

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Public Relations Training



Why Public Relations is Important to the NA Member . . .

The Narcotics Anonymous message is “that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live”

Our relations with the public enable us to share this message broadly so that those who might benefit from our program of recovery can find us. We perform public relations service to increase the awareness and credibility of the NA program. We share our message openly with the public at large, with prospective members, and with professionals.

Informing Professionals & the Public

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

Narcotics Anonymous is a global, community-based organization with a multi-lingual and multicultural membership.



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NA was founded in 1953, and our membership growth was minimal during our initial twenty years as an organization. Since the publication of our Basic Text in 1983, the number of members and meetings has increased dramatically. Today, NA members hold more than 58,000 meetings weekly in 131 countries.

We offer recovery from the effects of addiction through working a twelve-step program, including regular attendance at group meetings. The group atmosphere provides help from peers and offers an ongoing support network for addicts who wish to pursue and maintain a drug-free lifestyle.



Narcotics Anonymous.

Public Relations Goals

One goal spelled out in the Narcotics Anonymous World Services' Vision Statement is to “work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry our message of recovery”

Local NA communities can have a powerful impact on the larger communities around them. It is through the unity of members in their service efforts, and a cooperative attitude toward the public, that helps the NA message of recovery grow. The following points are goals that we can strive to fulfill in making NA a visible and attractive choice for addicts:

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

Anonymity With Non-Addicts

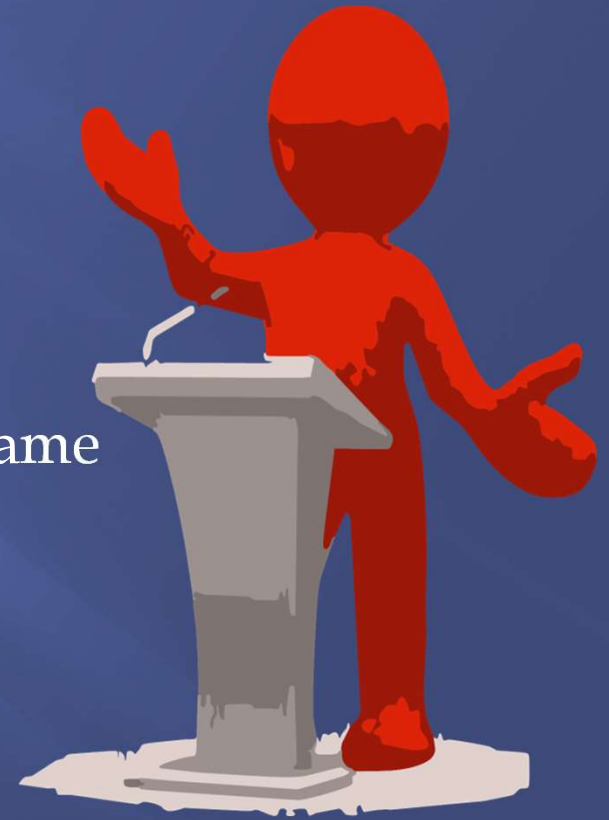
Tradition Eleven emphasizes that no one personality is more important than another. When our Eleventh Tradition tells us that “we need always maintain personal anonymity”, it does not say that we need to do so under all circumstances. Tradition Eleven says that “we need always maintain personal anonymity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

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

Public Information Presentations

Tips for how to make our presentations more successful:

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



Correctional Facilities



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

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- ▣ Trusted servants understand and agree to follow the facility's rules - including the facility's dress requirements. This often means no jeans and no shirts with logos, including NA logos.
- ▣ Members are asked to share a clear message of recovery in NA. This can mean avoiding old attitudes, like those that may have characterized their own experiences in correctional institutions, or offering information other than their experience, strength and hope of recovery in NA.
- ▣ Members understand that meetings are under correctional officers' control.
- ▣ Trusted servants are trained to follow the facility's guidelines regarding security risks; this may mean that trusted servants will be expected to report to correctional authorities about situations that pose a threat to NA members or that pose a general security threat.

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- ❑ Many facilities require volunteers to attend an orientation session. Trusted servants should be prepared to attend one of these sessions, if required by the facility. It is becoming more and more common for facilities to require volunteers to attend these kinds of orientations.
- ❑ Trusted servants understand and follow protocols regarding sponsoring inmates. Some areas and facilities prohibit sponsoring because it may show favoritism. Some facilities have rules concerning communication with inmates. These rules may not allow NA volunteers who regularly enter the facility to be on an inmate's visiting, correspondence or phone list. In other areas and facilities, it is generally accepted that trusted servants can sponsor inmates. What's important is that NA members are willing to follow guidelines of both the area and the facility regarding sponsorship. Trusted servants can also refer inmates to correspondence and sponsorship programs run by various NA communities.

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- ❑ Speaker meetings, panel presentations, questions & answers and literature discussion formats work well in correctional facilities. NA speakers usually share their experience in a meeting format with a predetermined time frame. A rotating format can provide a balance between outside NA speakers and inmate participation.
- ❑ Trusted servants understand that any sexual relationship with inmates is totally inappropriate. The primary purpose of providing meetings in a criminal-justice setting is to carry a clear and consistent NA message of recovery. We want to avoid inappropriate sexual relationships or sexual harassment in NA meetings.
- ❑ We also want to encourage inmates to stay focused on NA's message of recovery, not on who is delivering that message.
- ❑ Those who provide service in a criminal-justice setting want to always strive to create an environment where focus is on recovery, not a friendship between the trusted servant and the inmate.

The “Do’s”

(adapted from Hospitals & Institutions Handbook)

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

The “Don’t”

(adapted from Hospitals & Institutions Handbook)

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

Treatment: Inpatient, Outpatient & Residential Setting

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



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Often, treatment professionals ask for information about NA meetings that may appeal to a specific population. Have we identified local meetings that may be helpful to specific populations (for example, the hearing impaired, youth, GLBT, various language groups, etc...)?

Given the area's human resources (members), how many meetings can the area reasonably bring into local treatment facilities, and continue to bring over time? What would be the best use of NA's human resources, and what would meet the needs of the community? Will trusted servants bring in meetings on a weekly basis? A monthly basis?



Formats

There are a variety of formats that we use when carrying the message into facilities, but there are some key points to keep in mind about all of them. The format of any particular H&I meeting/presentation may vary from meeting to meeting depending on the type of facility.

In short term facilities, the format will be more focused on the panel members carrying a message in to the residents, while at a long-term facility we may encourage more participation from the residents.

In H&I we are carrying the message into the facility. At an H&I meeting we are not there to dump our problems, but rather to help the addicts become aware of what NA is and hope it works in our lives. In effect an H&I meeting is an introduction to our fellowship for addicts. The panel leader should let you know what the format is before the meeting/presentation and should be able to answer any questions you may have about it.

If you would like to see samples of a variety of formats, there is an explanation of several of them in the H&I Hand-Book. Whatever format is chosen, we normally get the residents involved with a question and answer session at some point in the meeting/presentation. Also, you may be asked to stay after the meeting for a while to talk with the residents if that is allowed.

Orientation

H&I orientation is a period that allows NA members to become familiar with H&I work so they aren't rushed into it without any preparation for this service. Many people are quite apprehensive about getting into H&I for a variety of reasons. Don't be put off, everyone has something to offer.

This packet has been compiled by the Kings/Tulare PR sub-committee to give a brief outline of some of the specifics that will be important for you as a panel member. The H&I Hand-Book gives a much more in-depth look at H&I work in Narcotics Anonymous if you decide you want to learn more about this rewarding type of service.

Many areas as a part of orientation bring those that are new to PR to their first H&I meeting/presentation or two as an observer. This will give you a chance to just listen at first and see how a H&I meeting/presentation really works. Also this helps guarantee you are more comfortable joining the panel.



Phone Line

- ❑ Our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. By far, the best way to make us available to those who need help is to provide a “helpline” phone service. This phone number is listed as Narcotics Anonymous in the telephone directory and serves that purpose. The still suffering addict can call this number, get meeting times and locations, and receive information about NA. Talk anonymously to a recovering addict 24 hours a day.
- ❑ Please familiarize yourself with this packet. The recovery and welfare of the suffering addict may depend on how well YOU handle their call. Thank you for being of service!



Volunteer Policies

The suggested requirements for our Helpline!

- ❑ Active members of NA, who attend NA meetings regularly and have twelve months clean time and be willing, able and available to serve on the phone line.
- ❑ Always respect the confidentiality of your role and the dignity and privacy of all callers with whom you come in contact with. If you are returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as an addict or mentioning NA.
- ❑ When speaking with callers, remain objective and non-argumentative. Remember that you are likely to be the first contact a person has with NA. A warm, friendly voice will reassure a frightened, uneasy person in need of help.
- ❑ We do not endorse or make recommendations about any other program or agencies. Be sure the caller understands that **NO** outside programs/agencies are affiliated with or recommended by NA. If the caller insists on information about treatment facilities or detoxes, refer to the community referral list.
- ❑ Do not give out names and numbers of any members except those printed on our meeting schedules.

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- ❑ Do not harbor any doubts or frustrations about your position a helpline volunteer. If you run into any problems or have any questions, call the phone line coordinator.
- ❑ The phone line coordinator will provide you with updated meeting schedules and other information you may need to better serve your caller.
- ❑ Make sure the information you give out is up to date and accurate. Take time to check current schedules and new information. It is better to give NO information than give WRONG information.
- ❑ You may get “NA business” related calls (e.g. a caller wanting to start a regular meeting, a meeting schedule sent to them, a special one-time speaking engagement, a treatment facility wanting to start a meeting etc...) **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO HELP THESE CALLERS YOURSELF. GET THEIR NAME AND NUMBER AND PASS THIS INFORMATION ON TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSON IMMEDIATELY.** Get as much information as you can about what they want. Let them know you will be passing their information on to someone responsible for that service and that person will get back to them as soon as possible.

12 Step Calls

The best way to handle a call is to listen, and suggest the caller get to a meeting as soon as possible. Often the caller wants to talk to someone in person. We do not have an organized 12-Step service here in the Kings/Tulare Area of Narcotics Anonymous. If you feel it absolutely necessary for a 12-Step call to be made, please remember the following basic guidelines:

- ▣ **NEVER GO ALONE!**
- ▣ Find another NA member to go with you. Meet the caller in a public place, at an NA meeting or, if absolutely necessary, at their place of residence.
- ▣ Men should 12-Step men.
- ▣ Women should 12-Step women.



Social Media



If we are not careful about maintaining our personal anonymity, our activities and interaction on social networking sites can be a reflection on Narcotics Anonymous, affecting the way our fellowship is viewed both by potential members and by those who might refer addicts to NA.

While some of us may maintain the perception that this type of anonymity is only important for celebrities or “high-profile” members, this is not the case.

The Eleventh Tradition essay in *It Works: How and Why* reminds us:

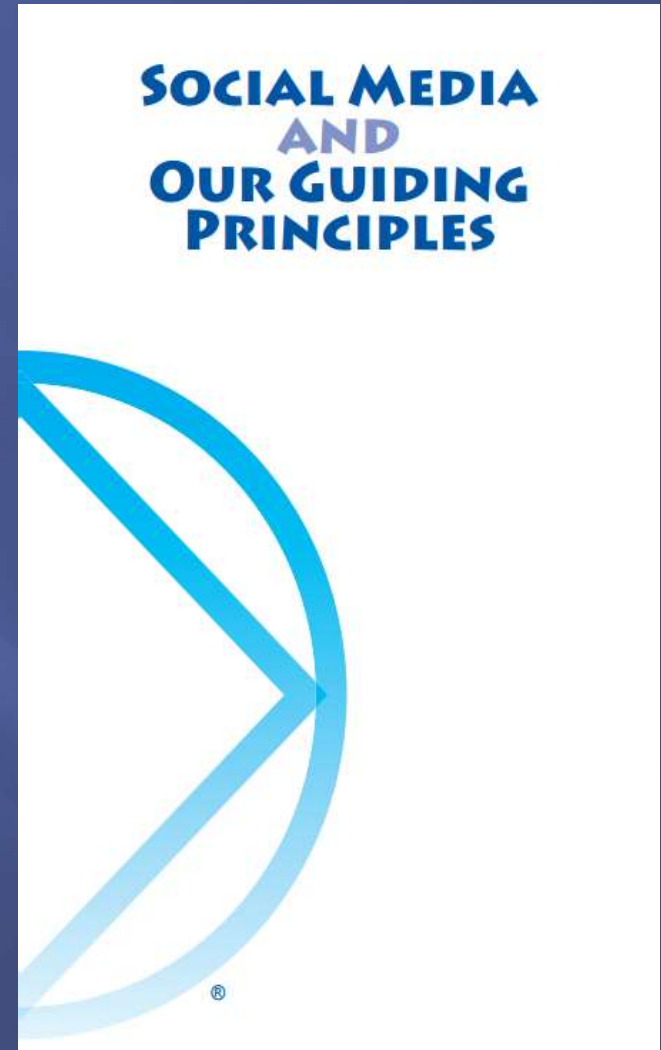
“Wherever we go, we always represent NA to some degree... we want that reflection to be a source of attraction rather than a source of embarrassment.”

By revealing our NA membership online, we become representatives of the fellowship whether or not we want to be, and any of our individual behavior or opinions can be misunderstood as reflective of NA as a whole.

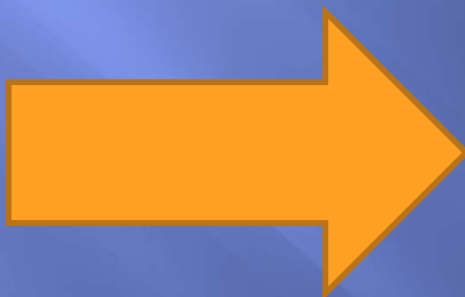
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Photos, Videos and Social Media – We recognize that it is a common practice for members to take photos and videos at NA events and post them on social networks. We do not believe this to be in conflict with our traditions so long as they are for the enjoyment of members and are not made available to the general public.

Please be considerate of our guiding principles and the anonymity of others as you share your photos and videos from this NA event. For more information, please see the service pamphlet on Social Media.



PR
Sign Up
Sample
Sheet



Public Relations Volunteer List

Public Relations is looking for volunteers in the King-Tulare & Foothill Area for panels going into Group Homes, Jails & State Prisons and volunteers for the phone line!

Those who want to become panel members please put your name and contact information below.

Jails (3 years from last arrest)

Name (first)	Phone:	Email:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Group Home (No time requirement)

Name (first)	Phone:	Email:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Prisons (Ability to gain clearance)

Name (first)	Phone:	Email:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Phone Line (1 year)

Name (first)	Phone:	Email:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Those that sign up will be contacted for a training day that will be happening sometime this year. For more information please show up to the next PR meeting.



Thank You For Your Time

As always . . .

Thank you for being of service!

