

Note- This booklet is service material. It is intended for use by group, area and regional service committees. It is not for use in regular Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This simple booklet is intended to aid our fellowship back to recovery as quickly as possible from a natural disaster. These plans of action, experience, strength and hope are the result of a disaster that left us over 11,000 square miles of devastation, 6 billion dollars in property damage, 50,000 people homeless, and 33 deaths. Experience has taught us that we can and do recover. In loving service, **The Carolina Regional Service Committee.**

## **HURRICANES**

Hurricanes are common along our coastline; however, many members may have recently moved into your area and may be unfamiliar with securing their homes, storing supplies, and other general information for storm preparedness. It is advisable to discuss these matters, as well as the contents of this booklet, at group business meetings during the season in which hurricanes are likely to occur.

Hurricane season runs from late summer through November, although they can occur at any time during the year. Our recent experience has taught us that during hurricane season coastlines experience the greatest amount of damage. However, devastation can be felt hundreds of miles inland. Therefore, it is important for all groups and areas to discuss storm preparedness throughout the region.

Encourage members to look into stocking supplies such as battery operated radios, canned food, water, paper supplies, sheets of plastic, and first aid supplies for any emergency.

Before the storm hits, bring indoors all light-weight objects because loose objects traveling at a high rate of speed cause considerable damage. Tape or board all windows. Unplug appliances, turn off the main electrical breaker, turn off water, gas and hot water heaters. Fuel all motor vehicles.

If there is time to evacuate the area, do so. You will not be asked to leave your home unless your life is seriously threatened. The death toll from Hurricane Hugo was minimal because over 150,000 were successfully evacuated from the coastline before the storm hit. When you receive word to go, leave. Follow the escape routes designated by local officials. If you are unable to be evacuated and you are unsure if your home or apartment is sound enough to weather a hurricane, go to an emergency shelter. Leave food and water for pets as emergency shelters will not allow pets in their buildings.

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Take clothing, blankets, extra food, etc. with you. Take your Basic Text and NA phone numbers. Take this booklet.

If you cannot be evacuated or get to a shelter during the storm, stay indoors and on the downward side of the house. Stay away from windows. Hurricanes often bring tornadoes. Do stay in small interior areas like hallways, closets, or bathrooms. Do not use candles or open flame for light or cooking. Use phones only for emergencies. Do not go outside during the storm.

Major hurricanes generally last anywhere from six to eight hours, in some cases longer. Remember when the eye of the hurricane comes over, the storm is only half over and it will begin again within minutes. Stay indoors.

When the storm is over stay away from downed power lines. Do not drink the water until you are told it is safe. Unless you are injured, stay where you are. Follow all instructions from local officials.

## **TORNADOES**

Every year, about a thousand tornadoes touch down in the U.S. with winds in excess of 200 miles per hour. They uproot trees, rip apart buildings, turn over cars and mobile homes, and send glass and debris flying everywhere.

Tornadoes can strike any place and at anytime. The season when most tornadoes hit is in the spring and early summer when the weather is unstable. Tornado season runs from March to August. Peak tornado months are April, May and June. tornadoes often develop in the afternoon or early evening. As they move towards the ground they make a hissing sound. When the tornado touches down the hiss changes to a deafening roar.

### **During A WATCH**

A tornado WATCH means that conditions are right for a twister. When a Tornado WATCH is issued for your county, get set:

Watch your television or listen to the radio.

Watch for signs of an approaching tornado such as blowing debris or a roaring sound. (Many people say a tornado sounds like a freight train.)

### **During A WARNING**

Be ready to react when a tornado WARNING is issued. That means a tornado has been sighted or is about to strike. When a WARNING is issued, or you suspect a tornado is coming, go to safety immediately.

Stay away from windows. Go to the basement. If there is no basement go to the lowest floor. Go to a bathroom or closet in the center of the building. Protect yourself under something sturdy and protect your head . Leave your mobile home or car, and if there is no substantial shelter nearby, seek protection in a ditch or low-lying area. ( Be alert, though, for flash floods.)

After a tornado hits, listen to your portable radio for information. Use your flashlight to inspect your home for damage. Wear sturdy shoes and protective clothing to protect you from broken glass, fallen objects and other hazards. Watch out for power lines that have fallen. Only use the telephone for emergency calls. Do not go into an area damaged by a tornado, you may interfere with emergency operations, or you may injure yourself.

## **EARTHQUAKES**

The Carolina Region also sits on an earthquake fault. As we are generally unfamiliar with earthquakes it is important for all groups and areas to carefully read this section so we can be prepared. There is no prior warning for an earthquake. Most casualties result from falling objects and debris because the shocks can shake, damage or demolish buildings and other structures. Earthquakes may also trigger landslides and generate huge ocean waves which can cause great damage. During an earthquake remain calm. If indoors, watch for falling plaster, bricks, light fixtures and other objects. Watch out for high bookcases, china cabinets, and other furniture that might topple. Stay away from windows, mirrors, and chimneys. Get under a table, desk, or bed, in a corner away from windows, or in a strong doorway. Encourage others to do the same; it is best not to run outside. If you are in a high-rise office building, get under a desk. Do not dash for exits since stairways may be broken and jammed with people. Power for elevators may fail. If you are in a crowded store, do not rush for the doorway since hundreds may have the same idea. If you must leave the building choose your exit carefully. If you are outside, avoid high buildings, walls, power poles and other objects which could fall. Do not run through the streets. Stay out of damaged areas.

After the earthquake is over check for injuries in your family and neighborhood. Do not move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Check for fire and fire hazards. Check for gas, water, sewage breaks; check for downed electrical lines, and turn off utilities. Clean up materials that are potentially harmful. Check closets and storage shelf areas. Open closets carefully and watch for falling objects. Do not use toilets if sewer lines have been broken. If water is off, emergency water may be obtained from water heaters, toilet tanks, melted ice cubes and canned vegetables. Do not eat or drink anything from open containers near shattered glass. Liquids may be strained through a clean handkerchief or cloth if there is a danger that glass particles exist. Be prepared for additional earthquake shocks, "aftershocks". Although most of these shocks are smaller than the main earthquake they can sometimes cause additional damage.\*

## **AFTERMATH OF A NATURAL DISASTER**

In any major disaster, services that we have come to depend upon could in all likelihood cease to exist. No disaster preparedness can depend on telephones for *information, although* it is critical to maintain up-to-date and accurate phone numbers. Electricity is another service we *cannot depend* on being available to us. For example, gasoline pumps run on electricity; if there is no electricity for weeks, there will be no gasoline. Any services run by computers will also be downed such as banking. You *will* be unable to cash checks or use credit cards. Cash is the only thing accepted during a disaster. Street lights, television and radio stations, and refrigeration will also be discontinued. Transportation could be drastically affected. Roads and bridges could be washed out, collapsed, or impassable from debris. Airports could be closed. There may be no food supplies except what is in the affected area for days or weeks. there may be no clean water. In a major disaster the saving of human life is of course the first and foremost priority. As recovering addicts, staying clean is also a priority. Our lives depend upon it. The following sections deal with plans of action to begin NA meetings quickly and in an organized manner.

#### **THINGS TO CONSIDER**

This booklet is formulated to be used in conjunction with the following: the NA Regional directory, Regional NA Officer and ASR list, all current H&I information, current information on phone numbers and addresses of all local radio stations and newspapers, state and local maps. During a national disaster if all modern services are out, getting information back and forth may have to be done by hand. Therefore, it is important to consider every alternative that is available to you. For example, a disaster hits - there are no phones, roads are damaged, and the status of meeting places is *uncertain*. Listen to the radio. Map out meeting places on your local maps, check the radio again for broadcasts on any road information and reroute accordingly. Motorcycles can be *invaluable* as they can travel over rough roads and are extremely gas efficient. The use of maps is very important for traveling safely. Also, well *known landmarks* such as signs, buildings, etc. and other "familiar" terrain may look totally different. Later, if you need to get *information* to other parts of the region (nearest area not affected) map out where you need to go! In the event of a *hurricane travel* west away from where the hurricane made landfall. As earthquakes have an epicenter and send shock waves over a wide radius, listen to the radio and

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\*(Information on earthquakes was supplied by the American Red Cross)

travel away from the epicenter and away from the coastline. Do not travel unless you are sure the way you are headed is clear. Never send a recovering addict alone-together we can. If martial law and curfews have been imposed follow all directions exactly. Remember martial law and curfews are for your protection and to insure emergency services can get through to injured persons and to aid setting up relief stations.

## **HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS**

NA members who are in hospitals and institutions are particularly vulnerable during a disaster. Like everyone else, they may have lost friends, family and homes. Remember they are away from their loved ones, frightened, and unsure of what will happen next. (See article on feelings.) They may also have little clean time. Some facilities such as treatment centers may be evacuated; however, many may be in "lock down" or housed in damaged buildings. Contacting these facilities quickly is very important to assure these recovering addicts that the fellowship of NA is with them after the crisis. Contacting these facilities should be a priority. If your area H&I members are unable to conduct meetings immediately after a disaster, most facilities will still accept literature. Your H&I commitments with phone numbers and addresses are listed in the back of this booklet. Reminder - Do not carry notes or letters in or out of a facility, don't give yours or another person's address or phone number, don't make phone calls on behalf of the client or prisoner. Follow these and all other H&I guidelines.

## **WHAT TO DO**

- 1) Check the location of your meeting place. If it's okay for members to meet, contact the radio station and newspaper ( See Emergency Public Information (PI) announcements).
- 2) if your regular meeting place has been destroyed, sufficiently damaged or you cannot reach it, set up a new location. NA meetings can be held anywhere during an emergency! Contact a radio station and newspaper with the new location. (If under martial law or curfew set meetings for 12:30 pm and 5:00 pm.)
- 3) Contact H&I facilities. If you are allowed to meet, do so. if you are not allowed to meet, leave your phone number and address so the facility can contact NA. Check back with the facility often.
- 4) Check emergency shelters for NA members who may be there.
- 5) Contact an area committee member. Be sure to give detailed information of where your meetings are being correct time. Give information on the status of H&I. Tell them

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how many members you currently have. Give them the name, address, and phone number of the radio stations and newspapers you are using. Leave your name, address, and phone number.

6) Area committee members contact the R.S.R., R.S.R. Alternate, Regional Chairperson or Regional Service Office (1-919-273-4204). Regional Service Committee numbers and addresses are listed in the back of this booklet.

Give them information as to how many groups have reported in and how many meetings have been set up. Give detailed information on days, times, and locations of these meetings and whatever needs your meetings might have.

If you have not heard from any groups or members within 72 hours contact a regional officer or the Regional Service Office.

#### POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR MEETINGS

Step One	Step Two	Step Three
Just for Today	Denial	H.A.L.T.
Go to Any Length	Freedoms	Anger
Faith in a Higher Power	Keep it Simple	Powerlessness
Tools of the Fellowship	H.O.W.	

#### LONG RANGE PLANS

Major national disasters have very long range problems. Getting meetings started again is the beginning. When radio, television stations, and newspapers are back in working order it is important to begin as many Narcotics Anonymous Public Service Announcements (P.S.A's) as possible. Areas should consider through public information efforts to last 4 to 6 months after the disaster. Refer to the Public Information Handbook often. Also, do not hesitate to contact the Regional Public Information Committee for any assistance.

Keeping the region informed of the progress of H&I and the regular meetings is very important. In some instances meeting directories for the area and region may need to be altered and reprinted. Area phone lines may need to be changed.

Groups and areas might also consider holding social events such as special speaker meetings, dances, bring a dish dinners, and outdoor activities to keep up moral. With effort the fellowship will return to normalcy much more quickly.

## **FEELINGS**

Emotional upset is a normal reaction to a natural disaster. It is hoped that by addressing some common feelings and issues that the healing process can begin. Our feelings are our feelings; the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous are the way out of pain for all of us. Whatever events we may experience or feelings we may encounter our principles of recovery will work on every situation.

Some of the feelings described by all people (not just recovering addicts) are a sense of life being out of balance, disbelief, flashbacks, sleep disturbances/nightmares, sadness, a desire to use, a tendency to minimize the critical event, anger/irritability, forgetfulness, cold like symptoms, survivors .guilt, social withdrawal, emotional numbing, feelings of being out of control, fears of "going crazy". loss of feeling secure in the world, diminished sex drive and self-doubt in all areas of our life. These feelings are normal to everyone affected by a natural disaster.

The feelings that we experience during a traumatic event often go in stages. These stages and the words that label them are very familiar to all recovering addicts. They are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally surrender and acceptance.

Denial - The first stage is denial, shock, disbelief, panic, and an overall refusal to accept or acknowledge reality. We experience anxiety and fear, or we refuse to believe what has happened. We screen out information that we do not want to see, hear or think.

Anger - When we can no longer suppress the events and strong feelings that are beginning to emerge, we feel angry. Our anger can take many differing forms, outwardly and inwardly. The stress we have been under begins to surface. We can be angry at ourselves, angry at other people, and angry at the God of Our Understanding.

Bargaining - When the anger we feel begins to subside and the reality of the drastic changes in our day to day life becomes more evident, we may attempt to bargain with life, other people, or our Higher Power. Again, remember our feelings are our feelings.

Depression - when our attempts to change the situation have failed, the sense of powerlessness can leave us sad and exhausted. We begin to realize the full impact of the shock. We may experience profound grief over our losses and sorrow for the losses of others around us. Recovery is a painful process.

Surrender and acceptance - Working through denial, anger, bargaining, and depression leads us finally to surrender and acceptance. We surrender to the fact that the situation is as it is, and we accept whatever we have to do to pick up the pieces of our life and go on with it. The only thing permanent in life is change.

A disaster is a very frightening and disturbing event. Our reactions are bound to vary widely from one day to the next. The re-emergence of these and other feelings are common after days, weeks, or months after the actual event. We may go through this process many times.

Our program of recovery teaches us that "Just for Today" is an important ingredient in living life on life's terms whatever those terms might be. It is important to remember that grieving for our losses is a natural and normal human response and that all of us accept changes at different times and on different terms. What is easily accepted by one person may not be easily accepted by another. Various things are important to various people. Sharing our feelings, one addict helping another, is the fastest way to recovery.

Dealing with a natural disaster and the changes that come with it are no different from living life on life's terms. By not using, going to meetings whenever and wherever possible, contacting our sponsor regularly, and by working the Twelve Steps, together we can and do recover.

## FROM A NEWCOMER

I would like to share with other addicts how the Twelve Steps and the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous (NA) helped me and many other recovering addicts survive Hurricane Hugo on September 21, 1989 and the days to come after. I am a grateful recovering drug addict and I live in Charleston , South Carolina.

I can say today with honesty that if I hadn't had the support of the God of my understanding, the NA Fellowship, and the Twelve Steps on my side during Hurricane Hugo I would either be in a jail, a hospital, an institution, or dead because I would have used drugs. I, along with many other Charleston recovering addicts, had just lived through the most dramatic physical and emotional upheaval that a person could ever imagine going through and I did not use drugs help me deal with the feelings I had.

The confusion, depression, anger, sorrow, fear and other feelings you could muster up were flying through the air in Charleston. The most intense part of the disaster lasted about a month but the feelings still lingered on. Before the hurricane actually hit us I was pretty skeptical about the whole thing, but as I watched people half crazed, snatching things from people's hands in the stores, working like madmen to prepare their homes and businesses for the storm and pack to leave, I changed my mind about the entire situation. I too then began this crazy routine to prepare myself but not only for whatever awaited us as far as physical damage but to stay clean and composed for the days ahead of us.

I made phone calls to other addicts to find out where they were going to be so I would know where to look after the hurricane had passed. I made sure I had food for plenty of people so we wouldn't go hungry. I opened my doors to anyone in recovery who needed a safe place to stay. Then I did the best I could have ever done. I kidnapped my sponsor and a friend. Not only was I concerned about her well-being and safety but I knew I was going to need her guidance, support, love, and companionship through the whole thing. Then as the storm grew closer and closer I prayed more and more, not for everything to be all right but for faith, strength, courage, and serenity and not to use even if my bottom fell off. We kept in contact until the phone lines went down and then it was complete isolation. We were cut off from any kind of formal recovery except what we had already deposited in the recovery, bank. Thank God I had been making big recovery deposits and working a Twelve Step program so I had lots of recovery to withdraw and use to see me through.

The hurricane hit and the days to follow were devastating. The emotions everyone were experiencing were controlling everything. We were without phones, gas, water, and electricity. We did have guns in our streets, looting, price gouging homeless people, stranded people, some hurt and some dead people. The most apparent thing in the air was a whole lot of chaos. My gratitude and faith were

stronger than ever before in my life. We cried, we laughed, and we hugged. We were depressed, we were happy, we felt guilty that we had survived. We shared the most intimate times-in our life.

You can imagine how hard it is to live with one addict, then try lots of them under one roof . Lots of us did. We pulled together, something that the NA fellowship taught us to do. We lived and felt feelings and there were lots of them. Then we let go of them.

After the initial shock wore off we were worn thin and we needed each other badly. In my community there was a couple in recovery that I had lost touch with over the last two years. Because of the hurricane we were reunited and we gathered at my house for a . meeting by candlelight. Again, we cried, we hugged, we yelled, we laughed, and shared our deepest feelings. It was wonderful. We did this until we got phone service and we could start looking for our fellowship friends. Once we located others we started setting up meetings by word of mouth at people's houses. We had to have our meetings during the daytime due to the martial law that was in effect. All our regular meeting places were either damaged or we could not get to them. We pulled together "one addict helping another". We made it!!

My own faith replaced my fears and I survived this ordeal clean and with serenity. When the hurricane hit I had only 27 days back in recovery from a long hard relapse. My mother had just died and I was a wreck. Three days after Hurricane Hugo hit, in the midst of debris, an emotionally bankrupt city, smelly people, and total chaos, I picked up my (30) thirty day chip. I call it my faith chip and when I feel hopeless and afraid I look at it and remember what that chip means to me and what I went through to get it. To all the other recovering addicts I want to say thank you all and I love ya'll.

**AREA :**

**FACILITY:**

H & I COMMITMENTS  
AREA H & I COMMITTEE USE

FACILITY \_\_\_\_\_ TIME & DAY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE#: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

(\*NOTE: The above form is repeated six times per page)

**AREA :**

**RADIO STATION:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE#: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

(\*NOTE: The above form is repeated six times per page)

**AREA :**

**NEWS PAPERS:**

NAME : \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

(\*NOTE: The above form is repeated six times per page)

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS **EMERGENCY ACTION PSA's**

RADIO STATION:

PHONE #:

ADDRESS:

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_ AREA NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

DUE TO REASONS BEYOND OUR CONTROL THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
\_\_\_\_\_ GROUP OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS HAS CHANGED THE  
MEETING \_\_\_\_\_ (TIME AND/OR PLACE)

TO- \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM. AT \_\_\_\_\_ (TIME AND/OR PLACE)

RECOVERY IS WHAT HAPPENS AT N.A. MEETINGS. IT IS POSSIBLE TO STOP USING  
DRUGS!!(IF PHONE #CAN BE REACHED PLEASE LIST THEM **HERE:**

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RADIO STATION:

PHONE #:

ADDRESS:

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_ AREA NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

DUE TO REASONS BEYOND OUR CONTROL THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
\_\_\_\_\_ GROUP OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS HAS CHANGED THE  
MEETING \_\_\_\_\_ (TIME AND/OR PLACE)

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RADIO STATION:

PHONE #:

ADDRESS:

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_ AREA NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

DUE TO REASONS BEYOND OUR CONTROL THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
\_\_\_\_\_ GROUP OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS HAS CHANGED THE  
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