

**PROPOSED
HANDBOOK
FOR
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
NEWSLETTERS**



**WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE
LITERATURE COMMITTEE 1984**

(This is not Conference Approved Literature)

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World Service Office, Inc.
16155 Wyandotte Street
Van Nuys, CA 91406
(818) 780-3951

PURPOSE OF THE NEWSLETTER HANDBOOK

The purpose of a newsletter handbook is to provide the NA fellowship with suggested guidelines that work. Our guidelines are meant to be suggested only and are a result of the experience of our group conscience. We realize that God as we understand Him will constantly disclose more to us as we grow together to help carry the NA message.

WHAT IS A NEWSLETTER

A newsletter is a meeting in print, and an effective vehicle to carry the message of recovery. We need always remember our Fifth Tradition that we have but one primary purpose and that is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Tied in with our primary purpose a newsletter is a most important tool to build N.A. unity through communication. We communicate to share our experience, strength and hope with our groups, areas, and regions. On a local level we keep our groups informed of important activities by printing events, meetings, sub-committee reports, area, regional and world news. The better our communication, the more strength and support N.A. activities and events will get and the stronger our unity will be.

Simply put, N.A. newsletters communicate in two areas: the printing of N.A. news and personal stories of recovery.

A newsletter committee should be formed once an area has decided it wants a newsletter. In order to meet production deadlines it has been found that regular monthly meeting dates and times should be established. Some newsletter committees meet weekly and others only once a month; this should be determined by the newsletter committee.

Getting talented and interested members on the committee will be an ongoing process. The first members will be few, but as the committee grows so will the newsletter.

Officers should be elected by group conscience at the first committee meeting. The officers should consist of a Chairman, Secretary or Typist, and Distribution Manager. All other work on the newsletter should be performed through group conscience of the committee members.

The committee should choose a name for the newsletter. There are many ways to do this with Group Conscience being the best. The name should be recovery-oriented, one that the recovering addict can relate to. Taking a look at the names of existing newsletters can help.

Next the committee should get a permanent P.O. Box number and let the World Literature Committee and other newsletters know you are in business. One of the ways you can keep your newsletter fresh and continuously growing is to exchange with those throughout the world. You'll never run out of ideas on how to grow and improve your newsletter as other newsletters pour in.

The P.O. Box number will be where your readers send in written material. You can never ask too much for their written input; it is their newsletter and your source of future material.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR NEWSLETTERS

The following are suggested topics found in current N.A. newsletters.

Anniversaries	Meetings Needing Support
Announcements	New meetings
Sub-committee Reports	Conventions
Group News	Fellowship Activities
Area News	Workshops
Regional News	Personal Recovery Stories
World News	Slogans and Cliches
Inside Out	Poems
(Members in institutions)	
Letters	Cartoons
Material from text	
(Material from other N.A. newsletters and publications)	

These are just a few topics. When you use material from another source (e.g. other N.A. newsletters and publications) make sure you note the source of your material. By encouraging your readers to send in their stories and thoughts on recovery, you will increase the bulk of your written material and your readers involvement. Newsletters are for everyone!

EDITING

The traditions should serve as the basic guidelines in the editing of your newsletter. We should be conscious of the spiritual principals in our traditions, such as, we have no opinions on outside issues, N.A. has no leaders, carrying the message, and a loving God is the ultimate authority.

It has been found that using a Group Conscience of committee members is the most effective policy on editing.

There are some other guidelines that will be helpful. Language is important--avoid tasteless four-letter words, as many hospitals, jails, and institutions will not allow filth. We want to spread the message, not the disease. The initials N.A. are appropriate. The name Narcotics Anonymous suggests program approval, and it is not appropriate. Preserve anonymity. Proofreading for grammar, spelling and accuracy of information in announcements, etc., is important. Can it help an addict?

Remember that editing need not eliminate input which is possibly controversial; however, articles geared toward unity are more constructive.

DISTRIBUTING AND FINANCING

The most important aspect of distribution is that the newsletter reach the readers on time on a regular basis. In other words, we should be dependable.

Since much of the distribution depends on how a newsletter is financed, there are several different successful methods of distribution.

Distribution by subscription. For newsletter committees that are entirely self-supporting the subscription method is the best. The cost (printing, mailing, operating expenses) of getting the newsletter to the individual subscriber are figured out for a year and a yearly subscription rate is applied. This way a committee can set a predictable budget and meet foreseen expenses. A subscription list should include: name, address, amount paid, and date enrolled.

The subscription method, however, is limited to the amount of subscribers. Other areas have found that by financial backing from their group ASC and RSC, more members can receive the benefits of a newsletter.

Bringing the newsletters to the monthly ASC or RSC meeting and hand delivering them to the GSR's or ASR's to distribute to the groups cuts out the costs of mailing. For members outside of the existing area who wish to receive the newsletter a separate subscription list and rates should be made for them.

Distribution is vital. Without members knowing about the newsletter, it will die from lack of support.

PRODUCTION (GENERAL FORMAT, METHOD OF PRINTING, LAYOUT)

Affordability must be considered before establishing the general format (physical appearance) of your newsletter. The three paper sizes used are 8-1/2 X 11, 8-1/2 X 14, and 11 X 17. There are three basic formats that can be used. Format #1 is a one or two page (front of front and back) 8-1/2 X 11 or 8-1/2 X 14 sheet. Using this same format for multiple pages, a corner or side staple must be used to keep pages together. Format #2 is an 11 X 17 sheet folded in half to 8-1/2 X 11 to allow four page access. Format #3 is a magazine style which is best suited for a newsletter with a large number of pages (12 or more). It is the most expensive format. All three paper sizes can be used for this format. Folding, collating, and stapling are required. The format of your newsletter may change as the amount of input increases. It is helpful to communicate with other newsletters to find out what growing pains they have experienced.

There are various forms of reproducing a newsletter. Among these are mimeograph, copying, and offset printing. The way you reproduce your newsletter will depend on your newsletter's budget or what equipment you have available for use. For those who have mimeograph machines available, it is a slow process, but is a feasible way for members of the committee to actually produce the newsletter. The same applies to copying. Offset printing is probably the most expensive form of reproducing a newsletter. Clear, typewritten copy can be taken to a printer for reproduction. A lot of printers also have phototypesetting capabilities, that allows you

to have your typeset in a typestyle of your choosing. Although this is more expensive, it creates a more attractive newsletter. A way of cutting down expenses when a commercial printer is used, is to fold and/or collate the newsletter yourself.

The appropriate page layout is required for easier and another reading. A shorter copy line reads easier and is more appealing to the reader than a copy line that extends the full length of the page. For example, two equal columns is easier to read than one column measuring 7-1/2 inches across the entire page. If the newsletter is going to be produced by members and not by a printer, typewriter with a good ribbon is needed. Information for the newsletter is typed out in equal columns and then measured to make sure all copy fits. The columns are then cut into sections and pasted onto the mechanical (white board). One coat of rubber cement on the back of the columns works best.