



## Hospitals & Institutions (H&I) Workshop

### **READ 12 TRADITIONS AND 12 CONCEPTS**

The purpose of an H&I meeting is to carry the NA message of recovery to addicts who do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. H&I meetings/presentations, except for those in long-term facilities, are intended to simply introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA program. This committee shall function within the guidelines set forth by LEANA, the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of NA, and the rules and regulations of the institutes which this committee serves.

### **READ H&I SERVICE BULLETIN #2: WHO IS BEST SUITED TO CARRY THE MESSAGE IN AN H&I SETTING?**

Anyone with a clear and consistent Narcotics Anonymous message who is willing to share is well suited for H&I work. An H&I meeting provides the first exposure to Narcotics Anonymous for many addicts, so it is imperative that we project a positive image because our fellowship as a whole may be judged on how we conduct ourselves.

In our experience it is best for members to have three months clean before attending an H&I meeting, and six months clean before speaking at one. Some facilities house only men or only women; others house both men and women, but keep them separate. In these facilities where your meetings will consist of only men or only women, we feel strongly that only same sex NA members should participate. Problems that arise in this area have the potential to seriously damage the credibility of our fellowship. Experience has taught us that we can avoid these problems if we follow this simple guideline. A large majority of the facilities where our H&I subcommittees provide an H&I presentation have other Twelve Step fellowships providing meetings as well.

Clients and/or inmates will hear a variety of recovery messages. Other Twelve Step fellowships do not need our assistance in carrying their message. References to other fellowships and their literature may lead one to believe that the only way an addict can recover is to attend all Twelve Step fellowships. As a fellowship, we need to allow the addicts we may come in contact with the opportunity to choose for themselves which fellowship is best suited for them.

Any fellowship utilizing twelve step recovery has a set of traditions. The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, as directed by our Fifth Tradition, has but one primary purpose. Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Unity is one of our greatest strengths in carrying the message. Unity of purpose keeps our focus in carrying the message. What is the message that we are asked to carry? That an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, find a new way to live, and that the freedom of recovery (today) can be theirs also.

*Questions, comments, and experiences?*

## **READ EXCERPTS FROM NA BULLETIN #13: SOME THOUGHTS REGARDING OUR RELATIONSHIP TO AA**

Our First Step gives us one focus: our addiction. The wording of Step One also takes the focus of our powerlessness off the symptom and places it on the disease itself. The phrase "powerless over a drug" does not go far enough for most of us in recovery—the desire to use has been removed—but "powerless over our addiction" is as relevant to the old-timer as it is to the newcomer. Our addiction begins to resurface and cause unmanageability in our thoughts and feelings whenever we become complacent in our program of recovery.

This process has nothing to do with "drug of choice." We guard against the recurrence of our drug use by applying our spiritual principles, before a relapse. Our First Step applies regardless of drug of choice and length of clean time. With this "ten-strike" as its foundation, NA has begun to flourish as a major worldwide organization, clearly focusing on addiction.. As any NA community matures in its understanding of its own principles (particularly Step One), an interesting fact emerges.

The AA perspective, with its alcohol-oriented language, and the NA approach, with its clear need to shift the focus away from specific drugs, don't mix well. When we try to mix them, we find that we have the same problem as AA had with us all along! When our members identify as "addicts and alcoholics" or talk about "sobriety" and living "clean and sober," the clarity of the NA message is blurred. The implication in this language is that there are two diseases, that one drug is separate from another, so a separate set of terms is needed when discussing addiction.

At first glance this seems minor, but our experience clearly shows that the full impact of the NA message is crippled by this subtle semantic confusion. As a fellowship, we must continue to strive to move forward by not stubbornly clinging to one radical extreme or the other. Our members who have been unintentionally blurring the NA message by using drug-specific language such as "sobriety," "alcoholic," "clean and sober," "dope fiend," etc., could help by identifying simply and clearly as addicts, and using the words "clean," "clean time," and "recovery," which imply no particular substance.

We all could help by referring to only our own literature at meetings, thereby avoiding any implied endorsement or affiliation. Our principles stand on their own. For the sake of our development as a fellowship and the personal recovery of our members, our approach to the problem of addiction must shine through clearly in what we say and do at meetings. Our members who have used these arguments to rationalize an anti-AA stand, thereby alienating many sorely needed stable members, would do well to re-evaluate and reconsider the effects of that kind of behavior.

Narcotics Anonymous is a spiritual fellowship. Love, tolerance, patience, and cooperation are essential if we are to live our principles. Let's devote our energies to our personal spiritual development through our own Twelve Steps. Let's carry our own message clearly. There's a lot of work to be done, and we need each other if we are to be effective. Let's move forward in a spirit of NA unity.

*Questions, comments, and experiences?*

## **READ THE DO'S & DON'TS OF H&I SERVICE**

*Questions, comments, and experiences?*

## **READ EXCERPTS FROM NA H&I SERVICE BULLETIN #5**

H&I service brings us into contact with future members in the initial stage of their recovery. At times members of an H&I committee may act in ways that detract from our primary purpose. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, we are not only risking the reputation of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, addicts who need to hear our life saving message may not do so and may die as a result. This may seem dramatic, but past experience has proven it true.

*Questions, comments, and experiences?*

## **DOs and DON'Ts for H&I Work**

The World H&I Committee has compiled this list based upon the experience of committees around the world who sent input on the matter. They provide some very helpful guidelines and should help you to avoid the pitfalls others have fallen into.

One of the most important being DON'T EVER GO IN ALONE!!!!

DO Explain briefly what H&I is and why we are there.

DO Make directories of outside meetings available to residents.

- We supply Meeting Lists from our Area along with the Tri-State Region Meeting list to all the facilities that we support.

DO Start and end on time!

- Each Facility has allotted a certain time slot for our meeting. Facilities have other activities going on and we need to respect that.
- NA has taught us to be responsible and show up on time.

DO Try to get residents involved, especially those in long term facilities

- We want them to feel a part of and comfortable enough to talk.

DO Obey the dress code, exercise common sense & respect for the facility in what you wear.

- NO shorts, miniskirts, spandex muscle shirts, etc. (distracting clothing)
- Wearing a NA shirt is a good way to spark conversation about NA.

DO Keep staff aware of your whereabouts at ALL TIMES

- Don't go exploring. The staff at the facility is responsible for our safety

DO Follow ALL security regulations at ALL TIMES.

- We are guests in their house and must respect their rules.
- We can't pick and choose which rules apply - THEY ALL DO!
- Again, they are responsible for our safety

DO Get the panel coordinators numbers

DO Explain the language we use (addict, clean, recovery, clean time) and why we use it (1st Step & 6th Tradition)

DO Emphasize the importance of getting to a meeting on your first day out.

DO Stress the importance of getting a sponsor, a home group, and the ongoing nature of recovery, and the importance of regular meeting attendance.

- Suggest 90 Meetings in 90 Days (explain what that means & why)
- Some facilities have individuals who have experience with the steps who would be able to be a temporary sponsor

DO Emphasize that NA recovery is available to all addicts regardless of drug(s) used.

DO Clearly state that Narcotics Anonymous is separate from the facility and from other fellowships.

DO Ensure that a clear NA message of recovery is carried by all panel members.

DON'T Emphasize using days while sharing an NA message of recovery. They already know how to use.

DON'T Break another person's anonymity or tell their story.

- We all have our own story and don't need to borrow someone else's.
- We can't tell residents who comes to the outside meetings and we can't tell anyone outside the facility who we saw there.

DON'T Get involved in discussions about an inmate's guilt or innocence

- We are here to carry the NA message. We are not judges or lawyers and we have no opinion on the issue.

DON'T Debate any issues involving facility rules, regulations, programs, or other fellowships.

- The facility set these rules and we have no opinion on outside issues.

DON'T Discuss conditions within the institutions, methods used by the facility or opinions about staff members.

- We are visitors and need to keep our comments to ourselves.

DON'T Debate which drugs are acceptable. NA's program is complete abstinence from ALL drugs.

- We are not doctors. If there are questions about the medications they are taking, direct them to speak to their doctor. We are only there to carry the NA message of recovery.

DON'T Show favoritism to any inmates or residents.

DON'T Accept money or gifts from, or give money or gifts to any inmate. They are considered contraband and show favoritism.

DON'T Wear flashy jewelry and don't carry excessive cash.

- Large amounts of cash and expensive jewelry distracts from our message.

DON'T Bring an NA member who has friends and/or family in the facility.

DON'T Take messages or carry letters in or out of the facility.

- We are not mailmen, and we cannot mail letters for inmates or patients.
- We cannot become pen pals with inmates, this shows favoritism and also shares too much personal information.

DON'T Give out someone else's address or telephone number. This breaks their anonymity.

DON'T Give anyone within the facility your address or telephone number.

- If asked, tell them you will give it to them at an outside meeting.

DON'T Carry in ANY contraband items such as cigarettes, weapons etc.

- Items they are allowed to have are available through the facility or institution.
- We don't want to provide a means for escape for anyone (gum, pocket knife, screw driver, change of clothes, rope, ladders)

DON'T Dress like a street bum.

DON'T Use excessive profanity. It is offensive and distracts from our message.

DON'T Do the H&I meeting if there is a suspicion the person you are with is loaded.

DON'T EVER GO IN ALONE!!!

- We don't have any accountability if we are alone.
- If the person you are going in with doesn't show up, apologize to the facility and call the panel coordinator