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## **APF Public Information Presentation Training Kit**

### *Section 3: Public Information Presentations and Resource Material*

Version 1.02 – November 2001

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# APF PI Presentation Training Kit: Section Three

## *Public Information – Presentations and The Resource Material*

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This section contains public information resources for use in our training on PI presentations. These materials are gathered from various sources such as World Services, and Regional and Area Public Information Committees. These materials are the substance of what we present to the public in our presentations.

### **Part One: Public Information Presentations**

Below is a suggested planning model for responding to requests for a public information presentation.

Phase 1	The Request
Phase 2	Preparation
Phase 3	Pre-Presentation Training
Phase 4	The Presentation
Phase 5	Post Presentation
Phase 6	Reporting

Each phase is described in detail on the following pages.

#### **Phase 1 - The Request**

When a request for public information presentation is received, basic information should be gathered about the request. Important questions to be answered are:

1. Who is making the request for the presentation?
2. Who are we making the presentation to?
3. How many participants are expected?
4. When and where will the presentation take place?
5. What are the expectations of the group receiving the presentation?
6. Is this request appropriate for NA to participate in a presentation?

All these questions need not be answered at the moment the request is received. In due time, it will be necessary to have an understanding of the situation to prepare a work plan if a presentation is indeed to be executed.

Let's go over the individual questions for more detail on their usage:

#### **Item 1: Who is making the request for the presentation?**

It is critical to identify the party requesting the presentation (this request may be received as unsolicited, the result of a PI campaign or even as a personal Fellowship contact, for example).

Appropriate contact information such as name, telephone number, title (social worker, schoolteacher, doctor, etc.) is obviously important facts to have before responding to a request.

It's best to have a single point of responsibility to interface with when investigating the request! That goes for the Fellowship as well. A single person should be designated to investigate the request. This information is passed on to the PI committee and/or other responsible trusted servants.

**Item 2: Whom are we making the presentation to?**

This questions deals with the composition of the audience for the presentation. This information is important for trusted servant evaluation with respect to approval or disapproval of the request. It is also important because the composition of the presentation is affected by the composition of the audience. Although the information we present is essentially the same, we need to be aware of our audience's interest and temperament. For example, an audience of medical students at a university would have different needs and questions versus an audience of correctional professionals, secondary school students versus social services organization and so on.

**Item 3: How many participants are expected?**

The information gained from this question help us to plan on how much literature is needed for the presentation.

**Item 4: When and where will the presentation take place?**

The information gained from this question is helpful of course in arranging for trusted servant volunteers in accommodating the request.

**Item 5: What are the expectations of the group receiving the presentation?**

It is important to understand what the person or people' requesting the presentation expects of us. Most times the person or organization making the request only knows that NA is a program concerned with drug addiction. Who we are and what we communicate may be different from their expectations of our presentation. This is our first opportunity to explain whom and what we are, making sure that the person requesting the presentation has a more accurate vision of our program and what we offer.

The question also helps trusted servant preparation for the presentation; choosing appropriate literature to distribute, practice questions for pre-presentation training and adjustments to the presentation format, if needed.

This initial understanding will help prevent negative experiences in the course of the presentation.

**Item 6: Is this request appropriate for NA to participate in a presentation?**

We need to be sure our participation in a public presentation is consistent with our Traditions and the philosophy of our program. An example could be the request of a local church for a presentation. The priest wants us to teach his parishioners how to detect people using drugs or how horrible it is to be a drug addict. This is not what we do in Public Information. This inquiry is an opportunity for us to inform the priest on what our program is and that we are available to his church members should the need arise.

Another example is a local secondary school requesting our participation in their health education program. Further inquiry shows that the event planned is an anti-drug use rally. The school expects us to make anti-drug statements and support their position of drug abuse prevention. Again, this not the type of environment for NA participation and the request should be declined.

An example of an appropriate event would be a request from a university class for nursing students. The event is in a classroom environment and the audience is interested in the recovery of drug addicts from drug addiction. This is valid request we can respond to.

**Phase 2 - Preparation**

Once the request goes through local service committee approval, preparation for the presentation begins. At this point coordination, funding, human resource evaluation and the delegation of trusted servant responsibilities should be the priorities.

Here is a list of questions to assist us in the preparation phase:

1. Who will coordinate the pre-event communications and coordination?
2. What financial resources are available (travel & literature needs)?
3. What human resources are available (capable trusted servants for the event)?
4. When and where will the pre-event training take place?
5. What literature will be distributed?
6. What presentation format will be used for the presentation?
7. To whom does the presentation coordinator report for the duration of the project?

Let's go over the individual questions for more detail on their usage:

**Item 1: Who will coordinate the pre-event communications and coordination?**

Some PI committees have pre-designated coordinators for presentations. Others respond after the event is accepted by the PI committee. Regardless, a single point of coordination should be assigned for the event.

**Item 2: What financial resources are available?**

Depending on the scope of the presentation (local, regional, national or international), financial resources need to be identified. Also it must be determined if the resources address the needs of the presentation.

For instance, do we need to cover travel costs of trusted servants? How much money is budgeted for PI presentations? Is there enough money in the PI committee's budget for this event? Will another NA service body contribute financially to this event? Questions like these need to be considered and answered for the planning of this event.

**Item 3: What human resources are available?**

This is an important aspect of our preparation and will affect the pre-event training sessions.

For instance, do we have members with the necessary clean time? Do we have members that are appropriate for the event (age, language and other considerations)? Are these trusted servants available for the event? Do they have proper public information experience? If not, are they available for pre-event training sessions?

The PI committee should maintain a list of NA members willing to and qualified to participate in this type of event.

All the participants should know about:

- The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
- The presentation audience (who we are speaking to, what is their interest in NA)
- The format to be used for this presentation
- Each volunteer's part in the presentation
- Where and when the presentation is, and how to get there
- Who the contact person is at the facility
- Where the presentation group will meet prior to the presentation

If public information experience is lacking in your area, don't give up! How else will members in your area get the experience? Following PI guidelines and faith in a Higher Power will guide you to carrying the message in a public forum.

**Item 4: When and where will the pre-event training take place?**

Once an understanding is reached on whom the trusted servants are to participate in this presentation, a pre-event training session should be scheduled. It is very important to make sure all members participating in the event are present to assure a quality presentation.

**Item 5: What literature will be distributed?**

Most presentations use some core literature for all presentations and then some additional literature specific to the audience. Below is a suggested list of NA literature to use for a presentation. For a specific audience it may be worthwhile to add other NA literature. Of course the PI Committee’s choices will be limited to its budget!

- Local meeting directory
- NA White Booklet, Newly Revised
- Literature order form
- IP #1: Who, What, How and Why
- IP #7: Am I an Addict?
- IP #11: Sponsorship
- IP #22: Welcome to Narcotics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous, "A Resource in Your Community." Booklet
- Facts about Narcotics Anonymous. – Published Paper
- Narcotics Anonymous- "A Commitment to Community Partnership." - Published Paper

NA literature has been translated into various languages. That fact helps us show that Narcotics Anonymous is a worldwide fellowship and can be a useful tool in our public information work. You may want to take some translated materials if members of your audience may speak other languages.

**Item 6: What presentation format will be used for the presentation?**

Some PI Committees have developed specific formats for their presentations. This is often very helpful for new volunteers, and it can also help keep the message at presentations consistent.

As we said earlier, knowing your audience is essential in deciding how the format will be adjusted, if at all. We will speak more about presentation formats in Part 2 of this section, *Presentation Formats*.

**Item 7: To whom does the presentation coordinator report to for this project?**

Clear lines of responsibility should be laid out so that reporting on the event progress and conclusion can be properly communicated to the NA service structure.

**Phase 3 – Pre-Event Training**

It is very, very important for all participants to meet before the presentation to review the chosen format of the presentation, discuss details of the event (when, where, how, agreed upon dress code, etc.) and the opportunity to practice the presentation.

One or two participants should be designated to conduct the pre-event training session. An agenda should be prepared and materials made available to the participants. This is also a great opportunity to invite NA members not scheduled to be a part of the presentation so that they can observe and learn what skills are needed for making presentations.

Of primary concern in this training session is to reinforce standards for participant behavior, dress code, and make trusted servant assignments in execution of the presentation.

Also important is to practice answering questions from your audience. This is where most members need practice in communicating information while upholding our Twelve Traditions. This kit provides a “Frequently Asked Questions” resource for the PI Committees practice.

## **Phase 4 – The Presentation**

Now it is time to make your presentation. Here are tips for the presentation coordinator or presentation leader to keep in mind before and during the presentation:

- Contact all participants prior to event to remind them of their responsibilities and communicate any changes to the event if needed.
- Contact the trusted servant responsible for literature to verify the materials are accessible.
- It is recommended to pre-assemble “packets” of literature for distribution to the audience. It’s much easier to distribute the literature in this manner. Decide where and when to assemble these packets.
- Participants should meet at a pre-designated location close to the event - this will allow your group to arrive on time, assemble the literature if necessary and make adjustments to your presentation, if needed. This is also a good time to share a moment with each other focusing on a Higher Power.
- Encourage all trusted servants to relax and be pleasant! Presentations can be stressful but do your best to project the program’s values of humility, caring and respect.

## **Phase 5 – Post Presentation**

Once the presentation is completed, a post-presentation meeting should be scheduled for discussion on how the presentation was conducted. It may be helpful to schedule this at the next PI Committee meeting. This is also a good time to take notes for the service committee report to the responsible service body.

This post-presentation meeting should discuss subjects such as:

- Communication skills demonstrated by the trusted servants
- The question and answer period of the presentation
- Difficulties encountered
- Positive experiences
- The presentation format (was it adequate, does it need to be changed, etc.)
- Contacts – compilation of contact information (business cards and requests for more information, etc.)
- Did we bring enough literature?
- Did we bring the right kind of literature, including translated literature where applicable?
- Did we adequately answer the audience’s questions?
- How might we have answered their questions better?
- Was there anything else requested from the PI committee? Do we need to follow up on these requests?
- Were the volunteers adequately trained?
- Have we been invited back?

A good technique to get started on the discussion is to ask each member of the presentation team to state one thing they liked and one thing they did not like about the presentation.

## **Phase 6 – Reporting**

The presentation coordinator should make a final report to the proper service boards or committees as soon as possible to assure information is accurate and complete.

Items to report are:

- Date and time of presentation

- Trusted servants in attendance
- The hosting organization, number of audience
- Any special requests or new contacts made (referrals to H&I, etc.)
- Overall impression of the presentation

## Part Two: Presentation Formats

Some PI committees have developed specific formats for their presentations. This is often very helpful for volunteers, new and experienced alike. An agreed to format can also help keep the message at presentations consistent. If your PI committee uses a specific format, the volunteers should practice reading it until it flows naturally. There are three sample presentation formats included in this kit that you may wish to adopt for your use or as a guide in creating your own format.

Here is a brief outline of a basic public presentation format:

- Introduction of the presenters and a description of what will be presented. Each person should be introduced as a recovering addict.
- Description of the literature available at the presentation. Mention books and information pamphlets that are published by World Services and different available formats (audio cassette, Braille, large print, and languages translated into, etc). Bring order forms and explain how they can purchase them.
- Description of Narcotics Anonymous with a brief history of NA as a whole and locally.
- Local services, the group and types of meetings available.
- Speak briefly on the meaning of addiction for NA members.
- Speak briefly on the meaning of abstinence.
- Describe the Twelve Steps of NA and the meaning of “spirituality” in NA.
- Describe recovery, the “NA Way of Life”, living life without drugs.
- Appropriate contact information is given (phone number, addresses, etc.).
- Questions and answers.

## Outlines for PI Presentations

We present three outlines for PI presentations to different audiences. These outlines serve as guides for a “presentation format” to be created at the local level. Information and cultural considerations can be inserted into these presentation formats to enhance communication with your audience.

In reality, there are only slight differences between these outlines. The order of information presented is interchangeable to some extent and can be modified as needed. The trainer (or trainers) should strive to use the following formats as is, encouraging trusted servants at the local level to use these outlines as guides to their final format used. We’ve separated the outlines so that they may be copied as individual documents for training use.



## **Outline for PI Presentations to Non-Addicts from an Organization**

(Clubs, Fraternal Organizations, Business Groups, Etc.)

- 1) Identify Yourself to the Audience
  - a) Using first names, NA participants identify themselves as an addict.
  - b) Thank the person(s)/agency(s) who invited NA for the presentation.
- 2) Opening statement to describe why are we here and what do we hope to accomplish:
  - a) “Narcotics Anonymous is grateful to have this opportunity to speak to you today about our Fellowship. It is always a pleasure to meet members of the public, such as yourselves, who are concerned with the problem of drug addiction in our community. We have no answer for you today about how to stop someone from becoming involved with drugs. We have found through the experience of recovering addicts that our program of recovery works for those who apply themselves to it. Our program works in our meetings...but the addict has to get to our meetings first to find this recovery. It is our hope that you will remember Narcotics Anonymous when confronted by a member of the community that may need our help.”
- 3) Read anonymity statement:
  - a) “The basic premise of anonymity allows addicts to attend meetings without fear of legal or social repercussions. This is an important consideration for addicts thinking about going to their first NA meeting. Anonymity also supports an atmosphere of equality in meetings. It helps insure that no individual's personality or circumstance will be considered more important than the message of recovery shared in NA. We ask your help in maintaining our tradition of personal anonymity by not identifying our members by name or in full-face photos as members of Narcotics Anonymous, or by describing details of their personal circumstances, which could reveal their identities. We thank you for respecting our request.”
- 4) History of Narcotics Anonymous
  - a) “Narcotics Anonymous was inspired by the Alcoholics Anonymous movement of the late 1940s. Narcotics Anonymous, as we know it today, started meetings in the Los Angeles area of California, USA, in 1953. For many years the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship grew very slowly, spreading from Los Angeles to other major North American cities and Australia in the early 1970s. In 1983, Narcotics Anonymous published its self-titled book we call the “Basic Text”, and membership growth rates have since risen dramatically.”
  - b) Our literature has been translated from English into more than 7 major languages.
  - c) We have more than 24,000 weekly meetings in over 72 countries and our message continues to help addicts all over the world find a new way of life.
  - d) Give local NA history (date first meeting was held, number of meetings presently being conducted, etc.)
- 5) Description of Narcotics Anonymous
  - a) Read, “What is the NA Program”.
  - b) Make statement: “Narcotics Anonymous is an international, community based 12 step oriented program focused on the recovery from drug addiction. The name “Narcotics Anonymous” does not refer to any particular drug or group of drugs. Very simply, it is any mind or mood-altering substance. It makes no difference to us how or what drugs were used. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.”
- 6) Local Narcotics Anonymous Service Structure
  - a) State the different levels of service identifying the NA member as the highest level to whom we serve.
  - b) Hospitals and Institutions Committee—purpose is to carry the message to addicts who are unable to attend regular meetings of NA. Local information should be given by an H&I member

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- c) Public Information Committee—state committee’s purpose is to inform all areas of the public about who and what we are, and how we can be found. Maintains meeting schedules. If applicable, advise audience PI committee usually maintain a telephone line to help addicts anonymously.
  - d) Literature Committee—maintains stock of literature for sale to the groups. Conducts review of literature written for the Fellowship.
  - e) Translations Committee—works on translating conference approved literature to local language.
- 7) The Group
- a) Meets regularly at a specific time and place, follows the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of NA. Describe different types of meetings, difference between open and closed meetings, for example.
  - b) Identification of one addict to another, recognition of themselves in others.
  - c) Sharing of personal experience, strength, and hope.
  - d) A “sanctuary” where addicts can relax among peers in fellowship.
- 8) Addiction
- a) Read “Who is an Addict”
  - b) Make the following statement about NA’s concept of addiction, “The Narcotics Anonymous program uses a very simple, experience-oriented disease concept of addiction. Narcotics Anonymous does not qualify its use of the term "disease" in any medical or specialized therapeutic sense.”
  - c) Compulsive, self-centered, obsessive behavior.
  - d) Drug use only a symptom of the underlying problem (The disease is more than just the drugs we used)
  - e) Duration of drug use does not determine addiction.
  - f) Living in denial and isolation, denying any recognition of our drug and living problems.
- 9) Abstinence and Recovery
- a) “Narcotics Anonymous encourages its members to observe complete abstinence from all drugs, including alcohol. It has been the NA members' experience that complete and continuous abstinence provides the best foundation for recovery and personal growth.”
  - b) We have found that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.
  - c) We follow a 12 Step program based on principles that we can follow in our daily lives.
  - d) The progression of recovery is primarily up to the individual.
- 10) The Steps and Spirituality
- a) “Narcotics Anonymous itself is non-religious and encourages each member to cultivate an individual understanding of a Higher Power, religious or not.”
  - b) “Central to the program is an emphasis on what is referred to as a "spiritual awakening," emphasizing its practical value, not its philosophical or metaphysical importance.”
  - c) Spiritual benefits of the 12 Steps: Honest admission of being an addict, finding hope, developing faith, come to a better understanding of ourselves, change our old behaviors, remove defects of character, make amends for past wrongs, continue to develop faith and improve our living actions, and sharing with others.
- 11) Life After Drugs
- a) We develop new interests.
  - b) We get together and plan social activities of all types (mention local activities such as conventions, camping, dances, picnics, etc.).
  - c) Every two years we hold a worldwide convention where thousands of addicts meet to celebrate their recovery.
  - d) We practice spiritual principles in our lives. We experience freedom from self-obsession. We gain self-respect, as well as respect for others.
- 12) How to Find Narcotics Anonymous
- a) Local Helpline telephone number(s).
  - b) Local web site URL address, if applicable.

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- c) Area Service Committee contact information.
  - d) Regional Service Committee contact information
  - e) NA World Services' Office contact information (Web site URL address also).
- 13) Question and Answer Period
- 14) Closing
- a) Thank audience for their attention

## Outline for PI Presentations to Non-Addicts in Schools

(Secondary Schools, College or University)

- 1) Identify Yourself to the Audience
  - a) Using first names, NA participants identifying themselves as an addict.
  - b) Thank the person(s)/agency(s) who invited NA for the presentation.
- 2) Opening statement to describe why are we here and what do we hope to accomplish:
  - a) “We came here today to speak to about the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, who we are, what we are and how we can be contacted. We are always grateful to have this opportunity to carry our message to the public so that no addict seeking recovery need die from the horrors of addiction. Someone you know may need help with his or her drug problem. It is our hope that you may remember the name *Narcotics Anonymous* when you met someone who may need our help.”
  - b) Read anonymity statement: “The basic premise of anonymity allows addicts to attend meetings without fear of legal or social repercussions. This is an important consideration for addicts thinking about going to their first NA meeting. Anonymity also supports an atmosphere of equality in meetings. It helps insure that no individual's personality or circumstance will be considered more important than the message of recovery shared in NA. We ask your help in maintaining our tradition of personal anonymity by not identifying our members by name or in full-face photos as members of Narcotics Anonymous, or by describing details of their personal circumstances, which could reveal their identities. We thank you for respecting our request.”
- 3) History of Narcotics Anonymous
  - a) “Narcotics Anonymous was inspired by the Alcoholics Anonymous movement of the late 1940s. Narcotics Anonymous, as we know it today, started meetings in the Los Angeles area of California, USA, in 1953. For many years the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship grew very slowly, spreading from Los Angeles to other major North American cities and Australia in the early 1970s. In 1983, Narcotics Anonymous published its self-titled book we call the “Basic Text”, and membership growth rates have since risen dramatically.”
  - b) Our literature has been translated from English into more than 7 major languages.
  - c) We have more than 24,000 weekly meetings in over 72 countries and our message continues to help addicts all over the world find a new way of life.
  - d) Give local NA history (date first meeting was held, number of meetings presently being conducted, etc.)
- 4) Description of Narcotics Anonymous
  - a) Read, “What is the NA Program”.
  - b) Make statement: “Narcotics Anonymous is an international, community based 12 step oriented program focused on the recovery from drug addiction. The name “Narcotics Anonymous” does not refer to any particular drug or group of drugs. Very simply, it is any mind or mood-altering substance. It makes no difference to us how or what drugs were used. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.
- 5) The Group
  - a) Meets regularly at a specific time and place, follows the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of NA. Describe different types of meetings, difference between open and closed meetings, for example.
  - b) Identification of one addict to another, recognition of themselves in others.
  - c) Sharing of personal experience, strength, and hope.
  - d) A “sanctuary” where addicts can relax among friends in fellowship.
- 6) Addiction

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- a) Read, “Who is an Addict”
  - b) Make a statement about NA’s concept of addiction, “The Narcotics Anonymous program uses a very simple, experience-oriented disease concept of addiction. Narcotics Anonymous does not qualify its use of the term "disease" in any medical or specialized therapeutic sense.”
  - c) Compulsive, self-centered, obsessive behavior.
  - d) Drug use only a symptom of the underlying problem (The disease is more than just the drugs we used)
  - e) Duration of use does not determine addiction
  - f) Living in denial and isolation, denying any recognition of our drug and living problems.
- 7) Abstinence and Recovery
- a) “Narcotics Anonymous encourages its members to observe complete abstinence from all drugs, including alcohol, even substances other than the individual’s drug of choice. It has been the NA members’ experience that complete and continuous abstinence provides the best foundation for recovery and personal growth.”
  - b) We have found that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.
  - c) We follow a 12 Step program based on principles that we can follow in our daily lives.
  - d) The progression of recovery is primarily up to the individual.
- 8) Life After Drugs
- a) We develop new interests.
  - b) We get together and plan social activities of all types (mention local activities such as conventions, camping, dances, picnics, etc.).
  - c) Every two years we hold a worldwide convention where thousands of addicts meet to celebrate their recovery.
  - d) We practice spiritual principles in our lives. We experience freedom from self-obsession. We gain self-respect, as well as respect for others.
- 9) How to Find Narcotics Anonymous
- a) Local Helpline phone number(s).
  - b) Local web site URL address, if applicable.
  - c) Area Service Committee contact information.
  - d) Regional Service Committee contact information.
  - e) NA World Services’ Office contact information (Web site URL address also).
- 10) Question and Answer Period
- 11) Closing
- a) Thank the audience for their attention.

## **Outline for PI Presentations to Professionals in the Field of Addiction**

(Treatment centers, therapeutic community, hospital or other similar institution)

- 1) Identify Yourselfes
  - a) Using first names, NA participants identifying themselves as an addict.
  - b) Thank the person(s)/agency(s) who invited NA for the presentation.
- 2) Opening statement to describe why are we here and what do we hope to accomplish:
  - a) “We have accepted this opportunity to share with all of you about the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. We understand that you, as professionals in the field of addiction treatment, come in contact with addicts daily. Our program is designed to help the addict stop using and find a new way of life. We have no opinion on which treatment center is best or what modality of treatment may be more effective. We have by no means found a cure for drug addiction. We offer a plan for daily recovery that has worked for thousands of addicts worldwide. Many of our members have come to us through various hospitals and institutions (such as yours).”
- 3) Read anonymity statement:
  - a) “The basic premise of anonymity allows addicts to attend meetings without fear of legal or social repercussions. This is an important consideration for addicts thinking about going to their first NA meeting. Anonymity also supports an atmosphere of equality in meetings. It helps insure that no individual's personality or circumstance will be considered more important than the message of recovery shared in NA. We ask your help in maintaining our tradition of personal anonymity by not identifying our members by name or in full-face photos as members of Narcotics Anonymous, or by describing details of their personal circumstances, which could reveal their identities. We thank you for respecting our request.”
- 4) History of Narcotics Anonymous
  - a) “Narcotics Anonymous sprang from the Alcoholics Anonymous movement in the late 1940s. Narcotics Anonymous, as we know it today, started meetings in the Los Angeles area of California, USA, in 1953. For many years the Narcotics Anonymous grew very slowly, spreading from Los Angeles to other major North American cities and Australia in the early 1970s. In 1983, Narcotics Anonymous published its self-titled basic text, and membership growth rates have since risen dramatically.
  - b) Our literature has been translated from English into more than 7 major languages.
  - c) We have more than 24,000 weekly meetings in over 72 countries and our message continues to help addicts all over the world find a new way of life.
  - d) Give local NA history (date first meeting was held, number of meetings presently being conducted, etc.)
- 5) Description of Narcotics Anonymous
  - a) Read, “What is the NA Program”.
  - b) “Narcotics Anonymous is an international, community based 12 step oriented program focused on the recovery from drug addiction. The name “Narcotics Anonymous” does not refer to any particular drug or group of drugs. Very simply, it is any mind or mood-altering substance. It makes no difference to us how or what drugs were used. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.
- 6) The Narcotics Anonymous Service Structure
  - a) State the different levels of service identifying the NA member as the highest level to whom we serve.
  - b) Hospitals and Institutions Committee—purpose is to carry the message to addicts who are unable to attend regular meetings of NA. An H&I should give member, local information member, if possible.
  - c) Public Information Committee—state committee’s purpose is to inform all areas of the public about who and what we are, and how we can be found. Maintains meeting schedules. If applicable, advise audience PI committee usually maintain a telephone line to help addicts anonymously.
  - d) Literature Committee--Maintains stock of literature for sale to the groups. Conducts review of literature written for the Fellowship.

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- 7) The Group
  - a) Meets regularly at a specific time and place, follows the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of NA. Describe different types of meetings, difference between open and closed meetings, for example.
  - b) Identification of one addict to another, recognition of themselves in others.
  - c) Sharing of personal experience, strength, and hope.
  - d) A “sanctuary” where addicts can relax among friends in fellowship.
- 8) Addiction
  - a) Read “Who is an Addict”
  - b) Make a statement about our concept of addiction, “The Narcotics Anonymous program uses a very simple, experience-oriented disease concept of addiction. Narcotics Anonymous does not qualify its use of the term "disease" in any medical or specialized therapeutic sense.”
  - c) Compulsive, self-centered, obsessive behavior.
  - d) Drug use only a symptom of the underlying problem (The disease is more than just the drugs we used)
  - e) Living in denial and isolation, denying any recognition of our drug and living problems.
- 9) Abstinence and Recovery
  - a) “Narcotics Anonymous encourages its members to observe complete abstinence from all drugs, including alcohol, even substances other than the individual's drug of choice. It has been the NA members' experience that complete and continuous abstinence provides the best foundation for recovery and personal growth.”
  - b) We have found that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.
  - c) We follow a 12 Step program based on principles that we can follow in our daily lives.
  - d) The progression of recovery is always up to the individual.
  - e) The Steps and Spirituality
  - f) “Narcotics Anonymous itself is non-religious and encourages each member to cultivate an individual understanding of a Higher Power, religious or not.”
  - g) “Central to the program is an emphasis on what is referred to as a "spiritual awakening," emphasizing its practical value, not its philosophical or metaphysical import.”
- 10) Spiritual benefits of the 12 Steps:
  - a) “Narcotics Anonymous itself is non-religious and encourages each member to cultivate an individual understanding of a Higher Power, religious or not.”
  - b) “Central to the program is an emphasis on what is referred to as a "spiritual awakening," emphasizing its practical value, not its philosophical or metaphysical importance.”
  - c) Spiritual benefits of the 12 Steps: Honest admission of being an addict, finding hope, developing faith, come to a better understanding of ourselves, change our old behaviors, remove defects of character, make amends for past wrongs, continue to develop faith and improve our living actions, and sharing with others.
- 11) Life After Drugs
  - a) We develop new interests.
  - b) We get together and plan social activities of all types (mention local activities such as conventions, camping, dances, picnics, etc.).
  - c) Every two years we hold a worldwide convention where thousands of addicts meet to celebrate their recovery.
  - d) We practice spiritual principles in our lives. We experience freedom from self-obsession. We gain self-respect, as well as respect for others.
- 12) Where to Find Narcotics Anonymous
  - a) Local Helpline telephone number(s).
  - b) Local web site address, if applicable.
  - c) Area Service Committee contact information.

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- d) Regional Service Committee contact information
  - e) NA World Services' Office contact information (Web site address also).
- 13) Question and Answer Period
- 14) Closing
- a) Thank the audience for their attention.



## **Part Three: Description of Public Information Resource Materials**

The following section describes the public information presentation materials with a brief explanation on their use. In Part Four, we have provide these materials. Additional materials can be found in “A Guide to Public Information” from World Services. You may wish to contact World Services for materials specific to your needs. You may also wish to contact other PI committees for materials they use for their presentations.

### **General Do’s and Don’ts in PI Presentations**

This material is a list of suggestions in conducting a PI presentation. During the training session, the list of suggestions may be used to question your presentation participants to enhance the learning process. PI committees should use this list as a reminder to the experience members and as a teaching tool to inexperienced members.

### **Suggested Dress Code for PI Presentations**

This material is a list of suggestions on apparel to wear at a PI presentation. All members of a PI presentation need to be aware of what is appropriate and what is not appropriate to wear to such an event.

Dressing for the occasion is a social custom in all cultures. Ethnic differences in dress may detract from the usefulness of a presentation and should be discussed prior to a PI presentation.

### **Anonymity Statement**

This material is used in presentations and is included here for reinforcement on the issue of anonymity when we make a presentation to the public; for ourselves and for our audience.

### **Frequently Asked Questions in PI Presentations**

The list of frequently asked questions (or FAQ) presented here is provided for the trainer and the local PI committees in conducting training on answering questions from the public at a PI presentation. The intention of the list is to demonstrate the types of questions that can be received and the application of the Twelve Traditions in answering them.

### **Suggested Answers to Frequently Asked Questions in PI Presentations**

These suggested answers presented as supplemental material to the FAQ described in the previous section. Please remember that they are just that: *suggested*. However they should not be discounted and should be examined for their use of two useful tools in public information: The Twelve Traditions and the technique of “bridging answers”.

“Bridging” is a technique to answer a question with information. For example, a question is asked about NA’s opinion concerning the “war on drugs”. To answer the question with a simple “we don’t have an opinion on that topic” leaves the questioner to speculate on why you answered in that manner and may call into question your attitude towards him or her. Bridging means to answer the question with information: “NA has a tradition not taking opinions on outside issues. This tradition helps to keeps NA focused on its’ own mission of carrying the message to the addict that still suffers.”

Trainers are encouraged to teach trusted servants to use these answers as a guide in developing their own experience in answering questions from the public. It is a good training tool when practicing before a PI presentation.

### **Items to Remember When Speaking to the Public**

This material is used to focus NA members at a PI presentation on some core principles of the NA program. Trainers and PI subcommittees can use this as reminders of what we are trying to communicate to non-NA members.

Not only when we engage the public through a presentation program are we “on stage”. Before and after the presentation are opportunities for interaction with the public. We need to be conscious of these core principles when interfacing with members of the public

### **The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous**

This item is our Twelve Traditions for trainer and trusted servant reference. Further discussion of the Twelve Traditions as it relates to public information service is available in “A Guide to Public Information”, the 1998 draft of the “Public Information Handbook”, the “Basic PI Guide”, our Basic Text, and “It Works: How and Why”. Contact the World Service Office or other PI committees for this or other materials.

Trainers should encourage discussion on the Traditions and their relationship to public information service. PI Committees are encouraged to discuss the Traditions before embarking on any PI project, not just a presentation to the public.

### **Facts About Narcotics Anonymous**

This document was first issued as an abstract to the International Congress on Alcoholism and Addictions Conference in Berlin, Germany, in 1990. It has since been edited and approved for distribution by World Services as a public information tool in 1995.

The document is a useful tool in communicating with the public in “plain talk” rather than in “Fellowship talk”. Our program’s literature is primarily written for the NA member. This document is well suited for distribution to professionals and the media as it describes our program in terms and language more suited for that audience.

### **Narcotics Anonymous: A Commitment to Community Partnerships**

This document was first issued as an abstract to the International Congress on Alcoholism and Addictions Conference in San Diego, California, in 1995. It has since been edited and approved for distribution by World Services as a public information tool in that same year.

The document is similar to “Facts About Narcotics Anonymous” and is a useful tool in communicating with members of the social professions and community organizations. This document is well suited for distribution to these types of professionals as it describes our program in terms and language more suited for that audience.

### **Professional Events Regional/Zonal Events Check List**

This document was adapted from the World Services Non-NA Events List used in the 1990’s by the External Affairs Committee (EAC) of the former Board of Trustees. Its primary use is for World Services participation in global meetings such as the International Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations, International Congress on Alcoholism and Addictions and the World Federation of Therapeutic Communities.

It was revised by members of EAC for use by Zonal Forums or Regional PI committees for similar events that are geographically regional in nature. It may be useful with “normal” PI presentations and can be adjusted for local use.

## **Part Four: Public Information Resource Materials**

On the following pages you will find the PI resource materials previously described in Part Three. We've separated these materials so that they may be copied for training and presentation purposes.

## General Do's and Don'ts in PI Presentations

### Do:

1. Have a working knowledge of the Twelve Traditions.
2. Dress conservatively and neatly (see “Dress Code”).
3. Speak clearly and slowly so your audience can understand you.
4. Use our literature. Use our presentation papers such as “Facts About Narcotics Anonymous” and “NA—A Resource in Your Community”. Both are excellent items in addition to our literature.
5. Bring NAWS merchandise order forms, area and regional meeting lists.
6. Present yourself as a responsible member of society enjoying life; be positive in demeanor and smile!
7. Follow local social customs where applicable.
8. Practice the presentation before actually doing it.

### Don't:

1. Don't ever do a presentation alone. Utilize qualified members that have been trained to speak to the public.
2. Don't argue! Don't take a stand on issues such as AIDS, Harm Minimization, religions, politics or legislation. Carry a clear and simple message; have “...no opinion on outside issues.”
3. Don't express any personal opinion that the audience MAY assume is NA's opinion.
4. Don't go into a presentation without knowing your audience. Know whom you will be addressing. Professional groups usually require a seasoned and mature speaker.
5. Don't attempt to answer questions that are inappropriate for NA. For example: “How can I tell if my kids are using drugs?” “How long does marijuana stay in your system?” or “Is cocaine more dangerous than heroin?”
6. Don't use profanity!
7. Don't use slang language for drug use or other addiction related activities.
8. Don't use acronyms for our service structure; use full names (say “Area Service Committee”, not ASC, or “Hospitals and Institutions Subcommittee”, not “H&I”, for example).
9. Don't allow anyone to photograph, film or videotape any members of Narcotics Anonymous. Personal anonymity is at stake.

## **Suggested Dress Code for PI Presentations**

- All clothes should be clean, wrinkle free and in good condition.
- Undergarments must be worn.
- All shirts and blouses must cover shoulders (no tank tops).
- Pants, skirts, or dresses should be in good shape (no holes, rips, stains, etc.).
- Appropriate footwear should be worn.
- No sweat suits or body suits of any kind.
- No hats.
- No NA jewelry of any kind should be worn. <sup>1</sup>
- No shirts with commercial (or non-commercial) messages and logos should be worn, including NA memorabilia. <sup>1</sup>
- Tattoos should be covered, if possible and if socially appropriate. <sup>2</sup>

Please remember that our public image is important when we present ourselves as members of Public Information for Narcotics Anonymous.

<sup>1</sup> The reason for items 8 and 9 is to prevent controversy within the Public Information Committee and the Fellowship. Differences of opinion can be avoided when all agree to not wear NA memorabilia.

<sup>2</sup> Depending on local custom tattoos may project a poor image of NA and should covered. Use common sense and make a group decision on this issue.

## **Anonymity Statement**

The basic premise of anonymity allows addicts to attend meetings without fear of legal or social repercussions. This is an important consideration for an addict thinking about going to their first NA meeting. Anonymity also supports an atmosphere of equality in meetings. It helps insure that no individual's personality or circumstance will be considered more important than the message of recovery shared in NA.

We ask your help in maintaining our tradition of personal anonymity by not identifying our members by name or in full-face photos as members of Narcotics Anonymous, or by describing details of their personal circumstances, which could reveal their identities.

We thank you for respecting our request.

## Frequently Asked Questions in PI Presentations

1. Does NA consider alcohol a drug?
2. My employee is sober for two years after treatment and doesn't go to meetings. Is that OK?
3. Is drug addiction hereditary?
4. Aren't nicotine and caffeine drugs?
5. Do you also recognize [*gambling, excessive shopping, overeating, obsessive-compulsive behavior*] as addiction?
6. I believe in NA and want to help NA. What can I do?
7. How can you tell if someone is an addict?
8. How can I tell if someone is under the influence of drugs?
9. What's the difference between drug use and drug abuse?
10. How can I get someone to stop using drugs?
11. What do I do if I find drugs in my home or at work?
12. I know someone who is [*deaf or blind or otherwise physically challenged*] but refuses to go to your meetings. Is there anything you can do for them?
13. Do you verify attendance at your meetings? Can I check with you if my [*friend, husband, employee, etc.*] is really going to your meetings?
14. What's the difference between NA and drug treatment centers? NA and psychotherapy?
15. Is the [*local*] Treatment Center any good?
16. If a person is under the influence of drugs, can they participate in NA meetings?
17. What can we do to prevent our [*children, employees, friends, etc.*] from becoming drug addicts?
18. Where is your office located?
19. How much do you charge for your services?
20. How do you deal with the mentally ill addicts?
21. Do you refer addicts to detoxification centers? Which are the best ones?
22. Does NA operate any treatment centers or detoxification units?
23. Do you have information about [*AA, CA, NARANON, ALANON or other 12 Step Program*]?
24. What about using drugs while you're pregnant?
25. Isn't [*person's name*] a member of NA?

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26. Are your meetings confidential? Is that legal?
27. Do you have counselors? Is that a “sponsor”?
28. Do you certify addicts are clean of drugs for [*law enforcement, doctors, social welfare organizations, etc.*]?
29. I’m not an addict, but can I attend your meetings?
30. How long do you have to attend meetings before you are cured?
31. Do you teach AIDS prevention techniques?
32. Does NA support harm minimization?
33. Do you have special meetings for [*youths, homosexuals, HIV positive addicts, etc.*]?
34. Do you help addicts get [*jobs, social welfare assistance, education, housing, health services, etc.*]?
35. Is NA only for addicts who use narcotics?
36. What does the term "dual addiction" mean?
37. Are you "clean and sober"?
38. NA, AA, CA, OA...aren't they all the same? What's the difference?

*When answering these questions, remember to keep your responses short and to the point. Use the opportunity to "bridge" your answer to give information about our Fellowship. The longer your answers, the more likely you will go into subjects that may become difficult to disengage from. It's also OK to say "no" when answering some of these questions. Be sure not to make your audience feel like they are "dumb"!*



## Suggested Answers to Frequently Asked Questions in PI Presentations

1. Does NA consider alcohol a drug?
  - a) *Yes, we do. One of our group readings, “How It Works”, states...(read last paragraph of How It Works).*
2. My employee is sober for two years after treatment and doesn't go to meetings. Is that OK?
  - a) *We really can't tell you if this is “OK” or not. We can say that part of our program is attending meetings on a regular basis.*
3. Is drug addiction hereditary?
  - a) *NA does not have an opinion on this topic. This is something that scientists and doctors could best answer that questions for you.*
4. Aren't nicotine and caffeine drugs?
  - a) *Although it can be said that nicotine and caffeine are mood or mind- altering drugs, NA believes that each individual member must make their own decision on whether to the use of these substances is acceptable. We believe that a NA member can still be clean and maintain a spiritual program while drinking coffee and tea or using tobacco. We don't believe this is possible by still using marijuana or liquor, for example.*
5. Do you also recognize [gambling, excessive shopping, overeating, obsessive-compulsive behavior] as addiction?
  - a) *When we refer to addiction, we refer to the obsessive and compulsive use of drugs. Our meetings are for those persons who have a problem with drugs.*
6. I believe in NA and want to help NA. What can I do?
  - a) *Your positive remarks to others about our Fellowship are a beginning. We do not accept outside contributions nor do we have non-addict volunteers in our Fellowship. The best thing you can do to help us is to advise a person with drug problems that NA is here, that there is no cost to join us, and that we might be able to help that person.*
7. How can you tell if someone is an addict?
  - a) *In general, we don't give that kind of advice. We don't even tell people who come into our meetings whether he or she is an addict or not. We allow individuals the opportunity to know for themselves if they are an addict or not. We have a pamphlet titled, “Am I An Addict”. It has many questions from our Fellowship's collective experience on what it's like to live as a using addict. The person who reads it can answer for himself or herself whether they have a drug problem and may possibly be an addict. You are welcome to read it and may give you insight to your question.*
8. How can I tell if someone is under the influence of drugs?
  - a) *I'm sorry, but we don't give that kind of advice. Medical personnel and similar professionals could best answer your question.*
9. What's the difference between drug use and drug abuse?
  - a) *NA is a Fellowship of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. We have no opinion whether a person is a social user or an addict. This is up to the individual person to decide and a time will come when the answer to this question will become obvious.*
10. How can I get someone to stop using drugs?
  - a) *From our personal experiences, you can't stop a drug addict from using. The addict will only stop when there is a desire to stop using and seek help. If you know somebody who is using, you may wish to give him or her literature and a meeting schedule so that they can come to one of our meetings to see if NA can help them. NA does not conduct so-called drug “interventions” nor do we give advice to family members, friends or employers in how to deal with using addicts.*

11. What do I do if I find drugs in my home or at work?
- a) *We cannot give you legal advice on this topic. You'll have to deal with this issue using your own conscience as a family member and a member of society.*
12. I know someone who is [deaf or blind or otherwise physically challenged] but refuses to go to your meetings. Is there anything you can do for them?
- a) *Depending on which the situation is about a deaf or blind or challenged person, you may answer like this: "We have special materials for this type of person with [audio tapes of our Basic Text and Braille editions of our pamphlets] or [we have meetings that have handicapped access at XXX location]". Its always difficult for an addict to attend an NA meeting for the first times due to feelings of separation and shame. Especially in a situation where the person has a physical challenge in receiving our message of recovery." You may not have the answers at the moment for the particular situation, advise the person asking that your committee will seek the information and get back to them.*
13. Do you verify attendance at your meetings? Can I check with you if my [friend, husband, employee, etc.] is really going to your meetings?
- a) *No, NA does not verify the attendance of addicts at meetings. However, as a courtesy to those persons attending our open meetings because of legal issues or for out-patient treatment programs, some of our groups will allow the secretary of that meeting to initial a form provided by the attendee. And not all groups will honor this request. Some groups will do it with or without restrictions. But on a whole, we do not verify the attendance of any member nor do we maintain any type of membership roles.*
14. What's the difference between NA and drug treatment centers? NA and psychotherapy?
- a) *Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit organization, which charges no fees or dues to its members. We do not have medical staff or professional counselors to treat or advise our members. We do not present ourselves as professionals to the addicts that come to us seeking recovery. We offer ourselves as addicts, the same as them, who have learned how to stop using drugs, lost the desire to use drugs and found a new way to live. [For the psychotherapy question] Our meetings are not conducted like a psychotherapy session. We do not allow cross talking nor do we have professionally trained facilitators.*
15. Is the [local] Treatment Center any good?
- a) *We have no opinion or endorse any organization, treatment center or hospital programs. We do have some of our meetings at treatment centers, hospitals or institutions to carry our message of recovery to the addicts within them. This should not be interpreted as an endorsement of these organizations or their particular model of treatment for drug addiction. We still adhere to our 12 Traditions as best we can while carrying our message to addicts within these institutions.*
16. If a person is under the influence of drugs, can they participate in NA meetings?
- a) *We do not exclude addicts who may be under the influence of drugs at our meetings. Our Third Tradition states the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. We do not require our members to be clean to be a member or to attend our meetings. However some of our groups do not allow using addicts active participation in their meetings, such as sharing or holding a position of service at the meeting. To keep our message in the meetings clear, most groups ask that if a person has used within the last 24 hours that they refrain from sharing and that they speak to someone after the meeting if they need to share. We also suggest that those under the influence not be volunteers in service such as the members you see here today for this presentation.*
17. What can we do to prevent our [children, employees, friends, etc.] from becoming drug addicts?
- a) *We can't give you advice on this topic of concern. Our Fellowship is not about preventing people from becoming drug addicts. We are about helping those members of society who cannot live life without using drugs.*
18. Where is your office located?

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- a) *(If you have a local service office, give the appropriate address and contact information) We have a Narcotics Anonymous World Services' office in the Los Angeles area of California in the United States. This is where our worldwide service efforts are coordinated from. The majority of our literature is manufactured and distributed there also. Extension offices are located in Canada and in Belgium. The address and contact information is printed on all of our literature if you wish to order literature or seek more detailed information on NA as a worldwide organization.*
19. How much do you charge for your services?
- a) *We charge no fees or dues for our services nor do we accept outside contributions. NA is supported by the individual NA member through donations of time and money along with the sales of NA literature.*
20. How do you deal with the mentally ill addicts?
- a) *We do not exclude addicts from our meetings because of their personal health issues, whether physical or mental. Our Third Tradition states the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.*
21. Do you refer addicts to detoxification centers? Which are the best ones?
- a) *NA does not refer addicts to any outside organizations nor do we endorse any other organizations.*
22. Does NA operate any treatment centers or detoxification units?
- a) *No, NA does not run any treatment center or detoxification services to addicts.*
23. Do you have information about [AA, CA, NARANON, ALANON or other 12 Step Program]?
- a) *We only have information today for you about the NA program. We are not affiliated with any other 12 Step program. We can only suggest that you check the telephone book or an informational referral agency for information on other 12 Step programs.*
24. What about using drugs while you're pregnant?
- a) *We are not medical professionals and we cannot advise you on this topic.*
25. Isn't [person's name] a member of NA?
- a) *We do not identify members of our Fellowship to anyone! We try our best to practice anonymity within our Fellowship and strictly so outside of it. We also practice personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and video. We ask for your respect in not identifying any member of NA in anyway that would compromise their anonymity.*
26. Are your meetings confidential? Is that legal?
- a) *We try our best to be confidential and respectful of anonymity. However we cannot fully guarantee confidentiality or full anonymity in the community nor do we have the same legal right of confidentiality that a doctor or an attorney has.*
27. Do you have counselors? Is that a "sponsor"?
- a) *We do not have professional counselors in NA. A "sponsor" is a NA member with experience in working the 12 Steps of NA who advises a fellow member on how to participate and experience our program.*
28. Do you certify addicts are clean of drugs for [law enforcement, doctors, social welfare organizations, etc.]?
- a) *We do not test, certify or guarantee any member is clean from drugs.*
29. I'm not an addict, but can I attend your meetings?
- a) *We have meetings that are open to the public and are listed as such on our meeting schedule. We do ask that you respect our closed meetings, which are only for addicts and those who believe that they have a problem with using drugs.*
30. How long do you have to attend meetings before you get cured?
- a) *We as a Fellowship do not believe that there we are ever cured from the disease of addiction. We believe this to be a lifelong recovery process. Going to meetings is a part of our program and we are encouraged to attend meetings regularly.*

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31. Do you teach AIDS prevention techniques?  
a) *No, we do not teach AIDS prevention techniques as an organization.*
32. Does NA support harm minimization?  
a) *NA has no opinion on concept of harm minimization. NA has its place in the arena of recovery from drug addiction. NA does not participate with other organizations to promote harm minimization or any other addiction related philosophies.*
33. Do you have special meetings for [youths, men or women, homosexuals, HIV positive addicts, etc.]?  
a) *If your area does support the specific orientated meetings mentioned in the question, refer the questioner to your local meeting schedule as a guide. If your area does not have this special type of meeting, you may answer something like this, “**We currently do not have any of these meetings in our area, although in other areas of [geographic location], these types of meetings are well supported.**”*
34. Do you help addicts get [jobs, social welfare assistance, education, housing, health services, etc.]?  
a) *NA is not a social service nor does it makes referrals for addicts to social or government agencies that provide these types of services. [Optional] Our program teaches us self-responsibility, we learn to solve our living problems with those that can best help us: if you have a medical problem, seek health assistance, legal problems, seek legal assistance, etc.*
35. Is NA only for addicts who use narcotics?  
a) *We believe our problem is not the use of any specific drug or group of drugs. Our problem is the disease of addiction, and our program is one of abstinence from all drugs.*
36. What does the term "dual addiction" mean?  
a) *The term dual addiction has no application for us. We believe there is one disease, regardless of drugs used. All addicts are welcome in NA.*
37. Are you “clean and sober”?  
a) *Clean and sober is a phrase used by members of Alcoholics Anonymous. We don’t use the phrase in Narcotics Anonymous. It is our belief that to speak in this manner suggests that there are two diseases, that one drug is somehow separate from the rest, requiring special recognition. Narcotics Anonymous makes no distinction between drugs. Alcohol is a drug. Our identification as addicts is all-inclusive, allowing us to concentrate on our similarities, not our difference. We use the terms “clean-time” and “recovery” to specify our total abstinence from all mood and mind altering substances*
38. NA, AA, CA, OA...aren’t they all the same? What’s the difference?  
a) *The similarities of all these Fellowships are the 12 Steps, the core of our programs. The difference is our first Step, where we state that we are “powerless over our addiction”, whereas other Fellowships address other substances specifically. We have our own literature and program, which makes us what we are, and that is what makes us attractive to the addict seeking recovery.*

## Items to Remember When Speaking to the Public

### Our Traditions

- Traditions serve our common welfare, unity of the Fellowship.
- One ultimate authority, a loving God as we understand Him.
- No leaders governing—only trusted servants.
- Only one requirement for membership, a desire to stop using—not how much you or how little an addict has, etc.
- The therapeutic value of one addict helping another.
- We do not endorse any other organizations or take stands on any issue outside of NA.
- We are a non-profit Fellowship—self-supporting through our own contributions.
- We are not professionals—we do employ special workers for special tasks.
- NA itself is not organized; our Fellowship has a structure of service boards and committees responsible to the NA members. The members are at the top of the structure with the groups, committees and boards below it.
- NA as whole as no opinion on issues outside of its own mission. NA stays out of public controversy.
- Anonymity is our spiritual foundation.
- NA members strive to put principles before their personalities.

### Our Steps

- Our first step focuses on addiction, not on a specific drug.
- God in the steps—be careful with this subject, know your audience! We have a universal concept and the member comes to an individual understanding.
- Prayer and meditation—again, be careful with this subject, know your audience! Express non-denominational approaches and stress the individual member's right to have his or her own understanding/practice.
- Defects of character—recognizing our negative character traits and working towards resolving them.
- Amends—taking responsibility for our lives and making amends for the damage we caused as using addicts.
- Carrying the message—we focus on giving our message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.
- Principles in our daily life—we strive to live just for today, living by spiritual principles such as honesty, open-mindedness, goodwill, humility, self-sufficiency, love and selflessness, for example.

### **Other Items to Remember**

- Sponsorship—members with program experience assist those less experienced.
- NA does not participate in prevention programs or other addiction related efforts.
- NA does not offer a “cure” for drug addiction; we do offer a program of *recovery* from addiction.
- The “disease of addiction” is not a medical declaration; it is a concept that works best from our common experience as a Fellowship.
- Those who suffer from the disease of addiction transcend all social, economic and cultural boundaries.
- It is OK to say, “I don’t know” to a question that you feel a need to answer. Be honest and advise the person asking that you will get back to them later with that information. And do it in a timely manner!
- Don’t worry about making a mistake—you will! Practice and experience will help reduce your mistakes.
- Relax and be inviting during your presentation. Smile and be friendly.

## **The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous**

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## **The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous**

*We keep what we have only with vigilance, and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps, so freedom for the group springs from our traditions. As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well.*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems or money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. NA as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

*Understanding these Traditions comes slowly over a period of time. We pick up information as we talk to members and visit various groups. It usually isn't until we get involved with service that someone points out that "personal recovery depends on NA unity," and that unity depends on how well we follow our Traditions. The Twelve Traditions of NA are not negotiable. They are the guidelines that keep our Fellowship alive and free.*

*By following these guidelines in our dealings with others, and society at large, we avoid many problems. This is not to say that our Traditions eliminate all problems. We still have to as they arise: communication problems, differences of opinion, internal controversies, and troubles with individuals and groups outside of the Fellowship. However when we apply these principles, we avoid some of the pitfalls.*

*Many of our problems are like those that our predecessors had to face. Their hard won experience gave birth to the Traditions, and our own experience has shown these principles are just as valid today as they were when the Traditions were formulated. Our Traditions protect us from the internal and external forces that could destroy us. They are truly the ties that bind us together. It is only through understanding and application that they work.*





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## Facts About Narcotics Anonymous

### A SOCIETY OF RECOVERING DRUG ADDICTS

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**Narcotics Anonymous is an international, community-based association of recovering drug addicts. Started in 1947, the NA movement is one of the world's oldest and largest of its type, with nearly twenty thousand weekly meetings in seventy countries. Here we hope to explain what Narcotics Anonymous is and what its recovery program offers to drug addicts. We will describe how NA services are organized at the local, national, and international levels. We will talk about how Narcotics Anonymous cooperates with others concerned about drug abuse in their countries and communities. Finally, we will provide information on NA's membership and indicators of the success of Narcotics Anonymous.**

#### DEVELOPMENT

**Narcotics Anonymous sprang from the Alcoholics Anonymous movement in the late 1940s, with meetings first sprouting up in the Los Angeles area of California, USA, in the early Fifties. For many years the society grew very slowly, spreading from Los Angeles to other major North American cities and Australia in the early 1970s. An assembly of local delegates was first established in 1978. In 1983 Narcotics Anonymous published its self-titled basic text, and growth rates have since skyrocketed. Groups formed rapidly in Brazil, Colombia, Germany, India, the Irish Republic, Japan, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. In the three years following initial publication of NA's basic text, the number of Narcotics Anonymous groups nearly tripled. Today, Narcotics Anonymous is fairly well established throughout much of Western Europe, the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand, with newly formed groups and NA communities scattered through the Indian subcontinent, Africa, East Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.**

#### PROGRAM

**NA's earliest self-titled pamphlet, known among members as "the White Booklet," describes Narcotics Anonymous as "a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem . . . recovering addicts who**

**meet regularly to help each other stay clean." Membership is open to any drug addict, regardless of the particular drug or combination of drugs used. There are no social, religious, economic, racial, ethnic, national, gender, or class-status membership restrictions. Narcotics Anonymous membership is completely voluntary; no membership rolls or attendance records are kept, either for NA or anyone else. Members live in the community and attend meetings on their own time. There are no dues or fees for membership; most members regularly contribute small sums to help cover expenses at group meetings, but contributions are not mandatory.**

**The core of the Narcotics Anonymous recovery program is a series of personal activities known as the Twelve Steps, adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. These "steps" include admitting there is a problem, seeking help, self-appraisal, confidential self-disclosure, making amends where harm has been done, and working with other drug addicts who want to recover. Central to the program is an emphasis on what is referred to as a "spiritual awakening," emphasizing its practical value, not its philosophical or metaphysical import, which has posed very little difficulty in translating the program across cultural boundaries. Narcotics Anonymous itself is non-religious and encourages each member to cultivate an individual understanding, religious or not, of this "spiritual awakening."**

**Narcotics Anonymous believes that one of the keys to its success is the therapeutic value of addicts working with other addicts. In meetings, each member shares personal experience with others seeking help, not as professionals but simply as people who have been there themselves and have found a solution. Narcotics Anonymous has no professional therapists, no residential facilities, and no clinics. NA provides no vocational, legal, financial, psychiatric, or medical services. The closest thing to an "NA counselor" is the sponsor, an experienced member who gives informal assistance to a newer member.**

**The primary service provided by Narcotics Anonymous is the NA group meeting. Each group runs itself on the basis of principles common to the entire organization, principles laid out in the movement's literature. There is no hierarchical authority structure in Narcotics Anonymous. Most groups have no permanent facilities of their own, instead renting space for their weekly meetings in buildings run by public, religious, or civic organizations. Meetings may be "open," meaning anyone may attend, or "closed," meaning only people who are there to address their own drug problem may attend. Meetings are led by NA members; other members take part by talking in turn about their experiences in recovering from drug addiction.**

**The Narcotics Anonymous program uses a very simple, experience-oriented disease concept of addiction. Narcotics Anonymous does not qualify its use of the term "disease" in any medical or specialized therapeutic sense, nor does NA make any attempt to persuade others of the correctness of its view. The NA movement asserts only that its members have found acceptance of addiction as a disease to be effective in helping them come to terms with their condition.**

**Narcotics Anonymous encourages its members to observe complete abstinence from all drugs, including alcohol, even substances other than the individual's drug of choice, though NA's only stated membership requirement is "a desire to stop using" drugs. It has been the NA members' experience that complete and continuous abstinence provides the best foundation for recovery and personal growth. However, Narcotics Anonymous takes no absolute stand as a society on the use of caffeine, nicotine, or sugar. Similarly, the use of prescribed medication for the treatment of specific medical or psychiatric conditions is neither encouraged nor prohibited by NA. While recognizing numerous questions in these areas, Narcotics Anonymous feels that they are matters of personal decision and encourages its members to consult their own experience, the experience of other members, and qualified health professionals in making up their minds about these subjects.**

**One more thing needs to be said about the Narcotics Anonymous program. Its members recognize that NA is but one organization among many addressing the problem of drug addiction. Members feel they have had significant success in addressing their own addiction problems, but Narcotics Anonymous does not claim to have a program that will work for all addicts under all circumstances or that its therapeutic views should be universally adopted. If Narcotics Anonymous can be useful to addicts in your care or in your community, it stands ready to be of service.**

#### **SERVICE ORGANIZATION**

**The basic unit of the Narcotics Anonymous organization is the NA group. In a country where Narcotics Anonymous is a relatively new phenomenon, the NA group is the only level of organization. In a country where a number of Narcotics Anonymous groups have had the chance to develop and stabilize, groups will have elected delegates to form a local service committee. A number of services are usually offered by these area committees, among them:**

- distribution of Narcotics Anonymous literature;
- telephone information services;
- public information presentations for treatment staff, civic organizations, government agencies, and schools;
- panel presentations to acquaint treatment or correctional facility residents with the NA program; and,
- meeting directories for individual information and use in scheduling visits by client groups.

**Area committees, whether serving a network of groups in a single city or all groups in a given country, are run almost exclusively by volunteer NA members, who serve on a rotating basis.**

**In some countries, especially the larger countries or those where Narcotics Anonymous is especially well established, a number of area committees have joined together to create regions. These regional committees handle services affecting the entire national movement, while the area committees handle local services.**

**An international delegate assembly called the World Service Conference, which has met annually since 1978, provides guidance for a number of committees which**

**address issues affecting the entire organization, all assisted by NA's World Service Office in Los Angeles, California, USA. Primary among the priorities of NA's world services are activities which support young national movements and the translation of Narcotics Anonymous literature. For additional information, contact either the World Service Office headquarters in Los Angeles or the European branch office in Brussels; their mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and fax numbers appear at the end of this article.**

#### **POSITIONS ON RELATED ISSUES OR INSTITUTIONS**

**In order to maintain its focus, Narcotics Anonymous has established a tradition of non-endorsement and does not take positions as an organization on anything outside its own specific sphere of activity. Narcotics Anonymous does not express opinions, either pro or con, on civil, social, medical, legal, or religious issues, nor does it take any stands on secondary addiction-related issues such as criminality, law enforcement, drug legalization or penalties, prostitution, HIV infection, or free-needle programs. The NA movement does not even oppose the use of drugs, stating only that if an addict desires to stop using, Narcotics Anonymous stands ready to help.**

**Narcotics Anonymous is entirely self-supporting and accepts no financial contributions from nonmembers. In a similar vein, it is generally understood that groups and service committees are run by members, for members.**

**NA will neither endorse nor oppose any other organization's philosophy or methodology. Narcotics Anonymous believes its sole competence is in providing a platform upon which drug addicts can share their recovery with one another. This is certainly not to say that Narcotics Anonymous believes there aren't any other "good" or "worthy" organizations. However, to remain free of the distraction of controversy, NA focuses all its energy on its particular area of competence, leaving others to fulfill their own goals.**

#### **COOPERATING WITH NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

**Although, as previously stated, certain traditions do guide NA's relations with other organizations, Narcotics Anonymous welcomes the cooperation of those in government, the clergy, the helping professions, and private voluntary organizations. In turn, NA is happy to cooperate with others interested in Narcotics Anonymous by providing information, literature, and contact information about recovery through the NA Fellowship. NA's non-addict friends have been instrumental in starting Narcotics Anonymous in many countries and helping NA grow.**

#### **EFFECTIVENESS; MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS**

**No comprehensive surveys of Narcotics Anonymous membership have been completed to date, due especially to NA's emphasis on protecting the anonymity of the members. However, it is possible to offer some general, informal observations**

**about the nature of the membership and the effectiveness of the program, observations believed to be reasonably accurate.**

#### **Male/female ratio**

**Of the 5,000 NA members responding to an informal poll taken in 1989:**

- **64% were male**
- **36% were female.**

#### **Socioeconomic background**

**The socioeconomic strata represented by the NA membership varies from country to country. Most national movements are founded by members of one particular social or economic class, but as their outreach to the entire range of the drug-addicted population in each country becomes more effective, the membership becomes more broadly representative of all socioeconomic backgrounds.**

#### **Age**

**Of the 5,000 NA members responding to an informal poll taken in 1989:**

- **11% were under 20**
- **37% were between 20 and 30**
- **48% were between 30 and 45**
- **4% were over 45**

#### **Religious backgrounds**

**All religious backgrounds are represented among NA members. In a given national movement, the membership generally reflects the diversity or homogeneity of the background culture.**

#### **Rate of growth**

**Because no attendance records are kept, it is impossible even to estimate what percentage of those who come to Narcotics Anonymous ultimately achieve long-term abstinence. The only sure indicator of the program's success is the rapid growth in the number of registered Narcotics Anonymous meetings in recent decades and the rapid spread of Narcotics Anonymous outside North America. In 1978, there were fewer than 200 registered groups in three countries. In 1983, more than a dozen countries had 2,966 meetings. In 1994, we knew of groups holding 19,822 weekly meetings in seventy countries.**

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*This paper was first presented at the ICAA's 18th International Institute on the Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependence, Berlin, July 1990. It was updated in May 1995.*

## **Narcotics Anonymous: A Commitment to Community Partnerships**

A presentation to the International Council on Alcohol and Addiction's 37th International Congress on Alcohol and Drug Dependence at the University of California at San Diego, 20-25 August 1995

**Abstract:** Narcotics Anonymous, an international, community-based association of recovering drug addicts, provides peer support to other addicts who desire a drug-free outcome. We are fully committed to collaborating with professionals and community organizations with similar goals. This paper identifies key factors affecting NA's interactions with others, points out means by which professionals can contact Narcotics Anonymous, long-established means of direct interaction between NA and professionals, a number of programs designed to facilitate client introduction and entry into Narcotics Anonymous, and a description of what clients will find when they attend NA meetings and meet NA members. The paper addresses a number of areas where professionals may encounter difficulties in relating with Narcotics Anonymous, and closes by identifying ways to resolve any problems that may arise when interacting with NA.

Narcotics Anonymous is one of the world's oldest and largest associations of recovering drug addicts. The NA approach to recovery from drug addiction is completely nonprofessional, relying on peer support. We believe the NA program works as well as it does primarily because of the therapeutic value of addicts helping other addicts.

Narcotics Anonymous is organized locally as self-governing, self-supporting groups adhering to a common set of principles, adaptations of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Local NA groups are organized worldwide via NA's international delegate assembly, called the World Service Conference, and secretariat, the World Service Office, headquartered in Los Angeles, USA.

The first Narcotics Anonymous meeting was held in 1947 in Lexington, Kentucky, as part of a USA federal public health hospital program. An independent, community-based group using Lexington principles that was formed in Los Angeles in 1953 became the root of today's Narcotics Anonymous. Today, Narcotics Anonymous has nearly 20,000 registered weekly meetings in 70 countries around the world, the greatest concentrations being in the USA (16,000) and in Canada, Latin America, and Western Europe (1,000 each).

### **A framework for NA community engagement**

The Narcotics Anonymous commitment to community partnerships can best be understood within the context of NA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Our Twelfth Step for personal recovery encourages every individual NA member to try "to carry [the NA recovery] message to addicts". Among our Twelve Traditions are certain guiding principles for NA's engagement, as groups and as an organization, with others in the community:

- Our mission as an organization is to communicate to addicts in the community that we may be able to help them learn to live drug-free, recover from the effects of drug addiction, and establish stable, productive lifestyles.
- Our public relations activities strive to attract addicts to Narcotics Anonymous without being overtly or unduly promotional.

- Our membership is open to anyone who wants to stop using drugs, regardless of the particular drugs they have used. There are no social, religious, economic, racial, ethnic, national, gender, or class-status membership restrictions.
- We maintain a policy of “cooperation without affiliation” in our inter-organizational relations. This policy allows us to work with others in the community without becoming involved in a manner which might distract us from our mission. This means that:
  - ❖ We will neither explicitly endorse nor oppose other organizations or approaches to the problems associated with drug addiction.
  - ❖ We will not allow other organizations to use the Narcotics Anonymous name for their programs.
  - ❖ We will not provide funding for other organizations, nor will we accept funding from outside our own organization.
  - ❖ We will take no position on any public issues, even those related to drug addicts or addiction.

Narcotics Anonymous has only one mission: to provide an environment within which drug addicts can help one another stop using and find a new way to live. We are not an anti-drug or prohibitionist organization, nor do we take any position concerning decriminalization or legalization. We are neither for nor against free-needle-and-syringe exchange programs, drug-replacement clinics, or other efforts to reduce drug-related harm. We will work with anyone to provide their clients with our services, without interfering with their therapeutic regimen or client relationships.

We encourage anyone likely to be interacting frequently with Narcotics Anonymous to become familiar with the book on our Twelve Steps and Traditions, *It Works: How and Why*. The book is available from our World Service Office.

### **Means of contact with NA**

There are two points of contact with Narcotics Anonymous at the local level: NA groups, and NA service committees. Narcotics Anonymous groups hold the actual recovery meetings where drug addicts interact with one another. Our service committees coordinate volunteer activities for a number of NA groups in a community, district, or country.

There are three ways to make contact with local NA groups and committees.

1. Many NA communities have telephone contact services. Their numbers are usually listed in the *NA Phonenumber Directory*, available from our World Service Office. Local telephone contact numbers are also often listed in the local telephone book or through the telephone company’s directory assistance service under the name “Narcotics Anonymous.”
2. Local NA chapters that have been in existence for some time usually publish local meeting directories that show the days, times, and places where Narcotics Anonymous groups meet and sometimes give additional information about specific meeting formats. You can get a local meeting directory either by visiting an NA meeting or by calling the local NA phonenumber.
3. If no means of contacting local NA groups or committees can be found, contact our World Service Office. Using the worldwide group and committee registration information we maintain for our fellowship, we will be able to tell you how to contact the nearest NA community.

There are two basic kinds of Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Anyone from the community may attend an “open” meeting to see for themselves what Narcotics Anonymous is like. “Closed” NA meetings, however, are meant for attendance by addicts only. Be sure to ask the



phoneline contact or check the meeting directory to see whether the meeting you are planning to attend is “open” or “closed” before visiting.

### **Direct NA interaction with professionals and the community**

Narcotics Anonymous communities have two primary ways in which they regularly interact directly with professionals and the community. NA public meetings are sometimes held to present NA on a broad scale to an entire community. Local NA public information committees also make regular presentations to community organizations, treatment administrators and clinical staff, policy makers, and researchers.

Narcotics Anonymous has a strong interest in cooperation with addiction researchers to independently study the nature and effectiveness of our program. However, we have had difficulty establishing such relationships so far. Our fellowship has a very strong interest in maintaining the personal confidentiality of its members. We also need to discuss how to connect a researcher with NA interviewees without inferring an outright endorsement by NA of the researcher’s organization or compromising the autonomy of local groups and service committees. Our World Service Office is eager to discuss innovative ways to cooperate with researchers in surmounting these challenges.

One direct contact between NA and professionals is in the Narcotics Anonymous meetings that are sometimes started by non-addict treatment staff, health care professionals, social workers, educators, and others. We actively encourage professionals to support Narcotics Anonymous in their local communities and to start NA meetings in communities where there is no Narcotics Anonymous as yet. We have two cautions to offer in regard to such meetings:

- *NA meetings started by non-addict professionals should be turned over to the addicts themselves as soon as possible.* One of the key reasons Narcotics Anonymous works as well as it does as an organization is its independence. New NA members should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own NA meeting as quickly as they can, without compromising the stability of the meeting. The professional who started the meeting should then take an outside support role in relation to the new NA group.
- *When NA meetings are held on the grounds of a treatment facility or in a professional’s offices, special care should be taken to explain the distinction between the facility and Narcotics Anonymous.* It serves everyone well to maintain the distinction between professional therapeutic facilities and NA’s nonprofessional, addict-to-addict approach to recovery. When an NA meeting is held in a treatment facility or a therapist’s offices, some explanation should be made to those attending that the NA group is simply meeting there but is not a function of the facility or therapist.

### **Client interaction**

In local communities where Narcotics Anonymous is fairly well established, we offer a number of services designed to make for easy interaction between your clients and our fellowship.

Though we generally do not take a primary role in interventions, we do offer something called a “Twelfth Step call” that could be used as a follow-up to an intervention. If your client agrees, you can call the local NA phoneline and ask that a

couple of experienced NA members visit your client to explain the NA program. To avoid confusion, it may be advisable to have your client call the phonenumber him or herself.

Local service committees regularly organize panel presentations of the NA program for client groups and correctional inmates in residential facilities. These are organized by “hospitals and institutions” committees and are known within NA as “H&I panels.” If you would like an H&I panel conducted for your clients, call the local NA phonenumber and ask for a return call from the H&I committee chairperson to make arrangements.

Narcotics Anonymous meetings welcome visits from your client groups—in fact, our literature says that “the newcomer is the most important person at any meeting.” If you would like to take a client group to visit an NA meeting, just call your local phonenumber and find out when and where the nearest meeting is being held. If you are bringing a large group, you may want to ask the person answering the phonenumber whether the meeting you are considering will be able to accommodate your group.

Many Narcotics Anonymous meetings are accustomed to identifying some person who will sign attendance verification cards for persons in outpatient treatment or on judicial referral. You should be aware that at some NA meetings, the person signing the card may take a special effort to emphasize to the client that this is being done as a service to the client, not because of some direct affiliation between your organization and Narcotics Anonymous. You should also be aware that in other NA meetings, it is *not* customary to sign attendance cards because of the local perception that doing so creates too great an appearance of affiliation between NA and other organizations. If you have any questions about this service, you should call the local NA phonenumber. If the person on the line cannot answer your questions, ask them to have either an ASC (area service committee) or RSC (regional service committee) officer or the public information committee chairperson return your call.

If you have sufficient confidence that Narcotics Anonymous could be helpful for your clients, you can encourage them to ask experienced NA members—“sponsors”—to help them engage in our recovery program. All they need to do is listen carefully at NA meetings until they hear someone with whom they identify, preferably someone of their own gender. Once they’ve found someone, they should ask that person if they can talk further with her or him. If all seems well, they should then simply ask that person to sponsor them. The person may decline—perhaps because they are already sponsoring a number of people, perhaps because they do not feel ready for the responsibility. If they accede to the request, the sponsor will help your client work through NA’s Twelve Steps and offer her or his own experience as a backdrop to the NA program; these are the only services offered by sponsors. Sponsors do not charge any fees for the services they render their sponsees.

Finally, probably the most important service we can offer your client is the environment of the Narcotics Anonymous group: a place where other drug addicts can offer first-hand hope of recovery to your client based on their own direct, personal experience. The NA group atmosphere is intensely social; if your client has difficulties in this area, you may want to specially prepare him or her for the first NA meeting. Once your client has made a firm connection with an NA group, usually by attending that



- *Open/closed meetings.* As we discussed earlier, some NA meetings allow nonaddicts to attend, though usually not to participate. Only at closed meetings can your client count on finding addicts only.

### **Potential difficulties between the NA program and your treatment regimen**

There are a few points where the Narcotics Anonymous program, or the local variety thereof, may conflict with your treatment philosophy. Rather than evade these points, we prefer to state them in the open so that you can make informed decisions about referring clients to Narcotics Anonymous.

- *Disease concept.* Narcotics Anonymous views addiction as a disease. We use a very simple, experience-oriented disease concept. We do not qualify our use of the term “disease” in any medical or specialized therapeutic sense, nor do we make any attempt to persuade others of the correctness of our view. The disease concept works well as an analogy by which our members can understand their condition: When treated, addiction can be “arrested” but not “cured.” Untreated, addiction has effects similar to a disease.
- *Total abstinence.* The experience of our members has been that total, continuous abstinence from all drugs has provided them with a reliable foundation for recovery and personal growth. However, abstinence is not in itself the sole goal of our members; more importantly, we seek a comprehensive change in attitude and lifestyle. “Relapse” is seen as a sometimes necessary part of the overall addiction/ recovery process for many individuals. Relapsers are not “shamed” but are encouraged to pick up the pieces, learn from their experience, and move on. Narcotics Anonymous views alcohol as a drug, and we find the “drug of choice” designation irrelevant to our program since we focus on the disease of addiction itself, not any particular drug or drugs. The use of psychiatric medication and other medically indicated drugs prescribed by a physician and taken under medical supervision is not seen as compromising a person’s “clean time.” Regarding the use of nicotine and caffeine, members are encouraged to consult their own experience, the experience of other members, and qualified health professionals.
- *Other twelve-step programs.* Narcotics Anonymous makes a clear distinction, based on very different program goals, between itself and other anonymous fellowships—for instance, Alcoholics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous.
- *Some anti-professional sentiment.* Though NA as a movement takes no such position, we have noted that some Narcotics Anonymous members bear some antagonism toward professional therapists and psychotherapeutic concepts. We cannot speculate on the reason for such antagonism. Thankfully, this antagonism is not an overwhelming feature in the life of the NA groups where it can be found.
- *Spirituality.* The Narcotics Anonymous program has a distinctly spiritual orientation, with a theistic bent to most of our literature. We are neither sectarian nor religious, but we are not antagonistic toward organized religion—at least not as a movement. Some of our members, however, are atheists and/or anti-religious. Our English-language Twelve Steps and Traditions refer to God as a masculine person, though our fellowship is currently engaged in a discussion of this matter.

### **Problems with local organization, groups?**

It is quite possible that, if you have a long-term association with Narcotics Anonymous, you or your clients may run into a problem with NA members sooner or later. If you do, we suggest that you contact the local NA phonenumber as we have already indicated and ask for an ASC or RSC officer or the PI chairperson to give you a return

call so that you can discuss the matter with them. If you do not succeed in contacting anyone in a responsible position in the local NA community, feel free to contact our World Service Office. The world office may be able to untangle a communication knot or mediate a dispute for you.

### **Summary**

Narcotics Anonymous does not claim to have all the answers for every drug addict in every community, nor do we believe that all other approaches to the problems associated with addiction are necessarily without merit. However, the members of 20,000 NA groups in 70 countries have been successfully applying the Twelve Step program to their own drug addiction since 1947 and are ready to offer their experience to other addicts seeking a drug-free outcome, recovery from the effects of addiction, and a stable, productive lifestyle. Narcotics Anonymous has a long tradition of cooperating with professionals, government, and community organizations to address the needs of addicts. Most local NA groups and service committees are prepared to welcome visitors and client groups, follow up on professional interventions, make presentations to residential clients or prison inmates, sign attendance verification cards, connect clients with individual NA “sponsors,” and welcome clients into the recovery atmosphere of the NA group. Our members cover a broad demographic range and we have a number of different types of meetings, so most clients will usually find something in NA in their local community they can make a connection with. We have identified a few points where the Narcotics Anonymous program may conflict with your treatment regimen so that you can make informed decisions when referring clients, but we hope these conflicts will be minor, few, and far between. Our primary message is that, together, Narcotics Anonymous and others in the local community concerned with drug addiction can help addicts find a new, more satisfying, more productive way to live.

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### Professional Event Check List for Regional / ZONAL PI Committees

- 1. PI Committee nominates event - Writes purpose for attendance at event- Projects financial costs for project. (Remember to include literature stock expenses and shipping costs if applicable)
- 2. PI Committee Chair advises Zone/RSC/ASC - submits request for funding event - Approval or denial of project by Zone /RSC
- 3. Upon approval of event, Coordinator chosen by PI Committee/RSC/ZONE
- 4. World Services abstract to be presented to conference secretariat for consideration - Action Coordinator
  - a. After acceptance of abstract, Coordinator will need to send off one paid registration to secure place on program
- 5. Event Coordinator communicates project initiation and intended activities to all PI / H&I Committees in affected areas - Event dates, organizations and other pertinent information shared - Requests for assistance and specialized needs are communicated
- 6. Selection of all primary attendees made by PI Committee and/or Event Coordinator following PI Committee guidelines
- 7. Event Coordinator briefs all attendees on:
  - a. Details of previous conference(s) provided by coordinator, if possible.
  - b. Date and times they are expected to attend the event.
  - c. Responsibilities and roles.
  - d. Do's & Don'ts for PI - Re: speaking to professionals, dress code, etc.
- 7. a. Send request for space, or inclusion on program schedule for an open NA meeting
- 8. Has conference secretariat acknowledged receipt of abstract/ request for display space? Action by coordinator?
- 9. Has conference secretariat acknowledged invitation to present? Action by coordinator?
- 10. When requesting a workshop or plenary session presentation: Try to ensure presentations are in the morning, afternoon workshops are normally not well attended. Which World Services paper is appropriate for what session?
- 11. Have coordinator establish contact with:
  - a. Conference organizer
  - b. Planning / Program committee
  - c. Travel agent for conference
  - d. Secretariat
- 12. Check that all prospective attendees have current, valid passports/visas, if applicable
- 13. Check if hotel accommodations need to be verified for visa reasons

- 14. Fill out registration forms for everyone attending  
Note: If multiple attendees are participating (for training purposes) you may be able to get "student/training" registration at a discount rate. (Usually U.S. \$50—\$100.00 per attendee)
- 15. Pay registration fees (unusual in some countries to accept credit cards. Arrange bank draft where possible in advance if this applies)
- 16. Pay deposit on hotel (usually one—two nights rates)
- 17. Advise conference secretariat of attendees' arrival, departure times, and flight numbers. This will usually enable you to be picked up at the airport. Again if applicable.
- 18. Determine whether registration fee covers meals
- 19. If meals not covered with registration, arrange for personal expense advance if needed.
- 20. Determine rates, methods for currency conversion in advance if applicable.
  - a. Attendees should be familiar with Zonal/Regional travel policy guidelines.
- 21. Ensure travel expenses have been approved.
- 22. Arrange and purchase travel tickets (air, rail or other), arrange travel insurance.
- 23. WSO-Van Nuys, WSO-Europe, or the nearest RSO or ASO should be advised of literature requirements in advance should stocks not be sufficient (especially world meeting directories). *Did you include this in your budget?*
- 24. Check that RSC has sent literature and display at least one week in advance if not being walked through customs.
  - a. Make sure video equipment was ordered (check to see if this viable as it can be expensive)—and don't forget the looped tape of the *Just for Today* video!
- 25. Have predetermined contact person who will take responsibility for literature when it arrives (e.g. conference secretariat, hotel concierge, shipping agent) The hotel is usually the best if your a listed guest
- 26. Arrange display booth/space, tables, and video machine arrangements well in advance to avoid disappointment upon arrival. Sometimes these arrangements are done with the conference secretariat, at other times, directly with the hotel. Always check with secretariat first, and then check with hotel regarding feasibility. Some conferences charge for space, make inquiries. Try and get the display next to the coffee "set up".

- 27. Ask the local NA community for help staffing the display table and for assistance with an open NA meeting should the conference allow you to have one. Note: Check to see if the conference organizers will let the local NA members into the venue first. This will save an unsuspected embarrassment. Sometimes they will want to charge extra or deny entry based on security reasons.
  - a. Delegate local volunteer coordinator.
  - b. Review PI Do's & Don'ts with local volunteers.
  - c. Review with local NA members about anonymity and their participation at an open NA meeting for the public and professionals. Stress caution to these members on making statements that can compromise personal anonymity and express opinions on issues outside of NA's purpose.
  - d. Make a note of difficult questions, or general questions asked of you many times, as it could be input for future papers and articles for the World Services or local PI training materials.
- 28. Space for open NA meeting usually needs to be arranged in advance. If this does happen, impromptu arrangements upon arrival can lead to a successful outcome. *Note:* Make sure the meeting does not conflict with other conference workshops or social events; the organizers would not like this.
- 29. Check that all primary attendees are aware of the dress code and/or decorum standards for the particular conference in question.
- 30. Check that all primary attendees are aware of the full array of assignments during the week—presentations are only a small part of our participation in the event. Social activities, hallway talks, and general outings are all opportunities for public relations work that will make this exercise meaningful. Remember to have fun, people are attracted to smiles and stress-free individuals.
- 31. Follow up—ensure there are enough PI committee business cards available.
  - a. Business cards should only have the address and phone numbers for NA (local, regional or both). Business cards should not have an individual's full name or personal address information.
- 32. If selling literature, prearrange a cash float and an *official* receipt book.
- 33. Keep a follow up book (journal) for mailing out further information after the event to those we meet. Pass onto World Services any professional contacts that you feel needs following up. Do not make any promises. Make sure WS gives you feedback what was done or not done. Follow up is imperative.
- 34. Also locate local NA communities for further communication if you are visiting an isolated area.
- 35. Document trip in order to update or add to this checklist for further trips.



- 36. Write report for Zonal/Regional Committee. cc World Services if appropriate. *Always remember who may get a copy of your report. Be sensitive to local cultures or outside issues. If you need to report on a sensitive or confidential issue, attach an addendum marked confidential to the Chairs of the RSC/Regional PI or Zonal Forum*
- 37. Write a general article on your trip for local newsletters or *The NA Way Magazine*. Again watch out for sensitivities and outside issues. Treatment agencies may subscribe to the newsletter
- 38. Obtain copy of conference proceedings for local archives.
- 39. Prepare curriculum vitae or resume if you are going to make a presentation; you will need it for your introduction by the chairperson. The planning committee or conference organizer usually likes this well in advance.
- 40. After conference, send a thank you letter(s) to the conference organizers, and also to the attendees who gave their time.
- 41. Make recommendations to the Zone/RSC regarding future attendance.
- 42. Try to mix with researchers and policy makers; they dictate treatment and create trends in dealing with drug addicts. Try and split up to avoid clinging together. Make the most of our people resources.
  - a. Ensure that entire delegation gets together once a day, at a time and location everyone knows about, to debrief and make plans for next round of engagement.
- 41. Write report from notes on the way home, otherwise it will not get done within thirty days!
  - a. Fill out appropriate expense report.
  - b. Keep copies of your currency exchange receipts for purposes of justifying the conversion rates you will show in your expense reports (**if applicable**).