



**ORANGE COUNTY AREA PHONELINE TRAINING  
MANUAL**

# **ORANGE COUNTY AREA HELPLINE**

## **THE TWELVE STEPS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

- 1 We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2 We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3 We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we *understood Him*.
- 4 We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5 We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6 We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7 We humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings.
- 8 We made a list of all the persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9 We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10 We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11 We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## **INTRODUCTION**

NA's primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. One of the best ways to make ourselves available to those who need help is to provide a "Helpline" phone service where anybody can call and talk anonymously to a recovering addict. The phone number for the Helpline is listed as "Narcotics Anonymous" in the phone directory and serves that purpose. The still-suffering addict can call this number without fear of arrest, to receive information about NA meeting times and locations.

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## **WHAT IS THE HELPLINE?**

Basically, the Helpline is our link to the addict on the streets. Many of the people you see in meetings today were first introduced to NA by calling us on the phone. You might say, then, that our most important function is to be at this end of the line when the addict needing help calls. There are, however, other very important functions for the Helpline:

1. A number where anybody who is not involved with NA can call and be directed to the proper source of information.
2. A number for people from in and out of town to call and inquire about meetings.

This is a service position of great responsibility! As NA grows in the Orange County Area, so will our Helpline. This information will evolve with the Phoneline. Please familiarize yourself with this material. The recovery and welfare of a suffering addict may depend on how well you are prepared to handle calls.

As a volunteer you will probably receive several different types of calls. This Helpline is concerned mostly with calls from addicts who need help. You will need to know what to do with other calls as well. When a person calls for information about NA, you could read them the following selections of this pamphlet.

## **A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS PROGRAM**

Narcotics Anonymous was founded in the early 1950's as a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women who suffered from drug addiction. Ours is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs, including alcohol. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. The program is based on a set of spiritual principles, written so simply that almost anyone can follow them in their daily lives.

NA groups meet on a regular basis to carry the message to addicts who still suffer. Group members are recovering addicts who help others in order to maintain their own recovery. This aspect of NA – one addict helping another – works when all else fails.

We are not affiliated with any other organizations. We are not connected with any political, religious or law enforcement groups. There are no dues or fees, and no promises to make to anybody. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, creed, sexual identity, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much the addict has used or who their connections were, what they have done in the past or their social status. We are only interested in what they want to do about their drug problem and how we can help.

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We feel that our approach to the disease of addiction is both realistic and practical. NA's experience has demonstrated that the addict need not necessarily be removed from community life for successful recovery. Many of our members are achieving recovery while participating as responsible members of their community. All that is required for membership is a desire to stay clean.

## **NINE MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT NA**

There are some misconceptions about what NA does and does not do, so here are some of the things that NA does **not**:

- 1     **NA does not**           operate detox units, recovery or halfway houses and is not affiliated with such facilities.
- 2     **NA does not**           crusade, solicit or try to persuade anyone to join.
- 3     **NA does not**           engage in or sponsor research.
- 4     **NA does not**           keep membership records or case histories, nor follow-up on members to control them in any way.
- 5     **NA does not**           make medical or psychological diagnosis or prognosis, nor provide marriage, family or vocational counseling.
- 6     **NA does not**           provide welfare or other social services.
- 7     **NA does not**           conduct religious services of any kind.
- 8     **NA does not**           engage in education or propaganda about drugs.
- 9     **NA does not**           accept money for its services, is not funded by any public or Private sources or agencies, nor accepts contributions from any non-NA sources.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUR PHONELINE COMMITMENT**

The NA Helpline uses an internet-based calling system (FreedomVoice) to connect the addict seeking meeting information and general Helpline information. Presently calls are forwarded to Phonenumber volunteers during their designated time-slot. The Helpline number is **(714) 590-2388 & (888) 593-3108 toll-free.**

Our goal is to answer every call with a live addict. The volunteer should leave his/her phone on during their shift so in case the call can't be answered, it can be forwarded to the next available backup. Should the caller leave a voicemail on your phone & you chose to return their call, it is suggested that you dial \*67 first to mask your number.

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Do carry the message of NA. Remember you are likely to be the first contact a person has with NA. Please answer the phone politely. The hours you sign-up for are **YOUR** responsibility. If you know that you won't be able to make your shift, **please** notify your back-ups to fill in for you.

**Attend** our monthly meeting. The monthly meeting is our **only chance** to share information with each other and to receive updated material necessary for doing a good job.

If you have any questions, please call: the Coordinator or the Co-coordinator.

Give your shift to your Higher Power and all will be well.

**(Please return this manual if you give up your shift and inform the Chairperson)**

## **DO'S AND DON'TS ON THE HELPLINE**

### **DO**

1. Do carry an NA message, remember that you are likely to be the first contact the person has with NA.
2. Do encourage the addict to attend a meeting by giving them day, time, location and directions.
3. Do remember to refer the disclaimer before making any referrals: "NA is not affiliated with nor endorses any related facility or outside enterprise. But, in the spirit of cooperation, I will refer..." (Refer from list of "Suggested Emergency numbers on page 12).
4. Do keep an open mind and have the willingness to learn the guidelines of the NA Helpline.

### **DON'T**

- 1 Don't give names of hospitals, detox centers, etc – as NA does not endorse any facility. (Don't give out any referral numbers to any addict without letting that person know what Narcotics Anonymous is and where the nearest meeting is to that person).
- 2 Don't give medical advice.
- 3 Don't have long conversations on the Helpline.
- 4 Don't give personal opinions as you are representing Narcotics Anonymous.
- 5 Don't take abuse; you do have the right to hang up.

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- 6 Don't try to persuade the caller to stop using.
- 7 Don't break anyone's anonymity.
8. **Don't give out anyone's personal information, name, phone number, e-mail address, etc.**
9. **Don't accept collect calls.**
10. **DON'T TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY!** Your responsibility is to share your experience, strength and hope, passing on information about meeting time and location. You are the link between the addict who is calling for help and the program. It is not your responsibility to solve personal problems. When it gets to that point, you need to tell the person that you are answering a helpline and that you need to clear the line for the next caller.

## **WHEN AN ADDICT CALLS**

### **Your Primary Objective Is To Get Them To A Meeting**

Your caller may have some knowledge of what NA is; they may just want to know where the meetings are. They may just want to know what NA is. Answer the questions from your own experience. For example, "All kinds of people go to NA" or "We help each other with recovery from addiction."

### **Keeping The Phonenumber Clear**

Keep calls short, especially if you do not have call-waiting.

### **Be Compassionate**

Listen to what the addict is saying; **do not** talk down at them. Allow the time they need to ask questions, or to discuss the problem they are having. Ask once again what you can do to help.

### **Let Them Know You Care**

Acknowledge that you have heard what they have said, and that you are concerned. Respond empathetically and share some of your experience, strength and hope.

Share about recovery in your life. Share that there is a life after drugs; things do get better. Do not be judgmental. Do not get hung up in war stories. After you have listened to the addict and told them that you know how they feel, discuss NA with them. NA is about one addict helping another. Let the caller know that this call is the first step to recovery, if they want it.

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## **“I’m Too Sick”**

If the addict needs to detox, provide the number of the agency in your referral list, or refer them to the local yellow pages.

## **“I’m Too Crazy, Too Messed Up”**

Say, “I felt that way too.” You are trying to get the addict to agree to attend a meeting, where the magic happens. If after repeated tries the addict is still resistant, ask them to call back whenever they feel like attending a meeting. Conclude the call.

## **A Final Word**

Some of your callers will be very loaded and some may even be belligerent. Try to keep in your mind that you are planting a seed. Don’t argue; don’t call them names or lecture. You’ll want this to be a positive experience because it’s probably their first experience with Narcotics Anonymous. Even if they don’t get clean today, it may be this conversation that eventually gets them to our doors.

## **CRISIS SITUATION**

### **Keep It Simple**

We are an information service only, and are not qualified to handle emergency or crisis situations. We do not give medical diagnosis or medical advice.

The minute you receive the call, find out if it is an emergency situation and, if so, what is the nature of the emergency. Has the caller overdosed? Try to get the caller’s phone number and address, urge them to call **911** for medical assistance. If you feel that further follow up is necessary you may call **911** to verify that a call has been made.

### **Overdose?**

If the call is from a family or friend, and the addict has overdosed, have the caller call **911** for assistance. Ask the caller to please call back after the crisis has passed so that we may direct them to a meeting, if necessary.

## **RELATIVES, FRIENDS, LOVERS AND OTHERS**

Addiction is a disease that affects the whole family or environment where a using addict lives. Therefore, many calls come from families and friends of addicts. NA does not deal with these problems. However, by listing ourselves in the telephone directory we invite calls from the public. We ought to treat callers well and talk to anyone who reaches out for help. Families and friends of addicts often feel isolated and ashamed. It is important to take a little time with these people because they may be reaching out for the first time. They need and deserve encouragement.

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These are the people who are in direct contact with the addict and affected most by their chemical use. These callers should be informed briefly about the program of NA. You have been provided with a few phone numbers that you can give to the caller. Maybe the caller is looking for family support groups. Ask the person on the phone if they would be interested in one of those numbers. Someone there may be able to help

As recovering addicts, we know that the pain the caller is experiencing is very real. Be compassionate. After offering the caller phone numbers for 12 step programs for families of addicts (be sure to tell them we're not affiliated), ask this question, "Does the addict want help?" **If so, have the addict call us.** If not, explain to the caller that even though you do sympathize, there's nothing NA can do to help.

## **DRUG IDENTIFICATION REQUESTS**

Do not attempt to identify any drugs over the telephone; if you make a mistake somebody could be hurt and you or NA could be held responsible. **Your most important function is to help the addict who still suffers.**

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS CALLS**

### **Professionals**

This includes: parole and probation officers, therapists and counselors, doctors and nurses, minister and clergymen who want information about Narcotics Anonymous. Our information pamphlets and books will contain most of the information they need for an understanding of the program.

If you wish, you may read them "A Brief Description of Narcotics Anonymous" from page 2 of this manual. Anything that you cannot answer, please, take the callers' name and address and refer them to the Public Relations chairperson. Please encourage these people to attend an open NA meeting. **Check your directory -some meetings are closed - which means only addicts are welcome to attend.**

### **Speakers**

Usually such requests come from schools, churches and civic groups who want a member of Narcotics Anonymous to speak to their group. Even if the caller is calling because they want a panel to come to their facility, the Public Relations and the Orange County Area Service Committee have policies and procedures to handle such requests. Again, take the callers' name, phone number and nature of their request and pass this information onto the Public Relations chairperson as soon as possible.

If you get a call for directories or any request for Public Relations about Narcotics Anonymous, contact the PR chairperson. Get the following information to give to the PR chairperson:



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Are they in the Orange County Area?

What is the call about?

Name of the person calling?

Place the person is affiliated with?

Phone number?

**Do not give out Chair or Vice-Chair's contact or personal info!**

## **MEDIA CALLS**

All calls from the newspapers, radio or television stations should be referred to the Public Relations chairperson. **Do not** attempt to deal with these people on your own. Again, take the caller's name and number and refer them to the Public Relations Chair or Vice-Chairperson. **Do not give out Chair or Vice-Chair's contact or personal info!**

## **ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. Does NA consider alcohol a drug?
  - Yes we do.
2. Is the "bottom" different for alcohol than for drugs?
  - For each of us, our "bottom" is an individual experience. These experiences are different for each and every addict. The one common link is we all feel there is no where left for us to go. We can't go on living as we have been living.
3. Is drug addiction hereditary?
  - NA does not have an opinion on this topic. This is something that scientists and doctors could answer better than we can. It really does not matter; we are all responsible for our own recovery.
4. Aren't nicotine and caffeine drugs?
  - Although it can be argued that nicotine and caffeine are mood or mind altering drugs, we believe that each individual member of NA must make their own decision whether or not the use of these substances is acceptable. We believe that an NA member can still be clean and maintain a spiritual program while drinking coffee and tea or smoking cigarettes. We don't believe this is possible by still using marijuana or liquor, for example.
5. Do you also recognize (gambling, excessive shopping, overeating, obsessive compulsive behavior) as addiction?
  - When we refer to addiction, we refer to the obsessive and compulsive use of drugs. Our meetings are for those persons who have a problem with drugs.
6. I believe in NA and want to help you. What can I do?
  - We appreciate your interest in NA, but we do not accept outside contributions nor do we have non-addict volunteers in our Fellowship. The best thing you can do to help us is to advise a person with drug problems that NA is here, that we are free and that we might be able to help that person.

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7. NA, AA, CA ... aren't they all the same? What's the difference?
  - The similarities of all these Fellowships are the 12 steps, the core of our programs. The difference is our first step, where we state that we are **"powerless over our addiction"**, whereas other Fellowships address other drugs specifically. We have our own literature and program, which makes us what we are, and that is what makes us attractive to the addict seeking recovery.
8. How can I tell if someone is an addict?
  - We don't give that kind of advice to others on this topic. We don't even tell people who come to our meetings whether they are an addict or not. We allow them the opportunity to know for themselves if they are an addict. We do have a pamphlet titled **"Am I an Addict?"** The person who reads it can answer for themselves whether they have a drug problem and may possibly be an addict.
9. How can I tell if someone is under the influence of drugs?
  - NA does not have an opinion on this topic. This is something doctors can answer better than we can.
10. What's the difference between drug use and drug abuse?
  - NA is a Fellowship of men and women for whom drugs have become a problem. We cannot tell if someone is a social user or an addict. This is up to the individual person.
11. How can I get someone to stop using drugs?
  - From our personal experiences, you can't stop a drug addict from using. They will only stop when they have the desire to stop and seek help. NA does not do drug "interventions", nor do we advise family members, friends or employers on how to deal with the using addict.
12. What should I do if I find drugs in my home or at work?
  - We do not give advice on this topic. You'll have to deal with your own conscience as a family member and a member of society.
13. I know someone who is (deaf or blind or disabled) but refuses to go to your meetings. Is there anything you can do for them?
  - Depending on the situation, (deaf or blind or disabled) you may answer like this: "We have special materials for this type of person with [audio tapes of our Basic Text and Braille editions of our pamphlets] or [we have meetings that has handicapped access at locations]. It is always difficult for an addict to attend an NA meeting for the first time due to feelings of separation and shame. Especially in a situation where the person has a physical challenge in receiving our message of recovery.

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14. Do you verify attendance at your meetings? Can I check if my (friend, husband, employee, etc.) is really going to your meetings?
  - No, NA does not verify the attendance of addicts at meetings. However, as a courtesy to those persons attending our open meetings, because of legal issues or for treatment, some of our groups will allow the secretary of that meeting to initial a form provided by the attendee.
15. What's the difference between NA and drug treatment centers? NA and Psychotherapy?
  - NA is a non-profit organization, which charges no fees or dues to its members. We do not have medical staff or professional counselors to treat or advise our members. We do not present ourselves as professionals to the addict that comes to us seeking recovery. We offer ourselves, as addicts, the same as them, who have learned how to stop using drugs, lost the desire to use drugs and have found a new way to live.
16. Is the ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) treatment center any good?
  - We have no opinion nor endorse any organization, treatment center or hospital programs. We do have some of our meetings/panels in treatment centers, hospitals, or institutions to carry our message of recovery to the addict within them.
17. If a person is under the influence of drugs can they participate in NA meetings?
  - We do not exclude an addict who may be under the influence of drugs at our meetings. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. Some groups, however, do not allow the active participation in their meetings such as sharing or holding a position of service. Most groups ask that if a person has used within the last 24 hours that they refrain from sharing and that they speak to someone after the meeting if they need to talk.
18. What can we do to prevent our (children, employees, friends, etc.) from becoming drug addicts?
  - We cannot give you advice about this topic of concern. We would all like to know the answer to that question. Our fellowship is not about preventing people from becoming addicts. We are about helping those men and women who cannot live life without using drugs.
19. Where is your office located?
  - Ask the caller if it is a meeting they are looking for, or the local service office. If so, give information of our local service office. (Located on the meeting directory).
20. How much do you charge for your services?
  - We charge no fees or dues for our services nor do we accept outside contributions. NA is supported by the individual member through donations and sales of literature.
21. How do you deal with the mentally ill addicts?
  - We do not exclude addicts who may be mentally ill at our meetings; we realize that this is a mental, physical and spiritual disease.

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22. So you refer addicts to detox centers? Which are the best ones?
  - NA does not refer addicts to any outside organizations nor do we endorse any of those organizations. We do, however, cooperate with those that cooperate with us. (Refer to the disclaimer and the 800# for detox and recovery centers).
23. Does NA operate any treatment centers or detoxification services to addicts?
  - No.
24. Do you have information about (AA, CA, Al-Anon or other 12 Step programs)?
  - We only have information about our Fellowship. We are not affiliated with any other program. We can only suggest that you check the telephone book or an informational referral agency.
25. What about using drugs while you're pregnant?
  - We are not doctors and cannot advise you on this topic.
26. Are your meetings confidential? Is that legal?
  - We try our best to be confidential and respectful of anonymity. However, we cannot fully guarantee confidentiality or full anonymity in the community nor do we have a legal right to confidentiality such as a doctor or an attorney has.
27. Do you have counselors? Is that a "sponsor"?
  - We do not have professional counselors in NA. A "sponsor" is a NA member with experience in working the 12 Steps of Narcotics Anonymous who advises a NA member how to participate in the 12 steps of recovery.
28. Do you test or certify that addicts are clean of drugs?
  - We do not test, certify or guarantee any member is clean from drugs.
29. I'm not an addict, but can I attend your meetings?
  - We have meetings that are open to the public and are listed as such in our meeting directory. We do ask that you respect our closed meetings that are for *addicts only* and for those who believe that they have a problem with using drugs.
30. How long do you have to attend meetings before you are cured?
  - For ourselves only, we do not believe that we are ever cured from the disease of addiction. We believe this is a lifelong issue. Going to meetings is part of our program and we are encouraged to attend them regularly.
31. Do you have special meeting for (youths, homosexuals, HIV positive addicts, etc.)?
  - Our area supports specific orientation meetings...refer to our directory. Or, "We currently do not have any of these meeting in our area, although in other areas of the region, these types of meetings are well supported".

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32. Do you help addicts get (jobs, social welfare assistance, education, housing or health services)?

- NA is not a social service but a 12-step fellowship

## **SUGGESTED LIST OF EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Center for Substance Abuse Hotline (Detox/Recovery) | 1-800-662-4357              |
| 2. Social Service Hotline                              | 211 or 1-888-600-4357       |
| 3. Suicide Prevention Hotline                          | 1-800-SUICIDE<br>(784-2433) |
| 4. County/Statewide Emergency                          | 911                         |
| 5. NAR-ANON  | 1-888-297-9560              |

## **SURROUNDING NA AREA SERVICE HELPLINES**

Bay Cities	310-372-9666
Desert Empire	1-800-863-2962
Eastern Counties	562-698-4604
Eastern Inland Empire	1-800-397-2333 909-370-3568
Eastern Sierra	760-446-4445
Greater Antelope Valley	661-944-9177
Greater East Los Angeles	323-721-5504
Greater Hollywood	323-850-1624
Greater Los Angeles	323-933-5395
Inland Empire Foothills	909-795-0464
Inland Empire West	909-622-4274
Northern Counties	626-541-9900 1-800-613-0984
Orange County	714-590-2388 1-888-593-3108
San Fernando Valley	818-997-3822
San Gabriel Valley	626-584-6910

Santa Clarita	661-299-5599
South Coast	1-800-333-3610
Southern Antelope Valley	1-800-353-6323 661-266-2200
Southern Mojave	1-800-863-2962 800-TODAYNA
Westside	310-390-0279
Westend	818-787-9706
World Service Office	818-773-9999
So Cal Regional Office	626-359-0084
1800TODAYNA	1-800-863-2962
Spanish Helpline	1-888-622-4672 888-NA-AHORA

### **REVISION AND ADOPTION OF TRAINING MANUAL**

The Orange County Area Phonenumber Committee will review and revise our Training Manual every five (5) years.

Rev. 03-17  
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