

**October, 1985**

*Narcotics Anonymous  
World Service Conference  
Public Information Newsletter*

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\*\*\*\*\* **P.I. NEWS** \*\*\*\*\*

Hi! I'm your WSC Public Information Newsletter and I need a name. The only suggestion so far is "P.I. - Formation." Do you like that or do you have another idea? If you have any artistic talent, feel free to send in ideas on an attractive headliner also. Please send your choices to WSC P.I., c/o the World Service Office, attn: Danette, as soon as possible.

This first edition of the Newsletter is a sample preview of what's ahead. The WSC P.I. Committee, during it's meeting in Philadelphia earlier this month, appointed an ad hoc committee to establish criteria for editing and formatting policy. Their directions and advice will be instituted in future editions.

The P.I. Newsletter contains information from WSC P.I. and area and regional P.I. subcommittees around the world. It is being sent to P.I. subcommittee chairpersons (or a contact person in places where there is no formalized subcommittee) to share information and experience that can help us develop a unified approach to P.I. activities in Narcotics Anonymous. Fellowship reports and WSO newslines are also an important source of P.I. information and should be read and utilized by your P.I. committees. If you're just beginning and it seems slow or overwhelming, don't despair. We're guided by a Higher Power and our answers are provided when we allow that power to work through the group conscience. Share your progress and problems with others. Working within the service structure gives us the opportunity to receive direction from our Higher Power through a group conscience (all P.I. subcommittees should be supported by and responsible to an ASC or RSC). If your committee has been functioning for an extended period, please share with others any experience that might be helpful for new committees and also any areas of P.I. work you have encountered which are not addressed in the current P.I. Kit/Handbook.

The following pages contain some items of interest from several different P.I. subcommittees. Also included are WSC work-in-progress drafts for starting a P.I. subcommittee and providing P.I. services at various levels.

**An often overlooked aspect of Public Information is the special needs of rural areas. The following is from a member in Alaska:**

Where to begin--that's been the dilemma. I've got lots of notes and ideas with no easy way of getting them down on paper.

Up here there has been only one area that reached a sophisticated enough level to get involved with any Public Information work. Our region is new and has not yet started a P. I. subcommittee. Most questions regarding Traditions had previously been directed through the World Service Office. The Public Information Handbook can alleviate a lot of these same questions.

We have very little N.A. activity outside of the population centers. The only method of communication in this state that would reach everyone would probably

be satellite T.V. There are a lot of radio stations/short wave communication systems that don't seem to plug into any central source outside of the Alaska news network. Most work has been done within the Anchorage Area. There has been a PSA video shown on a local T.V. station. Radio spots have been used, along with the usual ads placed in newspapers. Probably the most involved work has been through mental/public health systems and private/funded treatment centers. Booths at health fairs are making available N.A. literature with people sharing what they themselves can offer the people on the street. We've had some experiences involved with interviews on radio and plans for a televised spot that fell through due to unrelated problems.

We have lots of work to do related to our very large and diverse native population. One idea has been to record meetings for loners trying to stay clean after leaving treatment. We've also thought of translating tapes into Yu Pik, Junupeak, etc. Anything on tape can go a long ways up here. Just about every village has a school now, and the districts all have video cassette recorders.

Anyway, the work is just beginning. Everything should be done through a strong regional Public Information subcommittee. Area level P.I.'s should be connected to region. Credibility with any agencies can only be built with consistent policies and approaches. Length of service and a strong "alternate" system within the steering committee are very important.

We have established literature drops at treatment centers, women's resource centers, community meeting halls and Public Health Service Offices. We have had N.A. listed in both the yellow and white pages of the local telephone books. A state wide book is in print. We haven't explored a state phone number (we don't have and can't use 800 #'s) as yet, but again, we are new! We have had articles about a local group in the local paper, been on talk shows, etc.

We are a state that has the biggest drug and alcohol problem in the country. It is destroying the native culture that makes this place the great place it is. We are greatly hampered by distances, expensive air fare, language and cultural barriers and the bureaucratic process that believes in million dollar profits rather than ideas that work. Lots of frustration!

I hope this letter can be of service. We are working on it, but perhaps need more direction. Your letters take a good three to five days to get here and anything less than first class can take up to three weeks. We continue trying to carry the message up here but are not unique in that N.A. service usually falls on the same shoulders.

**After a learning experience regarding affiliation with another organization in phone line work, one Public Information subcommittee wrote this:**

It is the feeling of this committee that fault lay not with any particular person or group of persons but rather in the original operational structure of the Help-Line itself. An analysis shows that the guidelines suggested by our World Service Conference in 1979 were not closely adhered to, resulting in one or more members carrying more than their fair share. This experience should prove to us that guidelines suggested by our world committees are not arbitrary but, rather, are the result of much experience and careful thought and can be utilized to great advantage in all areas of our service work.

**Dade County Florida sent a questionnaire to WSC P.I. which they ask their members to complete after making public information presentations to non-addict groups. This is the first sample we've seen of this and thought other committees might like to see and/or use it:**

The Public Information committee would like to know about your experience when you shared. We can use this valuable information to let others know what to do when they are asked to speak. You're experience is useful to helping N.A. grow and letting people know N.A. does work!

Group you talked to:

Contact person:

How many people did you talk to?

Did you speak with people "one on one" or to an audience? Please explain:

What type of group did you talk to? Radio, School, Civic, etc.

What was the average age of the group?

What questions were you asked?

What questions were difficult to answer?

What problems did you encounter?

Please add any additional information or suggestions. Please use back of paper.

If you are doing a radio or T.V. show please request a tape for our records.

## **WORK-IN-PROGRESS WSC P.I. COMMITTEE**

### **Item A. Simple outline for area/regional P.I. Subcommittee Start Up**

#### **I. Membership and Meetings**

- A. Contact at least one member from each group/area, preferably P.I. chairs or people with five years clean and P.I. experience. Get a commitment from them to attend area/regional P.I. meetings and act as liaison for their group/area. Also, ask for their experience in any P.I. activities they have attempted.
- B. Create your initial mail list from those contacts and set time and date for your first meetings. It has been beneficial for some regions to hold frequent meetings at first (twice a month) to lay a foundation.

#### **II. Initial Meeting Agendas**

- A. Guidelines for the P.I. committees are essential, and should be the first item on your agenda until they are completed. This beginning work may take time but it is important to move ahead slowly and thoroughly in order to avoid problems later.
- B. Contacts and Resources
  - 1. Begin contacts with, and lists of, your areas phone lines and H&I chairpersons, encouraging their participation in the P.I. subcommittee. Phone lines must be operating at peak level once P.I. work starts being done. H&I must be able to respond to some of those calls and also to facilities where initial P.I. contact results in an H&I need.
  - 2. Contact should be made with WSC P.I., through WSO informing them of your committees existence and requesting information on P.I. being done in neighboring areas/regions and a regional contact when available.
  - 3. Contact those neighboring areas/regions to share P.I. experience.
- C. Be sure your subcommittee information contact name(s) and phone number(s) are made available throughout your area/region and be prepared to start your job as the communicator between areas, region and world.
- D. Along with your guidelines, a contingency plan should be created, (see attached WSC P.I. draft examples) to ensure that all hotline volunteers as well as P.I. chairs know who is responsible for handling P.I. requests at various levels of service.

### III. Ongoing Work

- A. Speaker kits must be created and continually updated to assure a regular supply of members available to respond to requests for speakers.
- B. P.I. workshops should be planned and held at regular intervals throughout the year, both at regional and area levels.
- C. In order to accomplish the above, P.I. subcommittees must constantly and consistently share information and do in-service training, so that area representatives are up to date and knowledgeable of P.I. goals and activities. It is vital to incorporate a good understanding of our Twelve Traditions in all P.I. activities.
- D. Work with your regional convention committee and WSC P.I. in conducting P.I. workshops during conventions. These might include presentations to the media, professional people outside the Fellowship as well as members. Media contact at a regional level should always be coordinated with neighboring regions and WSC P.I.

### Item B. P.I. at Various Levels of Service What Every Member Should Know

***THE MEMBER AND PUBLIC INFORMATION:***

Every member must be prepared to respond to individuals outside the Fellowship that request public information about Narcotics Anonymous. The most common request individual members typically receive are requests for general information pamphlets, requests for speakers at churches, civic organizations and schools. Occasionally, members may also receive requests from newspapers or other local media, such as radio or television. Each member should be aware of how to respond to such requests.

For members whose group is part of an area service committee, there should exist, as an activity of the area service committee, a group of individuals whose responsibilities include public information. Even an N.A. member with 90 days clean time should learn, and keep an up-to-date record of, who the contact persons are for the area public information subcommittee. An individual member receiving a request for public information should convey the request to this contact person in the subcommittee whenever they are approached from anyone outside the Fellowship.

The GSR of each group should personally keep in touch with the P.I. subcommittee contact person on a regular basis so they can assist and quickly respond to any such requests that are received by members of the group.

***AREA SERVICE COMMITTEES:***

An important reason for the formation of an area service committee is to handle all aspects of public information that individuals, groups and the area committee may face. Our experience has shown we can assist in conveying a message of recovery through Narcotics Anonymous by a well organized public information effort. This is usually done through a subcommittee under the control and direction of the area service committee. There are more detailed guidelines in other sections of this publication on how an area public information committee should operate.\*\* However, there are several items of importance that should be included here.

It is important that the area public information subcommittee be able to respond quickly to every request for public information received from members of groups or their GSR. Additionally, the subcommittee should be organized so as to become the focal point through which most requests for public information are directed rather than through individual members. This can be effectively done through letters and personal visits by members of the P.I. subcommittee to those individuals, agencies and companies that are most likely to have need for, or interest in obtaining information on Narcotics Anonymous.

Every area P.I. subcommittee should have a contingency plan which clearly establishes procedures to be followed and assignments of responsibilities for all aspects of public information. The individual or several individuals assigned responsibility to respond to public information requests should be selected by the subcommittee and the sequence of contact for those individuals should be well known by all members of the subcommittee, the area service committee and all GSR's. Telephone numbers for day and evening use for these members should be widely distributed. The contingency plan should include second and third

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\*This reference will apply when this item becomes a part of the P.I. Handbook.



alternative members who can be called to handle these matters when the primary or secondary person is unavailable. A well understood policy should be formulated that establishes what limitations, if any, should be used when members of the P.I. Committee respond to public information requests. An important aspect is that after a request for public information has been received by the appropriate contact person, discussion of the actions to be carried out is conducted before any action is taken. The procedure should provide for a response to every public information request WITHIN 48 HOURS of the time the request is made known to the subcommittee contact.

Specific plans should include a list of individuals who can attend public forums, meetings of civic organizations, governmental agencies, schools and churches to speak as a recovering addict and distribute literature about Narcotics Anonymous. Care should be exercised in the selection of members for these tasks so the Fellowship will benefit by using members who have considerable clean time, and personal experience in public speaking. The plan should make provisions for response to newspapers, radio, television or magazine requests. Such requests should be analyzed by the public information subcommittee members to determine the appropriateness of the effort to be expended. It is important to determine whether or not the individual's request is actually a matter that should be handled by the area public information subcommittee alone or whether it should be a joint response by the area P.I. subcommittee, an adjoining area P.I. subcommittee, a joint response by the area P.I. subcommittee and the regional P.I. subcommittee or the World Service Conference P.I. subcommittee. An important measure to be used in determining the level of coordination is the distribution or coverage the information will get through this contact. If, for instance, an area service committee receives a request from a radio station that broadcasts into areas served by another area service committee or a different region, a joint public information effort is warranted and should be implemented.

#### **REGIONAL PUBLIC INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE:**

The Regional Service Committee should have a public information subcommittee whose primary responsibilities include the coordination and performance of public information activities that are larger than the scope of responsibilities to be handled by an area public information subcommittee within its region. A contingency plan should be developed in similar detail and structure as described above for area P.I. subcommittees. It is important to have this distributed widely through every area's public information subcommittee so that all members of every public information subcommittee has the appropriate telephone numbers of individuals to be called in sequence in a similar manner as described for area P.I. subcommittees. Members of the regional public information subcommittee should have copies of the contingency plan which details who is to be called for each different public information need. The plan of course should be updated quarterly and be published widely within the region.

*"P.I. News" will be published three to four times a year and will vary in content depending on WSC P.I. work and the amount of input received from the Fellowship. We want to know what's happening with P.I. in your area/region. Send us questions, input and comments. This is one way to continue strengthening our Fellowship network in P.I. It will provide better communication between WSC P.I. and the Fellowship in general plus give us a chance to better meet the needs of P.I. subcommittees around the world.*