



NEWANA PRC ORIENTATION INFORMATION

Revised April 2016

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE (PRC)?

Under the umbrella of PRC are three resource committees:

1. Helpline
2. Hospitals and Institutions
3. Public Information

PRC is how Narcotics Anonymous interacts with the public.

PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICE COMMITTEE

Our purpose is based on NA's 5th Tradition, "Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." Everything we do in NA Service must be motivated by the desire to successfully carry the message of recovery— that an addict, any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live.

The Northeast Washington Area Public Relations Committee is the working body for our combined group service efforts, and it is directly accountable to the ASC and the groups it represents in its actions, "The final responsibility and authority for NA Services rests with the NA Groups." (2nd Concept)

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & MEMBERSHIP

The PRC meeting is a resource for groups and NA members interested in combining and coordinating efforts to reach the addict who still suffers, and improve NA's reputation as a viable program of recovery in our community. It is also an opportunity for any committee member to receive information on public relations related issues they would like guidance on, and for our committee members to report on the effectiveness as well as any needs they have to continue and improve the services we currently provide. The PRC establishes a time and place to meet that accommodates the needs of the groups and current or prospective committee members.

DECISION MAKING

As a spiritual body, we try to reach all decisions by consensus based decision making; we believe that a loving God's will is expressed through our group conscience (2nd Tradition). In the event we cannot reach consensus, we take a vote of members who have attended the last two of three PRC meetings.

One of the reasons we try to achieve consensus is it insures that we follow our 9th Concept, "All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making process." By carefully discussing and respectfully listening to all points of view we try to make sure this happens at the PRC. The reason all committee members are allowed to vote is the 7th Concept, which states, "All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes."

ELECTIONS

In our election process we use the 4th Concept, “Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.” We trust that our committee’s group conscience will select the coordinators and officers best suited to fulfill the responsibilities of the positions.

PUBLIC RELATIONS SUBMISSION FORM

In order to insure the best use of our limited resources, it is essential to use good planning in our public relations efforts. All proposed projects will be submitted to the committee using the public relations plan submission form contained in these guidelines. Using this form allows the committee to thoroughly analyze and prioritize each proposed project. The plan submission form helps insure all our communications and interactions are professional, consistent and mutually beneficial.

SPECIAL RULES

From time to time the PRC will make special rules to assist in carrying out its projects. Those that are permanent are recorded in this section of the guidelines.

TRUSTED SERVANTS

“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.” (2nd Tradition). Being of service to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous is recognized as a valuable tool for the addict seeking recovery. Our groups have shown their trust in these individuals by, “delegating to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.” (3rd Concept).

NEWANA HELPLINE

What is NEWANA Helpline?

The NEWANA Helpline is a phone line in which the caller is or can be in immediate contact with an NA volunteer. A caller may be a member of the public seeking information or an addict seeking help. Our system is menu driven and the caller can be provided with information, talk directly to an addict, leave a voice mail, or be connected to a Twelve Step Volunteer.

What is a Helpline Volunteer?

A helpline volunteer is an NA member whose primary objective is to direct the potential newcomer to an NA meeting or direct questions about our fellowship to the appropriate subcommittee. The first NA member the caller will come in contact with is usually the helpline volunteer. The response and attitude of a volunteer can have a lasting impression on the caller.

This is a service position of great responsibility.

Experience has shown that the most successful helpline volunteers possess certain assets which are beneficial in the accomplishment of their responsibilities. These qualifications include:

- Í Appropriate clean time requirements as set forth in the NEWANA PRC Guidelines (six months).
- Í Appropriate training (i.e., orientation)

- Í Knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.
- Í Familiarity with all helpline related NAWA handbooks.
- Í The willingness to serve.
- Í The willingness to give of personal time.

A helpline volunteer will need to use good judgment regarding calls. Calls from **NA members** are usually simple requests for information. These should be answered quickly. Most members understand the need to keep the helpline open for other calls.

Calls from **non-NA members**, such as students, professionals, or community members are usually requests for general information about NA. Sometimes the caller is requesting a presentation, special meeting, literature, or an activity. These should also be handled quickly. Give the caller a brief description of NA and explain that an informational packet is available and that their request will be referred to the appropriate member of NA. The volunteer will then get the name and address of the caller and pass this information on to the appropriate Coordinator or Officer of the PRC Committee. It is extremely important to remember to **NEVER** make any commitments on your own. Calls from interested non-addicts can also be referred to open meetings.

What is a Twelfth-Step Volunteer?

A Twelve Step call can mean that two or more addicts provide a ride to an NA meeting or that volunteers simply talk with the caller, helping the potential member get to a meeting on their own. Certain things must be adhered to:

- Í Appropriate clean time requirements as set forth in the NEWANA PRC Guidelines (one year).
- Í Never go alone and make sure at least one of the volunteers is the same gender as the caller if meeting in person.
- Í Try to meet in a neutral, public location (e.g. restaurant, etc.). Meeting a newcomer in your home or in their home is an unnecessary risk. If meeting or picking up the addict at their home is unavoidable, consider the circumstances and take precautions.
- Í Ensure that all arrangements for meeting the caller are accurate and understood by both parties.
- Í Upon arranging to meet the caller, bring the Helpline Literature Packet outlined in the NEWANA PRC Guidelines.
- Í Tell someone you are going and call them when you get there.
- Í Don't stop anywhere on the way to a meeting, especially at the suggestion of a newcomer.
- Í The NA program has one **must** that applies to everyone: no drugs or paraphernalia in our possession. It is important that the volunteer tries to ensure that the newcomer follows this requirement. This is for the protection of the volunteer, the Fellowship, and its groups.

Once an addict has been taken to a meeting, the Twelfth-Step volunteer may help the addict obtain telephone numbers and transportation to other meetings. If the addict is in a hospital or treatment facility Twelfth-Step volunteers can call regularly and let the addict know that

members of NA care. When the volunteer visits, it is a good idea to bring along some NA literature to leave for the addict.

Note: If an addict requires medical attention refer them to 911.

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, Twelfth-Step list, and Helpline Log) 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 the calls you answer.

Do contact the Helpline Coordinator if problems arise.

Do use the Twelfth-Step list.

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 that you are not qualified to answer.

Don't give medical advice, including drug replacement therapy.

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

Don't use last names or places of employment.

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 glorify active addiction by telling war stories.

Don't give opinions about other 12 Step Fellowships, or any mental health services or health institutions.

H&I

What is the purpose of an H&I Panel?

The purpose of an H&I meeting is to carry the message of recovery to addicts who do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. H&I panel meetings/presentation, except for those in longer term facilities, are intended to simply introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA Program.

DO'S:

Do make sure all speakers carry a clear NA message of recovery.

Do follow the guidance found in all H&I related NAWs handbooks.

Do make PRC schedules only of outside meetings available to residents.

Do clarify the facility's rules with anyone you bring in.
Do show up early and start and end on time.
Do briefly explain what H&I is.
Do make it clear that NA is separate and distinct from the facility as well as other fellowships.
Do try to get residents involved, especially those in long-term facilities (i.e., literature, coffee maker, readings, etc.)
Do obey all dress codes. Exercise common sense and dress appropriately.
Do keep the staff aware of your whereabouts at all times.
Do explain the language that we use ('addict', 'clean', 'recovery') and why we use it (the First Step of NA and the Sixth Tradition of NA)
Do emphasize that in NA, recovery is available to any addict, regardless of type of drug(s) used.
Do emphasize the importance of getting to an NA meeting the first day out.
Do emphasize the importance of a sponsor and a home group, the ongoing nature of recovery, and the importance of attending meetings (suggest ninety meetings in ninety days.)
Do use the literature recommended for H&I work, if we are supplying the literature. Encourage the treatment centers to supply NA literature on their own if at all possible.
Do let the panel leader know if you have a friend or family member in a facility.
Do read "Who is an Addict", "What is the NA Program", "Why Are We Here?" and "How it Works"

DON'TS:

Don't break another person's anonymity or tell his or her story.
Don't debate any issues involving the facility's rules or regulations.
Don't discuss conditions within the facilities or opinions about staff members.
Don't debate the merits of the treatment center's program or other fellowships. Remember, we have no opinion on outside issues. The best approach is to focus on the positive and unique qualities of our program. Keep the Basic Text handy, and read from it. It is the foundation of our program of recovery.
Don't comment on the methods used by the treatment facility. Not all facilities are Twelve Step based nor do their understandings of the Steps necessarily coincide with the understanding gained in Narcotics Anonymous. We share our experience without reference to the facility's methods or to residents' comments.
Don't put too much focus on what it was like while sharing. They already know.
Don't use vulgar language in facilities during H&I presentation
Don't debate which drugs are acceptable. NA is program of complete abstinence from all drugs.
Don't carry excessive cash or expensive flashy jewelry.
Don't show favoritism to any resident and no sponsorship of resident within a facility.
Don't take any messages in or out of the facility.
Don't give out any person's address or phone number, including your own.
Don't carry in any contraband items, including cigarettes food or weapons.
Don't rely on flooding a treatment center with literature to carry our message. The most powerful tool for carrying our message is the NA member.
Don't wear clothing with logos (including NA) or any type of advertising.
Don't read too many literature selections at the beginning of the meeting. Keep it short and simple to keep their attention.
Don't collect any money.

Don't go in to a facility by yourself.
Don't read the Twelve Traditions or Just For Today meditation.

Additional *Do's* for Correctional facilities

Do follow all security regulations at all times.

Additional *Don'ts* for Correctional facilities

Don't get involved in discussion about an inmate's guilt or innocence.

Don't give or accept gifts.

Don't carry letters or messages in or out of the facility.

Don't give the residents money.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

What is Public Information?

Public Information is informing the public about recovery from addiction through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. The purpose of Public Information is to inform the public that NA exists and offers recovery from the disease of addiction.

DO'S:

Do have a working knowledge of the Twelve Traditions.

Do follow established guidelines.

Do be consistent. Follow through with your plan of action.

Do remember quality is more important than quantity, Start with one or two projects and do them well before branching out.

Do remember other Twelve Step fellowships are part of the public we are informing. Practice cooperation, not affiliation.

Do understand and be responsive to the needs of those we serve.

Do present a good image of recovery (be on time, dress appropriately, and avoid the use of obscenities, etc.)

Do work within the service structure to determine the feasibility of projects and to keep the lines of communication open.

Do make information packets available.

DON'TS:

Don't endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside organization. (6th Tradition)

Don't confuse a PI presentation with an H&I presentation or meeting.

Don't overtax your human power and resources, or burn out on a project before it is completed creates a bad image of NA to the community and/or media.

Don't overstep boundaries as far as area/regional geography is concerned. When in doubt, ask!

Don't do it by yourself. Remember the First Tradition and that the service structure is there to be used.

Don't contact the media without an approved "Plan Submission Form".

Don't give out personal phone numbers without prior approval from the PRC.