

BOOTH SITTING GUIDELINE MATERIAL

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Q: Who are the members of Narcotics Anonymous?

A: Narcotics Anonymous is a worldwide Fellowship of men and women who are recovering from drug addiction. Our members come from all walks of life. The drugs we used differ, the circumstances of our lives differ, the degree to which our addiction had progressed differs, but we share one thing in common: the disease of addiction. The only requirement for membership in N.A. is a desire to stop using drugs.

Q: Is N.A. only for narcotics addicts?

A: No. Our Fellowship was named in the 1950's, when the general understanding of the word "narcotics" was very different than it is today. The drug culture of the 1960's and 1970's changed the picture entirely for the addict. A great variety of drugs are widely used today, not all of which are commonly called "narcotics". Over the years, however, the basic principles of N.A. have not changed. We believe that our problem is not a specific drug or group of drugs. Our problem is the disease of addiction. N.A. is for all addicts, regardless of the drugs they used. We must abstain from all drugs in order to recover.

Q: Can non-addicts become N.A. members?

A: Non addicts may play a number of roles as friends of N.A., but not as members. Many professionals who work with addicts attend an occasional meeting to see first hand how N.A. functions. Family and friends of addicts often attend our social functions and open meetings. N.A. membership, however, is restricted to addicts only, so that we may preserve the atmosphere of trust and identification do necessary for our recovery. Our highest priority is the maintenance of an atmosphere at our meetings in which a suffering addict may find hope and begin to recover.

Q: 'What about Alcoholics or 'Dual Addicts'?

A: In Narcotics Anonymous we make no distinction addicts based upon "drugs of choice". The term "dual addiction" has no application for us, because we believe we have only one disease, regardless of the drugs we used. All addicts are welcome in N.A., whether or not alcohol was part of their addiction.

Q: How can addicts of such diverse backgrounds relate to one another?

A: Over the years, as we have refined our understanding of our own principles. we have found that we have no trouble relating to each other when we are precise in the language we use to describe our disease and our recovery process. We encourage N.A. members to avoid the use of language which implies more than one disease, or which sets some drugs apart as separate from others. We use the term "addict" when describing ourselves, regardless of the drugs we used. We use the terms "clean", "dead time", and recovery" to describe the recovery process rather than any terms which are specific to certain drugs. In this way we carry one consistent, clear message that applies to us all. This simple solution has proven very effective in unifying us all, regardless of background.

Q: Where are N.A. meetings held?

A: There is no certain kind of facility in which N.A. meetings are held. We meet in churches, community rooms, parks, clubhouses—anyplace where we can pay the rent. Regardless of where an N.A. meeting is held, it is in no way affiliated with that facility.

Q: How can we find these meetings?

A: Every Area Service Committee in the Southern California Region of N.A. operates a phoneline which is listed under Narcotics Anonymous in the local phone books. Volunteers should have a complete directory of all the meetings held in their area. Regional directories are available upon request or simply call the phoneline, or pick up a local directory at a meeting.

Q: What are N.A. meetings like?

A: Since N.A. meetings are autonomous, there is great diversity among meetings. Some are topic discussion meetings, some are speaker meetings, some are literature discussion meetings, and some are a combination of these. Some are open to the public and some are for addicts only. A few common threads run through all of them, however:

1. The primary purpose of any N.A. meeting is to Carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
2. There is no counselor or any person present functioning in a professional capacity. N.A. meetings are run on an all volunteer basis by addicts for addicts.
3. Regardless of the format, N.A. meetings usually start off with some readings from our literature, then move into the main portion described above. There is time for N.A. announcements and perhaps another short reading in the end. They usually close with a prayer.

Q: What's the difference between "open" and "closed" N.A. meetings?

A: An open meeting is one which non-addicts may attend to experience our fellowship. Closed meetings are for addicts only or for those who think they might have a problem with drugs. Our regional directory and most area directories have a legend describing types of meetings available.

Q: What about meetings held in hospitals or institutions?

A: There are special N.A. meetings held in hospitals or institutions called "H&I meetings". Unlike a regular meeting, which is the primary activity of an autonomous Narcotics Anonymous group, the H&I meeting is sponsored by the area service committee. It is a presentation of N.A. recovery in a setting in which a regular meeting would not be feasible. Because of the special nature of these meetings, they are not listed in our meeting directory, and are usually not open to general participation by members. If a facility to have one of these meetings held regularly, they may call the phoneline and leave a message for the H&I Committee Chairperson, or write to the address below, Attn: H&I Committee. Some meetings that are held in hospitals or institutions may be regular Narcotics Anonymous groups. They have no direct relationship to the facility or

it's program: they are self- supporting through their own contributions; there are no restrictions imposed by the facility on whom may attend; there is no sign in procedure or no attendance records kept. It is when these conditions cannot be met, because of the nature of the facility or it's program, that an H&I meeting is held instead,

Q: Is N.A. a religious organization?

A: No. Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with any religious group, and espouses no particular set of religious beliefs. Our program is a set of principles. "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" which are spiritual in nature. While these principles mention God specifically, each member is free to develop his or her own personal concept of God.

Some N.A. members are also members of religious bodies, while others are not. Some of our members do not believe in God. We leave this personal area to each member to develop in the way that is best for them. The important point for us is that our recovery is based upon spiritual principles that work.

Q: Is there any formal organization to N.A. as a whole?

A: There is no governing body within N.A. which has authority over any part of the Fellowship. N.A. as, is made up of thousands of autonomous recovery groups. These groups are held together by common principles: N.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. This a network of service committees which seek to unify and strengthen the N.A. groups. These committees exist to assist groups in offering recovery to addicts. Some increase the number of addicts who know about N.A. so that they may attend meetings. Others provide services to the groups such as literature development, phonedlines operation, guidance in applying our principles, etc. These services are provided by volunteers, all members of the N.A. Fellowship.

Q: What does it cost to participate in N.A.?

A: It cost nothing. There are no initiation fees or membership dues. Since N.A. is non-professional, we are air addicts who are here for our own recovery--very little money is required for an individual group to function. We pass a basket at each meeting so that members who wish may contribute. This money goes to pay for the group's expenses, such as rent, coffee and literature. Any money left over is sent to the next level of N.A. service to be used to support the groups carrying the message to suffering addicts. In this way we remain independent of outside control, and self-supporting through our own voluntary contributions.

Q: How are Narcotics Anonymous groups funded?

A: Solely through the voluntary contributions of it's members. In keeping with our traditions, N.A. accepts no grants, gifts or contributions from any outside sources In this way we can keep from being diverted from our primary purpose, which is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

Q: Does N.A. operate any detox or treatment facilities?

A: No. N.A. is not a professional organization, nor are we affiliated with any professional agencies or facilities. We employ no counselors or treatment staff. Though many treatment facilities introduce their patients to N.A. before their release, N.A. itself is a Fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly on a voluntary basis to help each other stay clean. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives.

Q: How can I get a catalog of N.A. literature?

A: Our World Service Office will send you one upon request. Write to:

World Service Office, Inc.
PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999

Phone: 818-773-9999
Fax: 818-700-0700

ROLE PLAYING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section is to assist with the training of volunteers to more effectively respond to frequently asked questions while booth sitting for public information. Role playing is a great tool for use at learning days, workshops and training sessions. We suggest taking a panel of no more than four volunteers, placing them at the front of the room and then have other members ask them these and other questions. After allowing the panel to answer, then the audience can add positive feedback and other possible answers to those questions. This exercise works best when a number of different panels are created with a variety of volunteers. For role playing to be a successful learning tool, it must be a positive experience. *So have fun!*

1. Is the "bottom" different for alcohol than for drugs because alcohol is legal in our society?
2. My son is clean two years after rehab. and doesn't go to meetings. He says he gets depressed. What can I tell him?
3. Is drug addiction hereditary?
4. Do recovering drug addicts have a sense of humor like recovering alcoholics seem to have?
5. Do you also recognize food as an addiction?
6. Someone I know needs to be identified because he was arrested and he wants someone to verify that he was at a meeting at the time of the alleged crime. Can you help?
7. I believe in the value of N.A. as a self-help program. I am a non-addict. What can I do to help?
8. My father owns a furniture store. He wants to donate a couch to N.A. What do we do?
9. What is the difference between the different Twelve Step programs?
10. Do you use a similar approach to A.A. and G.A.?
11. How do you tell if someone is an addict, and what is the difference between drug use and drug abuse?
12. How can I tell if someone is high?
13. How can I get someone to stop using?

14. What can I do or what will happen if I find drugs in my house or work place?
15. Someone I know is deaf and/or blind and won't go to a meeting. Is there a way to help them?
16. What about people needing a signature to verify attendance at a meeting?
17. Is "XYZ treatment center" any good?
18. What is the difference between psychotherapy, treatment centers and Narcotics Anonymous?
19. Does N.A. consider alcohol a drug?
20. Is anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol allowed to share at an N.A. meeting? Why or why not?
21. What can we do to prevent children from becoming addicts?
22. What is your policy on other fellowships using N.A. literature?
23. Where is your office located?
24. How much do your services cost?
25. How do you deal with the mentally ill addict?
26. Do you refer to detox centers? What is the best one?
27. Do you have information about Naranon?
28. Which pamphlet explains how the N.A. program works?

(You may add your own questions for specific situations or information that you wish to pass on to the public in your local area.)

SUGGESTED GENERAL DO'S AND DON'TS

DO's:

- Do have a working knowledge of the Twelve Traditions.
- Do dress conservatively and neatly,
- Do use only the language of the NA program. Using drug specific words or slang or terms used in other fellowships confuse your audience.
- Do use our literature. "What Is The NA Program" is an excellent item.
- Do bring WSO literature order forms when possible.

DON'TS:

- **DON'T ARGUE!!** Don't take a stand on issues such as AIDS, religion, politics or legislation. Carry a clear and simple message: have "no opinions on outside issues".
- Don't express ANY personal opinion that the audience MAY assume is NA's opinion.
- Don't use profanity at all. Apologize immediately if you slip up on this.
- Don't work alone. Clear your assignment with the Area PI Committee. If you are new, you must work with an experienced member.
- Don't get in over your head. It's OK to say "I don't know." Politely take their number and offer to have P.I. Chairperson contact them with the information requested.
- Don't attempt to answer questions that are inappropriate, such as "How can I tell if my kid is using drugs?", "How long does marijuana stay in your system?" Or "Is cocaine more dangerous than heroin?"
- Don't allow anyone to photograph or videotape any members of Narcotics Anonymous. Your anonymity is at stake. We are carrying the message, not representing Narcotics Anonymous.

INFORMATION TO REMEMBER WHEN SPEAKING WITH THE PUBLIC

There are several aspects to our Fellowship, all are important.

History of NA - Past and Present:

- World wide Fellowship was founded in 1953 in Los Angeles, California.
- No single founder, group of addicts started NA.
- Basic Text published in 1983. Now translated into French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, with more languages being worked on.
- Over 24,000 meetings around the world.
- We have nearly ___ meetings a week in our Area, and close to ____ meetings a week in the Hawaii Region.
- First meeting held in Hawaii was on Oahu in 1973. The first meeting on (island) was held ____.

Traditions - N.A. Unity:

- Common welfare, unity of the Fellowship.
- One ultimate authority - A loving God as we understand Him. No leaders - trusted servants
- Only one requirement, a desire to stop using.
- It doesn't matter how much or how little we have...
- The therapeutic value of one addict helping another.
- Primary purpose - carrying the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.
- We do not endorse any other organization or philosophy...
- Non-profit Fellowship - We are self-supporting through our own contributions. Non-professional - but we do employ special workers.

- N.A. ought never be organized. Our Fellowship is one of a service structure, An inverted triangle with the members at the top. There are committees responsible only to the members they serve...
- N.A. has no opinion on outside issues. No pledges to sign, No surveillance. Not connected with anyone. No promises to make.
- Anonymity is our spiritual foundation. Principles before personalities.

The Steps:

- Powerless over addiction - don't be drug specific.
- God - Be very careful with this subject.
- Inventory. Defects of character. Amends.
- Prayer - Know your audience.
- Carrying the message. Principle in our daily lives.

Other Things To Remember:

- Sponsorship.
- No interventions or participation in prevention activities.
- There is no known cure for addiction, but there is recovery.
- Disease of addiction - crosses all barriers.

BOOTH SITTING RULES

1. BOOTH MUST BE STAFFED. ONE MINIMUM!
2. NO EATING OR SMOKING IN OR AROUND BOOTH.
3. NO DRINKING, EXCEPT WATER. (KEEP UNDER TABLE)
4. NO ONE IN BOOTH WHO IS NOT SCHEDULED. (NO EXCEPTIONS)
5. NOTHING ON TABLE THAT IS NOT N.A. RELATED.
6. STAY INSIDE BOOTH.
7. ENGAGE PEOPLE IN CONVERSATION ABOUT N.A.
8. WHEN USING AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT, KEEP ON AT ALL TIMES, (NOT TOO LOUD.)
9. KEEP LITERATURE RACKS FULL, BUT NOT CRAMMED FULL AND P.I. TYPE DIRECTORIES (WITH ONLY HELPLINE NUMBERS) ON TABLE.
10. MAKE AVAILABLE I. P. LITERATURE TO ALL. ONLY GIVE EXPENSIVE LITERATURE TO THOSE WHO SHOW INTEREST. (i.e. LITTLE WHITE BOOKS, REGIONAL DIRECTORIES, IN TIMES OF ILLNESS, ETC.)
11. PLEASE KEEP BOOTH NEAT AND CLEAN AT ALL TIMES.

BOOTH SITTING DRESS CODE

1. NO SHIRTS WITH COMMERCIAL (OR NON-COMMERCIAL) MESSAGES AND LOGOS SHOULD BE WORN, INCLUDING ANY N.A. MEMORABILIA.*
2. ALL SHIRTS AND BLOUSES MUST COVER SHOULDERS. NO TANK TOPS!
3. DRESS TYPE SHORTS ONLY. NO BICYCLE SHORTS, CUT-OFFS, OR SHORT SHORTS!
4. PANTS MUST BE IN GOOD SHAPE. NO HOLES, RIPS, ETC.
5. SHOES WITH SOCKS MUST BE WORN. NO SANDALS!
6. NO SWEATS OR BODY SUITS OF ANY KIND.
7. NO HATS OR SUN GLASSES.
8. CLOTHES SHOULD BE WRINKLE FREE AND IN GOOD REPAIR.
9. UNDERGARMENTS MUST BE WORN.
- 10.NO NA JEWELRY OF ANY KIND!*
- 11.TATTOO'S SHOULD BE COVERED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
- 12.GROOMING STATEMENT FROM H&I HANDBOOK

** The reasons for items # 1 & 10 are to prevent controversy within the P I Committee and the Fellowship. Differences of opinion can be avoided when all agree to not wear N.A. memorabilia.*

(Please remember, as members of Narcotics Anonymous, we are also members of Public Information. Strictly enforce the dress code, our public image is important!)