PHONE LINE HANDBOOK FOR UNITED WASATCH AREA OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

PHONE LINE

801-296-4044

March 6, 1999
United Wasatch Area Public Information Committee

INTRODUCTION

Our primary purpose is to stay clean, and to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. By far, the best way to make ourselves available to those who need help, is to provide a "HELP LINE" phone service. Someone can call and talk anonymously to a recovering addict. The phone number is listed as Narcotics Anonymous in the telephone directory, and serves that purpose. The suffering addict can call this number without fear, get meeting times and location, and receive information about NA.

Pleas familiarize yourself with this packet. The recovery and welfare of the suffering addict may depend on how well **YOU** handle their call.

WHAT IS THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

PROGRAM

NA non-profit society or fellowship of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership; the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that you can follow them in your daily life. The most important thing about them is that they work.

There are no strings attached to NA. We are not affiliated with any other organization. We have no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious or law enforcement groups and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, sexual identify, creed, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used, who your connections are, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

Copyright 1982, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1998 Narcotics Anonymous World Service, Inc. Reprinted by Permission. All rights reserved.

HOW IT WORKS

If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you

are ready to take certain steps. These are the principles that made our recovery possible.

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 then ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. We made a decision to turn our will and 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 these defects of character.

7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. We made a list of 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 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.

Copyright 1982, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1998 Narcotics Anonymous World Service, Inc. Reprinted by Permission. All rights reserved.

THE 12 TRADITIONS

We keep what we have only with vigilance, and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps, so freedom for the group springs from our Traditions

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 the desire to stop using.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting 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 any 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 then 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.

Copyright 1982, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1998 Narcotics Anonymous World Service, Inc. Reprinted by Permission. All rights reserved.

THE 12 CONCEPTS

1.To fulfill our fellowships primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf of NA as a Whole.

2.The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.

3.The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.

4.Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.

5.For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.

MISCONCEPTIONS

There are many misconceptions about NA...so we wish to state what NA **does not do:**

1. NA does not operate detox units, recovery or halfway houses is not affiliated with such facilities in any way.

2. NA does not crusade, solicit, advertise for members, or try to persuade anyone to join us.

3. NA does not engage in sponsor research.

4. NA does not keep membership records or case histories, nor follow-up on members, or in anyway try to control them.

5. NA does not make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses, nor provide

marriage, family, or vocational counseling.

6. NA does not provide welfare or other social services.

7. NA does not conduct spiritual or religious service of any kind.

8. NA does not accept money for its service; is not funded by the public or private sources or agencies, and accepts no contributions from non-members.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

And other Helpful Hints

1. The requirements for help line volunteers are:

   a. Be an active member of the United Wasatch NA Fellowship. It is difficult or almost impossible to share with a newcomer the benefits of the program if YOU are out of touch with the fellowship yourself.

   b. Have 1 year continuous clean time.

   c. A private touch tone phone.

   d. A knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous (e.g., the only requirement....,our primary purpose....,never endorse

related facilities...., non-professional....,no opinion on outside issues....,attraction rather than promotion....,anonymity....,etc.)

e. The willingness to serve.

f. The willingness to give of personal time.

2. Always respect the confidential aspects of your role and the dignity and privacy of all callers with whom you come in contact. If you are returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying as an addict or mentioning NA.

3. When speaking with callers, remain objective and non-argumentative. remember that you are likely to be the first contact a person has had with NA, and a warm friendly voice will reassure a frightened, uneasy person in need of help.

4. Remember we do not endorse or make recommendations about any other program or agencies. If another program is part of your experience strength and hope you have to share, be sure that the caller understands that no outside program is affiliated with or recommended by NA. If the caller insists on information about treatment facilities, or detoxes tell them to look in the yellow pages under "drug abuse". **PERIOD!**

5. Make sure the information you give out is **up-to-date and accurate.** Take the time to check current schedules and new information. It is better to give **NO** information than give **WRONG** information.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PHONE LINE SERVICE

DO'S

* Do always identify yourself with your first name only and state that you are an addict.

* Do always have the necessary materials (e.g., White Booklet, meeting list NA pamphlets) close to the telephone, in order to avoid delay and confusion.

* Do find out what the caller needs. Ask questions.

* Do, if you are returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as an addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous.

* Do remember to be helpful and polite to all callers.

* Do make appropriate referrals when necessary.

* Do keep a log of all calls you answer.

* Do contact the phone line chairperson if problems arise.

* Do know and apply the Traditions in all your interactions with callers.

* Do always give accurate information about our Fellowship.

* Do execute good sense and judgement in all your interactions with callers.

* Do keep the calls as brief as possible. We are not counselors or therapists.

DON'TS:

* Don't argue with people whose views of addiction differ from yours, or NA's. If the caller does not want to stop using, do not try to persuade him/her to stop.

* Don't try to handle calls you are not qualified to answer.

* Don't give medical advice.

* Don't give out other people's names or telephone numbers.

* Don't answer questions about who was at an NA meeting (e.g., to police officers, probation officers, or significant others). However, general information may be given about NA's make-up (variance in size of meeting, NA open to all age groups, etc).

* Don't be rude, short, disrespectful, or use any foul language or profanity.

* Never guess the answer to a question. If you do not know, tell the caller you do not know.

* Don't glorify addiction by telling war stories.

COMMON PHONE LINE CALLS

Remember that we carry the message of recovery to the caller, when we express that:

* Our primary objective is to get the addict to a meeting

* The program works

* We were once suffering ourselves

* We care and are willing to help

* The Value of one addict helping another

Our tone of voice and delivery speed are just as important as the words we use. We acknowledge what the caller is saying and feeling. Do not use judgmental words or preach to the caller.

It is important to keep in mind that calls may not follow exactly the dialogue detailed in this section. However, familiarity with this information will make it easier to respond appropriately and to serve within the spirit of the Twelve Traditions of NA.

Fellowship matter/Request for Information

Give a brief description of NA to callers requesting presentations, special meetings, literature, activities, etc. The volunteer also explains that these requests will be referred to the NA member designated to handle such calls. Never make these types of commitments on your own. The phone line volunteer takes the name, number, etc. of the caller and passes it to the Phone line Chair or the Public Information Chair.

In the event that a member of the media contacts the phone line, we must be ready to respond appropriately. It is important to request help from the public information committee.

(See Phone line Flow Chart #1)

Personal Calls

If the caller wants to meet or talk to a specific individual in NA, politely tell them, "It is our policy that we cannot accept personal messages, and I cannot give out the telephone number of anyone who may or may not be in the fellowship." Keep in mind that the anonymity of our members is very important, and we must never acknowledge anyone's membership in our fellowship, either directly or indirectly.

Talking to a Friend or Family Member

Crisis Calls-Although most of the calls taken by the phone line volunteer are routine in nature, occasionally a crisis call may arise. Always take these calls seriously. When the volunteer has established that a caller is in a crisis, the volunteer can quickly refer the caller to the appropriate telephone number from the Community Service Referral List. Make sure the person writes the number down, then say "when the crisis passes, give our telephone number to your loved one and suggest he/she call NA to hear about recovery from drug addiction." Invite the person to an open meeting to experience our fellowship firsthand, many of these people are also addicted.

Does The Addict Want Help?

Find out if the addict wants to stop using. If the answer is yes and he/she would like to hear about recovery from drug addiction, talk to them (see Talking to an Addict).

If the addict doesn't want to stop using or come to the telephone, tell the caller, "We cannot do anything for your loved one until they want to stop using-the addict must want help. There are however, programs for loved ones of addicts. I can tell you how to contact on if you would like." NOTE: Always explain briefly the principle of our Sixth Tradition. "Narcotics

Anonymous is not affiliated with, nor recommends any other organization, institution, emergency service, agency, program in the spirt of cooperation not affiliation. We simply provide alternate telephone numbers to callers who need services other than NA." Answer questions about NA politely, but don't tie up the telephone for long. "We need to clear the line now in case an addict is trying to call us. Feel free to attend an open meeting if you would like to find out more about NA. Your loved one may wish to attend with you."

NOTE: For additional information, refer to "How to Handle Special Calls."

Talking to an Addict

Listen and respond to the caller. A suffering addict probably will indicate that he/she wants information or help.

(See Phone line Flow Chart #2)

Addict Wants Information About NA

Answer the caller's questions. If you sense that the caller wants more, ask, "Do you have any more questions about Narcotics Anonymous?" After the caller has asked all his/her questions, and if you sense the caller wants to continue the conversation, then respond, "It sounds like you are really hurting. I know the desperation that you must be feeling. Do you want help to quit using drugs?" The addict will indicate if he/she wants help.

Addict Interested-May Be Ready For Help: NO

Conclude the call by saying, "When you are ready, we are here to help you. Our program works for those who want to quit using. Always remember there is a way out."

Addict Interested-May Be Ready For Help: YES

If the caller wants help that is beyond the scope of services that NA can provide (e.g, detox, treatment information, etc.), furnish one or more telephone numbers from the Community Service Referral List. Be familiar with "How to Handle Special Calls". Do not hang up until you are fairly sure you have done all you can for this caller. If it is not a crisis call, listen to the caller and express your concern.

Addict Wants To Stop Using Or Is Not Sure

Respond empathetically. Share a little about what is was like, what happened, and what it is like today. You might sum it up by saying, "There was a time in my life that I thought I'd never be able to quit using drugs. However, since I found NA I haven't had to use. Would you like to go to an NA meeting."

Refer Addict To A Meeting

Give the caller information(time, location, and directions if needed) about the next available meeting. Take a few moments and explain to the caller what he/she can expect at a meeting. Include the structure/format of the meeting (e.g., speaker, topic discussion, Basic Text

study, etc.). It is helpful to go into some detail to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Conclude the call by saying, "To Get the most out of the meeting, try to get there a few minutes early. If you need further help, give us a call again. You've done the right thing by calling us. I will/won't be at the meeting-I'm looking forward to meeting you."

Addict Won't Go To A Meeting

Ask them, "Why not?" The following are examples of ways to respond to excuses for not going to a meeting. The addict's questions and statements may sound like he/she is not ready yet, but remember that the caller has already expressed that he/she needs help. Our intention is to help the caller focus on the solutions, rather than the problems keeping him/her from attending NA meetings.

If the caller is on guard, "What happens at a meeting." respond, "We are a group of clean addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. Addicts share about what it was like and what life is like today. You aren't required to do or say anything."

If the caller presents obstacles, 'My car doesn't work, etc. respond, "Does this problem have a solution?" or "All of our meeting are on bus lines."

If the caller uses his/her children for an excuse, "I don't have anyone to take care of my children, respond, "If you have to, you can bring them to an open meeting. If the are school age, you can attend daytime meetings."

If the caller says the are too scared respond, "You're not alone. During my first meeting I felt so self-conscious I was afraid to say anything. You don't need to worry, we're all pretty friendly." If the caller says they are still using, "I can't stay clean long enough to go to a meeting," respond "If you want to stop using, then you are welcome. We ask that you not have any drugs or paraphernalia with you during the meeting."

If the caller says they are too hopeless, "It won't work for me. I'm too far gone." respond, "I felt that way too, however, with the help of NA, I have a choice. I don't have to use today." If the caller has other excuses, "I can't go because: I have family or work obligations; my wife/husband doesn't approve; etc." respond "It sounds like if you don't get help you may not be able to keep your job, family, etc."

After discussing the caller's reasons for not going to a meeting and some possible solutions, ask the caller, "Do you want to go to a meeting."

(See Phone line Flow Chart #3)

How to Handle Special Calls

A Narcotics Anonymous phone line is strictly for dispensing information about the NA Fellowship, NA meetings, and recovery. The volunteer must remember that they are only a

recovering addict sharing their experience, strength, and hope. As volunteers, we are not professional crisis counselors, doctors, or psychologists, etc., and do not have the right to give professional advice. Callers with issues that, in the volunteers opinion, are beyond the boundaries of Narcotics Anonymous should be quickly and politely given an appropriate referral number for the Community Service Referral List. Before providing any other referral number, always explain that Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with, nor recommends, any other organizations, institutions, emergency services, agencies, or programs. We simply provide alternate telephone numbers for those callers who need services other then NA.

Handling Crisis Calls

Although most of the calls taken by the phone line volunteer are routine in nature, occasionally a crisis call may arise. Always take these calls seriously. When the volunteer has established that a caller is in crisis, the volunteer can quickly refer the caller to the appropriate telephone number from the Community Service Referral List. If the call is a suicide or OD try to have caller call 911 if not possible go next door and call, stay on line until some has responded to assist the caller.

(See Phone line Flow Chart #4)

Calls From Friends And Family Members

Many calls come form family members or friends who are concerned with the welfare of the person who is using drugs. We must remember that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. If the addict is there and willing to talk with a volunteer, great; if not, suggest that the family member attend an open meeting to find out more about Narcotics Anonymous. It can be suggested that the caller bring along the addict who is still suffering. Second, the family members often want us to talk to an addict who is unwilling to do anything about his/her problem or they want us to call them personally. We cannot do this. Tell them that the addict needs to call us or be willing to get on the telephone. We can only help someone who is willing to help themselves. If family members persists in telling us how they are feeling, refer them to the appropriate telephone number(s) from the Community Services Referral List. Remember to treat the family member or friend with kindness and the utmost patience, they may be the one with the drug problem. Many addicts have come to the program after calling for someone else.

COMMUNITY SERVICE REFERRAL LIST

When providing these numbers, always explain that Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with nor does it recommend any other organizations, institutions, emergency services, agencies, or programs. We simply provide alternate telephone numbers for those callers who need services other then Narcotics Anonymous.

DRUG CRISIS HOTLINE.....583-2500

SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER.....483-5444

POISON CONTROL CENTER.....581-2151

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES.....483-5444

RAPE CRISIS CENTER.....467-7273

SPOUSE ABUSE SERVICES.....355-2804

CHILD ABUSE.....538-4377

RUNAWAY HOTLINE.....1-800-231-6946

COUNTY/STATE-WIDE
EMERGENCY NUMBER.....911

FAMILY-ORIENTED
RECOVERY PROGRAM.....562-6185

ALCOHOLIC'S ANONYMOUS.....484-7871

ALANON.....262-9587

DETOXIFICATION.....363-9414