

# GOLD COAST AREA POLICY MANUAL

## HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE POLICY

Adopted revised form -- / -- / ----

Last Amended -- / -- / ----

# **GOLD COAST AREA POLICY MANUAL**

## **HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS**

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# **GOLD COAST AREA POLICY MANUAL HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE POLICY**

The H&I Orientation Package distributed February 1990, approved March 1990.

## **1. PURPOSE**

- 01 To coordinate all local Narcotics Anonymous Hospitals and Institutions meetings. To carry the NA
- 02 message, via meetings, to those addicts who cannot attend outside meetings, in accordance with our
- 03 Fifth Tradition.

## 2. MEMBERSHIP, VOTING and PARTICIPATION

### A. GENERAL MEMBERS

- 1) One (1) day clean time to attend.
- 2) The willingness to fulfill the commitment.
- 3) All persons who join the H&I Subcommittee MUST complete orientation with the H&I Orientation Chair. Any person who has not held a commitment for an H&I Presentation within the Gold Coast for one (1) year or more must complete orientation.

DUTIES: It is suggested that you attend the subcommittee meetings and keep coming back.

### B. VOTING PRIVILEGES

- 1) Only those members with a current commitment to take an H&I Presentation into a facility when the subcommittee meeting opens have voting privileges.
- 2) Members who commit to taking an H&I Presentation into a facility during a subcommittee meeting who didn't qualify for voting privileges at the opening of the meeting establish their voting privileges at the close of the meeting.
- 3) Voting privileges are lost after losing or discontinuing all active commitments for H&I Presentations.

### C. GUIDELINES FOR H&I SERVICE COMMITMENTS and PARTICIPATION

- 1) *"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion..."* Ego has no place in H&I work. We are here to spread the message of recovery to the suffering addict - not to make a name for ourselves.
- 2) Only those members with a current H&I commitment may take an H&I Presentation into a facility.

- 39
- 40 3) Each Speaker must have at least three (3) months clean time to speak at an H&I meeting and
- 41 have a clear NA message.
- 42
- 43 4) Speakers and Chairpersons for H&I meetings must not be in a residential treatment facility.
- 44
- 45 5) Literature and meeting lists for H&I meetings will be supplied at H&I Subcommittee meetings
- 46 only and will be distributed with discretion.
- 47
- 48 6) Rides to outside NA meetings are not provided by H&I Subcommittee members.
- 49
- 50 7) Speakers and Chairperson for H&I meetings must not be employed or affiliated with that
- 51 facility. Speakers and Chairpersons for H&I meetings must not be seeking employment at
- 52 that facility.
- 53
- 54 8) Orientation should be at least 1 hour, to be held either on the same day as the subcommittee
- 55 meeting, at learning days that are held at the Gratitude Event or GCCNA, or on a different
- 56 date.
- 57
- 58
- 59
- 60

61 **D. H&I PRESENTATION CHAIRPERSON**

62 Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.

63

- 64 1) Six (6) months clean time.
- 65
- 66 2) Attended H & I Subcommittee Orientation within the last 12 months.
- 67
- 68 3) Has paneled or spoken at three (3) Gold Coast Area H&I Presentations within the last twelve
- 69 (12) months.
- 70
- 71 4) An example of living recovery through the application of the Twelve Steps and Twelve
- 72 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.
- 73
- 74 5) Willingness to fulfill the commitment.
- 75
- 76 6) Members must be present at the H&I Subcommittee meeting to be able to take commitment.
- 77
- 78 7) All subcommittee members must attend (or call one of the trusted servants) the H&I
- 79 Subcommittee monthly. If a member fails to attend in person for more than 2 consecutive
- 80 months they must attend the next month's committee or they will lose the meeting.

81  
82 DUTIES: It is required that you attend the monthly Subcommittee meetings. If you are unable to  
83 attend, please call the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson. If you do not call or attend for two (2)  
84 consecutive months you will lose your meeting. At the commencement of the individual's  
85 commitment (date and time) they will have met all criteria of qualifications for that specific facility (6  
86 months or 1 year and paneled 3 meetings and attended orientation and can make monthly  
87 subcommittee meeting). Members must attend orientation every two years; they are encouraged to  
88 attend either the Learning Day at the Gratitude Event or GCCNA.

### 3. SUBCOMMITTEE TRUSTED SERVANTS

#### A. CHAIRPERSON

Nominated and elected by the ASC.

- 1) Two (2) years clean time.
- 2) One (1) year prior involvement in the H&I Subcommittee.
- 3) An example of living recovery through application of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

DUTIES: Maintains order in Subcommittee meetings. Ensures the NA Traditions are upheld. Maintains communications and responds to all requests for meetings from Hospitals and Institutions. Acts as liaison between the Area, the H&I Subcommittee and the Institutions. Must attend all ASC meetings and the meeting with the ASC Vice-Chairperson prior to the ASC. Maintains communications with the RSC and must attend all H&I RSC meetings. Maintains a list of contact persons at institutions. Keeps current listing of H&I meeting chairpersons. Sees that contact persons at the Institutions are notified when a new H&I meeting Chairperson is taking over the meeting. Is responsible for preparing and submitting the Subcommittee's budget. Should acquaint him/herself with the Gold Coast Area Service Policy.

#### B. VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.

- 1) One (1) year clean time.
- 2) Six (6) months prior involvement in the H&I Subcommittee.
- 3) An example of living recovery through application of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

DUTIES: Fills in for the Chairperson when needed. Helps Chairperson maintain order in Subcommittee meetings. Assists Chairperson in updating list of H&I Meeting Chairpersons. Contact any meeting chairperson who fails to attend the H&I Subcommittee for more than 2 consecutive months in order to inform them that they must attend the next month's committee or they will lose the meeting. Also contact the Institution with any meeting that had no report at the H&I Subcommittee for one (2) months.



39  
40 **C. SECRETARY**

41 Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.  
42

- 43 1) Six (6) months clean time.  
44 2) Secretarial experience and some organizational ability.  
45

46 DUTIES: Takes accurate minutes at monthly Subcommittee meeting and has copies available upon  
47 request. Maintains the Subcommittee's records. Keeps an updated volunteer list of willing people  
48 who would like to serve on the Subcommittee.  
49

50  
51  
52  
53 **D. ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

54 Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.  
55

- 56 1) Six (6) months clean time.  
57 2) Secretarial experience and some organizational ability.  
58

59 DUTIES: Assist the secretary. Two (2) year commitment for this position. The first is year spent  
60 becoming familiar with the job, as well as attending all H&I meetings. Takes accurate minutes at  
61 monthly Subcommittee meeting and has copies available upon request. Maintains the  
62 Subcommittee's records. Keeps an updated volunteer list of willing people who would like to serve on  
63 the Subcommittee.  
64

65  
66  
67  
68 **E. LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION**

69 Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.  
70

- 71 1) Six (6) months clean time.  
72 2) Willingness to fulfill the commitment.  
73

74 DUTIES: Keeps records of, distributes literature and meeting lists at the monthly subcommittee  
75 meeting. Literature and meeting lists (see Appendix A). You should be able to evaluate your  
76 monthly literature needs based on past experience. It is advisable to cover any unusual  
77 circumstances. Re-evaluate the disbursement of literature to institutions which allow their clients to  
78 go to outside meetings. Also, we need to streamline the types of literature that we take into facilities.  
79 We suggest the White Booklet, Meeting Lists, and the following I.P. #'s 6, 7, 11, 12, 16 & 23 for  
80 BARC and DOC Facilities. All other facilities receive White Booklet and meeting lists only. Also,

make Basic Texts available to be placed in the libraries of correctional institutions, one for every two hundred (200) inmates. Hospitals, treatment centers and institutions should be urged to use their budgets and funds to purchase NA literature for use by their clients.

#### **F. LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION ASSISTANT**

Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.

- 3) Six (6) months clean time.
- 4) Willingness to fulfill the commitment.

DUTIES: Assist in literature distribution.

#### **G. ORIENTATION CHAIR**

Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.

- 1) One (1) year clean time.
- 2) Six (6) months prior involvement in the H&I Subcommittee.
- 3) An example of living recovery through application of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

DUTIES: Attend monthly H&I subcommittee meeting. Facilitates the orientation process for new members to Gold Coast H&I Subcommittee. Assists H&I Secretary in maintaining jail clearance list for H&I subcommittee. Assists Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to ensure all H&I meetings are covered throughout the month.

#### **H. ORIENTATION CO-CHAIR**

Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.

- 1) One (1) year clean time.
- 2) Six (6) month H&I experience.

DUTIES: Assist the orientation chair.

123  
124  
125  
126 **I. AD HOC FOR GRATITUDE EVENT CHAIRPERSON**

127 Nominated and elected by the H&I Subcommittee from its voting members.  
128

129 1) Two (2) years clean time.

130 2) Prior involvement with the Gratitude Event Ad Hoc Committee.  
131

132 DUTIES: To plan and host the Gold Coast Area's annual gratitude event consistent with H&I  
133 Guidelines and with the cooperation of Area members. To provide monthly reports to the H&I  
134 Subcommittee and to provide to the ASC.

## 5. SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS and FINANCES

### A. AGENDA FOR MEETINGS

- 1) Opening Prayer
- 2) Read the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts
- 3) Establish voting membership
- 4) Old Business
- 5) New Business
- 6) Group Reports (and Meeting Chairperson Elections if necessary)
- 7) Establish next meeting time and place
- 8) Close Meeting with Prayer of Choice

### B. MOTIONS

- 1) May be made and seconded only by voting members.

### C. QUORUM and VOTING

- 1) A quorum is a simple majority of the voting members. Once a quorum is established at each meeting, it stays throughout the meeting.
- 2) Voting is limited to the members of the Subcommittee who established that privilege at the opening of the meeting except for the Chairperson who does not vote.
- 3) The Chairperson may only vote in the event of a tie.

39  
40  
41  
42 **D. BUDGET**  
43

- 44 1) General operating expenses: these might include copies of minutes, guidelines or policies,  
45 orientation packets, reports on projects from other levels of service or other committees,  
46 postage and rent for H&I Subcommittee and Ad Hoc meetings.  
47
- 48 2) The Chairperson, or Vice-Chairperson in their absence, are reimbursed up to Two- hundred  
49 (\$200.00) for travel and hotel expenses per RSC. For travel over 86 miles reimbursement of  
50 32 cents per mile. Monies can be obtained in advance upon request.  
51
- 52 3) A budget needs to be prepared and submitted to the Area Service Committee yearly. The  
53 H&I Chairperson's report to the ASC should include a monthly statement detailing literature  
54 and operating expenses. The H&I Subcommittee should receive literature from the Area  
55 rather than funds for literature. The ASC provides the H&I Subcommittee with up to One  
56 Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) worth of literature a month.  
57
- 58 4) All contracts committing the Gold Coast ASC or its subcommittees (except convention) to  
59 amounts greater than \$500 are to be reviewed by the ASC Chair, ASC Vice-Chair and the  
60 ASC Treasurer in conjunction with representatives from the subcommittee wishing to enter  
61 into the contract. All such contracts are to be signed by the ASC Chair or the ASC Treasurer  
62 in the Chairs absence.

## 6. H&I GRATITUDE EVENT AD HOC GUIDELINES

### A. AD HOC COMMITTEE FORMATION and RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) The "Gratitude In Action" event is held annually in the month of March and is hosted by the H&I Subcommittee for the Gold Coast Area.
- 2) The event is to be an activity/meeting organized by the H&I Gratitude Event Ad Hoc Committee.
- 3) The Ad Hoc Committee is formed by the H&I Subcommittee. It is composed of no less than five (5) members. Any member of the Gold Coast Area can attend the meeting and be a member of the committee.
- 4) The forming of the Ad Hoc Committee is the responsibility of the Gold Coast Area H&I Chairperson. The Ad Hoc Committee will be formed by the beginning of September to all for seven (7) months preparation.
- 5) The Ad Hoc Committee chairperson will be voted in by the H&I Subcommittee with the other Subcommittee Trusted Servants.
- 6) The Ad-Hoc Committee will consist of a Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Event Liaison, and volunteers; these positions are established within the Ad Hoc Committee.
- 7) Copies of the Basic Text will be ordered and given to persons with thirty (30) days or less. This is a budgeted item of the Gratitude in Action Committee.

### B. MEETINGS, VOTING PRIVILEGES and EVENT PLANNING

- 1) All members of the committee at its formation have voting privileges. Any member joining later must attend two (2) consecutive meetings; their voting privilege is established at the start of the third meeting.
- 2) Members missing two (2) or more meetings consecutively without calling the Chairperson will lose their voting privileges; privilege is reestablished after attending two (2) consecutive meetings at the start of the third meeting.

- 39 3) The Ad Hoc Committee will meet no less than once a month to plan, promote and carry out  
40 all arrangements necessary for the event.
- 41
- 42 4) The Ad Hoc Committee shall provide monthly reports to both the H&I Subcommittee and the  
43 ASC during the seven (7) month period and should include related budget information.
- 44
- 45 5) The Committee will choose the place of holding the banquet five (5) months prior to the event  
46 and pay the required deposit. This deposit is included in the Ad Hoc budget.
- 47
- 48
- 49
- 50

### 51 **C. SPEAKERS and SHIRT DESIGNS**

52

- 53 1) Speaker requirements:
  - 54
  - 55 a) 5 years clean time and a member of Narcotics Anonymous.
  - 56
  - 57 b) He/she prior three (3) years involvement with H&I and/ or is a product of H&I.
  - 58
- 59 2) Tapes for speakers will be submitted from within the Florida and South Florida regions.
- 60
- 61 3) The Ad Hoc Committee will pick one speaker for the event in the form of a secret ballot.
- 62
- 63 4) The T-shirt designs that are submitted will be voted on in the form of a secret ballot. Only  
64 one (1) design may be voted in as the theme for the Event. The event speaker and T-shirt  
65 design winner will each be given an event ticket and a T-shirt. (free)
- 66
- 67 5) Members of the Ad Hoc Committee may not submit a tape or design.

# TABLE HI-01: ISWG (AD HOC CMTE GUIDELINES)

## INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW for INMATE STEP WRITING GUIDES



Approved by Home Groups Nov 2018

Supported by SFL Region Oct 2018

Supported by NAWS Step Writing Guide Working Group



## INMATE STEP WRITING GUIDE POLICY

### GOLD COAST HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS

It is with deep gratitude that the working group of the H & I Gold Coast Area acknowledges the hard work, dedication and service of the Connecticut Region of Narcotics Anonymous and for helping us with this proposal based on their collective work, foundation, policy, and assistance. We are also grateful to the South Florida Region of Narcotics Anonymous for their support and NA World Services Inmate Step Writing Group for their guidance.

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# Primary purpose

*"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."*

*The Group Booklet, p. 1*

## Writing steps for recovery behind the walls

*"My name is C\_\_\_\_\_. I'm currently a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ Correctional Institution. I've been involved in (the institution's) drug and alcohol program for two months now. It is a six-month program. I'm looking for a sponsor. I really need one. I'm serious about my recovery. If you could help me—which I hope you could—please write back to me. I really appreciate it. Thank you very much."*

And so it began. After receiving this cry for help from an addict serving time in one of our state prisons, the Connecticut Region (USA) decided to discover a way within our service structure to help incarcerated addicts find the same relief from addiction we have found. That was in June 1993.

"Sponsorship Behind the Walls" started functioning as a working group of our regional H&I subcommittee in the fall of 1994. In December 1995, the WSO Board of Trustees (the name at the time for one of the elements of our current World Board) pointed out that since we used pen names and were offering step direction through NA service, not traditional sponsorship, the name "Sponsorship Behind the Walls" was perhaps not the best name for this service. As a result of this input, the group's name was changed to "Writing Steps for Recovery," or WSR for short. At that same time, the regional conscience called for the committee to become a standing subcommittee of the Connecticut Region, rather than a workgroup of H&I, since the service is quite different from that of taking presentations into institutions.

In the beginning, we worked with the Connecticut Department of Corrections to come up with guidelines that would make it possible for us to follow the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts while adhering to the rules and regulations of DOC facilities. As of the summer of 2007, WSR had been approved to serve addicts in all eighteen Connecticut DOC institutions. This accomplishment has taken time and consistent, responsible service. Because of what we have been able to accomplish, we feel grateful to share our experience, strength, and hope with anyone interested in doing the same.

I began my involvement with WSR in early 1996. Working with this committee has been a wonderful part of how I stay clean. Over the years I've had step writers in prison who have been so eager to change their lives that they diligently worked all Twelve Steps before their release. Recently, one of the girls I guided through her steps showed up at our subcommittee meeting, was trained to become a new WSR step guide, and took on a subcommittee commitment. In January, when we held our workshop at the Connecticut Convention, another former inmate who had worked her steps through WSR qualified to become a new step guide. We've received word that there are now some addicts in Connecticut's prisons who have been working with WSR step guides and have enough cleantime and step-writing experience to offer true sponsorship to fellow inmate addicts! It's so incredibly rewarding to see this process come full circle, to see the living, breathing, recovering proof that what we are doing is working! Through this service, addicts with experience in working the steps have an anonymous avenue for sharing that experience with incarcerated addicts.

My WSR commitments have been instrumental in my own recovery. It's been incredibly rewarding knowing that my service contributed to at least one addict being released from jail with the knowledge and experience she needed in order to live differently. She

carried that knowledge into her recovery on the outside, and is now giving back what she freely received. I've also benefited in much the same way as I do when I sponsor women. Working the steps with other addicts reinforces my understanding of how the steps work for me. I'm also grateful that this service is convenient and time-friendly. It's the closest thing to sponsorship that we can give these addicts—and for me, it has the extra benefit of not further complicating my sometimes chaotic daily life.

I've loved the times when I've had a commitment on the subcommittee level, too. As the corresponding secretary, I've grown more accustomed to picking up the phone and asking for help. Never before in my recovery have I ever had this much practice in that simple, life-saving skill. This commitment, more than any other I've had in the seventeen years I've been clean, assures me that I will stick with the winners. When I receive that initial letter from an inmate who pours out his or her heart about how far down into degradation and despair the disease of addiction has taken them, and then they ask for our help in learning a new way to live, I am sometimes moved to tears. I have absolutely no doubt that, for me, this is the best service commitment in NA!

This article was taken from the April 2008 NA Way

Please visit the local resources area at [www.na.org](http://www.na.org) ([http://www.na.org/?=local\\_resource\\_area\\_resources](http://www.na.org/?=local_resource_area_resources)) to find - or to offer - inmate step writing resources.

*This is a column for you, about you, and by you. We invite you to share any challenges your group or NA community may have faced, how you reached a solution, or its "special knack" that keeps you coming back!*



## Become a Step Writing Guide!

*(Sponsorship Behind the Walls)*

***The closest thing to written sponsorship we can offer within our guidelines and traditions, until the incarcerated addict is able to go to regular open meetings and find a regular sponsor.***

*"...I am very very grateful to NA Each time I receive a letter from my step guide with step work and I read it, it makes me get honest with myself which is very important so I don't use again. I feel I would not be as in-volved or serious in my recovery as I am now if it weren't for writing steps in recovery. Prison saved my life but my step guide is helping me to learn how to live and stay clean. I hope this letter will help another addict like my step guide has helped me..."*



JOIN THE

INMATE STEP WRITING GUIDE  
COMMITTEE

meets on the

FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH

8 PM

@ Serenity by the Sea (Small Room)

3561 NW 9th Ave, Oakland Park, FL 33309 For  
more information

Grace T. 917-579-3750  
Luigi 954-687-7099





## ISWG ORIENTATION

### Inmate Step Guide Orientation

1. Review SWG introduction and history
2. Read "typical first letter" or actual new letter anonymously
3. Read "Welcome letter" out loud (is the first thing sent to inmates requesting SWG)
4. Go over Correspondence Only agreement
  - a. Note especially "no prior knowledge"
  - b. Also "confidentiality of all information"
  - c. Only letters can be sent from step guides; the Introductory Guide is sent by the committee upon the step guide's request
5. Go over 12 Guidelines for Function from SWG Policy
  - a. Details of How to Become a Step Guide from SWG Policy
  - b. Emphasize importance of affirming and read aloud all 11 questions
  - c. Point out importance of notifying coordinating secretary at the time of each response
  - d. Importance of attendance at SWG meetings, learning days, and workshops
  - e. Importance of maintaining pen-names and **CORRESPONDENCE THROUGH THE SWG PO BOX ONLY UPON RELEASE** as a bridge to recovery in order to give step-writers the same opportunity to "do as we did" in creating their own network and finding a sponsor in real meetings on the outside.
6. H&I do's and don'ts
7. Do DOC Orientation
  - a. Emphasize emotional vulnerability of inmates and the importance of maintaining a supportive and loving but not inappropriate intimate tone
  - b. Be clear that we are to remain known as pen names only
8. For ALL LETTERS:
  - a. Address the envelope to: "Inmate full name & id#; then the DOC name & address".
  - b. Your return address: "Pen-Name-SWG NA; PO Box \_\_\_\_\_"
  - c. Make a **copy of each letter that you write**. Occasionally the letters don't get to the addict or they lose them and ask you for a copy. Also it is helpful to look at what you wrote when writing your next letter or making sense out of the response you got back.
9. In your **FIRST LETTER** be sure to:
  - a. Ask if they have received the "Welcome letter" and if they understand our basic guidelines.
  - b. Ask if they have a Basic Text. If not, notify coordinating Secretary so NA Introductory Guide can be sent. **(If they asked for it in their introductory letter, let them know that they need to write a letter to you starting the step process in order for the committee to send them a book).**
  - c. Let your new step writer know that turn-around time for letters is much longer than the 2 weeks the step guides have from time of receipt, and that it has to do with time for the SWG letter to get to the PO box, be collected, then to SG.
  - d. Give step direction just 2 or 3 questions at a time at first (and at your discretion in subsequent letters)
  - e. Emphasize importance of planning NA meeting schedule when on furlough and with upcoming release. Send schedule information for their home area - do not send *the schedule* as this is not an approved piece of literature. (and at your discretion in subsequent letters)
  - f. Educate about 90/90, phone numbers, "people, places, things" etc. (and at your discretion in subsequent letters)
  - g. **In order to benefit from the experience of other addicts who have prior experience in working with Step Writers in jail, read your first letter to another more experienced Step Guide prior to sending it.**
10. Mention, review & discuss as necessary:
  - a. "It's working" letters from facilities
  - b. 90 days or less letter
  - c. Spanish response letter (for when there are no Spanish-writing SG's available)
  - d. List of participating DOCs

## TYPICAL FIRST LETTER

### TYPICAL FIRST LETTER

*Hi,*

*My name is ..... and I am badly in need of a sponsor because I've been trying to work my 4<sup>th</sup> Step but I can't do it alone. It hurts too much. It was suggested to me to get a sponsor and since I don't have one to visit me through the mail is my best bet. I was in recovery for almost two years but I never passed the third step probably because of fear but today I believe that if I don't deal with all this pain I'll end up relapsing again and I don't want to use ever again.*

*Well the reason for this letter is so that NA can find me a sponsor so I can get my life back in order and work at changing it.*

*Please write back soon and Thank you very much.*

*Yours in Recovery ,*

*....*

---

<sup>1</sup> Typical first letter from the “inside” written by a Connecticut addict inmate to NA-WSR (a CT Regional Narcotics Anonymous Subcommittee). Typing done in the interest of anonymity and readability.

## WELCOME LETTER

### WELCOME LETTER

*(The first thing the inmate will receive from SWG)*

**DEDICATION AND PURPOSE:** THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THIS COMMITTEE IS TO PROVIDE WRITTEN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS STEP GUIDANCE TO ANY INCARCERATED ADDICT DESIRING RECOVERY WITHIN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS.

Dear

The Step Writing Guide Committee has just received your letter. We are in the process of finding a recovering addict to write to you. SWG is unable to provide sponsorship in the strictest sense of the word, because in your situation many of the facets of sponsorship cannot be fulfilled. But we can provide you with an addict willing to guide you in the steps of recovery in hopes that step guidance can be your bridge to recovery until you find a sponsor.

We suggest that you start your search for a sponsor in an NA meeting as soon as you are released. If you have 90 days or less before your release there is not time to develop a relationship with a SWG step guide. Upon your release we're sure that you will be able to find a sponsor that will be able to meet all your needs. Addicts on the outside are able to choose someone to guide them through the steps by listening to other addicts in meetings and seeing how they live. SWG has set up some guidelines so that we can try to assure that, though your circumstances make it necessary we choose your step guide for you, you will receive guidance from someone who will help you grow in NA. All of the potential step guides have shared with this committee their commitment to their NA based recovery. They work all their steps in writing and have completed at least the first five with an NA sponsor. They have a minimum of 2 years clean and attend NA step meetings regularly. We assure you that your step guide will be of the same gender and will have no prior knowledge or acquaintance with you prior to your incarceration.

Mail is collected from our PO Box once a week. After step guides have received their letters, a reply will be sent within 2 weeks. During the process of assigning a step guide to you, your very first letter was read anonymously to the committee, but all future correspondence will be strictly confidential between you and your step guide. It is important that you understand, though, that every letter between you and your step guide will be subject to prison rules regarding review of mail and that the prison will be notified of your involvement with SWG. Contact with your step guide will be limited to writing only and cannot include requests for photos, drawings, pictures, messages to others, phone calls, rides, visits or any damaging personal information. We are bound by the 12 Traditions of NA and the rules of the prison.

You need to know that if you have any questions or concerns about your relationship with your step guide or your needs for step guidance not being met, you can write to the SWG Committee and let them know. There are times when the relationship with the person we choose to guide us through the steps doesn't work or stops working and addicts on the outside have the option of choosing someone else and so do you. You may not be able to choose an individual but you can choose a different individual. In order to protect your step guide's anonymity, step guides will be using "pen names". Many potential step guides serve on the H&I panels that service the institutions that potential step writers are coming from. A lot of jails have rules forbidding contact between H&I panel members and inmates. Also H&I is bound by their own guidelines. By using "pen names" we hope to avoid any problems which might impede the message of recovery. Please be patient with us, someone will respond to you in the near future.

Yours in recovery,

## NA REACHING OUT NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION FORM

### NA *Reaching Out* Newsletter Subscription Form

*Reaching Out* is a quarterly, recovery-oriented newsletter made available free of charge to incarcerated addicts through Narcotics Anonymous World Services. If you will be incarcerated for at least six more months and would like a free subscription to *Reaching Out*, you can let NA World services know by sending them the following completed form.

#### SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

I am an incarcerated addict (and will be for at least six more months) and want a free subscription to *Reaching Out*.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Country \_\_\_\_\_

Send your completed form to :*Reaching Out*  
**c/o NA World Services**  
**PO Box 9999**  
**Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA**

#### ***Submission Information From Reaching Out Magazine:***

*We encourage submissions for Reaching Out from members and H&I subcommittees. Please consider that we are more likely to publish articles that focus on how NA has helped an individual to recover while incarcerated rather than those that concentrate on the horrors of drug use. **Send all submissions to Reaching Out; NAWs, PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999; USA, or to [fsmail@na.org](mailto:fsmail@na.org).***

## SWG CORRESPONDENCE ONLY AGREEMENT

### SWG CORRESPONDENCE ONLY AGREEMENT

TO BE KEPT ON FILE BY THE SECRETARY

I understand that in my role as a step guide in the SWG program I am to conduct myself under the guidelines as outlined by the SWG committee, the DOC, and the individual institution.

As an ISWG step guide I agree to:

1. Limit my contact with the step writer to writing.
2. Refrain from using abusive or profane language.
3. Respect the confidentiality of the step writer.
4. Refrain from supplying the step writer with any materials for corresponding including envelopes, stamps, pre-stamped envelopes, writing paper and writing implements.
5. Refrain from sending the step writer any books, tapes, and items of this nature. *\*The step writer may request **The Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous** and the step guide can then notify the coordinating secretary of the request so that this guide can be sent by the ISWG Coordinating Secretary.*
6. Refrain from supplying the step writer with my telephone number, address, and any other information prohibited by the program.
7. Refrain from visiting the step writer or having contact with him/her outside the facility.
8. Refrain from contacting anyone whom the step writer might ask me to contact other than himself/herself.
9. Refrain from revealing any damaging personal information.
10. Attest to having no prior knowledge of the step writer including not having been a victim or an accomplice with him/her as the result of a crime.

The DOC is aware that this program is designed for the purpose of recovery through the steps of Narcotics Anonymous and will allow the SWG committee to send an Introductory guide to NA to the step writer if the institution is unable to provide the NA Basic Text or the Introductory Guide to NA.

Furthermore, I understand that every letter I send into the facility may be opened and checked for contraband. The content of the letter is to remain on the topic outlined by the program and discretion will be exercised in writing about any matter that could be construed as to jeopardize the safety and security of the facility, it's staff, it's residents, this committee or anyone else.

I understand that failure to adhere to any of the aforementioned articles will result in cessation of my participation in the SWG program and may put the whole program at risk.

#### Step Guide's Mailing Address, Phone Number and Pen Name

First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Step Guide's Pen Signature

Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## POLICY and GUIDELINES

### POLICY AND GUIDELINES

**I. Dedication and purpose** The primary purpose of this committee is to provide written Narcotics Anonymous step guidance to any incarcerated addict desiring recovery within Narcotics Anonymous.

#### **II. Guidelines for function**

1. All letters are sent via the NA ISWG PO Box with no personal last names, addresses, or phone numbers of step guides, committee members, or any one else given to step writers. **Step guides use pen names. Correspondence Only agreements with these signatures are filed with the SWG committee and the inmate step writer's facility.**
2. Step guides from the SWG Committee have an individual addict assigned in the order that the step guides have qualified and that addicts of the same sex become available. The coordinating secretary notifies the new step guide if they are not present at the meeting when their "turn" comes up. The step guides agree to have no prior knowledge of their assigned inmate step writer, and to respect the confidentiality of their assigned addict. They also agree to correspond through the SWG PO Box only after release.
3. After the initial letter is read (anonymously) to the committee, all correspondence between step guide and step writer is confidential.
4. All incoming and outgoing letters are logged by date with name, facility, and DOC identification number of the inmate step writer, and name, pen name, and phone number of the step guide by the coordinating secretary.
5. No arrangements for rides, visits, loans, phone calls, materials for corresponding, photos, books\*, drawings, tapes, contacting family members or friends will be made between step guide and step writer. \*The step writer (inmate) may request ***The Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous*** in their first letter back to their new step guide. The book will then be sent by the Secretary upon step guide notification of the need.
6. The 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous will be strictly upheld.
7. All rules and regulations of the institution will be strictly upheld.
8. Only women write to women, and only men write to men.
9. At H&I commitments, the availability of SWG can be announced, including information that the committee meets monthly, and that informational cards will be available upon request of the addicts behind the walls.
10. Informational cards will also be available for the prison addictions and volunteer services staff so that inmates who are unable to attend the H&I presentations can have equal access to SWG.
11. Any addict behind the walls or anyone who thinks they may have a problem may write the SWG Committee as a whole with any questions or concerns at any time.
12. Presentations to the fellowship and to facilities will include the SWG statement of dedication and purpose, as well as these guidelines for function.



### **III. Voting Policy**

NA members present at SWG Committee meetings have a vote.

### **IV. How to Become an ISWG Step Guide**

Addicts will qualify and become an oriented DOC volunteer through the committee. (DOC policies and procedures for qualification and clearance will be adhered to). **They will discuss and be able to answer affirmatively all of the following questions.** Step guides will be assigned an inmate step writer in the order that they have become qualified, and that addicts of the same sex become available. The coordinating secretary will notify the new step guide if they are not present at the meeting when their "turn" comes up.

1. Is your recovery based in Narcotics Anonymous?
2. Have you done a 4th and 5th step?
3. Do you work the steps in writing with an NA sponsor?
4. Do you have at least 2 years clean time?
5. Do you attend NA step meetings regularly?
6. Do you have a working knowledge of the 12 steps and 12 traditions of NA?
7. Do you have experience as an NA sponsor?
8. Do you have the means to provide stationery and stamps for regular correspondence?
9. Do you have the willingness and availability to reply to any letter you receive within 2 weeks, and to notify the coordinating secretary each time?
10. Are you willing to sign and follow the NA SWG Correspondence Only agreement?
11. Are you willing to attend at least one SWG Committee meeting or one SWG workshop per year?

### **V. Cleantime Guidelines**

1. SWG step guide- 2 years
2. Chair- 2 years
3. Vice Chair- 2 years
4. Secretary- 2 years
5. Alternate Secretary - 2 years

### **VI. Responsibilities of Trusted Servants** **Chair of ISWG Committee**

1. Minimum cleantime requirement is 2 years.
2. Keeps order in the meeting.
3. Keeps discussion on the topic.
4. Prepares an agenda for each meeting.
5. Ensures that the Traditions and Concepts are upheld in all matters.
6. Maintains a link of communication between the SWG Committee and H & I Chair including giving a monthly report at that meeting.
7. Attends each meeting of SWG Service Committee.
8. Makes sure committee has a monthly meeting place.
9. Maintains an ongoing file of all SWG minutes.

### **Vice Chair**

1. Minimum cleantime is 2 years
2. Helps chairperson keep proceedings orderly
3. Acts as chairperson in the case of chairperson's absence. Fills in for any other trusted servant position as necessary.
4. If the office of chairperson becomes vacant, serves as chair until confirmed by the committee/ area/region/ or until a new chair is elected.
5. Conducts Orientation for New Guides.

### **Secretary**

1. Minimum cleantime is 2 years.
2. Attends monthly SWG meeting
3. Is responsible to collect mail from the P.O. Box
4. To insure accountability, keeps a complete log of all ISWG step guide/step writer communications (as described in guidelines Function # 4). Keeps in phone contact with step guides as needed.
5. Mails **Correspondence Only** agreements to inmate's facility each time the step guide is assigned a new inmate step writer.

### **Alternate Secretary**

1. Minimum cleantime is 18 months
2. Attends monthly ISWG meeting
3. Goal of the position is to assist the secretary with correspondence and to learn the duties of the secretary so that the alternate can function in the absence of the secretary.
4. Takes an accurate set of minutes at each meeting and distributes them to H & I Subcommittee Chair prior to ASC and to members prior at next meeting.

### **VII. Terms of Commitment**

1. All trusted servant positions are for 1 year, with a 2 year limit on consecutive terms in the same position.
2. Anytime a trusted servant misses a meeting he or she will contact the chair regarding their inability to attend the meeting and also submit a monthly activity report. If a trusted servant fails to meet these criteria two consecutive months, the commitment will be considered open.
3. Any trusted servant may have other responsibilities depending on the needs of SWG.

### **VIII. Literature and Ongoing Correspondence/Step Writing Process**

1. Once a relationship has been established, as per policy guidelines, between a step writer and a step guide and an **ISWG CORRESPONDENCE ONLY AGREEMENT** has been sent, the step guide will request *The Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous* from the committee (if this was requested by the writer (inmate) in their first letter). The Secretary will send the book to the guide.
2. After 3 letters have been received by the writer (inmate) and answered by the guide, the first step from the NA Step Working Guide will be sent. Drawing upon their own experience, strength and hope, as it relates to their own step writing experience, the guide will explain to the writer how to approach the writing of the step.
3. After the third letter is received from the writer (inmate) an *NA Step Working Guide* will given to the guide.

## H&I DOs and DON'Ts

### H&I DO'S AND DON'TS

- DO           Emphasize that in NA, recovery is available to any addict, regardless of "type" of drug(s) used
- DO           Make it clear that NA is separate and distinct from the facility as well as other fellowships
- DO           Make directories of outside meetings available
- DO           Emphasize the importance of getting to an NA meeting the first day out
- DO           Emphasize the importance of getting a sponsor and a home group, the ongoing nature of recovery, and the importance of attending meetings (suggest 90 meetings in 90 days)
- DON'T       Break another person's anonymity or tell his or her story
- DON'T       Get involved in discussion about the inmate's guilt or innocence
- DON'T       Debate which drugs are acceptable. NA is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs
- DON'T       Discuss conditions within the facilities or opinions about staff members
- DON'T       Give or receive gifts, money, or loans
- DON'T       Give your personal address or phone number
- DON'T       Take messages in or out of the facility
- DON'T       Debate the merits of the treatment program or the other fellowships. Remember, we have no opinion on outside issues. The best approach is to focus on the positive and unique qualities of our program. Use references from your Basic Text. It is the foundation of our program of recovery.
- DON'T       Comment on the methods used by a treatment facility. Not all facilities are Twelve Step based nor do their understandings of the Steps necessarily coincide with the understanding gained in Narcotics Anonymous. We share our experience without reference to the facility's methods or to inmates' comments
- DON'T       While sharing, put too much focus on what it was like. They already know.

## DOC GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

### *DOC GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS*

#### FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

#### MISSION STATEMENT:

*"Provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of those entrusted to our care, creating a safe and professional environment with the outcome of reduced victimization, safer communities and an emphasis on the premium of life."*

- \* Listen and write carefully with sincerity
- \* Accept people with different values
- \* Be persistent and patient
- \* Be dependable
- \* Be capable of empathizing
- \* Be objective
- \* Be mature and confident
- \* Be enthusiastic
- \* Use discretion
- \* Seek to establish adult relationships
- \* Use good judgment
- \* Encourage a positive attitude

## DOC VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS, FURTHER RULES and REGULATIONS

### DOC VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS

- \* The volunteer should maintain high standards of personal conduct
- \* The volunteer should act in accordance with the highest standards of integrity
- \* The volunteer's primary responsibility is to work cooperatively with staff to benefit the inmate
- \* The volunteer encourages the inmate to explore his/her own values while not imposing his values on the inmate
- \* The volunteer should respect the privacy of the inmate and hold in confidence all information
- \* The volunteer should treat co-volunteers with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith
- \* The volunteer has the responsibility to communicate with the SWG committee on a regular basis

### FURTHER DOC RULES AND REGULATIONS

- \* Respect the confidentiality of records and other privileged information
- \* Do not make phone calls or perform similar services for inmates
- \* **Refrain from using inappropriate or possible misinterpretable signs of affection**
- \* Do not enter into business ventures with inmates

## EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO INMATE WHO HAS 90 DAYS OR LESS

### EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO INMATE WHO HAS 90 DAYS OR LESS

(Response to Inmates who request Step Guidance but are serving 90 days or less)  
Dear

The ISWG committee has just received your letter. Our committee is designed to help addicts who will not be released 90 days or longer from the time we received your letter. Because your stay is less than that we feel we can best help you by sharing some suggestions that will help you get started in NA recovery upon your release. These are:

1. Check with the volunteer or addiction services staff at your institution to obtain a meeting schedule if one is available.
2. If you can't obtain a schedule and don't know where the meetings are in your area, call the hotline number for your area. The number can be found in most phone books under Narcotics Anonymous or from Info. line. South Florida Regional helpline number is : (844) 623-5674
3. At your first meeting let people know who you are and that you're new. Get phone numbers, a current meeting schedule (if you haven't already gotten one) and start your search for a sponsor who will help you work the steps of NA recovery-
4. Don't hang out in "the old familiar places" with the "old familiar faces".
5. Most importantly, DON'T USE NO MATTER WHAT!

Narcotics Anonymous promises us that through working this program we can find relief from our obsession to use drugs. Every addict who stays clean is proof of this miracle and all it takes to belong is the desire to stay clean.

**Good luck and we hope to see you in the rooms of NA soon.**

Yours in recovery,

Step Writing Guides for Recovery Committee

## SPANISH RESPONSE LETTER

### SPANISH RESPONSE LETTER

*(For when no Spanish speaking guides are available)*

Querida/o \_\_\_\_\_,

En estos momentos este comite no tiene un/a adicta/o que habla espanol disponible. Entonces, esta carta esta escrita en ingles, y una persona quien habla solamente ingles le va a escribir a usted para tras. Nosotros esperamos que usted pueda encontrar a alguien que pueda traducir la carta en espanol para usted.

De Usted en Recuperacion,

NA Step Writing Guide for Recovery Committee

Comite de Escribiendo Pasos para Recuperacion

**(En Ingles: Currently our committee has no Spanish speaking addicts available. Therefore, this letter is written in English, and an addict who speaks only English will write back to you. We hope that you can find someone who can translate the letter into Spanish for you.**

**Yours in Recovery,... )**

## EXAMPLE LETTER TO DOC FACILITY

### EXAMPLE LETTER TO DOC FACILITY

Dear

Enclosed is information concerning the **Narcotics Anonymous Inmate Step Writing Guide Program for Recovery**. This packet is being sent to you because an inmate in your facility recently wrote to our committee asking that we provide him with a qualified step guide to help him write his steps for recovery. NA-SWG and many DOC Correctional Institutions have been working together since 1994 in other states.

The purpose of this service is to provide guidance through writing the steps of NA with any incarcerated addict/inmate desiring recovery within NA. Working the steps is the process we've found for continuing ongoing growth with our ability to live life on life's terms without the use of drugs. This committee operates on certain policies and guidelines. Some of the requirements to be a step guide are:

1. Two years of continuous abstinence from all drugs
2. A willingness and availability to reply to any letter within two weeks of receipt.

Among the contents of this packet you will find:

- ***A Short History*** of the SWG Committee
- Our current ***Policy and Guidelines***
- A letter from out of state facility expressing satisfaction with this service.
- The ***Welcome Letter*** for inmates requesting our services,
- A ***Typical First Letter*** from a recovering addict requesting our services
- A ***Gratitude Letter*** from one of the recovering addicts we have been able to serve.
- The ***SWG Correspondence Only Agreement*** that our Step Guides sign
- The letter we send to recovering addicts who will be released within 3 months
- The letter we send to Spanish speaking recovering addicts in the event we do not have any Spanish speaking step guides available
- There are more guidelines and policies which we will be happy to discuss with you further. We are looking forward to participating with your institution.

Yours in service to the addict who still suffers

ISWG Committee



## OUT OF STATE INMATE RESPONSE LETTER

### OUT OF STATE INMATE RESPONSE LETTER

**NOTE:** to be sent upon receiving out of state inmate's request for Step Guidance

Dear

The SWG committee has just received your letter. Our committee is designed to help addicts in Florida Prisons who are requesting help to work the steps of Narcotics Anonymous. We are recovering addicts who volunteer our time to share our step writing experience and as such our resources are limited and we can only commit ourselves to work with the addicts within Florida. We are forwarding your letter on to the Regional H&I Committee in your state in hopes they can give you the help you are requesting. We commend you for reaching out to us in an effort to enhance your recovery and know that you will find the following suggestions helpful as you get started in NA recovery. Please reach out to your local H&I meeting if there is one being brought into your facility. Upon your release please follow these suggestions:

1. Prior to your release check with the volunteer or addiction services staff at your institution to obtain a meeting schedule if one is available.
2. If you can't obtain a schedule and don't know where the meetings are in your area, call the hotline number for your area. The number can be found in most phone books under Narcotics Anonymous or from Info. line.
3. At your first meeting let people know who you are and that you're new. Get phone numbers, a current meeting schedule (if you haven't already gotten one) and start your search for a sponsor who will help you work the steps of NA recovery-
4. Don't hang out in "the old familiar places" with the "old familiar faces".
5. Most importantly, DON'T USE NO MATTER WHAT!

Narcotics Anonymous promises us that through working this program we can find relief from our obsession to use drugs. Every addict who stays clean is proof of this miracle and all it takes to belong is the desire to stay clean.

**Good luck and we hope to see you in the rooms of NA soon.**

Yours in recovery,

Inmate Step Writing Guides for Recovery Committee

# TABLE HI-02: H&I PRESENTATION MEETING FORMAT

## HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS MEETING FORMAT

This is a presentation of H&I, which stands for Hospitals and Institutions of Narcotics Anonymous. We are recovering addicts who carry the message to fellow addicts that cannot attend outside meetings.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, can you please help me open this meeting with a moment of silence followed by the SERENITY PRAYER.

I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read WHO IS AN ADDICT.

I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read WHAT IS THE NA PROGRAM.

I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read WHY ARE WE HERE.

I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read HOW IT WORKS.

Introduce your speaker.

Try to leave time for others to share, if possible.

Have someone read JUST FOR TODAY.

(All readings can be found in white book)

CLOSE MEETING ON TIME...

WITH A MOMENT OF SILENCE, FOLLOWED BY THE SERENITY PRAYER.

## TABLE HI-03: H&I ORIENTATION PACKAGE

### HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ORIENTATION PACKAGE

#### ORIENTATION

H&I orientation is a walk-through that allows NA member to become familiar with how H&I works so that they are not rushed into a commitment without any preparation for this service. Many people are quite apprehensive about joining H&I for a variety of reasons. Do not be put off... everyone has something to offer.

This packet has been compiled by the GOLD COAST AREA H&I SUBCOMMITTEE to give a brief outline of some of the specifics that will be important for you to know as a panel member or chairperson. The H&I Handbook gives a much more in-depth look at how H&I works. If you decide you want to learn more about this rewarding type of service, it is available to borrow at the monthly subcommittee meeting which meets on the first Monday of each month.

In the Gold Coast Area, as a part of orientation, it is required that those people seeking to chair a meeting accompany a chairperson to three (3) meetings as an observer (panel member or speaker). This gives newcomers to H&I a chance just to see how an H&I meeting is run. This also helps many feel more comfortable when it comes time to join the H&I committee.

#### WHY IS AN H&I MEETING NECESSARY?

The purpose of an H&I meeting is to carry the NA message of recovery to addicts who do not have access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. H&I meetings are intended simply to introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA program.

#### WHO IS BEST SUITED TO CARRY THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MESSAGE IN A HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION MEETING?

In our experience, it is best for members to have at least three (3) months clean time before attending an H&I meeting as a panel member or speaker, and six (6) months clean time before chairing or co-chairing a meeting,. It is not important whether or not we have been in a similar facility ourselves. Anyone with a CLEAR AND CONSISTENT NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MESSAGE who is willing to share is well suited for H&I work.

## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE AS A COMMITTEE?

**Literature:** When the facilities themselves are not-for-profit and cannot provide approved NA literature to their residents, H&I Subcommittee should provide such literature. Each facility is different and literature guidelines are set within the subcommittee based on the facility's needs and guidelines. For-profit facilities are allowed to provide NA approved literature to their residents through the Gold Coast Area literature distribution committee or via World Service at [www.na.org](http://www.na.org).

## WHAT DO WE NOT PROVIDE?

**Transportation Services:** H&I Subcommittees do not provide transportation for residents to outside NA meetings. Providing rides could create a liability issue for the H&I Subcommittee, the Fellowship and the NA member: accidents, escapes and false accusations.

## THE MEETING FORMAT

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

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

It is the responsibility of the chairperson to inform the guest speaker what the format is before the meeting begins and should be able to answer any questions he/she may have. Samples of a variety of formats are given in the H&I Handbook.

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

## PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

Please do not volunteer for an H&I meeting if:

1. You are not sure that you want to attend this type of facility, or
2. You are not sure that you will be able to attend the meeting. If something comes up and you will be unable to make your meeting, try to give the chairperson or co-chairperson at least 48 hours notice so that he/she can invite someone to fill your spot. DO NOT ask anyone who is not a current H&I member to take your place. The chairperson is the only one who is allowed to invite people to the meeting. If the meeting cannot be filled for some reason, please contact the facility so that they may adjust their residents' schedule for that time slot, or
3. If you cannot attend the H&I Subcommittee Meeting on the first Monday of every month.

## QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

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

Please remember that NA has no opinion on outside issues. Occasionally during the question and answer period, or when talking after the meeting, the residents will ask us to give an opinion on outside issues such as:

1. Other recovery programs or other fellowships;
2. The facility, i.e. "Do I need to stay in treatment?"
3. "Can you recommend a half-way house?"
4. Types of medication;
5. "Are certain drugs OK if they are natural?"
6. Many other issues that do not pertain to recovery from addiction in the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship.

It is very important that we are not drawn into these types of discussions. Always remember to share only your experience, strength and hope about your recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Remember that our primary purpose is to carry the message of hope.

## **WORKING WITH OTHERS**

Some facilities house only men or only women. Some house both men and women but keep them separate, while other facilities house both men and women together. IT IS VITAL THAT YOU AS A CHAIRPERSON OR CO-CHAIR CHECK WITH YOUR H&I SUB-COMMITTEE FOR GUIDELINES AS TO WHO (male or female) MAY ATTEND THESE MEETINGS IN YOUR RESPECTIVE FACILITY. Remember, our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery. Problems that arise in this area have the potential to seriously damage the credibility of Narcotics Anonymous. Remember that it is your commitment and therefore your responsibility to be aware of your facility's guidelines and rules.

## **SOME SUGGESTED TOPICS**

1. Transition to the fellowship from treatment.
2. The BASICS: Don't use, meetings, phone numbers, literature, sponsorship and THE STEPS.
3. Responsibility for our own recovery.
4. Identify rather than compare.
5. Spiritual - not religious - program.
6. Denial and reservations.
7. Giving up old playmates, playgrounds and playthings.
8. Living Just for Today.
9. The first three steps.

This is a list of some topics that could be talked about during your meetings, but there are countless others. Topics should, however, be chosen carefully, keeping in mind the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

## **H&I CHAIRPERSON REQUIREMENTS ALONG WITH THE DOs and DON'Ts**

You have been invited to carry the message of recovery through the H&I meetings because:

1. You have 3 months clean time from all mood and mind-altering chemicals, making you eligible to panel or speak.
2. You have 6 months clean time from all mood and mind-altering chemicals, making you eligible to chair or co-chair a meeting.
3. You are willing to comply with all H&I subcommittee and facility requirements.
4. You are willing to carry the Narcotics Anonymous message in a responsible manner.
5. You have a strong, clear and consistent Narcotics Anonymous message of recovery from addiction.

## **DO'S**

1. Point out on meeting lists those outside meetings available to residents.
2. Clarify the facility's rules with anyone you bring (speaker or panel member).
3. Start and end the meeting on time.
4. Give a brief explanation of what H&I is.
5. Make it clear that NA is separate and distinct from the facility as well as other similar fellowships.
6. Try to get residents involved.
7. Obey all dress codes. Exercise common sense and dress appropriately.
8. Keep staff aware of your whereabouts AT ALL TIMES.
9. Remember that this is a "we" program. No addict should feel that he/she is alone or being preached to, disrespected or singled out.
10. Remember that an addict is an addict, regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, creed, religion or lack of religion.
11. Remember that in NA, recovery is available to any addict, regardless of what or how much or how little we used ( or where we come from or how we got here).
12. Emphasize the importance of getting to an NA meeting the first day out.
13. Emphasize the importance of getting a sponsor and a home group, the on-going nature of recovery and the importance of attending meetings (making 90 in 90).
14. Use the literature recommended for H&I work, if we are supplying literature.
15. Explain the language that WE use ("addict", "clean", "recovery") and why we use it.
16. Be selective about your choice of speakers or panel members. Clean time is important, however equally important is that person's message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

## DON'T'S

1. Don't break another person's anonymity or tell their story.
2. Don't debate any issues involving the facility's policies, conditions within the facility, opinions about staff members, the merits of the facility's program and methods used by the facility OR OTHER FELLOWSHIPS. Focus on the positive qualities of our program. Remember, not all facilities are 12 step based nor does their understanding of the Steps necessarily coincide with the understanding gained in Narcotics Anonymous. We share our experience without reference to the facility's methods or to residents' comments.
3. Don't debate which drugs are acceptable. We are a program of complete abstinence. Remember we are not doctors or professionals (counselors or therapists).
4. Don't carry excessive cash or wear expensive or flashy jewelry.
5. Don't show favoritism to any resident.
6. Don't carry messages - either verbal or written - in or out of any facility.
7. Do not give out another person's phone number or street address. Refer always to the helpline number.
8. Do not carry contraband items, such as cigarettes, coffee, weapons, etc.
9. Don't flood the facility with literature. The most reliable means of carrying the message is the NA member.
10. Don't pass the basket.
11. Don't let the meeting run too long.
12. Don't read too much literature; just keep it simple for everyone (including you).
13. Don't take a person with outstanding warrants to jail or prison meeting. THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO LEAVE.
14. Don't take a person who is on parole or probation unless they have received permission from both their parole/probation officer and the facility.
15. Do not give out your phone number, but you may inform the resident what meetings you attend and if that person would like to meet you at a meeting, then at that time you can give him/her your number.

**Remember at all times that you have a responsibility to the facility, to the residents and to Narcotics Anonymous. If you observe the suggestions above and follow the 12 Traditions, you will be upholding your responsibilities to all three.**

***This is only a brief outline of information. For further information, see your H&I Handbook which is available through your area S&I Subcommittee. The World Service Conference H&I Handbook is also available.***

***Thank you for your service.***