

H&I BASICS

Hospitals & Institutions

Committees

Corrections

Treatment



H&I meetings can carry the NA message of recovery to addicts who do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. H&I is an important service in our public relations efforts to inform the public and the potential member about our program. When addicts seeking recovery know who we are and where to find our meetings, our efforts have been successful. H&I meetings and presentations, except for those in long-term facilities, are intended to introduce attendees to some of the basics of the NA program.

This resource consists of three sections: *Corrections*, *Treatment*, and *Committees*. The *Corrections* section offers guidance for taking NA meetings into correctional facilities (jails and prisons). The *Treatment* section offers guidance for servants taking NA meetings into treatment centers. The *Committees* section explains the basic structure and function of an H&I committee and provides best practices for service committees looking to start H&I service.



H&I BASICS Corrections

H&I service embodies our primary purpose in Narcotics Anonymous: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. When addicts seeking recovery know who we are and where to find our meetings, this means our efforts have been successful. H&I meetings and presentations, except for those in long-term facilities, are intended to introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA program.

For those who are of service to H&I, carrying the message into a correctional facility can instill gratitude and help them stay in touch with the reality of the disease of addiction. It gives members an opportunity to practice the Twelfth Step and Fifth Tradition and deepen their own spiritual growth. This resource outlines the key points to consider when bringing H&I panels into correctional facilities. More extensive information can be found in the *Public Relations Handbook* and through local PR committees.

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

Hope

Jails are a revolving door for many still-suffering addicts who may be at the end of the road and looking for a way out. Sitting with their thoughts, some incarcerated addicts may be in a good position to receive the NA message of recovery.

An H&I panel could be an incarcerated addict's first exposure to NA, or to the hope that they can get and stay clean while incarcerated. Hearing members share may be an incarcerated addict's only connection to the outside.

Although personal experience in the correctional system is not a requirement for H&I service behind the walls, sharing from members who have been incarcerated may offer a special level of identification and hope for addicts inside. Above all, members entering facilities need to follow all the facility's regulations and use clear NA language so that NA's message is not blurred.

Consistency and Commitment

The principles of consistency and commitment are vitally important when selecting trusted servants to carry the message into correctional facilities. H&I is an important service in NA's public relations efforts. When NA members and service bodies are reliable, it reflects well on the Fellowship. Taking on an H&I commitment, especially in corrections, is a commitment to represent NA at its best. Building relationships of trust and respect with facilities is essential.

Every facility has its own rules and regulations all outsiders must follow. To get clearance to enter the facility, members must often apply with their full legal names and may be required to have a certain amount of time off parole or probation. Fingerprinting and background checks may be conducted. Additionally, a tuberculosis test may be required, which could involve two separate visits to a medical professional to administer the test and to check it several days later. More rarely, some facilities may require volunteers to attend an orientation that may include mandatory training about reporting knowledge of sexual assault or intimidation happening in the prison.

Whatever the rules are in a given institution, it may help to remember that they exist for the safety and security of everyone involved. Personal appearance is very important, including for online meetings. Panel leaders

should inform new panel speakers of the dress code ahead of time. Some facilities are very strict about what can be brought inside and may not even allow literature. A commitment to H&I service is a demonstration of responsibility. Trusted servants realize that responsibility by carrying the message and following facility rules.

Anonymity

Although anonymity is integral to all NA service, in correctional settings it is essential. Care should be taken to preserve incarcerated addicts' anonymity with the facility, among members, and in the community before and after release. Likewise, trusted servants should avoid sharing phone numbers, social media accounts, or any personal or family information with incarcerated addicts. Some facilities may not grant access to anyone who has had prior contact with someone on the inside, and if a member does encounter someone they knew from active addiction or are related to during their commitment, they should consider recusing themselves for that meeting depending on the guidelines of the facility and their H&I committee. Selfless service keeps the focus on recovery rather than friendships or personalities. At the heart of Step Twelve is a commitment: not just to share NA's message with the still-suffering addict, but to practice the program's principles in all our affairs.

BUILDING & MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FACILITIES

Bringing H&I services into a facility for the first time can require perseverance. It may be common for facilities to decline initially, especially if the facility personnel are not familiar with or have misconceptions about the NA program. Public relations (PR) committees can be valuable partners in the effort to get a presentation to a decisionmaker at the facility. Having an inside champion, such as a chaplain or volunteer coordinator at the facility, can be useful in gaining administrators' trust and a first step in building a relationship.

Corrections systems can differ significantly from state to state or country to country. However, while the particulars under different governments vary, the same general principles apply. Reach out to the facility warden or those administrators who oversee the wardens with the aim of setting up a meeting where they can talk about how NA helps incarcerated addicts, the purpose of H&I, and the number of H&I meetings within their jurisdiction. Although this may take some persistence, it is often worth the effort, as the relationship with the administrators can be a valuable one to foster and maintain alongside relationships with individual facilities. Once a relationship is established, it is equally important to maintain it. We follow up regularly and ask how we can improve or be of better service.

At the outset, it is important to set clear, realistic expectations about what NA can and cannot do with the number of volunteers available. Likewise, gaining a thorough understanding of the facility's regulations—ideally in writing—to share with incoming volunteers will help to create a successful working relationship. Personal conduct, including dress, can go a long way in fostering mutual respect.

Some types of institutions, such as juvenile or psychiatric correctional facilities, may have especially strict policies about things like physical contact or require more robust orientation for volunteers. Commitments at these kinds of facilities are more challenging than regular H&I panels



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and are best suited to the most experienced trusted servants. When joining a new panel, it is suggested to follow the lead of more experienced members and practice the spiritual principle of listening. Disruptive behavior is not uncommon in these settings. Legally, if a minor shares that they have been abused, the H&I committee may be required to report it. And in psychiatric facilities in particular, it is important not to offer advice or opinions on prescribed medication. Before committing to work with these institutions, committees should assess whether they have enough experienced trusted servants who are up to the task.

Accountability

Correctional institutions may not be familiar with the principles and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous, so it is critical to present a good public-facing image so that decisionmakers trust our program and our Fellowship. It is up to us to make sure we are meeting the needs of the incarcerated. A point of contact from the service body should check in with the facility on a monthly basis to see what they need, ask if they have any suggestions for how we could improve, and keep contact information up to date. Regular follow-up builds trust and demonstrates reliability. Clear, consistent communication is essential.

If a trusted servant cannot fulfill their commitment a particular week, they communicate that as soon as possible and ideally find another member who has already been cleared to replace them. Sometimes H&I committees may find themselves overcommitted, with too few people to fulfill all their obligations. In such cases, best practice is going to the facility to let them know that H&I is overcommitted and needs to discontinue or decrease the schedule of meetings. NA will retain its credibility and respectability by meeting face-to-face with facility staff when we are unable to keep a commitment. Having a larger pool of trusted servants to call upon helps committees avoid these situations.

OVERVIEW OF H&I STRUCTURE

H&I panels are not autonomous. They report to H&I committees, which in turn are accountable to a larger service body, usually an area, regional, or zonal service committee, in keeping with our concept of a single point of decision making and accountability. The larger service body also serves as the H&I committee's source of funding for literature and other expenses. As with other NA service commitments, it is important for H&I to work with the service body in the spirit of unity, bringing initiatives and requests to the body and gaining their support. In isolated or developing NA communities where formation of and participation in an area service committee (ASC) with an H&I subcommittee is not yet possible or practical, one or more groups may take on responsibility for H&I efforts. In such cases, the principle of accountability is fundamental to H&I, including an inventory of human and financial resources. Our experience has shown it is better to start small and build from there.

Generally, the most effective setup for H&I service is a local H&I subcommittee associated with an area service committee. In some areas or regions, H&I may be part of the public relations subcommittee, while in others they are two distinct bodies. In either case, it is suggested that H&I and PR work together toward their shared goal of carrying the NA message. Although H&I usually has the responsibility to provide panel meetings, trusted servants from both committees may be involved with presentations in facilities that house potential members.

The format for H&I meetings or presentations can vary depending on the facility. In short-term facilities, each panel may have an assigned leader who brings in speakers on a weekly or monthly basis to share their experience, strength, and hope in recovery. This format focuses on the message that panel members are carrying to the potential members. In contrast, at long-term facilities, panel leaders may want to encourage more participation from incarcerated addicts. Regardless of the format, H&I panel members are there to share about their recovery and refrain from sharing "war stories" of active addiction.

The length of time a member may serve as panel leader is up to the local service body's group conscience. Because the process of getting speakers cleared to enter correctional facilities can be cumbersome, some H&I committees may support longer-term commitments.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

The pandemic ushered in a dramatic growth in virtual NA service, including H&I. Because online panels can draw from a wider geographic area, they may have the benefit of a deeper pool of volunteers. In addition, virtual meetings can multiply the number of people receiving NA's message. A single virtual panel can reach multiple segregated cell blocks in multiple prisons. This is another reason why collaborating with administrators can be beneficial. In one state, for instance, all the women's prisons dial into a single H&I meeting. This allows an addict who transfers facilities to continue attending the same meeting. Some parts of the world even hold multinational prison panels, with as many as 50 prisons logging in to the same meeting!



As with in-person H&I meetings, building and maintaining strong relationships with facilities is essential when establishing online panels. An initial step could be a meeting with the warden to discuss the feasibility of virtual meetings within the facility. It's possible that additional meetings may follow with IT and security personnel. Sometimes facilities decline because they lack the budget, the staff, or the equipment necessary for virtual H&I. If a request is initially denied, an approach may be to ask the decisionmakers what they would need in order to consider online meetings. Public relations experience helps H&I leaders communicate the concrete benefits of virtual NA to decisionmakers.

Technology and Equipment

Once approval has been granted, trusted servants work with the facility to get an inventory of equipment they have. A jail may be more likely than a prison to have Wi-Fi, and prison conditions vary widely around the world. Some facilities may require more than one conversation, as well as diplomacy and support, in order to get online connection set up.

Based on experience, minimally the facility will need a laptop, projector, and speakers, or alternatively, a smart TV. Some setups may require a separate microphone as well. If incarcerated addicts are permitted to speak during the meeting, they can come up one at a time to the microphone. If a facility has a preference toward a particular video chat platform, it is important to let them make that decision. It is H&I's responsibility to adapt to the facility's needs, not the other way around.

If no Wi-Fi connection exists at the facility, H&I meetings can take place in a dedicated room where the laptop setup has a wired connection to the internet. If the facility lacks internet access altogether, don't be discouraged—there are still ways to carry the NA message there. Meetings might take place over the telephone, or trusted servants may bring in speaker CDs or DVDs (shared only within the facility and after release forms have been signed). In one institution, where the only medium addicts could listen to was AM radio, the H&I committee rented an hourlong slot through their local radio station to share a message of recovery. There's always a way!

Security and Authentication

In many cases, online meetings require the same security clearance as in-person ones. Any differences in clearance level or procedure should be noted in writing in case of a personnel change at the facility. Just as they would in person, the facility will need to authenticate that virtual panelists are the same individuals who got cleared. Virtual volunteers can often do this by holding a photo ID up to their face and getting close to the camera.

Use discretion in giving out the meeting ID and password to H&I subcommittee members, and give it only to facility staff who have been cleared. Effective H&I leaders ensure that all trusted servants are kept up to date with any changes to the links or passwords for online meetings.

HANDLING STAFF CHANGES, CONSISTENCY OF TRUSTED SERVANTS, SECURITY

When trusted servants have been coming to a particular institution for some time, they may develop a comfortable working relationship with the personnel they interact with. Staff turnover within a facility does happen, however, and new staff members might not be familiar with how NA H&I works. While they may have received some basic information about NA's ongoing service to their facility, they may have expectations or misconceptions that clash with a volunteer's sense of "how things are done."

Trusted servants need to pay attention when faced with new correctional staff who may not do things exactly like the previous staff did. Instead of getting upset or giving pushback, be willing to inform the staff about NA and the meeting to help them gain an understanding. It may be worthwhile for trusted servants to consider providing a presentation to the new staff to help them get a better sense of NA H&I. Patience, flexibility, and humility are all valuable when working out any type of personnel change. With these, a trusting relationship with the facility can be maintained and the addicts on the inside can experience consistent delivery of the NA message.

One way to minimize issues when staff turnover happens is to be in constant communication with the facility. If the facility can notify the committee leaders of any changes in advance, volunteers going in can be informed and prepared to meet new staff and begin building relationships. In these cases, it may be helpful to arrive early to allow extra time to get through their process.

As stated earlier, consistency is key in maintaining good relations with correctional facilities, especially during transitions. H&I committees that cultivate consistency in their trusted servants will have more success in fulfilling NA's primary purpose.

MEETING AT THE GATE / REENTRY

When reentering society after incarceration, it can be daunting and challenging to find one's first NA meeting on the outside. This can stir up feelings of uncertainty or fear. To support addicts through this transition, some H&I committees have established programs pairing addicts with trusted servants who act as temporary contacts, accompanying the newly released to their first outside NA meetings.

NA communities have had success with different arrangements for meeting addicts upon release. In some places, the process begins with the incarcerated addict filling out a short form as their release date approaches. They may then receive a packet including a meeting schedule for their local area and some relevant informational pamphlets. In some NA communities, volunteers meet addicts at the prison gates when they get out and take them directly to a meeting, while in other places volunteers arrange to meet the addicts at a meeting within a day or two of their release. Alternatively, H&I committees may use a more informal process of contacting the reentry managers at institutions and sending them meeting schedules for addicts upon release.



Temporary NA contacts usually do not sponsor the newly released addicts they are helping. Instead, they introduce the formerly incarcerated member to as many other NA members as they can to help them build a supportive NA network. As with any other new member, feeling connected to members in the rooms can make all the difference between staying clean and going back out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Remember to:

- Make directories of both virtual and in-person meetings and NA helpline numbers available to potential members so they can find NA upon release.
- Start and end on time!
- Clearly state that Narcotics Anonymous is separate from the facility and from other fellowships and treatment methods.
- Obey the dress code and use common sense.
- Conduct orientation and/or training sessions for all members involved in H&I service.
- Meet with facility staff on a regular basis to check on how NA is doing in the facility and how we could improve.
- Ensure that all panel members carry a clear NA message of recovery.
- Clarify the rules with whomever you bring into the facility.
- Emphasize that NA recovery is available to all addicts, regardless of drug(s) used.
- Involve potential members in the meetings, especially in long-term facilities (NA meeting readings, etc.).
- Screen all panel members, speakers, and chairperson(s).
- Attempt to get all agreements with correctional staff in writing and record them with the H&I committee.
- Adhere to the security regulations at all times.
- Avoid visible associations with outside issues or organizations through clothing, jewelry, or tattoos.
- Let incarcerated addicts know about *Reaching Out*.
- Let incarcerated addicts know about sponsorship behind the walls and provide contact information so they can get connected with a sponsor.

Refrain from:

- Conducting an H&I meeting or presentation alone.
- Giving any inmate within the facility your address or telephone number.
- Breaking another person's anonymity.
- Getting involved in discussions on outside issues; don't forget why we are there.
- Showing favoritism to any resident(s).
- Bringing an NA member who has friends and/or family in the facility.
- Accepting money or gifts from, or giving money or gifts to, any incarcerated addict.
- Emphasizing using days while sharing an NA message of recovery.
- Using excessive profanity.
- Debate any issues involving facility rules, regulations, programs, or other fellowships.
- Discussing conditions within the facility or facility staff members with incarcerated addicts.
- Dressing inappropriately, wearing flashy jewelry, or carrying excessive cash.
- Taking messages or carrying letters into or out of the facility.
- Asking what type of crime an incarcerated addict has been convicted of or discussing guilt or innocence.

MOVING FORWARD

Addicts on the inside can benefit from NA's message of hope and promise of freedom from addiction. Bringing NA to correctional facilities, whether in person or virtually, offers a potentially lifesaving pathway for recovery from addiction.

Once addicts hear the message, read the literature, and regain a glimmer of hope, they may want to start working Steps with a sponsor. In some local service communities, there is an established committee dedicated to sponsoring incarcerated addicts, sometimes referred to as Sponsorship Behind the Walls. In other places, this service is a subcommittee of H&I or public relations. Regardless of how the specific service structure is organized, sponsoring incarcerated addicts through letter writing is a powerful way for both sponsors and sponsees to stay connected to the program and engaged in their recovery. Before starting a new committee of this kind, it can be helpful to reach out to other local committees or look at the Local Service Resources page at na.org and take note of how other committees do things. Rather than reinventing the wheel, service bodies can learn from one another.

SPONSORSHIP BEHIND THE WALLS (SBTW)

Introducing newcomers to sponsorship while they are in an institution can also introduce them to spiritual principles like friendship, accountability, and hope. For the first time in a long while, they might feel they are truly not alone. For some addicts, letters from a sponsor might be their only regular contact with the outside world—maybe even the only demonstration that someone actually cares. Having a sponsor can be the beginning of a caring, supportive relationship.

Sponsoring an incarcerated addict can also reinforce the sponsor's own recovery through connection and purpose. Commitment is important when sponsoring people who are incarcerated. Unlike most NA service positions, which have a scheduled rotation, sponsorship behind the walls is a long-term undertaking that can require years of dedication from the sponsor. In this respect, it is like any other sponsor-sponsee relationship in the NA Fellowship.

Working the Steps

There is no single correct way to work the Twelve Steps in Narcotics Anonymous, but for consistency's sake it can be useful for local subcommittees to agree on a common method, such as the *Step Working Guides*. That way, if a sponsor does need to give up their commitment, the addict's new sponsor will be able to pick up right where their previous sponsor left off. Maintaining a consistent program of stepwork is as important for the incarcerated member as it is for any other addict.

Some SBTW committees will initially ask incarcerated members to read designated IPs and/or answer some questions before diving into stepwork. This may help SBTW assess whether the addict is genuine in their desire to work Steps. Once a sponsee begins their stepwork, it is helpful to lay out clear and simple expectations at the beginning of the process. For example, a sponsor might ask their sponsee not to move on to Step Two until they've gone over Step One. In writing to sponsees, keep NA's Traditions and spiritual principles at the forefront.

Effective committee leadership includes regular follow-up to make sure everything is going well for sponsees on the inside. Incarcerated addicts should be made aware of the process for requesting a different sponsor, whether through a facility coordinator or by writing directly to the service committee. The more consistent the communication between committees and facilities, the better the sponsor-sponsee relationships will be.



Mailing Logistics

Understanding an institution's mail policies is an important first step in establishing a SBTW program. Depending on the facility, sponsors may be able to mail NA literature to their sponsees directly, just as they mail their letters. Some facilities will only allow books inside if they have been shipped directly from the publisher. In these cases, committees can order literature online and have it shipped from the World Service Office to the facility.

Sometimes incarcerated people can get moved around within or between institutions, so it is helpful for SBTW committees to communicate regularly with prisons to ensure that all sponsees' addresses are current and complete. Incarcerated members usually address their letters to a PO box associated with their sponsor's local service body. Sponsors should also use this PO box as their return address and refrain from using their personal physical address on any mail.

Not all SBTW committees rely on the mail. In some areas, incarcerated addicts communicate with their sponsors and do stepwork via electronic tablets. As with H&I service, technology is increasingly expanding the possibilities of carrying the NA message.

One Addict Helping Another

Incarcerated addicts are no different from their fellow NA members living life on the outside. The heart of NA recovery is one addict helping another, whether it be at an NA meeting, on an institutional panel, or through sponsorship behind the walls. Incarceration may be a dark time for addicts, but NA can be the difference that changes the course of an incarcerated addict's life.



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PR Handbook: na.org/handbooks

Reaching Out: na.org/reachingout

Narcotics Anonymous Step Working Guides: na.org/webstore

IP #23, *Staying Clean on the Outside*: na.org/englit or na.org/webstore

H&I BASICS Treatment

The Narcotics Anonymous World Services Membership Survey suggests that over 38 percent of our members found NA meetings through the encouragement of addiction-treatment providers. Creating and maintaining relationships with addiction-treatment professionals can be an important way to carry NA's message to still-suffering addicts. Much as it does in correctional settings, H&I in treatment centers gives trusted servants the opportunity to practice the Twelfth Step and Fifth Tradition and deepen their own spiritual growth. Treatment settings come with their own set of considerations, which are outlined in this resource.

The challenges for members who serve NA H&I in treatment centers include following the Sixth, Eighth, and Tenth Traditions: We are not affiliated with any treatment center, we are not serving in a professional capacity, and we have no opinion on treatment methods.

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

Attraction

Making NA attractive—both to addicts in treatment and to the professionals who treat them—lies at the heart of this service. Different treatment centers have different philosophies and approaches. In addition to counseling, addicts may be receiving medication to treat their disease. Some treatment centers use a twelve-step approach, but the staff and clients may be more accustomed to the literature and language of a different fellowship. In these situations, an H&I panel may be an addict's first introduction to Narcotics Anonymous.

It is the job of trusted servants to present NA as a welcoming path to long-term recovery. One way to broaden the appeal of the program is to bring in panelists with a mix of age, racial or cultural background, and cleantime. This way, clients listening to the members share can see that NA has room for every manifestation of the recovering addict.

At the same time, we strive to demonstrate the reliability of NA to treatment professionals so that they refer more of their clients to our meetings. Through steady commitment, consistent communication, and behavior that reflects recovery, we can demonstrate the effectiveness of NA. If a trusted servant cannot keep their commitment for some reason, it is best practice to find a replacement panel leader with H&I experience and to notify the point of contact at the treatment center that someone new will be covering for the usual leader. Treatment centers often have full daily schedules, and when NA panels fail to show up at their scheduled time, it diminishes our credibility.

Cooperation, Not Affiliation

As Tradition Six states, NA is not affiliated with any outside enterprises, and this includes treatment facilities. Even if the treatment center is run by or employs NA members, this distinction between cooperation and affiliation must be maintained. This is an important point for H&I committees to stress when entering a relationship with a treatment facility. It is also helpful to communicate to the addicts listening that NA is separate from the treatment center and panelists are not being paid to carry the message into their facility. As such, conversations about the treatment center's approach or policies are not appropriate. Open-mindedness can be valuable for trusted servants as we take care to respect the autonomy of the facility. Although the NA way is what has worked for us, it is not necessarily the only way that works.



Hope

Many still-suffering addicts arrive at treatment centers with no intention of lifelong recovery or even staying clean. They may have been in and out of treatment many times with little lasting success, or they may simply be looking for a place to detox so they can “get their life together”—in other words, get their using back “under control.” An H&I panel could be an addict’s first exposure to the hope that they can stay clean after they get out of treatment.

A panelist’s humble assertion that “if I can do it, you can do it too” can plant the first seed of hope that any addict can lose the desire to use and find a new way to live. When trusted servants bring welcoming smiles and an authentic delivery of how NA has changed their own lives, they create space for this hope to take root.

BUILDING & MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TREATMENT CENTERS

Treatment centers vary widely in their approaches to recovery and their attitudes toward NA. Some treatment centers may have unfavorable views of NA shaped by misconceptions, philosophical differences, or adverse client experiences. On the opposite end of the spectrum are facilities that are staffed or even founded by dedicated NA members. In the middle are facilities that are friendly to NA but may have more experience with other twelve-step programs. Across this whole spectrum, trusted servants should take special care as to how the NA message is being delivered.

PR committees can be valuable partners in articulating how NA differs from other programs and what we have to offer. PR and H&I committees can work together to ensure that treatment professionals are clear on what NA can and cannot provide for their clients.

It is essential to respect the trained professionals who are inviting us into their workplace to carry the NA message. If we recognize certain staff members as NA members, we keep that information to ourselves to maintain clear boundaries and protect employee anonymity. Addiction professionals, even those who are in recovery, are not bound to follow our Traditions or Steps as employees and are under no obligation to us. We are not there to discuss the treatment methods being used; we are there to offer a message of hope through the NA Steps and Traditions and to follow any rules the facility may have, regardless of our personal views. We are guests of the facility, and if their approach to treating addiction is at odds with NA’s, it is helpful to present addicts with another perspective on long-term recovery.

Different treatment centers have different rules, which are always important to observe. For instance, although hugs are a popular staple of NA meetings, some treatment facilities may have a policy against touching clients. Some treatment centers may require panelists to have TB tests before entering their facilities, or they may require a sign-in with one's full legal name. In service committees' initial discussions with facilities, documenting both parties' expectations in writing can help ensure continuity when there is turnover among treatment staff or trusted servants. Through cooperation and clear communication with facilities, we establish our Fellowship's reputation as a reliable community resource.

Accountability

After establishing a relationship with a treatment facility, it is equally important to maintain it. A point of contact from the H&I service body should check in with the treatment center regularly to see what they need, ask if they have any suggestions for how we could improve, and keep all contact information up to date. Regular follow-up builds trust and demonstrates reliability. Clear, consistent communication is essential.

It is important for service committees to be realistic about the number of volunteers willing to go to the facility and able to deliver the services the facility is asking for. Failure to follow through on a commitment damages NA's reputation. It is better to start small and expand than to overpromise. For instance, if not enough trusted servants are available to provide weekly panels at a particular facility, monthly panels may be feasible instead.

Panel leaders remind their panelists to use clear NA language when they share so that NA's message is not blurred. Some treatment centers routinely use terminology from other twelve-step programs that is inconsistent with how we speak in NA meetings. Rather than correcting a professional's or a client's choice of words, we simply model the language of our program. Trusted servants who may attend multiple fellowships need to be reminded to stick to NA terms like "addict" and "clean" when serving on behalf of an NA service body. NA's message of recovery is paramount.

Another part of carrying a clear NA message is communicating that this is a spiritual, not religious, program. Referring to specific religious figures can alienate potential members or mislead them into thinking they must believe in a certain God for NA to work for them. Speakers reach more addicts when they focus on what their Higher Power does for them, rather than who or what their Higher Power is.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Since the pandemic that began in 2020, delivering H&I service virtually has become more common. Because online NA panels can draw speakers from a wider geographic area, they may have the benefit of a deeper pool of volunteers. This "wide net" may be especially useful in finding panelists who will be relatable for specialized populations, such as adolescents, older adults, or addicts with co-occurring mental health diagnoses. Virtual meetings can multiply the number of people receiving NA's message, as a single online H&I panel can potentially reach multiple treatment facilities at once.

As with in-person panels, treatment centers may have preferences for how online H&I service is delivered. It is important to let the treatment center determine the rules and settings for virtual panels, such as whether clients are permitted to unmute themselves or raise their hands to ask



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questions or share. As always, it is an H&I committee's responsibility to adapt to the facility's needs while being clear about the boundaries set forth by our Traditions.

It is important that trusted servants treat online H&I with the same level of diligence and effort they would for in-person service. The fact that our trusted servants are not physically present at the treatment center does not mean the facility's expectations have changed. For example, speaking while driving a car can distract from the message of recovery. Instead of multitasking, consider that we have a single focus and set aside time to dedicate our full attention to fulfilling our primary purpose and the commitment.

Independent of H&I service, treatment centers also have the option to log in virtually to outside NA meetings that are online or hybrid. H&I trusted servants can inform facility staff that their clients are invited to these meetings, which are listed at na.org/virtualmeetings.

RELEVANT FACTORS IN TREATMENT SETTINGS

Medication-Assisted Treatment

The need to differentiate NA from the therapy provided by a treatment center may be more crucial than ever with the rise of medical approaches to addiction treatment. With the increasing numbers of opioid use disorder patients being prescribed medications to assist with treatment, H&I panelists need to be trained on how to respond to questions from clients and facility staff on how NA and its members view addicts who come to meetings while taking these medications.

While Narcotics Anonymous is a program of abstinence, NA has no opinion on professionally prescribed medications. There are places where the government will only provide funding to treatment centers that prescribe certain addiction medication to their clients. It is not necessarily these addicts' choice to use this medication; they are just following the protocols of their treatment program. Too often, treatment facilities and medical professionals do not send their clients to NA meetings because they think they will be stigmatized and feel unwelcome. These addicts then lose out on the chance to hear our lifesaving message that any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. If our Fellowship is not a welcoming place for addicts who come through these treatment centers, they may never find the freedom our program promises.

"As we stated previously, NA has no opinion on the practices of any organizations or practitioners outside NA. However, within the context of NA and its meetings, we have generally accepted principles, and one is that NA is a program of complete abstinence. By definition, medically assisted therapy indicates that medication is being given to people to treat addiction. In NA, addiction is treated by abstinence and through application of the spiritual principles contained in the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous."

Narcotics Anonymous and Persons Receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment

When inviting clients to NA meetings, it may help to remind them that all our members are in various stages of recovery themselves. Consequently, some members may still be learning to give the warm welcome they were so grateful to have received. We encourage our new members coming from treatment to seek out those members who extend a hand, a hug, and an invitation to join our lifesaving program. H&I trusted servants can help addicts and professionals alike understand that anyone with the desire to be abstinent can be an NA member. We have neither the right nor the ability to judge another addict's desire to stop using.

Use of NA's Name

In some places, it is common for NA members to open treatment centers and "raise the NA flag," making direct affiliations and endorsements. This goes against our Sixth Tradition: "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." Although businesses such as treatment centers are not obligated to follow

our Traditions, we as a Fellowship still try our best to protect the NA name and other trademarks when they are co-opted by outside entities. We try to educate those facilities and explain that there is no such thing as an “NA treatment center.” H&I committees that run into this situation can contact NA World Services for support.

“Over and over, we check ourselves not only for affiliation but for the appearance of it.”

Guiding Principles, “Tradition Six”

Even though we are not affiliated with treatment centers, we do supply them with NA literature to help familiarize clients with what NA has to offer. H&I committees should provide trusted servants with plenty of informational pamphlets and local meeting directories to bring to their panels, as well as information about how to access online meetings. Depending on your H&I subcommittee’s literature budget, you may also want to bring in book-length recovery literature. However, it is important to be prudent with Fellowship funds in accordance with Concept Eleven. Part of building sustainable relationships with treatment centers involves showing those facilities how to gain greater access to NA literature. Providing a walkthrough of the literature available on na.org and bringing in order forms empowers facilities to show their clients how to get literature for themselves. Another idea is to give the treatment center staff a library of NA books that clients can borrow, and give the clients their own copies of the *Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous*.

Client turnover at some treatment centers is high, so IPs can run out quickly. It is up to the trusted servants to check the IP racks or literature tables and note which literature items need replenishing each month. It is also important to keep treatment centers stocked with the most up-to-date versions of local meeting directories. Some treatment centers do not allow literature with staples inside. Committees can specify “no staples” in their literature orders, or trusted servants can remove any staples from booklets or pamphlets before bringing them into the facility.

In order to carry a clear NA message, trusted servants do not bring any non-NA literature or non-NA speakers into treatment centers. Speakers can be reminded in advance to share a clear NA message using the language of our Fellowship during their share.

Sponsorship

Some treatment centers that utilize a twelve-step approach may direct their clients to find sponsors. In some cases, having a sponsor might be a requirement for getting cleared to attend outside meetings. It is common for addicts to come up to the speakers after an H&I panel and ask panelists to sponsor them. It is up to individual NA members whether they are open to sponsoring addicts in treatment; they may also wish to consult their area H&I guidelines.

Sometimes a counselor or other staff member from the treatment center may request a brief conversation with the potential sponsor about their recovery and experience before clearing them to sponsor a client. Other facilities have a more relaxed approach.

IP #11, *Sponsorship*, can be helpful to bring in when visiting treatment centers. It is important for clients and staff to understand the role of an NA sponsor and what it does and does not entail.



IP SUGGESTIONS FOR TREATMENT CENTERS

IP # 7, *Am I An Addict?*

IP #8, *Just for Today*

IP #11, *Sponsorship*

**IP #13, *By Young Addicts,
For Young Addicts****

IP #16, *For the Newcomer*

IP #17, *For Those in Treatment*

IP #22, *Welcome to NA*

**IP #27, *For the Parents or Guardians of
Young People in Recovery****

IP #29, *An Introduction to NA Meetings*

***These IPs are specifically recommended for use in adolescent treatment.**

Special Populations

The growth of the addiction-treatment industry has allowed treatment centers to specialize in serving specific populations, such as adolescents, older adults, or addicts with co-occurring mental health conditions. Before sending trusted servants into such specialized treatment centers, H&I committees should ensure these members have been trained to meet the needs of the specific clientele those facilities serve. In these cases, committees should also have guidelines in place to make sure new trusted servants rotating into these positions are fully prepared.

Adolescents are an example of a group that comes with certain challenges. It can help to recruit panelists who got clean young, as well as those who are able to engage members when they share. Keep language simple and straightforward. It is also preferable to err on the side of too many speakers rather than too few. Three or four ten- or fifteen-minute shares will hold young people's attention more effectively than two twenty-five minute shares. Two pamphlets that are helpful to bring to adolescent treatment centers are IP #13, *By Young Addicts, For Young Addicts* and IP #27, *For the Parents or Guardians of Young People in Recovery*.

Conversely, some treatment facilities serve a client population that is older. Just like younger addicts, older addicts pose their own challenges for H&I. It is important to motivate them to find reasons to want to be drug-free as they age. Speakers who got clean at an advanced age will be relatable, inspiring hope in clients who may otherwise feel it is too late for them. Younger panelists might share positive experiences with grandparents or other older people they know who also got clean in NA. Speakers can emphasize the gift of recovery that is enjoying the full spectrum of life, including quality time in their day-to-day living with friends, finding joy in everyday activities, or simply being able to laugh again. Many older people have chronic physical conditions that may make daily life more difficult. For these addicts, the booklet *In Times of Illness* is an invaluable resource, as is the section titled "Aging" in Chapter Four of *Living Clean: The Journey Continues*.

Some treatment centers specialize in clients with "co-occurring disorders," meaning they have both a mental health diagnosis and substance abuse. Trusted servants going into these facilities should take care to maintain a clear, simple message of recovery in NA. We are not there to discuss mental health issues. However, if it comes up in a question or comment from a client, panelists may choose to touch on how the Steps of NA helped them with other behaviors besides drugs, if applicable. It is very helpful to bring copies of IP #30, *Mental Health in Recovery*, into these settings.

Many residential treatment centers are single-gender or gender segregated. Some men's facilities may ask that only male trusted servants bring H&I services into their facility for H&I, while others may be open to panelists of all genders. By contrast, women's facilities usually do not allow male visitors. As with all facility policies, it is important to clarify these expectations in advance. Addicts who do not identify as strictly male or female may still be welcome to share at a single-gender facility, depending on their gender presentation. It may be helpful to discuss these cases with staff ahead of time so that both the clients and the panelists feel safe and can focus without distraction on the NA message.



Ideas for Topics / Formats

A common format for an H&I meeting at a treatment center is a panel of two or three speakers sharing on their recovery for 15–20 minutes each. Having three or even four speakers allows for a more diverse panel, which increases the chance that addicts will hear something that resonates with them. Additionally, most addicts in their first days or weeks clean have yet to recover their full attention spans or mental clarity, and shorter shares help to retain their focus.

There are other meeting formats that may work well in treatment centers. A rotating Step One-Two-Three meeting can introduce clients to the parts of our program that apply most directly to where they are in their recovery. Alternatively, a meeting that centers on a topic such as “surrender” can be a good way to engage clients; some panels have clients draw a topic from a bag or hat. Questions and answers can also be an effective format, although trusted servants will need to be trained to anticipate and answer—or skillfully refrain from answering—difficult questions clients may ask, such as opinions about treatment methods, staff, or outside issues. No matter the format, it is important that there be some kind of structured format to keep the discussion focused.

When we share at treatment centers, it can be tempting to try to relate to clients by telling “war stories” about what it was like when we were using. But addicts in treatment already know about active addiction—they need to learn about recovery! Similarly, it is best practice to avoid talking about specific drugs, which can be triggering or alienating to newly clean addicts. Although treatment centers often identify a client’s “drug of choice,” or “DOC,” as part of the intake process, H&I panelists can explain that Narcotics Anonymous focuses on the disease of addiction rather than on any specific substance. Clarify that NA views drugs as a symptom of the disease of addiction, and that NA is here to help addicts recover from this disease regardless of what or how much they used.

Discharge

Whether someone is in treatment for a matter of days, weeks, or months, most treatment programs eventually come to an end. H&I trusted servants can help addicts in treatment centers have a plan for what to do once they are discharged. It is helpful to bring a printed stack of local meeting directories to hand out, perhaps with your home group circled or highlighted. You can invite addicts to meet you at your home group when they are discharged and point out other meetings that may be a good fit for them. Mention that some members find it effective to go to ninety meetings in ninety days, which helps them cement themselves in the Fellowship and build a support network. IP #17, *For Those in Treatment*, contains additional guidance for addicts approaching the transition out of treatment and into NA recovery.

Of course, not all treatment is residential. Clients receiving outpatient treatment have the freedom to attend outside meetings on their own after their daily programming has concluded. To encourage addicts in outpatient treatment to attend meetings, it can help to establish a regular NA meeting that any addict is welcome to attend in a room at the treatment center. The advantage of this is one of convenience and comfort for the addict in treatment. However, it is especially important in these cases to remember the Sixth Tradition and avoid the appearance of affiliation with the facility. Group trusted servants may want to include a statement about nonaffiliation early in the format of an onsite meeting.



Reprinted from *Reaching Out*, October 2015

RECOMMENDATIONS

Remember to:

- Communicate NA's philosophy about addiction and recovery, such as total abstinence, the Twelve-Step approach, focus on the disease of addiction rather than specific drug use, etc.
- Make sure addicts in treatment have access to NA helpline numbers and online meeting schedules for both virtual and in-person meetings.
- Clarify the treatment center's rules with whomever you bring into the facility.
- Clearly state that Narcotics Anonymous is separate from the facility and from other fellowships and treatment methods.
- Respect the anonymity of treatment professionals and staff who may also be members of NA. If we recognize certain staff members as NA members, we keep that information to ourselves to maintain clear boundaries.
- Dress neatly and modestly, and avoid visible associations with outside issues or organizations through clothing, jewelry, or tattoos.
- Keep NA's purpose in mind: carrying a *clear NA message* of recovery and instilling hope.
- Thank residents for allowing NA to come in—acknowledging we're being welcomed into their current residence.

Refrain from:

- Debating any issues involving facility rules, regulations, programs, or other fellowships.
- Wearing flashy jewelry.
- Using profanity, especially in youth treatment.
- Taking messages or carrying letters into or out of the facility.
- Bringing an NA member who has friends and/or family in the facility.
- Inviting significant others who are not part of the H&I panel into the treatment center.
- Discussing conditions within the facility or facility staff members with clients.

MOVING FORWARD

Addicts come to treatment centers under all kinds of circumstances, but they all can get the same message of hope and the promise of freedom when NA members bring H&I service into these facilities. Addicts can't take the resources and comfort of a treatment center with them when they leave, but they can take hope with them knowing that Narcotics Anonymous is waiting for them. However, it is not enough to have a discharge plan that lists the meetings they will go to and the contacts they will reach out to for support. To stay clean in NA, addicts must be willing to commit to do something to ensure their success. H&I trusted servants can help inspire this commitment by sharing how their own commitment to NA recovery has changed their lives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PR Handbook (Chapter 7): na.org/handbooks

H&I Handbook: na.org/handbooks

Local service resources: na.org/localresources

Virtual meeting search: na.org/virtualmeetings

Literature order form: na.org/order-form

Webstore: na.org/englit or na.org/webstore

IP #7, *Am I an Addict?*

IP #8, *Just for Today*

IP #11, *Sponsorship*

IP #13, *By Young Addicts, For Young Addicts*

IP #16, *For the Newcomer*

IP #17, *For Those in Treatment*

IP #22, *Welcome to NA*

IP #27, *For the Parents or Guardians of Young People in Recovery*

IP #29, *An Introduction to NA Meetings*

IP #30, *Mental Health in Recovery*

Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous

In Times of Illness

H&I BASICS Committees

Like so many service efforts in Narcotics Anonymous, H&I service works best when it is a “we” endeavor, not a “me” endeavor. Our Ninth Tradition states that “NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.” Committees provide a structure that helps promote collaboration and continuity of services. While NA groups carry the message to addicts who can get to their meetings, H&I committees carry the message to those who cannot attend community meetings. Committees coordinate coverage of facilities, including treatment centers; provide logistical support to panel leaders; and help solve problems. Our experience is that these committees give life to our Fellowship, encouraging the development of responsible trusted servants.

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

Unity

Tradition One reminds us of the importance of NA unity: Our common welfare must come first. Having unified H&I committees helps trusted servants carry a clear, consistent message of Narcotics Anonymous to addicts in facilities including treatment centers. Committees limit the issues that may arise when a member takes on the responsibility alone with the desire to serve but without adequate guidelines or support. Guidelines and shared practices ensure that the quality of service remains the same even when trusted servant positions rotate.

Commitment

When NA panels come to facilities, we are the face of Narcotics Anonymous. We may be the first contact many people have with NA. For NA to carry the message successfully, we need to build a sound reputation within and amongst facilities. The Corrections and Treatment sections go into more detail about approaches for building these relationships.

The importance of showing up for commitments cannot be overstated. A prudent practice for committees is to initiate contact with a facility only if fully prepared to support H&I service there. Overcommitment is a risk many H&I committees face when they are eager to serve but do not take a realistic inventory of volunteer availability. Our primary purpose is not best served when we allow ourselves to become overcommitted. The quality of meetings is more important than their quantity.

Emergencies happen, even for the most reliable of trusted servants. Fortunately, having a robust H&I committee ensures that every trusted servant is connected to a support network so we can fulfill our obligations to facilities without overburdening the individual.

Attraction to Service

Just as H&I panels serve to attract suffering addicts to the NA program, H&I committees strive to attract local Fellowship members to H&I service. New members stepping up to serve are what keeps the program growing and evolving. A diverse committee is a strong committee because it reflects our message that any addict can get clean and lose the desire to use.

In some NA communities, it can be challenging to fill H&I committees with qualified and dedicated members. Rather than relying on pressure or guilt, we make service appealing when we share the benefits serving has

given us. Serving on an H&I committee strengthens personal recovery by surrounding us with other addicts who have the willingness to do what it takes to stay clean. It encourages us to learn to work with others toward a common purpose. A committee that runs smoothly and that members visibly enjoy participating in will naturally attract more people to serve.

FUNCTIONS OF AN H&I COMMITTEE

- Initiates, coordinates, and conducts all local NA H&I services within the area.
- Provides a monthly forum to pool experiences for discussion of local H&I issues.
- Prepares H&I policies and guidelines for approval by the subcommittee itself and/or the ASC.
- Serves as a communications link between local H&I meetings/presentations and H&I subcommittees at the area and regional levels.
- Selects the members who are to conduct the H&I meetings.
- Serves as a distribution point for literature for the meetings and reports these transactions to the ASC.
- In cooperation with PR, makes all initial contact with facilities.
- Conducts learning days, workshops, and orientations on relevant topics.

H&I COMMITTEES AND THE SERVICE STRUCTURE

Most H&I committees are subcommittees of an area, regional, or (more rarely) zonal service committee, and as such they are directly accountable to that committee in all matters. This guide tends to focus on the area H&I subcommittee, since the direct coordination and effort for most H&I service is performed at the area level.

Areas can differ in how they organize their local services. In some NA communities, H&I exists as a subcommittee under the umbrella of Public Relations (PR), often along with phonelines and other public-facing services. In other places, the H&I subcommittee is completely independent from PR and directly responsible to the area service committee. In areas where H&I and PR operate separately, it is important for these two committees to maintain regular communication to help make sure resources are being used effectively to best carry the message. Working together, H&I and PR can support each other in getting NA resources into the community and branching out to new locations around the area.

Regional H&I subcommittees exist primarily to lend assistance to area H&I subcommittees, rather than to dictate or try to control their actions. The regional subcommittee can be a forum for areas to ask questions and hear others' experiences with various situations in H&I service.

Regional subcommittees are accountable to their RSC in the same way area subcommittees are accountable to their ASC. It is recommended to submit budgets, guideline revisions, and reports of the subcommittee's work for approval to the appropriate service committee on a regular basis.



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COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

Although our leaders do not govern in Narcotics Anonymous, they do bring important personal qualities to their roles as trusted servants. Most H&I committees elect their own members to fulfill leadership commitments. For these positions, it is important to identify members who have demonstrated reliability, patience, and the ability to facilitate meetings and discussion.

Leadership Positions

Typically, an H&I subcommittee will have a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary. The exact duties of these positions depend on an individual committee's guidelines and the number of trusted servants available to fill them. For instance, some committees may assign the vice chair the job of obtaining literature from the area, region, or world for distribution at H&I facilities. Other committees might have a separate literature coordinator position dedicated to acquiring literature and bringing it to the H&I subcommittee meeting for panel leaders to pick up. Below are some recommended guidelines for officer roles on an H&I subcommittee:

Chair

- Suggested minimum cleantime varies by community, but a minimum of two (2) years is recommended, with at least 1–2 years of experience in H&I service.
- Suggested minimum term of two (2) years.
- Prepares an agenda for each subcommittee meeting.
- Keeps order in the meeting and keeps discussion on topic.
- Ensures that the Traditions are upheld in all matters.
- Maintains a link of communication between the H&I subcommittee and the area service committee, including giving a monthly report to the ASC.
- Attends each meeting of the regional H&I subcommittee and brings a report of its activities back to the area H&I subcommittee.
- Works with the panel coordinator(s) to draft all correspondence to facilities served by the subcommittee.
- Maintains referral information such as meeting schedules so that panel leaders or the facility can refer addicts leaving an H&I setting to a meeting or helpline number.
- Provides training for new H&I trusted servants and ensures that guidelines are upheld.
- May have other responsibilities, depending on the local H&I guidelines.

Vice Chair

- Suggested minimum cleantime varies by community, but a minimum of one (1) to two (2) years is recommended, ideally with at least one year of experience in H&I service.
- Suggested minimum term of one (1) to two (2) years.
- Helps chairperson keep proceedings orderly.
- Acts as chairperson in the case of chairperson's absence.
- If the office of chairperson becomes vacant, serves as the chair until confirmed by the ASC or until a new chair is elected.
- Provides training for new H&I trusted servants and ensures that guidelines are upheld.
- May have other responsibilities depending on the local H&I guidelines.

Secretary

- Suggested minimum cleantime varies by community, but a minimum of one (1) to two (2) years is recommended, ideally with at least six (6) months of experience in H&I service.
- Suggested minimum term of one (1) year.
- Takes an accurate set of minutes at each monthly meeting and distributes them to subcommittee members prior to the next meeting.
- Keeps an updated volunteer list of members who would like to go to H&I meetings.
- Maintains an ongoing file of all correspondence and minutes.
- May have other responsibilities depending on the local H&I guidelines.

Literature Coordinator

- Suggested minimum cleantime varies by community, but a minimum of one (1) to two (2) years is recommended, ideally with at least one year of experience in H&I service.
- Suggested minimum term of one (1) to two (2) years.
- Responsible for distributing NA-approved literature and any other items the subcommittee uses in carrying the message, such as copies of *Reaching Out*, to the panel leaders.
- To assure accountability, keeps a complete record of all transactions and reports them at the regular subcommittee meetings.
- Keeps track of the amount of literature being distributed so the panel leaders' literature requests remain prudent and the subcommittee can fairly distribute the literature without exceeding its budget. Regular audits ensure that the literature outlays are reasonable and accounted for.

Correctional Facility Coordinator

- Suggested minimum cleantime varies by community, but a minimum of one (1) to two (2) years is recommended, ideally with at least one year of experience in H&I service.
- Suggested minimum term of commitment of two (2) years. This is to ensure continuity of service when dealing with correctional center administration.
- Responsible for getting panel leaders and members scheduled and cleared for entry into correctional facilities.

The Panel System

Traditionally, H&I committees have used the panel system to delegate responsibilities to committed committee members. Recurring H&I meetings at a given facility may be held weekly, biweekly, or monthly depending on the facility's schedule and volunteer availability. Each meeting has a leader whose responsibility it is to assemble a panel of two to four members to carry the NA message into the facility. These panel leaders report to a panel coordinator who acts as the point person for that facility. Below are some recommended guidelines for panel roles:

Panel members

- Suggested at least six (6) months cleantime
- Panel members (sometimes called panelists or panel speakers) are the essential element of H&I service—the members who share their experience, strength, and hope at the H&I meeting. It is not important whether or not members have been in a similar facility themselves. Anyone with a clear and consistent Narcotics Anonymous message who is willing to share is well suited for H&I work.
- Committees may hold regular orientations for new panel members. Some committees ask first-time panel members to attend only as observers. (For more, see the "Guidelines and Training" section on page 23.)

Panel leaders

- Suggested minimum cleantime of one (1) year and demonstrated personal responsibility in other service commitments. Experience sharing on panels is helpful.
- Suggested term of six (6) months to one (1) year. Shorter terms of service may create confusion and challenges for the facility and the H&I committee.
- The panel leader selects members of the Fellowship to be panel members for a particular panel, often from a list maintained by the H&I committee. Panel leaders are responsible for bringing appropriate speakers with a clear NA message, so having some familiarity with a member's story before asking them to speak is encouraged. Also, panel leaders make sure their panelists are aware of H&I "Recommendations" and any facility regulations.
- It is recommended that panel leaders be selected by the H&I subcommittee at its regular service meeting and continue to attend committee meetings regularly.
- The panel leader opens the meeting and introduces the panelists, following the format the committee has developed. They are responsible for ensuring that the meeting starts and ends on time.
- Any problems can be reported to the panel coordinator and then included in the regular report to the H&I subcommittee.

Panel coordinators

- Suggested minimum cleantime of one (1) to two (2) years. Prior experience as a panel leader is helpful.
- Suggested term of one (1) to two (2) years. For panel coordinators working with correctional facilities, a longer term (2+ years) may be encouraged to ensure continuity of service when dealing with correctional center administration.
- The panel coordinator acts as the liaison between the H&I subcommittee and a given facility. A panel coordinator may be responsible for just one, several, or all the facilities their subcommittee works with, depending on the needs and conscience of the H&I subcommittee.
- Panel coordinators working with correctional facilities are responsible for getting panel leaders and members scheduled and cleared for entry into the facilities.
- Before each subcommittee meeting, the panel coordinator reaches out to all the panel leaders for their facility to ask for a report on how things are going. Often, the panel coordinator is also one of the panel leaders for the facility, which helps streamline communication with the facility.
- Panel coordinators make sure that H&I meetings are conducted in accordance with the H&I committee policies and the facility rules.
- In some areas, the responsibilities of the panel coordinator fall under the job description of one of the other members of committee leadership, such as chairperson or vice chairperson. This may work in a smaller area, but as the number of facilities you are dealing with grows, you may want to elect one or more panel coordinators to handle the job.



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Rotation and Mentorship

Occasionally, trusted servants grow attached to their leadership roles and may be reluctant to turn them over to another willing and qualified addict. It can help to remember that anonymous, selfless service puts principles before personalities. Rotation of service in NA gives more addicts the opportunity to serve, helps prevent burnout, and ultimately makes for a richer, more vibrant committee.

However, committees can suffer during leadership transitions when new officers are left to pick up the pieces with no guidance. In H&I especially, having roles change hands too frequently can get in the way of building relationships with facilities. This is particularly true in correctional settings. Some institutional administrators or government regulators may prefer or even require a single contact person who doesn't change from year to year. Sometimes members who would be happy to continue leading an institutional panel are "pushed" out because of overly rigorous rotation standards, and the replacement panel leader may not be as reliable. We can lose perfectly healthy panels because we insist on a rotation that we inadequately fill.

Mentorship can help bridge the gap and strike a balance between rotation of leadership and continuity of service. When experienced H&I members mentor those who are newer to service, both members experience rewards, as many have found it gratifying to watch addicts they have mentored carrying the message in new and powerful ways. Various mentorship arrangements are possible; sponsors can mentor their sponsees in service, or a panel coordinator might mentor and train one of their panel leaders to step into the role after a few years. Committees can coordinate mentorship among committee members so that knowledge and responsibilities are passed on seamlessly to the next elected service person.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

It is typical, though not universal, for H&I committees to meet once a month. The meeting is an opportunity for panel leaders to pick up literature to bring to their facilities, to report on how their panels are going, and to participate in any committee business such as elections. Showing up regularly to these meetings fosters unity and a sense of teamwork. Panel leaders are able to get to know one another, and those facing challenges can learn from others who share what has worked for them as trusted servants.

While meeting in person allows panel leaders to pick up literature, many H&I committees have found that having the option to join the committee meeting online allows more addicts to serve. Holding a "hybrid" H&I committee meeting increases flexibility and convenience for trusted servants, enhancing the appeal of this vital service.

Sample H&I subcommittee meeting format:

- Moment of silence for the still-suffering addict
- Opening NA prayer or reading
- Read Traditions and/or Concepts
- Take attendance
- Read and approve the minutes of the previous meeting
- Report of budget expenditures, including literature disbursements
- H&I panel coordinators report
- H&I panel leaders report
- Old business
- Elect officers (if appropriate)
- New business
- Schedule next subcommittee meeting
- Closing NA prayer or reading



Sometimes longtime panel leaders may feel like they know what they're doing and no longer see the value in attending the H&I committee meetings. This issue can be minimized by making committee attendance as interesting and informative as possible, emphasizing that these meetings are where leaders pass on experience to newer H&I members. It is the policy of some H&I committees to remove any panel leaders who fail to show up for a set number of consecutive subcommittee meetings. Other committees do not have such a policy in their guidelines. The decision is up to the committee. In making decisions like these, it can be helpful to consider the general availability of trusted servants. An area with few members willing and able to lead panels might be more lenient than one where more panel leaders are available to fill positions.

It can also be helpful for the committee to set up an online group chat or text group for communication between formal meetings. This allows panel leaders and coordinators to share any needs or announcements that come up, such as last-minute panelist requests or unexpected schedule changes.

GUIDELINES AND TRAINING

Every H&I subcommittee should develop a set of guidelines and review them annually or as needed. Changes to the guidelines are made by group conscience at the subcommittee meeting. In some places, any changes to subcommittee guidelines require approval from the ASC or RSC. Guidelines are not hard-and-fast rules, but they are important safeguards to the healthy functioning of the committee and the integrity of service. New H&I committees are encouraged to look at other H&I committees' guidelines as a starting point when developing their own.

H&I committees are also responsible for training new H&I trusted servants in carrying the message effectively. Although some H&I training may happen "on the job" as panel members watch and learn from their panel leaders, a strong committee will make sure all new trusted servants have been well prepared for their roles. Committees may wish to hold regular orientations for new panel members. It is a good idea for the panel leader to meet the panel members outside the facility ten minutes or so before the panel to go over expectations. Emphasis should be placed on what is meant by "a clear NA message (not clouded by language from other fellowships)," appearance and behavior, the importance of anonymity, and any facility rules. Panel leaders may wish to print copies of the H&I "Recommendations" for panelists to refer to.

Panel leaders need training as well. At a minimum, committees may want to provide each panel leader with a folder including a meeting format, a set of group reading cards, a phone list of members who have volunteered to share on panels, copies of the “Recommendations” to give to new panel members, and a copy of this guide. If your committee is engaged with virtual H&I service, then panel leaders can also be trained in the use of the virtual meeting platform. Similarly, a panel leader stepping into the role of panel coordinator may be given a list of staff contacts for their facility and a complete schedule of panels and panel leaders for that facility. It helps for the committee to have a group means of communication, such as an email list or group chat, to share numbers and other resources.

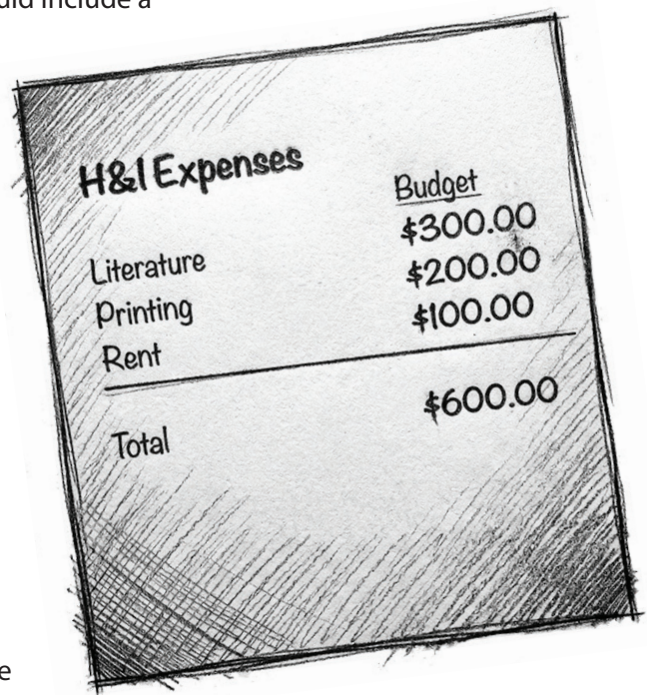
Committees may wish to hold regular orientation workshops where incoming panel leaders and panel coordinators can role-play various situations that typically arise in service. Workshops are also a good way for committees to work together to create systems for recruiting new volunteers and helping panel leaders find qualified speakers.

Committees carrying the message into specialized facilities for particular populations of addicts can benefit from specialized training. Examples include younger or adolescent addicts, or addicts with mental health conditions. The regional H&I subcommittee meeting is a good place to connect with other areas who may have experience serving these populations. Also worthy of special attention are addicts with reading challenges. For these addicts, encountering NA literature at a meeting can be alienating and a source of shame. Committees may find it helpful to hold an orientation for panel leaders on how to reach those addicts who don’t read in order to make them feel more a part of.

BUDGETING AND REPORTING

Like all service committees, H&I subcommittees can draw up and vote on a budget on a regular basis, such as quarterly or yearly. Typically, the budget is approved first internally by the H&I committee, followed by the ASC. The chair’s monthly report to the ASC could include a statement detailing literature and administrative expenses, such as printing costs for copies of minutes, guidelines, reports, or event flyers. Other administrative expenses may include postage, rent for the committee meeting space, and/or virtual platform account fees if needed.

Committees can assess their monthly literature needs based on experience. There is no right or wrong amount to spend on literature, but being judicious about what types of literature to bring into facilities can help cut costs. The booklet *An Introductory Guide to NA* is a low-cost alternative to the Basic Text, containing the entire chapter “How It Works,” including all Twelve Steps, plus ten informational pamphlets. Together, the *Introductory Guide* and the Little White Book make it easier for H&I committees to be cost-effective in fulfilling our primary purpose. If encouraged, certain facilities may be willing to use their own budgeted funds to purchase NA literature when possible. Some correctional institutions have libraries where Basic Texts can be made available.



| H&I Expenses | |
|--------------|---------------|
| | <u>Budget</u> |
| Literature | \$300.00 |
| Printing | \$200.00 |
| Rent | \$100.00 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total | \$600.00 |

Besides budgets and expenditures reports to the area, the committee chair will also report to the regional H&I subcommittee meeting, where they may be asked to fill out a short report form. Usually these reports are simple, asking for basic figures like the number of H&I meetings in the area, the number of panel leaders, any changes in officers or contact information, and any problems or concerns. Some area H&I subcommittees provide similar report forms for their panel leaders, while others simply ask for spoken reports at each subcommittee meeting.



Reprinted from *Reaching Out*, July 2016

MAINTAINING CONTINUITY OF SERVICE

The biggest challenge most H&I committees face is making sure there are no gaps in our efforts to carry the message of recovery. Panel leaders who find themselves unable to show up to their panel a particular week are advised to contact their panel coordinator as soon as possible so arrangements can be made. Given enough lead time, the panel coordinator may ask another panel leader for that facility to cover for or switch panel dates with the original panel leader. If need be, it is best practice for panel coordinators to be prepared to step in themselves.

When a panel leader steps away from an ongoing panel commitment without securing a replacement, that panel is considered “open.” Experienced committees try to fill open panels as quickly as possible so addicts can continue hearing our message of recovery. Some H&I committees have a policy where the panel coordinator will cover any open panels at their facility until a new panel leader is able to step into that commitment. If the panel coordinator is unable to do this, a member of the executive body may step in to help. To avoid these situations, panel leaders who plan to give up their panels can give the committee several months’ notice so they can recruit, vote in, and train a replacement panel leader.

It is not unusual to have more requests for panels than there are trusted servants available to cover them. Decisions must sometimes be made about where to allocate limited resources. A good rule of thumb is to prioritize those facilities that are more restricted—that is, where addicts are unable to get to any outside meetings. Facilities can also be prioritized according to how long they have been waiting for a panel.

If a committee finds itself needing to scale back services—for instance, bringing in panels every other week rather than weekly—it’s up to the panel coordinator to communicate clearly with the facility about the situation and be open to the facility’s suggestions. Effective committees are mindful of their membership and capacity to serve. It is usually better to start small and gradually add panels rather than having to downsize.

It may become necessary to temporarily shut down an H&I meeting/presentation for a variety of reasons, such as changes in facility policies or lack of trusted servants. If this happens, it is helpful for the H&I subcommittee to continue supplying the facility with meeting schedules and literature. In the rare event that an H&I meeting is shut down due to the negligence or misconduct of a member of the H&I subcommittee, it is important that several objective members of the subcommittee take all steps necessary, within our guidelines, to reconcile the situation and resume the meeting. Above all, we must remember that our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering addict.



WORKSHOPS & LEARNING DAYS

Area or regional H&I committees may wish to hold learning days or workshops to educate the local Fellowship about H&I service. We have learning days to keep members informed of updated H&I resources and projects, and so that we may benefit from the collective experience of other NA members. Workshops are events where specific topics or projects are worked on. Workshops are helpful when particular issues arise on a committee.

When members get involved in putting on learning days, they develop a clearer understanding of the many facets of H&I and become more confident and positive in carrying a clear, consistent NA message. Learning days and workshops give newer members the opportunity to understand H&I service as a vital and positive part of their recovery. H&I is where many members found hope and usefulness in the Fellowship, and these kinds of events give us the opportunity to pass that hope on to others.

When planning a learning day, it is a good idea to communicate with your local PR and activities subcommittees. Some H&I and PR subcommittees choose to hold joint learning days, which can draw in more interest and save resources. A willing committee member can be designated to coordinate the learning day and serve as a single point of accountability for the event. A proposed date, time, location, and budget should be determined and presented to the ASC or RSC for approval. The budget should account for room rent, printing costs, and any refreshments that will be provided. Sometimes a committee will fund a speaker's travel when they are coming from outside the area/region. Using virtual meeting technology to hold a hybrid event can also allow for a wider, more inclusive reach.

H&I learning days may focus on a specific topic, or more generally, on H&I service. A panel of speakers with questions and answers is often an effective format. You may want to invite members from outside the area or region. Having mentors at the event to answer questions and evaluate volunteers can be very useful. It is always useful to provide sign-up sheets where members can sign up to be contacted to share on panels, along with printed copies of *Reaching Out*, *Behind the Walls*, and this guide (*H&I Basics*). Learning days may be recorded for showing at future H&I committee meetings.

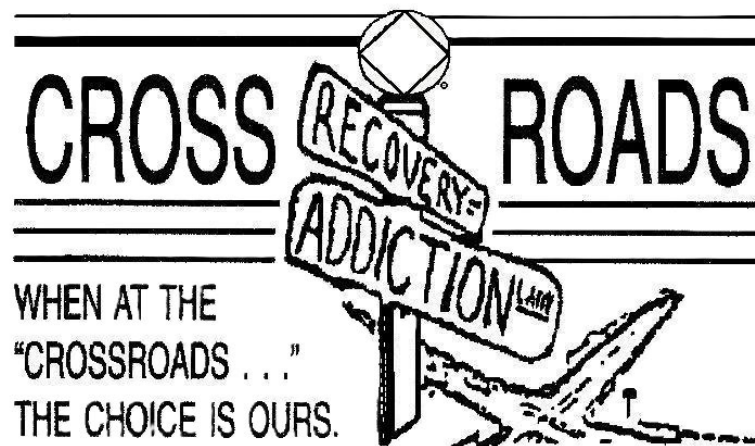
H&I SERVICE WHERE NO ASC OR H&I SUBCOMMITTEE EXISTS

In isolated or developing NA communities, often due to a meeting's geographical location or to the limited development of an NA service system, formation of and participation in an ASC with an H&I subcommittee may not yet be possible or practical.

Once an H&I meeting/presentation is started, the news can spread very quickly. Facilities hear about our H&I efforts and seek out local members, often requesting an H&I meeting or information about NA meetings. Usually, these original members in an area are very committed and try to say "yes" to all requests, so new H&I meetings are started. At this point, it may be helpful to inventory both the human and financial resources available in order to prioritize meetings and/or facilities that can be served effectively. H&I needs committed members, but literature and transportation costs should also be considered.

It is common for H&I commitments to be taken on by a few dedicated members. We have discovered that the demands of supporting one or more H&I meetings, week in and week out, can often lead to burnout. Effective delegation and planning can help ensure that the commitments are maintained and the responsibilities are shared. It is possible to do H&I work with just a few members, but in such circumstances be sure to use common sense. Here are some tips:

- Never take on an H&I commitment alone. In the absence of an area H&I subcommittee, any H&I work has to be the effort of one or more groups. Remember, I can't—we can.
- Make sure the group is ready for the responsibility. Don't be afraid to say, "We're sorry, but we're just not able to support a meeting in your facility at this time." You may also consider negotiating. For example, you could offer to bring in one meeting a month instead of two. Don't take on additional commitments until you are ready.
- Get other groups involved whenever possible, perhaps alternating weeks or months. Reach out. Sometimes members from neighboring areas or the region are able to come and help on an occasional basis.
- If possible, holding online or hybrid subcommittee meetings can allow more addicts to participate in the committee even if they are geographically remote.
- If you find that you have overcommitted and cannot consistently hold the meeting, go to the facility and let them know that you need to discontinue the meeting or decrease the schedule of meetings. NA will retain its credibility and respectability when you meet face-to-face to inform a facility's staff that you are unable to keep a commitment.
- Always be aware that H&I work is best done by area H&I subcommittees using the panel system. As soon as it is possible to form an ASC or to join one, do so.



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MOVING FORWARD

Experience shows that areas with H&I meetings tend to experience greater Fellowship growth. Strong committees provide the foundation for each member of the committee to reach their potential, resulting in reliable, consistent, quality service. H&I service is the lifeblood of our Fellowship. It ensures our future and exemplifies putting our vision into action. Somewhere on the globe a group of members are coming together to fulfill our purpose—and someone will hear the words “Narcotics Anonymous” for the very first time. In order for our Fellowship to thrive, it’s important that potential members see a unified, hope-filled group of individuals with the sole purpose of communicating with them that freedom from active addiction is possible.



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

An Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous: na.org/englit or na.org/webstore

Little White Book: na.org/englit or na.org/webstore

Reaching Out: na.org/reachingout

Behind the Walls: na.org/englit or na.org/webstore

Reaching Out

Order Form

Reaching Out is a quarterly, recovery-oriented newsletter made available free of charge to incarcerated addicts through Narcotics Anonymous World Services. If you will be incarcerated for at least six more months and would like a free subscription to *Reaching Out*, complete and return the following form.

Reaching Out is also available in a printer-ready format,
for free download at na.org/reachingout.

Reaching Out is also available by a 20-copy bulk subscription at a cost of \$44.00 annually. If you are interested in purchasing a bulk subscription, please complete the following form and return it along with a check or money order.

- I am an incarcerated addict (and will be for at least six more months) and want a free subscription to *Reaching Out*.
- I want to purchase _____ 20-copy bulk subscriptions of *Reaching Out* @ \$44 each, total \$ _____.

Name _____

Identification Number _____

Facility Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Reaching Out

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NOTES

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