

**Group Service Representative
(GSR)
Orientation Guide**

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WHAT IS A GSR *

Group service representative (GSR)

Each group elects one group service representative; even those groups hosting more than one recovery meeting elect just one GSR. These GSRs form the foundation of our service structure. GSRs provide constant, active influence over the discussions being carried on within the service structure. They do this by participating in area service committee meetings, attending forums and assemblies at both the area and regional levels, and sometimes joining in the work of an ASC subcommittee. If we are vigilant in choosing stable, qualified leaders at this level of service, the remainder of the structure will almost certainly be sound. From this strong foundation, a service structure can be built that will nourish, inform, and support the groups in the same way that the groups nourish and support the structure.

Group service representatives bear great responsibility. While GSRs are elected by and accountable to the group, they are not mere group messengers. They are selected by their groups to serve as active members of the area service committee. As such, they are responsible to act in the best interests of NA as a whole, not solely as advocates of their own groups' priorities.

As participants in the area committee, GSRs need to be as well informed as they can be concerning the affairs of the committee. They study the reports of the committee's officers and subcommittee chairpersons. They read the various handbooks published by the World Service Office on each area of service. After carefully considering their own conscience and what they know about how their group members feel, they take active, critical parts in the discussions which form the group conscience of the entire committee.

Group service representatives link their groups with the rest of the NA service structure, particularly through the information conveyed in their reports to and from the area committee. At group business meetings, the GSR report provides a summary of area committee activities, often sparking discussions among group members that provide the GSR with a feel for how the area can better serve the group's needs. In group recovery meetings, GSRs make available fliers announcing area and regional activities.

At area committee meetings, GSR reports provide perspectives on group growth vital to the committee's work. If a group is having problems, its GSR can share those problems with the committee in his or her reports. And if the group hasn't found solutions to those problems, the area chairperson will open a slot on the committee's "sharing session" agenda so that the GSR can gather the experience others have had in similar situations. If any helpful solutions arise from the sharing session, the GSR can report those back to the group.

Alternate GSR

Groups also elect a second representative called an alternate GSR. Alternate GSRs attend all the area service committee meetings (as nonvoting participants) with their GSRs so that they can see for themselves how the committee works. If a GSR cannot attend an area committee meeting, that group's alternate GSR participates in the GSR's place.

Alternate GSRs, along with other members, may also serve on area subcommittees. Subcommittee experience gives alternate GSRs added perspective on how area services are actually delivered. That perspective helps make them more effective area committee participants if their groups later elect them to serve as GSRs.

1. Why do we need an ASC?

- It is the vital link in the chain between the individual recovering addict in the group and the rest of the worldwide fellowship. Without it the groups would be isolated.
- It provides a forum of information to help co-ordinate groups and subcommittees
- The area receives donations from groups, in accordance with tradition 7, to maintain our services and further our primary purpose - to carry the message of recovery.

2. Who's Who at the ASC?

- Chairperson – facilitates the ASC and ensures that the ASC keep to the agenda of business
- Vice Chair – supports the Chairperson, liaises with the area sub-committees and stands in if Chairperson is absent
- Secretary – records what happens at the ASC in the form of minutes, which are posted to the GWANA website (www.gwana.org) prior to the next ASC
- Treasurer – keeps the bank account in order, receives donations, pays the bills, ensures that the subcommittees have the funds they need and keeps a record of all transactions
- Regional Committee Member (RCM) – the link between the area and the CT region of NA
- Area Sub-committees – include Hospitals & Institutions (H&I), Public Information (PI-PL), Literature, Policy, Basketball Shootout, Campout
- Group Service Representative (GSR) – the link between the group and the Area. The GSR should have an alternate GSR for support and to keep the continuity when the GSR's commitment is completed. Though the suggested clean time for a GSR is ONE YEAR, each group is autonomous.

• What the GSR needs to do at the ASC

- The GSR is selected by their group to serve as an active member of the ASC and is committed to attend each ASC meeting which is held on the ~~first~~ second Monday of the month from 7pm – 9pm (changed to second Monday in 2012)
- The GSR gives a report on the current status of the group and brings any donations from the group to the Area Treasurer.
- The GSR may be asked to place the group's literature order or to pick up the group's literature at the ASC and return with it at the group's next meeting
- Keep in mind Tradition 12, particularly during any voting, and carry the group's conscience "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our **traditions**, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

- **What the GSR needs to do outside the ASC**
- Relay information from the ASC back to the group. The best way to do this is usually with the ASC minutes in hand, which should ensure accurate information.
- Report on what happened at the ASC at your group's business meeting at least once a month. The group's donations and literature stock are usually discussed along with any other issues affecting the group and/or ASC at that business meeting.
- Keep the regional scheduling committee informed of meeting changes to avoid addicts being misdirected.
- Become familiar with the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts of NA service.

- **Carrying the Group's conscience**
 - i. From time to time issues arise at the ASC that need the input from all the groups within the area. In this case the GSR needs to give the group all the relevant information at a business meeting and hold an open discussion. The group will eventually reach a conscience on that issue. This is the Group's conscience that the GSR will carry to the next ASC.

6. Open Forum

- The portion of the meeting that gives GSRs the opportunity to discuss information and issues that may affect the group, the area, the region or NA as a whole. This is also an opportunity to discuss any upcoming NA related events.

7. Agenda

- There will be an attendance sheet with the Agenda on the back. The agenda should contain any items that should be brought up during new business.

8. Old Business

- Old Business was the new business from the previous month that needs to be brought back to the current meeting for further discussion/resolution.

9. New Business

- Motions and agenda items that need to be discussed and perhaps voted on or tabled back to groups.

10. Motions From Groups

- Motions from groups should be brought to area in written form to preserve the accuracy of the group's intent. Once brought to area, the GSR obtains a motion sheet from the ASC Secretary, copies the motion and the intent, obtains a second and returns the completed motion sheet to the secretary to be brought up in New Business.

11. Voting

- This can be confusing so it is important to ask if you need something explained. All remarks and questions made in a committee meeting such as the ASC must be directed through the chairperson. This involves attracting the Chairperson's attention via a raised hand. The general rule is that only GSR's may vote on ASC elections and NA business. If, however, the vote is tied, the Chairperson has the "casting" vote.
- Another exception is where the vote is on matters such as date/time of ASC or whether to extend the meeting to conclude business. In this case **all** in attendance may vote.
- There is only ONE vote per group. If a GSR or alternate cannot attend the ASC, the group does not get a vote. (Abstention --- more)
- The three voting options are "FOR", "AGAINST", "ABSTAIN". You should abstain if you don't have a clear conscience from your group or, as in the case of elections you are unsure.
- If a proposal is made it must be seconded by a GSR before a vote can be taken. For this motion to then be carried more than 50% of the GSRs must vote FOR it. If the "ABSTAIN" and "AGAINST" votes together are more than 50% of the vote, the motion fails. You do not need to consult your group before voting to elect members at the ASC. As a trusted servant you can make an informed decision on which way to vote unless your group has instructed you otherwise. On money matters GWANA policy states that all motions containing requests for \$50.00 or more must be tabled back to groups. In matters affecting policy the vote must be a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority in order to change policy.
- Unwritten reports do not need to be voted on.

- **Donations**

- **All donations must be brought in check form and the check must be made payable to GWANA.**

If you have any questions, please don't be afraid to ask them.

Remember: Service is good for recovery. **KEEP COMING BACK!**

GSR HELPFUL HINTS ***

13. Before the ASC meeting begins...

- **Literature Order:** Preferably 15 minutes prior to the beginning of ASC place or pick up your group's literature order.
- **Written Reports:** Written reports and announcements are located on a table at the ASC meeting room.
- **Announcements:** Announcements are also located on the table. Pick up announcements and check for any mail for your group. Use your judgment on the number of announcements to pick up. Many times there is only enough for one announcement for each group. The Agenda and attendance sheet will be going around the table. Be sure to add any items to the agenda that your group has asked you to discuss.

14. During the ASC Meeting...

- **The ASC meeting follows an agenda** and will announce any items on it before resuming the second half of the meeting. The first half of the ASC meeting consists of verbal and written reports from the ASC executive committee, various subcommittees and adhoc committees. Hi-light or make notes during each report as to what you think your group will find important. Also, make a note of what positions are open and add them to your announcements to read. Take notes on what is said during open forum to add to your GSR report. Take notes on all motions under new and old business. In order to better inform your group regarding the motions to be voted on pay close attention and take notes that will help to answer any questions that may come up during your business meeting. At the next ASC, you will need to vote the conscious of your group.

15. After the ASC Meeting...

- **Back at the Group:** Depending on your group's policy, when the chairperson asks for any NA announcements, you may be asked to update the group with upcoming events and open positions.

16. At the Next Business Meeting...

- **Be prepared to give your report on the ASC meeting.** Your report should consist of highlights from each report presented at the previous ASC meeting, topics under open forum, any motions voted on at the ASC, any new motions to be voted on by the group, and anything else that you think is noteworthy. Copies of the previous month's meeting minutes, which can be obtained from the GWANA website, can be very helpful. Make sure that any motions to be voted on by the group are brought up under new business at the group's business meeting. When these motions are brought up at the next ASC, vote the group's conscious.

17. Communication is the Key...

- **If you are unable to attend the ASC meeting,** please contact your Alternate GSR to take your place. If the Alternate GSR is unavailable to take your place, then contact the group's secretary to see if another trusted servant from the group can take your place.

*****GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS**

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Additional needs, addicts with | Additional needs arise from physical challenges such as blindness, hearing impairment, or mobility limitation imposed by use of wheelchairs. Reaching addicts with additional needs and making our meetings and other services more accessible to them is an obligation our fellowship takes very seriously at all levels of its service structure. |
| Area Service Committee (ASC) | A committee created to provide common services for NA groups in a specific locale. Composed of GSRs (Trusted Servants of the Group), ASC officers (Trusted Servants of the ASC) and Subcommittee Chairpersons (Trusted Servants of the ASC). Usually part of a region, to which it sends RCMs. |
| Closed Meetings | NA recovery meetings that are closed to non-addicts. |
| Common Needs (Special Interests) | A tag referring to specialized groups formed to provide additional identification for addicts with particular needs or interests in common – for example, men’s or women’s groups or gay or lesbian groups. |
| Conference-approved Literature | <i>See NA-approved literature</i> |
| Fellowship approved literature | <i>See NA-approved literature</i> |
| Group Service Representative (GSR) | Elected by an NA group to participate on the group’s behalf in the ASC |
| Home Group | The group an NA member calls “home”. Home group membership calls for regular attendance of its recovery meeting, financial and voluntary service support and participation in conscience-building and decision-making processes, regularly attends business meeting. |
| Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) | A field of service usually covered by one ASC subcommittee devoted to carrying the NA message primarily to correctional inmates and treatment facility patients. |
| <i>NA Way Magazine</i> | The NA Fellowship’s quarterly journal, published in various languages. |
| NA-approved literature | Literature officially sanctioned by the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as given voice by its groups through their delegates to the World Service Conference. Also referred to as “fellowship-approved literature”. Formerly known as “conference-approved literature” at a time when the entire WSC voted on the approval of new NA literature. |
| Open Meetings | NA recovery meetings that allow attendance of non-addicts. |

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| Public Information and Phone Line (PI/PL) | A field of service usually covered by one ASC subcommittee devoted to carrying the NA message to government and private agencies, the public media, community leaders, those in the helping professions, and the community-at-large so that addicts seeking recovery will be referred to Narcotics Anonymous. Phone line answers calls made to the NA phone number located on the bottom of the schedule, posters and various websites. |
| Reaching Out Magazine | <i>Fellowship approved Quarterly Newsletter put out by NA World Services to help H&I panel members and incarcerated addicts.</i> |
| Regional Assembly | A gathering of RCMs, conducted by the RSC, to discuss issues affecting NA worldwide, usually in preparation for the annual WSC meeting. The regional delegate is elected at the assembly. |
| Regional Committee Member (RCM) | Elected by an ASC to participate on the area's behalf on the regional service committee. |
| Regional Delegate (RD) | A World Service Conference participant elected by a region's GSRs and RCMs. |
| Regional Service Committee (RSC) | A body that draws together the combined service experience of a number of adjoining areas for those areas' mutual support. Composed of RCMs, the regional delegate and alternate delegate, and others as needed. |
| Service Bulletins | Articles, position papers, and food for thought on a variety of NA service-related topics. A number of such bulletins are available from our World Service Office and can be found online at www.na.org . |
| Shared Service Committee | A committee created by two or more area or regional committees to fulfill one or two needs both territories have in common. In a state, province, or nation with more than one region, such a committee would interact on those regions' behalf with state, provincial, or national government, professional, religious, and civic organizations. Funded by and accountable to those who created it. |
| Sharing Session | A non-business portion of the agenda of most NA service board or committee meetings. Somewhat more informal than the rest of the meeting because of the suspension of the ordinary rules of order. Facilitates wide-ranging, open discussion on committee issues and group problems. Allows for development of group conscience necessary before spiritually sound decisions can be made in ordinary business session. |
| Trusted Servant | An NA euphemism for "leader", "official", or "officer". Derived from NA's Second Tradition, in which NA leaders are characterized as "trusted servants" as opposed to governors. |

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| Twelve Concepts for NA Service | One of three bodies of basic NA principles, the concepts apply specifically to the development, coordination, and maintenance of NA services on behalf of the groups. |
| Twelve Steps | One of three bodies of basic NA principle, the steps describe NA's regimen leading to personal recovery and a spiritual awakening. |
| Twelve Traditions | One of three bodies of basic NA principle, the traditions provides guidance for the behavior of NA groups, helping the groups maintain their independence while nurturing their unity. |
| World Service Conference (WSC) | A deliberative body composed of regional delegates and world-level trusted servants, the WSC provides an effective voice and active conscience for the worldwide NA Fellowship. |
| World Service Conference Report | The full reports of the World Service Conference and its boards and committees. Formerly known as the <i>Fellowship Report</i> |
| World Service Office (WSO) | World Service Board headquarters (Los Angeles) and branch facilities (Canada, Europe) |
| WSC | See <i>World Service Conference</i> |
| WSO | See <i>World Service Office</i> |

RESOURCES

- NA World Website : <http://na.org>
- World Wide Locally Developed Resources: http://na.org/?ID=local_resource_area_resources
- CT Regional Website: <http://ctna.org>
- GWANA Website: <http://gwana.org>

SOURCES

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- **Adapted From the GSR Guide to ASC – NE London ASC 2008
- ***Adapted From GSR Helpful Hints from San Jose ASC 2005
- **** Adapted From Tri-state 2006)