

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 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](https://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

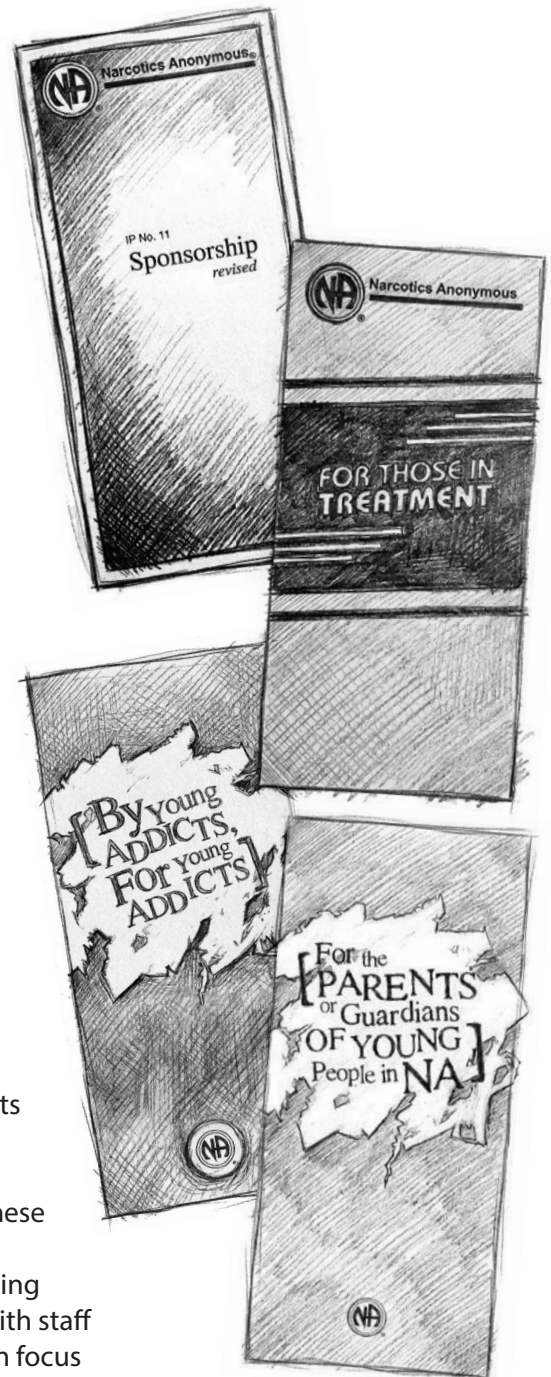
The growth of the addiction-treatment industry has allowed treatment centers to specialize in serving specific populations, such as adolescents, older adults, or addicts with co-occurring mental health conditions. Before sending trusted servants into such specialized treatment centers, H&I committees 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.



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## 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.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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

H&I Handbook: [na.org/handbooks](https://na.org/handbooks)

Local service resources: [na.org/localresources](https://na.org/localresources)

Virtual meeting search: [na.org/virtualmeetings](https://na.org/virtualmeetings)

Literature order form: [na.org/order-form](https://na.org/order-form)

Webstore: [na.org/englit](https://na.org/englit) or [na.org/webstore](https://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*