

I.P. No. 18



N.A. GROUP STARTER KIT

**Our
Gratitude
Speaks...**

N.A. World Service Office, Inc.
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Approved Literature
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Welcome to the growing Worldwide Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

The information contained in this booklet will give you the basics in starting an N.A. Meeting. More detailed information is available. May we suggest that you read this material well before starting.

We are grateful for your desire to help carry the message of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Our best wishes go out to your new Group and its members. Keep in touch with Narcotics Anonymous as a whole; we are here to help in any way we can.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The 12 Steps of N.A.	2
The Member	3
The Group	3
Securing a Meeting Place.	3
Different Kinds of Meetings	4
First Business Meeting	4
Conducting a Meeting	5
Typical Meeting Outline	6
Before & After the Meeting.	7
Trusted Servants of the Group	7
Public Information Tips	8
Carrying the Message in Hospitals & Institutions. .	8
About N.A. Unity.	9
The 12 Traditions of N.A.	10
Group Registration Form	11

**Complimentary Literature and Order Form
Enclosed in This Booklet.**

To assure that no addict seeking recovery need die without having had a chance to find a better way of life. From this day forward, may we provide the necessary services.

THE 12 STEPS OF N.A.

If you want what we have to offer, and are willing to make the effort to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps. These are suggested only, but they are the principles that made our recovery possible.

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.

*12 Steps and 12 Traditions
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THE MEMBER

Any addict can be a member — the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. It is the individual member in the Group who carries our message of recovery and works with others.

We are not responsible for our disease of addiction, but we are responsible for our recovery. Also, it is the responsibility of each of us to share freely our experience, knowledge of our Twelve Steps and hope with the addict who still suffers. We work to insure that which was freely given to us remains available to the newcomer and old-timer alike.

The gathering of two or more addicts, for the purpose of learning how to live a drug-free life by practicing the principles of Narcotics Anonymous, constitutes an *N.A. Meeting*. When such a meeting is held regularly, it is known as an *N.A. Group*.

THE GROUP

An *N.A. Group* is any meeting which meets regularly at a specified place and time, providing that it follows the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. *N.A. Meetings* are conducted by addicts, for addicts. It is a personal and spiritual program, therefore personal experiences, *N.A.* principles and *N.A.* general information should be the topics of our meetings.

The primary purpose of an *N.A. 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 life without the use of drugs. The Group, in essence, is a vehicle by which our message is carried, by providing a setting in which a newcomer can identify with recovering addicts and can find an "Atmosphere of Recovery".

SECURING A MEETING PLACE

Although a meeting can be started in a private residence, we have found it unwise to remain there long. Meetings held in public locations are much more successful in carrying the message. The following organizations may have meeting rooms in their facilities that are suited to our needs: Churches, Y.M.C.A.'s, Salvation Army, V.F.W., Union Halls, etc. It is a good idea to take literature along and be prepared to describe what our Fellowship is all about.

Agree on a specific day of the week and time, explaining the importance that the meeting takes place regularly. There may be arrangements to make — unlocking the meeting room, obtaining chairs or making coffee.

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, we need to be self-supporting, therefore an amount for rent will need to be arrived at.

Most meeting facilities will be very cooperative and generous. Even though they may want to donate their space, we still need to give a small amount.

Some facilities that come in contact with addicts seeking recovery may prefer their rent to be paid in literature. This arrangement is beneficial to the growth of the Fellowship and to the addict who receives that literature.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEETINGS

N.A. Meetings fall into three basic *categories*:

- 1) Closed. Attendance limited to addicts only. (Usually Discussion Meetings, sometimes, Speaker.)
- 2) Open. Family members, friends and other interested persons may attend. (Usually Speaker Meetings.)
- 3) Hospital or Institutional Meeting. (See section on "Carrying the Message in Hospitals & Institutions.")

N.A. Meetings have several different *styles*:

- 1) Topic or Step Discussion
- 2) Literature Study (Steps & Traditions)
- 3) One or Two Speakers
- 4) Beginner's Meetings (Steps 1, 2 & 3)
- 5) Panel Meetings - Question & Answer (Usually for Hospitals and Institutions.)
- 6) Combinations of the above.

Terminology and procedures may vary widely from one geographical location to another. For consistency's sake, if there is an established Service Area or Region, it is good to find out what is working for other meetings. Our Groups are autonomous and have their freedom in choosing the meeting styles, formats and meeting outlines that best suit their needs...as long as it does not affect the integrity of *N.A.* as a whole.

FIRST BUSINESS MEETING

The Group should hold a business meeting as soon as possible after the first regular meeting. At this time, the Group can choose a name for the meeting, the weekly format, and the style. Trusted Servants should also be elected at this time (see section on "Trusted Servants of the Group").

The "Group Registration Form" needs to be completed. This is to help assure that your meeting will be included in Area, Regional and World meeting directories.

CONDUCTING A MEETING

Chairing a meeting is an important responsibility to the Group and is a form of "12th Step Work". The duties of a Chairman include starting and closing the meeting on time (usually 1½ hrs.), keeping the meeting flowing, and seeing that everyone has a chance to share in the discussion.

The Chairman also needs to keep the "Atmosphere of Recovery" in mind and contribute to maintaining that atmosphere. If a disturbance or problem arises, the Chairman should handle it in a firm, but caring manner.

There are several discussion "formats" that can be used. It is good to have a consistent format that works for the Group. Some are more suited to large attendances and others are better for smaller Groups. There may be instances in a large meeting when everyone may not have a chance to share.

The format can be the same from week to week, decided on by Group Conscience (a Group vote) or the Chairman's choice. Among these different formats are:

- 1) Simply go around table or room in one direction. Choose someone to start or ask for a volunteer.
- 2) When a member is finished sharing, they choose another member, and so on.
- 3) "Open Discussion". Chairman opens floor for discussion and members speak in turn as they are personally moved to share, introducing themselves first.
- 4) Chairman calls on members at random, letting the newcomers absorb the meeting. Newcomers are then asked to share before closing. (This kind of format isn't necessary to describe before starting.)

It is a good idea to go over the "meeting outline" with another Trusted Servant of the Group before the meeting starts, especially if it is your first experience of being Chairman.

New ideas can be good for a Group, however, they need to be talked over with other members of the Group before they are tried. Changes in Group format, style or other matters affecting the Group should be discussed in a Group Conscience Meeting. A Group Conscience Meeting may be called by any member of the Group and should be conducted after the regular meeting. All concerned members regardless of length of clean time may attend. As long as we are within the bounds of our 12 Traditions, these ideas will probably be beneficial and effective. With growth, changes of one kind or another may be necessary to better serve the addict seeking recovery, as well as the regular members of the Group.

Typical Meeting Outline

1. Welcome members to the meeting and introduce yourself. (Hello I'm _____, an addict, serving as your Chairman. Welcome to the "Beginner's Group" of Narcotics Anonymous.
2. Open with moment of silence (approx. 15-20 sec.) for the addict who still suffers, followed by the Serenity Prayer.
3. Is there anyone attending their very first N.A. meeting? We would like to extend a special welcome to newcomers. Is there anyone attending *this* meeting for the first time?
4. Make it known:
 - a) There is a must that applies to everyone attending: **THAT NO DRUGS OR PARAPHERNALIA BE ON YOUR PERSON AT MEETINGS.** This is for the protection of the Group and the Fellowship, as well as the meeting facility.
 - b) If you've used today, please listen and talk to someone after the meeting.
 - c) It costs nothing to belong to this Fellowship, you are a member when you say you are.
5. Recognize 24 hours or less, 30 Days Continuous "Clean Time", 60 Days, 90 Days, 6 Months, 9 Months, 1 Year or multiples of 1 Year.
6. Suggestions for Literature Readings. (Refer to the "White Book" or "Who, How, What & Why" Pamphlet.
 - a) "Who is an Addict?"
 - b) "What is the N.A. Program?"
 - c) "How it Works."
 - d) "The 12 Traditions of N.A."

Get members involved by asking them to read.
7. Secretary's report and any announcements of upcoming N.A. Conventions, Conferences, Local N.A. Functions or New Meetings.
8. Ask for topic or Step for Discussion. (Or Introduce Speaker.)
9. Discussion or Speaker.
10. Before closing, read the 7th Tradition. This goes to pay for rent, coffee, literature and supplies. (Sec'y or Treas. passes basket.)
11. Closing. Usually members join in circle and close meeting with the Lord's Prayer.
12. Keep coming back, it works!

Before and After the Meeting

It helps if members of the Group are at the meeting place at least 30 minutes before meeting time to help the Secretary get the meeting set up. Preparing coffee, setting up the room, putting literature in plain sight and being there to welcome someone to their first meeting is important. It *will* make a difference.

We will get no respect unless we give it. The meeting room should be left in as good as or better condition than it was found.

TRUSTED SERVANTS OF THE GROUP

The Group needs members who are concerned with its growth and well-being. Trusted Servants are chosen by the Group Conscience. We need to work together to serve the Group to the best of our ability. Carrying out the commitment to serve is important. The Trusted Servants are the backbone of the Group and their regular attendance is needed. It is suggested that they serve for a term of 6 months or a year.

Read the literature. Become acquainted with the Traditions. Keep the lines of communication open and well used. These suggestions will help the Group develop a strong sense of unity and a great spirit of recovery.

The Secretary

The Secretary sees that the meeting takes place when and where it should and maintains the day to day needs of the Group. The Secretary is responsible for making literature available each week and selecting a Chairman. Another duty is to let the Treasurer know when the Group needs to order literature, purchase supplies, etc. The Secretary can keep information records or logs from meeting to meeting such as number in attendance, topic or Step discussed and Chairman. This information is used as general reference and can be included in Treasurer's duties if preferred.

The Treasurer

The collection and distribution of the Group's funds are handled by the Treasurer. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to pass a basket during the meeting and to purchase literature and supplies, keeping accurate financial records. Generally literature may be purchased from the Area Service Committee if one exists, or from the World Service Office. Make sure to have plenty of literature on hand and place orders well in advance.

After Group expenses are met, excess funds can be diverted to the local Area Service or Regional Service Committee. If no Area

or Region is in existence, then funds can be donated directly to the World Service Conference.

Note: The Secretary and Treasurer's duties can be combined if it works better for the Group.

The Group Service Representative

When a few meetings exist in your city or geographical location, an "Area Service Committee" (ASC) can be formed. The Group Service Representative (GSR) attends these monthly service meetings to share Group experiences and discuss more effective ways of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. The GSR keeps the Group informed about new meetings, upcoming N.A. functions, new ideas, etc. There may already be an established ASC in your locality.

An Alternate GSR is elected to work closely with the GSR and to learn these responsibilities.

The N.A. Service Structure is described in detail in our "N.A. Service Manual" which is available from the World Service Office.

PUBLIC INFORMATION TIPS

Letting the general public know where the suffering addict can come if they want help is important. There are several ways to help make the community aware that your N.A. meeting exists.

- 1) Public Awareness Meetings
- 2) Telephone Helpline or Answering Service
- 3) Small Flyers can be Posted.
- 4) Radio "Public Service Announcements"

We recommend that a "Public Information Kit" be obtained from your local Area Service Committee, Region or the World Service Office before venturing into Public Information. It contains detailed information and guidelines as well as helpful examples.

CARRYING THE MESSAGE IN HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS

An N.A. "H&I" Meeting is a special or introductory meeting held in a hospital, prison, treatment center, recovery house or mental hospital. The primary purpose of this kind of meeting is to carry the message to the addict who cannot attend regularly scheduled meetings. It helps to show the residents of these facilities that on-going recovery can be possible once they are released.

In some instances, the rules and regulations of a given institution can conflict with our Traditions. We can work out these problems with the facility and still effectively carry our message of recovery.

Members may also find an "H&I" meeting beneficial in a town where there are a limited number of recovering addicts to support

a regular meeting. The H&I meeting can continue until or after support is generated for a Regular N.A. Meeting.

When local members or Groups see a need for an H&I meeting, the information contained in the "Hospitals & Institutions Handbook" can provide the guidance necessary for a successful institutional or hospital meeting. (See Literature & Materials Order Form.)

ABOUT N.A. UNITY

By sharing with one another throughout greater N.A., we get a wider perspective of N.A. recovery. It gives hope in times of despair... especially for a "loner" meeting that is geographically isolated.

Many members have experienced the growing pains involved with starting a new Group. In the beginning, the growth of membership was usually slow. The development of a local Fellowship takes time, faith and hope. Please stay in contact through communication with the World Service Office, other Groups, Areas and Regions.

This booklet was prepared to give general guidelines for N.A. Groups from the experience of the Fellowship as a whole. As our experience and desire to further carry the message of recovery grows, so will our literature and general information.

In order to maintain the needs of our Fellowship in the course of growth, the development of new literature and improved service structure is an ongoing process. Only through our unity in fellowship and service will these needs be met.

**Our Gratitude Speaks...
When We Care and
When We Share
with Others the N.A. Way.**

THE 12 TRADITIONS OF N.A.

We keep what we have only with vigilance and just as freedom for the individual comes from the Twelve Steps so freedom for the groups springs from our Traditions.

As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. 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 N.A. as a whole.
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose — to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our Service Centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. N.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. 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, every reminding us to place principles before personalities.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS GROUP REGISTRATION FORM

Today's Date _____ City _____ State _____

- We're a New Group, please refer us to other Groups and Areas in our State.
- We're helping another Group, please send "Starter Kit".
- Please update your records with the following changes for our Group.

Meeting Day _____ Time _____ A.M. P.M.

Type of Meeting _____ Open Closed

Date of Group's First Meeting _____

Location of Meeting _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mailing Address: Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Regular Members of Group for Contact Purposes:

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

If your Group has any specific needs, problems or questions, use the reverse side of this form to communicate them, thank you.

Please mail this form to:
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