Many NA meetings are held in churches, synagogues, or mosques. Since we already have relationships with these professionals, it makes sense to proactively strengthen these relationships. A service body may decide that this group of professionals should make up the first roundtable discussion. A discussion with the clergy has the potential to strengthen the stability of NA meetings.
- ❸ **Healthcare professionals:** This group may include professionals from local hospitals or medical clinics, as well as local physicians. Additionally, healthcare professionals such as nurses, paramedics, physician's assistants, or social workers who work in a clinical or hospital setting may be audiences for separate roundtables.
- ❹ **Education professionals:** Secondary school guidance counselors and healthcare professionals and university or college healthcare professionals can be invited to a roundtable meeting to help make NA a more visible and reliable resource.
- ❺ **Service professionals:** This group may include police, fire, and emergency medical technicians often interact with addicts in crisis situations.

- ⑥ **Government service professionals:** Those who work in the public assistance field and child and family services, can be invited to a roundtable meeting.
- ⑦ **Criminal justice:** This may include local police, parole and probation officers, and personnel of the judicial system such as social workers and substance abuse counselors.

The above list is not exhaustive. As the service body plans its roundtable, trusted servants may identify additional professional groups that are relevant to its area's goals. In smaller NA communities, trusted servants may host a roundtable with professionals from several of the audiences listed above. Asking for and receiving information from professionals in the local community can help us to reach more addicts.

How to plan for an area roundtable

Once an area has decided it wants to host a roundtable and has agreed on the audience, there are additional tasks that need to be accomplished. Preparation and practice are key components of a successful and meaningful roundtable.

Planning tasks

1. Identify trusted servants who are willing to participate in the planning of the roundtable and the roundtable itself.
2. Planning group tasks:
 - a. First, identify an ideal date and the facility in which the roundtable will be held. The service body will want to give itself about ninety days to plan the roundtable. Consider the most convenient day and time for the professionals who will be invited as well as for the trusted servants involved.
 - b. Identify key professionals and invite those professionals to participate in the roundtable. See the sample invitation letter included in this packet as a possible model.
 - c. A roundtable meeting usually consists of eight-to-twelve invited participants. It's best to invite three to five additional participants to the roundtable. For example, if the area hopes to host a roundtable meeting of eight professionals, the planning group should invite at least twelve. Professionals may decline an invitation because of a conflict with the date, an unexpected illness or pressing need, or simply an unwillingness to participate.
 - d. The planning group may choose a coordinator to be responsible for reporting updates about the progress of the roundtable to the committee. The coordinator can also help the planning group maintain its focus and reach identified objectives during the planning process.
 - e. The planning group identifies a facilitator for the roundtable and develops questions to ask (see the questions contained in the sample format as a possible model). The planning coordinator would also report this information to the area.
 - f. The planning group can prepare for the event by holding rehearsals in which trusted servants involved in the roundtable have a chance to discuss the expected issues and prepare a common understanding of a response to those issues. It might be helpful to run through a mock roundtable.

Sample roundtable format

Participants and facilitator

A roundtable meeting will be conducted with invited professionals and a varied mix of trusted servants. If possible, the area should choose a facilitator who is comfortable interacting with both NA members and members of the professional community. This might be a member who is also a professional, or a professional who is not a member but is knowledgeable about Narcotics Anonymous. Because having frank discussions about NA is one of the goals of a roundtable, the area will want to avoid creating a situation where the facilitator seems to be biased or contentious.

Clarify purpose and process

The facilitator will begin the discussion by clarifying the purpose of the roundtable. Often the general purpose will be to build cooperative relationships between Narcotics Anonymous and the professional community. A roundtable will help achieve this purpose through discussing and identifying what professionals need from NA, in order to facilitate this improved cooperative relationship.

The area may want to record the discussion or take typed or written notes of the discussion. If recording the discussion, be sure to ask permission from all participants.

The roundtable discussion

The area can work with the facilitator to decide how the discussion will be structured. Listed below are three roundtable format options; in your community a chosen format may be a combination of approaches. A format is created to maximize the opportunity with professionals in a roundtable setting.

- 🌐 One approach is to allow the facilitator to ask members of the professional community to discuss questions while NA participants listen. NA members can then enter into a dialogue after the professional participants have discussed the given questions.
- 🌐 Another option is to have the entire roundtable discussion structured as a fluid dialogue between professional participants and NA members. The danger of this format is that the participation of NA members will limit the input given by professional participants.
- 🌐 One of the more common formats is to have a general presentation and to frame a small-group discussion around how to build better cooperative relationships. The small groups are a mix of invited professionals and trusted servants. The questions for the roundtable and the focus are geared to the audience that has been invited.

Regardless of the format, trusted servants need to remember that listening to the input provided will most benefit the discussion. A defensive or aggressive attitude will usually defeat the purpose of a roundtable discussion. It may be advantageous to clarify any misperceptions or misunderstandings about NA held by the professionals. This action will help us to achieve a more productive discussion. It is only through listening to the audience's perspective of dealing with NA that we can come up with ideas on how to work better together.

The following questions are examples of the kinds of topics that can instigate a meaningful dialogue in a roundtable discussion. The area can use or modify these questions in any way it sees fit. Again, remember to adapt the questions to suit the audience. You will need to have a specific focus and not try to cover too many questions in one session.

NA's image

1. How is Narcotics Anonymous perceived in your particular field?
2. Do you know about any misconceptions regarding the NA program and/or its name?
3. How can NA improve the way it is perceived in your field?

Awareness of NA

1. What can NA do to become a better-known resource for addicts who desire recovery?
2. What materials have you seen or read regarding NA?
3. What types of materials would give you and your clients a better understanding of NA?

NA as a resource

1. What are we doing that is helpful?
2. What do you perceive as the shortcomings of the local NA community?
3. How do you think we can improve?
4. How can we build better cooperative relationships with you?

Ongoing relationships

1. What is the most effective tool to continue our communication with you?
2. What specific information could NA provide to make us more accessible?

Following up

Following up with those who attended the roundtable discussion will be crucial to making the roundtable a success. Be sure to send formal thank-you letters to all participants, and follow up with whatever commitments or promises were made during the course of the roundtable discussion.

SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER FOR ROUNDTABLE

Date

Invitee's Name and Title
Organization's Name
Address
City, State Zip

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear Mr. Jones:

Narcotics Anonymous is a member-driven, international, multilingual, multi-cultural organization with a twelve-step approach to recovery from drug addiction. No dues or fees are charged for membership. NA's program focuses on an addict's recovery from the disease of addiction rather than any specific drug. In 2016, there were nearly 67,000 Narcotics Anonymous meetings in 139 countries worldwide. *(Note to local committees: Please add a sentence that informs the reader about the size of the local fellowship and the number of NA meetings.)*

We are cordially inviting you to attend a public relations roundtable discussion hosted by the XYZ Area of Narcotics Anonymous. We anticipate that this meeting will bring together various professionals from the community. We want to engage with professionals in a facilitated discussion to help us build cooperative relationships with your organization, and we hope that you will be able to participate.

We are inviting professionals to this event in a desire to build cooperative relationships, to inform professionals about NA in the local community, and to learn from you how we can better work together. This discussion will be a mutual exchange of experiences and information. Our desire is that NA becomes a viable and credible community resource for you. We would like your help in achieving our goal. Attached is information that provides an overview of the Narcotics Anonymous program and a tentative agenda for the roundtable discussion. The session will take place *[day and date]* from *[provide time]* until *[provide time]*, at *[place, street, and city address]*. Directions to the facility are enclosed.

Please contact us regarding your availability to participate in the roundtable, and with any questions you may have. I can best be reached at *[provide a contact phone number and email address that is answered by one person throughout the roundtable planning process]*. Or, you may contact *[provide name and email address]*.

Thank you for your interest in Narcotics Anonymous.

Susan Smith
Public Information Chairperson
XYZ Area of NA

Enclosure



When a committee is sending this letter, additional pertinent information, such as refreshments, lunch, and other attendees, may be mentioned. Print this sample letter on your service body's letterhead or include your complete return address.

RESOURCES FOR

chapter five










MEDIA

contents

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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 spirit 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 phonenumber 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 phonenumber 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 phonenumber 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

Date

First and Last Name, Position Title

Organization Name

Address

City, State Zip Code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

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 2016, there were nearly 67,000 meetings in 139 countries speaking 80 languages. During our 63 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 & phonenumber)

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 & phonenumber)

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 2015 *Membership Survey*, our members use a variety of drugs, including alcohol. Interestingly, 79% 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 2016, Narcotics Anonymous exists in 139 countries, speaks 80 languages, and has nearly 67,000 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.

RESOURCES FOR

chapter six

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER

An encouragement letter can be used to respond to inquiries from inmates about Narcotics Anonymous. A standardized letter can allow committees to respond to these requests in a more timely manner.

Date

First and Last Name





Address

City, State Zip code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear ____:

Thank you for contacting us; we truly enjoy hearing from incarcerated addicts. In response to your letter, we are writing to provide you with general information about recovery in Narcotics Anonymous, including:

-  information about the NA Fellowship
-  starting meetings in a correctional institution
-  finding a sponsor
-  finding NA meetings upon release

While this letter may give you more information than you requested, we hope you find the enclosed recovery material helpful, and we encourage you to share these publications with others addicts.

The NA Fellowship

Narcotics Anonymous is an international, multilingual, multicultural fellowship of men and women who are recovering from the disease of addiction. People from all walks of life, ages, races, religious perspectives, occupations, and lifestyles meet regularly in NA meetings every day, all over the world, to help each other remain drug-free. Reading NA literature, attending NA meetings, and talking with other recovering addicts is helpful in achieving a drug-free, productive, and rewarding life.

Even though our members used a variety of drugs, in Narcotics Anonymous we speak of recovery from the disease of addiction, rather than specific drugs. We believe that drugs are a symptom of our disease, and recovery from the disease of addiction is through application of the principles contained in the Twelve Steps. Continuous abstinence from mind- and mood-altering drugs is necessary to maintain ongoing recovery. Many of our members have relapsed, yet have returned to NA meetings and begun their recovery again. In essence, there is no reason to give up on oneself; addicts in NA meetings welcome members back and are ready to help them in their recovery.

In case you are wondering, there are countless members who have found freedom from active addiction while incarcerated. In fact, there are institutional NA meetings celebrating twenty years of helping incarcerated addicts recover. We have the *Reaching Out* publication where incarcerated members share their experience with staying drug-free and recovering while incarcerated. These stories from incarcerated members offer hope to others and let incarcerated addicts know that they are not alone.

Starting an NA meeting



Note: Prior to responding to inmates, the area should have had a discussion about the approach to institutional meetings. The planning would center on whether to pursue having a meeting within the institution or recognizing that this is a facility that the area cannot support at this time. If support cannot be offered, the *Institutional Group Guide* could be included with this letter. A sample response follows.

We have enclosed the *Institutional Group Guide* to help you start an NA meeting in your facility. Our committee discussed whether we could support an NA meeting in your facility; however, at this time, we do not have the trusted servants to fulfill that kind of commitment. We are available to help with your literature needs, provide you with a group starter kit, and make suggestions for meeting formats.

Sponsorship

A sponsor is an experienced NA member who shares about the recovery process through working the Twelve Steps and about handling everyday life situations without returning to drug use. Choosing a sponsor is a personal decision that each member makes for themselves. As you will read in the enclosed literature, members typically find their NA sponsor by attending NA meetings. However, we are aware that addicts in a correctional setting often find it difficult to find a sponsor. Utilizing a recovery peer within the institution whose recovery you admire may be an alternative for you. *[If your committee has a sponsorship or correspondence program, please include it in this letter.]*

NA meetings in the community

If you are nearing your release date, you may want to begin planning for that day. A question you may ask yourself that may help you prepare is, “How will I remain drug-free on the day I that I am released?” As you answer that question for yourself, please consider contacting the area helpline *[provide number]*, if you have phone privileges. The helpline could connect you to another addict to talk to. The experience of members seems to be that release day can be scary, overwhelming, and exciting. The feeling of freedom following confinement speaks to addicts in various ways. Some addicts want to celebrate freedom with using drugs. Being able to talk with a recovering addict on the helpline may give you additional support.

The enclosed meeting schedule will help you plan what meeting to attend the day you are released. It has been the experience of many members that making a meeting on their first day out is instrumental in helping them remain drug-free. Planning to attend as many meetings as possible upon release will give you the opportunity to meet other recovering members, gaining their support for your recovery. Many of us needed to meet recovering

addicts, as we had no friends who didn't use drugs and our family members were not that supportive, either. Considering all these issues prior to your release will help you to be more successful in your recovery.

We look forward to seeing you in NA meetings in the community. We have enclosed the pamphlet *Staying Clean on the Outside* to give you additional support with your release preparation.

NA literature

Enclosed are the publications we can supply at this time. We hope you find the recovery information helpful, and we encourage you to share these publications with other addicts seeking recovery who may be incarcerated with you.

In closing, we thank you again for writing to us. Many thousands of addicts have found recovery from addiction in Narcotics Anonymous, and we believe that you can, too. Please accept our very best wishes, and feel free to contact us again if we can be of any further assistance.

In fellowship,

Service Committee Name

Enclosures



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

CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONAL LETTER

This letter can be used when responding to standard informational inquiries about Narcotics Anonymous from criminal justice professionals. This is not meant to be a response to those professionals seeking a meeting in their facility. A standardized letter can allow committees to respond to these requests in a more timely manner.

Date

First and Last Name
Position Title
Organization
Address line 1
City, State Zip code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear ____:

We appreciate your interest in Narcotics Anonymous as a program of recovery from drug addiction. NA was founded in 1953 and, with the publishing of our Basic Text in 1983, grew from 2,000 NA groups to nearly 67,000 weekly meetings in more than 139 countries around the globe speaking 80 languages¹.

NA meetings all have a common purpose: recovery from the disease of addiction. In meetings, members speak of their experiences managing life situations without returning to drug use, and discuss recovery principles contained in the Twelve Steps. People of diverse backgrounds, ages, races, religious perspectives, occupations, and lifestyles attend NA meetings. The personal identification which occurs during meetings provides a powerful message of hope.

Incarcerated addicts throughout the world have been recovering from the disease of addiction for over twenty years within institutions. Many of these incarcerated addicts are housed in long-term correctional facilities. Equally, many of our members who found recovery while incarcerated (or involved with drug courts) remain drug-free and active in NA meetings all over the world. Within these meetings, addicts found hope from others recovering – hope to live drug-free, productive, and rewarding lives.



Note: Provide a paragraph with information about the area, including how long meetings have been in the community, number of meetings, experience with criminal justice, and phonenumber with meeting schedule.

¹ As of April 2016.

NA literature is available in 49 languages, including English, Spanish, Farsi, French, German, Portuguese, and Japanese. We also produce audio CDs, literature in Braille, and informational pamphlets. NA has seven book-length publications. To receive any of these publications or a product catalog, please write to NA World Services at PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409, or visit NAWWS' website at www.na.org.

We hope that you find this information useful in your efforts to help addicts find recovery. If you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Service Committee Name

Contact information

Possible enclosures: *Behind the Walls, Staying Clean on the Outside, Reaching Out*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS

This resource can be used when interacting with **professionals from the criminal justice system**, including **drug court professionals**. These frequently asked questions are meant to help trusted servants educate criminal justice professionals about what NA has to offer to their clients. The Twelve Traditions and the abilities and experiences of the local area service committee will ultimately guide an area's relationship with any professional.

Trusted servants can consider the following points when preparing for interactions with professionals:

- ♦ Responding to questions in your own words often works best—the responses listed below can be used as a guide.
- ♦ Short, simple, direct responses work best. Audience members or those who stop by an exhibit booth usually have limited time and will appreciate a brief response.
- ♦ If NA specific language such as home group is used, please explain the meaning to the audience.
- ♦ Try to keep responses focused on the questions asked. Remember, the goal is to inform members of the public about Narcotics Anonymous—personal disclosure is usually not appropriate or helpful (for example, sharing about the step you are working, how many members you sponsor, and your service commitments is not necessarily relevant).

What follows are possible answers to questions frequently asked in a criminal justice setting:

Q&A

1

How can I arrange for NA members to coordinate a meeting in my facility?

The Hospitals and Institutions Committee is usually responsible for facility meeting commitments, and I will provide you with their contact information. Often the H&I committee will arrange with you a date on which to provide the facility staff with a presentation and discuss the various ways a meeting could be started in your facility. Depending on the availability of trusted servants and prior facility commitments, the H&I committee members may be able to bring a panel meeting into your facility. If they cannot provide this service at this time, they will discuss with you how to start a self-sustaining meeting within your facility.

Q&A

2

How does NA help parolees upon their release?

NA helps parolees by helping them to feel welcome at meetings, informing them about group commitments which are usually helpful in building a support system of recovery peers, offering information about sponsorship (where an experienced addict helps the newer member), and introducing the new member (parolee) to experienced recovery members. Often new members are invited after a meeting for

coffee, and members can be asked to pick up the new member who is without transportation.

Addicts who are reentering society and are already involved in NA may have arranged for transportation upon release with another member. Our experience demonstrates the importance of attending an NA meeting on the day of release for achieving a drug-free life. Those who are reentering and have no recovering friends to meet them can make contact with NA by calling the local NA helpline. Provide the number and inform audience as to whether the community has a list of members who are willing to transport addicts to meetings.

Q&A 3

Can NA members pick up parolees at the gate?

NA does not pick up parolees as a practice, but sponsors or recovering friends of released inmates may choose to pick them up.

Q&A 4

How can our facility receive a donation of literature? We're a rather large facility with a comprehensive drug programming and we want NA to be a part of the services we offer.

Facilities can contact NA World Services for a free sample literature packet, as well as free subscriptions to our publications, *Reaching Out* and *The NA Way Magazine*. Some local NA communities include free NA literature for institutions in their budget, and may also be able to help in that way. [Inform audience of community's practice with literature.]

Our literature is for sale directly from NA World Services at www.na.org. We also encourage professionals to keep in mind that friends or relatives of addicts can purchase NA literature from NA World Services and have that literature sent directly to the inmate.

Q&A 5

We would like to start our own NA group. How do we do so?

An NA meeting starter kit and *Institutional Group Guide* are available from NA World Services (www.na.org) or [provide local RSO or ASO, if applicable].

Q&A 6

We've had experience with members from NA over the years, and those experiences have been inconsistent. How can we be sure NA will consistently serve the needs of the inmates here?

Today, we have NA members who are willing to meet with staff at your facility and discuss what you would like from NA and what we can realistically provide. We will also provide you with local contact information for any issues that may arise with your facility. Sometimes, in our enthusiasm to help, we may have overextended ourselves by offering services that we were not able to follow up with. Please keep in mind that we are a volunteer organization and are continually striving to improve the ways in which we provide services. We are also happy to help start meetings in

your facility that can eventually be self-sustaining. Following this presentation, we can discuss your particular needs and arrange for a local NA member to contact your facility.

Note for local service committees: Inconsistencies sometimes happen even though we strive to keep our commitments. Often an inconsistency can be attributed to supplying the facility with only one contact person. It is suggested that a facility be given area information and multiple contact persons to focus on building a relationship with facility personnel.

Q&A

7

Does NA provide housing/shelter or help incarcerated addicts to find jobs?

NA does not provide housing, shelter, or employment opportunities. Our primary purpose is to help addicts recover from drug addiction, and our traditions (the principles that guide our service efforts) caution us against affiliating ourselves with specific recovery homes or places of employment. At meetings, individual NA members may have suggestions about how to find housing or employment, but those members are speaking from their own experience, not on behalf of NA as a whole.

Drug court personnel who work with drug court referrals may have different questions about NA and the services they can expect. The following questions may be helpful in those interactions.

Q&A

1

How can we work with NA? How can we build a relationship with NA?

A presentation about NA may be the best way to learn about our program of recovery and begin an ongoing relationship. Although NA's Twelve Traditions (the principles that guide our service efforts) limit us from affiliating with outside organizations, we are eager to build a relationship based on the goals we share.

Q&A

2

Can we have meetings here at the courthouse?

Depending on the area's capabilities, you can arrange for a panel or a meeting to be held at the courthouse. A panel is a regularly scheduled presentation that NA members conduct at a facility like the courthouse. An NA meeting is self-sustaining and run by NA members. We are happy to talk with you about which type of meeting might work best.

Q&A

3

Does NA sign court cards?

Many NA meetings sign court cards. This is a choice made by the members of that particular home group, or the area as a whole. If a meeting has made a decision not to sign court cards, this is usually listed in the local meeting directory. You can encourage your clients to check with an NA member before the meeting to be sure the group signs court cards.

Q&A 4

For those groups that do sign court cards, will you guarantee that my parolees/probationers will be attending the meeting, and will be staying through the entire meeting?

Attendance at our meetings is free and voluntary. We cannot guarantee that any person will attend a meeting or remain for its entirety. NA maintains no attendance records. We are a program for addicts who want to recover.

Q&A 5

Can sponsors and/or other NA members testify in court to verify the work that my clients are doing?

As indicated in NA's informational pamphlet, *Sponsorship*, sponsorship is a relationship between two members of NA – a more experienced member helping a newer member. Attending court on behalf of a “sponsee” would be an individual decision on the part of a sponsor (or any NA member). NA's traditions (the principles that guide our services) speak to maintaining personal anonymity, neutrality, and having no opinion on outside issues.

Q&A 6

Can I read my clients' step work, and will the sponsor verify that my clients are doing the work that they say they are doing?

Because NA is not affiliated with the courts and because our primary purpose is to help others lead drug-free lives, we would not verify step work with the court. Verifying or sharing step work in that way has the potential to jeopardize the trust that is essential to the sponsorship relationship. However, a client may choose to share their step work with you, and that decision is entirely theirs.

Understanding the criminal justice system and the people who work within that system can only help to build strong, long-lasting relationships. Criminal justice professionals have a variety of relationships with treatment centers and recovery homes that may or may not be different from the type of relationship they can have with NA. It is up to us to clearly communicate the kind of relationships we can have, given our primary purpose and traditions. This kind of communication can only help to build strong relationships and offset any possible misunderstandings.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRACKING FORM

Date _____ Area name _____

H&I contact person _____

H&I contact phone number _____

New meetings and presentations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Current projects:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Current issues that need help:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Number of H&I meetings per week _____

Number of panel coordinators _____ Number of panel leaders _____

Open panel slots:

Coordinator slots _____ Leader slots _____

Learning day/workshop schedule:

1. _____
2. _____

Cooperation with area committees and the ASC:

1. _____
2. _____

General Comments:

NEWCOMER WORKSHOPS

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

Often NA groups experience an influx of new members. These addicts may be court-ordered clients via the judicial system, referrals from treatment centers, or part of a natural growth process within an area. Increased numbers of members attending a meeting may place constraints on groups, such as coffee costs rising, more involved facility setup and cleanup, or increases in literature and keytag expenses.

Group members may have found that, in spite of their best efforts, these newer members' needs are not being met and, with NA's primary purpose in mind, the group has decided to create a plan that will help these new (and potential) members to feel welcome. This plan may include creating a structured format for newcomers. If that is the direction of an area, here are various formats that may be considered:

- ❶ **Create weekly newcomer meetings.** These meetings would function like any NA meeting; however, they would be identified in the meeting schedule as a “newcomer meeting.” The focus of the meeting would be geared to helping new members understand the NA program. The meeting format may contain information that provides meeting basics and etiquette for newer members, such as keytags being given to group members celebrating lengths of cleantime, cakes being served at a particular meeting to celebrate annual recovery dates, donation basket being passed with everyone encouraged to contribute, etc. Some communities use the IPs or Basic Text as a focus for the meeting.
- ❷ **Create an ongoing, regularly scheduled workshop** (e.g., once a month) geared to the needs of newer members. The workshop could be in a panel format. Trusted servants from the area may accept the commitment for a year, or panel members may be trusted servants of an area subcommittee. These panels provide a forum for new members to ask for information about NA and our language (e.g., What does “clean” mean? Why do you pass a basket? etc.), and to share information about the NA program such as meeting attendance and the concept of sponsorship. These workshops could be held in a meeting facility prior to a regularly scheduled NA meeting, at a treatment center that has clients completing treatment, or perhaps at a courthouse that has a drug court program.
- ❸ **Add a brief new member orientation** before the start of regularly scheduled meetings. This would become part of a meeting format and may address:
 - ✍ when attendance slips will be signed,
 - ✍ overview of meeting format,
 - ✍ purpose of keytags, and
 - ✍ purpose of the basket that is passed.

This is not an exhaustive list, and your area may want to include additional items for the brief orientation.

We highlighted three ways to help new members feel welcome in a meeting environment, yet there could be any combination of avenues to help with an influx of members.

Area considerations

In whatever manner an area chooses to proceed, there are several spiritual principles that can help you in your efforts. Practicing the principles of cooperation, unity, communication, and attraction will help an area to better carry the message of recovery to those who want recovery in NA.

Groups can help inform members by announcing the workshops and/or orientations at their meetings. The area could plan to fund literature for these efforts, and trusted servants from various groups can sign up as greeters, speakers, or panel members. In fact, all area groups can rotate the responsibility of providing for the new member orientations. The area may choose to have a newcomer workshop coordinator who assists the groups with planning and maintaining these meetings. These are a few ideas on how an area could welcome new members. Through area brainstorming and planning, an area will find what works best for them.

Planning tips

- ✍ Some newcomers may not be able to focus for long periods of time. Simple, short sharing from members can be helpful in holding their attention.
- ✍ Explaining that NA's philosophy focuses on the disease of addiction rather than any specific drug and that we are inclusive, regardless of drugs used, can be helpful for newcomers.
- ✍ This can be an opportunity to explain sponsorship, various meeting formats listed in schedules, what keytags mean, and why the basket is passed during a meeting.
- ✍ Meeting greeters (with meeting lists) can set the welcome tone.

H&I REQUEST FOR PANEL MEETING LETTER

Date

First and Last Name

Title

Institution

Address

City, State Zip code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear (*first name*):

We received your recent letter and thank you for your interest in Narcotics Anonymous. As you may be aware, Narcotics Anonymous is a member-driven international organization whose focus is recovery from the disease of addiction. Member volunteers provide our services. In our area, the Hospitals and Institutions Committee provides meetings for incarcerated addicts. We are currently reviewing our obligations to other institutions, jails, and treatment centers to determine whether we have the ability to provide a meeting for your inmates. (*Provide name*) from our committee will be contacting you within the month to request a meeting with you to help us determine how we can effectively cooperate.

We wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with recovery literature targeted toward the incarcerated addict. NA has a quarterly publication called *Reaching Out* that can be ordered from the World Service Office. The format for this publication is similar to an NA meeting, with articles from inmates who are willing to write about their experience, strength, and hope, and it is free. Additionally, the booklet *Behind the Walls* has excerpts from members, and *Staying Clean on the Outside* is an informational pamphlet geared to those addicts who are reentering society. We hope that you find these materials helpful for the incarcerated addicts.

We look forward to meeting with you and serving your institution.

Warm regards,

Contact person

H&I Secretary

Email address

Enclosures

PANEL LEADER REPORT TO AREA CHAIRPERSON

Date _____ Report month _____

Name of H&I chairperson _____

Name of panel leader _____

Facility where panel is held _____

	Number of panel members	Number of meeting attendees
1st week		
2nd week		
3rd week		
4th week		
5th week		

Are there any cooperation issues with NA and the facility? What are they? _____

Are you having any difficulties getting NA members to volunteer for the panel?

Yes ____ No ____

If yes, what seem to be the challenges? _____

AREA H&I CHAIRPERSON REPORT FORM FOR ASC

Date _____

H&I chairperson _____

Contact information:

Phone _____ Email _____

Number of H&I Meetings _____ Number of panel meetings that need support _____

New requests for H&I meetings _____

Current projects and activities _____

Current situations and challenges _____

What can the ASC and GRSs do to assist the H&I committee? _____

What can the H&I committee do to better serve the ASC? _____

NEW MEETING WITHIN AN INSTITUTION

Date

First and Last Name

Institution

Address

City, State Zip code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear _____:

Thank you for your recent letter about starting an NA meeting at your facility. We are gratified to learn of efforts from correctional staff. We are sending you a group starter packet, which includes a variety of NA literature, as well as the *Institutional Group Guide* that will help you with starting a new NA group.

There are a few considerations with starting a new group; these are usually taken into account prior to the initial meeting. One consideration is the format. Some meetings use recovery literature, others choose a recovery-related topic, while others may be speaker-and-discussion. The format sets the tone and focus of a meeting. Within the format, meeting guidelines, such as acknowledging NA recovery birthdays and time constraints, usually five minutes for each member to speak, are outlined. These meeting protocol items are usually announced at the beginning of the meeting. The *Institutional Group Guide* has additional information about meetings and formats. Since formats evolve and change with the group and its members, we suggest that you review your format annually to ensure that the meeting is functioning in a manner that meets the needs of the members.

Sometimes, starting a new NA meeting can be challenging, and we suggest patience and consistency in your efforts. Enclosed please find the name and address of the NA service committee contact for this geographical area. Our committee is aware of the support services needed for institutional NA groups and members, such as sponsorship for inmates, correspondence with inmates, and working the steps with inmates.

In closing, we are happy that you have contacted Narcotics Anonymous and that we could be of assistance. Even though we cannot provide you with a panel of NA members for your institution at this time, we will be contacting you in the very near future. We would like to meet with you and offer you a presentation about NA's program of recovery.

Warm regards,

Contact person

Service position

Email address

Enclosures

RECOVERY LITERATURE FOR INSTITUTIONAL GROUPS

Date

First and Last Name
Inmate number
Address
City, State Zip code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear _____:

Thank you for your recent communication expressing interest in obtaining recovery literature for a Narcotics Anonymous group within your facility. We understand that you would like this material for your group's meeting. We are enclosing (*name the books*) and suggest that these be kept with the group materials so that all members in the meeting can share the literature. Additionally, we have enclosed the booklet *Behind the Walls* and informational pamphlets *Sponsorship*, *Welcome to NA*, and *Staying Clean on the Outside*. Please feel free to share these with other members of the group. Often, recovery literature can help members identify with other addicts, gain a sense of belonging to a larger group of members, and connect with members from around the world with the experiences that are described in our literature.

We are always excited to learn of members participating in NA groups "behind the walls," and we wish your group the best of luck. We enclosed a literature order form. Sometimes, there are provisions within an institution's budget or from inmates to order literature. We look forward to hearing from you soon.











Warm regards,

Contact person
H&I Secretary
Area service address

Enclosures

LITERATURE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Whether presenting to professionals, providing a panel, or bringing a meeting to drug courts or jails, it is useful to bring literature that will help the audience to understand Narcotics Anonymous and explain who we are. Some suggested informational pamphlets and booklets for criminal justice public relations are:

-  NA White Booklet
-  *Behind the Walls*
-  *The Group Booklet*
-  *In Times of Illness*
-  IP No. 7, *Am I an Addict?*
-  IP No. 11, *Sponsorship, Revised*
-  IP No. 17, *For Those in Treatment* (for drug courts)
-  IP No. 22, *Welcome to NA*
-  IP No. 23, *Staying Clean on the Outside*
-  IP No. 29, *An Introduction to NA Meetings*

Our Basic Text is always helpful, and bringing it, along with a copy of *It Works: How and Why*, *The NA Step Working Guides*, and *Just for Today*, will help with your presentation, roundtable, panel, or meeting.

It might be helpful to also bring some copies of *The NA Way Magazine* and *Reaching Out* with you, and explain how to obtain a subscription.

SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL REFERRAL LETTER

Date

First and Last Name

Title

Address

City, State Zip code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear _____:

On behalf of the _____ area/regional service committee of Narcotics Anonymous, I am writing to thank you for all of the positive feedback that you have provided concerning our program of recovery as well as our participation in the _____ (event). Responses like yours help us to ensure that our representation at such events is helping to carry the message that Narcotics Anonymous is a viable referral option for those in your field.

We are requesting that you put that positive feedback in the form of a letter. We wish to use that letter, and others like it, as a form of referral that will help open doors for us with other professionals like you. We feel that these professionals may be able to better understand the Narcotics Anonymous program when the information is presented with your support.

To that end, we have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please use it if you choose to help us in our efforts to carry our message of recovery from the disease of drug addiction. Although NA is currently helping addicts to recover in over 139 countries worldwide, the primary focus of this committee is the still-suffering addicts right here at home in our area/region. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Subcommittee name

Contact information

RESOURCE FOR

chapter seven

TREATMENT

contents

Frequently asked questions – Treatment professionals I

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TREATMENT PROFESSIONALS

These questions and responses may help a committee when presenting to treatment professionals or when exhibiting at a professional event. Discussing these questions and answers before an event can help committee members provide reliable and consistent information about Narcotics Anonymous.

When preparing for such an event, be mindful that short answers seem to work best. Clear and concise answers help give the audience the information they desire, and trusted servants are better able to maintain a focus on sharing pertinent information. Responding directly to questions asked also helps members avoid venturing off into personal opinions. Pointing to recovery literature, or even holding it in your hand for the audience to see, is often better than directly quoting our literature for responses to questions posed by an audience. Additionally, if NA specific language such as “home group” is used, please explain the meaning for the audience.

Q&A 1

Does NA consider alcohol to be a drug?

Yes. A statement to that effect is part of our fellowship-approved literature, [refer audience members to the White Booklet] and is read at most meetings.

Q&A 2

What is the difference between AA and NA?

AA helped start NA in 1953 by giving NA's founding members permission to adapt their traditions and steps. The primary difference between the two programs is that AA's focus is alcohol and alcoholism, whereas NA's focus is recovery from addiction. In NA, we believe that the use of drugs, including alcohol, is but a symptom of the disease of addiction.

Q&A 3

Is help only available for narcotics addicts?

No. NA's focus is not on a particular class of substances, but is on recovery from the disease of addiction. It is possible that when NA first started, the majority of our members used heroin. It is also worth noting that when NA was founded, drugs such as marijuana were referred to as “narcotics” in the United States. Today, as indicated in our 2015 *Membership Survey*, our members use a variety of drugs, including alcohol. Interestingly, 79% 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.

Q&A 4

Some of our clients have stated that they would not feel comfortable in meetings with a bunch of street addicts. Can you address this?

Yes. Our members come from all walks of life, races, ages, and lifestyles. They have diverse backgrounds, religious perspectives, and occupations. In any given NA

meeting there will be various demographics including street addicts along with professionals. NA does not focus on an addict's drug use or lifestyle. Our members are available to help anyone with a desire to stop using drugs.

Q&A 5

Is NA appropriate for prescription drug addicts?

NA's message is all-inclusive with respect to any mood-changing, mind-altering substance. Our membership includes people whose primary drugs of abuse were prescribed, and who have found recovery through NA. NA is appropriate for any individual who has a desire to stop using drugs.

Q&A 6

What is NA's opinion on methadone and other drug-replacement therapies for the treatment of opioid dependence)?

[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 has provided 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.

It should be noted that 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 7

Is NA a religious program?

No. The NA program is based on a set of spiritual principles that are not associated with a particular religion. Although our steps call for finding and believing in a "power greater than oneself," this is a personal decision for each and every member to make. Members choose their own "power greater than themselves." Members' beliefs range from nature to organized religion, from no belief that a power exists, to belief in the power of inanimate objects such as rocks. Members are free to choose a belief that works for them personally, and there is no opposition to anyone's choice within the fellowship. We perceive this to be a strength of our program — the unconditional freedom members have with choosing their own personal belief — and in NA meetings one can hear members state that this is an attractive and safe aspect of the fellowship. NA doesn't endorse or oppose any religion. Experience of our members has shown that the spiritual principles work for all members, from the devoutly religious to the atheist and agnostic.

Q&A
8

What is your position on treating the dually diagnosed? On medications prescribed for the treatment of mental illnesses?

NA's sole focus is recovery from drug addiction. We do have a booklet titled *In Times of Illness* that discusses the use of medications and the issues that arise for addicts in recovery.

Q&A
9

What is your opinion on the harm reduction philosophy?

NA is a program of total abstinence; this has provided 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. Addicts taking advantage of such programs are more than welcome to attend NA meetings.

NA neither endorses nor opposes drug replacement strategies. NA does not claim to have the only workable approach to the problem of addiction, nor do we assert that all other approaches are flawed. We claim only that the Narcotics Anonymous approach has been proven very useful to hundreds of communities and tens of thousands of addicts around the world, and may be helpful in your community as well. NA's sole mission is to help people achieve total abstinence and recover from the disease of addiction.

Q&A
10

What are your criteria for calling someone an “addict”?

We don't have any criteria. It is for the individual to decide that they are an addict. This helps NA to be inclusive and nonjudgmental concerning anyone's level of drug usage. However, we do offer a pamphlet titled *Am I an Addict?* with questions designed to help people decide for themselves.

Q&A
11

Can we send our clients to your meetings with attendance cards, and have them signed there?

Many NA meetings sign attendance cards. This is a choice made by members of that particular home group, or the area as a whole. If a meeting has made a decision not to sign attendance cards, this is usually listed in the local meeting directory. You can encourage your clients to check with an NA member before the meeting to be sure the group signs attendance cards.

Q&A
12

Can someone from our facility call a client's sponsor to check on his/her progress?

That is up to the sponsor and the client. If the sponsor is willing to participate in this kind of communication, and has the permission of the “sponsee,” such an arrangement might be possible. However, a sponsor is a volunteer who is not bound by any treatment center's regulations, and would be engaging in this

communication as a service to the person he or she is sponsoring, not the treatment center.

Q&A 13

Who can I contact if I am having a problem with a sponsor and the work he/she is doing with one or more of our clients?

As indicated in NA's informational pamphlet, *Sponsorship*, sponsorship is a relationship between two members of NA – a more experienced member helping a newer member. If a sponsor is causing difficulties in the treatment of a client, you can have the client obtain a different sponsor. If needed, the local NA service committee might be able to furnish you with a list of sponsors who are available to help your clients.

Q&A 14

In the past, we have tried to have NA meetings at our facility, but your people did not show up consistently. How do I know that things would be any different today?

Today, we have NA members who are willing to meet with staff at your facility and discuss what you would like from NA and what we can realistically provide. We will also provide you with local contact information for any issues that may arise with your facility. Sometimes, in our enthusiasm to help, we may have overextended ourselves by offering services that we are not able to follow up with. Please keep in mind that we are a volunteer organization, continually striving to improve the ways in which we provide services. We are also happy to help start meetings in your facility that can eventually be self-sustaining. [Presenters need to be prepared to tell professionals what commitment can realistically be made, such as weekly meetings or monthly meetings. It may be helpful to have that discussion prior to a presentation, recognizing the human and financial resources of the service body.] Following this presentation, we can discuss your particular needs and arrange for a local NA member to contact your facility.

Note for local service committees: Inconsistencies sometimes happen even though we strive to keep our commitments. Often an inconsistency can be attributed to supplying the facility with only one contact person. It is suggested that a facility be given area information and multiple contact persons to focus on building a relationship with facility personnel

Q&A 15

What will we need to provide in order to have a meeting at our facility?

All that is necessary is a meeting space. We will contact you to set up a time to meet with your designated staff to explain how often we may be able to bring a meeting to your facility, which format might work best for you, and the types and frequency of meetings that we are capable of providing. If we find that we are unable to provide consistent support, we may be able to provide literature and material for clients to run stand-alone NA meetings.

Q&A
16

I am not an addict, but before referring anyone to an NA meeting outside our facility, I would like to attend one. Is that a problem?

Not at all. As noted in the meeting directory, the legend illustrates which meetings are “open” meetings and which are “closed” meetings. Open meetings are open to anyone who has an interest in Narcotics Anonymous. You are welcome to attend any of those meetings.

Q&A
17

How do I know that my clients will be safe if I send them to an NA meeting? Isn't it possible that they might find a new connection, or be able to purchase drugs there?

If a person goes to an NA meeting seeking drugs or a connection, it is possible that they might find what they are looking for (although this is true almost anywhere). However, if a person goes to an NA meeting with a desire to stop using drugs and to learn how to live drug-free, there will be members in the meetings willing to help them.

Q&A
18

How do I know that my (female, adolescent, etc.) clients will be safe if I send them to an NA meeting?

Most meetings create a welcoming atmosphere by appointing certain members to act as meeting greeters. Meetings also have member volunteers who are responsible for helping to maintain an environment of recovery. There are common needs meetings, such as women's meetings, gay and lesbian meetings, and young people's meetings in some communities, where some newer members may feel more comfortable.

NA encourages members to support each other and often suggests that women seek other women in recovery, men seek support from men in their recovery efforts, and adolescents seek their peers to add recovery support. To help your clients, you may want to encourage clients to meet women like themselves or adolescents to seek other members who are approximately their age. Additionally, a staff person could have the client contact the NA helpline to speak with an addict of the same sex, perhaps even agreeing to meet the client at the meeting. In that way, the client would be introduced to other members of the group, gaining recovery support.

Q&A
19

What if I want to learn more about NA?

Please take these meeting lists and pamphlets. These particular pamphlets, *Information about NA*, *Membership Survey*, and *NA: A Resource in Your Community*, were designed to offer introductory material for professionals. If you need further assistance, please contact [name, trusted servant position, and phone number].

Q&A 20

How would I get NA literature for our facility?

Initially, you may want to contact the NA helpline in your community and request literature for your facility. And you are welcome to contact NA World Services by calling 818.773.9999, or visit the NAWS website at www.na.org.

Q&A 21

What material do you have for my _____-speaking clients?

[Indicate any local meetings in that language, if available.] NA literature is published in 49 languages (April 2016). Here is a copy of our current product catalog which highlights all languages in which we have materials published.

Q&A 22

Do you have any literature targeted to specific demographic groups?

We have a pamphlet titled *By Young Addicts, For Young Addicts*. Also, the personal stories in our Sixth Edition Basic Text provide a wide range of experiences from our diverse international fellowship. As we move forward with literature development, there may be additional resources for specific demographic groups. [Be familiar with all NA-approved literature.]

Q&A 23

What sort of research demonstrates your efficacy?

The anonymous nature of our program has historically made scientific research difficult. However, we do take a survey of attendees at our biennial world convention that you may find interesting [have most recent *Membership Survey* on hand].

Q&A 24

Do you have meetings for treatment professionals, so that my staff members who are in recovery do not have to attend meetings with their clients?

Unfortunately, since our only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using, our fellowship has historically been reticent about holding meetings that exclude anyone. Your staff member can review a meeting schedule to determine if there is a local group geared toward professionals. Often treatment professionals become willing to travel a slight distance to a meeting to provide for their anonymity and meet the needs of their recovery program.

Q&A 25

What is the cost of attending NA?

There is no cost to attend meetings. However, most groups pass a donations basket during their meetings to pay expenses such as meeting facility rent and refreshments, and to help support NA services. In accordance with our principle of self-support, only NA members should put money in this basket. Members contribute to the welfare of the group and NA as a whole because it is one way that promotes a sense of responsibility for individuals. When many addicts were using drugs, they were irresponsible with all aspects of their lives—paying of bills, being responsible with their employers and families, etc. In recovery, addicts contribute to the welfare of the group through the donations basket. This is an action of responsibility for oneself and for the welfare of NA.

RESOURCES FOR

chapter nine PHONELINES

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PHONELINES TRAINING SESSION

The content and order of this session may vary depending on the time available. We encourage service committees to consider any individual circumstances that would require changes. Times referenced for particular segments of the session may vary.

Goals of the session

- » Discuss underlying public relations principles within our phoneline efforts.
- » Orient and train volunteers about how to respond to various types of phoneline calls.
- » Introduce NA members to local phoneline technologies and policies.

On tables are pens, note sheets, phonelines flowchart, and any local phoneline resources.

Before the session begins

Prior to the session

- » Review Chapter Nine of the *Public Relations Handbook*.
- » Prepare a sign-in sheet, asking for name and contact information, to be passed around the room during the session.

Once onsite

- » Consider the setup of the room:
 - 🕒 Are there any sight barriers, or hearing or lighting challenges to consider?
 - 🕒 Are there any other distractions that might need to be addressed?
 - 🕒 Do the size of the meeting and the seating plan allow for small group discussions?
- » Set up a literature table for any additional phoneline handouts or resource materials.
- » Be sure to be fully prepared to start the session **on time**.

Leader provides the setup of the session 5 minutes

Begin the session covering the following points:

Introductions

- » The leader can introduce all of the presenters. Give a brief background of each presenter and their experience with phonelines.

Logistical issues

- » Ask members to turn off ringers on their cell phones.
- » Explain where the bathrooms are, when breaks will occur, what refreshments are available, etc.
- » Inquire as to any special needs of any of the participants.
- » Ask members to sign in with their name and contact information, and collect this list for updated information.

Setup

- » Offer a brief outline of the session and what to expect, and state that any unanswered questions will be addressed at the end of the session.

Leader introduces core phoneline PR principles

10 — 15 minutes

Leader identifies core public relations principles. State the principles listed below. Choose one bullet point for each principle and offer an example or personal thought.

(Inform the participants that chapter two of the Public Relations Handbook has essays on the principles of the traditions along with examples.)

Cooperation

- ☞ One of our public relations goals is to build long-lasting relationships with other organizations.
- ☞ Compromising any of our traditions in an effort to build these relationships is never beneficial to individual members or NA as a whole. We maintain a consistent focus on our primary purpose with the public.
- ☞ By creating positive relationships with those outside of NA, and with our own members, we foster unity and harmony with each other and the community around us.
- ☞ We put the common welfare of NA first, and we remember that we are only autonomous as long as our actions do not affect NA as a whole.

Attraction

- ☞ What is likely to be attractive to the public and to professionals who interact with addicts is reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery.
- ☞ We can demonstrate the reliability of NA by showing up and fulfilling our obligations, whether it is to return a telephone call for information about NA or to supply meeting directories at a public library.
- ☞ We can draw on the experiences of NA members to fulfill the commitments we make to professionals.

**Leader
poses
questions
for
discussion
by the
group**

**5 — 10
minutes**

The following questions for discussion by the group are intended to help members consider cooperation and attraction as they apply to our phonline efforts. The group discusses one of the questions in this setting. The remaining questions may be a tool for the phonline committee to discuss at one of their meetings.

- ☞ How is our phonline used to cooperate with various outside organizations (such as the phonline service provider, an organization we may use as a referral, other public organizations in the community, etc.)?
- ☞ What cooperative actions do we, as committees and groups, take to ensure a smoothly running phonline?
- ☞ Why is it important that volunteers be consistent and reliable with their service, and how does that help NA's message of recovery remain attractive?
- ☞ How do we make phonline service an attractive NA commitment?

**Preparing
volunteers**

5 minutes

With the previous discussion as a foundation, leader covers the following points:

- ☞ Responsiveness is a key principle for phonline service. This means that trusted servants should engage with callers in a sensitive, appropriate, and helpful manner.
- ☞ Leadership qualities such as integrity, the ability to listen, and sound judgment are essential in providing phonline service.
- ☞ Phonline volunteers often have to perform in higher-pressure situations, and they are likely to be the first contact that people have with NA.
- ☞ Avoid using NA jargon (such as "it works when you work it," "home group," "get a sponsor," etc.).
- ☞ Use NA literature to present an accurate and positive message of recovery and to clarify that the NA program is separate from treatment centers or other twelve-step programs.
- ☞ Do not make commitments on behalf of the area, region, or NA Fellowship. If a professional or member of the public contacts an NA phonline, volunteers should provide as much information about NA as they can, solicit information from the public contact log, and follow up with the appropriate trusted servant such as a committee chairperson or the area's media contact person.

**Training
volunteers**

15 minutes

Leader asks: "Who calls our phonelines?"

Responses should include:

- ☞ Addicts (both potential members and current NA members).
- ☞ Nonaddicts.
- ☞ Family members and loved ones.
- ☞ Professionals.
- ☞ Clergy.

Leader then asks participants to identify specific types of calls

- ☞ Requests for meeting information.
- ☞ Requests for general information about NA.
- ☞ Requests for public relations efforts (PI presentations, H&I meetings, etc.)
- ☞ Difficult calls from addicts who are:
 - » under the influence of drugs.
 - » prank calls.
 - » calls from those who suffer from mental illness.

One strategy is to continually bring the conversation back to how the caller can get to an NA meeting and end a problem call before the situation escalates.
- ☞ Calls made by the public, including simple requests for information or calls made about problems created by the behavior of NA members.
- ☞ Crisis calls:
 - » Volunteers should be very clear about where their responsibility ends. Phoneline volunteers are not counselors or crisis workers.
 - » Threats to commit suicide, a drug overdose, or talk about being a victim of violence are all examples of crisis calls.
 - » Refusing to refer such callers to qualified outside crisis agencies could have legal implications, depending on local laws.
- ☞ Meeting recommendations:
 - » Volunteers can respect callers' requests and recommend a meeting where they are likely to find addicts with whom they may identify. We do not, however, automatically assume that because someone is of a certain age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual identity, they will want a meeting recommendation.
 - » If there are no common needs meetings in an area but there are meetings where, for example, a larger population of young people regularly attends, then phoneline volunteers can suggest these meetings to a caller who is asking for a recommendation.
- ☞ Twelfth step calls:
 - » A twelfth step call is usually a request for assistance to get to a meeting. We carry NA's message through twelfth step calls.
 - » A twelfth step call can mean that two or more addicts provide a ride to an NA meeting or that volunteers simply talk with the caller, helping the potential member get to a meeting on their own.
 - » When possible, members meet those requesting a ride to a meeting in a public place.

☞ Referrals:

- ▶ We don't give referrals to one specific treatment center or detoxification unit. Instead, we can provide a list of any and all local treatment centers and not align or affiliate ourselves with one in particular, or we can inform members of generic treatment referral numbers, such as the National Treatment Referral Line in the United States.
- ▶ If a caller has a local telephone directory, we can direct them to the services listed there. The same principle is true for suicide prevention numbers and other community service numbers.
- ▶ Family members and loved ones of addicts frequently call our phonelines. Volunteers can provide numbers for Nar-Anon and Families Anonymous or other similar information. But remember that we don't recommend one program over another or offer our opinions about any of these programs.

☞ Review Phonelines Flowchart considering the above examples.

☞ Remind the participants that these points and additional points are contained in the "Phonelines" chapter of the *Public Relations Handbook*.

**Local
phoneline
process,
technology,
and other
issues**

10 minutes

Leader discusses the details of the local phoneline system

This portion of the session will be developed by the local committee; the information presented will depend on the type of system used and local policy and procedure.

- ☞ Review local requirements (cleantime, meeting attendance, etc.).
 - ▶ Consider any forms or logs that the committee requires the volunteers to complete.
- ☞ Review current phoneline opportunities.
- ☞ Discuss the telephone system used by phoneline volunteers.

Break: 15 minutes

**Role-
playing
exercise**

**15 — 20
minutes**

Leader facilitates an exercise designed to help volunteers get practical experience. Add some of the specific calls material to this session. This will help participants to be more involved in the training.

Role-playing – Phoneline volunteers

- ☞ Set up mock telephone calls using two chairs, positioned back-to-back. Simulate common phone calls (from the list above) received by the volunteers.
 - ▶ Ask volunteers to respond to various types of calls using this process.

- » After each scenario, allow members to offer their thoughts on how the participants responded.
- » Using the phoneline resources, offer your own thoughts on how the call should be handled.
- » Once time has expired, ask participants what some of their real challenges have been. Talk about real issues and how to handle them, and then move on to questions and comments.

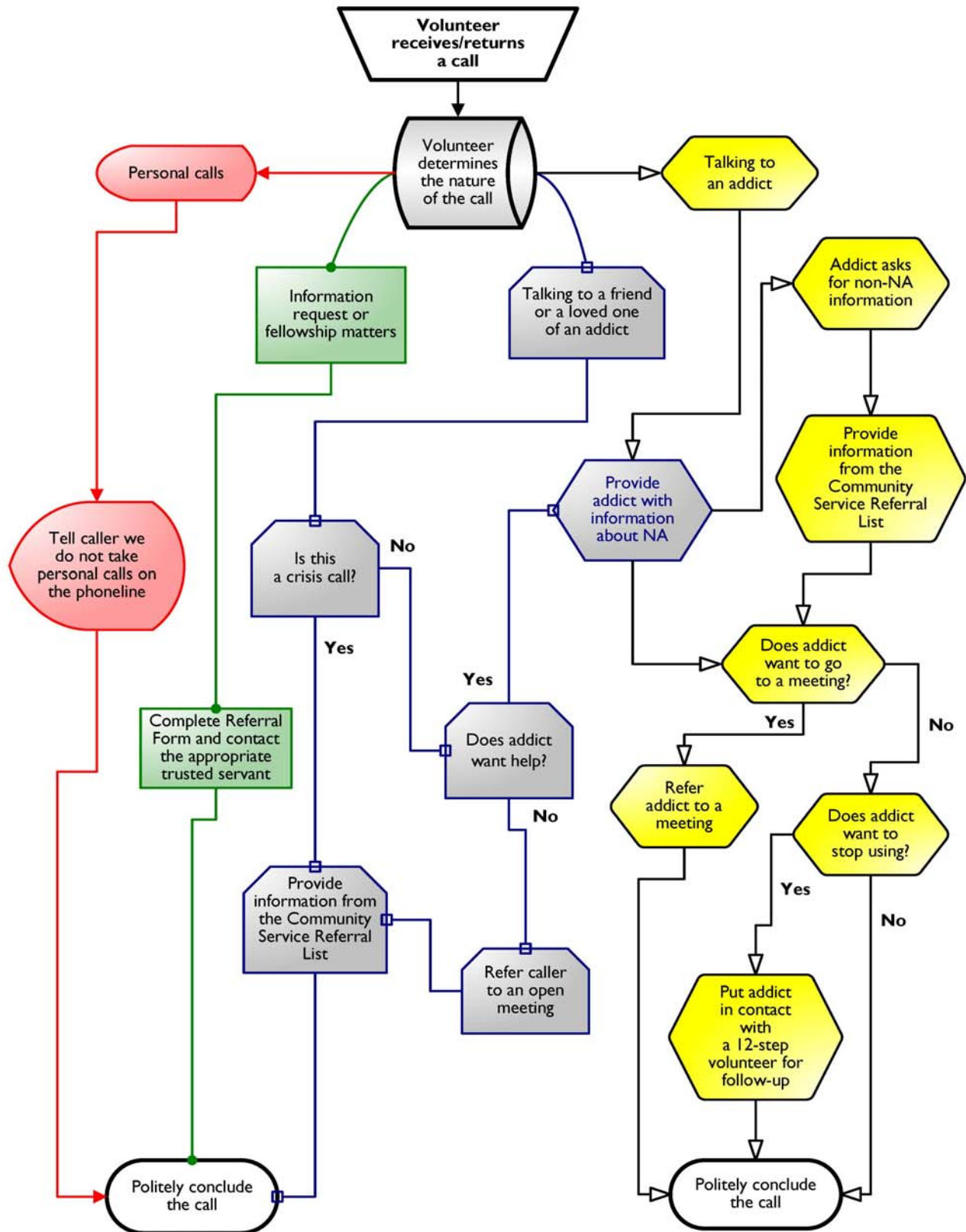
Questions and comments

10 minutes

Leader responds to questions from members

- ☞ Ask for questions or concerns.
- ☞ Remind members to complete the sign-in sheet.
- ☞ Thank everyone for attending.

Phoneline Flowchart



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PHONELINE VOLUNTEERS’ EXPERIENCE WITH CALLS

This resource can be used by volunteers answering phonenumber calls when interacting with addicts, loved ones, professionals, and the community at large. These frequently asked questions are meant to help trusted servants provide clear, consistent, and informative responses. When responding to a question using NA terminology, such as “leader”, please explain to the listener what we mean by that language. In an effort to gain an understanding of the information here, trusted servants can discuss and rehearse the questions and answers below.

What follows are possible answers to questions frequently asked by phonenumber callers.

Questions asked by potential members

Q&A 1

I’ve been using (smoking pot) for three years and I’m not sure if I am an addict. Can NA help?

We suggest attending an NA meeting and speaking with some of the members there. Because NA meetings are a safe place, newcomers are encouraged to ask questions. Also, read some of our literature, which is available at most NA meetings, and decide for yourself. The informational pamphlet *Am I an Addict?* may help you in your decision making.

Q&A 2

I am getting drug-tested by my parole officer; how long does cocaine stay in your system?

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship for those who think they may have a problem with drugs. We are a self-help, recovery-oriented organization and employ no medical professionals. We do not give any medical advice or opinions, but we do help addicts find recovery through the NA program.

Q&A 3

What should I expect when I go to my first NA meeting? Do I have to talk?

Typically a leader or chairperson will conduct the meeting. There is usually time for participation in which members share about their experience, strength, and hope with staying clean. You do not have to speak during the meeting if you don’t want to. We encourage you to get there a little early so that you can speak with some of the members and pick up some literature before the meeting starts.

Q&A 4

How much does NA cost? Are you counselors?

There are no fees or dues to be a member of NA. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. We are not professional counselors; we are recovering addicts who share our experience to help each other stay clean.

Q&A
5

I am a nurse by profession and I want to get clean. Where can I find a nurses' meeting?

Some areas have common needs meetings while others do not. This area does/does not have a nurses' NA meeting. We can tell you, however, that recovering addicts from all types of professions attend our meetings.

Q&A
6

I'd like to go to an NA meeting but I don't have a car. Can you help?

Yes, we can try. Where do you live? Let me take your number down and see if I can find a ride for you. (Refer to area Twelfth-Step list)

Note: This may not be a service offered in some areas. If your area is interested in Twelve Step lists, you may refer to the *Public Relations Handbook*, Chapter Nine.

Q&A
7

I'm suicidal and I don't want to live anymore. What should I do?

We strongly suggest contacting the suicide prevention number, which is _____, or 911 to get immediate assistance.

Questions asked by loved ones

Q&A
1

My boyfriend is using drugs, stealing, and cheating. What can I do to help him? Will you call him?

Because Narcotics Anonymous is a self-help program, addicts must have the desire to stop using. Once he is ready to stop using drugs, please have him call us so we can direct him to an NA meeting in his area. In the meantime, you may want to call Nar-Anon or Families Anonymous. Although we are not affiliated with these organizations, we are happy to provide their telephone numbers.

Q&A
2

My son/daughter is using drugs and wants to stop taking drugs. Can I go with him/her to their first meeting?

You may attend an "open" NA meeting with your son/daughter. Open meetings welcome family members and the community at large. Closed meetings are for addicts only. Let me check our meeting list, so I can give you several choices of open meetings...

Q&A
3

Will you call me if my son/daughter does not show up to meetings regularly?

No, we are not able to do this. Because this is a self-help program, it is not our position to monitor an addict's willingness to attend meetings.

Questions asked by community members

Q&A

1

I heard that my old friend, Jane Smith, is in NA. Can I have her phone number?

We are not at liberty to give out contact information for individuals who may or may not be members.

Q&A

2

Drugs are being sold in my apartment complex. Can you come and arrest them?

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship for those who think they may have a problem with drugs. We are a self-help, recovery-oriented organization and employ no law enforcement professionals.

REFERRAL FORM

For referring calls to the area or region

There are times when trusted servants within the area or at the regional service committee may be more experienced with answering certain phoneline requests. This is a sample referral form for the tracking of such calls. This form will allow us to follow the referral to ensure that the request is answered and the callers' needs are met.

Today's date _____ Time of call _____

Phoneline Volunteer _____

Caller's name _____

Name of agency or organization _____

Caller's telephone number _____ ext _____

Alternate telephone number _____

Time & date when caller is available to be called back _____

Caller or agency's email address _____

Reason(s) for calling

_____ Atmosphere of recovery issue

_____ Leadership issue

_____ Predator issue

_____ Public image issue

_____ Request from media

_____ Problem with meeting at facility

_____ Request for NA literature

_____ Request for NA presentation

_____ Twelfth-Step call request

_____ Request for meeting directories

_____ Request for meeting at facility

_____ Request for activities schedule

_____ Request for NA booth

_____ Other (*describe in detail*): _____

Referred request to: ☐ Area ☐ Region

Committee member's name and position: _____

Notes: _____

COMMUNITY REFERRAL LIST

The following is a sample community referral list, to be used when the caller is asking for help that does not fall within our primary purpose and our traditions. We offer information in the spirit of cooperation. We can provide a list of numbers rather than any one specific number. We do not recommend one referral over another. We simply provide contact information as a courtesy. (In many parts of the United States and Canada, a community services helpline can be reached by dialing 211. If 211 service is available in your area, it may be the easiest and most complete referral that you can make.)

Child Abuse Hotline	_____
County/City/State Emergency Services	_____
Domestic Violence Services	_____
Drug Crisis Hotline	_____
Families Anonymous	_____
Intervention Services	_____
Local Homeless Shelter	_____
Mental Health Helpline	_____
Nar-Anon	_____
Poison Control	_____
Probation Department	_____
Rape Crisis Center	_____
Services for Runaways	_____
Suicide Prevention Hotline	_____
Additional community resources and numbers	
_____	_____
_____	_____

RESOURCES FOR

chapter ten

INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

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STEPS FOR CREATING AN AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE WEBSITE

1 Area committee support: The area has carefully considered the benefits of an area website, the human and financial resources have been identified and allocated, GSRs have informed their groups, and members have committed to joining the committee.

2 Elect a webmaster and/or web committee: Having a web committee can help with the gathering of information and can assure that the website does not lose continuity at the end of the webmaster's term, or if the webmaster resigns for any reason.

Agree on a password that is known by the webmaster and two other committee members. This kind of extra measure helps to keep the website in the hands of the committee, and not one individual.

3 Create website operational guidelines: Cover all areas that are necessary to be functional and to guide subsequent committees to continue the work that this area service committee initiated. Guidelines are meant to be helpful and fluid. These guidelines should be adaptable to the changes in the committee and the technology.

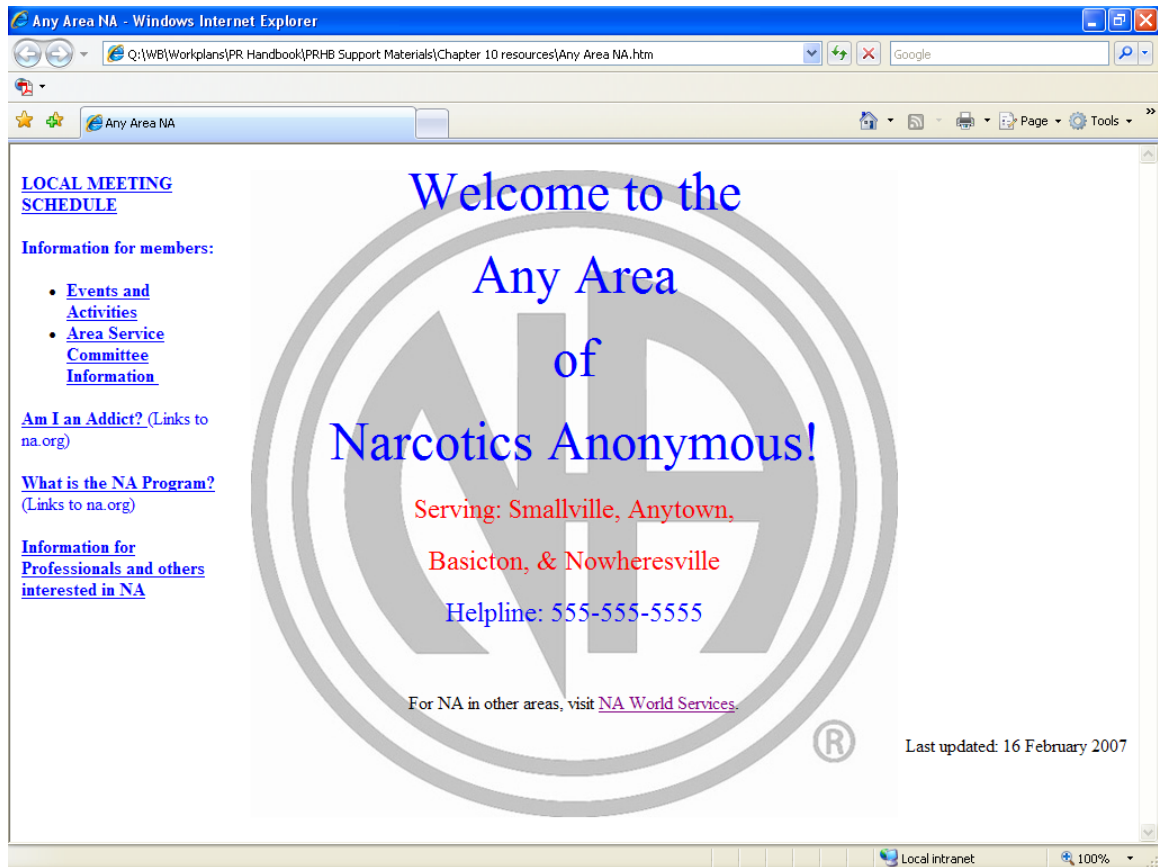
4 Create webmaster guidelines: Again, flexibility is important because of changing technologies and the differences in the skill levels of subsequent webmasters. The idea here is to make the webmaster aware of the ideas that the ASC wants to convey on the website, as well as the reasons behind the choice of the web provider, etc.

5 Determine the focus of the web front page (audience, information, etc.): This will help areas to use the language that is most attractive to the anticipated visitors to the site. Language that simply describes Narcotics Anonymous and clearly and succinctly describes our program of recovery and services offered in the area will assist any visitor. A website free of NA-specific language usually speaks to the broadest audience.

- a. Determine what is necessary for the web front page and its design. Simplicity and clarity may be key aspects of the design. We want the visitor to be able to easily navigate the site to find the information that they seek. An additional consideration in design is NA's public image. Many areas may want to place identifying area artwork on their site; however, we may do well to consider who the audience is that we are trying to reach and that we anticipate visiting our site.
- b. Decide on the content of the other website pages. Again, this will help areas to use language that will attract the audience for that page, and to keep the information brief and easy to navigate.

- 6 Decide on a web provider:** As Chapter Ten in the *Public Relations Handbook* suggests, the concept of “free” may signal a need to check further. The price for “free” service can include links to sites that are not recovery-oriented.
- 7 Website ownership:** Website domains should be owned and paid for by the service body. The area is accountable for the website; the area service committee ought to establish itself as the responsible entity for the website.
- 8 Research the website server security:** Contact your website host and find out what steps have been taken to ensure that the prospective website and email accounts stay free from worms or other malware.
- 9 Decide on what other sites you will be linking to:** If you are adding links to other service committee sites, be sure to find out how long they have been in existence and if their website has had any security issues in the past. This information is usually available through contact with their webmaster. You may want to consider linking to www.na.org, which can then link your readers to other NA sites.
- 10 Bring the website design to the ASC for approval:** This will help to ensure that all the information the committee wants will be included on the site.

SAMPLE WEBPAGE



RESOURCES FOR

chapter eleven


EVENT PLANNING

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SAMPLE LEARNING DAY FORMAT

Why should we have learning days?

...bring addicts together, so that the magic of empathy, honesty, caring, sharing and service can do their work.”

Basic Text

The longer we stay clean, the more true the above statement becomes for us, and the more we can search to improve how we carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering addict. Learning days are a tool we can use to improve the ways we deliver services in our areas. Learning days are designed to help service committees share information, new materials, challenges, and rewards with each other and other members and groups.

Who would want to host a learning day event?






A learning day event can be very valuable for emerging areas that are seeking to connect with other service committees. They can be helpful for areas that need more resources and want to educate the local fellowship about service and the service structure. Learning days are also a good tool for those within the service structure who are currently helping to improve services, sharing information and new ideas, and attracting support for the committees within the local area or regional service body.

Who plans the event?

Usually, an area committee or ad hoc committee will plan a learning day. These members may receive support from the region with planning and hosting the event. For multiregional events and zonal events, participation would be sought from all of the regions involved.

Before beginning the work of planning and presenting a learning day event, it can be helpful to read the *Public Relations Handbook*, in particular Chapters One through Four (for some foundational PR principles) and Chapter Eleven, “Event Planning.” Much of what you will need to help your learning day be successful is included in those chapters.

Once the planning committee is formed, the actual work begins. The following questions usually need to be addressed in this planning stage:

-  Where and when will we hold the event?
-  How long will we need to prepare for the event?
-  How will we pay for it?
-  Who will we want to be the presenters, and how much training will we want to provide for the presenters?
-  What materials will we need to provide?

- ✎ Will we have a social event (dance, comedy show, speaker meeting) associated with the event?
- ✎ How will we publicize the event?

How do we pay for the event?

In keeping with Tradition Seven, the money to begin the project comes from the sponsoring areas, regions, or zones. A projected budget should be drawn up in the planning stage in order to determine a registration fee. The goal of the event is to be self-supporting, and it can be, if it is planned well. Your budget should include line items for printing, literature, insurance, postage, rent, phone calls, refreshments, speaker travel and lodging, and merchandise.

Whom should we invite?

Everyone! The more members who attend, the greater the chance for a successful event. Once the date and location have been secured, email area, regional, and zonal websites so the event can be posted. You may also want to mail pre-registration flyers to surrounding areas right up to the date of the event.

Attracting members to attend

When a committee decides to organize a learning day event, it's helpful to understand that the audience might not yet share your same passion for service in NA. This means that the audience may need some additional motivation to attend, since the focus will be learning about service. This does not mean that learning can't be fun, but in order to share in the fun (and information), the audience will first need to attend the event. The following questions can help trusted servants plan for ways to attract members to the event:

- ✎ What will attract members to the event?
- ✎ Should we offer refreshments? What types of refreshments? Could a "bring your favorite food dish" be considered for lunch or dinner?
- ✎ Are there any speakers we can bring in from other areas, regions, zones, or countries?
- ✎ Will we have a recovery meeting, dance, and/or other entertainment?
- ✎ Is the location convenient and comfortable?
- ✎ Are the dates convenient, and have we made sure that they don't conflict with any other local events?

If a committee takes the time to plan the event from the perspective of the intended audience members, it will improve the effectiveness of a learning day so that it carries the message the committee wants to convey.

Sample program for learning day

Saturday

8am — 9am

Reception (refreshments) and Registration

9 — 10:30am

Service: How We Carry the Message

The Spiritual Rewards of Service

11am — 12:30pm

Understanding the Twelve Traditions and Service

12:30 — 1:30pm

Lunch Break

1:30 — 3pm

Planning for Services – What Is Our #1 Service Priority?

3:30 — 5pm

Moving Forward with Our Service Efforts

5:30pm

Potluck Dinner

7pm



Recovery Meeting

This is only a *sample* program. Topics, programs, and formats may vary, and the only requirement is that the topics address the needs of the participants. Often an area or committee hosting the event will ask members, groups, and trusted servants for topics for the event. When we involve others in the planning of the event, we are more likely to have increased participation and enthusiasm. We have found that providing some information in each session to the participants, and then allowing them to discuss pre-planned questions about that topic, is a productive way for our members to learn. The more involved the participants are, the more they will take away from the discussions.

Multi-Regional Learning Weekends: A committee may anticipate a large turnout of members with a multi-regional learning event. In that situation, more than one workshop is usually offered during each time slot.

SAMPLE COMMUNITY MEETINGS FORMAT










The purpose of a community meeting is to inform the public about Narcotics Anonymous. A community meeting differs from an open NA meeting in that we invite people outside of our fellowship to attend and address a particular focus that is relevant to our guests. Some examples of a community meeting might include:

-  A meeting in a neighborhood where clergy, teachers from nearby schools, or members of a neighborhood association are invited to attend.
-  A city- or county-wide meeting to inform healthcare workers, workers in government agencies, and other professionals about Narcotics Anonymous.

These meetings are hosted by Narcotics Anonymous members and are structured to share information about recovery with people who may be able to refer addicts to NA. In this way, we are expanding our ability to grow closer to our vision that no addict need die without having heard about recovery in NA.











Planning for a community meeting

First, we will want to consider how our public image will be affected by such an event. For that reason, it's important to be sure that we are well-prepared. Once a committee has identified the professional audience, the following points can help trusted servants successfully prepare for the event:

-  Research the identified professional audience. Whenever possible, learn the names and positions of those who will attend. You can obtain this information through NA members or community resources.
-  Consider scheduling the event at a time of day, and day of the week, that is most likely to work best for invited guests.
-  Find a location that is easily accessible, centrally located, and, if possible, well-known in the community.
-  Send a letter of invitation to the group of local professionals.
-  Be sure to follow up by calling the professionals, reminding them of the meeting, and requesting that they send a representative.
-  If you want to reach members of the entire community, a committee may want to have the meeting announced on radio, and in community calendars, newspapers, etc.
-  Invite speakers and guest speakers in advance of the meeting date. It is a good idea to ask speakers sixty-to-ninety days in advance of the meeting.
-  Offer refreshments and indicate in your announcements that refreshments will be provided.
-  Bring NA literature that best suits the event and the audience that you intend to reach, including informational pamphlets and meeting lists.

Preparing for a community meeting

When preparing for a community meeting, seeking help from other NA members and trusted servants can help make the event a success. Planning, setup, cleanup, and thank-you letters will all benefit from the support and ideas of other trusted servants. Other helpful ideas include:

-  Remember the purpose, focus, and goal of the meeting.
-  Review the *Public Relations Handbook*, including Chapters Four, “Interacting with Professionals” and Eleven, “Event Planning”.
-  Be aware of available resource tools, such as presentation formats and frequently asked questions.
-  Prepare and train the trusted servants and guest speakers who will be presenting the information about Narcotics Anonymous.
-  Talk about the inclusiveness of NA and emphasize that NA isn’t concerned with what drugs people use.
-  Provide statistics about our worldwide fellowship.
-  Consider using PowerPoint presentations and visual aids with material presentation.
-  Adhere to all of the Twelve Traditions — only respond to NA-related issues.
-  Use quotes from NA literature to express NA’s primary purpose.
-  Dress appropriately for the audience (like you would for a job interview).

Sample community meeting format

(This can be tailored for your community meeting.)

Hello. I would like to welcome everyone to this informational meeting, offered to you by _____ (*group/area/region/zone*) of Narcotics Anonymous. My name is _____ (*first name only*), and I am an addict.

Before we begin our presentation, I would like to tell you that refreshments will be available (*when and where*), pamphlets and meeting lists are (handed out or available on the back tables), and the bathrooms are _____.

The purpose of this meeting is to inform the community about the Narcotics Anonymous program of recovery — a resource in your community for those who want to stop using drugs. There are no membership criteria and there are no dues or fees to become a member of NA.

NA is a spiritual, not religious, program. We are not interested in what drugs a person used or about a person’s age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or educational or financial attainments. We only care that they want to stop using drugs and about how we can help them to remain drug-free.

We are a twelve-step fellowship. Our recovery comes through attendance at NA meetings, asking an experienced member to be a sponsor (or mentor) to help us with our recovery, working and applying the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, reading NA recovery literature, and helping others to stay clean. This has worked for us since 1953, and it continues to work for us today.

We have provided you with our *Membership Survey* and other pamphlets which document historic information about NA, how we have grown as a worldwide fellowship, and some demographics that were compiled from our world convention. (*Areas and regions may want to consider having literature stamped with the area or region's name, address, phone number, and website.*)

However, today's meeting is about NA in *this* community. And I would like to introduce you to (second presenter), who will inform you about how you can use NA as a local resource. (second presenter discusses local meetings, the helpline, H&I activities, current panels, literature, and any future activities that you are capable of offering and that your committee has the resources to provide).



Leave some time at the end of the presentation for a question-and-answer session. The presenter can ask the first question, such as “What can a newcomer expect at his or her first meeting?”

EVENT PLANNING WORKSHOP

This resource is for service committees in their efforts to plan local events. Local events can include anything from area committee workshops to learning days to community events and professional roundtables. Trusted servants are encouraged to adapt this planning aid to fit the needs of the service committee and the proposed event. To further support your event planning efforts, members may want to use the *Public Relations Handbook* as a resource, particularly chapters three (Communication Strategies), four (Interacting with the Public), and eleven (Event Planning). All NA events are an opportunity to further our relationships with the public, and planning can help NA be seen as a positive, credible, and reliable option for addicts.

Goals of the event

Prior to conducting a workshop for specific aspects of an event, a committee can identify the goal or goals of the event. This may be done during an area service committee meeting or within the committee. One of the benefits of involving the group service representatives (GSRs) in the initial planning is that partnerships with them can contribute to the success of the event. These partnerships can help support the event by improving communication and participation with NA groups in the area. Once the goal or goals of the event have been identified, the planning group or committee can then use this tool (or some other planning process) to conduct a planning workshop for the scheduled event.

Sample event planning goals

Committees can either create their own goals or use the overarching goals listed below:

To plan an event that will present NA in a positive public light.

To incorporate planning and preparation as a regular committee task.




Event planning workshop setup

On the tables there will be large note pads, markers, traditions and concepts cards, paper, and pens. In the front of the room or on the walls, the goal or goals of the event are identified. Having the goals of the event available for everyone to see will help members remain focused in their planning.

Before the session begins, the facilitator (usually the committee chairperson) will explain the process and goals of the session, as well as any logistic information that is needed (snacks, breaks, bathroom location, length of session, etc.).

Planning categories, brainstorming, and prioritizing

The session will be divided into five event planning categories:

-  human and financial resources
-  venue
-  communication

-  program
-  follow-up

For each category, the group brainstorms ideas while a recorder captures all suggestions for the group to see. Once all ideas are captured, the facilitator posts the lists on the wall for review. New ideas and questions are encouraged and can be added at this time. When all ideas are presented, the group prioritizes the list. Not all categories lend themselves to the prioritization process. The Area Planning Tool has suggestions for the facilitator and for prioritizing. Additionally, there are usually planning components, such as budget forecasting and start-up monies, that may need to go back to the area service committee for approval.

Category 1: Human and financial resources

Human resources

This category focuses the planning group on how to recruit members for the event. Recruiting members involves more than simply identifying members who may be willing to be of service at an event. The committee may want to first look at the availability of members from the area service committee, and then identify the qualities and experience needed for specific event functions. For example, the member who is providing follow-up may need to possess certain communication skills, both written and verbal, that may complement the audience. Follow-up with a professional treatment audience may greatly benefit from having a member involved who has some experience or education in the treatment field. The group can brainstorm ideas, and the recorder writes down all suggestions that pertain to the recruitment of NA members.

Financial resources

Members are encouraged to look at all budgetary issues including start-up costs, event operational costs (such as rent of the facility for the event), refreshment costs, costs associated with the event (such as mileage reimbursement for invited guests), announcement costs, and follow-up activity costs. Brainstorming for this category involves identifying each budget area with a list of specific items that fall in that area. For example, three budgetary areas that would include specific lists would be venue costs, projected refreshments costs, and program costs. Once all budget categories have their identified items, each list is prioritized and the budgetary items are presented to the area service committee. When this activity is completed, the budget created by the planning group will reflect the entire cost of the event, including start-up monies.

Category 2: Venue

The planning group is encouraged to look at all venue issues, keeping in mind the purpose and goal(s) of the event. Facility considerations may vary depending on whether the event is a community meeting, learning day, or professional roundtable. One of the initial venue selection considerations is choosing a place that is comfortable, so that the facility can accommodate the projected attendance and any event meetings and setup. Additional considerations are questions about the room layout, e.g.: Is there a need for a room that seats 100 people theatre-style or 100 people in small groups? Other venue selection items to consider may include kitchen facilities, parking, facility location (the

audience and purpose of the event help determine the location), audiovisual accommodations (such as sound, lights, and video), handicap accessibility, etc. One or more sites can be selected, with the final site selection depending on whether or not the bid is secured and meets the needs of the intended audience. For site selection, members prioritize their top two choices and usually make a recommendation to the area service committee for ratification prior to securing the site.

Category 3: Communication

This category focuses the event planning group on the question of who needs to be informed about the event and what are some effective ways to accomplish that task. There may be different communication strategies depending on who is to receive information and how the information might be most effectively communicated. For example, informing GSRs at the ASC meeting and creating flyers for the groups is one strategy, while writing invitation letters and following up with telephone calls to the invited professionals is a completely different strategy. The group may also want to consider that members who perform the tasks may need to have different skills. A member with graphic art skills may be appropriate for the creation of an event flyer and a member with writing skills may be appropriate for the creation of a letter to an identified audience. The lists created by the planning group or committee will most likely contain several communication strategies.

Category 4: Program

An event program can begin with an overall program design, with the specifics filled in after the program's framework has been created. For the overall program, members can consider what they want to learn from invited guests and how to make the program more valuable to them. Questions can include: What would this public audience like from NA? What do we want NA members to come away with from this event? The program is thus designed to be valuable to both the attendees and NA.

With the overall program design completed, the planning group can begin work on program specifics. These specifics usually include presenters, facilitators, qualified members, reimbursement costs such as mileage and parking, etc. The group recorder writes down all ideas that are offered. In the prioritizing process, it may be helpful to consider "matching talent to task," meaning that the group identifies members whose skills and background are best suited to the event and audience. The group may also want to select alternates to the first choices, as there may be instances when someone becomes ill or a life situation forces a person to cancel.

Category 5: Follow-up

Finally, the planning group is encouraged to look at everything that is needed for follow-up. Following up on an event may include addressing questions such as: If surveys were used at an event, who will be collating the information and developing an action plan? Which members will be responsible for follow-up activities, and how soon after the event should members follow up? What is the best time to follow up, and how should members contact invitees (phone call, thank-you letters, etc.)? Is the cost for follow-up activities included in the budget?

Workshop wrap-up







At the close of the planning group session, the facilitator thanks all of the members for their hard work. The group recorder will email or send a copy of the prioritized lists to all planning group members in a timely manner.



This format can be modified and adapted to meet a community's event planning needs. Some events, such as hosting a roundtable for professionals, may be more involved, while others, such as a committee workshop, may need less planning. However, the six categories listed above tend to apply to all events. Even after an area committee workshop, a follow-up activity with the facility manager to learn whether NA has left the facility in good order helps foster a strong relationship between NA and the public.

SAMPLE EVENT TIMELINE

This sample timeline may be shorter for an event that doesn't include professionals and presenters. However, taking time to plan events and create a timeline is advisable for any NA event. This timeline describes what needs to be accomplished and when.

-  **Four months prior to the event:** The planning group (usually an area committee) meets to work out all issues that may arise for the event as outlined in the above format. Items that need area ratification (such as the budget) have been taken to the area committee.
-  **Three months prior to the event:** Flyers are designed along with any web announcements; letters of invitation are composed and sent (if a roundtable or community meeting); the venue is reserved and a meeting with venue manager is scheduled; presenters/speakers are contacted, as well as alternate presenters; program is drawn up.
-  **Two months prior to the event:** Flyers are distributed; invited persons are contacted to secure their attendance at the event; the event program is printed and sent to presenters and alternates.
-  **One month prior to the event:** Flyer distribution continues; follow-up calls are made to those who have not responded; food and refreshments are purchased; committee members meet with presenters and alternates to review the program, to prepare and train them, and to answer any questions.
-  **Event.**
-  **One month following the event:** Surveys from the event are reviewed; attendees are contacted for additional feedback and to determine if there are any presentations or there is any literature distribution that may have been generated by the event.

RESOURCES FOR

chapter twelve

FELLOWSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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FELLOWSHIP DEVELOPMENT









A broad range of potential fellowship development activities are discussed in Chapter Twelve of the *Public Relations Handbook*. Following are some resources that can be used and adapted to various fellowship development opportunities.

Fellowship development inquiries

Before beginning a fellowship development activity, you may find it helpful to ask a series of questions of your committee, and also to the group, service committee, or NA community that you hope to reach. These questions are presented as samples and may be modified to meet the needs of each fellowship development endeavor.

Fellowship development activity questions for an NA committee

Following are examples of questions that a committee could ask prior to initiating any fellowship development effort.

-  What do we hope to accomplish with the assistance we are offering?
-  How much do we know about the NA community we are preparing to contact?
-  Do we know how they perceive their current situation? Have they asked us for the help?
-  What are some of the challenges that we might face? Is there a history of conflict or turmoil with the identified fellowship development group? Are there geographic concerns? Are there language barriers? Are there cultural differences?
-  When we consider our current service structure and trusted servant resources, what do we think is the ideal way to achieve our goal? Could a new sub-committee or ad hoc be formed? Would the fellowship development activity be better served by combining efforts with another service committee?
-  What communication strategy and method (phone call, email, or land letter) would help us reach the identified group? Would the project be best served by sending a group of trusted servants? How can we best attract the identified members or group toward cooperation with this project?
-  How would we evaluate the effectiveness of this project?
-  Will we be able to continue our support for an extended period of time? What are the ways that we can continue that support? What is the projected period of time for which support will be needed (six months, a year, etc.)?

Questions for the identified community who needs assistance

These sample questions can be used as a guide by the committee that is reaching out to the identified fellowship development community. The committee could use all or some of these questions to gather information and to help in the planning process. If questions are to be included in a letter, these questions could be the basis of the letter.

- ✎ How many NA meetings do you have each week? What is the approximate size of the fellowship in your area?
- ✎ Do you have members with clean time? With service experience? What is the range of clean time? Service experience?
- ✎ How are your meetings attracting newcomers? And, if meetings do not attract newcomers, why? How do the groups support the atmosphere of recovery in the meetings?
- ✎ Have you formed an area service committee in your community? How do you provide services? Do you have any specific subcommittees for service provision such as hospitals & institutions, public information, etc.? What resources (trusted servants, members, and financial) do you have available to carry the message of recovery?
- ✎ Geographically, how far apart are your meetings from one another? Have you ever come together as a fellowship for an activity or event? Please describe any challenges that you may have with travel in your community.
- ✎ Have you considered that you might be better able to carry the NA message of recovery with some assistance from a neighboring service committee? Are you willing to consider partnering with our committee in an effort to better serve our NA communities?
- ✎ What do you see as the most effective way for us to help you? Learning day workshop? Help in the development of a service committee? Our attendance at your committee meetings? Your attendance at our committee meetings? Other ideas?
- ✎ Are you in communication with other NA members or service committees that are outside your immediate area? Have you teamed with other NA members or communities to provide services?
- ✎ Are you in contact with NA World Services?
- ✎ Do you have NA literature available for your groups? Would additional literature help your groups/members?
- ✎ Is there any other way that our committee might be of service to your members? Please explain.







These last three points are for communities whose primary language is not English.

- ✎ Do you have literature available in your language? Do you have literature available in English?
- ✎ Have you translated any literature? Do you need help with translating literature?
- ✎ Do you have any English-speaking members? Does English literature have any value for your community?

Post-trip follow-up questions








While it may not be appropriate in every situation, sometimes a committee may decide upon a fellowship development trip. If that is the case, following are examples of questions a committee may want to ask the community they visited. The responses may help a committee to improve its

fellowship development efforts. Ask the recipient community to provide as much detail as possible in their answers.

-  What were you hoping would be achieved as a result of the fellowship development visit? How successful was the travel team in meeting those goals?
-  How did your NA community respond to the visit?
-  If your community desires a follow-up visit from us, what would be the goals of that trip?
-  Were the recovery and service materials used during the visit helpful?
-  Were the members and trusted servants who visited your community helpful? Well-informed? Were they good communicators?
-  Do you have any other feedback that would help us to improve future visits?



Following are some questions the committee may want to ask itself to evaluate, plan, and improve their fellowship development service efforts. Consider the questions that seem applicable to the goals of the trip.

-  What were our desired outcomes for this visit? Were these outcomes achieved? Where didn't we meet our goals for this trip? Why?
-  Do we think that a follow-up visit is necessary? What do we believe we can accomplish with a follow-up visit?
-  Were the materials we supplied useful? Is there anything else we could bring on future trips to enhance the visit?
-  Did we remain within our budget for the trip?
-  Were our trusted servants well-prepared? (Some of the areas to consider are expenses, travel arrangements, translations, and workshop planning and scheduling.)
-  Did we experience any difficulties due to cultural or legal differences?
-  Additional feedback and suggestions?

LETTERS

Fellowship development includes diverse service tasks such as reaching out to an individual, inviting groups to participate in the service committee, reconnecting with groups that are no longer participating in the service structure, and reaching out to an emerging NA community or service committee. Some of the challenges that you may find in your efforts to connect with members can include language barriers, cultural differences, racial issues, resentments, lack of understanding, and lack of willingness to be engaged. Yet the rewards of fellowship development service may be thought of as spiritual gifts. The isolated or perhaps struggling members connecting with more members in NA may be the spark that keeps their small groups alive and motivated

The committee may find that what works in one part of the world, or with one culture, may not work somewhere else. For these reasons, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive sample of a fellowship development letter that could be used and adapted by your committee for any and all fellowship development efforts. We offer some of the principles of fellowship development—unity, communication, and attraction—that can easily be part of any letter that you compose.

The following sample letter consists of a generic opening and a closing paragraph that you might consider using, along with suggestions for the main body of the letter, which is developed depending on the intended purpose. These are meant as starting points only and may be freely adapted as necessary.

Opening paragraph example

Date _____

Dear _____:

The _____ committee of Narcotics Anonymous sends our greetings and hope that this letter finds you healthy and enjoying your recovery. In the spirit of unity and our primary purpose, we are reaching out to you so that, together, we can better carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering addict. We want to help you to carry that message, and we hope that you will, in turn, help us in our efforts to fulfill our primary purpose.



Below are examples of what could be included in the body of the letter for identified fellowship development service efforts.

Area service committee to an isolated NA group:

From our area service committee's records of GSR attendance, we realize that it has been *(insert length of time)* since we have had members from the *(insert group's name)* group attend our area service committee meeting. We believe that all NA groups have a valuable contribution to make to our service efforts and hope to rekindle our relationship to better achieve our mutual goals.

We have recently been working on *(insert brief outline of a few current projects—Issue Discussion Topics, learning days for subcommittees, area convention, etc.)* and desire your group’s experience and involvement in these service projects. These service efforts are helping us to attract new members and improve our service delivery. We are reaching out to you to see whether you want to join us in our service efforts and whether we can be of service to you in your efforts.

Area/Regional service committee to an emerging NA community:

We have recently become aware of the existence of NA meetings in your local area and are excited to make our initial contact with your NA community. We hope that this is the beginning of a mutually beneficial and supportive relationship.

We are the *(provide name of area/region)* covering *(insert geographical details)* and are made up of *(insert number of groups/areas)*. We have recently worked with members from *(insert brief details)* and found that the experience both excited and engaged our members. We want you to be aware of our committee; we can support each other in our efforts to carry the message of recovery to addicts. Additionally, we would like to learn whether you are providing services, how many meetings you have each week, and the size of your NA community.

Closing

We have enclosed a questionnaire with this letter. Our desire is that you complete the questionnaire and we begin to work together. We look forward to hearing from you and anticipate coming together with you in the near future. In the event that we do not hear from you, we will be contacting you again in approximately six weeks. With our combined service efforts, we certainly could reach more addicts.

In Loving Service,

(provide one contact person)
(address)
(email)

TRUST

H O N E S T Y

All of the efforts of
Narcotics Anonymous are
inspired by the primary
purpose of our groups.
Upon this common ground
we stand committed.



A VISION FOR NA SERVICE

Our vision is that one day:

- ▶ Every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in their own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life;
- ▶ Every member, inspired by the gift of recovery, experiences spiritual growth and fulfillment through service;
- ▶ NA service bodies worldwide work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to support the groups in carrying our message of recovery;
- ▶ Narcotics Anonymous has universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

Honesty, trust, and goodwill are the foundation of our service efforts,
all of which rely upon the guidance of a loving Higher Power.

G O O D W I L L