



Narcotics Anonymous

New Orleans Area H&I Subcommittee



Hospitals and Institutions

Panel Member Orientation Package

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Introduction

H&I orientation is a period that allows NA members to become familiar with H&I work so they aren't rushed into it without any preparation for this service. Many people are quite apprehensive about getting into H&I for a variety of reasons. Don't be put off, everyone has something to offer. This packet has been compiled by the New Orleans area H and I subcommittee to give a brief outline of some of the specifics that will be important for you as a panel member.

The purpose of this panel orientation is to familiarize you with the guidelines used in carrying a clear and consistent message of recovery in narcotics anonymous to hospitals and institutions so that we may project positive image for our fellowship.

“The 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous, as adapted from A.A., are the basis of our recovery programs. We have only broadened their perspective. We follow the same path with a single exception, our identification as addicts is all-inclusive with respect to any mood-changing, mind-altering substance. Alcoholism is too limited a term for us; our problem is not a specific substance; it is a disease called addiction. We believe that as a fellowship, we have been guided by A Greater Consciousness, and are grateful for the direction that has enabled us to build upon a proven program of recovery. (Excerpt from Narcotics Anonymous, basic text 5th edition).

The H&I handbook gives a much more in-depth look at H&I work in Narcotics Anonymous if you decide you want to learn more about this rewarding type of service. Many areas as a part of orientation bring those that are new to H&I to their first H&I meeting/presentation or two as an observer. This will give you a chance to just listen at first and see how an H&I meeting/presentation really works. Also, this helps many feel more comfortable when they come join the panel.

You'll notice in your packet, there are various handouts that we have included as aides to ensure that we are carrying a clear and concise and a message of recovery: **“The message is that an addict, any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom.** When all is said and done our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the attic who still suffers because that is all we have to give.”

Basic Hospitals and Institutions Guide

Why Is an H&I Meeting/Presentation Needed?

The purpose of an H&I meeting/presentation is to carry the 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.

H&I Requirements

You have been invited to carry the message of recovery through H and i meetings presentations because:

1. You have at least six months abstinence from all drugs.
2. You have a strong and a message of recovery from addiction.
3. You seem willing to comply with all of the H&I subcommittee's and the facility's requirements.
4. You are willing to carry the message in a responsible way.

H&I and PR Cooperation

Generally, a PR activity is geared to people outside our fellowship and includes people who come in contact with addicts and can help addicts to find NA.

The Meeting/Presentation Format

There are a variety of formats that we can use when carrying the message into facilities, but there are some key points to keep in mind about all of them.

The format of any particular H&I meeting/presentation may vary from meeting to meeting depending on the type of facility. In short-term facilities, the format will be more focused on the panel members carrying a message into the residents, while at a long-term facility we may encourage more participation from the residents. In H&I we are carrying the message into the facility. At an H&I meeting we are not there to dump our problems, but rather to help these addicts become aware of what NA is and how it works in our lives. In effect, an H&I meeting is an introduction to our fellowship for addicts.

The panel leader should let you know what the format is before the meeting/presentation and should be able to answer any questions you may have about it. If you look like if you would like to see samples of a variety of meetings, there is an explanation of them in the H&I handbook.

Whatever format is chosen, we normally get the residents involved with a question-and-answer session at some point in the meeting presentation period also you may be asked to stay after the meeting for a while to talk with the residents if that is allowed.

Personal Commitments

Please **DO NOT** volunteer for an H&I meeting/presentation if:

1. You are not sure that you want to attend, or
2. You are not sure you will be able to attend the meeting. If something comes up and you will be unable to make it, try to give the panel leader at least 48 hours notice so that they can invite someone to fill your spot. **DO NOT** ask someone to take your place or even to come along with you to the meeting period the panel leader is the only one that is allowed to invite people to the meeting.

Meeting/Presentation Question and Answer

This is a good idea to encourage questions concerning what was presented at the meeting or other general questions about NA, but there are a few things you should keep in mind.

Please remember that NA has no opinion on outside issues. Occasionally during the question- and- answer period or when talking after the meeting/presentation, the residents will ask us to give an opinion on outside issues such as:

1. Other recovery programs or fellowship.
2. The facility, i.e., “Do I need to stay in treatment?”
3. Many other issues that do not pertain to the recovery from addiction in the Narcotics Anonymous fellowship.

It is very important that we do not draw into these types of discussions! Always remember to only share **YOUR** experience strength and hope about **YOUR** recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

Working with Others: Men with Men, Women with Women

Some facilities house only men or only women. Other facilities house both men and women but keep them separate. In these facilities, where your meetings/presentations will consist of only men or only women, we strongly feel that only same-sex Narcotics Anonymous members should participate. Remember, our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery, not to make our meetings more popular with the addicts we are trying to help. Problems that arise in this area have the potential to seriously damage the credibility of Narcotics Anonymous. Experience has taught us that we can avoid these problems if we follow this simple guideline.

Adolescents

When adolescents are referred to in this handbook, we are referring to anyone under the age of majority in your state or country. We need to remember that adolescents are prospective members and should be treated with respect. When sharing in an H&I meeting presentation, we need to remember that to an adolescent, the stress experienced due to peer pressure or the relationship with their parents and/or teacher may be just as much a crisis to them as losing a job, marriage, or house maybe to others. In NA, we learn to deal with our feelings and emotions, and share with others how we have been able to work through them by utilizing the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

Due to the governmental statutes regarding adolescence, we need to be especially aware of facilities' rules and regulations as they relate to our interaction with these perspective members. For example, some facilities may require a staff member to be present during meetings/presentations. One suggestion we may make to administrators of facilities for adolescence is that they make attendance at the H&I meeting voluntary. We have found this reduces distraction, increasing the opportunity for recovery in the Narcotics Anonymous fellowship.

While some people maintain that adolescents respond better to people closer to their own age, the bulk of our experience suggests that the age of the person sharing at an adolescent H&I meeting is secondary to their ability to share a strong, clear message of recovery period adolescent seemed to respond more to the message than to the messenger. All H&I meetings are highly structured and should be geared towards recovery through the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. Our experience has shown that we do not need to use a special format when carrying the message to adolescence.

In addition to the do's and don'ts found at the end of this package we feel that the following should be included.

Do's

Do Remember that this is a “we” program. No addicts should feel that they are being preached to.

Do Remember that an addict is an addict, regardless of age.

Do Tell them that there is fun in recovery, I. E., social events, fellowship, etc.

Do Acknowledge and validate their feelings and emotions.

Don'ts

Don't glorify your past.

Don't say, "I feel like I'm talking to my kids."

Don't compare your bottom to theirs.

Don't patronize adolescence.

Don't use profanity.

Do's and Don'ts for H&I Participation

Do's

Do Make directories of outside meetings available to residents.

Do Clarify the facilities rules with anyone you bring in.

Do Start and end on time!

Do Briefly explain what H&I is.

Do Make it clear that NA is separate and distinct from the facility as well as other fellowships.

Do Try to get residents involved, especially those in long-term facilities. (i.e., literature person, coffee maker, readings, etc.)

Do Obey all dress codes. Exercise common sense and dressed appropriately.

Do Keep staff aware of your whereabouts at all times.

Do Stamp all literature you bring into a facility with the local helpline number.

Do Screen all panel members carefully, especially regarding the clean time or other requirements.

Don'ts

Don't Break another person's anonymity or tell their story.

Don't Debate any issues involving facility rules or regulations.

Don't Get involved in discussions on outside issues; remember why we are here.

Don't While sharing, put too much focus on what it was like. They already know.

Don't Debate which drugs are acceptable. NA is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs.

Don't Discuss conditions within the facility, or opinions about staff members.

Don't Carry excessive cash or wear expensive or flashy jewelry.

Don't Show favoritism to any residents.

Don't Take measure messages in or out of the facility.

Don't Give out any other persons address or phone number.

Don't Carry in Any contraband items, such as cigarettes if applicable or weapons.

Remember at all times that you have a responsibility to the facility, to the residents, and to NA. If you observe the above suggestions, and follow the Twelve Traditions, you will uphold your responsibilities to all three.

Questions and Answers About H&I

The WSC H&I Committee receives many question about H&I work from individuals, areas, and regions. In this “question and answer” format we will present the committee’s responses to some of the more commonly asked questions.

Q. Some facilities want their residents to be allowed to continue to attend the H&I meeting at the facility after they relapsed. How does the H&I subcommittee deal with this when those newly released residents do not meet our requirements for our outside members to come in?

A. In most cases this is not a problem, the H&I panel carries the message to addicts who are residents/clients of that facility. Like any member of the fellowship, these members should not be asked to participate on the H&I panel until they are able to meet the requirements established by the H&I subcommittee. If a member of the fellowship goes on a panel to the facility from which they were released, It is a good idea to make it clear to that member that our role is to carry a narcotics anonymous message of recovery, not to make comments about the facility or its program.

Q. In our area we have requests from a number of facilities to come in regularly. We can't keep up with all the requests. How should a subcommittee decide which facilities to bring the message into first?

A. One important factor is the degree to which the residents are restricted from outside meetings. Addicts who have full access to regular NA meetings usually do not require H&I services. If they are completely restricted from outside meeting attendance, they should be high on the priority list. Another factor is the length of time that a facility has been waiting for your subcommittee to bring an H&I meeting/presentation. After considering these and other factors, the decision is up to each H&I subcommittee. A subcommittee should not make a commitment to start an H&I meeting until it is capable of being responsible to that commitment.

Q. We have H&I meetings in our area where some or all of the residents are on some type of medication. Are these appropriate facilities in which to carry the Narcotics Anonymous message? If so, can the residents share at meetings before they are clean? Hospitals and institutions handbook 11

A. Yes, these are appropriate facilities. As to whether these residents can share, a more comprehensive discussion of this and other related issues is provided on page 27 of this handbook.

Q. We have had problems with facilities that require that their residents attend our meetings. How should we deal with this?

A. In H&I service work, we carry the Narcotics Anonymous message of recovery into different types of facilities that have different objectives and methods. We do not try to decide which are proper and which are not. We do not, therefore, challenge this practice on principle. If, on the other hand, there is a specific problem that has developed in the meeting/presentation because some who attend are consistently disruptive, it may be appropriate to approach the facility about this. When such a disruption happens during a meeting, it can be handled in an understanding yet firm manner, asking for order in the meeting and talking to the individuals after the meeting/presentation. In this way, we can usually defuse situations before they escalate. But if it continues to happen regularly, it should be addressed with the staff.

Q. Should the H&I meetings be listed along with the regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings in our local meeting directory?

A. No. Participation in H&I meetings/presentations is coordinated through the H&I subcommittee. Your local meeting directory may include a statement referring interested members to the H&I subcommittee.

Q. We have a situation where individuals take it upon themselves to start H&I meetings. The H&I subcommittee is concerned because in the past when there were problems and the meetings were canceled; the facilities wouldn't have any more involvement with Narcotics Anonymous at all.

A. A Narcotics Anonymous meeting held in a facility where there is no direct involvement by the local H&I subcommittee is not considered an H&I meeting/presentation. Such meetings fall under the responsibility of the area or regional service committee. This may be a sensitive issue, however, for those involved in the new meeting. Such situations should be handled with care and with respect for those involved.

***Q.** Our H&I subcommittee was asked to prepare a sponsorship list for a facility so that they could match their residents up with a sponsor prior to release. Also, we have been asked to arrange for rides to meetings. Should we do this or not?*

A. These are services that H&I subcommittees should not become involved in. Sponsorship is an aspect of personal recovery, and it is up to the individual member to select someone that they feel would be a good sponsor.

***Q.** How should we deal with the situation when a facility requires that a Narcotics Anonymous panel member report any violation of their regulations heard shared in a meeting?*

A. Occasionally facilities want us to become involved with them in ways which are not consistent with our primary purpose. If a facility makes requests of this nature to us, we have the following options:

1. Work with the administration and staff to achieve an understanding of our principles so that we are not required to make such agreements.
2. If that is not possible, make it clear that we cannot accept such responsibilities, and that a staff person must be provided at the meeting/ presentation to meet the facility's needs.
3. If these issues cannot be resolved, we will not be able to provide a meeting/presentation in the facility.

***Q.** What if drugs are passed at H&I meetings?*

A. Read in the opening statements that “No drugs or paraphernalia be on any person at this meeting. If you don’t respect this request the meeting may be discontinued.” If drugs are passed, pack up and leave the meeting/presentation immediately. Let the staff know simply that the meeting is over for today and that we will be back again next week. (See question above for dealing with facilities that require reporting this or other activities.)

***Q.** A facility has asked us to change the format of our H&I meeting/ presentation. In this particular case, the residents want us to dispense with some of our usual readings in the beginning of the meeting and to read a statement at the end that does not pertain to Narcotics Anonymous. How does H&I stand on this issue?*

A. The format of an H&I meeting is up to the H&I subcommittee, not the facilities or the residents of the facilities. We are bringing in a presentation of Narcotics Anonymous, and it is imperative that we carry a clear message of Narcotics Anonymous. If the facility insists, see options one and three above.

Q. When taking an H&I meeting/presentation into facilities for minors, do we need different procedures?

A. Just as our behavior in a facility must be respectful of that facility's policies, we must respect all laws and ordinances as well. Such restrictions are beyond the control of Narcotics Anonymous. Be sure you are aware of the rules and regulations of any facility before bringing in an H&I meeting/presentation. It is suggested that when dealing with an adolescent facility, a staff member be present. This is for the protection of the Narcotics Anonymous members. It is not our responsibility to see that the residents follow the rules of the facility. We are there to carry a message of recovery within the framework of our traditions.

Q. Do staff members need to be present during an H&I meeting/presentation?

A. In some cases, we may request that the facility not have staff members present during the H&I meeting; in others, we may request that a staff member be provided. Each case is different, but the presence or absence of staff members is ultimately up to the facility.

Q. Should recovery keychains/chips be brought into facilities?

A. No. The regulations regarding the use of anything brought into a facility, at the federal, state, or local levels, are often many, varied, and confusing; placing an undue burden on H&I subcommittee members. More importantly, the possibility of compromising the residents' anonymity, due to a loss of continuous clean time, are too great.

Q. Can a meeting in a correctional facility be "sponsored" by a member who is incarcerated there?

A. No. This is never appropriate, whether in a hospital or a jail. Coordinators must be able to attend outside subcommittee meetings. (Long-term prisons in which it is not possible for an H&I subcommittee to bring in weekly H&I meetings may have an outside liaison help them. Remember, only meetings/presentations where H&I members are present are H&I meetings.)

Q. What can we do if a facility's policy is a violation of our traditions?

A. Occasionally problems arise because facilities do not understand our traditions or the nature and function of NA in general. Usually this can be avoided or handled successfully. See sections throughout this handbook on initial contacts, relationship with facilities and follow-up. Remember, facilities cannot "violate" traditions; they don't have traditions. The responsibility for upholding our traditions, or choosing to participate in situations which compromise them, is ours alone.

Q. *We have an H&I meeting in a long-term correctional facility. The inmates who attend want to elect officers, including a GSR. How should we respond?*

A. In a long-term facility, this H&I meeting may be the only NA recovery these addicts experience. Because of this, the addict should have the opportunity to participate in the full recovery experience and this includes service to fellow addicts. One thing we have to share with these addicts is the difference between an H&I meeting and regular meetings, and that they can't have a Group Service Representative or participate in area service, that the meeting they are participating in is a function of an H&I subcommittee. The election of officers should be limited to the internal function of the meeting, such as secretary, chairperson, coffee maker, and literature person (someone who keeps track of the literature and lets the panel leader know the need for literature).

Outline for Sharing

NA is a program of recovery from the disease of addiction, the obsessive behavior, nor the disease of a specific drug.

Ours is a **WE** program, not an **I** program. Alone, I can't, together **WE** can.

- Panel leader briefly qualifies (5 minutes)
- introduce speakers in their turn

In the last 5-10 minutes, open the floor for questions only, not discussion about NA! Keep in mind the 12 traditions of NA, and the dos and don'ts of H and I when answering questions.

Thank the speaker and explain the IP's on the table, putting emphasis on the meeting list and the sponsorship IP. Emphasize the importance of making a meeting their first day out of the facility. Explain how to get a sponsor, and how to get active in a group, Emphasize the importance of getting phone numbers, and then using them. Remind them **“DON'T USE, NO MATTER WHAT!”**

- Read the third paragraph of “We Do Recover”
- Circle up and have someone read “Just For Today”

Hospitals and Institutions Meeting Presentation Format

Hello everyone and welcome to the regular H&I presentation of Narcotics Anonymous here at _____. I'm an addict, my name is _____.

Can we have a moment of silence followed by the **WE** version of the serenity prayer for anyone who cares to join us.

I've asked someone to please read ***"Who Is an Addict"***.

I've asked someone to please read ***"What Is the Narcotics Anonymous Program"***.

I've asked someone to please read ***"Why Are We Here?"***.

I've asked someone to please read ***"How It Works"***.

Some announcements:

Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with this or any other institution. We are here to spread the Narcotics Anonymous message of recovery with the cooperation of this facility. **"The message is that an addict, any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom."**

This meeting is an introduction to Narcotics Anonymous for the residents of this facility. If you are not a resident here, we suggest that you attend regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings.

Let me briefly explain the Narcotics Anonymous language of recovery that we use and why we use it. We identify ourselves simply as addicts because in the first step of Narcotics Anonymous we shifted the focus away from a specific drug and onto the disease of addiction. When we abstain from the use of all drugs, we are "clean". We often abbreviate Narcotics Anonymous to NA. An NA Birthday is the day after the last time we used. "Clean time" is our period of continuous abstinence from all drugs. **Remember, alcohol is a drug!**

I also want to remind everyone that what is said here is the opinion of the speaker and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of NA as a whole or this institution.

If you have any questions, about Narcotics Anonymous, please wait until the question-and-answer portion of this meeting.

INTRODUCE PANEL MEMBERS

Close meeting with the Serenity Prayer.