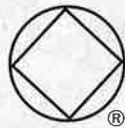




Narcotics Anonymous[®]



**Outreach
Resource Information**



Outreach Resource Information

Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc.
Chatsworth, California

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Preface

During the early 1980's, Narcotics Anonymous began to develop in many parts of the world where there was no NA. As a result of this growth, some NA groups and service committees became involved in a variety of "outreach" activities. Many early outreach efforts started because members in developing NA communities had a desire to stay clean, and make contact with others who were trying to do the same. Over time, as some of these NA communities grew larger, the "outreach" activities became more formalized through organized committees.

By the late 1980's, outreach committees had become active in different parts of the fellowship at the area and regional levels. As a result, the WSC Ad-Hoc Outreach Committee was formed to write an outreach handbook. Their efforts in gathering information from functioning outreach committees made it clear that outreach encompassed a wide range of activities based on local needs. This broad scope made writing an all-encompassing outreach handbook virtually impossible. The project was then given to the World Service Board of Trustees to complete the task.

This material was written to promote and encourage outreach efforts. Its purpose is to provide general information on outreach; not to list policies and committee guidelines. Therefore, outreach is presented as a general concept rather than a list of specific tasks. We have intentionally taken this direction to avoid dictating to committees the "correct" approach to structuring their outreach efforts. We hope this information will help the development of outreach committees¹ that provide services as needed by the local fellowship they serve, and allow for the flexibility to change as the fellowship grows.

¹ In this material, the term "outreach committee" is used to denote both formalized committees, and members who engage in these works where no such committee exists.

Introduction

Outreach efforts have always existed in Narcotics Anonymous, though they may not have been recognized as outreach, or called outreach by the members engaged in them. "Outreach" may have been several members piling in a car to drive to support a newly formed NA community. Or it may have been several members who had to travel long distances to get to a meeting themselves in order to stay clean. It may have been planning a picnic, sports, games, or other fun event with members from another nearby town. For many, anything done to help another addict find recovery is simply twelfth-step work. While that's correct, these kinds of activities are also outreach activities. As local NA communities grow, these activities usually become more formalized through organized committees.

Outreach

The main purpose of outreach is to help overcome the isolation that hinders the growth and survival of our groups. The focus tends to be on groups that are geographically isolated, but may also include assistance to groups isolated by such things as personal choice, language, cultural differences, or location within a locked facility not served by a Hospitals and Institutions Committee. While the main emphasis of this material is on outreach efforts that are aimed at bringing geographically isolated NA members into the larger community, outreach committees are not limited to those activities. What outreach does should depend upon local needs.

Outreach efforts can range from supporting groups that are far away to informing members that local groups are in need of support. This can be done simply through meeting attendance and sharing recovery. Outreach committees work closely with H&I and Public Information committees because each type of service has some areas of overlap. Just like H&I and PI committees, outreach committees organize and/or participate in workshops and learning days. In urban centers, outreach efforts may involve attendance at groups that have not participated in the service structure for some time. In some cases, these groups may have withdrawn their involvement because of resentments. More often, it is because the group lacks members willing and/or qualified to represent the group in the service structure. Members engaging in outreach to such isolated groups can promote re-involvement through direct, open discussion of concerns. This can also recreate enthusiasm for service work within the group. Some groups may not want their isolation ended, and this decision should be respected.

NA groups often communicate with one another via flyers, newsletters, and phone calls. These are very useful tools for communication; however, face-to-face contact between addicts is the most effective method. When visiting groups, it is very important not to negatively judge the way local groups operate. Many outreach efforts have been hampered by "experts" arriving to tell local members how things should be done. Such advice is rarely appreciated, nor does it usually further the goals of outreach. Outreach work is done to end isolation and promote growth, not to spread some homogeneous approach to recovery in NA.

In these cases, the outreach efforts may center on helping the fledgling NA community overcome the difficulties that are impeding its growth and stability.

Helping Struggling Groups and Areas

Outreach to isolated NA groups provides a beneficial and much needed service. A group that is the recipient of these efforts is assured of its welcome in the fellowship. The group will feel a sense of belonging and, consequently, will take an interest in the workings of NA, supplying trusted servants who will invest time and energy into the growth and development of NA as a whole. Outreach committees should express to isolated groups that they are an important part of the NA Fellowship, and are not alone. The very presence of such "outside support" confirms that carrying the message is the primary purpose of NA.

It is very helpful to arrange regular visits to an isolated group, perhaps on a weekly or monthly basis. In addition to making group visits themselves, outreach committee members should encourage members of an isolated group to attend NA meetings that are within traveling distance. This can be helped by coordinating rides and by preparing to welcome a visiting member within the established NA community.

Outreach committees often assist isolated groups with basic public information efforts, such as ensuring that the group is on local meeting and phoneline lists, and that the information is updated as needed. Outreach committees can also ensure the group is registered with the World Service Office so it can receive important information about recovery literature, conventions, service activities, and issues that may affect NA as a whole. Often, it is the local outreach committee that knows more about the NA groups in the area than any other part of the service structure.

Ongoing communication and follow-up visits are essential. Letters and telephone calls are a committee responsibility, however, they may also occur as a result of new friendships. Ideally, follow-up visits should include some of the same outreach members involved in the initial contact trip, however, follow-up should not hinge on this. A visit to a new or isolated group will raise hopes among that group's members. If outreach efforts stop there, it may leave the new group feeling more isolated than before. This can be avoided by exchanging phone numbers; sending flyers of upcoming events such as dances, conventions, retreats, learning days, and area and regional service meetings.

To the greatest extent possible, outreach should be done in teams. At least two people visiting a struggling group not only give support by attending the meeting, but also provide information and offer suggestions in conversations with the group trusted servants after the recovery meeting. Answering questions and explaining the purpose and functions of the area and its committees are also an important part of these visits.

Workshops can provide the basics needed for a solid foundation of experience, from which members can build their own service efforts. At workshops, members learn about the tools and the resources that are available. In much the same way that addicts learn the benefits of the steps by sharing them and practicing what they have learned, they start to understand the benefits of learning new information about service, and see how putting those ideas into practice in their local fellowship promotes increased growth.

A learning day is an opportunity for sharing experience about different aspects of service and/or recovery. However, it is of longer duration than a single workshop. In fact, a learning day is usually made up of a series of workshops, each dealing with many different topics that cannot all be covered in the short time offered in a single workshop.

Learning days and workshops can work well even when members must travel a long distance to attend. Scheduling some fellowship time at the end of a learning day is of great benefit. A meal and a recovery meeting provide the means for NA members to connect and get to know each other on a more personal level. In such a relaxed atmosphere, experience not brought out in the formal sessions may surface.

Outreach Obstacles & Barriers

What can get in the way of doing outreach work? Cultural differences, language barriers, geographical distance, legal restrictions, and even lack of support from the local fellowship or a particular meeting. All too often, the obstacles encountered are the reasons for the isolation that the outreach effort is attempting to overcome. As addicts new to recovery may isolate themselves from other addicts because of perceived differences, new NA groups or communities can withdraw for similar reasons.

Sometimes the part of the fellowship that outreach is attempting to help will have been isolated for so long that many of their local members have an attitude of resistance to anything different and new. Perception of the outreach committee as “outsiders” may exist even though members of the isolated group are asking for assistance. It is hard to go forward with an outreach effort when we are afraid our efforts won’t be welcomed, but if we approach the members in the spirit of help and sharing and maintain a positive attitude, we will eventually succeed in reaching the isolated group.

If there is a language barrier, try to bring at least one NA member who can speak the language fluently. While translations are an important part of carrying our message, language need not be an issue affecting a friendly visit. Often a simple request for language assistance will bring forth a volunteer in the group willing to translate or help explain things. It helps to be brief, and to keep any explanations simple. Avoid the use of slang and complex vocabulary. Focus explanations only on that information that will help the group with their specific problems at that time, and add more as the group is able to assimilate it. There’s no need to give a crash course in NA recovery and service work in one sitting.

RESOURCE SECTION

The materials found in this resource section are compiled to serve as a possible *starting point* for your own outreach efforts. They may be used as is or modified to suit your individual needs. It is not mandatory you use any of the materials in this section. They are here simply as examples. As your outreach efforts continue to develop, this section may be expanded upon. You may wish to include your area/regional meeting lists, RSO/WSO catalogs, or possibly maps to area/regional service meetings. Placing this information in a three-ring binder facilitates updates and additions.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The Group Booklet:

This is the primary guidebook to starting and maintaining a Narcotics Anonymous group. It includes a sample NA meeting format along with sections that answer key questions such as:

- What is an NA group?
- Who can be a member?
- Where can we hold NA meetings?
- What kind of meeting format can we use?
- What kinds of literature should we use?
- What officers does a group need?
- What responsibilities does an NA group have?
- How can our group support other NA services?
- How can our group better serve our community?
- How can our group solve its problems?

Other Available Resources:

- *Hospitals & Institutions Handbook*
- *H&I Basics*
- *Public Relations Handbook*
- *PR Basics*
- *Planning Basics*
- *A Guide To Local Services in NA*
- *The Group* (IP #2)
- *The Loner: Staying Clean in Isolation* (IP #21)
- *Institutional Group Guide*

GROUP VISITATION REPORT

NAME OF GROUP: _____

DAY OF MEETING: _____ TIME OF MEETING: _____

ADDRESS: _____

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING: _____

PURPOSE OF VISIT: _____

GROUP'S RESPONSE TO OUTREACH VISIT: _____

DOES THE GROUP REQUEST OUTREACH ASSISTANCE? _____ YES _____ NO

IN WHAT AREA(S) DOES THE GROUP NEED HELP? _____

WHAT SERVICE POSITIONS ARE FILLED? GSR SECRETARY TREASURER

GROUP CONTACT: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: () _____ BEST TIME TO REACH: _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

OUTREACH VOLUNTEER LIST

	Name	Address	Phone	Do you need transportation?		Distance willing to travel
				Yes	No	
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						



NA World Services



NEW GROUP REGISTRATION/UPDATE FORM

This form can be completed online at www.na.org/?ID=updateforms-newregfm

Visit www.na.org/?ID=subscribe or call 818.773.9999 x771 for information about free communications from NAWS

Please complete all information (Please print clearly)

Group Code (if known)	Today's Date
Group Name	
This group was formed (month/year)	This group holds meeting(s) per week
Area Service Committee Name	
Regional Service Committee Name	

Group's Meeting Information

Meeting Days	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Meeting Time							
Language(s)							
Format							
Wheelchair Accessible							
Room Name							
Open/Closed*							

*Open NA meetings welcome addicts and interested observers; closed NA meetings welcome addicts only.

Meeting Location

OLD (if applicable)

NEW

Place / Building Name		
Address		
City		
Borough / Sub-City		
State/Province		
Zip/Postal & Country		

If this meeting is held in a correctional or treatment facility, are there special criteria for entry?

Group Contact Mailing Address

This is typically a stable group member who can forward any communication from NA World Services to the NA group.

This may or may not be a current group trusted servant, and is not usually the group's meeting location address.

Group Contact Name (first and last)			
Address			
City	State/Province		
Postal/Zip	Country	Phone ()	
Email Address			

Please return this form to: NA World Services, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409, USA or FAX to 818.700.0700

Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.