



NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Southern Fairfield County Area

Hospitals
And
Institutions
Subcommittee

Orientation Package

Welcome to the H & I Subcommittee of Southern Fairfield County Area. We are a group of addicts dedicated to carrying the message of recovery in NA to those addicts who are recovering in hospitals and institutions.

Our basic work is done through unity; our personal recovery is reinforced when we share our experience, strength and hope. Our gratitude speaks when we care and share with others the NA way.

We represent the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. Our personal attitude and behavior reflects on our fellowship as a whole.

Do's and Don'ts

- Do Try to get all agreements with the facility in writing
- Do Start and end the meeting 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 (literature person, readings, coffee maker, etc.)
- Do Obey all dress codes. Exercise common sense and dress appropriately
- Do Keep staff aware of your whereabouts at all times
- Do Stamp all literature you bring into a facility with the local helpline number
- Do Explain the language that we use ("addict", "clean", and "recovery") and why we use it (the First Step and the Sixth Tradition of NA)
- Do Emphasize that in NA, recovery is available to any addict regardless of the "type" of drug(s) used
- Do Emphasize the importance of getting a sponsor and a home group, the ongoing nature of recovery and the importance of attending meetings (suggest 90 meetings in 90 days)
- Do Use the literature supplied and recommended for H&I work. Encourage the treatment centers to supply NA literature on their own if at all possible
- Do Inform the contact person that we have literature forms available for their use
- Do Contact the facility contact person and let them know that they can purchase literature from the RSO and WSO (most jails and correctional facilities have funds available for this)
- Do Screen all speakers, chairpersons and panel members carefully, especially regarding the clean time and other requirements of both the facility and the H&I Subcommittee
- Do Be selective about who you choose to take into H&I meetings. Clean time requirements are very important. People who sit on NA panels should be able to share a message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous
- Do Make sure all speakers carry a clear NA message of recovery
- Do Follow the guidelines found in the WSC H&I Handbook

Do's and Don'ts

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 NA. We share our experience without referencing the facility's methods or resident's comments.

Don't Put too much emphasis on using days when sharing. They already know what it was like

Don't Debate which drugs are "acceptable". NA is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs

Don't Carry excessive cash or wear expensive or flashy jewelry

Don't Show favoritism to any resident or inmate

Don't Take messages or letters in or out of the facility

Don't Give out your or any other person's phone number or address

Don't Rely on flooding a treatment center to carry our message. The most powerful tool for carrying our message is the recovering NA member

Don't Read too many literature selections at the beginning of the meeting. Keep it short and simple to keep their attention

Don't Let the meeting run too long. Most treatment center residents spend much of their day in meetings of one sort or another, often in the same room

Don't Give or collect and money

Don't Break another person's anonymity or tell their story

Don't Take a member who has friends or family in the facility into the facility

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

Don't Discuss conditions within the facility or opinions about staff members

Don't Give or accept gifts

Don't Take a person into a correctional meeting who is on parole or probation unless they specifically get permission from the parole/probation officer and the facility

Don't Take a person with outstanding warrants

The Meeting/Presentation Format

There are a variety of formats that we use when carrying the message into facilities, but there are some key points to keep in mind about all of them:

The format of any particular H&I meeting/presentation may vary from meeting to meeting depending on the type of facility. In short term facilities, the format will be more focused on the panel members carrying the message in to the residents, while at a long-term facility we may encourage more participation from the residents. In H&I we are carrying the message into the facility, we are not there to dump our own problems but rather to help these addicts become aware of what NA is and how it works in our lives. In effect, an H&I meeting is an introduction to our fellowship for addicts.

The panel leader should let you know what the format is before the meeting/presentation and should be able to answer any questions you may have about it. If you would like to see samples of a variety of formats, there is an explanation of several of them in the H&I Handbook.

Whatever format is chosen, we normally get the residents involved with a question and answer session at some point in the meeting. Also, you may be asked to stay after the meeting for a while to talk to the residents if that is allowed by the facility.

Experience has taught us that we become effective in H&I work when we apply the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in our lives. Many emotional pitfalls can be avoided by using these principles.

Personal Commitments

Please DO NOT volunteer for an H&I presentation/meeting if:

- a) You are not sure you want to attend
- b) You are not sure that you will be able to attend the meeting regularly. In the odd circumstance that something comes up and you will not be able to make it, try to give the panel leader at least 48 hours' notice so that she can invite another member to fill your spot. DO NOT ask someone to take your place or even come along with you to the meeting. The panel leader is the only one that is allowed to invite speakers and panel members to the meeting.

Questions and Answers

It is a good idea to encourage questions concerning what was presented at the meeting or other general questions about NA but there are a few things you should keep in mind.

Please remember that NA has no opinion on outside issues. Occasionally during the Q&A period or when talking after the meeting, the residents will ask you to give your opinion on outside issues such as:

- 1) Other recovery programs, methods or fellowships.
- 2) The facility, i.e., "Do I need to stay in treatment?"
- 3) Many other issues that do not pertain to recovery from addiction in NA.

It is very important that we are not drawn into these types of discussions! Always remember to share only your experience, strength and hope about your recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

Working With Others: Men with Men, Women with Women

Some facilities house only men or only women. Other facilities house both men and women but keep them separate. In facilities where your presentations will consist of only men or only women, we feel strongly that only same-sex NA members should participate. Remember, our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery, not to make our meetings more popular with the addicts we are trying to help. Problems that arise in this area have the potential to seriously damage the credibility of NA. Experience has shown that we avoid these problems if we follow these simple guidelines.

Twenty-Eight Day Facilities

These facilities may utilize various methods of detoxing residents. Once again we are reminded that Narcotics Anonymous has no opinions on outside issues including methods of detoxification. In these facilities and detoxes, it is important to remember that the addicts you are carrying the message to are in the earliest stages of recovery.

It may be appropriate to change the format weekly so that the residents are exposed to four different formats during their twenty-eight day stay. Formats recommended include speaker meetings, topic discussion, question and answer and literature /Basic Text discussion.

Some facilities encourage residents to attend regular NA meetings during their treatment. The H&I panel may inform residents about regular meetings, covering such topics as the language used in NA meetings, meeting formats, etc., as well as providing them with meeting lists.

Psychiatric Hospitals

In psychiatric hospitals we often find addicts who at times have emotional and mental problems besides addiction. Many residents are probably on some kind of medication. As subcommittee members we do not debate or discuss these other problems. Because of these unique considerations, we should hold speaker or panel presentations with a possible Q&A session. We should choose topics that deal with the earliest stages of recovery. Extra care should be taken to

fully acquaint ourselves with the facility's policies and restrictions. You may wish to ask a staff member to be present. This will provide the H&I members with maximum protection when working with these facilities.

Forensic

A forensic unit is a court-ordered maximum security correctional facility for those classified as mentally unstable, incompetent, needing psychiatric evaluation or classified as criminally insane.

In forensic units, we often find addicts who at times have emotional and mental problems besides addiction. Many residents are probably on some kind of medication. As subcommittee members we do not debate or discuss these other problems. Because of these unique considerations, it is clearly indicated that a HIGHLY STRUCTURED H&I format is needed for this basically long-term population. A good example is panel or speaker presentation with a possible Q&A session. Carrying the message into this type of facility is an especially sensitive type of service and only the most experienced H&I members should be selected to participate. These facilities usually have extensive requirements regarding participation from the outside. Extra care must be taken to fully acquaint ourselves with the facility's policies and restrictions. You may wish to provide H&I members with the maximum protection when working in these types of facilities.

During the initial planning of meeting with these facilities, we must be very clear about what NA is and what our basic message is. NA is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. We have no opinion on outside issues, however, our approach is non-professional so we must be very sure that it is understood that we do not advocate going against a physician's advice.

Neither do we endorse the use of any drug.

In facilities which provide medication, residents inevitably ask the question, "am I clean if the doctor has me on medication?" Based on our Eighth and Tenth Traditions, we are not in a position to discuss this issue. We can only tell them to keep coming back, they are welcome in meetings and to read the Basic Text. The people on the H&I subcommittee should not tell residents to stop taking their medication. We are not doctors.

Interaction with Staff

Our relationship with the staff at a facility is important for the continued success of the H&I meeting/presentation. Although the staff's designated contact person may be on the administrative level, our week-to-week interaction will most likely be with other staff.

It is important that we establish a rapport with these staff members that will make it much easier to deal with any difficulties that may come up. This positive relationship will facilitate everything from making sure that there is a table to put the literature on to handling a resident who has a seizure during a presentation.

At some H&I presentations, a staff person may be expected to attend. We should make it clear, not only at the initial stage of setting up the meeting, but also on an ongoing basis, that their role will be as observers only. This also applies if the staff member happens to be a member of NA. While this person is functioning as an employee of the facility, they wouldn't be able to share about NA without the residents becoming confused about NA's relationship with the facility. This is in keeping with our Traditions concerning non-professionalism and non-affiliation. (8th,6th)

Adolescents

When adolescents are referred to in this handbook, we are referring to anyone under the legal age of majority CT (18). We need to remember that adolescents are prospective members and should be treated with respect. When sharing in an H&I presentation, we need to remember that to an adolescent, the stress experienced due to peer pressure or the relationship with their parents and teachers may be just as much of a crisis to them as losing a job, marriage or house may be to others. In NA we learn to deal with our feelings and emotions and share with others how we have been able to work through them by utilizing the Twelve Steps of NA.

Due to the governmental statutes regarding adolescents, we need to be especially aware of the facilities' rules and regulations as they relate to our interaction with these prospective members. For example, some facilities may require a staff member to be present during our presentations. One suggestion we may make to administrators of facilities for adolescents is that they make attendance at the H&I meeting voluntary. We have found that this reduces distraction which increases the opportunity for recovery in the NA fellowship.

While some people maintain that adolescents respond better to people closer to their own age, the bulk of our experience suggests that the age of the person sharing at an H&I meeting is secondary to their ability to carry a clear, strong message of recovery. Adolescents seem to respond more the message than to the messenger. All H&I meetings are highly structured and should be geared towards recovery through the Twelve Steps of NA. Our experience has shown that we do not need to use a special format when carrying the message to adolescents.

In addition to the Do's and Don'ts included earlier in this package, we feel that the following are important to remember:

- 1) This is a “we” program. No addict should feel as if they are being preached to.
- 2) An addict is an addict, regardless of age.
- 3) Point out to the adolescent addict that *recovery is fun!* Social events, fellowship, etc.
- 4) Acknowledge and validate their feelings and emotions, don’t patronize them.
- 5) Do not glorify your past use.
- 6) Never say, “I feel like I’m talking to kids.”
- 7) Don’t compare your “bottom” to theirs.
- 8) Keep profanity to a minimum.

Some Suggested Topics

- Any IP or selection from the Basic Text
- HOW (Honesty, Open-mindedness and Willingness)
- Surrender
- Acceptance
- The Basics (Don’t use, meetings, phone numbers, sponsor, literature, Steps)
- HALTS (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired or Serious)
- Responsibility for our own recovery
- Freedom from active addiction
- Identifying rather than comparing
- Spiritual not religious program
- Going to any lengths
- Transition to the fellowship from treatment
- Tools of the fellowship
- Letting go
- Feelings
- Learning to Trust
- Giving up old people, places and things
- Living Just For Today
- Steps 1, 2, 3
- Denial
- Reservations
- Sponsorship

Possible Questions and Answers

Q: I'm just an alcoholic, can I go to NA?

A: Alcohol is a drug and NA treats the disease of addiction. If you have the desire to stop using, you fit the requirements for membership.

Q: Will you be my sponsor?

A: Give an explanation of how to choose a sponsor in regular NA meetings and refer them to the Sponsorship IP.

Q: Can I have your phone number?

A: Explain how they can get phone numbers at regular NA meetings and let them know that when you see them outside of the current facility you will gladly introduce them to other addicts and give them your phone number at that time.

Q: I don't know if I'm an addict, what do you think I should do?

A: Suggest reading the IP "Am I an Addict?" and let them know that if life feels like it has become unmanageable and they are sick and tired of being sick and tired they might want to try NA.

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

A: Our only suggestion when you leave here is to go to a meeting as soon as you get out. We have no opinions on issues outside of NA.

Q: I still feel sick after two weeks. How long until I start feeling better?

A: We aren't doctors, just fellow addicts and we can really only share what it was like for us.

Q: We are allowed to go to outside meetings while here. Will you take me to a meeting?

A: Refer them to the hotline number for a ride to a meeting.

How would you respond?

Q: "Is Turning Point a good rehab to go to when I leave here?"

Q: "They won't let us go to outside meetings while we're here, don't you think that's unfair?"

Q: "How come there are so many meetings in here but this is the only NA meeting?"

Terminology

<u>Use:</u>	<u>In Reference to/Instead of:</u>
Clean	Sober, Straight
Clean Time/Recovery	Sobriety, Inactive addiction, Abstinence
Addicts	People who are powerless over chemicals
Addiction	Dependency, active using
Using	Drugging, drinking, getting loaded, picking up
Recovering	Ongoing Spiritual Growth, Recovered
Working/Practicing/Living the Steps	Taking the Steps

Outline for Sharing Personal Experiences at H&I

- How were you introduced to NA?
- Describe your surrender
- What were your first meetings like?
- What was your early recovery like?
- Share your experiences with getting and using a sponsor
- Share your experience with working the Twelve Steps
- Any other significant recovery experience or service experience you'd like to share
- Suggestions for newcomers