



Narcotics Anonymous ®



**A Guide to
Public Information**

**Group Conscience Approved
October 26th, 2013**

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.



A Guide to Public Information

FOREWORD

Since the restructuring of the Service Structure in 1998 through an inventory process the Standing Committees of Public Information, Hospitals and Institutions, Additional Needs, Literature, Phone line, Outreach, Institutional Groups and the Board of Trustees were dismantled and a centralized board was created.

Since then these services from NAWS have diminished to near obscurity in the United States. Through the creation of the United States Service Committee and the United States Service Conference by groups, areas and regions; these services are offered to the US Fellowship as an option to help fulfill their Fifth Tradition. The Subcommittees of the USSC that have been created are using proven literature that has been removed from the na.org website as resources for providing national services.

The USSC Subcommittees are allowed to do this through the NAWS disclaimer following this explanation and the Twelve Traditions. We hope they can be utilized to once again help the suffering addict find what we have found. Thank you for your support.

In loving service

USSC Public Information Subcommittee

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A Guide to Public Information

**The United States Service Committee
Public Information Subcommittee**

October 2013

INTRODUCTION

SECTION I: BASIC INFORMATION

WHAT IS IT? WHO DOES IT? HOW DOES IT GET DONE? 1

PI AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF SERVICE

WHAT EVERY MEMBER SHOULD KNOW 1

PUBLIC INFORMATION CONTINGENCY PLAN 4

USSC CONTINGENCY PLAN 5

SECTION II: START UP AND STRUCTURE

HOW TO GET STARTED 9

START UP OUTLINE FOR

AREA/REGIONAL PI SUBCOMMITTEES 10

SAMPLE GUIDELINES 12

GUIDELINES FOR COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

IN PI IN OVERLAPPING AREAS OR REGIONS 14

H&I/PI COOPERATION 15

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION 18

SECTION III: THE WORK ITSELF

PHONELINES, BULLETINS, AND LETTERS 27

SAMPLE BULLETINS, FLYERS, NEWSPAPER ADS 29

HOW TO DEVELOP BILLBOARDS, BUS BENCHES,

AND TRANSIT SIGNS 30

THE USE OF LETTERS IN PUBLIC INFORMATION 31

GROUPS/ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTACT 33

SAMPLE LETTERS TO GROUPS/ORGANIZATIONS 34

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMUNITY MEETINGS 41

COMMUNITY MEETING FORMAT 43

SPEAKING TO NON-ADDICTS 45

MASS MEDIA PUBLIC INFORMATION

PREPAREDNESS INVENTORY 49

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND THE MEDIA 51

LETTERS FOR RADIO AND TV 63

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING NEWS RELEASES 68

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE 69

RADIO PSA SCRIPTS 70

TV PSA SCRIPTS 75

SECTION IV: LEARNING DAYS AND WORKSHOPS

LEARNING DAYS 79

WORKSHOPS 82

QUICK REFERENCE FOR DO'S AND DON'TS

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PI SERVICE WORK IN GENERAL 17
DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PHONELINES, BULLETINS, AND LETTERS 29
DO'S AND DON'TS FOR LETTER WRITING 32
DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PRESENTATIONS TO GROUPS AND COMMUNITY
MEETINGS 42

INTRODUCTION

About This Guide

It is essential that all public information efforts of Narcotics Anonymous be well planned, prepared, and carried out. The clarity and quality of our public image has a direct bearing on whether or not addicts who need us will be able to find us. For that reason, PI efforts must be undertaken with patient, careful planning.

The information in this guide was developed to help PI subcommittees sort through the sometimes complicated issues involved in PI work. You are strongly urged to read it carefully and consider each of your PI projects in relation to the applicable sections before proceeding. If you do that, you will find that many of the potential difficulties can be avoided, and this important area of NA service can be quite fascinating and rewarding.

Throughout the guide you will find many references to items contained on other pages. These are samples which may be altered to reflect the needs or circumstances of your individual committees. They are included as a reflection of the collective experience of many PI subcommittees throughout the nation and provide valuable information which we hope you will find useful.

Revisions and Updates to This Guide

Portions of this guide are incomplete. Additional revisions and updates to these sections will be ongoing projects of the United States Service Conference and the USSC Public Information Subcommittee and sent out for review and approval as they are completed.

Due to the changing nature of public information work, this guide will need continual updating. We look forward to members' input in order to continue presenting the most comprehensive materials possible for use throughout the US Fellowship.

SECTION I
BASIC INFORMATION

WHAT IS IT? WHO DOES IT? HOW DOES IT GET DONE?

What Is It?

Public information is informing the public about recovery from addiction through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

The purpose of a public information subcommittee is to inform the public that NA exists and offers recovery from the disease of addiction.

Who Does It?

Public information work is accomplished through service committees directly responsible to those they serve. These PI subcommittees provide community awareness of what NA is, as well as how, when, and where we are available.

How Does It Get Done?

We get the job done by establishing clear guidelines for our subcommittees, setting goals, prioritizing tasks, adhering to our Twelve Traditions, and a lot of hard work!

PI AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF SERVICE WHAT EVERY MEMBER SHOULD KNOW

The Member, the Group, and Public Information

Area and regional public information subcommittees should adequately inform the fellowship about PI efforts so that any member with 90 or more days clean knows what to do when someone outside NA requests information. Here's how an NA member should handle requests from outside the fellowship for speaking engagements, general information, literature, etc.:

- Call the area PI chairperson (or someone designated by the group if there is no area PI chairperson) to handle the request.
- The group secretary and group service representative (GSR) should always have on hand phone numbers for the area PI chairperson, area service committee (ASC) chairperson, and vice chairperson. All requests for information from outside the fellowship should be referred to those trusted servants.

NOTE: In some instances a group may be isolated from an ASC and will do PI work in the community. The group should always keep the ASC informed of its activities. Public information work done by groups will usually be limited to posting bulletins, distributing meeting schedule information, and getting the word out in the community about the NA meeting(s).

ASC PI subcommittees should do all they can to provide support and encouragement to groups in isolated areas.

Some very basic rules of thumb in PI need to be understood by every NA member:

- Never do speaking engagements on your own. Refer them to the appropriate trusted servant (see above).
- Never do media interviews on your own. Refer requests for interviews to the appropriate trusted servant (see above).
- Remember that no individual member can ever represent NA. That's why we have service committees to handle public information.

Area Service Committee and Public Information

Very simply, an area service committee is responsible for establishing and supporting a well organized, informed PI subcommittee. The PI subcommittee, under guidance and direction of the ASC, should establish guidelines and develop a contingency plan (see pages 4 and 5) to respond to all requests for information from individuals, agencies, or media within the geographical boundaries of the ASC.

Once a request has been received or when plans are being drawn for a PI campaign, the following information must be obtained and appropriate action taken:

Will this action (a newspaper interview, a professional seminar, etc.) affect other areas or regions or NA as a whole?

No---Then proceed according to your area's contingency plan.

Yes---Then STOP further action until all areas and/or regions involved have been contacted and a joint plan has been developed.

NOTE: *If the action involves national agencies or media, proceed as follows:*

- Call the USSC and talk with the Administrative Chairperson.
- If the office isn't open, call the USSC Public Information Chairperson or Vice Chairperson (Area/Regional PI Chairpersons should keep these numbers available and up-to-date. Get them from your RD or the USSC).

At the national level, there is a contingency plan involving representatives from all the service arms who jointly determine how to handle each situation. National situations most definitely affect other groups and NA as a whole.

Regional Service Committee and Public Information

An RSC is responsible for establishing and supporting a well organized, informed PI subcommittee. The PI subcommittee, under the guidance and direction of the RSC, should establish guidelines and develop a contingency plan (see pages 4 and 5) to respond to all requests for information from individuals, agencies, or media within the geographical boundaries of the RSC.

In addition, the RSC PI subcommittee is responsible for coordinating area PI efforts and for cooperating with other regions in joint PI efforts. The RSC PI subcommittee is the communication link between the areas and the USSC. This means that the RSC PI subcommittee must provide all information and material developed at a national level to their areas. Regional PI learning days or workshops are a good way to improve communication among all levels of PI service.

Once a request has been received or when plans are being drawn for a PI campaign, the following information must be obtained and appropriate action taken:

Will this action (a newspaper interview, a professional seminar, etc.) affect other areas or regions or NA as a whole?

No---Then proceed according to your region's contingency plan.

Yes—Then STOP further action until all areas and/or regions involved have been contacted and a joint plan has been developed.

NOTE: *If the action involves national agencies or media, proceed as follows:*

- Call the USSC and talk with the Administrative Chairperson.
- If the office isn't open, call the USSC Public Information Chairperson or Vice Chairperson (Area/regional PI chairpersons should keep these numbers available and up-to-date. Get them from your RD or the USSC).

At the national level, there is a contingency plan involving representatives from all the service arms who jointly determine how to handle each situation. National situations most definitely affect other groups and NA as a whole.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CONTINGENCY PLAN

Your Area or Region

It is essential that all members of the area/region know what procedures are to be followed when Narcotics Anonymous is contacted by a print or broadcast news entity. This plan will outline how such contacts are to be managed and should be distributed widely throughout the area/region.

Additional details on why and how a contingency plan should be used can be found on pages 2 and 3 --- PI at Various Levels of Service.

Any member receiving a request for information from a media contact must immediately call one of the following:

1. The area or regional PI chairperson or vice chairperson;

OR

2. The area or regional chairperson and vice chairperson.

One of the individual(s) listed above should respond to the media contact as soon as possible, preferably within the work day or within an eight hour period.

The following information should be determined:

1. What audience level the exposure is likely to receive. It is important to understand how the information we give and/or contact we provide is going to be used. Is it going to be used in a local, regional, or national broadcast or print story? There are circumstances when a story may be used in a national, regional, or local area. It is also important at that point to determine if the coverage will overlap into other areas and regions, or if it needs to be handled at a national level. The caller should be asked politely to help us in responding by giving us the range of the intended audience.
2. What is the scheduling and deadline information the individual is working with in the accumulation of information for media use? In the instructions following, a different approach must be followed if there is a 48-hour or less deadline. Politely ask their help. Making our response positive and successful can only be done if we know their schedule deadlines.

Upon gaining the necessary information, the responsible individual must decide whether the media request is to be handled by the area or region. Some requests may need to be coordinated with or forwarded to the United States Service Committee.

NOTE: *It is always advisable to contact the USSC to discuss any media requests which may result in film crews and/or TV interviews with addicts.*

If the determination is made that the area or region will handle the media request, follow up will be made depending on the deadline schedule.

AREA OR REGIONAL AUDIENCE WITH LESS THAN 48-HOUR LEAD TIME.

Contacts involving such short time require immediate action that to some degree necessitates a lack of communication and coordination within the fellowship among all the trusted servants who might otherwise be involved. One or more of the individuals listed above should act for that individual service arm, responding with whatever assistance they can provide.

AREA OR REGIONAL MEDIA AUDIENCE WITH MORE THAN 48-HOUR LEAD TIME.

One of the individuals as listed above should respond by assigning an individual to be part of the team to work with the media contact. The assigned individual(s) should be named by your individual PI subcommittee and be the most knowledgeable and experienced members available.

For electronic media contacts wherein television or film crews will be involved, more specific guidelines are required that involve adherence to our tradition of personal anonymity.

- Area or regional PI chairperson or vice chairperson
- Your RCM or RD

Those individuals listed above should assign members with the most training and experience in working with the electronic media contacts.

USSC SERVICE CONTINGENCY PLAN

This outlines how contacts with Narcotics Anonymous by national or electronic or print media should be handled.

It is very important to ask every national or electronic media contact the following:

- What is the audience exposure likely to be? (Will it be a local, regional, national, or broadcast or print story?)
- How is the information going to be used? (Is the context of the article or program appropriate for our message of recovery?)
- What are the scheduling and deadline requirements?

As an international fellowship we need specific national or regional guidelines to ensure maximum support for members handling the media contacts. The trusted servants that are specified in these plans should have the most extensive experience possible in both public information work and in personal recovery. The principles contained in the guidelines below

may be adapted to the needs of Narcotics Anonymous communities around the world. These should be adhered to in those states where the trusted servants listed below are available.

National or Media Coverage

That Does Not Affect a Member's Anonymity

Responsibility for responding to Media requests shall be assigned to the USSCNA in conjunction with any one of the persons listed below:

1. A member of the USSC Public Information Subcommittee.
2. The USSC Administrative Committee Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson.

National or Media Coverage

Which Affects a Member's Anonymity

Contacts involving a member's anonymity require prompt response from USSCNA. One or more of the individuals listed above should be contacted to respond with whatever assistance they can provide. These types of media contact may require the presence of a USSC Administrative Chair or USSC PI Chair.

Certain types of electronic media coverage involving video or film crews may require the presence of a non-addict spokesperson to be interviewed on camera in order to ensure protection of our member's anonymity.

SECTION II
START UP AND STRUCTURE

First of all, it is important to understand how public information fits into the NA service structure. PI subcommittees, like other service activities, must be responsible to those they serve. This can be accomplished effectively if each PI committee is a subcommittee of an area or regional service committee. PI subcommittees should not be created or operate independently of the group, the area, or the region they serve. This is an important aspect of the unity of purpose which guides our PI efforts. Area or regional guidelines should always include specific language about the formation of the PI subcommittee, its officers, its duties, and its responsibility to work through the group conscience of the area or regional committee. Area and regional service committees can provide support, guidance, and lines of communication throughout the fellowship.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Attend a meeting of the local area or regional service committee and find out what, if anything, is being done in the way of public information. The geographic area to be reached will determine whether the PI subcommittee is a part of an area or regional service committee. If there is no ASC or RSC, begin research on forming an ASC or RSC, following the guidelines in *A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous*.

It is important that PI efforts be carried out within the service structure. Services which are attempted without the support of area or regional committees often end in disarray and rather than carrying a positive message of recovery may result in negative exposure for Narcotics Anonymous.

If there is an active ASC or RSC, but no PI subcommittee, get one started. Schedule a meeting and get the word out that you're looking for members who are interested in this kind of service. Encourage representatives from each group or area to attend. This will improve communication and ensure that your committee remains directly responsible to the Fellowship of NA.

NOTE: *There may be times in remote areas when a group or groups do basic public information before the formal structuring of an ASC or RSC. The types of PI activities carried out by groups are best limited to posting bulletins, distributing meeting information, and getting the word out to the community about NA.*

Our experience has shown that good solid recovery and clean time is especially important in this field of service since so much PI work involves contact with non-NA members. Although it is helpful to have individuals on the subcommittee who have experience in communications or public relations, it is certainly not essential. A good working knowledge of the traditions is the single most important asset a member can have. As NA members, we need to remember that no individual can ever speak for NA as a whole, and that our competence to speak about addiction is limited to our own experience and to the program of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

GO SLOW AND EASY! Enthusiasm is one of our greatest assets in Narcotics Anonymous, but we need to remember the importance of being well prepared when we are approaching individuals or organizations outside of NA.

Public information work, by its very nature, is a frequent source of tradition violations. Add to that the excitement and enthusiasm of reaching out to the addict who still suffers, and you can begin to see wherein the danger lies. Strict adherence to the Twelve Traditions is vital in order to protect the fellowship so that it may always be able to provide an atmosphere of recovery for the addict who wants to stop using. As you are working on this project, keep the traditions in mind. If you have questions, ask, and remember, **“when in doubt, don’t.”**

NOTE: *Use part of every PI subcommittee meeting to read and study the traditions. Don’t hesitate to write to the USSC if you have questions about possible violations, or for more information on PI work and the Twelve Traditions.*

START UP OUTLINE FOR AREA/REGIONAL PI SUBCOMMITTEES

Membership and Meetings

Contact at least one member from each group/area, preferably PI chairpersons or people with one to five years clean and PI experience (clean time will vary depending on the age of your area or region). Get a commitment from them to attend area/regional PI meetings and act as liaison for their group/area. Also, ask about their experience in any PI activities they have attempted.

Create your initial mailing list from those contacts and set a time and date for your first meeting. It has been beneficial for some regions to hold frequent meetings at first (twice a month) to lay a foundation.

Initial Meeting Agendas

Guidelines for the PI subcommittee are essential, and should be the first item on your agenda until they are completed. This beginning work may take time but it is important to move ahead slowly and thoroughly in order to avoid problems later.

Contacts and Resources

1. Compile a list and begin contacting your area's phone line and H&I subcommittee chairpersons, encouraging their participation in the PI subcommittee. Phone lines must be operating at peak level once PI work starts. H&I must be able to respond to some of those calls and also to facilities where initial PI contact results in an H&I need.
2. Contact should be made with the USSC, informing them of your committee's existence and requesting information on PI work being done in neighboring areas/regions and a regional contact when available.
3. Contact neighboring areas/regions to share PI experiences.

Be sure your subcommittee information contact name(s) and phone number(s) are made available throughout your area/region and be prepared to start your job as a communicator with other areas, regions, and the world.

Along with your guidelines, a contingency plan should be created to ensure that all phone line volunteers, as well as PI chairpersons, know who is responsible for handling various types of PI requests.

Ongoing Work

Information kits for speakers must be created and continually updated to ensure a regular supply of members available to respond to requests for speakers.

PI workshops should be planned and held at regular intervals throughout the year, both at regional and area levels.

In order to accomplish the above, PI subcommittees must constantly and consistently share information and conduct training workshops, so that area representatives are up-to-date and knowledgeable about PI goals and activities. It is vital to incorporate a good understanding of our Twelve Traditions in all PI activities.

SAMPLE GUIDELINES

Purpose

The purpose of a PI subcommittee is to inform the public that NA exists. It offers recovery from addiction and information about how and where to find it. All activities directed to that end shall be carried out in accordance with the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

Functions/Responsibilities

The basic functions of a PI subcommittee are:

1. To open and maintain lines of communication
 - A. Between NA and the public.
 - B. Between the ASC/RSC and the USSC.
2. To respond to all requests for information in a timely and effective manner.
3. To be sure that those requests are handled at the appropriate level of service (see pages 3, 4, 5, and 6). Remember our Ninth Tradition states subcommittees are “directly responsible to those they serve.”

Meetings and Membership

All PI subcommittees should meet regularly at a designated time and place that is well publicized, encouraging all members to attend. Members of a PI subcommittee should be defined according to one or more of the following suggestions:

1. Those assigned to head specific projects as needed.
2. Those willing to help on various projects as needed.
3. Voting members (defined usually as those representatives chosen by individual groups or areas with experience in PI).

Active membership should be further defined to include regular attendance at PI meetings. Some subcommittees have included a regulation that persons can be considered active only after attending two consecutive meetings.

Voting Participants and Procedures

1. Who is eligible to vote?
2. What is the required quorum?
3. Decide upon the members who will be eligible to participate in your subcommittees group conscience. These might be:
 - A. Elected Officers
 - B. Representatives elected and sent by the groups or areas within your area/region.

Requirements and Duties of Voting Participants

It is generally accepted that all participants shall have the following:

1. Personal time and abilities to perform their duties.
2. Willingness and desire to serve in the position.
3. Clean time and service experience as stated herein.
4. Understanding and practical experience of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.
5. Maintenance of clean time throughout term of office or participation.

Further discussion within the committee will determine the requirements of officers. Officers are usually limited to chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. Clean time will vary depending on the age of your area/region. Experience in PI or a related activity is desirable.

Other details can usually be found by reading through the ASC/RSC guidelines. Sample guidelines can also be obtained through the United States Service Committee or neighboring PI subcommittees.

Task Force Committees

Task force committees are often established by PI subcommittees, as the need arises, to work on specific projects such as:

1. Speaker lists
2. Information packet mailings
3. Creating and updating contact lists
4. Material for posters
5. Formats for speaker presentations

GUIDELINES FOR COOPERATIVE EFFORTS IN PI IN OVERLAPPING AREAS OR REGIONS

Purpose

To coordinate and channel PI requests that overlap areas/regions to the proper service committee.

Objectives

1. Maintain contact with the person in each area/region who handles PI contingency plans.
2. Share information on meetings, volunteer lists, etc.
3. Coordinate inter-area/regional PI workshops.

Membership

Choose one or more from each area/region as voting members.

1. PI chairperson or PI vice chairperson
2. RCM/RD
3. Alternate RD
4. ASC/RSC chairperson or vice chairperson
5. Phone line chairperson or central office manager

Meeting Schedules

We suggest quarterly meetings with monthly correspondence.

Communicating and Coordinating with Other PI Subcommittees

Find out what is being done by other PI subcommittees in neighboring communities. Avoid duplication of effort and work together. If feasible, hold an all-day workshop on public information work and invite PI subcommittees from surrounding areas. It is strongly suggested that areas and regions follow procedural guidelines that describe the coordination of PI activities which may overlap geographical boundaries.

Communicating and Coordinating with Non-PI Subcommittees

It is also important to consider how PI efforts may have an impact on non-PI subcommittees within NA. Usually the first contact made by a person responding to the PI effort is through an NA phone line. This fact is frequently ignored by PI subcommittees. If a phone line subcommittee is separate from the PI subcommittee, it must be included in planning and implementation of programs that promote public awareness or invite contact with the

fellowship. Similarly, there may be some overlap in the efforts of PI and H&I subcommittees. When a PI project seems to spill over into the area of H&I, the two subcommittees should cooperate. The ASC or RSC provide ideal settings for such cooperation. Encourage the attendance of PI and H&I representatives at your PI meetings.

H&I/PI COOPERATION

Rules of Thumb for Cooperation Between H&I and PI

- Remember, we all belong to the same fellowship and our primary purpose is the same no matter which committee we serve on.
- Communication between the two subcommittees ahead of time (that means planning together on how to proceed) will help avoid problems and promote unity.
- Flexibility (something many of us addicts are not familiar with) will allow for cooperative efforts that respond to the needs of the institution while staying within our traditions.
- “I can’t, but we can” applies to subcommittee members and subcommittees.
- Work together. When we don’t, we divert ourselves from our primary purpose!
- There may be instances where the most effective and productive presentation can only be accomplished by a combined effort of representatives from PI and H&I. This, of course, is a perfect application of our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions---working together to carry the message of NA recovery to the still-suffering addict.

Examples:

- A hospital treatment center calls for a presentation to their doctors and nurses---PI.
- A hospital treatment center calls for a presentation to their clients---H&I.
- A call requesting information about NA or maybe about a meeting, not sure---PI and H&I.

If a PI subcommittee doesn’t exist in an area or region, H&I subcommittees may take on many of the responsibilities generally performed by PI subcommittees. Ask your ASC/RSC for support and information. If there isn’t a PI subcommittee in your area or region, start one.

Generally, a PI activity is geared to people outside our fellowship and includes people who come in contact with addicts and can help addicts to find NA. The approach with non-addicts differs from the more personal sharing appropriate to talks given to addicts.

Guidelines for H&I Subcommittees

All H&I committees (regional, area, and local) should remain in frequent contact with their counterparts in PI.

Whenever possible, a liaison should be selected by the committee to attend any PI meetings held within their area or region, so that a spirit of absolute cooperation can be fostered which will better enable us to carry out our primary purpose.

“The purpose of an H&I meeting is to carry the NA message of recovery to addicts in hospitals or other institutions who do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. H&I Panels, except for those in longer term facilities, are intended to simply introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA program.”

When local members of groups see the need for an H&I meeting at a facility, the local H&I committee should be contacted. H&I meetings are a function of the H&I subcommittee. Individuals should not take it upon themselves to do H&I work. Groups should only do it in places where an area H&I committee hasn't been formed yet and seek guidance from their regional H&I committee. At these meetings, outside participation should be limited to the panel members who are invited in advance.

For a more comprehensive look at Hospitals and Institutions service work, see the *Hospitals and Institutions Handbook*, which is available for free download from the United States Service Committee (usscna.org).

Guidelines for PI Subcommittees

PI subcommittees should always check with the H&I subcommittee before making initial contact with an H&I type facility. These facilities are usually one of the following: hospital, methadone clinic, jail, prison, detox center, or treatment program. This contact with H&I will determine whether H&I services are already being provided and if not, whether H&I is able to provide them if requested.

PI presentations are simply an information-giving activity---who are the members of NA and what NA is. We do not give in-service training on addiction or drug abuse.

Whenever making a presentation, PI members must have the name of an H&I contact to supply to the facility if it becomes apparent that an H&I meeting is requested or required. Don't commit H&I services.

Conclusion

At the regional and area levels, PI committees and subcommittees are working to develop materials to use in presentations to people in the helping professions.

H&I subcommittees are working diligently to better carry the message of recovery to addicts in hospitals and institutional settings.

Cooperation and flexibility are the keys that will allow H&I subcommittees and PI subcommittees at all levels to keep informed on what is being done by other subcommittees in their area or region. If we work together, we can accomplish any task. Unity of purpose is vital to our efforts.

Do's and Don'ts for PI Service Work in General

These Do's and Don'ts are important and should be studied carefully. In our past experience with public information work, we have found that by practicing the Do's we can best carry the message of NA to the public. When the Don'ts are not taken into consideration, our message may become lost or distorted.

Do

- Have a working knowledge of the Twelve Traditions.
- Follow established guidelines.
- Be consistent. Follow through with your plan of action.
- Keep updated records of contacts, posted announcements, PSA's, speaker's lists, and follow up regularly.
- Remember quality is more important than quantity. Start with one or two projects and do them well before branching out.
- Make sure that lists of meetings, Twelfth Step volunteers, and speakers are updated regularly.
- Remember other Twelve Step fellowships are part of the public we are informing. Practice cooperation, not affiliation.
- Understand and be responsive to the needs of those we serve.
- Present a good image of recovery (be on time, dress appropriately, and avoid the use of obscenities, etc.).
- Work within the service structure to determine the feasibility of projects and to keep the lines of communication open.
- Make information packets available.
- Consult with members experienced in PI work before contacting the media and/or public.
- Use discretion when giving out personal phone numbers.
- Assist the media in screening their features or articles for tradition violations before publication.

Don't

- Endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside organization.
- Do the work of another committee, such as H&I.
- Overtax your human power and resources. Burn out on a project before it is completed creates a bad image of NA to the community and/or media.
- Overstep media boundaries as far as area/regional geography is concerned. When in doubt, ask!
- Do it by yourself. Remember the First Tradition and that the service structure is there to be used.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

In response to many letters from the fellowship regarding the Traditions and PI service, the World Service Board of Trustees¹ has supplied written answers to a variety of questions in past years. The most common problems are included below in a question/answer form. Since the BOT was dismantled in 1998 if there are any new questions regarding the Traditions, they can be addressed through the USSC Guardian Committee on the usscna.org website “contact us” tab.

The answers, formulated by the Board of Trustees², are not meant to be the final authority, but have proven helpful to many members in gaining a better understanding of the relationship between PI and our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Q. What is the importance of anonymity?

A. Our Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions talk about anonymity. Tradition Twelve states that “anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.” Tradition Eleven cautions us to maintain our anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

When an individual member of the fellowship finds himself or herself in the limelight as a member of Narcotics Anonymous, the result is one individual speaking for Narcotics Anonymous. It also creates an artificial barrier between the particular member and other members of the fellowship. It taps into the grandiosity that is a part of our individual characters and sets the person up as an expert. Breaking anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films is dangerous to the individual’s recovery and might be a deterrent to other individuals coming into the program. They may feel that we can’t be trusted to maintain their anonymity or that they will be required to discuss their addiction and recovery on a public level.

The fellowship at all levels---area, regional, and national---needs to be very careful in selecting individuals to do PI work. There are individuals who actively seek media exposure and these individuals are probably the least qualified to do PI work.

¹ This section was addressed specifically by the World Service Board of Trustees, part of the service structure that existed before it was changed at the 1998 WSC.

² See note above.

The individuals best qualified are those who value anonymity and are willing to serve out of love for the fellowship and not out of ego needs.

Q. In writing to radio and television stations, judges, hospitals, detoxes, etc., should PI chairpersons or committee members use their full names?

A. Above all else, we need to adhere to the Twelve Traditions and maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. Some of our members have had the unfortunate experience of having individuals from the press make promises that their anonymity would be maintained, only later to see their names in print.

One suggestion is to use the following language at the end of letters written to non-Na's: "In keeping with the program's tradition of personal anonymity, I respectfully request that you not use my full name if any portion of this letter is to be printed."

If there is any reason to believe the letter will be published or find its way on the air, then it is important that last names be avoided. Although letters without a full signature often have less credibility in the eyes of the recipient, the use of the first name and last initial is appropriate.

Q. How can we answer the question, "Who is the founder of Narcotics Anonymous?"

A. Narcotics Anonymous evolved as the result of a group effort and did not have a single founder. Along the way, a number of individuals played key and important roles. The process through which Narcotics Anonymous grew and developed highlights one of our strengths, the strength of the group; the strength of anonymous people working together.

Q. When is it appropriate to use non-addicts to provide information about Narcotics Anonymous to the media or outside agencies?

A. We believe that non-addicts should always be used to provide information about our fellowship on national television, radio, magazines, newspapers, etc. With respect to local TV stations, we believe it would be helpful for a non-addict to appear but also realize that a non-addict may not always be available for this purpose. With respect to outside agencies, it may be beneficial to use non-addicts, depending on the agency. For example, in approaching the American Medical Association it might be helpful to have a physician who is a non-addict explain how physicians might utilize Narcotics Anonymous in working with their addict patients. Endeavors which target federal agencies might find it helpful to utilize a non-addict who has knowledge or expertise in the agency being approached.

We believe that we need to avoid the use of blacked-out faces, silhouettes, and shadows. Some of these techniques have been used to maintain anonymity. However, these techniques are also used by the media to protect the identity of criminals, informers, and other nefarious characters, therefore denoting a very negative image and giving the impression that we have something to hide. That negative image is

something we are working very hard to get away from. For this reason, non-addicts who have an understanding of our fellowship, our Twelve Steps and our Twelve Traditions are important to us.

Q. We are writing to ask if it is all right for some of our members to take photographs during an NA meeting.

A. Photographs taken at an NA meeting, regardless of whether it is a regularly scheduled meeting of Narcotics Anonymous or a meeting held at an NA function or activity, can be a potential danger to individual members' anonymity.

Taking photographs at banquet dinners, dances, and picnics seems to be a common practice throughout the fellowship. We believe this practice does not constitute a violation of our traditions provided those individuals whose pictures are taken have no objection and that the photographs are for the enjoyment of the individuals involved and are not ever to be used at the level of press, radio, or films.

Q. May a group choose to announce the time and location of the NA meeting in newspapers, radio, or TV in order to reach still-suffering addicts in the community?

A. A group may announce the time and location of the meeting in newspapers, on radio, or TV in order to reach still-suffering addicts, but should do so only when it is absolutely necessary. Whenever possible, phone line numbers should be used in newspapers, radio, and television announcements. We realize that this is not possible in some smaller areas and regions which do not have the resources necessary to maintain a phone line. These areas and regions can then announce the times and locations of meetings until they are able to maintain phone line(s).

Q. Is it a violation of any tradition for members of Narcotics Anonymous Public Information committees to participate in public health fairs? Would members talking in person about NA constitute a break of anonymity? Can a PI subcommittee pay a fee to participate in a health fair?

A. Participation in a public health fair would be an appropriate endeavor for an area, regional, or world level PI effort. Health fairs provide a good opportunity for the members of our fellowship to let the community know who we are and what we do. A booth or table is often provided at these functions where we can make literature available and tell people that we exist and can help anyone with a drug problem to recover. This participation would not be a violation of anonymity. Individuals talking in person about Narcotics Anonymous do so of their own volition and at this level, anonymity is a matter of personal choice. We suggest that first names be used and further caution participants that at the level of press, radio, and films anonymity needs to be maintained as specified by our Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. Photographs should not be allowed under any circumstances.

It would no more be a violation of our traditions to pay a fee to participate in a health fair than it would be to participate in one. It would, however, be necessary for any funds expended in this fashion to go through an area, regional, or national level budgeting process.

Q. When an outside organization or agency requests a public information speaker and offers to pay travel expenses, can the PI subcommittee or individual accept such reimbursement?

A. Sometimes these offers come from organizations or agencies who do not understand our program, our Twelve Steps, or our Twelve Traditions. These organizations and agencies are often accustomed to paying a fee or offering reimbursement for expenses as a matter of course. However, this is not appropriate for Narcotics Anonymous. We are self-supporting through our own contributions and we cannot accept a fee for PI work nor a check for expenses incurred. It is important that we explain our traditions and the reason why it is not appropriate to accept this type of fee or reimbursement.

Members of a PI subcommittee can be reimbursed by the PI subcommittee for travel expenses. Reimbursement for travel expenses is a very responsible course of action by a PI committee and is well within the Seventh Tradition.

Q. Our public information subcommittee is currently using the NA logo and the name of our fellowship, "Narcotics Anonymous," on its stationery. It has been brought to our attention that this may be a violation of our traditions. Can you clarify this matter for us?

A. There is no tradition violation in the use of the NA logo and the words "Narcotics Anonymous" on any area PI subcommittee's stationery. The confusion in your area may stem from a motion passed by the World Service Conference in 1982.

The motion stated that only the NA logo and not the name "Narcotics Anonymous" was to be used on convention and activity brochures and fliers. This motion does not apply to stationery. Hence the name Narcotics Anonymous may be used on stationery of service boards and committees at an area, regional, and world level.

Q. Is it promotion or attraction when a PI subcommittee contacts schools, probation officers, county or government offices, and treatment centers to let them know about NA?

A. Our Eleventh Tradition tells us that our public relations policy is one of attraction rather than promotion. When PI subcommittee members go out into the community and inform government agencies and individuals who work with addicts about who we are and what we do, they are operating well within the level of attraction. We provide information regarding our program and letting those agencies and individuals know we are a Twelve Step program of recovery from the disease of addiction.

Q. Are PSA ads on the radio attraction or promotion?

A. Whether PSA's on the radio and television are attraction or promotion depends directly on the content of the material presented in the advertisement. It seems to us that there is a fine line between attraction and promotion. Providing basic information and letting the public know who we are and what we do is another area of attraction. When we go beyond the act of letting the public know who we are and what we do, we get into the area of promotion. When we start making exaggerated promises beyond the scope of recovery from addiction, we have crossed the line into promotion.

Q. Is it appropriate to convey the message that addiction is a disease in our PI effort?

A. Addiction is a disease. Our literature states that addiction is a disease. Our Basic Text states, "We have a disease: progressive, incurable, and fatal." We, as a fellowship, have had firsthand experience with thousands of addicts. Based on our firsthand experience we believe we have a chronic, progressive, and fatal disease which if untreated will result in jails, institutions, and death for us. We believe it is absolutely necessary to state these basic facts about addiction on our public information endeavors.

We are in a stage of public understanding of the disease of addiction where Alcoholics Anonymous was with the disease of alcoholism in the late thirties. It was at that time widely held that alcoholism was a moral weakness caused by a lack of character in the alcoholic, or that it was a psychiatric disorder whose treatment consisted of instilling character in the individual by treating the underlying psychiatric disorder whereby the excessive drinking disappeared.

Alcoholics Anonymous members were the first to suggest that alcoholism was a disease. As a result of the efforts of members of the AA Fellowship, today there is universal acceptance of alcoholism as a disease and the stigma attached to alcoholism has substantially diminished.

There is still an enormous stigma attached to drug addiction and as long as addicts and those individuals working with addicts believe that drug addiction can and should be controlled by the addict, addicts will die trying to find ways and means to develop control. A by-product of public information subcommittee activities will be the educating of those working with addicts to the fact that addiction is a disease and the addict is powerless over it. We need to accept ourselves as persons who have a disease and we need to inform those who work with us and those who love us of that fact. We can best do this by talking about addiction as a disease in our PI efforts.

Q. Should local area or regional PI subcommittees produce TV spots?

A. It has been our experience that most regionally produced PI video spots have been of a very poor quality. In one incident, a local PI subcommittee expended considerable time, energy, and money only to find the spots they produced did not meet FCC standards and the local stations refused to use them because of their overall poor quality.

In the past, regional and area level PI subcommittees made video spots due to the fact that world services had not produced videos. Videos have been made by NA World Services and are available from the World Service Office for a nominal price. They are professionally done, have been carefully reviewed by world level trusted servants including the Board of Trustees, and are well within the guidelines of the Twelve Traditions.

We recommend that with the availability of these videos, area and regional PI subcommittees use their time and resources in other more needed areas.

Q. Why is it not advisable for a PI subcommittee to do PI work separate from an area or regional service committee?

A. When a committee acts on its own or is not a part of a regional or area service committee, it is not accountable to anyone. The PI subcommittee is responsible for area, regional, or world level PI work---these committees have a responsibility to the fellowship.

Any committee acting apart from the greater whole creates a very dangerous situation both for the individuals involved and for the fellowship. PI subcommittees must be formed by the area or region in order to be PI subcommittees.

Q. Why is it not advisable for an individual to do PI work separate from a PI subcommittee?

A. Our First Tradition states that “our common welfare should come first,” and that “personal recovery depends on NA unity.” This tradition teaches us that the “we” comes before the “I.” Often, what may seem like a wonderful idea to an individual turns out to have disastrous results. Most of the very serious anonymity breaks which have occurred over the past several years have resulted from individuals acting on their own, not as the result of public information subcommittee members carrying out projects discussed and decided upon by a public information subcommittee.

When we act on our own we tend to be grandiose, and often operate on self will. One of the reasons we found our way into Narcotics Anonymous is that we could not do it alone. With respect to public information the “I can’t, but we can” still applies. Sometimes when a PI committee does not accept our idea or project we want to rush out and do it anyway. We grow in our recovery when we can resist this urge.

Q. I recently received a call from a parole officer who asked me to provide verification that a member is, in fact, attending N.A. meetings and is involved in our Fellowship. This parole officer will not accept a “court card” because he maintains that anyone can sign it. What do we do?

World Service Board of Trustees¹ report to the WSC 1984 on Tradition violations

A. Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step program of recovery from the disease of addiction. The Twelve Traditions make possible our Fellowship and therefore our recovery. Tradition Six prohibits us from affiliation with any other organization or outside enterprise. We are not affiliated with anyone, including probation offices, state parole offices, or correctional institutions. To report on another member’s attendance or participation in our Fellowship to any agency or institution is to affiliate with that agency or institution.

In addition, our Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions protect the anonymity of our members. In our meetings we have a place to share our experience, strength and hope as well as the trials and tribulations we encounter in our struggle to progress in our recovery. Without the freedom to express ourselves without fear of what may or may not be reported to an outside agency of a person charged with our supervision, our recovery and the recovery of others in our Fellowship would be severely inhibited.

Sometimes courts, parole agencies and probation officers require that “court cards” be carried by the persons they supervise and signed by the secretary of the meeting. This is a transaction between the supervising agency and the individual member involved. The individual is free to attend or not attend, participate or not participate. When we as N.A. members actively report to a supervising agency regarding another member, we break our Traditions, affiliating ourselves with the supervising agency. We break another’s anonymity, and we jeopardize the chance for that person’s recovery within our Fellowship.

It is our suggestion that the parole or probation department officer be visited by several members of the area's public information committee so that an explanation of our program may be supplied along with information regarding our Traditions and the importance of adhering to them. It has been our experience that when individuals in the community gain an understanding of how our program works, and have the opportunity to see that it works through meeting with addicts who have found recovery through our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, they become as supportive of them as we are.

This particular Q & A was taken from the World Service Board of Trustees¹ report to the WSC 1984 on Tradition violations. This subject is more prevalent in NA in 2013 but is just as valid now as then.

SECTION III
THE WORK ITSELF

PI service work is probably one of the most exciting areas of service in Narcotics Anonymous. Almost every member at one time or another will be in a position to provide information about our program of recovery to addicts and non-addicts. The ways and means of providing this information are so varied that volumes could be written about each type of PI activity that has ever been attempted throughout the fellowship. The following sections of the handbook will highlight the most commonly used PI tools and provide details that will strengthen the foundation for each PI subcommittee's ongoing project.

An active PI subcommittee needs financial support from the fellowship. The money can come from groups, ASC's, and RSC's. Prior to beginning any PI activities, make a realistic evaluation of the expenses involved for various types of PI work (mailing fliers, copying, printing, telephone charges, audio and video tape duplicating, etc). The approach your subcommittee takes may well be determined by the funds available.

PHONE LINES, BULLETINS, AND LETTERS

Phone lines, bulletins, and letters are probably the most commonly used PI tools. These and all other PI activities should always be carried out in accordance with our traditions and in cooperation with the area or regional service committee as suggested in previous sections.

Phone lines are usually handled by a separate subcommittee. A large amount of work and planning is required to establish an efficient phone line in your area or region. For this reason, phone line guidelines have been printed in a separate handbook and may be ordered through the United States Service Committee.

Bulletins are used to inform the still-using addict, and the community at large, of what Narcotics Anonymous offers, how and where to obtain help or additional information, and when and where local meetings are held. Phone line numbers and/or meeting places (open meetings only) may be listed in bulletins.

Many local newspapers provide space for community announcements. The bulletins your committee chooses for posting may also be used in newspapers. Public information work carried out via newspapers and other forms of media is discussed in more detail in a later section.

The following guidelines have been compiled from the experience of PI subcommittees throughout the fellowship. Read them carefully before you begin posting bulletins.

- Divide the area into smaller, geographical areas for which one PI committee member, on either a full time or part time basis, agrees to be the contact person. This commitment involves determining where to place bulletins, how many will be needed for that person's particular geographical area, and being responsible to see that they are posted.

- Work through your ASC and RSC to be sure the meetings being listed are aware that this activity is going on. They must be ready to handle a possible increase in new member attendance.
- Arrange for printing the bulletins and provide them, along with guidelines for each person who will be posting, to the contact person.
- Determine any follow-up procedures you may need, i.e., mailings of information packets to community members or professionals, possible increase in volunteers to work phone lines, and Twelfth Step lists.
- Post five to six bulletins at each location, if possible, so that interested people may take one, if desired. Larger numbers are suggested in some places---it is left to the discretion of the contact person to determine this depending on the size and location of the facility.
- Post bulletins at all public institutions where large numbers of people will see them. Generally, permission is not necessary; however, if in doubt, ask, especially if larger numbers of bulletins are to be left.
- Do **NOT** put bulletins on telephone poles, trees, fence posts, etc., nor leave them in public restrooms. Many communities have ordinances concerning this type of activity, so it is most important to use discretion in distribution as it can affect the reputation of the entire fellowship.

Places for Distribution

Public Institutions

1. Police stations
2. Health clinics
3. Welfare offices
4. Hospitals (both emergency rooms and employee bulletin boards)
5. Courthouses
6. Colleges
7. Junior high and high schools
8. Libraries
9. Post offices

Private Businesses

1. Stores (groceries, drug stores, etc.)
2. Civic auditoriums
3. Churches
4. Laundromats
5. Factories
6. Supermarkets

Do's and Don'ts for Phone lines, Bulletins, and Letters

Do

- Study these guidelines
- Remember the Twelve Traditions
- Ask permission when necessary
- Remember that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.
- Remember that, though you are not a representative of NA, you are being seen as an NA member. Conduct yourself accordingly.

Don't

- Go alone to post bulletins---there is less possibility of tradition violations when two or more members are present.
- Act as a spokesperson for NA as a whole.
- Antagonize those whose ideas of addiction differ from those of NA.
- Take contributions from outside sources.
- Refer to any agency or other fellowship.
- State an opinion or take a stand on any controversial or public issue .

SAMPLE BULLETINS, FLYERS, NEWSPAPER ADS

Bulletins should always include your PI subcommittee's mailing address. Some subcommittees use the back of flyers or bulletins to list several local meeting locations.

1. If using drugs isn't fun anymore and you've tried to stop but you can't, there is a group of recovering addicts who can help you live life without the use of drugs, Narcotics Anonymous.

For more information call _____.

Meetings are held at _____.

2. If you think you may have a problem with drugs, give yourself a break. There is a way out with the help of other recovering addicts in Narcotics Anonymous. We have been there.

Call _____ for more information.

3. Narcotics Anonymous is a group of recovering addicts who live without the use of drugs. It costs nothing to be a member. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.

Call _____ for more information.

4. Drug addiction is a disease. Narcotics Anonymous is a group of recovering addicts who help each other stay clean. There is a way out of having to use through the help of Narcotics Anonymous.

Call _____ for more information.

5. As recovering addicts, we have found that it is possible to live without the use of drugs with the help of Narcotics Anonymous. If you are still using and can't stop, we can help. Give yourself a break.

Call _____ for more information.

6. If you have found that drugs are causing you problems, there is a solution. Narcotics Anonymous is a program that works if you want to stop using. We can help.

Call _____ for more information.

7. If life seems hopeless and you can't stop your drug use, Narcotics Anonymous offers a way out and a new hope for life without the use of drugs. Give yourself a break.

Call _____ for more information.

HOW TO DEVELOP BILLBOARDS, BUS BENCHES, AND TRANSIT SIGNS

Considerations for the content are:

1. Billboards, bus benches, and transit signs should always include the full name, Narcotics Anonymous.
2. Phone line number may or may not be used, according to area/regional needs.
3. The message on the billboard, bus bench, or transit sign should be tasteful and in keeping with NA's positive message.
4. The message should be simple and easily comprehended.
5. The billboard, bus bench, or transit sign should not be cluttered with extraneous material.
6. The message should mention drugs in general or that NA is a program of recovery from drug addiction.
7. Care should be exercised in the layout and art work done for this project. Committees should consider using contrasting colors and limiting their layouts to two types of print.

THE USE OF LETTERS IN PUBLIC INFORMATION

Letters can be used as an effective means of introducing Narcotics Anonymous to various segments of the public. The type of letter you use will depend on the group or organization you decide to contact.

Some of the types of letters described below are for use in introducing NA, responding to requests for information and/or speakers, announcing a public information/community meeting, and following up or sending thank you letters.

Introductory Information Packets

Information packets are commonly used to mail various NA pamphlets (IP's) with a cover letter to individuals or organizations who might come in contact with addicts and be able to direct them to Narcotics Anonymous. These information packets should include a meeting directory for your area or region and the phone line number, if available. Contact information for the USSC PI Subcommittee should also be included in the packet with mailing address and website address.

Information packets should also be available and mailed in response to requests received through the phone line, by mail, or during community meetings. The amount of information your committee includes in this type of packet may depend on your financial situation. Decide ahead of time how much money you can afford for purchasing NA pamphlets, duplicating meeting lists and letters, and the cost of mailing.

Letters to Specific Individuals or Groups

When your committee decides to target a specific segment within the community, i.e., treatment counselors, doctors, or employee assistance directors, one of the example letters should be used and mailed with the IP's. Use first class postage and individuals' names whenever possible.

Otherwise, your letters may end up in a trash can. Professionals often do not have time to read every item of mail they receive. If your letter looks like advertising or bulk mail it may never be read.

At this point many PI subcommittees also decide to arrange for a community meeting. After an initial letter of introduction has been sent, you may follow up with letters inviting members of the community to a community meeting. Always be sure that your choice of letters accurately reflects the type of individual or group you are contacting.

Before beginning a mailing be sure that your ASC or RSC is aware of your activities and that any other subcommittees that may be affected are involved in the activity. You will need support for both manpower and money. Remember that planning a community meeting will require the rental of a meeting space and the purchase of sufficient literature for those attending to take with them.

Do's and Don'ts for Letter Writing

The workers in the field of drug and alcohol treatment, rehabilitation, etc. are overloaded with mail. The biggest enemy that stands in the way of getting the message out is the wastebasket. Here are some suggestions that others have found to help get your mailings read:

Do

- Use first class mail. Most mail is sorted by postage; third class mail is seldom read.
- Have a point of contact (Dear Mr. Clagari). It takes more time to find out this information, but most people are put off by impersonal headings.
- Use standard form and layout. No one is going to take you seriously if your letters are a mess.
- Use typewritten letters if possible. Many times correspondence is sent out on photocopies that are next to illegible. If you can't type, find someone who can (even a paid professional, if the price is affordable).
- Use the definitions from our literature (NA is a fellowship or group of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem). If you use terms that mean nothing to the professional or have different meanings to them your point is lost.
- Get to the point, try to stay away from "drug-a-logs." Try to stick to facts like: 1. It works. 2. It's free. 3. It's available.
- Point out that we are not here to take the place of the professional. Never make it sound as though we believe we can do the professional's job for him. Point out that we have a common goal, to help the addict who still suffers.
- Follow up, research has shown a personal contact (phone call, visit, etc.) is much more effective than a simple mail out.
- Include USSC PI contact information

Don't

- Use bulk rate mail.
- Use generic titles (Dear Health Care Person).
- Be sloppy.
- Use bad copies.
- Use slang or "catch" phrases such as "Just a bunch of hope-to-die dope fiends who stopped cooking and live one day at a time."
- Ramble on.
- Threaten the professional.
- Mail and forget.

GROUPS/ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTACT

The use of letters in PI work is discussed in detail in previous sections of the handbook. Refer to those sections before using the list below.

This list is not intended to be all inclusive, but rather to help trigger ideas. Expand or delete as necessary. Each PI subcommittee should take the time to make up this type of list for their community.

Remember to work with your H&I committee when contacting any agency that might need an H&I meeting.

Religion

Members of the clergy
 Church groups--
 young people's social, etc.
 Clergy associations
 Theological seminaries

Industry

Unions
 Personnel directors

Education

Teachers
 Teachers associations
 Student teachers
 High schools and grammar schools
 (social studies or health classes
 Are usually the best options
 Colleges---health services
 Seminars on addiction
 or chemical dependency

Governmental

Police academies
 Judges
 Probation officers
 Wardens
 Military
 Police departments

Medical

Doctors, dentists, etc.
 Medical students
 Nurses and student nurses
 Hospital staff
 Clinic staff

Organizations

Clubs (service or social)
 Neighborhood organizations
 Nursing homes and rest homes
 Youth groups
 Fraternal organizations
 Ethnic associations
 Suicide prevention or crisis centers

SAMPLE LETTERS TO GROUPS/ORGANIZATIONS

When composing your subcommittee's letters, please remember that these sample letters are just that---samples. They may be used just as they are, or they may be modified to meet your subcommittee's needs.

One area of flexibility is the tone of the letter. Some members feel a direct, assertive tone is better than a softer more subtle manner, and vice versa. As long as the message is clear and accurate, either style is acceptable.

The communities you serve may be rural or urban, working class or well to do. The letters presented are generic and can readily be changed to reflect those differences.

Sample Response Letter

Date

Organization/Individual/Etc.

Address

City, State, Country, Postal Code

In response to your request, the purpose of this informational packet is to acquaint you with Narcotics Anonymous. NA is a fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. We charge no dues or fees; we are self supporting through our own contributions.

Enclosed you will find pamphlets that further explain the NA program. These are available in Spanish as well. Please note the meeting directory, which lists all current meetings in the (____) area. For meetings open to the public (i.e., non-addicts), please refer to the meeting list. We have included an order form should you wish to purchase additional literature.

We also operate a "help line," staffed by clean addicts, to aid those who want to stop using. Our number is: (You can be more specific in what your help line/phone line offers).

If you have any further questions or if we can be of further help to you, please contact the Public Information Subcommittee at the above address.

Sincerely,

PI Committee Chairperson
Group/Area/Region of Narcotics Anonymous

Cover Letter for Information Packets

Date

Organization/Individual/Etc.

Address

City, State, Country, Postal Code

Dear Friends:

The purpose of this letter is to bring an awareness of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous to the community. We hope to create an understanding of our fellowship so that if you feel our program may be of benefit to you, or to the people you serve, you will know how to contact us for further information. Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. Our fellowship is concerned with the disease of addiction and recovery from that disease; the drug (or drugs) of choice is unimportant.

We, in Narcotics Anonymous, would very much like to give more information to the public, in hopes that those who can use us, will be able to find us. Feel free to use our literature, meeting directories, etc. as referral to our program. If you would like NA speakers at your facility, please allow a two to four week notice. Please address your requests to:

Group/Area/Region Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Thank you for your time and we hope that we may be of some service to you, your group, or organization.

Sincerely,

PI Committee Chairperson

Group/Area/Region of Narcotics Anonymous

Sample Letter to Professionals

Date

Organization/Individual/Etc.

Address

City, State, Country, Postal Code

(Use names where possible)

Dear Counselor:

The purpose of this informational packet is to familiarize you with Narcotics Anonymous, also known as NA. You may have clients with a drug addiction problem and you may want to suggest they attend Narcotics Anonymous. Possibly together we can help the addict who still suffers.

Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean by sharing their experiences, strength, and hope.

NA is composed of men and women of all ages from all walks of life. We are an anonymous fellowship, so that addicts who seek recovery here may be confident that their anonymity will be protected.

We have enclosed some literature and a current schedule of NA meetings. If after reading this literature, you would like to obtain additional copies, please call or write us and we will make them available to you.

We also operate a phone line to aid those who want to stop using. Our fellowship provides much to the addict. It does not, however, provide legal counseling.

NA costs the addict nothing. NA costs you nothing and is entirely self-supporting and declines outside contributions.

Many addicts have credited professionals such as yourself for directing them to NA. Thank you for your time and concern.

Sincerely,

PI Committee Chairperson

Group/Area/Region of Narcotics Anonymous

Sample Letter to Professionals

Date

Organization/Individual/Etc.

Address

City, State, Country, Postal Code

(Use names where possible)

Dear Educator:

The purpose of this informational packet is to familiarize you with Narcotics Anonymous, also known as NA. You may have students addicted to drugs and you may want to suggest they attend Narcotics Anonymous. Possibly together we can help the addict who still suffers.

Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean by sharing their experience, strength, and hope. NA is composed of men and women of all ages from all walks of life. We are an anonymous fellowship, so that addicts who seek recovery here may be confident that their anonymity will be protected.

We have enclosed some literature and a current schedule of NA meetings. If after reading this literature you would like to obtain additional copies, please call or write us and we will make them available to you.

We also operate a phone line to aid those who want to stop using. Our fellowship provides much to the addict. It does not, however, provide educational counseling, lectures of the pharmacology of drugs, or related research. We do have speakers who are recovering addicts available to talk to individuals or groups about NA.

As an educator, we know you will impact many individuals who may be addicted or will need information regarding our fellowship.

Many addicts have credited professionals such as yourself for directing them to NA. Thank you for your time and concern.

Sincerely,

PI Committee Chairperson
Group/Area/Region of Narcotics Anonymous

Sample Letters to Professionals

Date

Organization/Individual/Etc.

Address

City, State, Country, Postal Code

(Use names where possible)

Dear Doctor:

The purpose of this informational packet is to familiarize you with Narcotics Anonymous, also known as NA. You may have patients addicted to drugs and you may want to suggest they attend Narcotics Anonymous. Possibly together we can help the addict who still suffers.

Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean by sharing their experience, strength, and hope.

NA is composed of men and women of all ages from all walks of life. We are an anonymous fellowship, so that addicts who seek recovery here may be confident that their anonymity will be protected.

We have enclosed some literature and a current schedule of NA meetings. If, after reading the literature, you would like to obtain additional copies, please call or write us and we will make them available to you.

We also operate a phone line to aid those who want to stop using. Our fellowship provides much to the addict. It does not, however, provide detoxification, hospitalization, medication, psychiatric, or medical diagnosis.

NA costs the addict nothing. NA costs you nothing and is entirely self-supporting and declines outside contributions.

Many addicts have credited professionals such as yourself for directing them to NA. Thank you for your time and concern.

Sincerely,

Group/Area/Region of Narcotics Anonymous

Sample Thank You for Use after Speaking or Community Meeting

Date

Organization/Individual/Etc.

Address

City, State, Country, Postal Code

Dear:

On behalf of Narcotics Anonymous, I would like to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to speak at your school/facility/etc. Our presentation seemed to be very well received by the students/patients/etc.

Should other teachers/facilities/etc. be interested in a presentation by NA, we can be reached at the above address. A message can also be left through our phone line at _____.

Once again, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

PI Committee Chairperson

Group/Area/Region of Narcotics Anonymous

Thank You for Attending and/or Response to Request

Date

Organization/Individual/Etc.

Address

City, State, Country, Postal Code

Dear:

On behalf of Narcotics Anonymous, I would like to thank you for the time you took to attend our recent community meeting presentation. Community members/professionals like yourself are often the vehicle through which suffering addicts first hear about NA meetings.

In response to your request (during the meeting or on the sign-up sheet) we are enclosing additional information about the NA program of recovery which I hope will be very helpful to you.

If you or others you know would like further information or presentations, please don't hesitate to contact our committee at the following address.

A message can also be left by calling our phone line at _____.

In service to the fellowship,

PI Committee Chairperson

Group/Area/Region of Narcotics Anonymous

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Public information community meetings may result from your subcommittee's invitation or at the request of an individual or group. The most frequent contact is initially made through the phone line, which is one important reason for communication between subcommittees. Phone line volunteers must have contact names and numbers of those members active in PI so that requests can be responded to quickly and efficiently.

What is a Public Information Community Meeting?

The purpose of this type of meeting is to inform the public about our fellowship. As public information community meeting (call it what you choose) differs from an open NA meeting in that we invite people outside our fellowship to attend and we structure the meeting to address the particular focus of our guests. This is a "special meeting" rather than a regular NA meeting.

The focus of a meeting of this type will be determined in part by your choice of the people who will attend. Examples include: (1) a community meeting in the neighborhood inviting clergy, teachers from nearby schools, or members of a neighborhood association, or (2) a city-wide or county meeting to inform health care professionals and workers in governmental agencies.

An important point to consider is what time of day and day of the week will best accommodate the people you are trying to reach.

The point is, this is a meeting hosted by Narcotics Anonymous and structured to effectively carry the message to addicts and to people who come in contact with addicts.

Legwork for Setting Up a PI Community Meeting

1. Target the groups or individuals you want to reach.
2. Find a location that is easy to reach, centrally located and if possible, well known.
3. Send out a letter of invitation to these individuals and groups.
4. Follow up by calling organizations/groups to see if they will be sending a representative.
5. If you wish to reach the community at large, have the meeting announced on radio, community calendars, in newspapers, etc.
6. Set up speakers and guest speakers ahead of time.
7. Get refreshments.
8. Make sure speakers understand the time limit.

9. Be sure that all participants understand the need to dress nicely and avoid foul language.
10. Start on time.
11. End on time.
12. Bring NA literature and meeting lists.

Do's and Don'ts for Presentations to Groups and Community Meetings

Do

- Prepare PI speakers for PI presentations.
- Try to match speakers to their audience to create the best possible identification.
- Stress our common welfare and the importance of unity.
- Stress that there are no leaders---only concerned members.
- Express our primary purpose---to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.
- Stress that the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.
- Point out that NA isn't exclusive to one kind of addict; but to anyone who believes his/her life is unmanageable due to whatever the drug of choice.

Don't

- Do it by yourself.
- Take a stand on any controversial/public issue.
- Do this for personal gain.
- Refer to outside agencies.
- Be a spokesperson for NA as a whole.
- Break your anonymity by alluding to geographical area or profession.
- Forget---the spirit of anonymity is the sacrifice of personal ambition.
- Argue with those whose views of addiction differ from those of NA.
- Accept contributions from sources outside NA.

COMMUNITY MEETING FORMAT

Introduction:

Hello, I'd like to welcome everyone to this public information meeting, sponsored by the _____ group/area/region of Narcotics Anonymous. My name is (first name only), and I'm an addict.

The purpose of this meeting is to inform the community of what we offer in Narcotics Anonymous: recovery from the disease of addiction. Our message is simple:

An addict, any addict, with the desire to stop using drugs, can stop using, can lose the desire to use, and can find a new way of life through NA.

NA is a worldwide fellowship of recovering addicts who help each other stay clean. NA was founded in July of 1953. It grew very slowly for the first twenty years, but began to spread quite rapidly in the early 1970's. By the early 80's, that growth was explosive, in part as a result of the publication of our Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous*. By January of 1988, there were some 12,000 NA groups in 43 countries, with several new groups being added to the list each day. Narcotics Anonymous is growing at an incredible rate today in all 50 states and across Canada, and continues to stabilize in more countries all over the world. Here in _____, NA was formed in (year), and has grown to (number) meetings per week. We will discuss the local NA Fellowship in more detail later.

We will begin tonight's meeting by reading from some NA literature to better acquaint you with our program. A recovering addict will then be called on to share his/her personal experience with addiction and recovery. Next we will give you a detailed description of our local NA groups, including meeting lists, contacts, opinions you hear tonight are the speaker's, and not necessarily those of NA as a whole. The meeting will last until (time). You are invited to stay for coffee after the meeting is over.

(Optional)

As is customary in regular meetings of NA, we will begin with a moment of silence for the addict who still suffers, followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Readings:

I have asked _____ to read "Who is an addict."

I have asked _____ to read "What is the NA Program."

I have asked _____ to read "How it Works."

Before I call on the first speaker, I would like to say a few words about anonymity. We remain an anonymous fellowship so that addicts who seek recovery here may be confident that their anonymity will be protected. Many of us eventually come to have nothing to fear from society if it becomes known that we are recovering addicts; still we maintain anonymity as a reminder that it is not our personal identity that is important in NA. What is important is that we are addicts who have learned to live without drugs. Personal anonymity at the public level remains an important spiritual principle, reinforcing the humility necessary for ongoing recovery. Thank you for respecting that when you leave here tonight. Our first speaker tonight is (first name only).

(Share your experience, strength, and hope)

Our second speaker tonight will share information about our local NA groups (first name).

Local history of NA----where and when the first group started, when expansion began, how many groups today. (It is sometimes helpful, if applicable, to be candid about the change in atmosphere in the local groups since the “early days.” This may address any preconceptions or fears about NA.)

Formation of service committees----describe local H&I efforts, literature outlets, phone line arrangements, PI efforts, etc.

How to make use of NA----describe the steps to take in contacting NA, and how they may expect you to respond. Tell them about Twelfth Step lists, pass out meeting lists, including phone line number, explain sponsorship and how it is handled locally, explain how they may get an H&I panel of PI speakers to come to their facility, etc.

Include other relevant local information, if any.

The floor is now open for questions and answers.

(After Q & A)

The pamphlets and magazines on display are free; the books are for sale. World Service Office order forms are also free, should you want to order your own literature directly. Thank you for your attention tonight; please stay for coffee and fellowship after the meeting, and feel free to contact USSCNA at any time should a need arise.

(Optional)

Closing Prayer.

SPEAKING TO NON-ADDICTS

Preparation:

1. Investigate the audience.
 - A. Make sure there is a need for a presentation. What are their needs, wants, and expectations?
 - B. Consider how we can best relate to the audience.

2. Plan.
 - A. Select persons who will deliver a positive presentation about NA.
 - B. Read the section on “do’s and don’ts” in *A Guide to Public Information*.
 - C. Consider with whom the audience may best identify when selecting speakers.
 - D. Establish goals as to what points we wish to communicate to the audience.
 - E. The individuals making the presentations should prepare an outline (i.e., a list of brief points from which the presenter will elaborate).

3. Practice.
 - A. Make your presentation to your committee.
 - B. You may share from your personal experience in such a way as to enhance the presentation.
 - C. CAUTION: Remember, the focus is on the Fellowship of NA, not on your personal life. Try not to get drawn into a lengthy discussion of your personal history.
 - D. Based on our experience, the use of personal stories before teenage student groups is not advised.

The following information may be helpful:

1. Meeting lists
2. Literature order forms
3. Basic Text (for display)
4. *IP #1* or *White Book* (Newly Revised)
5. *The NA Way Magazine*
6. A few IP’s most appropriate to your audience
7. Current Phone line Directory (State your local help line number and/or put up your local NA poster so it is visible throughout the presentation.)

The following is not intended to be a canned speech, but rather a reference outline.

1. IDENTIFY YOURSELF

2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A. Thank the person(s)/agency(s) who invited us.

B. Why are we here? What do we hope to accomplish?

C. These are three examples which may be helpful when speaking to audiences of different orientations:

(1) “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 by no means found a cure for addiction. We do have a program for recovery that is working successfully for many addicts. A large number of our members were referred to us through various hospitals or institutions such as this one.”

(2) “We came here today to tell you about the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous: who we are, what we are, and where we are. We are not here to tell any of you that you have a problem. We are always grateful to have the opportunity to let people in schools know about NA so that no addict seeking recovery need die from addiction. Perhaps you or someone you know will need help in the future because of a drug problem. It is our hope that you will remember the name Narcotics Anonymous.”

(3) “We are thankful to have this opportunity to share with you about the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. We are grateful that your organization is concerned about drug addiction. All of us know that addiction is a tragic problem which is causing many people great harm. We in NA know that addicts can recover. Our members come from all walks of life. Regardless of age, race, education, or social background, we all share the common problem of addiction. We have found a common solution through helping each other in Narcotics Anonymous.”

3. HISTORY

A. In 1953, a handful of addicts seeking recovery held the first NA meeting in California.

B. Gradually, new meetings started in other areas of the United States and other parts of the world.

C. In 1982, we published a book entitled *Narcotics Anonymous*.

D. Our literature has been translated into many different languages.

E. We now have more than 14,000 weekly meetings in over 40 countries.

F. Your local history may be added here.

4. DESCRIPTION OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

The name “Narcotics Anonymous” does not refer to any particular drug or group of drugs. Our program focuses on addiction and recovery, not on specific drugs. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.

You may want to read “What is the NA Program?” or

- A. We have found that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.
- B. There are no dues or fees for participation in NA.

5. THE GROUP

- A. Describe open and closed meeting.
- B. Groups allow for the identification of one addict with another; addicts’ recognition of themselves in others.
- C. Groups are a place for the sharing of personal experience, strength, and hope.
- D. Groups are the most effective way to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
- E. Groups meet regularly at a specified time and place and follow the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of NA.
- F. Groups do not have any opinions on outside issues.
- G. Groups have no outside affiliations and receive no outside financial support.

6. THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS STRUCTURE

- A. State the different levels of service, identifying the member as the highest level of service.
- B. Hospitals and Institutions Committee
 - (1) Carries the message to addicts who are unable, for whatever reasons, to attend our groups.
- C. Literature Committee
 - (1) Develops new literature concerning our fellowship, from its inception to review and finalized draft.
- D. Public Information Committee
 - (1) Informs the public about who and what we are, and where we can be found.
- E. If you choose to talk about our service structure, make it brief.

7. ABSTINENCE AND RECOVERY

- A. We have found that we must abstain from all drugs in order to recover.
- B. We follow a Twelve Step program based on a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives.

- C. The progression of recovery is always up to the individual member (NA does not guarantee a scheduled recovery).
8. SPIRITUALITY
- A. NA is not religious, nor are we in conflict with any religious beliefs.
 - B. We encourage addicts to seek a belief or spiritual concept of their own understanding.
 - C. Discuss the spiritual principles in the steps (i.e., making an honest admission; finding hope; developing faith; coming to a better understanding of ourselves; changing our attitudes, belief systems, and old behaviors; making amends; continuing to develop faith and improve our lives; and sharing with others).
9. LIFE AFTER DRUGS
- A. It is possible for us to develop new interests.
 - B. We plan and attend social activities.
 - C. We have conventions where large numbers of recovering addicts meet to celebrate their recovery.
 - D. When we practice spiritual principles in our lives, it is possible to experience freedom from self-obsession.
 - E. It is possible to become productive and responsible members of society and to gain self-respect, as well as the respect of others.
 - F. “Narcotics Anonymous offers a program of recovery that is more than just a way of life without drugs” (*Narcotics Anonymous*).
10. WHERE TO FIND NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS (meetings and/or literature)
- A. Local phone line number.
 - B. Service office or committee address.
 - C. United States Service Committee address and telephone number.
11. EXPRESS THANKS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE ABOUT NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
12. QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

MASS MEDIA PUBLIC INFORMATION PREPAREDNESS INVENTORY

The following are types of mass media public information projects currently being used by our fellowship to inform the public of our existence:

1. Radio PSA's
2. Television PSA's
3. Billboards
4. Bus benches
5. Transit signs
6. Other mass media tools

The mass media public information preparedness inventory is based on a series of questions for regional and area committees to answer. With their answers and assessment, public information committees can then approach their respective service committee to proceed with a mass media project. We have used the word "area" as a model for the questions to follow. If the committee in question is an RSC, insert the word "region" wherever "area" has been used.

Don't rush your mass media project as it may have a long-term impact on your community. Follow-up on this project is a priority. If your committee is having trouble completing this mass media preparedness inventory, it may be an indicator of problems your committee will incur trying to follow through with your project.

If other areas are going to be affected by your project, invite them to participate with your committee from the beginning phases through the completion of the project.

Public Information Committee Questions

It has proved beneficial to develop a long term plan for how the mass media project will be accomplished. Development of this plan will need the support of your phone line committee. Upon completion of your plan, present it to your ASC.

1. Why does your committee want to do this project?
 - A. Does this project fit the need of your area/region?
 - B. Does this project fit the experience of your committee?

2. Do you have a functioning committee? How many members on the committee have a history of following through with their service commitments? It's not only what we do well that counts, but what we can do consistently well.

3. What types of projects has the current public information committee accomplished?
4. Does your committee have a working, updated contingency plan? See sample contingency plan in Section One.
5. How will this project affect the normal functioning of your committee?
6. Has your committee considered setting up an ad hoc committee that will coordinate and follow up on this project?

Phone line Committee Questions

1. What type of phone line service does your area have? Will this type of service be compatible with this project? Phone numbers should never be used with a mass media project.
2. Is your phone line listed in the phone book?
 - A. How long has your area had the same phone line number?
 - B. Can your area determine that your phone line number will not be changed in the near future?
3. Does your area consistently meet the costs of your phone line service? Would additional costs become a problem?
4. Can your phone line committee handle an extra influx of calls, particularly from non-addicts? Does your phone line committee have a contingency plan if your phone line becomes overloaded with addict or non-addict calls?
5. Is your phone line committee functioning? Do you keep log books and are they up to date? Are volunteer positions consistently filled? What is the average response time to calls received on your phone line service?
6. How does your phone line committee handle the following?
 - A. Calls for meeting locations
 - B. Requests for speakers
 - C. Requests for literature
 - D. Calls from family members
 - E. Calls from professionals and institutions
 - F. Calls from media
 - G. Calls for other fellowships
 - H. Crisis calls

Often these calls are referred to specific subcommittees, service offices, or designated trusted servants. It is our experience that many of these calls should be covered in your contingency plan.

Area Service Committee Questions

1. Is your area service committee well organized and receiving support from the groups? Does your ASC agree to support this public information project?
2. Is your financial situation stable with a consistent fund flow from the group to other levels of service?
3. Can your area afford to allocate sufficient funds to complete this project? We have found that the costs vary widely from area to area.
4. Are the USSC and adjacent areas/regions aware of this project?
5. Have you discussed this project with other areas and regions to gain their experience or input?
6. Have your public information and phone line committees developed a thorough plan for implementation and follow through on this project?

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND THE MEDIA

Overview

Contact with the media can be a wonderful opportunity to carry the message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. However, it can also be a major source of tradition violations, personal ego inflation, and fellowship disunity which is detrimental not only to the individual member(s) involved, but may affect NA as a whole.

Each PI subcommittee should be aware of the USSC Contingency Plan found on pages 5 and 6. This should be supplemented by area/regional contingency plans of your own. The following guidelines can help prevent problems if they are used in responding to all kinds of media contact.

Responding to Media Requests

The two basic types of requests which PI subcommittees receive from the media are either for: (1) general information on Narcotics Anonymous, or (2) requests for NA members to do interviews.

Many areas and regional PI subcommittees have a standard letter and literature packet which is mailed out in response to every request. Often these are left at help line offices in order that members who work the phones may assist PI in responding as quickly as possible to callers' requests.

The following are some frequently asked questions during initial phone calls. Many requests can be handled easily over the phone and require little or no other follow up.

Q. Can you provide updated information for a directory of self-help groups (or any other type of phone/contact list)? How should NA be listed?

A. Usually they will want a service office address and number as the main heading (should the WSO be used?). Check the geographic parameters of the listing. In any case, encourage them to indicate something like “contact with Narcotics Anonymous in your community can be made through the local phone directory.”

Q. Do we provide public information speakers/meetings outside of NA?

A. Yes. We have found this to be a good way to inform the general public of who and what we are.

The reasons for speaking are two-fold. First, it establishes awareness and communication between NA and the non-addict community. Second, there might be individuals at the presentation who need us and what we have to offer.

Q. What if a reporter wants to attend a meeting?

A. A reporter may attend open meetings only and should be accompanied by a member of the PI subcommittee. It’s always best to provide the reporter with a copy of an anonymity statement. For an explanation on the difference between “open” and “closed” meetings, please refer to page 56.

Q. What if the reporter wants to bring a camera crew and take pictures at a meeting as part of the story?

A. NO!

Q. Why not?

A. Photographs taken at an NA meeting, regardless of whether it’s a regularly scheduled meeting of NA or a meeting at any NA function or activity, can be a potential danger to individual members’ anonymity.

Q. How about blackouts, silhouettes, or covered faces on camera?

A. Generally, this technique is used to protect the anonymity of persons engaged in or accused of criminal activities. We are working very hard to correct this negative image of the addict. Some addicts have been interviewed using rear upper torso camera angles. We have had more success with interviews which have been pre-recorded in a studio setting than recorded live or on location. The best way to ensure our members’ anonymity, however, is to utilize non-addicts who have an understanding of our fellowship’s steps and traditions.

Even when it is unclear whether or not the media is requesting general information or an interview with an addict, we can never go wrong by having literature and a letter on hand to provide them with an immediate response and clear, written information. Sometimes the media caller is unclear on what NA is and whether an interview with an addict is

appropriate for their purposes. Often our literature can answer their questions better than we can and our open meetings can let them know what NA is when our words fall short.

When a reporter, producer, or writer calls requesting an interview with an addict, your area/regional contingency plan should be put into effect immediately. The contingency plan ensures that no one is doing it alone. It helps us define geographical boundaries, it ensures NA unity, and helps uphold the Twelve Traditions.

Contingency plans provide a guide and checklist which enable us to determine if the request is (1) appropriate for Narcotics Anonymous to handle at all and (2) appropriate for our particular area or region or requires joint action, or needs to be referred to the United States Service Committee PI Subcommittee.

Often national media requests are referred back to the region/area in which the event will occur. The sections that follow provide guidelines for handling area and regional and national/international PI media events. The role of the PI subcommittee will be discussed, as well as the role of the NA members who find themselves involved in some way. Whether you are an interview coordinator, interviewee, the member who answered the phone, or the member who gets to welcome the newcomer who got the message due to our PI efforts, SERVICE IS A PRIVILEGE!

Pre-interview Coordination

Point #1:

At the time the contingency plan is put into effect, a coordinator should be selected who will be responsible for all direct contact with the media until the interview or project is completed. The coordinator is very often the PI chairperson. The coordinator should be someone other than the person(s) to be interviewed in order to avoid giving out phone numbers or work places of the interviewees. The coordinator is responsible for keeping the area or regional or world PI media contingency group informed of ongoing progress and any last minute changes that may arise. The coordinator should agree ahead of time to prepare a report for the media contingency group at the end of the project. If the contingency is area or regional only, the coordinator should send a copy of the report to United States Service Committee in care of the USSCNA. This ensures continued evaluation of our procedures and decisions in order to help us improve our effectiveness in dealing with the media and national organizations.

The coordinator needs information about the reporter and the paper or station they are from. This information should include: name, address, phone numbers, date of contact, probable date the information will be used, and the different papers or stations that will use the information.

Point #2:

As soon as a request for an interview is received, the coordinator will make sure that an informational package is express mailed or hand delivered to the people in the project:

- Executive producer of the show
- Producer
- Reporter (person doing the interview)
- NA interviewee
- NA member coordinating the interview

The informational package should include literature, an anonymity statement, demographic data on NA) number of meetings, estimated number of recovering addicts, etc., that is available from the WSO upon request). The NA members involved (interviewee and coordinator) should know what information has been given to the media and should have extra copies of the anonymity statement to give to the camera and audio crew at the shoot.

Point #3:

The NA member to be interviewed must be someone with experience and knowledge of the traditions. As trusted servants, our responsibility is to find NA members who can handle this type of interview “on their own.” The coordinator should spend time with the possible interviewee and feel confident that they are not doing the interview for any personal gain, don’t have an axe to grind, and fully appreciate the importance of maintaining their anonymity for themselves and for the fellowship as a whole. As trusted servants, we have a responsibility to avoid putting someone in a situation that would be very difficult for them to handle. We also have the responsibility to find NA members who can best articulate NA recovery in an interview situation.

Point #4:

Once an interview has been scheduled and an NA member or members have agreed to participate, it may be helpful for the interviewees to talk directly with the reporter or coordinator in order to get a better idea of what the interview will be like. The producer or reporter for a story may be concerned that the NA service structure is attempting to censor or control the interview situation, that the concern about anonymity was overstated, and that we were going to attempt to give them a line of propaganda rather than a personal interview. Having the interviewee(s) talk directly with the media contact may alleviate many of the producer’s fears and make for a much smoother situation the day of the interview. The producer or reporter will usually want to know something about the person they will be interviewing ahead of time in order to better prepare themselves and to make sure they aren’t wasting their time talking to someone who doesn’t fit their story or show.

Point #5:

Immediately after the interview, the coordinator should make clear records about the subject discussed, information revealed, and other pertinent facts about the interview. A written or verbal report should be given to the subcommittee chairperson immediately after the interview is over.

Point #6:

THE ANONYMITY OF THE NA MEMBER BEING INTERVIEWED SHOULD BE MAINTAINED WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP AS WELL AS WITHOUT. The NA member(s) being interviewed may be concerned that they would have to deal with jealousy, judgments, and opinions from other NA members about their participation in the interview. Most of us who agree to be interviewed do so because it might help an addict who is out there using but we do not want it to adversely affect our own recovery within NA. The identity of the NA members involved should be disclosed only on a “need to know” basis.

Sample Interview----Questions and Answers

Following are some question and answer formats which seem to come up frequently when contact occurs with newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV. Every PI subcommittee should study and discuss these sections in preparation for any media contact. Note: Both questions and answers are only examples. Answering questions about our fellowship; is easy and can be very informative if we remember three things:

1. The first thing to remember is to use one of the best tools we have for providing information about our fellowship, the Basic Text. It contains a wealth of information about almost every aspect of the program. You can feel safe quoting from it.
2. The second thing to remember is that the person asking the questions will usually have only a limited knowledge about NA. Because of this, whatever you end an answer with will usually help lead the interviewer into the next question. So the better informed you are about your answer, the better prepared you are for the next question.
3. The third thing to remember is that every question has an answer. Any question, no matter how obscure it may seem, can be used to give information about Narcotics Anonymous. These three things can best be shown by the following examples:

Q. How do you feel about the “war on drugs”?

A. Our Tenth Tradition says that Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy. The “war on drugs,” specific drug usage, or drug education are issues that are outside the purpose of our fellowship. In NA we deal only with recovery from the disease of addiction. This tradition

helps keep us focused on our primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict that still suffers.

Q. What is the “NA message”?

A. The “NA message” is that an addict, any addict, can stop using, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life through the program of Narcotics Anonymous.

Q. Is NA only for narcotics addicts?

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.

Q. What about dual addiction?

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. We make no distinction among them.

Q. What is the difference between “open” and “closed” NA meetings?

A. An “open” meeting is one which non-addicts may attend to see how NA functions. A “closed” meeting is only for those who are there because of their own addiction problem.

Q. When did NA start?

A. NA began when several addicts who were seeking recovery held their first meetings in Southern California in 1953. The primary purpose in the beginning was the same as it is today, to help suffering addicts find a solution that would help them get clean and recover from the disease of addiction. Since, the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has experienced a tremendous amount of growth. By mid-1987, the number increased to over 12,000 Narcotics Anonymous meetings in 40 countries. Around the end of 1987 the number increased to over 12,000 Narcotics Anonymous meetings in over 43 countries.

Note: You may wish to add information on when NA started in your area.

Q. What is the Basic Text?

A. In 1982, the book Narcotics Anonymous was first published. In its pages the disease of addiction is described by recovering addicts who share their personal experiences, strength, and hope. The Basic Text of recovery provides general information and discussion about the principles of recovery found in the Narcotics Anonymous Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Q. What’s the difference between NA, AA, or any other Twelve Step Program?

A. The response should focus on the First Step, the fact that NA deals with the disease of addiction, not any specific drug.

Q. What is your World Service Office?

A. The World Service Office is the publishing and distribution center of the fellowship.

Q. Who funds NA and how much does it cost?

A. We decline any outside contributions; our fellowship is entirely self-supporting. A collection is taken in our meetings to cover our expenses, and whatever is left over goes to support services such as phone lines to further our primary purpose.

Q. Who can become a member of NA?

A. Anyone can be a member of Narcotics Anonymous. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, sexual identity, color, creed, religion, or lack of religion.

Q. What unique service does NA offer?

A. The unique aspect of our program is our approach to the disease of addiction: the therapeutic value of one addict helping another.

Q. What is the best way to get help from NA for a person with a drug problem?

A. Get the number of Narcotics Anonymous from your local phone listing. Give the number to the person and suggest they call. Get information where and when local NA groups meet and suggest the person attend a meeting (local meeting lists are often available upon request through the phone line or contact the United States Service Committee at PO Box 8378 Rockford, IL. 61126).

Some Insight about Reporters

If the reporter learns from any source about the participation of a “public person” (a professional sports figure, entertainer, etc.) they may go to almost any lengths to get information, even an acknowledgment of the individual’s membership in NA.

Reporters are people doing a job. They have a responsibility to their editors and papers or stations to produce stories that contain facts, revealing facts if possible, including names and other specific items that they believe are important. They will direct the questioning in ways that they believe will be informative to their audience as a whole. The story, as they envision it in their minds, may not necessarily involve information that you feel is important for them to know about NA. Your task is to respond to their needs and to our needs by providing positive information that does not cause problems for you or the fellowship.

Reporters are trained to use every item of information that comes to them, written or orally. If you mention names of people, events or places, they will record that, whether on paper, with their equipment or in their minds, and use it, even if you think they missed it. If you reveal something to a reporter that should not have been stated, such as an anonymity break, you must--immediately before the

next word is spoken---ask that that item of knowledge not be reported. If you do not immediately make that request, it may be too late. They are not likely to respond favorably to a phone call the next day with the same request.

There is a difference between the objectives of reporters and PI subcommittee members. The reporter is responsible for obtaining information for a story that is better if it has specific names, dates, places, and phone numbers. They will particularly want to know about the relationship; of the members and the fellowship to drug use generally and about specific levels of drug use for certain drugs. They will want to know the relationship of members to former suppliers and others currently using.

The task of the PI subcommittee is to take advantage of opportunities in talking with the reporters to provide information about Narcotics Anonymous, NOT to provide information for an expose. It may take some experience and patience to steer clear of giving answers to such questions as illustrated above, but it is important to do so. Our experience has shown that reporters' questioning often relates to specific substances or issues. Although direct answers to these would seem to be in violation of our traditions, it is possible to answer reporters in such a way as to provide more information while protecting the integrity of our spiritual principles.

Initiating Media Requests

In addition to responding to requests from the media, some area and regional PI subcommittees have taken it upon themselves to contact newspapers, radio, and television stations. In addition to the information listed previously for reporters overall, there are several other points to consider in this type of PI effort.

1. Make a contact list of the stations in the area. Call the station and ask for their mailing address and the names of the station manager, program director, public service director (PSD), and the news director. This is important, for you will be using them all at a later time.
2. Then pick the station you want to use first and call to make an appointment with whoever handles PSA's. Have available different types and lengths of PSA's.
3. If you receive an appointment, then you have the opportunity to take written information in order to share about who we are and what we are trying to do. Usually, we share a little about ourselves.
4. Remember to present information only. Don't promote! The media has no responsibility to follow our traditions, that is our job.
5. Wherever possible, quote from or discuss NA-approved literature. This will ensure a consistent message and provide information on the literature we have available.
6. All persons involved in the contact should feel prepared, be polite, and be patient! Creating a good rapport with the media will make future contacts more productive.

7. If the Public Service Director doesn't have time for an appointment, ask them if you can drop off a PSA at the front desk (be sure to call back later and ask if they received it and when they'll be finished with it). In each case, try to find out when they would start airing.
8. Immediately after the contact is made, send a thank you note for the appointment and/or their time regardless of whether you got to see them or not.
9. In about two weeks, call the PSD and inquire when you might pick up your copy of the tape. This serves two purposes. One, the PSA won't get lost in the shuffle. Two, it offers you the chance to enhance the relationship and show continued interest.
10. Always reports to the ASC/RSC about which stations have the spot and ask groups to let you know if a member reports seeing it. This gives the opportunity to send another thank you letter to the station. This time, send it to the station manager, thanking him for the station's efforts.
11. Call the PSD regularly and ask if anything is needed.
12. Take a new selection to each of your stations every six months and review their commitment.
13. Keep a calendar of contact dates and action taken.

As always, regional and area boundaries must be considered prior to any contact. Although you may feel quite prepared for the outcome of any media contact, an area that might be affected by the contact may not feel prepared.

The advantage of this type of contact is that you are asking the media to broadcast our message, rather than fulfilling their informational needs. It is therefore important to have all information to be presented prepared prior to the actual contact.

Some points to remember

Don't get frustrated if your PSA effort does not seem to be resulting in new members or increased phone line activity. At first, there may be a good deal of concern about phone lines being flooded with calls. In many cases, the amount of incoming calls stays about the same. Remember our primary purpose and if just one addict calls, it's worth the effort.

You may start getting more calls from concerned individuals and organizations requesting written information. Advance preparation for this is a good idea.

There are several thousand non-profit groups competing for the limited amount of free air time. In the near past, the US Government required that the stations provide free air time, but that has been deregulated now. The station decides how much air time is available and that's not much.

You might ask that the running times be after 11:00 p.m. and before 6:00 a.m. and you will have a better chance of getting them run. Most non-profit groups want prime time and there isn't much. It seems like many addicts watch TV during that period of time. We have been happy with that.

Local Programming

Most stations produce their own local community service/action programs. These are usually thirty minutes to one hour in length. Call the station and ask for the producer or assistant producer of the show. Ask them if they need a new topic for one of their shows. If yes, arrange time, send them information on NA, and start getting ready. If no, thank them for their time and send them information. Usually, the ones who say no will give you a scheduled time on the second call after they receive your written information. Either way, we call each program monthly.

Keep abreast of any activities of the local media regarding drugs or addiction. This will help you know when the time is most appropriate to make your contact.

Many papers/stations have public service projects on a periodic basis, ranging from awareness days to fairs to simply listing information on local services. Initiating a contact in connection with these projects can be an opportunity to provide the public with information on NA on a recurring basis with regularity and oftentimes less work.

Talk shows are always in need of and grateful for a new idea or story. There is so much talk in the media about the negative area of drug abuse. Call and offer them the other side of the story.

Inviting the would-be host to attend an open meeting can be of great benefit. She/he will then be able to ask informed questions on the show, about what it's like at a meeting. Always explain the Twelve Traditions prior to their attendance in order to protect the group.

Again, after each contact, follow up with thank you notes, NA information, and the like.

Local Newscasts

Although you may call news directors and give them our name as a contact, it's a good idea to shy away from the news program. The reasons are:

- Short time notices
- Possibility of being picked up at a national level
- Editing can take our statements out of context
- High exposure to anonymity breaks
- Helpline numbers is hard to get on the screen

What about volunteers to speak and their selection? The first consideration is to select different speakers each time. By doing this, dissention and jealousy can be avoided. PI administrative members and coordinators should appear only when there is a “no show.” Everybody should get a chance to speak but not a chance to be a star or a representative. As for the volunteers, whenever the media is involved we never have a shortage.

In trying to keep the selection process simple, speakers may come from the “helpline” list or PI subcommittee.

Important speaker assets include the following:

- The most clean time available in the area
- An active commitment to NA
- Prior service experience
- Experience in articulating NA recovery
- Working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
- Good speaking ability

Newspapers

Almost all the newspapers have community meeting/happening sections in them. Get all the papers you can and determine the availability of the announcement section. Prepare a press release and mail it out.

The United States Service Committee has many items that can aid you in providing accurate and consistent information on the NA program. These items range from audio and video public service announcements, to press releases, to packets of information on the history and growth of NA worldwide. It will be important to give the media some information on the growth and history of NA in your area and region as well. The actual amount and type of information appropriate for a contact of this type will depend on the size of the media audience, the size and support available in NA in the area to be covered, and the willingness of the media to honor your request. Regardless of the media’s reaction to your request, you will have provided them with a view of NA recovery. If you continue to keep in touch with them, through follow-up or thank you letters, chances are you will have a very successful vehicle to help carry the NA message.

Public Service Announcements General Information

Generally speaking, there are three types of PSA's for radio and TV.

1. Television----10, 20, 30, and 60-second spots supplied to stations on $\frac{3}{4}$, 1, or 2 inch video tape.
2. Radio---"Canned" cassette or reel, 10, 20, 30, and 60-second spots.
3. Typewritten spots read by the station's disc jockeys.

Suggestions

Quality is more important than quantity. Go slowly, be careful, and be thorough.

- Keep records.
- Be sure that radio and TV tapes are stored in a cool, dry, dark area. Heat and water can quickly ruin tapes.
- Be sure spots have the name and phone number of a PI contact, spot length, and title particulars on labels, both on tape and case.
 - A 10-second spot has approximately 20 words.
 - A 20-second spot has approximately 50 words.
 - A 30-second spot has approximately 75 words.
 - A 60-second spot has approximately 150 words.(See pages 70-76 for scripts of radio and TV PSA's available from the World Service Office.)

Use spots provided by the world or regional level PI committee whenever possible.

Do not hand write or print. Use typewritten spots only. Use 8 ½ x 11" white bond paper. Provide only one announcement per page. The copy must be clear and easy to read. Do not fold or staple the paper. Do not use abbreviations. Use double spaces, and upper and lower case type. A sample set of a properly prepared radio spot is provided on the above mentioned pages.

LETTERS FOR RADIO AND TV

Thank You Letter for Interview

This should be edited to reflect the correct information for your area or region.

XXX News

John Doe

Street

City, State, Country, Postal Code

Date

Dear Mr. Doe,

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you and your viewers the recovery program of Narcotics Anonymous. We appreciate the cooperation and open-mindedness shown to us by the members of your news staff. The radio/television media provides us with an excellent form of communication to the suffering addict who doesn't know where to turn for help. In their most desperate hours, many addicts have heard/seen a public service announcement with an NA phone line number and made the call for help.

We would appreciate a copy of the broadcast in order to keep a record of our committee's work and to communicate successful methods to other areas.

Our fellowship continues to grow by leaps and bounds every year. Since 1953, when the fellowship was established in California with only a few addicts, the number of clean, recovering members has increased to hundreds of thousands.

We are always grateful to organizations which are understanding and respectful of the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. If there is any additional help or information you may need, now or in the future, please feel free to contact our committee, either through our phone line or at the address below.

Sincerely,

Contact person
Committee name
Address
Phone

Letter of Introduction for PSA Placement

This should be edited to reflect the correct information for your area or region.

XXX News
John Doe
Street
City, State, Country, Postal Code

Date

Dear Public Service Director:

(Use names wherever possible)

We are writing in response to our recent conversation with your station concerning Narcotics Anonymous.

Narcotics Anonymous is a worldwide fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who held regularly scheduled meetings to help each other live drug-free lives. We feel that our approach to the problem of addiction is completely realistic, for the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel. We feel that our way is practical, for one addict can best understand and help another addict.

We are a non-profit organization, self-supporting through our own contributions. Therefore, we charge no dues or fees for our service.

We believe it is of vital importance for our community to be aware of the service we offer. It is our hope that your station will be able to aid us in this task by airing our PSA's. If there are any questions concerning Narcotics Anonymous or our status as a non-profit organization, please do not hesitate to contact us. We can be reached through our phone line in the _____ Area. Ask to speak with the Public Information Contact person.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Public Information Subcommittee
Narcotics Anonymous
(Include a name and phone number)

Letter of introduction for PSA Placement

This should be edited to reflect the correct information for your area or region.

XXX News

John Doe

Street

City, State, Country, Postal Code

Date

Dear _____:

Narcotics Anonymous of _____ County is requesting the help of area radio/TV stations in an effort to reach people with a drug problem who want to stop using.

In order to do so, the Area Service Committee of _____ County is operating a phone line, available to anyone seeking help. This service covers the areas of _____ Counties. The number is _____.

We are trying to let the public know of this service and we have prepared 30-second public service announcements which we would greatly appreciate you're airing during your broadcast day.

Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean and free from drugs. We offer a means of recovery to others who wish to stop using. We charge no dues or fees. We are not affiliated with any hospitals, drug recovery houses, agencies, or institutions.

We will be contacting you in the near future to establish communication with your station so that we may answer any questions you might have. We would appreciate your advising us of air time and frequency of broadcasts as we are endeavoring to maintain records.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Radio and TV Coordinators

Chairperson: _____

Thank You Letter for PSA Placement

XXX News

John Doe

Street

City, State, Country, Postal Code

Date

Dear _____:

The _____ (area) Public Information Subcommittee of Narcotics Anonymous would like to thank you for your cooperation in our effort to carry the message of Narcotics Anonymous by airing the public service announcements we previously sent to you. The response has been positive and extremely valuable.

Being aware that it is not possible for you to air our public service announcements on a continuing basis, we have prepared and enclosed updated versions. We thank you once again for your cooperation and if you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at my home or through this committee.

Sincerely yours,

PI Subcommittee Chairperson
Group/Area/Region of Narcotics Anonymous

Thank You Letter for PSA Placement

This should be edited to reflect the correct information for your area or region.

Jane Doe
Public Announcement Director
XXXX Television Station
PO Box _____

City, State, Country, Postal Code

Date

Dear Ms. Doe,

The purpose of this letter is to express the gratitude of the _____ (area) Public Information Committee of Narcotics Anonymous for running the NA phone line video/NA TV PSA's.

We feel that it is very important that we bring to your attention the impact this video has on addicts, on families of addicts, and on friends of addicts. It seems that people who suffer from the deadly disease of addiction reach a point of total defeat. They are then ready to admit that they have no control over their drug use and become willing to seek and to accept help. It is crucial that they are aware that there is a fellowship and a program available to them in which addicts help each other to stay clean.

We are very grateful to your station for the part you play in circulating the message that recovery is possible by working the Twelve Steps to recovery in NA. We feel that as a result of your support many people are now aware that they can lead a clean, healthy, and productive life.

Sincerely,

PI Subcommittee Chairperson
Group/Area/ Region of Narcotics Anonymous

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING NEWS RELEASES

1. Content needs to be news – something has to have happened; a newsworthy event should be the focus.
2. All information must be accurate. In order to preserve credibility and an attractive public image, we must always do our best to carefully check any information, such as addresses, etc., and any figures, claims made, or any other data we present, for accuracy.
3. Press releases should be written in journalistic style, presenting facts, using clear, concise, simple, to-the-point sentences, with information placed in order of importance (sample news release attached). The release should give the “five W’s,” telling what happened or will be happening, whom is involved, where the event took place or will take place, when the news event took place or is to take place, and why it happened or will happen. “How” it happened or is expected to happen should also be included. The release should end with a journalistic closing symbol, “-30-” or “####.”
4. Use no more than one sheet, if possible. Use letter size paper (8 ½ by 11 inches). Type and double space the text, leaving large margins on the top, bottom, and sides. When it is necessary to use a second sheet, put “-MORE-” centered at the bottom of the first page, and “-2-” or “page 2” at the top of the second page. Also at the top of the second page, include a short identification line, such as “Narcotics Anonymous,” or an abbreviated version of the heading used on page one. This will help if the second page is accidentally mislaid or separated from the first page.
5. The top of the page should say “PRESS RELEASE” or “NEWS RELEASE.” It is a good idea to use a special style of stationery instead of regular letterhead paper. The upper left hand corner of the page should give the appropriate address, including the name Narcotics Anonymous, and a phone number if there is one. Also on the heading should be a release date which says “for immediate release,” or, if you need more control over the timing of the release, gives a specific time for release, such as “for release June 2, 1997” or “for release after 11:00a.m., Wednesday June 3, 1997.” The heading should also include the date of the release. Before the text of the news release, put a title line which describes the contents to follow. The line looks like a headline, but it is provided for the news editor or reporter’s information, and it may not be used in print.
6. A press release should be designed to be read in a very short period of time. It should not contain advertising style attention getting statements. Reporters can contact us for background information if they want to. Then we may supply further information, such as a press kit. Provide your release to the media in a timely fashion. If you are informing the media about a community meeting to be held, be sure they get the release several days in advance.

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

From:
Narcotics Anonymous
PO Box _____

Contact:
(name), Public Information Committee
(Telephone)

Number of Narcotics Anonymous groups in (Name of town) TOPS (number)

(PLACE OF RELEASE), (DATE OF RELEASE) – Narcotics Anonymous (NA), a non-profit group for drug addicts, announces that (number) NA groups are now meeting each week in (name of town). In addition to those meetings, (number) special NA meetings in area institutions are regularly held. The number of NA groups worldwide surpassed twenty one thousand (21,000) in 1996.

Narcotics Anonymous offers hope and help to drug addicts. At NA meetings, addicts meet other people who have had similar experiences and problems who are now staying off drugs and learning a better way to live. There is no fee for attendance at NA meetings.

Founded in 1953, NA now exists throughout the United States and in over 65 other countries. Narcotics Anonymous is for any drug addict, regardless of which drug or combination of drugs that person used. NA literature emphasizes that when addicts substitute one drug for another, it just releases their addiction all over again. By focusing on recovery from the common problem of drug addiction, NA provides an environment where addicts who may not have used the same drugs identify with and help each other.

The only requirement for membership in NA is a desire to stop using drugs. Open NA meetings may be attended by any interested members of the public. Information about Narcotics Anonymous and local meeting schedules are available from _____.

RADIO PSA SCRIPTS

Radio PSA #1

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

Organization:

Narcotics Anonymous
(____Area Service Committee)
0000 Every Street
Anytown, USA 69696
000-0000

Contact:

John Doe
Public Service Director
000-0000

Reading Time – 10 seconds

Voice/Over 1

Recovery is what happens in NA meetings. It is possible to stop using drugs.

Voice/Over 2

Call Narcotics Anonymous, we can help.
(Name of Organization) File #000000000000

Radio PSA #2

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

Organization:

Narcotics Anonymous
(____Area Service Committee)
0000 Every Street
Anytown, USA 69696
000-0000

Contact:

John Doe
Public Service Director
000-0000

Reading Time – 10 seconds

Voice/Over 1

It is possible to stop using drugs.

Voice/Over 2

Call Narcotics Anonymous, we can help.
(Name of Organization) File #000000000000

Radio PSA #3

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

Organization:

Narcotics Anonymous
(____Area Service Committee)
0000 Every Street
Anytown, USA 69696
000-0000

Contact:

John Doe
Public Service Director
000-0000

Reading Time – 20 seconds

Voice/Over 1

I was searching for an answer when I reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous.

Voice/Over 2

Surrounded by fellow addicts, I realized I was not alone.

Voice/Over 3

Recovery is what happens at NA meetings. It is possible to stop using drugs.

Voice/Over 4

Call Narcotics Anonymous, we can help.
(Name of Organization) File #000000000000

Radio PSA #4

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

Organization:

Narcotics Anonymous
(____Area Service Committee)
0000 Every Street
Anytown, USA 69696
000-0000

Contact:

John Doe
Public Service Director
000-0000

Reading Time – 20 seconds**Voice/Over 1**

I admitted I was powerless over my addiction – that my life had become unmanageable.
I had tried to quit on my own but it never worked.
In Narcotics Anonymous I learned that it is possible to stop using drugs.

Voice/Over 2

Call Narcotics Anonymous, we can help.
(Name of Organization) File #000000000000

Radio PSA #5

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

Organization:

Narcotics Anonymous
(____Area Service Committee)
0000 Every Street
Anytown, USA 69696
000-0000

Contact:

John Doe
Public Service Director
000-0000

Reading Time – 30 seconds

Voice/Over 1

I was searching for an answer when I reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous.

Voice/Over 2

Surrounded by fellow addicts, I realized I was not alone.

I heard them talk about the same feelings I was afraid to share.

Voice/Over 3

Recovery is what happens at NA meetings. It is possible to stop using drugs.

Voice/Over 4

Call Narcotics Anonymous, we can help.

(Name of Organization) File #000000000000

Radio PSA #6

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

Organization:

Narcotics Anonymous
(____Area Service Committee)
0000 Every Street
Anytown, USA 69696
000-0000

Contact:

John Doe
Public Service Director
000-0000

Reading Time – 60 seconds

I admitted I was powerless over my addiction, that my life had become unmanageable.

I had tried to quit on my own but it never worked.

I was searching for an answer when I reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous.

I came to my first NA meeting in defeat, and didn't know what to expect.

Surrounded by fellow addicts I realized I was not alone. I heard them talk about the same feelings I was afraid to share.

Recovery is what happens in NA meetings.

It didn't matter what drug or how much I used. In Narcotics Anonymous I learned that it is possible to stop using drugs.

I don't have to do it alone.

Call Narcotics Anonymous, we can help.
(Name of Organization) File #000000000000

TV PSA SCRIPTS

TV PSA #1 – Basic Text

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

30 Second PSA

Title: Basic Text

“I was searching for an answer when I reached out and found Narcotics Anonymous...
...I came to my first NA meeting in defeat and didn’t know what to expect...”

“Surrounded by fellow addicts I realized...

...that I was not alone; I heard them talk about the same feelings I was afraid to share...”

“Recovery is what happens in our meetings.”

“It is possible to stop using drugs.”

“Call Narcotics Anonymous...

...We can help.”

“Check your local phone book or write,
United States Service Committee
PO Box 8378
Rockford, IL. 61126).

TV PSA #2 – Woman at Table

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

30 Second PSA

Title: Woman at Table

“I admitted I was powerless over my addiction...
that my life had become unmanageable
...It didn’t matter how much or what drug I used.”

“In Narcotics Anonymous...

...I learned that it is possible to stop using drugs.”

“I don’t have to do it alone!”

“Call Narcotics Anonymous

...We can help.”

“Check your local phone book or write,
United States Service Committee
PO Box 8378
Rockford, IL.

TV PSA #3 – Man in Phone booth

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

30 Second PSA

Title: Man in Phone booth

“I remember how scared I was. I was desperate. I know I was desperate because I wouldn’t have called otherwise. I was sick and I was beginning to do things I’d promised myself I’d never do. There wasn’t anyone left who was glad to see me anymore. So I took a chance and called Narcotics Anonymous. You don’t have to wait until you’re as bad off as I was before you reach out.”

“Check your local phone book or write,
United States Service Committee
PO Box 8378
Rockford, IL. 61126).

TV PSA #4 – First Meeting/Hallway Scene

(WSC-approved; available through WSO)

30 Second PSA

Title: First Meeting

“When I went to my first meeting I was scared. I didn’t know what to expect.”

“A bunch of drug addicts in a room together, give me a break.”

“But it was weird, no matter what anyone said, nobody was surprised. Other people felt the same way.”

“I’d been running alone for so many years and now I wasn’t. You know what I mean?”

“It is possible to stop doing drugs. The proof is at the meetings. But you’ve got to get there first.”

“Check your local phone book or write,
United States Service Committee
PO Box 8378
Rockford, IL. 61126).

SECTION IV
Learning Days and Workshops

A Public Information learning day or workshop can be the most valuable PI function the fellowship has. Learning days and workshops are held primarily to provide a forum in which experience in all aspects of PI work can be shared. The basic difference between a learning day and a workshop is that workshops focus on one particular issue of a project and are usually part of a larger event such as a convention or unity day. Learning days are, for the most part, weekend-long events with a broad spectrum of topics covered in meetings held throughout each day.

Learning Days

Why should we have a learning day?

The purpose of a PI learning day is to provide a forum in which trusted servants involved in PI can share their challenges, innovations, and solutions with one another. Many areas have the same concerns which are specific to public information work, such as attracting members to I service, how to best present the program when speaking to non-addicts, how to educate the members in their respective areas about the importance of the Twelve Traditions and maintaining anonymity, and a variety of other important issues.

Learning days also provide an opportunity for area PI committees and individual members to give and receive information about the current direction of PI. Any new materials being used by an area can be passed around to others at these events. Whatever a committee or an individual learns about carrying the message more effectively can be passed on.

Who plans the event?

Usually an area PI committee, with the support and coordination of the region, actually hosts the event. In some cases, the area PI committee will do all of the actual planning. Other times, a special ad hoc committee will be formed with members from both the area(s) and the region(s). In the case of a multi-regional event, participation would be sought from all the regions involved. Care should be taken to select members who are not responsible to maintain vital services, such as answering the local helpline or chairing recovery meetings while the event is taking place.

Once the planning committee is formed or an area committee is selected to host the event, the actual work can get underway. Several decisions need to be made immediately, such as the dates of the event, what the program will include, and how much it will cost.

Who pays for the event?

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, the money to initiate this project will come from the sponsoring areas or regions. A projected budget should be drawn up as soon as possible to determine a registration fee. While small amounts of money may be raised through pre-registration, it is hoped that fund raising will not become the primary focus of the event. The goal is for the event to be self-supporting, which can be attained through careful planning. Your budget should include line items for printing, postage, rent, phone calls, and refreshments.

You may also wish to consider adding line items for speaker travel and lodging and merchandise, keeping in mind the size of the event.

When should we hold our learning days?

It is very important to plan the event well in advance to allow ample time for committee work assignments, site selection, program development, speaker selection, printing of materials, and announcement of the event. It is suggested that at least six months be allowed for a multi-regional learning day. For a regional learning day, three to six months is sufficient. For an area event, one to two months is appropriate.

Selecting the date the learning days will take place can be a make or break factor in the success of your event. It is important that the event does not conflict with other major NA events, such as your regional convention. Non-holiday weekends are considered a good choice.

Where should we hold our learning days?

Possible sites include hotels, college campuses, community centers, campgrounds, or any place that has sufficient meeting rooms and can accommodate your needs. Your committee will need to determine specific criteria including the number and size of meeting rooms, a registration area, facilities for preparing and service refreshments, nearby lodging and restaurants, and space for an entertainment function, if one is to be included in your program.

Who should we invite?

Absolutely everyone! As with all successful events, the more members in attendance, the more enriching the experience will be for all. As soon as you have decided on dates for the event, the USSC should be notified so that your event can be announced in all of the fellowship's publications. The USSC or your regional chairperson should be able to provide you with an address list for trusted servants in the surrounding areas so that they may also be invited. It is suggested that pre-registration flyers be mailed at intervals to surrounding areas and regions right up to the date of the event.

How much structure is required and under what circumstances?

When discussing the theme and program, the size and duration of the event will most likely become the deciding factors. For a multi-regional learning day, it is suggested that the event be held over the course of a weekend. Multi-regional learning days can be broad based in focus and include meetings on several topics. The possibilities for a weekend-long event are virtually unlimited. Meetings can be held simultaneously in order to give those in attendance a choice of which topic they are most interested in, or you may choose to have one meeting at a time so that those in attendance can attend all of the discussions. Most weekend-long events include a recovery meeting along with some sort of entertainment.

For regional or area learning days, a day-long event is suitable. In addition, it is wise to narrow the focus of the event to two or three topical issues in PI. Consecutive meetings are the preferred format for a day-long event.

Many variations exist for the formats of the individual meetings. The style you choose for the meetings will depend on the availability of speakers; the issues that are of current interest in PI, and of course, the size of your event. You may choose to have a mock presentation, skits, examples of interviews, sharing sessions, visual aids presentations, speaking rehearsals, or anything else your committee feels will stimulate discussion and a broader understanding of our Twelve Traditions as they apply to PI work. It is suggested that lecture type meetings be avoided and full audience participation be encouraged. If you plan to include speaker presentations, it is a good idea to allow plenty of time for those in attendance to ask questions and share experiences. There is a tremendous amount of experience at the area level with issues such as open meetings, cooperation with the legal community, attraction to PI, media relations, and many others. It is important that we provide a forum at all learning days in which all members can share this valuable experience with each other.

Sample Program for a Multi-Regional Learning Day

Friday

6:00 pm – Registration Begins (location)

8:00 pm – Kick-off meeting

Saturday

8:00 – 9:00 am – Reception and Registration

9:00 – 10:30 am – Attraction Not Promotion

9:00 – 10:30 am – PI Priority Setting

11:00 am – 12:30 pm – Traditions and PI

11:00 am – 12:30 pm – Speaking to Non-Addicts

12:30 – 2:00 pm Lunch Break

2:00 – 6:00 pm – Open Forum

6:00 – 8:00 pm – Dinner Break

8:00 pm – Recovery Meeting followed by Dance

Sunday

10:00 am – 12:00 pm – United States Service Committee PI Subcommittee Panel

12:30 – 2:00 pm – Closing Meeting

The preceding is only a sample. Topics will vary from time to time and place to place. The only requirement is that the topics address the needs of the participants involved. Samples include: Billboard and Bus Benches, Traditions and PI, Rural PI, Urban PI, Starting a PI committee, Cooperation with H&I, Cooperation with Surrounding PI Committees, Phone lines, PSA's, Posters, Speaking to Non-Addicts, Attraction to PI, Anonymity, Letter Writing, Addicts with Additional Needs, Media Relations, Input for USSC PI Subcommittee Projects, or anything else related to PI.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops may be done as a single event, although they are usually part of a larger event, such as a convention or unity day, or as an adjunct to PI learning days. The focus of a workshop is usually limited to one topic.

Workshops emphasize the exchange of ideas, demonstration and application of techniques, and/or gathering input for a project. These may be conducted in a round table discussion or with a moderator to keep the discussions focused on the issue at hand. Generally speaking there are two types of workshops, those conducted to offer and exchange information and others for the sole purpose of gathering information from the fellowship for a specific project.

It is important to establish clearly defined goals. A successful workshop depends on how well prepared the event is. A particular goal should be decided upon and a plan outlined for accomplishing the task. As with learning days, those in attendance should be provided with an agenda of the event.

Input workshops are the means by which PI committees can determine their priorities. The fellowship should be invited to share what their needs are so that PI committees can develop projects based on the actual needs of a given area. USSC PI Subcommittee will, on occasion, host workshops to gather information from the fellowship on their current projects. The USSC will be able to advise you of what is currently being developed.

Learning days and workshops are different from celebrations of recovery such as unity days and conventions. The goals are to educate the fellowship on how to inform the public, share experience, and set priorities for the future direction of public information work. When consistency of message, unity, and spiritual principles guide our actions, all will be well. The unity created, the experience gained, and the knowledge and ability shared are the true measure of success.

Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

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 of money, property, or 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 nonprofessional, 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.