Group Service Representative
Orientation & Information Booklet

Narcotics Anonymous
Service Pyramid
CONSCIENCE

SOME NOTES ON GROUP CONSCIENCE IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

WHO:
Members of NA

WHAT:
The process of members gathering together to discuss and decide on Narcotics Anonymous matters.

WHEN:
1. Anytime as long as it is NOT during an NA meeting. Preferably before the reading of “Who, What, How, and Why” or after the closing prayer.
2. Some groups regularly have a group conscience at the meeting just prior to the next ASC meeting.
3. Any regular attendee / member of a group may request a group conscience. Such request is usually made during the Secretary report.

HOW:
The following is offered as a suggestion.
1. Chaired by group Chairperson or Secretary.
2. Begin with reading 12 Traditions of NA.
3. Determine number of voting members and observers present.
4. Secretary reports on literature and chips supply.
5. Treasurer reports on group funds.
6. GSR brings up topics from ASC requiring group input or vote.
7. Any other business to be discussed.
8. For each topic:
   • Discussion
   • Decide to vote or table.
   • Restate the motion.
   • Vote
For each election:
   • Read service position description.
   • Nominations.
   • Seconds.
   • 3 min. statement from each nominee
     Clean time
     Other current positions
     Desire
     Willing to serve full term or state otherwise
   • Nominees leave room.
   • Discussion
     2 pro for each
   • Vote.
9. The group conscience ends when a motion to close passes.

PURPOSE

NA GROUP OUTLINE

NA MEMBER:
1. Stay clean.
2. Carry message of recovery to addict who still suffers by working with others.
3. Any addict can be a member – the only requirement is a desire to stop using.
4. Without active membership – there would be no NA.
5. Responsible to share freely – experience, strength, and hope with still suffering addict.
6. Works to ensure what was so freely given to us remains available to newcomer and old timer.
7. Gathering of 2 or more addicts constitutes an NA meeting.
8. When a meeting is held regularly – it becomes a group.
9. Many members choose one group as their "Home Group"

**NA MEETING:**

1. Uses only NA conference approved literature.
2. Is a forum for sharing recovery based on the "Twelve Steps" of NA.
3. Is led or chaired by a person who considers him/herself a member of NA.
4. Provides all members with a chance to express themselves and to hear experiences of other NA members.
5. Two types of meetings:
   - Open to general public
   - Closed to public, (for addicts only)
6. Some formats of meetings:
   - Participation meetings
   - Speaker
   - Question & Answer
   - Topic discussion
   - 12 Step study
   - Step and Tradition study.
   - 5th and 10th step
   - Basic text study
   - Some are a combination
7. A written format improves stability and consistency.
8. Proven to be most successful vehicle for 12 Step work.
9. Provides setting where newcomer can find identification by hearing a number of recovering addicts.

**NA GROUP:**

1. Strives to abide by the 12 Traditions.
2. Primary purpose to carry message to still suffering addict by providing a setting for identification.
3. Provides healthy atmosphere for recovery.
4. Is any meeting which meets regularly at a specified place.
5. A group may have one meeting per week or more than one scheduled meeting per week.
6. Can be described as the steering committee that puts on the NA meeting.
7. Group membership should not be denied to any addict seeking recovery.
8. Has no outside affiliations.
9. Receives no outside financial support.
10. Should register with W.S.O. of NA to facilitate communication, unity and better serve NA as a whole.
11. Second level of NA Service Structure.
12. Most valuable thing a member can do is to bring new members to a group meeting.
13. Group meeting becomes place where newcomers can come for help.
14. Level at which day to day business of NA is taken care of.
15. Pays rent.
16. Buys and distributes literature.
17. Provides refreshments.
18. Keeps meeting hall clean.
20. Makes announcements.
21. Stays in contact with other groups in its area and with the rest of NA.
22. First level at which fellowship funds are handled.
23. Correct use of money is essential for preservation of group.
24. Principle of trusted servant comes into being at group level.
25. Trusted servants are nucleus of group steering committee.
26. Steering committee is made up of members who regularly attend group and also attend business meetings.
27. Officers of group elected by majority vote or group business meeting:
   - Secretary
   - Treasurer
   - GSR
   - GSR alternate
   - Any other positions group decides to have:
     - Coffee maker
     - Literature
     - Chairperson
     - Greeters
28. Business meeting is not held in middle of recovery meeting.
29. Groups with multiple meetings/secretary’s often elect a steering committee chairperson.

GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR)
1. First link of communication between groups and NA as a whole.
2. Link that binds groups together in carrying message.
3. Responsible to keep group informed.
4. Responsible to express groups conscience in all matters.
5. Voice of their group.
6. Takes an active part in NA business.
7. Active representation can strengthen ties that bind us together and promotes common welfare.
8. Speaks for their group at ASC meetings.
9. Takes part in planning and implementation of any functions which affects members of their groups.
10. Members should be able to go to GSR for:
    - Find out about their own group.
    - Other groups.
    - How NA service structure works.
    - Twelve traditions.
    - How they can become more involved.
11. Serves for period of two (2) years.
12. First year spent as GSR alternate.
13. Should attend ASC meetings.
14. Should share some responsibilities with GSR alternate.
15. Voice and ears of group – they represent YOU.
16. Willingness and desire to serve.
17. Suggested 1 year clean time.
18. Active participation in group they serve.
20. Understanding of service structure and responsibilities of GSR.

GSR ALTERNATE
1. Works closely with GSR.
2. Learns duties of office for first year.
3. Takes over in case GSR is ill or can no longer serve.
4. Can vote at ASC in absence of GSR.
5. Responsibilities are same for alternate as GSR except suggested 6 months clean time.

NOTE
Apprentice system of GSR and GSR alternate serves two purposes:
1. Helps provide continuity of service so that a group is always represented.
2. Two years as an alternate provides training necessary for an effective GSR.

GROUP SECRETARY
1. Responsible for day to day functions of group.
2. Responsible to assure group meeting takes place when and where it is supposed to.
3. Selects leader (speaker) for each meeting.
4. Makes sure coffee and refreshments are ready.
5. Arranges for group business meetings.
6. Arranges for celebrations of birthdays (anniversaries).
7. Makes sure hall is left in proper order.
8. Answers all correspondence.
9. Without a good secretary – group has little chance of surviving and providing an atmosphere of recovery.
10. Willingness and desire to serve.
11. Six months clean time.
13. Active participation in group they serve.

GROUP TREASURER
1. Responsible for funds which come into group from collection.
2. Responsible for handling and distributing funds.
3. Money should be carefully budgeted.
4. Keeps accurate records of all groups financial transactions.
5. Purchases literature or gives funds to GSR for literature purchase.
6. Provides money for refreshments.
7. Buys supplies and covers cost of expenses.
8. Money from group collections and member contributions must always be used to further primary purpose.
9. Group must first support itself.
10. After bills are paid – funds should be put in group bank account (if possible).
11. Accumulates money reserve adequate to run group for 2 or 3 months.
12. Excess funds are to be passed on to ASC.

NOTE:
1. Secretary and treasurer serve for 1 year.
2. Use of any drug while as an officer is automatic resignation.
3. Responsibility of officers of groups is to train other group members to replace them.
4. Continuity of service can be aided by staggering and overlapping the election and terms of service of trusted servants.

WHAT IS A "HOME GROUP"?
In some NA communities, it has become customary for members of the fellowship to make a personal commitment to support one particular group – their “Home Group”. Though this custom is not universal, many believe its practice can benefit the individual members as well as the group. For the individual member, it can provide a stable recovery base – and a place to call "home", a place to be known by other recovering addicts. For the group, it ensures the support of a core of regular, committed members. A strong home group can also foster a spirit of camaraderie among its members that makes the group both more attractive and more supportive of newcomers. The home group is one very specific way in which, by making a personal commitment to NA Unity, group members can enhance their own recovery as well as insure that the same opportunity exists for others.
While the home group concept is the accepted norm in some NA communities it’s unheard of in others. There are many, many ways of talking and thinking about the bond established among addicts in their groups. Do what seems most suitable in your own NA community.

WHAT IS A “GROUP BUSSINESS MEETING”?
The purpose of the group business meeting is fairly self-explanatory to conduct the business of the group in such a way that the group remains effective in carrying the recovery message. Some of the questions a typical group business meeting addresses are:
- Is the group effective in carrying the NA message?
- Are newcomers being made welcome?
- Do solutions for problems at recent meetings need to be sought?
- Is the meeting format providing sufficient direction?
- Is the attendance steady, or growing?
- Are there good relations between the group and the facility in which the meeting is held? Between the group and the community?
- Are the group funds being used wisely?
- Is there enough money being donated at meetings to meet the groups needs and also provide for contributions to the rest of the service structure?
- Are literature and refreshment supplies holding up?
- Is there a service vacancy in the group?
- Has the area, the region, or the national service conference asked the group for advice or support?

Group business meetings – sometimes called steering committee meetings – are usually held before or after a regular recovery meeting, so that the recovery meeting remains focused on its primary purpose. The group selects someone to lead the business meeting. Group officers give reports on their areas of responsibility, and subjects of importance to the group are raised for discussion. Some groups hold business meetings on a regular basis, others only call them when something specific comes up that needs the groups attention. All group members are welcome – even encouraged – to attend, raise questions related to the groups work, and take part in discussion.

NEW MEETING NOTES – HANDLING MONEY:

GROUP TREASUER –
- Willingness to serve.
- Suggest 6 months clean time.
- Knowledge of 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.
- Active participation in the group.
- Co-signer on group bank account (if applicable).

ENVELOPE SYSTEM –

The envelope system is a way to safeguard and audit Groups funds, and not lose track when financial records fall behind. Each week, the Secretary places the basket contributions in an envelope. On each envelope is written the date, amount in basket, subtractions for expenses, and additions for Basic Text sales, and the total amount closed. Any receipts are also put in the envelope with the money. The Secretary also writes this information on the group treasurer’s record.

The Treasurer keeps a small amount of cash for re-embursing group’s expenses, and deposits the funds in the group bank account. All of the group envelopes are kept by the Treasurer usually wrapped in a rubber band.

The envelope system provides for an audit trail of group funds (meeting log and old envelopes), is not obvious, and is simple. Many groups find the envelope system a good way to handle money.

BANK ACCOUNTS –

Open a group bank account requiring two signatures on each check. Supporting and assisting our trusted servants means helping them to NOT HAVE TO DO IT ALONE. Putting the
income in a bank account and writing checks for disbursements provides a record of what the group does with its money. For a Treasurer to be able to refer to bank statements takes a lot of weight off his/her shoulders. Some shared experience:

- Most banks charge a monthly fee on checking accounts. Also a lot of banks have a minimum deposit amount of around $200 - $300. This is much more money than a group needs for prudent reserve.
- Some banks do not charge monthly fees on non-profit organization checking accounts. There are also banks that do not charge monthly fees for a non-profit group to maintain a checking account, but do charge for each check that is written. Always ask about both charges.
- All banks are required to ask for a Tax-ID number. WSO recommends providing the SSN of a group member, usually the treasurer. A phone call to other fellowships confirms they do the same thing.
- WSO asks that individual groups do not apply for a Tax-ID number. The reason is to steer away from group reporting of funds to the IRS. Having a Tax-ID number involves annual reporting of funds to the IRS.
- Non-interest bearing, non-profit group bank accounts are not a priority of the IRS. When less than $5,000.00 a year is involved, giving a SSN for a NA group bank account does not have repercussions.

SUPER GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

The following are suggestions that come from our areas experience. Although these ideas are only suggested we believe that they will make your service more enjoyable.

THE GSR REPORT:

1. Be ENTHUSIASTIC: do not moan or mumble your way through this report. Speak loud, have fun with it, laugh, get angry if it's called for. Explain the consequences of inaction (LAY GUILT) if necessary. Be positive. If a committee or meeting needs support, avoid saying "needs support" and emphasize something positive about the meeting that will attract others to it. Share your enjoyment of service, not your obsession or revulsion.

2. Be INFORMED: Get copies of the TEMORARY WORKING GUIDE TO THE SERVICE STRUCTURE. A GUIDE TO SERVICE IN NA. The area guidelines. Attend all area meetings and ask questions when you do not understand, know the phone numbers of all subcommittee chairs and when you where their next meeting will be, know what they are working on, know what the requirements are to be of service in various positions. The best way to be informed is to select one committee to be of service on and to periodically visit other sub committees.

3. Be BRIEF: Only announce functions or subcommittee meetings that are coming up in the next week (except for conventions or other major events). Select one or two meetings that need support and get people enthusiastic about supporting them. Never announce functions that have passed (reread your report prior to each meeting and cross out old material and highlight the next week's events). Do not read phone numbers or addresses out during your report (people almost never have their pens and paper ready and it often puts out women's addresses and phone numbers to those not wishing to be of service).

4. Be CLEAR: Avoid the use of service slang and NA abbreviations. Ask if there are any questions or if there is anything the meeting would like to change or improve about your report.

THE MEETING YOU REPRESENT

Whether the GSR or the Alternate is giving the report, both should attend every meeting of the group they represent if at all possible. They should arrive early and greet people and stay afterwards and answer questions and socialize. They should be the one suggesting that people go out for coffee afterwards if this is not already being done. They should share their love for the meeting and the importance it plays in their recovery both at the meeting and away from it. If there are problems with the meeting they should have a steering committee meeting and be apart of the solution and not bad rap the meeting or others outside the steering committee. YOU SHOULD KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ATTEND YOUR MEETING THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM SERVICE COMMITTEES AND APROACH THEM INDIVIDUALLY AFTER THE
MEETING OR AT THE BREAK. You should make sure that the newcomers get literature and get introduced to those who may be willing to sponsor them. Finally, you should make copies of the fliers for all functions and also have a schedule of the functions and committee meetings with their times and locations copied on the table.

Remember to be an example of appropriate meeting behavior. Do not chat during the meeting. If you must talk to someone in crisis take it outside of the meeting. If a member of the opposite sex needs to talk, arrange for someone of their sex to talk with you or better yet instead of you. Clap at the appropriate times and sign load.

LITERATURE DISPLAY
Create an inviting literature display and information corner that will attract the eye of the newcomer and old timer alike. Have a poster with IP’s, fliers of upcoming functions, and a calendar of upcoming committee times and locations. Keep the information correct.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE
Get the phone numbers of the Secretary, Treasurer, GSR, and Alternate GSR. Discuss with them how the meeting is doing. If something that they are doing is working complement them on it. If there is a problem discuss what can be done to solve it. If nothing is going on get together and socialize with them. The spirit of friendship within the steering committee will spread to the group.

THE AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING
You are there to represent your group and to participate in the seeking of God’s will. Remind yourself of that before you walk in to an ASC meeting. Get a copy of the minutes and take notes on the minutes regarding new meetings and meetings that need support. Meet with the welcome committee and get a contact sheet of phone numbers. Area guidelines, and a listing of subcommittees and their functions, and a guide to area slang and abbreviations. Avoid chatting with those next to you, but do ask questions when you get confused.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS
1. Ask your meeting if they want a meeting copy of the NA WAY.
2. Get the NA poster set and mount the steps or whichever posters you wish and display them at your meeting.
3. Ask the WSO to send you the NEWSLINE (free).
4. When a picture would say more than a thousand words prepare a diagram of use other audiovisual aides to enhance your GSR report.

SUPER GSR II: THE SEQUEL

Although many of the truths that existed when "How To Be A Super GSR" still apply, there are a number of truths that have unfolded since then. The following is meant to be an addendum rather than a replacement for the initial handout. There are more service commitments than there where before and more meetings that need support. The GSR can still be the loneliest person after the meetings. Maybe some of this will help. The following is also directed at those who have been a GSR before and were super at it. These people may need more challenges to keep it interesting.

GOOD NEWS: One of the things that can make a GSR lonely is that they are often the one that brings the bad news or that need someone else to do something. This meeting needs support, this committee is going to fail, this amount of money was lost, etc. It is important to bring good news. Twenty eight of the thirty meetings in this area are doing great. This committee just completed Project X. The following people just got elected. This many newcomers chips were purchased suggesting we are still growing........

FOCUS: I don’t know about you, but I tend to get bored easily if I do the same thing over and over again. For the old timer that thinks they have already done everything being a GSR and there is nothing new, or for the person who was an Alternate GSR for two years and is serving their second term of office as GSR, the following should help keep things fresh. Each month pick a focus that serves your meeting’s needs at that time.

*January: Purchase a poster set and mount them. Each meeting put these up around the meeting.
February: Try to find someone that regularly attends the meeting to serve on the phone line right before the meeting. That way any newcomers that call can get a ride from them to the meeting that day.

March: Organize going out to coffee (or tea, bottled water, etc) after the meeting. This will build unity at the meeting and help with your own social skills.

April: Pick a meeting that needs support month. Invite other members to come with you to support a struggling meeting. Talk about your positive experiences doing this. Know that what you give as a meeting will come back ten fold.

May: Trusted Servants Acknowledgement Month. Pick a committee and do things like have those who are of service raise their hands and be applauded. Invite the chair of the committee to your meeting to speak or to lead the meeting. In your GSR announcement highlight special accomplishments of that committee. Adopt that committee at your meeting, and give a special report.

June: Newcomer Month. For a month give away either a Basic Text or a copy of Just For Today. Each week. Announce this at other meetings and have sponsors bring their new sponsee to the meeting.

July: Get to know your members month. Create a phone list of those that attend your meeting and call them and ask them how they are doing. If there is a group conscience make a list available to newcomers.

August: Home Group Month. Share about the value of home groups. Photocopy articles from the NA WAY about the importance of home groups and put it on the literature table. Have a steering committee meeting and discuss the home group concept.

September: Literature Month. Create a display of the available NA literature. If you are not artistic ask one of the members of the meeting for help. Get extra copies of 4 different IP’s and give each a week to focus on how they have helped your recovery.

October: Have your meeting host an NA function. This can be anything from a dance, to a subcommittee meeting, to a learning day for meeting secretaries. Have the function either right before or right after your meeting meets at the location where the meeting meets. Make sure that your function does not conflict with other NA functions and that people you rent from approve.

November: NA WAY month. Share about the benefits of receiving the monthly publication of your fellowship. Have the meeting use the NA WAY to pick topics for discussion. Review current NA controversies in the monthly steering committee meeting. Announce conventions and campouts from the magazine that are occurring in exotic places. Buy the meeting a subscription to the NA WAY. Sell subscriptions to individual members or recovery houses that attend the meeting.

December: Have a party and invite those who attend the meeting to it. If it is a small meeting it could be a dinner party. Large parties could be potlucks. It is nice to have fun and socialize (no matter what your disease tells you).

This list is by no means exhaustive. There are many more things that a GSR could do. It might also be that because of your own busy life or your own defects of character that you just cant do this much. If this is the case pick one thing and try and do it. Remember that this handout is for the SUPER GSR. Stronger than normal GSR’s, they can leap buildings with a single bound......Allow it to be an ideal to work towards not a standard that you beat yourself up with for never reaching.

Many of these suggestions involve other trusted servants or NA members. Do not go off on self will. Seek a group conscience at your meeting or at the steering committee for undertaking projects that impact others. First be a GSR, than a SUPER GSR, and if there is anything left then shoot for being a SUPER GSR.

Allow your service to be an act of love.