

Mountain Area of Narcotics Anonymous Hospitals and Institutions Subcommittee

Member Orientation Package

It is in the best interest of Narcotics Anonymous to provide an orientation for NA members who want to become familiar with service in the Hospitals & Institutions (H&I) Subcommittee.

H&I presentations differ from Narcotics Anonymous meetings and this orientation will introduce new volunteers to these differences and to the MANA H&I Subcommittee guidelines. It will also explain why we also follow the rules and regulations of the facilities where we meet. While listening, we encourage you to ask questions. In this package there are various components that we use as aids to help us ensure that we are carrying a clear and concise NA message of recovery. What is our message: *“That an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise is freedom.”* Our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, because that is all we have to give.

H&I Service - Who Does It?

Everyone! H&I service is for Narcotics Anonymous members who want to put the program into practice, regardless of whether or not we have been in an institution ourselves. Working with others in an H&I setting consistently enhances personal recovery.

Why Do We Do It?

Narcotics Anonymous has one primary purpose, *“to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers”*. H&I work helps Narcotics Anonymous members do this by offering presentations to incarcerated and institutionalized addicts. H&I presentations are intended to introduce attendees to the basics of the Narcotics Anonymous fellowship and inform them of meetings that are available to them upon release. We strive to do our part that no addict need die without hearing our message of hope.

COMMITMENT - *the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause*

The Commitment to H&I

H&I presentations provide the first exposure to recovery in Narcotics Anonymous for many addicts. Our presentations may also be the only contact that these addicts receive with our fellowship. It is important that we realize that the suffering addicts in the facilities we serve may depend on us for the message of recovery. For this reason, we ask that you not volunteer for an H&I presentation, if you are not sure you will be able to attend. If you do volunteer, make sure that you fulfill your commitment. None of us as individuals have the right to cancel an H&I presentation. By making the choice to join a panel, we must realize that we may have to abandon activities that we might prefer. Living by spiritual principles, such as commitment, does not always feel good in practice, but offer lifelong rewards.

The Commitment to Service

The Basic Text of Narcotics Anonymous tells us “Goodwill is best exemplified in service; proper service is doing the right thing for the right reason. When good will supports and motivates both the individual and the fellowship, we are fully whole and wholly free”. Service is a cornerstone of our personal recovery. When we apply this principle of commitment to our lives, we grow spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. Sometimes we may feel that our work in H&I is futile, and it’s working. However, that will change when you are sitting in a meeting one day, and an addict comes rushing up to meet you and to say thank you for bringing Narcotics Anonymous to them. If we can touch just one life with our presentations, then we have done our job.

The Commitment to Represent NA

As H&I panel members we are viewed as examples and representatives of Narcotics Anonymous. The fellowship as a whole may be judged on how we conduct ourselves. Common courtesy is essential! Therefore, we should arrive early to the facility, start and end the presentation on time, dress appropriately, and act respectfully. Our actions in these facilities reflect on Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

The Commitment to the Language of NA Recovery

A commitment to the language of NA recovery in our presentations is essential. We must remain consistent with our traditions and make sure the message we carry is clear and consistent. We refer to ourselves simply as “addicts” not drug addicts, not addicts and alcoholic, not dually addicted, not junkies or dope fiends, just as “addicts”. We refer to our time in the fellowship as “clean”, “clean-time”, or “recovery”, not sobriety, not clean and sober, just “clean”, clean-time”, or “recovery”.

H&I Presentation Guidelines

As a Panel Member you have a responsibility to the facility managers, their clients, and to Narcotics Anonymous. If you follow the suggestions below and the Twelve Traditions, you will uphold all of your responsibilities.

The DO's and DON'TS for Panel Leaders and Panel Members

DO's

- DO** - Be selective about who you choose to speak
- DO** - Clarify the facility's rules and regulations with your speaker
- DO** - Clarify H&I Subcommittee policies and guidelines with your speaker
- DO** - Use MANA H&I Subcommittee formats only
- DO** - Start your presentation on time, and end on time
- DO** - Explain what an H&I presentation is to members and clients
- DO** - Explain that Narcotics Anonymous is separate and distinct from the facility, as well as other fellowships
- DO** - Explain the language that we use (addict, clean, recovery)
- DO** - Emphasize that in Narcotics Anonymous recovery is available to any addict, regardless of the type of drug(s) used
- DO** - Emphasize the importance of getting to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting the first day out
- DO** - Emphasize the importance of attending meetings, getting a home group, and a sponsor.
- DO** - Try to get the clients involved by reading passages or asking questions.
- DO** - Use the literature provided by the H&I Subcommittee
- DO** - Make sure all literature is stamped with the Mountain Area helpline and web address
- DO** - Make Narcotics Anonymous meeting lists available
- DO** - Obey all facility and H&I Subcommittee dress codes

DON'Ts

- DON'T** - Rely on flooding a facility with literature to carry our message - The most powerful tool for carrying our message is you, the Narcotics Anonymous member.
- DON'T** - Put too much emphasis on what active addiction was like, they already know
- DON'T** - Mention names of other fellowships
- DON'T** - Mention specific names of hospitals, rehabs, doctors, etc...
- DON'T** - Break another person's anonymity or tell his/her story
- DON'T** - Debate any issues involving facility rules and regulations
- DON'T** - Discuss conditions within the facility or opinions about the staff
- DON'T** - Comment on the methods used by the facility
- DON'T** - Debate the merits of other fellowships

DON'T - Debate which drugs are acceptable - Narcotics Anonymous is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs.

DON'T - Show favoritism to any client in the facility

DON'T - Take personal messages in or out of the facility

DON'T - Collect any money

DON'T - Carry cash or cell phones into the facility

DON'T - Wear expensive or flashy jewelry

DON'T - Give out another person's address or phone number

DON'T - Use tobacco or vape in facilities

DON'T - Take a person with outstanding warrants into a facility

DON'T - Give or accept gifts

DON'T - Take a panelist who has a friend or family member in the facility

DON'T - Use excessive profanity

Fielding Questions

It's recommended to encourage questions from the clients regarding what was presented or what recovery is like in Narcotics Anonymous. Remember, Narcotics Anonymous has no opinions on outside issues. Occasionally, during this 'question and answer' session clients will ask us to give an opinion on outside issues such as:

- Other recovery programs or fellowships
- Methadone, suboxone or medication-assisted treatment
- The facility or ask, "Do I need to stay in treatment?"
- Many other issues that do not pertain to recovery in Narcotics Anonymous

It is imperative that we are not drawn into discussions on these or other topics unrelated to recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Don't hesitate to say, "I'm sorry. I have no experience with that. I can't share with you on that subject". Always remember to only share *your* experience, strength and hope about *your* recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

Commonly Asked Questions

QUESTION: I don't know if I'm an addict! What should I do?

ANSWER: Suggest reading the I.P. "Am I an addict." If you feel your life has become unmanageable and are sick and tired of being sick and tired, and want to find a new way of life, you may want to try Narcotics Anonymous.

QUESTION: I'm an alcoholic. Can I go to Narcotics Anonymous?

ANSWER: Alcohol is a drug. Narcotics Anonymous treats the disease of addiction. If you have the desire to stop using, you fit the requirements for membership.

QUESTION: Will you be my sponsor?

ANSWER: Suggest reading the I. P. "Sponsorship". Explain the way addicts get a sponsor is at a meeting.

QUESTION: Can I have your phone number?

ANSWER: Explain how they can get phone numbers at meetings. Explain that if they see you at a meeting, you will be glad to introduce them to other addicts.

QUESTION: I'm an addict and an alcoholic, but I drank more than I used drugs. Should I go to AA or go to NA?

ANSWER: Alcohol is a drug. Narcotics Anonymous treats the disease of addiction, and we have no opinions on other programs.

QUESTION: What should I do when I leave here? Should I go to a halfway house or go home?

ANSWER: Narcotics Anonymous has no opinions on any issues other than those relating to Narcotics Anonymous. We do suggest that you go to a NA meeting the day you leave this facility.

QUESTION: I'm still feeling sick after two weeks. How long before I'm not sick anymore?

ANSWER: We are not doctors. We are addicts like you. We can only share how it was for us.

QUESTION: While I'm in here, I am allowed to go to meetings. Could you take me to a meeting?

ANSWER: Refer them to the MANA Helpline number.

**Mountain Area of Narcotics Anonymous
Hospitals and Institutions Subcommittee**

Member Orientation Package Completion Form

(initial)

_____ I acknowledge that I have read the MANA H&I Orientation Package and the MANA H&I Subcommittee Policies and Guidelines.

_____ I acknowledge that I have reviewed the information in the MANA H&I Orientation Package with a member of the MANA H&I Subcommittee.

_____ I acknowledge that I have a clear understanding of the information in the MANA H&I Orientation Package, and I will abide by the policies, guidelines, rules, and regulations of the H&I Subcommittee and the facilities where H&I presentations are given.

_____ (printed name)

_____ (signature) _____ (date)

_____ (name of reviewer)