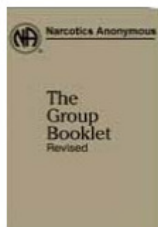


Mile High Area Service Committee



GSR/A Training W/ Consensus Decision Making Training

AUGUST 2011



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The NA Group

Introduction

Narcotics Anonymous groups are self-governing (the Twelve Traditions use the word autonomous). The group may conduct its own affairs in whatever way seems fit to its members, provided the group's actions do not adversely affect other groups or the entire NA Fellowship. So what we offer here is not a "rule book" but the shared experience of how many of our groups have met with success in conducting meetings and tending to business. Newer members may find this booklet helps them understand who does what to keep the group going and how to help. For more experienced members, it may lend some perspective to their group involvement. But no matter how much information we pack into this booklet, you're still going to find that the best source of guidance for your group is in your group itself.

There are many ways of doing things in Narcotics Anonymous. And just as all of us have our own individual personalities, so will your group develop its own identity, its own way of doing things, and its own special knack for carrying the NA message. That's the way it should be. In NA we encourage unity, not uniformity.

This booklet does not even attempt to say everything that could be said about operating an NA group. What you'll find here are some brief answers to a few very basic questions: What is an NA group? How does the work get done? What kinds of meetings can a group have? When problems arise, how are they solved? We hope this booklet proves useful as your group seeks to fulfill its primary purpose: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

What is an NA group?

When two or more addicts come together to help each other stay clean, they may form a Narcotics Anonymous group. Here are six points¹ based on our traditions which describe an NA group:

1. All members of a group are drug addicts, and all drug addicts are eligible for membership.
2. As a group, they are self-supporting.
3. As a group, their single goal is to help drug addicts recover through application of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.
4. As a group, they have no affiliation outside Narcotics Anonymous.
5. As a group, they express no opinion on outside issues.
6. As a group, their public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.

In stating the six points that differentiate an NA group from other kinds of groups, we place greater emphasis on drug addiction than almost anywhere else in our service literature. This is because Narcotics Anonymous groups cannot be all things to all people and still provide the initial identification drug addicts need to find their way to recovery. By clarifying our groups' sole membership requirement and primary purpose in this way, once and for all, we free ourselves to focus on freedom from the disease of addiction in the bulk of our service literature, certain that our groups are providing adequate grounds for identification to those seeking recovery.

¹ The six points describing a group have been adapted from "The AA Group," published by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

NA groups are formed by addicts who wish to support one another in recovery, in carrying the message directly to other addicts, and in participating in the activities and services of NA as a whole. One of the primary means an NA group uses to fulfill these ends is to conduct NA meetings where addicts can share their recovery experience, thus supporting one another and at the same time carrying the message to others. Some groups host a single weekly meeting; others host a number of meetings each week. The quality of an NA meeting is directly dependent on the strength and solidarity of the NA group which sponsors it.

NA groups – not NA meetings – are the foundation of the NA service structure. Together, the NA groups are responsible for making service decisions that directly affect them and what they do in their meetings as well as those that fundamentally affect the identity of Narcotics Anonymous. For instance, new NA literature is approved by regional delegates at the World Service Conference only after they have received direction from the groups they represent. Likewise, “proposals to change NA’s Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, name, nature, or purpose should be approved directly by the groups” before they can become effective, in accordance with our Second Concept.

Groups maintain contact with the rest of Narcotics Anonymous through representatives selected to participate on the groups’ behalf in the NA service structure. Mailings from the World Service Office, including the quarterly NA Way Magazine, keep NA groups informed on issues affecting the fellowship worldwide. If your group is not receiving The NA Way Magazine, ask your secretary to contact the World Service Office.

The primary purpose of an NA group is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. The group provides each member with the opportunity to share and to hear the experience of other addicts who are learning to live a better way of life without the use of drugs. The group is the primary vehicle by which our message is carried. It provides a setting in which a newcomer can identify with recovering addicts and find an atmosphere of recovery.

Sometimes specialized NA groups form to provide additional identification for addicts with particular needs in common. For example, many men’s, women’s, gay, and lesbian groups exist today. But the focus of any NA meeting – even if it’s conducted by a specialized group – is on recovery from addiction, and any addict is welcome to attend.

NA meetings are events at which addicts share with one another their experience in recovery and in the application of the Twelve Steps. While many – if not most – NA meetings are in fact hosted by an NA group, other NA meetings occur all the time: informally among friends, at large area or regional speaker meetings, at conventions, in schools, institutions, and so forth. The NA group is an entity; the NA meeting is an event; and NA meetings may be held without the sponsorship of an NA group.

What is a “home group”?

In some NA communities, it has become customary for members of the fellowship to make a personal commitment to support one particular group – their “home group.” Though this custom is not universal, many believe its practice can benefit the individual member as well as the group. For the individual member, it can provide a stable recovery base, a place to call “home,” a place to know and be known by other recovering addicts. For the group, it ensures the support of a core of regular, committed members. A strong home group can also foster a spirit of camaraderie among its members that makes the group more attractive to and more supportive of newcomers.

The home group provides many opportunities for us to involve ourselves in the NA Fellowship, making it a great place for us to start giving back what Narcotics Anonymous has so freely given us. In committing to our home group, we make a personal commitment to NA unity. That commitment not only enhances our own recovery, it helps ensure recovery is available for others. Our home group also gives us a place in which to participate in NA’s decision-making processes.

While the home group concept is the accepted norm in some NA communities, it’s unknown in others. There are many, many ways of talking and thinking about the bond established among addicts in their groups. Do what seems most suitable in your own NA community.

Who can be a member?

If an addict wants to be a member of Narcotics Anonymous, all an addict needs is a desire to stop using. Our Third Tradition ensures that. Whether an individual NA member chooses to be a member of a particular group as well is entirely up to that individual. Access to the meetings of some NA groups is restricted by factors beyond the control of these groups – national border-crossing laws, for instance, or prison security regulations. However, these groups themselves do not bar any NA member from joining them.

What are “open” and “closed” meetings?

“Closed” NA meetings are only for addicts or those who think they might have a drug problem. Closed meetings provide an atmosphere in which addicts can feel more certain that those attending will be able to identify with them. Newcomers may feel more comfortable at a closed meeting for the same reason. At the beginning of a closed meeting, the leader or chairperson often reads a statement explaining why the meeting is closed and offering to direct non-addicts who may be attending to an open meeting.

“Open” NA meetings are just that – open to anyone who wants to attend. Some groups have open meetings once a month to allow non-addict friends and relatives of NA members to celebrate recovery anniversaries with them. Groups that have open meetings may structure their format in such a way that opportunities for participation by non-addicts are limited only to short birthday or anniversary presentations. Such a format allows the meeting to retain its focus on recovery shared one addict to another. It should be made clear during the meeting that NA groups do not accept monetary contributions from non-addicts.

Some groups use carefully planned open meetings, particularly open speaker meetings, as an opportunity to let members of the community-at-large see for themselves what Narcotics Anonymous is all about and ask questions. At such public meetings, a statement regarding our tradition of anonymity is often read, asking visitors not to use full-face photographs, last names, or personal details when they describe the meeting to others. For more information on public meetings, see Public Relations Handbook, available through your group service representative or by writing the World Service Office.

Where can we hold NA meetings?

NA meetings can be held almost anywhere. Groups usually want to find an easily accessible public place where they can hold their meetings on a weekly basis. Facilities run by public agencies and religious and civic organizations often have rooms for rent at moderate rates that will meet a group’s needs. Others in your NA community may already be aware of appropriate space available for your meeting; speak with them.

Most meeting facilities will be very cooperative and generous. Even though such facilities may want to donate meeting space to us, our Seventh Tradition encourages our groups to be self-supporting by paying all our own expenses, including our rent. Some facilities may prefer their rent to be paid in literature or other services.

Before securing a location, it may be well to consider whether or not the room will be accessible to addicts with physical limitations. Does the building have ramps, elevators with wide doors, and bathroom facilities able to accommodate someone in a wheelchair? Is adequate parking and unloading space available? There are other similar considerations your group may wish to make its self aware of. For more information on reaching out and serving addicts with additional needs, write to the World Service Office.

It’s generally recommended that group meetings not be held in members’ homes. Most groups find it desirable to hold their meetings in public facilities for a variety of reasons. Stable meetings held in public places tend to enhance NA’s credibility in the community. Because of varying work and vacation schedules, it is often difficult to maintain consistent times for meetings held in individuals’ homes. Holding a meeting in an individual’s home may affect the willingness of some members to attend. Although some groups may hold their first few meetings in a member’s home, it’s generally recommended that they relocate their meetings to public facilities as soon as possible.

Holding regular NA group meetings in some types of facilities – addiction treatment centers, clubhouses, or political party headquarters, for instance – can compromise the independent identity of the group. Before deciding to locate your meeting in such a facility, your group may wish to consider a few questions: Is the facility open to

any addict wishing to attend the meeting? Does the facility administration place any restrictions on your use of the room that could challenge any of our traditions? Is it clear to all concerned that your NA group, not the facility, is sponsoring the meeting? Do you have a clear rental agreement with the facility management, and is the rent you're being charged moderate enough to allow your group to contribute funds to the rest of the NA service structure? Are so many of your community's NA meetings already located in this particular facility that, if it were to fold, your NA community as a whole would be crippled? These are some of the questions a group should carefully consider before deciding where to hold an NA meeting.

What kind of meeting format can we use?

Groups use a variety of formats to enhance the atmosphere of recovery in their meetings. Most meetings last an hour or an hour and a half. Some groups have a single format for their meetings. Other groups have a schedule of rotating formats: one week a step study, the next week a speaker meeting, and so forth. Still others divide their large meetings into several sessions after the meeting has opened, each with its own format. Here are a few basic descriptions of some of the meeting formats that, with variations, seem to be among the most common. For reference, we've also included a sample meeting format at the end of this booklet.

Participation meetings

The leader opens the meeting up for members to share on any subject related to recovery.

Topic discussion meetings

The leader selects a particular recovery-related topic for discussion or asks someone else to provide a topic.

Study meetings

There are a number of different types of study meetings. Some read a portion of a NA approved book or pamphlet each week and discuss it – for example, a Basic Text study. Others have discussions focusing on the Twelve Steps or the Twelve Traditions.

Speaker meetings

Some meetings ask a single speaker to share his or her recovery story or experience in a particular aspect of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Others ask two or three speakers to talk for shorter periods of time. Still others use a combination format with a speaker sharing first and a topic discussion afterward.

Newcomer meetings

These meetings are often conducted by two or three of the group's more experienced members. These members share their experience with addiction and with recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. If time allows, the meeting is then opened for questions from the newer members.

Newcomer meetings are sometimes held a half hour before or after the group's regular meeting. Other groups conduct them as smaller sections of a large meeting. Still others hold a newcomer meeting one day of the week, their regular meeting another. Whatever the format, newcomer meetings provide a means for your group to give addicts new to NA an introduction to the basics of recovery.

Question-and-answer meetings

At Q&A meetings, people are asked to think of questions related to recovery and the fellowship, write those questions down, and place them in "the ask-it basket." The leader of the meeting pulls a slip of paper from the basket, reads the question, and asks for someone to share their experience related to it. After one or two members have shared, the leader selects another question from the basket, and so forth, until the meeting is over.

Developing your format

These are basic descriptions of just a few of the many different types of formats used in NA meetings; the variations on even these few format types can be endless. Feel free to innovate. Vary the format in whatever way seems to best suit the "personality" of your group and the needs of addicts in your community.

Often, a meeting will grow far larger than the group originally anticipated. A meeting format that worked well for a small meeting may not work as well for a larger one. When one of your group's meetings experiences that kind of growth, you may want to consider making some adjustments in your format, perhaps even replacing it altogether. Some groups experiencing such growth they break their larger meetings down into a number of small meetings held simultaneously in different rooms. Doing this gives each member a better chance to participate in whichever meeting that he or she attends. Many groups use a different type of format in each of these smaller meetings.

What kinds of literature should we use?

NA World Services produces a number of different kinds of publications. However, only NA-approved literature is appropriate for reading in Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Selections from NA-approved books and pamphlets are usually read at the beginning of an NA meeting, and some meetings use them as the core of their format. NA-approved literature represents the widest range of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

Groups often make other kinds of NA publications available on the literature tables at their meetings: various NA service bulletins and handbooks, The NA Way Magazine, and local NA newsletters. However, literature of any sort produced by other twelve-step fellowships or other organizations outside NA is inappropriate for display on our literature tables or reading at our meetings. To do either implicitly implies an endorsement of an outside enterprise, directly contradicting NA's Sixth Tradition.

What is a group business meeting?

The purpose of the group business meeting is fairly self-explanatory: to conduct the business of the group in such a way that the group remains effective in carrying the recovery message. Some groups hold business meetings on a regular basis; others only call them when something specific comes up that needs the group's attention. Some of the questions a typical group business meeting addresses are:

- Is the group effective in carrying the NA message?
- Are newcomers and visitors being made welcome?
- Do solutions for problems at recent meetings need to be sought?
- Is the meeting format providing sufficient direction?
- Is attendance steady or growing?
- Are there good relations between the group and the facility in which the meeting is held?
- Between the group and the community?
- Are the group's funds being used wisely?
- Is there enough money being donated at meetings to meet the group's needs and also provide for contributions to the rest of the service structure?
- Are literature and refreshment supplies holding up?
- Is there a service vacancy in the group?
- Has the area, the region, or world services asked the group for advice, support, or direction?

Group business meetings are usually held before or after a regular recovery meeting so that the recovery meeting remains focused on its primary purpose. Group members are encouraged to attend, raise questions, and participate in discussions related to the group's work. The group selects someone to lead the business meeting. Group officers give reports on their areas of responsibility, and subjects of importance to the group are raised for discussion.

The group, as the foundation of the NA service structure, is guided by both the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for NA Service. A good understanding of both will help a group business meeting stay on course. NA's step and tradition book, *It Works: How and Why*, provides a wealth of information about the Twelve Traditions. Interested members can read essays on the Twelve Concepts in *A Guide to Local Services*.

How does the work get done?

Setting up chairs, buying literature, arranging for speakers, cleaning up after the meeting, paying the bills, preparing refreshments – most of the things an NA group does to host its meetings are pretty simple. But if one person had to do them all, those simple things would quickly become overwhelming. That's why a group elects officers (or, in the language of the Second Tradition, trusted servants): to help divide the work among the group's members.

Electing officers is one way the group practices NA's tradition of self-support: "Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting..." Sometimes it seems that groups run all by themselves, but the fact is that someone has to do the work needed to support the group. By dividing the work, the group ensures that the group as a whole is self-supporting and that the group's burdens don't settle unevenly on the shoulders of just one or two individuals.

Electing officers provides the group with an opportunity to strengthen its members' recovery. When group members agree to serve as secretary or treasurer or tea- or coffee-maker, that acceptance of responsibility often helps advance their personal growth. It also gives them a chance to help enhance the group's ability to carry the recovery message.

You don't have to be a group officer to be of service to the group. Every week, there's work to be done: helping set up the meeting, greeting newcomers, cleaning up, bringing refreshments, and other things of that sort. Asking new members to help with these kinds of jobs can make them feel a part of the group more quickly.

How do we choose group officers?

When a vacancy occurs in a group office, the group holds a business meeting to consider how to fill it. Groups should arrange their elections in such a way that they don't have all their trusted servants leaving office at the same time.

There are a couple of things to think about when looking for a group officer. One is maturity in recovery. When those new in recovery are elected to a position, they may find themselves deprived of time and energy they need for their early recovery. Group members with a year or two clean are probably already well-established in their personal recovery. They are also more likely than new members to be familiar with NA's traditions and service concepts as well as group procedures.

A second thing to consider is consistent participation in your group. Do the nominees attend your group's recovery meetings regularly? Do they take an active part in your group's business meetings? Have they lived up to previous service commitments they've made? Further questions may occur to you as you read the essay in *A Guide to Local Services on NA's Fourth Concept for Service*, which squarely addresses the importance of NA leadership and the qualities to consider in selecting trusted servants.

Finally, we encourage you to remember that you're selecting group officers, first, to benefit the common welfare of your group. While service commitments often benefit those who accept them, that should not be the primary reason for selecting one individual or another to serve as an officer of your group. As the First Tradition says, in part, "Our common welfare should come first."

What officers does a group need?

In different areas the work is divided differently, and the particular jobs are sometimes called by different names. What's important is not who does the job or what the job is called, but that the job gets done. Following are general descriptions of some of the most common service positions NA groups have. For each of these positions, your group should establish realistic terms of service and clean-time requirements.

Secretary

The secretary (sometimes called the chairperson) arranges the affairs of the group, often by asking other group members to help out. One of the first jobs for a new secretary is registering the group's current mailing address and meeting information with the area service committee secretary and the World Service Office. When a new group secretary or GSR takes office or there is a change in the group's mailing address or the time or location of a group meeting, both the area committee and World Service Office should be informed. Other things a group secretary is responsible for may include:

- Opening the meeting room well before the meeting is scheduled to begin, setting up chairs and tables (if necessary), and cleaning and locking the room after the meeting is over.
- Arranging a table with NA books and pamphlets, local meeting list sheets, NA activity fliers, service bulletins, The NA Way Magazine, and NA newsletters.
- Making tea or coffee.
- Buying refreshments and other supplies.
- Selecting meeting leaders and speakers.

- Keeping a list of group members' recovery anniversaries, if the group wishes.
- Organizing group business meetings.
- And doing whatever else needs to be done.

Many groups break all these jobs down separately: someone to open and close the room, another person responsible for refreshments, a third to take care of the literature table, and so forth. Groups that host more than one meeting will often have a different person responsible for all these jobs at each of their meetings.

Treasurer

All groups, even those that host more than one meeting, elect one group treasurer. When the group consolidates responsibility for all its funds under a single treasurer, the group makes it easier to account for the contributions it receives and expenses it pays than if it gives a number of individuals responsibility for its money. Groups that host two or more weekly meetings should make arrangements for contributions to be passed to the group treasurer shortly after each meeting.

Because of the added responsibility of handling money associated with service as a group treasurer, it's important that groups look carefully at those they elect as treasurers. If the group elects someone who is not capable of handling the responsibilities of the job, then the group is at least partly responsible if money is stolen, supplies aren't purchased, or funds aren't properly accounted for. It's recommended that groups elect treasurers who are financially secure and are good at managing their personal finances. Because of the need to keep consistent records, it's also strongly recommended that groups elect treasurers to serve for a full year.

What do group treasurers do? They count the money that members have contributed at each meeting, always asking another member to confirm their count. They take special care not to confuse the group's money with their own personal funds. They pay expenses, keep good, simple records, and regularly provide financial reports to their groups. The group treasurer's job requires close attention to details. To help the treasurer in managing those details, a Treasurer's Handbook is available from your area committee or from the World Service Office.

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"² 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.

Rotation and continuity

Rotation is the practice many groups have of electing new people to service positions at set intervals rather than having the same person serve in the same position year after year. Rotation offers very definite benefits for the groups who practice it. By providing diversity in leadership, it helps a group stay fresh and energetic. It provides assurance that no one individual exercises so much influence that the group becomes a mere extension of his or her personality. The practice of rotation also reinforces the NA emphasis on service rather than the servant, consistent with our belief in the value of spiritual anonymity – what's important is the job being done, not the particular person doing it.

Some groups allow their members to serve more than one term in any given position so that the group can take advantage of its trusted servants' experience. Once group officers have completed their terms, rotation allows them to step aside for a time or accept responsibilities elsewhere in the NA service structure, giving other members the chance to serve the group.

The impact of rotation on the stability of the group is balanced by the continuing presence of its long-term group members. Those who have served in the past as group officers and continue to maintain an active role in the life of the group can provide much-needed continuity and maturity of perspective to a growing group's discussions. They can serve as the group's memory, ensuring that the group never has to "reinvent the wheel." They can also lend a hand to new officers and temporarily pitch in to relieve overloaded trusted servants.

What responsibilities does an NA group have?

The first and most important responsibility of any NA group – its "primary purpose," according to the Fifth Tradition – is "to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." And the single most important thing a group can do to fulfill that primary purpose is to conduct meetings that provide a welcoming atmosphere in which NA recovery can be effectively shared between addicts. Groups conduct the details of their meetings in very different ways, but all of them seek the same end: to make recovery from addiction available to any addict in the community who seeks it.

As the foundation of the worldwide NA service structure, groups have another responsibility, to help their members develop an understanding of the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for NA Service. By doing so, groups take part in the continuing evolution of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as well as providing for themselves an understanding of how the highest ideals of our fellowship can be applied in their activities.

How can our group support other NA services?

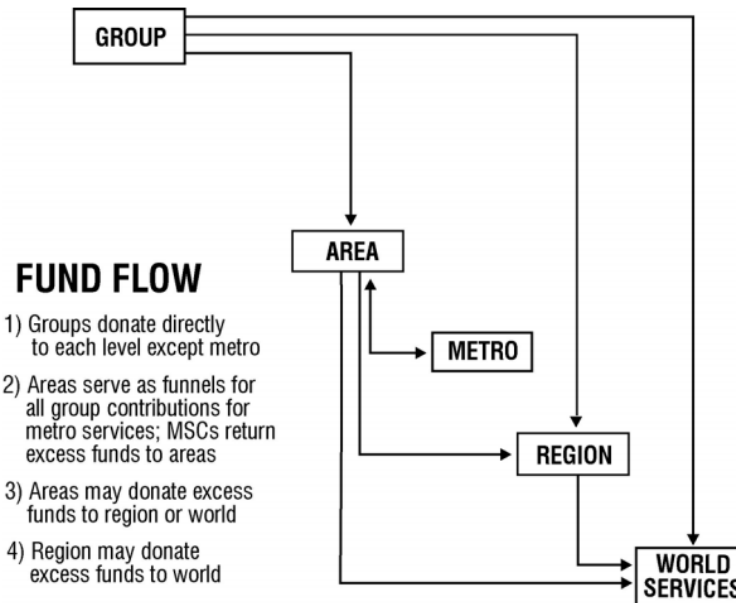
The Second Concept for NA Service says that the NA groups bear the final responsibility and authority for all the services of the extended NA Fellowship. Each group should send stable, active GSRs to participate in the work of the service structure on the group's behalf. And each group should consider how best to provide the funds the NA service structure needs to do its work.

2 In the "A Guide to Local Service" chapter on the area service committee, see the section titled "The Sharing Session."

After paying the bills, most groups set a small amount of money aside to use in case an emergency arises. But, oddly enough, groups usually find that too much money in the till causes far more trouble than too little money. For this reason, we encourage your group never to hold large sums of money in reserve.

At least once a year, the group service representative attends the regional assembly. Each group is encouraged, if at all possible, to take the necessary steps to cover the expenses associated with its GSR's attendance at the regional assembly. Some groups will choose to set aside money each month toward this expense.

After paying expenses and setting aside an emergency reserve, most groups contribute their surplus funds directly to the area committee, the regional committee, and NA World Services. For more discussion of the principles underlying group contributions to the rest of the service structure, see the essay on our fellowship's Eleventh Concept for NA Service in *A Guide to Local Services*. For assistance in managing the details of direct contributions, see the *Treasurer's Handbook*, available from your area committee or by writing our World Service Office.



How can our group better serve our community?

By its very existence, the group is already providing a substantial service to the community. It's providing the support addicts in the community need to reenter the mainstream of society. But how can a group become more effective in reaching out to addicts who've not yet found NA? There are two general ways in which a group can better serve its community: through the area service committee and through activities coordinated by the group itself.

Most NA groups are served by an area committee.³ Area service committees coordinate efforts to carry the NA message on behalf of all the groups they serve. Community public information services, telephone contact lines, and panel presentations to addicts in treatment centers and jails are three ways in which most area committees carry the message either directly to the addict who still suffers or to those who may refer an addict to an NA meeting. Your group service representative can tell you more about how you and your group can more effectively join in the work of your area service committee. For further information, see *A Guide to Local Services'* chapters on the Area Service Committee, pages 45 to 77.

Some NA groups reach out to their communities themselves, coordinating their activities with those of other groups either through their ASCs or through local cooperative councils (see the "Area Committees in Rural Communities" section toward the end of the Guide's chapter on the Area Service Committee). This is particularly the case in small communities and in areas where Narcotics Anonymous is very new. An NA group in a rural town obviously does not have as many people or as much money available as an area service committee in a large city, but opportunities exist nonetheless for carrying the recovery message effectively to others who may be seeking the solution we've found. If your group needs help in reaching out to the community, write to the World Service Office.

3 If you don't know how to contact the nearest area service committee, contact the World Service Office.

How can our group solve its problems?

NA groups encounter a wide variety of problems: meetings are disrupted; treatment centers bus in large numbers of clients when the group is ill-prepared to receive them; the format goes stale; the clarity of our message becomes an issue; the coffee tastes like industrial-strength cleanser; the readings at the beginning of the meeting go on, and on, and on. These are just a few of the problems the average NA group must deal with from time to time. This guide doesn't "lay down the law" on how to deal with these problems. It does point out some effective tools group members can use in solving their own problems.

The best source of solutions for the group's problems, in most cases, is the group itself. "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps," our Twelfth Step says, "we tried... to practice these principles in all our affairs." When we collectively apply the insight received from that spiritual awakening to our group's problems, we call that group conscience. Common sense, open minds, calm discussion, accurate information, mutual respect, and healthy personal recovery enable a group to deal effectively with almost anything that comes its way.

There are a number of printed resources the group may choose to use in gathering the information it needs to reach sound decisions. The Basic Text and our step and tradition book, "It Works: How and Why", both provide a great deal of information about how NA's Twelve Traditions can be applied to given situations. The chapter in A Guide to Local Services on the Twelve Concepts for NA Service gives in-depth explanations of the essential ideals underlying service activities in Narcotics Anonymous. The NA Way Magazine often has articles addressing problems the group might face. Also bulletins available from the World Service Office deal in detail with a variety of subjects relating to the group's work.

Another source of information the group might tap is the experience of other groups in its area or region. If the group has a problem and can't come up with its own solution, it might want to ask its group service representative to share that problem at the next area service committee meeting. Area committees set aside a portion of every meeting for exactly that purpose. And while the area committee can't tell a group what to do, it does provide a forum in which groups can share with one another what's worked for them. Workshops conducted by the regional service committee provide the same kind of opportunity on a larger scale. They'll be happy to put you in touch. For details on how the area or regional committee can help with group problems, see the chapters on those committees in A Guide to Local Services.

Also available from WSO:

Narcotics Anonymous, the Basic Text of Recovery
A Guide to Local Services in NA
Public Relations Handbook
Hospitals and Institutions Handbook
Handbook for NA Literature Committees
Treasurer's Handbook, Revised
Group Treasurer's Workbook, Revised
"Hey! What's the Basket For?" and
Self-Support: Principle and Practice,
two pamphlets on NA's tradition of self-support.
For more information contact:

Fellowship Services
World Service Office
PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9099 USA
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Website: www.na.org

The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Twelve Steps reprinted for adaptation by permission of AA World Services, Inc.

The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.
2. 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.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Twelve Traditions reprinted for adaptation by permission of AA World Services, Inc.

Group service representative (GSR)

The GSR is responsible for the following:

- ◆ Attending the area service committee (ASC) meeting regularly
- ◆ Serving as a member on ASC subcommittees
- ◆ Serving as a liaison between the group and the area
- ◆ Sharing responsibilities with the GSR-Alternate
- ◆ Keeping the group accurately registered with the World Service Office

The most important facet of this position is to be the communicator for the group. The group service representative is the vital link between the group and the rest of the fellowship. The GSR is the formal line of communication whose purpose it is to represent the group's conscience in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole. This duty requires the representative to provide information to the group about developments in the worldwide NA Fellowship and to share with the area any activities, strengths, or problems of the group. It is important that the GSR not break the chain of NA communication.

Group service representative-alternate (GSR-Alternate)

The position of GSR-Alternate parallels that of GSR except that it is a two-year commitment, with the first year spent in training and the second year as GSR. It is imperative that the GSRAlternate attend each ASC meeting in order to learn and to provide the GSR with support. The GSR-Alternate also acts as GSR in the absence of the GSR.

Additional ways to serve

The previously mentioned positions are elected trusted servants with definite terms of service. Another way we can serve is as a speaker or leader; these trusted servants are generally chosen by the group secretary. Throughout the worldwide fellowship there are numerous terms which are used and different ways of conducting meetings. Our Fourth Tradition promises us autonomy as long as these matters do not affect other groups or NA as a whole. This variety enriches our fellowship and increases our effectiveness. Our primary purpose is always to carry the message of recovery to addicts who still suffer.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

Introduction

Narcotics Anonymous, as a fellowship, is defined by its principles. Our Twelve Steps detail our program for personal recovery. Our Twelve Traditions relate experience that can help NA groups maintain their unity. And our Twelve Concepts are guiding principles for our service structure. The concepts summarize the hard-won experience of our fellowship's first forty years with such things as responsibility, authority, delegation, leadership, accountability, spiritual guidance, participation, communication, open-mindedness, fairness, and finances. The Twelve Concepts, together, help ensure that our fellowship's service structure remains forever devoted to service, not government.

The Twelve Concepts for NA Service are a relatively recent addition to our fellowship's body of guiding principles. Since NA's inception in the early 1950s, we have used the Twelve Steps as guidance in our personal recovery and the Twelve Traditions to steer our groups. The traditions empower the groups to create a service structure, directly responsible to them. The traditions also offer fundamental ideals to guide all our collective efforts. Our common welfare and unity, the ultimate authority of a loving God, leadership as service instead of government, group autonomy, our fellowship's primary purpose, cooperation without affiliation, self-support, the employment of special workers, attraction rather than promotion, public anonymity – without a doubt, the principles of our Twelve Traditions offer guidance for everything we do as a fellowship. Yet the Twelve Traditions themselves were designed especially to guide the NA groups; they were never intended to provide our service structure with the specific direction it needs to serve by. The Twelve Concepts for NA Service were created to meet that need.

Beginning with Concept One, they describe the creation of the service structure by the groups, the groups' final responsibility and authority for NA services, and the practical authority delegated by the groups to our fellowship's boards and committees for the development and maintenance of services on behalf of NA as a whole. The concepts recognize that service authority must be delegated with care, highlighting the qualities to be considered in selecting responsible NA leaders and emphasizing the importance of regular, open communication throughout our service structure in maintaining service accountability. To minimize confusion in assigning, fulfilling, and answering for NA services, the concepts recommend that each service responsibility be clearly defined right from the start. In addressing the decision-making processes used in our services, the concepts recall our spiritual foundation as well as the practical and ethical wisdom of inclusiveness and open-mindedness. To guard against the misuse of delegated authority, individual trusted servants are provided with a grievance process. The responsible management of NA funds, often a sore spot in service discussions, is dealt with directly. And finally, just as the traditions conclude by summarizing all twelve in a single word, anonymity, so the Twelfth Concept offers a fundamental ideal that underlies all the concepts: "our structure should always be one of service, never of government."

Now, the Twelve Concepts for NA Service are yours, the NA Fellowship's. The concepts offer practical guidance for the conduct of our services, from the group all the way to world level. How "valid" are the Twelve Concepts? Your experience in applying them will determine their validity. They are valid only to the extent that they prove helpful. However, just as the steps relate our collective experience in recovery, and the traditions our experience in group unity, the Twelve Concepts summarize a vast amount of experience in NA service, experience we would all do well to consider and apply wherever appropriate.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service

The Twelve Traditions of NA have guided our groups well in the conduct of their individual affairs, and they are the foundation for NA services. They have steered us away from many pitfalls that could have meant our collapse. Our various service units serve, for example, they do not govern; we stay out of public debate; we neither endorse nor oppose any of the many causes that our members may feel strongly about; our approach to addiction is a non-professional one; we are fully self-supporting. The traditions have provided our fellowship with essential guidance throughout its development, and they continue to be indispensable.

The Twelve Concepts for NA Service described here are intended to be practically applied to our service structure at every level. The spiritual ideals of our steps and traditions provide the basis for these concepts, which are tailored to the specific needs of our fellowship's service structure. The concepts encourage our groups to more readily achieve our traditions' ideals, and our service structure to function effectively and responsibly.

These concepts have been crafted from our experience. They are not intended to be taken as the "law" for NA service, but simply as guiding principles. We find that our services are stabilized when we conscientiously apply these concepts, much as our steps have stabilized our lives and our traditions have stabilized and unified our groups. The Twelve Concepts guide our services and help ensure that the message of Narcotics Anonymous is available to all addicts who have a desire to stop using and begin practicing our way of life.

1. To fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf of NA as a whole.
2. The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.
3. The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.
4. Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.
5. For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.
6. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.
7. 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.
8. Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.
9. All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.
10. Any member of a service body can petition that body for the redress of personal grievances, without fear of reprisal.
11. NA funds are to be used to further our primary purpose, and must be managed responsibly.
12. In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government.

For a more in-depth study on the Twelve Concepts for NA Service please refer to either

http://na.org/admin/include/spaw2/uploads/pdf/litfiles/us_english/Booklet/Twelve%20Concepts.pdf on the web or Twelve Concepts for NA Service from printed literature.

From the MHASC Guidelines

ARTICLE - 8**VOTING PROCEDURES ON PROPOSALS:**

- ◆ Quorum is comprised of 50% of the average number of GSR's attending the MHASC over the past three months.
- ◆ All proposals are decided through Consensus-Based Decision Making.
- ◆ Any NA member is welcome to attend the MHASC, introduce proposals and participate in discussion.

Consensus-Based Decision Making

The use of Consensus-Based Decision Making admittedly takes longer to achieve an outcome to an issue, called a proposal. But the results are understood by all in attendance at a more significant level of comprehension. In addition, any proposal can be easily changed or modified as discussion progresses.

Making a motion, requiring a second and so forth are no longer needed. Decision Makers become a single point of accountability to those that they represent (see 12 Concepts of NA Service).

Consensus-Based Decision Making Process

1. Bring proposals to the MHASC. Formulate clear proposals in advance with as much communication and collaboration as possible to facilitate the consensus decision process.
2. Maker of the proposal speaks first to the intent.
3. Open up the floor first for clarifying questions about the proposal (not a debate on the merits but a brief session to be sure everyone understands the proposal).
4. Facilitator asks whether anyone has reservations about the proposal. These are heard and they may be answered or the proposal may be modified.
5. Once all reservations have been heard and answered in this way, Facilitator asks, "Do we have consensus?"
This has since changed to a simple positional role call however this has not been included formally in the guidelines.

Participants respond in one of four ways:

- a. Assent.

This means that the Decision Maker supports the proposal, all things considered. It may not mean that the Decision Maker is in agreement with every aspect, but that the Decision Maker has heard the discussion and has had a chance to participate in the process of finalizing the proposal, and is prepared to support the final proposal. Assent is signified by remaining silent.

- b. Assent with Reservations.

This option is not materially different from the Assent option but is included as a way of giving Decision Makers a place to stand when they do not want to object more strongly, but they do want to note that they have reservations. Assent with Reservations is done by the Decision Maker raising their hand and simply saying when the facilitator calls on them, "Assent with Reservations." The assumption is that the reservations have been heard already, and the Decision Maker is simply noting that they can support the proposal and continue to have these reservations.

c. Stand Aside.

A common misconception about the Stand Aside option is that it is similar to an abstention. It is not. It is more accurate to say it is similar to a "no" vote. It is a statement that the Decision Maker does not support the proposal, but the Decision Maker's objection is not of the nature or the severity to warrant a block. Should the number of Decision Makers opting to be Stand Asides reach 15% or more, this will indicate a consensus too weak to adopt the proposal. The proposal is then either dropped or delegated to the maker of the proposal or an Ad Hoc Committee for reworking.

d. Block.

This option is also commonly misunderstood. Given that a proposal can be defeated by a sufficient number of Stand Asides, the Block should be an extremely rare step taken only when a participant honestly believes that one of the Traditions or Concepts is directly violated by this proposal. A Decision Maker who blocks must be able to articulate which Tradition or Concept or Spiritual principle fundamental to NA is violated by the specific proposal.

Adoption from Area Level Inventory and proposals that have amended the process

Process of Hearing Discussion on Proposals

3 Pro Proposal statements and 3 Contra Proposal Statements shall be heard

Discussion can be facilitated by either of the Chair, Vice-Chair or an appointed Facilitator.

Whoever facilitates the Discussion must do so without agenda and excuse themselves of their positioning to ensure impartiality.

CBDM Chart

CDBM Chart



(Relevant Portions)
GSR Orientation Packet
Colorado Regional Assembly
July 20, 2008

<http://www.nacolorado.org/region/GSROrientation.pdf>

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Introduction

The purpose of this document and presentation is to allow all those who attend the Regional Assembly the chance to become familiar with the terms we use, how our service structure is organized and how the members of the Colorado Regional Service Committee do business. This document and presentation is in no way meant to replace the service literature that is currently available to our fellowship. It is the author's hope that it will inspire further research and discussion by all of those in attendance today. All quoted material is presented 'as-is', there has been no attempt to correct usage, syntactical or grammatical errors.

Preliminaries

Alphabet Soup – Making Sense of All Those Acronyms

GSR

The Group Service Representative is the go-between for each Narcotics Anonymous Group and the various levels of our service structure. "These GSRs form the foundation of our service structure. GSRs provide constant, active influence over discussions being carried on within our 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. 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." Guide to Local Service pg. 36

GSRA

The Group Service Representative Alternate is the member who attends service meetings when the GSR is unavailable. Many groups use this position to allow the member addicit the chance to learn about service while preparing to take over for the GSR at the end of their commitment.

ASC

The Area Service Committee is the committee that does most of the work of the fellowship in providing services. This acronym is often added to a an area's name to simplify references in guidelines and correspondence; for example the Pikes Peak Area Service Committee may refer to itself as PPASC or PPASCNA where the NA stands for Narcotics Anonymous.

RSC

The Regional Service Committee is a service body to pool and develop local service responsibilities. This acronym is often added to a region's name to simplify references in guidelines and correspondence; for example the Colorado Regional Service Committee may refer to itself as CRSC or CRSCNA where the NA stands for Narcotics Anonymous.

CRCNA

The Colorado Regional Convention of Narcotics Anonymous is the annual celebration of our recovery. The Convention is a sub-committee of the Colorado Regional Service Committee and takes direction from and is responsible to that body for decisions made as part of the convention cycle.

RCM

The Regional Committee Member is the representative of each area on the regional service committee. "They serve as the core of the regional service committee... RCMs keep their areas in touch with the larger world of NA by providing information in neighboring areas, functions being sponsored by the regional committee, reports relevant to subcommittee affairs and important issues being discussed at various levels of service." Guide to Local Service pg. 51

RD

The Regional Delegate is the representative of the region who attends and is a full participant at the World Service Conference carrying their region's conscience. "The regional delegate serves as the primary contact between NA's world services and the local NA community. On one hand, the delegate provides information on current world projects to the regional committee. On the other, the delegate offers local perspective to the work of world services." Guide to Local Service pg. 89

RDA

The Regional Delegate Alternate may be looked at as our region's Regional Delegate in training and will participate in the World Service Conference in the event that the Regional Delegate is unable to attend or is not present on the floor of the World Service Conference. "The delegate often consults with the alternate, asking for different perspectives on world service affairs and seeks to involve the alternate in helping carry the workload." Guide to Local Service pg.90

RMFNA

The Rocky Mountain Forum of Narcotics Anonymous is: "a problem discussion and solution clearinghouse for the Narcotics Anonymous regions located in Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming."

<http://www.rmfn.org/mission.php>

WSC

The World Service Conference is an event held in even numbered years that brings the regional delegates, from every seated region in the world, and the World Board together to make decisions that affect the direction our fellowship will take over the next two years. The next World Service Conference was held in California, April 25, 2008 through May3, 2008.

"In each biennial meeting of the World Service Conference, our fellowship comes together in one place at one time to share experience, strength, and hope with each other. The purpose remains to solve common problems among those already here and fortunate enough to have discovered this new way of life and – more importantly – to redouble our efforts to carry the NA message to the addict who still suffers.

The World Service Conference is held every two years. It typically takes place the last week in April within seventy-five miles of the World Service Office. Regional delegates, together with members of the World Board and the executive director of the World Service Office, meet to discuss questions of significance to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. In addition, the conference meeting includes members of the Human Resource Panel and the two WSC Co-facilitators. All are fully funded to attend the weeklong meeting." A Guide to World Services pp 6-7, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

CAR

Conference Agenda Report is the document that outlines for the fellowship those issues to be discussed at the next World Service Conference. It is generally available in late November preceding the World Service Conference. For example the Conference Agenda Report for the 2008 World Service Conference was available in November 2007.

"The report contains the proposals and motions that the fellowship is being asked to consider and form a fellowship wide group conscience on. One copy of the report is mailed to each voting participant of the conference, each RD alternate, and the mailing address of each region.

The Conference Agenda Report includes reports, proposals, and motions from the World Board and any proposals or motions submitted from regions.

Statements of the financial impact of each motion appearing in the CAR will be included from the World Board. Reports may include a summary of events leading to the presentation of the proposals that are included. Material presented to the fellowship for approval will be written in a form that lends itself to a yes/no vote and specifies the

conceptual changes involved to affirm and support this process. Only material approved by the World Board is sent out to the fellowship in 'approval form.' All motions submitted to be placed in the Conference Agenda Report that attempt to change, amend, or delete WSC policies, shall include those policies, or sections of those policies, which each motion attempts to amend. Further, it shall be the responsibility of the maker of the motion to provide this information along with the motion." A Guide to World Services pp 11-12, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

WCNA

The World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous is a celebration of our recovery that rotates around the world to allow addicts worldwide to attend. The convention is generally held in odd numbered years, and the next convention is August 20 – 23, 2009 in Barcelona, Spain, registration will begin in December 2008. The World Board is responsible for the convention and acts in concert with local support committees to have an event that is memorable for all who attend. "The primary purpose of the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous (WCNA) is to provide a special celebration of our recovery, a reflection of our diversity, and a demonstration of our unity." A Guide to World Services pg 34, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

WSO

World Service Office is the place where the special workers employed by Narcotics Anonymous Worldwide Services actually carry out the duties of providing services to our worldwide fellowship.

"The purpose of the World Service Office (WSO), our main service center, is to carry out the directives of the World Service Conference in matters that relate to communications and information for the Fellowship of NA, its services, groups, and members. The World Service Office achieves this purpose by maintaining correspondence with NA groups and service committees, by printing and distributing WSC approved literature, and by maintaining the archives and files of Narcotics Anonymous." A Guide to World Services pg 3, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

"The World Service Office is currently comprised of our Chatsworth headquarters, a branch office in Brussels, Belgium, and a distribution center in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada."

<http://www.na.org/reports/ar/2004/NAWS.pdf>

NAWS

Narcotics Anonymous World Services is the legal entity that allows our fellowship to do business with the public in general and provide services and support to the addicts of our fellowship worldwide.

Narcotics Anonymous World Services operates the World Service Office in all its locations worldwide, and publishes and distributes our literature.

"NA World Services, Inc. employs forty-nine full-time employees and two part-time employees."

<http://www.na.org/reports/ar/2004/NAWS.pdf>

FIPT

The Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust is the legal document that protects and preserves our fellowship's intellectual property (our literature and logos) in a manner that is recognized by legal entities throughout the world.

It is a set of documents describing how NA's literature and logos are managed and protected for the greatest benefit of the fellowship as a whole; and contains its own glossary of terms. It was approved by the fellowship in April 1993. http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

"The purpose of the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust is to lay out the collective decisions the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship has made over the years concerning its literature and logos. Anyone who has any questions about how NA literature is to be developed and approved, who "owns" it, how it may be changed and who may

change it, who may print it, and what is to be done with the money resulting from its sale can easily refer to the Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust. In this one comprehensive document appear the policies our entire fellowship has created to preserve the integrity of its published message and the accountability of its publishing services.” <http://www.na.org/legal/fipt93b.htm>

CAL

Conference Approved Service Literature is literature that is intended for the service bodies within our service structure that has been approved by the World Service Conference. An example is the Guide to World Services in Narcotics Anonymous (http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf).

WB

The World Board is comprised of members of the fellowship elected at each World Service Conference to six-year terms. Their terms are staggered to provide continuity of the board. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms (twelve years) on the World Board. Any region or Zonal Forum may nominate members for consideration by the conference. Human Resources Panel also nominates members for consideration of the World Service Conference.

“The World Board will consist of up to eighteen members elected by at least 60% of the World Service Conference. These conference-elected members will have equal participation rights, including voting on the board and at the World Service Conference. Board members may not, however, vote on items that have been submitted to the groups in the Conference Agenda Report or on any other items of Old Business at the World Service Conference.”

A Guide to World Services pg. 14 http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

World Pool

The World Pool is comprised of members of the World Fellowship who volunteer their abilities and skills for World Service Conference projects and to be considered for the World Board, or the Human Resources Panel.

“The purpose of the World Pool is to constitute a pool of trusted servants willing and qualified to serve on the World Board, the WSC Cofacilitator positions, the Human Resource Panel, and the World Board’s committee and workgroup projects. The pool consists of a compilation of information about members, demonstrating a variety of recovery and service-related experience, as well as any skills necessary for the successful completion of world level assignments.” A Guide to World Services pg. 18, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

HRP

The Human Resources Panel is a panel comprised of addicts who facilitate the selection of World Board Nominees World Service Conference Co-Facilitators and Human Resource Panel members. Human Resources Panel members are elected by a simple majority of the World Service Conference participants.

“...Facilitates an election/selection process that will allow the World Service Conference to base trusted servant choices upon the principles of ability and experience, helps to allow members to be nominated from around the world without having to be present at the conference to receive due consideration, and create a more open opportunity for world services to benefit from our collective resources by providing an established and recognized process by which to do so.” A Guide to World Services pg. 3, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

CBDM

Consensus Based Decision Making is a spiritual based method of committees and service bodies to arrive at a decision. The theory is that decisions made in this manner will let all participants walk away feeling like they can fully support those decisions.

Service Structure -- The Inverted Pyramid

The Service structure of our fellowship allows us to further our primary purpose – carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. We rely on our members to create and maintain this structure on the local level. The discussion below goes from the top of the pyramid – the recovering addict– to the bottom – World Services. It is intended to allow those who are unfamiliar with our service structure to understand what service is all about and how the individual addict fits in.

The Addict

The entire service structure of Narcotics Anonymous depends on our membership – addicts who have chosen a new way to live. Any addict regardless of clean time can be of service to our fellowship. Things as simple as giving encouragement to the addict just walking in the door for the first time, providing rides to a meeting or simply giving another member a hug are examples of service to our fellowship. On a more concrete level many groups offer opportunities to serve, such as coffee-makers or greeters, that are available to any addict regardless of clean time. Without willing addicts to fill these positions of service, our fellowship becomes one of US and THEM, those who serve and those who don't.

The Group

The Group is the fundamental element of our service structure. Our groups provide regularly scheduled NA meetings and allow us to recover in the company of other recovering addicts. Although an addict can recover without the support of a group, it is difficult; therefore, service to our groups in any capacity is actually service to us. Someone needs to open our doors, make coffee, run our meetings, and be there for the still suffering addict. If we neglect to be of service to our groups, the group may survive but will hardly thrive. The strength of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole depends on the strength of our groups and that strength depends on addicts becoming willing to serve in whatever capacity they are able to. One of the most important service positions of the group is the Group Service Representative. This member has the responsibility to carry their group's collective conscience to the rest of our service structure through the Area Service Committee and periodic Regional Assemblies. It is through our GSRs that we give direction to our service structure as a whole. Just as the group supports its members, the rest of the service structure is intended to support our groups in fulfilling our primary purpose.

“NA groups are formed by addicts who wish to support one another in carrying the message directly to other addicts and in participating in the activities and services of NA as a whole.

NA groups – not NA meetings – are the foundation of the NA service structure. Together, the NA groups are responsible for making service decisions that directly affect them and what they do in meetings as well as those that fundamentally affect the identity of Narcotics Anonymous.” Guide to Local Service pg. 27

“NA groups are local, informal associations of recovering addicts. They are the foundation of the NA service structure. Groups are formed for the primary purpose of carrying the NA message of recovery, and all of their activities should reflect that purpose. Conducting Narcotics Anonymous meetings is the primary activity of an NA group.” A Guide to World Services pg. 1,

http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

Area Service Committees

The Area Service Committee is our interface between our groups and the community in general. While our groups build and maintain an atmosphere of recovery for addicts in general, it is our Area Service Committees that carries our message out to the community so they may learn what we offer and where we offer it. Among the responsibilities of the ASC are maintaining current meeting lists, getting information out to the public to know where we are (Public Information), setting-up and maintaining phone lines, carrying our message to addicts who are unable to attend our regularly scheduled meetings (Hospitals and Institutions) and supporting the groups who make up our areas.

“The area committee is the primary means by which the services of a local NA community are administered. The area committee is composed of group service representatives, administrative officers (chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer), subcommittee chairpersons, and the area's regional committee members. The area committee elects its own officers, subcommittee chairpersons, and RCMs.” A Guide to World Services pg. 1, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

“Area Service Committees are ultimately responsible to the groups they serve. Narcotics Anonymous groups send group service representatives (GSRs) to serve on the area committee. While still maintaining the final responsibility and authority for area services, they invest enough delegated authority in their GSRs – and through them, the area committee – for the necessary work to get done.” Guide to Local Service pg. 47

Regional Service Committees

The Regional Service Committee exists solely to support the areas and groups that make up the region. They also schedule regional assemblies so the groups have the opportunity to directly provide direction to this committee.

“Regional service committees exist to pool the experience and resources of the areas and groups it serves. The RSC is composed of regional committee members (RCMs) elected by the region's member areas; these RCMs elect regional committee officers from among themselves. RSCs organize assemblies at which group service representatives (GSRs) and regional committee members discuss a wide range of service matters, including those likely to come before the World Service Conference. The region's delegate to the world conference is elected by the GSRs and/or RCMs at the regional assembly or RSC” A Guide to World Services pg. 1, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

“Regional committees generally do not perform direct services – that is to say, they don't run phone lines, organize H&I panels or carry out a public information program. Regions are primarily formed simply to pool and develop local service resources that can be used by the groups and areas in better fulfilling their responsibilities.” Guide to Local Service pg. 88

Colorado Regional Service Committee

Here in the Colorado Region, our RSC, does provide some H&I services in geographic locations that do not have active groups. An example of these services is providing literature to prisons in the remote areas of our region.

The CRSCNA is comprised of up to two RCMS from each of our eight areas, an administrative committee, the Colorado Regional Convention of Narcotics Anonymous subcommittee, a Public Information subcommittee, a Hospital and Institutions subcommittee and various resource positions. The trusted servants of the administrative committee include a chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, web servant, regional delegate and regional delegate alternate.

The administrative committee members are generally elected at the April Regional Assembly for the terms defined in the CRSCNA Guidelines found at:

<http://www.nacolorado.org/region/CRSCNAGuidelines.pdf>

This committee meets in odd-numbered months throughout the Colorado Region to conduct business and organizes at least one Regional Assembly every year in April where the GSRs provide direction to the Regional Service Committee. The CRSCNA also is responsible for providing and maintaining the regional meeting list and providing a website (<http://www.nacolorado.org>) to allow addicts throughout the region to keep current with what is going on within the region as a whole. “The Colorado Regional Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous (CRSCNA) was formed simply to pool and develop local service resources that can be used both by groups and areas in better fulfilling their responsibilities. Regional committees generally do not perform direct services – that is, they don't run phone lines, organize H&I panels, or carry out a public information program. Although CRSCNA members may offer experience, strength, and hope in addition to suggestions, the CRSCNA does not have binding authority over the decisions or activities of any Area or Group within the Region.”

Colorado Regional Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous Guidelines pg. 1,

<http://www.nacolorado.org/region/CRSCNAGuidelines.pdf>

Regional Assemblies

Regional Assemblies are held to elect trusted servants, approve changes to the CRSCNA and subcommittee guidelines, gather the region's conscience on the Conference Agenda Report, and to disseminate information from The World Board and NAWS.

“One purpose of holding a Regional Assembly (usually in April) shortly before the biennial meeting of the World Service Conference is to bring representatives of NA groups (GSRs) and areas (RCMs) together with the RD and RDA for the purpose of developing a collective conscience concerning issues affecting Narcotics Anonymous worldwide. It is not merely to tabulate votes on the motions in the Conference Agenda Report (CAR). Open discussion about the CAR motions is more valuable to the RD than a simple “yea” or “nay” vote. It is these discussions which will give the delegate clear indications of the region's collective conscience concerning world issues. And it is these indications that will guide the RD when participating at the World Service Conference.”

“Another purpose of holding a Regional Assembly (usually in April) is to elect members of the CRSCNA administrative committee and standing subcommittee Chairpersons. Only CRSCNA members and GSRs in attendance will cast a vote. Only groups on the most current Regional meeting list or registered with the WSO will be permitted to send a GSR or elected designate.”

“The purpose of holding a Regional Assembly shortly after the World Service Conference is to go over the events of the World Service Conference as reported by the RD and RDA.”

Colorado Regional Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous Guidelines pg. 10,

<http://www.nacolorado.org/region/CRSCNAGuidelines.pdf>

Zonal Forums

Zonal Forums are outside of the service structure of Narcotics Anonymous and are formed to help regions come together and pool information resources and share solutions to common problems.

“Zonal forums are service-oriented sharing and/or business sessions that provide the means by which NA communities can communicate, cooperate, and grow with one another. Although not a part of NA's formal decision-making system, world services and zonal forums interact in many ways. Zonal forums are invited to provide reports on the floor of the World Service Conference and, when requested by the conference, may also answer specific questions or address the body.”

“World services typically attend zonal forum meetings, and may provide funding for some participants' attendance at zonal forums.” A Guide to World Services pg 2,

http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

Currently the Colorado Region is a part of the Rocky Mountain Forum; other members include the Montana Region, the Upper Rocky Mountain Region and the Utah Region. The Rocky Mountain Forum maintains a website that documents its activities and provides a repository of documents created by its members that address common issues and solutions.

Narcotics Anonymous World Services

Narcotics Anonymous World Services provides the services to allow groups, areas and regions to serve our primary purpose in the local area. NA World Services serves as the publisher and distributor of our literature and provides updates to the worldwide fellowship through the NA Way Magazine and NAWS News. NA World Services also provide a web site where much of the information used in this document was drawn from. NAWS is accountable to the fellowship through the direction received at each World Service Conference. The World Board is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the activities of NAWS.

“World services are those services that deal with the problems and needs of NA as a whole and that NA offers to its members, its groups, and to society. The basic purposes of our world services are communication, coordination, information, and guidance. We provide these services so that our groups and members can more successfully carry the message of recovery and so that our program of recovery can be made more available to addicts everywhere.” A Guide to World Services pg 2, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

World Service Conference

The World Service Conference is a biennial event where the direction of NA World Services is set. The Regional Delegates and their alternates from every region in the world meet to approve the CAR, to discuss issues that are currently important to the fellowship worldwide, to provide direct input from the regions to the World Board and NA World Services, and to develop solutions to problems common throughout our fellowship.

“It is the nerve center of our fellowship. Our conference is the one time and place where all of our world services come together. Unlike all other service bodies of NA service, the conference is not an entity, it is an event – the coming together. Every two years, regional delegates, the members of the World Board, and the executive director of the World Service Office meet to discuss questions of significance to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. The purpose of the World Service Conference is to be supportive of the fellowship as a whole and to define and take action according to the group conscience of Narcotics Anonymous.” A Guide to World Services pg 2, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

World Board

The World Board members direct and are responsible for the activities of NA World Services. These members are elected at the World Service Conference for six-year terms. These addicts from the fellowship in general who have expressed an interest in serving at this level and have demonstrated the leadership and administrative skills necessary to effectively lead our fellowship between World Service Conferences.

“The board serves as a primary resource for the NA Fellowship by providing the support needed to carry our message while ensuring that the service and support provided are of the highest quality possible. The World Board manages all activities of world services including oversight of the operations of the fellowship’s primary service center, the World Service Office.” A Guide to World Services pg 3, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

World Service Office

The World Service Office provides for the day-to-day needs of our fellowship worldwide. This office maintains an inventory of and sells our literature worldwide, provides the fellowship answers and solutions to specific problems, and helps to develop the fellowship worldwide. The actual work of Narcotics Anonymous World Services is accomplished by the special workers at all its locations.

“The purpose of the World Service Office (WSO), our main service center, is to carry out the directives of the World Service Conference in matters that relate to communications and information for the Fellowship of NA, its services, groups, and members. The World Service Office achieves this purpose by maintaining correspondence with NA groups and service committees, by printing and distributing WSC approved literature, and by maintaining the archives and files of Narcotics Anonymous.” A Guide to World Services pg 3, http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

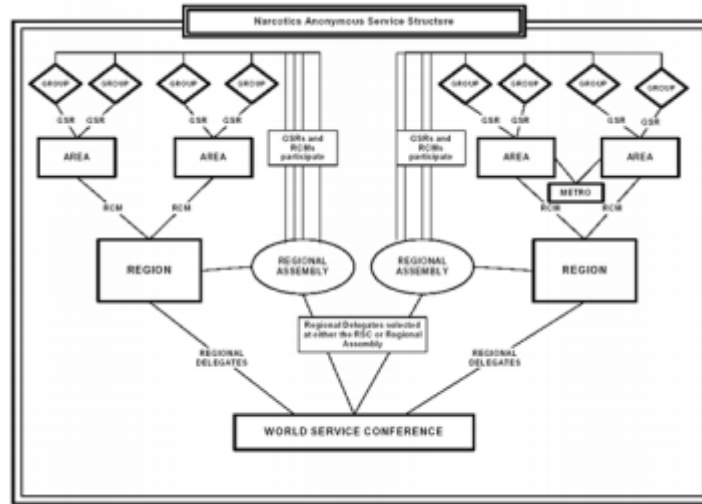


Figure 1 - Narcotics Anonymous Local Service Structure

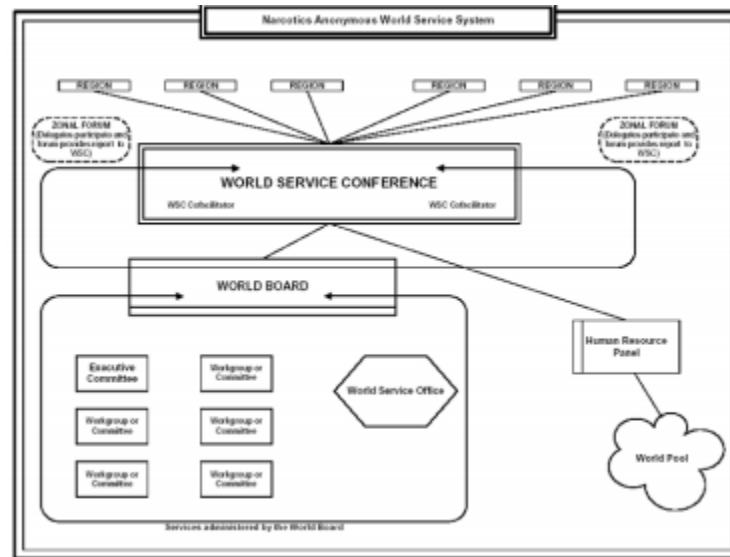


Figure 2 - NA World Service Structure I I

Why We Are Here

That is really the question isn't it? The Colorado Regional Service Committee welcomes all the participants who have given up their time to attend the Assembly. This event has two distinct parts: this orientation to help newcomers and old-timers alike to feel comfortable with what will hopefully happen here today, and the Assembly itself. If at any time you have questions or concerns over what is happening here today, please do not hesitate to ask someone – remember the only ignorant question is the one that is not asked.

Orientation

One of the problems I heard expressed over and over again at the Worldwide Workshop I attended is that the Group Service Representatives felt confused and left out at Regional Assemblies. They knew they were there to do something, sat through the entire assembly where something happened and left without really knowing what went on. My intent in creating this document and presenting it is to help everyone in attendance feel that at least they have a clue as to what is going on. I do not expect to be able to educate all of you into all the intricacies of service in Narcotics Anonymous, but I do hope I provide each of you with enough information and resources to feel a part of the process today. Following this presentation we will get on with the business of the Regional Assembly.

Assembly

The Colorado Regional Service Committee is charged with holding at least one Group Service Representative Regional Assembly every year. The Assembly is the forum for our groups to provide direct input to the committee members about the concerns of their groups. It also provides an opportunity to meet with addicts from throughout the region and network with them to discuss problems and explore solutions. Today our agenda includes conducting the business of the CRSC, Approving Guideline changes forwarded to this body, and selecting the site for CRCNA XXIII.

How We Do It

The CRSC uses several processes to do business and gather information for direction. The main process is Consensus Based Decision Making for conducting our business. We directly elect our trusted servants. We use brain-storming for issue identification and problem solution. Each of these processes is described in detail below.

Consensus Based Decision Making

Consensus Based Decision Making is a process for doing business that allows for the greatest participation in forming a conscience about the matter at hand. The CRSC version of this is presented below:

“The use of Consensus-Based Decision-Making admittedly takes longer to achieve an outcome to an issue (called a proposal). But, the results are understood by all in attendance at a more significant level of comprehension. In addition, any proposal can be easily changed or modified as discussion progresses. Making a motion, requiring a second and so forth are no longer needed. Trusted servants become a single point of decision-making and thus accountable to their Areas.

1. Bring proposals to the CRSC. Formulate clear proposals in advance with as much communication and collaboration as possible to facilitate the consensus-decision process. Facilitator presents the proposal to the CRSC (analogous to the motion in a Robert’s Rules process). Maker of the proposal speaks first to the intent.
2. Open up the floor first for clarifying questions about the proposal (not a debate on the merits but a brief session to be sure everyone understands the proposal).
3. Facilitator asks whether anyone has reservations about the proposal. These are heard and they may be answered or the proposal may be tweaked in a manner similar to the “friendly amendment” process in Robert’s Rules.
4. Once all reservations have been heard and answered in this way, Facilitator asks, “Do we have consensus?” Participants respond in one of four ways.
 - a. Assent. This means that the addict supports the proposal, all things considered. It may not mean that the addict is in agreement with every aspect, that the addict has heard the discussion and has had a chance to participate in the process of finalizing the proposal, and is prepared to support the final proposal. Assent is signified by remaining silent.
 - b. Assent with Reservations. This option is not materially different from the Assent option but is included as a way of giving addicts a place to stand when they do not want to object more strongly, but they do want to note that they have reservations. Assent with Reservations is done by the addict raising their hand and simply saying when the facilitator calls on them, “Assent with Reservations”. The assumption is that the reservations have been heard already, and the addict is simply noting that they can support the proposal and continue to have these reservations.
 - c. Stand Aside. A common misconception about the Stand Aside option is that it is similar to an abstention. It is not. It is more accurate to say it is similar to a “no” vote. It is a statement that the addict does not support the proposal, but the addict’s objection is not of the nature or the severity to warrant a block. Should the number of addicts opting to be Stand Asides reach 45% or more of the addicts present; this will then indicate a consensus too weak to adopt the proposal. The proposal is then either dropped or delegated to the Maker of the proposal or an Ad Hoc Committee for reworking.

d. Block. This option is also commonly misunderstood. Given that a proposal can be defeated by a sufficient number of Stand Asides, the Block should be an extremely rare step taken only when a participant honestly believes that one of the Traditions or Concepts is directly violated by this proposal, or some very fundamental moral position of the participant is violated. An addict who blocks must be able to articulate which Tradition or Concept or Spiritual principle fundamental to NA is violated by the proposal.”

Colorado Regional Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous Guidelines pp 2-3
<http://www.nacolorado.org/region/CRSCNAGuidelines.pdf>

Elections

While Consensus Based Decision Making is a spiritual means to resolve issues and develop solutions, our trusted servants need to be elected. Only the Regional Assembly can elect Trusted Servants to the Colorado Regional Service Committee Administrative committee.

1. A vote will be taken for all elected positions regardless of the number of nominees.
2. If there is only one nominee for a position after nominations have been closed, the election is known as a vote of acclamation and will be indicated as such by the Chairperson. The nominee must then receive 2/3rds of the participating votes to be elected. If the nominee fails to receive 2/3rds then nominations will be reopened.
3. While the voting process is taking place the nominees should leave the room.
4. All GSR's, RCM's, and CRSCNA Officers (except CRSCNA Chair) in attendance may cast one vote.
5. The Chairperson will ask who is in favor of the first candidate nominated, then the second, and so on.
 - a. All votes for a candidate will be counted before moving on to the next one.
6. There are no votes “against” a candidate. The only votes that will be tallied are those in favor of the candidate and those abstaining from the vote.
7. The Chairperson will vote only when a vote total is tied.
8. The final vote totals will NOT be reflected in the minutes. “

Colorado Regional Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous Guidelines pg 4,
<http://www.nacolorado.org/region/CRSCNAGuidelines.pdf>

Brain Storming

Brain Storming is a method of quickly generating discussions and allowing all in attendance the opportunity to contribute.

Resources for further Investigation

On-line (THE WORLD WIDE WEB)

Colorado Regional Web Site: <http://www.nacolorado.org/>

Rocky Mountain Forum Web Site: <http://www.rmfn.org>

Narcotics Anonymous World Services Web Site: <http://www.na.org>

Colorado Regional Guidelines <http://www.nacolorado.org/region/CRSCNAGuidelines.pdf>

Conference Approved Literature

Guide to Local Services

Guide To World Services 2004 - http://www.na.org/pdf/2004GWSNA_final.pdf

The Group Booklet

The Twelve Concepts Booklet

It Works How and Why

Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text

The Addict Sitting Next to YOU!

Sitting in this room today is probably hundreds of years of shared experience strength and hope. If you do not understand something please ask someone here, instead of sitting in confusion. You have nothing to lose and plenty to gain.