

BOOTH WORKER ORIENTATION INFORMATION

THE 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.**

WHAT IS PUBLIC INFORMATION?

Public Information is informing the public about recovery from addiction through the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. The purpose of a Public Information subcommittee is to inform the public--both addict and non-addict alike--about the existence, the nature and the availability of our Program within the community: Who we are, what we do and where they can find us.

HOW DOES IT GET DONE?

Public Information subcommittees use several ways to inform the public about our Program. The following list gives some examples.

- Placing flyers in the community listing selected NA meetings and our phone number.
- Donating Basic Texts to school and community libraries.
- Setting up information booths at community and professional events such as street fairs, health expos and county fairs.
- Sending speakers to make presentations about our Program to various groups such as schools, professional and fraternal organizations, counseling staffs and members of the medical and law enforcement community.
- Placing Public Service Announcements (PSA's) in local newspapers and periodicals, as well as radio and television stations.
- Mailing information packets about NA to professionals within the community such as doctors, counselors and law enforcement personnel, as well as others whose clientele might benefit from our Program.

THE WORK ITSELF

Even though we know that no single addict can represent NA, the public does not. It is important to remember that each passerby will think that every addict in Narcotics Anonymous is just like you. Remember that we only have one chance to make a good first impression. Therefore, you need to pay particular attention to the following details. If you just keep these things in mind while you are behind the booth then you won't have any problems and you'll do a good job.

Appearance: How do I dress when I do service in a P.I. booth?

- For street fairs and County Fairs you may dress comfortably. On warm days shorts and short sleeves are acceptable, as long as they are in good condition. Torn and/or soiled clothing does not convey the appearance of recovery.
- In adherence to the Sixth and Tenth Traditions it is important to remember not to wear any clothing with graphics or logos that identify specific organizations. This will minimize the chance that Narcotics Anonymous will be associated with or endorse those organizations. Also, for the sake of simplicity, this includes NA t-shirts.

Speech: What do I say when I am talking with the public?

- Most importantly, try not to get into arguments or use profanity with people you are talking to. Remember that your only job is to provide information about our Fellowship and our Program. If someone has a difference of opinion with some of the information in our literature or with an answer you give them, allow them the freedom of their opinion and politely smile. If you feel you are being provoked into an argument ask for help from one of the other booth workers.
- A good rule of thumb is always to answer in the 'we' form rather than the 'I' form (just like the Basic Text). Doing so will strengthen your identity with the Fellowship as a whole, and it will make it virtually impossible for you to express a personal opinion.

- Study the literature you will have with you for the event. Refer to it while you are talking to the public. If you are unsure of the answer to a question, you'll know where to find it. Give the meeting schedules and I.P.'s away to anybody who wants them, but don't be pushy.
- Try to answer all questions honestly, but avoid answering questions that are inappropriate. Examples are questions about your personal life or your opinion on the relative dangers of specific drugs, such as "Have you ever committed any crimes as a drug addict?" or "Does smoking marijuana lead to using heroin?" If you are pressed for details of your personal life politely tell the person that in your training you were instructed not to talk about yourself, but rather the Program of NA.
- When talking about the Program or about meetings, if you use language that non-NA members would not understand, such as '90 in 90', 'clean time', etc. always explain what you are saying. **Most importantly, only use the language of Narcotics Anonymous as it is written in the Basic Text. In NA we only say "clean", "clean time" and "recovery". the words "sober" and "sobriety" as well as the phrase "clean and sober" are not part of our vocabulary. Do not use these words. They are from another Program.**

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- If someone approaches the booth with a camera or camcorder, don't allow your picture to be taken. Explain to them that our Traditions prevent us from breaking our anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. If they would like to film or photograph the booth, have all volunteers move out of the booth until after they are finished. If they would like more information or an interview, have them call the Regional Service Office and ask for the Regional Public Information Chairperson.
- Do not accept a shift in the booth unless you are absolutely sure that you will be able to be there. Other people are depending on you to show up.

After you are scheduled for a shift, if, for any reason, you are unable to fulfill your commitment, notify a member of the Public Information Committee immediately. Don't take it upon yourself to arrange for your own replacement. However, if you have someone in mind who is willing to replace you, let us know about it and we will make the necessary adjustments.

- Never leave the booth unattended. Each shift will have three people, so if one of you wants to take a break there will still be two people left in the booth.
- The only people in the booth should be those who are working their particular shift. If you have children with you, make arrangements to have them cared for during your shift. They do not belong behind the booth.
- Do not bring food into the booth. If you get hungry, take a short break to have something to eat and then return. Cold drinks, water and coffee, etc. are permissible, as long as they are not placed on the table.
- Smoking is not allowed in the booth. If you do smoke, feel free to take any smoke breaks that you arrange with your other booth workers.

WHAT DO I SAY WHEN I DO SERVICE IN A P.I. BOOTH?

Public Information activities consist of informing the public that NA exists and where we can be found. We need to remember that the group's primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Our literature tells us that the group is NA's most powerful tool for carrying the message, and so we want to get the addict to a meeting so they can hear the message. Therefore, we are not there to tell our own personal story. We are there to talk about Narcotics Anonymous. The following are some of the issues we want to cover.

- We want to tell them that recovery from addiction is possible. Quite often the people that are drawn to our table are those who have a friend or loved one with the disease and have lost all hope that they can change.
- We want to tell them that we don't discriminate between different age groups, socioeconomic classes or gender. All are welcome to join. Remember that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
- We want to tell them that our Program is spiritual in nature, not religious. Although our literature frequently uses the word "God", this merely refers to "a Power greater than ourselves". We allow our individual members to seek "God" on his or her own terms. At the same time that we are not in conflict with any established religion, we are not associated with them either.
- We want to tell them that our Program is free. We do not receive funding from any government or otherwise outside source; we exist only on donations from members within our Fellowship.
- We want to tell them about our history:

We were founded in 1953 in the San Fernando Valley.

Our Basic Text was published in 1982.

Our first meeting in the San Diego area was held in 1980.

Today we are in over 130 countries.

Our literature is published in 34 languages with 16 more translations to follow.

We have more than 50,000 weekly meetings worldwide.

In San Diego County alone, we have over 400 weekly meetings.

- We want to tell them about the Steps and Traditions and how they aid us in our recovery, allowing us to rebuild our lives and repair damaged relationships.
- We want to tell them about meetings: what types there are (open or closed, men, women or youth oriented), what formats they follow (open discussion, speaker, book study), what happens at a meeting (opening readings, introduction of newcomers, clean time celebrations).
- We want to tell them about sponsorship and how important it is to our recovery. Stress that there are no professionals in NA, just one addict helping another.

- We want to tell them about the Fellowship and how important it is to each of us individually; how it helped all of us find new, real friends who genuinely cared for us from the very beginning, and who want to help each other continue in our recovery and our Program.
- Finally we want to tell them about the fun we have in recovery; that we have dances, campouts, conventions and other activities that allow us to enjoy ourselves without having to use drugs.

QUICK SUMMARY OF DO'S AND DON'T'S

DO

- Have a basic understanding of the Twelve Traditions, primarily the Sixth, the Tenth and the Eleventh.
- Dress conservatively and neatly to present a good image of recovery. Remember that the public will judge you by your appearance.
- Use only the language of Narcotics Anonymous as it is written in the Basic Text.
- Minimize your personal story and direct you discussions to the Program and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.
- Use the literature. If in doubt, read directly from it. That way, you can't go wrong.

DON'T

- Don't argue. You probably won't change anyone's mind by arguing with them, and it will leave a bad impression.
- Don't use profanity. If you happen to slip and use a "four-letter" word, politely apologize and move on.
- Avoid using drug slang, or NA specific language. This might confuse the listener.

- Don't answer inappropriate questions such as your personal opinion on outside issues, or details about your personal life. Also, don't give out any of your personal information, such as your phone number or where you live.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Although you may never be asked any of the questions below, reading them and forming your own answers is a good exercise in how we apply the Traditions to Public Information booth work.

1. Is drug addiction hereditary?
2. What is the difference between you guys and AA?
3. How can I get my son/brother/girl friend/parent to stop using?
4. What effort does your Program make as far as drug prevention?
5. How do I tell if someone is an addict?
6. Does your Program work for prescription drugs?

CONCLUSION

Keep in mind that even as you are reading this there are people in our community that are suffering right now from the disease of addiction. They are desperate for the information that we have to give them and they don't even know that we exist---yet.

The work that you do in Public Information is important and you have to be serious about it and about the way that you do it. But you can have fun at the same time, because you are grateful for the miracle of recovery in your lives, and remember: ***“My gratitude speaks when I care and when I share with others the NA way.”***