

# A Guide to Phoneline Service



World Service Conference  
Public Information Committee  
For Approval At WSC 1986

## **A GUIDE TO PHONELINE SERVICE**

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**WE ARE DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT**

**NO ADDICT SEEKING RECOVERY NEED DIE**

**WITHOUT HAVING A CHANCE**

**TO FIND A BETTER WAY OF LIFE.**

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## 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 asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people whenever 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 knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## **WSC PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE A GUIDE TO PHONELINE SERVICE**

### **PART ONE**

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#### **SECTION ONE**

#### **HOW DO WE BEGIN?**

##### **Does Our Area or Region Need a Phonenumber?**

It is suggested that prior to establishing a phonenumber, a thorough investigation should be made of the actual need for such a service. There may be surrounding areas, regions, etc., who have successfully established and maintained a phonenumber service and can provide valuable assistance.

A phonenumber is handled by a subcommittee of an area or regional service committee. Abide by the group conscience of your area or region. Separate individual opinions from group conscience. Be sure that all groups in the area rather than just a few members really want to establish such a service. What are your needs and what type of service better suits your area or region. Start small, it is easier to expand than to reduce services.

##### **Can Our Area or Region Support a Phonenumber?**

The following checklist of questions should be used by your area or regional service committee to take a preparedness inventory before you start a phonenumber in your community:

1. Have we made a reasonable effort to project what the response will be and to take steps to meet the workload for volunteers?
2. Do we have a contingency plan if our phonenumber or Twelfth Step lists get over loaded?
3. Will our phonenumber committee receive support from the Fellowship (in both finances and time) to allow us to

take on a potentially large number of calls in a short period of time? Can we handle financially an increase in phoneline costs, literature costs, etc.? If not, what can we do to help us reach a place where we can afford to move ahead?

4. Are we working in cooperation with P.I. and H&I Committees and our area or regional service committee to insure communication and responsible handling of calls?
5. Is our ASC or RSC well organized and receiving the support from the groups to allow our involvement in the creation of a phoneline that will work? Are we ready for this or should we have other priorities?
6. Have we checked with surrounding areas and/or regions for their experience, strength and hope in beginning a phoneline?
7. Have we discussed the above with the RSC to determine what is happening in other areas? Are Public Service Announcements being used in surrounding areas? Will that affect the phoneline?
8. What support will the phoneline committee need to do their jobs?
9. Have we talked with WSC P.I. to make sure we have all that's available to help us?

#### **What Do We Need to Start the Phoneline Committee?**

The first thing to do, of course, is to locate and enlist the support of members who have the desire, ability and requirements to carry out the responsibilities of a phoneline committee.

#### **Who are the members of the committee?**

It is strongly suggested that members of the phoneline committee include representatives from each group and/or area, depending on whether it will be an area or regional phoneline committee. These individuals and other N.A.

members may be the only volunteers in the beginning. The list of volunteers will expand as the need increases.

The phonline volunteer list should include alternates who can be called upon in the event that a scheduled volunteer cannot complete a shift.

*What about a Chairperson?*

The position of chairperson must be filled immediately. This may be done either by appointment at the regional or area service level or by election at a phonline committee meeting. The chairperson will be responsible for paying bills, organizing and scheduling volunteers and coordinating communication with answering services. These duties are most efficiently carried out by an N.A. member with long-term clean time. (Depending on the area or region, the time requirement varies from one to five years.) This member should also have a good working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Traditions of N.A. and the personal time necessary to commit to this position. Many hours are required to organize scheduling for volunteers and answering services.

**General Information Checklist**

The following is a general information checklist for the beginning work of a phonline committee:

1. Decide what your responsibilities will be as a committee.
2. Determine the type of phonline service best suited to your area or region (see Sections Three and Four).
3. **Determine the cost of a phonline based on type of service.**
4. Obtain an answering service which meets committee guidelines.
5. Prepare phonline guidelines (see Appendix). Request sample guidelines from nearby ASC/RSC.
6. Have volunteers serve on rotating basis (see Section Five).
7. Hold phonline workshops on a regular basis.

8. Use the buddy system for training new volunteers.
9. Prepare a log that accounts for all calls received during each shift. (see Appendix).
10. Prepare, for the answering service, a list of the N.A. volunteers and the alternates for each shift. (see Appendix).

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## SECTION TWO

### HOTLINES, HELPLINES AND INFOLINES WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

An N.A. phoneline can be termed hotline, helpline, or infoline. The difference between these terms is as follows:

A hotline is described in Webster's dictionary as "a direct telephone line in constant operational readiness so as to facilitate immediate communication." When a phoneline is termed a hotline then a recovering addict must be immediately ready to speak with a still suffering addict. This can be done in an office where a phoneline constantly is being answered by a recovering addict. Or, if an answering service can immediately patch a call from a suffering addict to a recovering addict. If a phoneline is not being answered immediately by a recovering addict then it cannot be called a hotline.

When a phoneline is termed a helpline, it implies that the caller will not be in immediate contact with a N.A. volunteer. Most of the phonelines that N.A. now uses are helplines. An N.A. phoneline tries to help the caller. The callers can leave their numbers and N.A. volunteers call them back. The callers can get locations and times for meetings from a helpline. In addition, an N.A. volunteer can do Twelfth Step work with the helpline.

An infoline can be located at an area or regional service office or an answering service. It also can be an answering machine. An infoline basically is for answering questions about N.A., giving out meeting times and locations, and

responding to any requests for service such as P.I. or H&I. Infolines must be answered by volunteers who are trained in the same way as hotline or helpline volunteers. However, the **volunteers must remember that they are answering an infoline, not a hotline or helpline.** When they are working an infoline, their primary purpose is to give information about N.A. to the caller. Volunteers on an infoline may want to have a Twelfth Step volunteer list in order to refer appropriate calls.

*Note: Some communities provide multi-reference crisis hotlines which use N.A. as one of their referrals. However, these community hotlines are not N.A. phonerlines.*

In summary, if the phonerline is being answered by an N.A. volunteer, then it is either a hotline, helpline, or infoline. If the phonerline is being answered by an answering service, then it is a helpline or infoline. If it is being answered by an answering machine, then it is a helpline or infoline. If it is being answered by a beeper, then it is a helpline or infoline.

#### **Phonerlines Spread the Word to the Suffering Addict By:**

- Giving meeting times and places with brief directions;
- **Having one-on-one conversations with a recovering addict** via the telephone;
- Setting up in-person Twelfth Step calls with the suffering addict;
- Making referrals without endorsement.

#### **What Type of Phonerline Best Suits Our Needs?**

The following descriptions, with their pros and cons, may help you decide what type of phonerline will best suit your needs.

**Type One** — A telephone and number handled by an answering service but owned by Narcotics Anonymous. A

diverter or patch system is used to forward the call to the volunteer.

**Pro — There is immediate contact with an N.A. member.**

**Pro —** Obtaining a phonenumber under the name of N.A. is to ensure the same phone number is retained in case of a change of answering service.

**Con —** There must be a sufficient number of volunteers willing to give up personal time in order to fill each shift.

**Type Two —** A telephone and number owned by and installed at an answering service office. The answering service operator takes the caller's name and number. The answering service then calls a volunteer from a list provided by the phonenumber committee. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to return the call immediately.

The answering service records each call on a log which includes, if possible, the time, the caller's name, the caller's phone number and the reason for the call. The disposition of the calls should also be indicated with the name and number of the phonenumber volunteer to whom the call was referred. (see Appendix).

**Pro — There is someone answering calls 24 hours a day.**

**Con —** There is not initial contact with an N.A. member.

**Con —** The volunteers pay for their calls to the caller.

**Con —** Some callers will be reluctant to leave their name and number.

**Type Three —** An answering machine with a taped message generally located at an N.A. member's home. The message may list a short definition of N.A., meeting information, and a request for the caller's name and number. Some messages also list one or two volunteer phone numbers, and volunteer must check the messages several times daily. Some areas use a longer message—perhaps three minutes—with a more detailed description of N.A., a complete list of meetings, and four or five volunteers' phone numbers. For these, no request is made

for the caller to leave a message. For this type, volunteers need not check in, but instead must be ready to receive calls any time at home. Meetings must also be ready for more newcomers walking in to their first meeting with no prior notice.

Answering machines can be purchased at a variety of locations. In addition, machines can be rented from the phone company. Some machines can answer two different phone lines and also record incoming calls. Some machines can be operated by remote control, so that the phonerline volunteer is able to play back recorded messages at a convenient location.

**Pro** — This is a good starter phonerline service for smaller areas with few meetings because it requires only one volunteer to handle the machine, and it is inexpensive to operate.

**Pro** — For the longer tape, volunteers need not alter their schedules to receive calls

**Pro** — If the tape contains clear, accurate information, most misplaced calls will be weeded out, and most requests for information will be handled without contact with a volunteer.

**Con** — The type which asks the volunteer to leave a message requires that a few volunteers work longer hours to respond to calls.

**Con** — Some callers will be reluctant to leave their name and number.

**Con** — Some callers will feel slighted by a tape rather than a person answering their call for help.

**Type Four** — A telephone and number owned by Narcotics Anonymous and physically located in an area that can be manned by N.A. volunteers twenty-four hours a day.

This phonerline is suggested for a large city. It is strongly suggested that you have more than one line and more than one extension. This type of phonerline must be manned on a twenty-four hour basis by N.A. volunteers. Some outlying areas may not have the member strength to support this type of service. Avoid covering too large an area. Trying to do so



overburdens your committee and your volunteers. It also discourages the caller who may have to call long distance.

**Pro —** The reason for obtaining a phone under the *name* of N.A. is to ensure the same phone number is retained in case of change of location.

**Con —** This type of phoneline requires a large volunteer staff to cover all shifts.

**Type Five —** Beeper systems can be utilized through answering services, answering machines and through a variety of other ways. An answering service operator or any other individual who answers the phoneline can reach the volunteer on duty by beeper. Investigate beeper systems available in your area to discover variety in cost and type.

**Pro —** The volunteer doesn't have to remain at home while on duty.

**Pro —** The beeper volunteer provides a good back-up for regular shifts.

**Con —** There is a delay in initial contact with an N.A. member.

**Con —** Some callers will be reluctant to leave their name and number.

**Type Six —** A toll-free statewide number in a central location, either in an answering service office or an N.A. service office. It is answered 24-hours a day by an answering service operator or an N.A. member. The number may be rented or purchased. Set up an appointment with your local phone company for an accurate estimate of cost.

Answering service operators or N.A. members give callers the phone numbers of on-duty N.A. volunteers according to geographical areas. Volunteers names and numbers are given **ONLY** with their permission and when provided by the phoneline committee. It is much less expensive to give the caller the information than to relay messages and have a volunteer make the return the call.

**Pro —** There is no cost to the caller.

**Pro** — One central number covering a larger area is simpler to communicate to the public.

**Pro** — This type of phonenumber's cost decreases as its usage increases.

**Con** — The initial set-up cost is more than other types.

**Con** — This type of phonenumber requires substantial volunteer participation and commitment.

*Note: 900 numbers, which are charged to the caller, are pre-recorded, computer answered lines which are not feasible for use within Narcotics Anonymous.*

**Note on costs:** Answering services are very competitive. Investigate a variety of services and make careful comparisons. Find out how they operate and if the service they provide will meet our needs. Request to see the number of incoming and outgoing calls. Be aware that the cheapest service is not always the best. Have a written contract for service and prepare guidelines for the answering service operator. It may be discovered that there may be two monthly bills for answering services; the answering service bill and the phone company bill. It is valuable to obtain an estimate for installation at N.A. locations because this is usually another considerable cost.

Other phonenumber expenses to be considered are basic supplies, phonenumber training packets, and P.I. mailings.

**Special Note:** There are many community referral agencies that encourage organizations such as N.A. to use their phone number. Use of such a type of service would directly connect and associate Narcotics Anonymous with the referral agency. In the spirit of unity and in keeping with the Twelve Traditions, N.A. must avoid using this type of service. In the spirit of cooperation, however, it is acceptable for the agency to use a Narcotics Anonymous phone number for referral purposes.

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### SECTION THREE

#### GENERAL INFORMATION FOR A PHONELINE VOLUNTEER AND A TWELFTH STEP VOLUNTEER

A phonline volunteer is an N.A. member who either directly receives calls or has calls referred by an answering service. The first N.A. member the caller will come in contact with is usually a phonline volunteer. The response and attitude of a volunteer can have a lasting impression on the caller. This is a service position of great responsibility.

phonline volunteers can receive calls from N.A. members, potential newcomers, family and friends of addicts and other people interested in N.A., such as professional people, students and members of the media.

Depending on the type of phonline, certain calls will most likely have to be made at the beginning of a shift. These calls might include calls to the volunteer being relieved, a call to the committee chairperson or a call to the answering service.

As a general guide, it has been found that the phonline volunteers are most successful if they possess certain assets necessary for the performance of their responsibilities. These qualifications include:

1. A minimum six months clean time.
2. A knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.
3. The willingness to serve.
4. The willingness to give of personal time.

If your area or region uses phonline and Twelfth Step volunteers interchangeably, the clean time requirement should be increased to one year. An additional requirement of a Twelfth Step volunteer will be the ability to provide transportation for newcomers. Service Committees may find it helpful to conduct phonline/Twelfth Step workshops periodically.

A Twelfth Step volunteer is an N.A. member whose primary objective is to get the prospective newcomer to an N.A. meeting. A Twelfth Step volunteer is willing to spend

personal time to take callers to meetings and talk at length about recovery in N.A.

**What does the phoneline Volunteer and Twelfth Step Volunteer need to know about answering the call?**

Upon receiving a call, the first thing to be determined is whether or not the caller is an addict seeking help. At this point, the flowchart in Part Two may be helpful in guiding the volunteer through the call.

Calls from N.A. members are usually simple requests for meeting information. These should be answered quickly. Most members readily understand the need to keep the phonelines open for other calls.

Calls from non-N.A. members, such as students, professionals, or community members, are usually requests for general information about N.A. These also should be handled quickly. The caller can be advised that an informational packet is available. In this case, the volunteer takes the name and address of the caller and refers this information to the person appointed to handle these types of mailings. Non-addicts, who are interested, also can be referred to open meetings.

Calls from persons requesting speakers, interviews, etc. are given a brief description of N.A. The volunteer also explains that these type of request needs to be handled by a member involved with Public Information. The volunteer takes the name and phone number of the caller and passes it along to the appropriate P.I. contact. P. I. members are experienced in handling public relations in keeping with the Twelve Traditions of N.A.

Calls from potential newcomers are, of course, the most important calls received by an N.A. volunteer. The volunteer will give a brief introduction of the N.A. program, explain what the caller can expect at a meeting and that another N.A. member will be contacted who can talk to them at length and take them to a meeting.

*Note: Once again, if an area or region is using phoneline and Twelfth Step volunteers interchangeably, the phoneline volunteer may be the person responsible for talking at length with the caller and arranging for transportation to a meeting.*

Additional information that a phoneline volunteer may need to refer a Twelfth Step call is listed below. Explain to

the caller that all information is confidential but some information is needed in order to help them.

1. The first name, phone number and address of the caller.
2. The sex of the caller. (Men work with men, women with women.)
3. Has the caller ever been to an N.A. meeting?

The phoneline volunteer tells the caller that someone will either call them back or be there as soon as possible to pick them up.

The phoneline volunteer also makes a note of any other pertinent information offered by the caller. It is suggested that the volunteer obtain as much information from the caller in as short time as possible. After hanging up, the volunteer should refer to the Twelfth Step list and call a Twelfth Step volunteer of the same sex and in the same geographical area as the caller. The name, number and basic information regarding the caller should be relayed to the Twelfth Step volunteer. Then the phoneline volunteer waits for the next call.

A phoneline volunteer will need to use good judgment regarding these calls. NEVER give out the name, address or phone number of any member of the N.A. Fellowship without permission. Refrain from using last names, places of employment, etc.

### **How to do a Twelfth Step Call**

After the Twelfth Step volunteer is given basic information from the phoneline volunteer, the Twelfth Step volunteer calls the addict as soon as possible.

*Note: The phoneline volunteer must be told if the Twelfth Step volunteer cannot return the call immediately. The addict seeking help is expecting a return call. The phoneline volunteer must then call someone else to take the call.*

Once an available Twelfth Step volunteer is reached, the Twelfth Step volunteer calls back the addict. If the addict is willing, the Twelfth Step volunteer offers to meet with him in person and/or take him to a meeting. Again, the addict should be willing, and not forced, to see the Twelfth Step volunteer or go to a meeting.

Once the Twelfth Step volunteer arranges to meet with the addict, it is suggested that the Twelfth Step volunteer bring a

current meeting list, an N.A. pamphlet and someone else with him. A good person for a Twelfth Step volunteer to bring along would be either his sponsor or someone with Twelfth Step experience.

Once an addict has been taken to a meeting, a Twelfth Step volunteer can try to arrange transportation for the addict to other meetings.

If the addict is taken into the Twelfth Step volunteer's home, it is suggested that the volunteer make certain that the addict is not holding anything. This is also a good idea to consider when transporting the addict to meetings. The N.A. program has one must that applies to everyone: No drugs or outfits in our possession. This is for the protection of the Fellowship and its groups.

*Note: If the addict requires medical attention, see "Handling Crisis Calls."*

If the addict begins recovery in a hospital or treatment center, Twelfth Step volunteers and other N.A. members can call regularly to let the addict know that N.A. cares. When the Twelfth Step volunteer visits, it is a good idea to bring along some N.A. literature to leave for the addict, such as the Basic Text.

Difficult problems may present themselves during Twelfth Step work. Support of other N.A. members, such as setting up a buddy system, can be very helpful. Remember, the goal of Twelfth Step work is to get the addict to a meeting.

#### **Do's and Dont's for Phoneline and Twelfth Step Volunteers**

##### **DO'S**

1. The volunteer is to call the answering service when he goes on or off duty.
2. The volunteer must call the phoneline when he is going to be out and cannot receive calls, or when he is going to be at a different phone number.
3. The alternate volunteer calls after the start of the shift to confirm that the primary volunteer is on duty. (During the shift, an alternate volunteer can be contacted if the primary volunteer's line is busy.)
4. The volunteer should answer the phone, "Narcotics Anonymous, This is (first name) and I am an addict."

5. If returning a call, the volunteer should be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying himself as an addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous.
6. The volunteer should find out what the caller needs.
7. The volunteer makes appropriate referrals, when necessary. (see Section Six and Appendix).
8. The volunteer is to keep a log of all the calls he answers.
9. The volunteer is to use the Twelfth Step list.
10. The volunteer keeps calls brief.
11. The volunteer refers the information from his shift to the next volunteer.
12. The volunteer is to contact the phoneline chairperson, if any problems arise. (see Section Six).

#### **DONT'S**

1. The volunteer doesn't try to persuade the caller to stop using if the caller doesn't want to.
2. The volunteer doesn't spend too much time with people who are not addicts.
3. The volunteer doesn't try to handle calls that he is not qualified to handle.
4. The volunteer doesn't give out other people's names and/or phone numbers without permission.
5. The volunteer doesn't have personal phone calls while on duty.

*Note: It is imperative that a volunteer always remembers to keep calls as brief as possible. Tying up a line for long periods of time prevents other calls from coming in.*

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## **SECTION FOUR**

### **HOW TO HANDLE SPECIAL CALLS**

#### **Handling Crisis Calls**

The N. A. phoneline is strictly for dispensing information about the N.A. Fellowship, meetings and recovery. The volunteer must always remember that he is only a recovering addict sharing his experience, strength and hope. Neither the

volunteer nor the answering service operator is a professional crisis counselor, doctor, or psychologist, etc. and neither has the right to give professional advice. Calls which, in the volunteer's opinion, are beyond the boundaries of Narcotics Anonymous should be quickly and politely diverted to the appropriate services available. Before providing any other referral number, always explain that Narcotics Anonymous does not endorse or recommend any other organizations or institutions and in no way is Narcotics Anonymous affiliated with any emergency services, agencies or programs. We simply provide alternative phone numbers for those callers who need services other than N.A.

After the volunteer has established that the caller is too sick to make a meeting, the volunteer can refer the caller to a general emergency telephone number (such as 911) which is set up for all emergency crisis calls. If this is not possible, other emergency telephone numbers may be used without implying endorsement or recommendation of any specific facility by name. These numbers are usually listed by counties or towns. (see Appendix).

### **Detox and Rehabs**

Callers requesting information about detoxification and/or rehabilitation should be told that the volunteer is not a professional, and not qualified to make specific referrals. The phoneline committee should find out if their town or county has a drug counseling center or similar agency which provides detox or rehab placement. Include their emergency phone number in the phoneline guidelines.

### **Calls from Friends and Family Members**

Although N.A. phonelines are operated for the purpose of allowing addicts the opportunity to discuss their desire to stop using, often calls are received from family members and friends of addicts. If the family member or friend calls N.A., the volunteer must always inquire, "Does the addict want help?" If the answer is no, it is a sad but true fact that there is nothing that N.A. can do for such an addict. The addict must ask for help. This must be explained to the family or friend and they should be advised to make the N.A. phoneline number available to the addict. The friend or family member should be treated with kindness and the utmost patience. They may be referred to a family oriented recovery program. Always explain that Narcotics Anonymous does not endorse or



recommend any other organization or institution and in no way is Narcotics Anonymous affiliated with any emergency service, agencies or programs.

## **WSC PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE A GUIDE TO PHONELINE SERVICE**

### **PART TWO**

#### **Flowchart for Answering Calls (Dialogue)**

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#### **IF USING AN ANSWERING SERVICE:**

**THE ANSWERING SERVICE OPERATOR WILL SAY (PARAPHRASED):** *"Hello, I have an N.A. caller on the line." or "I have a message for you."*

**THE VOLUNTEER WILL SAY:**  
*"Thank you (name of operator), I'm ready to take the call." or "Thank you, I am ready to take a message."*

**THE VOLUNTEER WILL EITHER RETURN THE CALL OR GREET THE CALLER.**

#### **RETURNING THE CALL:**

Be certain the person seeking help is on the line, then say:  
*"Hi, this is the N.A. phonenumber. My name is (first name) and I am an addict."*

#### **GREETING THE CALLER OR RECEIVING DIRECT CALLS - WITHOUT AN ANSWERING SERVICE:**

*"Hi, this is the N.A. phonenumber. My name is (first name), and I'm an addict."*

**THE VOLUNTEER WILL THEN ASK:**

*"How can I help you?"*

The volunteer needs to **determine the nature of the call** right from the beginning.

*"Are you calling for yourself or for someone else?"*

**IF YOU ARE SPEAKING TO:**

**1) AN ADDICT:**

**LISTEN AND RESPOND TO THE ADDICT CALLER. A SUFFERING ADDICT WILL PROBABLY INDICATE THAT HE/SHE WANTS FACTS OR WANTS HELP:**

***WANTS FACTS***

(What is N.A.?)

(Where is a meeting tonight?)

(What kind of people go to N.A.?)

(Does N.A. work for everybody?)



***WANTS HELP***

(I'm sick, depressed)

(I can't stop using)



Turn to:

"Addict Wants Facts"

page # 19



"Addict Wants Help"

page #20

**2) A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER:**  
Turn to page #27

**3) AN INQUIRY ABOUT A FELLOWSHIP MATTER:**  
Turn to page #29

## ADDICT WANTS FACTS

ANSWER THE CALLER'S QUESTION. IF YOU SENSE THAT THE ADDICT WANTS MORE, ASK:

*"Do you have another question about Narcotics Anonymous?"*

AFTER THE CALLER HAS ASKED ALL OF HIS/HER QUESTIONS, AND IF YOU SENSE THAT THE ADDICT WANTS TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION, THEN ASK:

*"How are you doing?"*

THE ADDICT WILL INDICATE THAT HE/SHE IS NOT READY, OR THAT HE/SHE MAY BE READY TO ASK FOR HELP

NOT READY YET

(I'm doing just fine.)

(I don't want to stop just yet)  
(I don't have a problem)

RESPONSE

CONCLUDE THE CALL:

*"When you are ready, we  
are here to help you. Our  
program works, for those  
who want to stop using.  
Always remember there  
is a way out." \END\*

MAY BE READY

(I'm not feeling so  
good.)  
(I'm hooked)  
(Part of me wants to  
stop and part of  
me can't.)

ASK:

*"What's going on?"*

TURN TO  
"ADDICT WANTS  
HELP" PAGE # 20

## ADDICT WANTS HELP

**LISTEN, ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HAVE HEARD AND ARE CONCERNED:**

*"Sounds like you're really hurting. I know the desperation that you must be feeling. Are you considering quitting drugs?"*

(NO)

(Yes, or, Not Sure)

**CONCLUDE THE CALL**

"When you are ready, we are here to help you. For those who have the desire to stop using, our program works." \END\

**RESPOND EMPATHETICALLY, CARE AND SHARE. BRIEFLY TELL THE ADDICT HOW IT WAS, WHAT HAPPENED AND HOW IT IS FOR YOU TODAY. YOU MAY SUM UP BY SAYING:**  
*"I was once completely strung out and thought that I'd never be able to quit using. But I got clean in N.A. and haven't had to use any drug for \_\_\_\_ (months or years.)"*

**THEN ASK:**

*(Do you want to go to a meeting and meet other people in N.A.?)*

YES

NO

**ACKNOWLEDGE THE ADDICT:**

**TURN TO "WON'T GO" PAGE # 22**

*"Well there is a meeting*



at \_\_\_\_\_."

GIVE THE TIME AND LOCATION OF THE MEETING,  
AND DIRECTIONS IF NEEDED. THEN ASK THE ADDICT  
IF A RIDE IS NEEDED:

*"Do you need a ride?"*

NO



YES

CONCLUDE THE CONVERSATION:

PROCEED TO THE  
"12 STEP PROCESS"  
PAGE # 25



*"To get the most out of the meeting, try to come a few minutes  
early. If you need further help, give us a call again. You've  
done the right thing by calling us. I look forward to meeting  
you." \END\*

## **ADDICT WON'T GO TO A MEETING**

IN RESPONSE TO YOUR QUESTION, ("DO YOU WANT TO GO TO A MEETING?"), THE ADDICT INDICATES HE/SHE DOESN'T WANT TO GO TO A MEETING.

THEN ASK WHY NOT:

*"Why not?"*

(I'm too sick)

(I don't know)

(My car doesn't work)

(I can't leave my kids)

(I'm afraid), etc.

TURN TO "NEEDS SUPPORT"----PAGE # 23

## **IF THE ADDICT WANTS TO DETOX --**

Provide the phone number for the community agency, county center, or emergency service from your referral list. Read Section Six on Handling Crisis Calls in Part One.

BE SURE THAT YOU DON'T HANG UP UNTIL YOU ARE CONFIDENT THAT YOU HAVE DONE ALL THAT YOU CAN DO FOR THIS SUFFERING ADDICT. \END\

## NEEDS SUPPORT

The following section has a change of format from the previous pages. There are seven topic classifications of the addict's questions or statements followed by a suggested response. The addict's questions and statements may sound like NOT READY YET, but remember that the caller already admitted a need for help. Our intention is to help the caller to focus on the solutions rather than the problems which are preventing attendance at N.A. meetings.

### ON GUARD (What happens at a meeting?)

#### RESPOND:

*"We're a group of clean addicts who meet regularly to help each other recover. Addicts share about what it was like and what life is like today. Nothing is required of you."*

### OBSTACLES (My car doesn't work, etc.)

#### RESPOND:

*"Does this problem have a solution?"  
"We have people who will give you a ride."*

### CHILDREN (I don't have anyone to take care of my kids.)

#### RESPOND:

*"If you have to, you can bring your kids to an open meeting. Or if your children are school age, you can attend the daytime meetings."*

### TOO SCARED (I'm afraid)

#### RESPOND:

*"You're not alone. During my first meetings, I was scared, afraid to speak and feeling very self-conscious. We're a friendly bunch."*

### STILL USING (I can't stay straight to attend a meeting)

#### RESPOND:



*"If you have the desire to stop using, then you're welcome. We do ask that you not have any drugs or paraphernalia on you during the meeting."*

**TOO HOPELESS (I'm too crazy; I'm too messed up)**

**RESPOND:**

*"I felt that way, too."*

**OTHER EXCUSES (I can't leave because...of my work, family obligations, husband doesn't approve of meetings, etc.)**

**AFTER DISCUSSING THE PRECEDING ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, ASK:**

*"Do you want to go to a meeting or perhaps talk some more with someone else about N.A.?"*

**No: CONCLUDE THE CONVERSATION**

**Yes, I'll go:**

**RESPOND AND PROVIDE THE NECESSARY INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEXT AVAILABLE MEETING:**

*"Great. There is a meeting at..."*

**ASK IF THE CALLER NEEDS A RIDE:**

*"Do you need a ride?"*

**No: CONCLUDE THE CONVERSATION**

*"To get the most out of the meeting, try to come a few minutes early. If you need further help, give us a call on the hotline."*  
**\END\**

**Yes: TURN TO "THE TWELVE STEP PROCESS," NEXT PAGE**

**I want to talk with someone else: TURN TO "THE TWELVE STEP PROCESS," NEXT PAGE**

None of the Above: CONCLUDE THE CALL:

*"When you are ready, we are here to help you. For those who want to stop using, our program works. An you can see and hear how it works in our meetings." \END\*

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## THE TWELVE STEP PROCESS

TELL THE ADDICT CALLER WHAT THE TWELVE STEP CALL IS ALL ABOUT:

*"There are recovering addicts in our N.A. Fellowship who will talk with you and give you a ride to a meeting if you want to go. I have to contact somebody who will then call you back. So give me your name and phone number, and stay by your phone."*

GET THE NAME AND PHONE NUMBER AND THEN ASSURE THE ADDICT:

*"Someone will call you back as soon as possible. You've done the right thing by calling us."*

CALL THE APPROPRIATE TWELFTH STEP VOLUNTEER AND GIVE THAT PERSON THE ADDICT'S NAME, NUMBER AND OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION.

IF YOU HAVE CALLED ALL THE TWELFTH STEP VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE OF THE SAME GENDER AS THE ADDICT CALLER, AND YOU HAVE NOT FOUND ANY WORKERS AVAILABLE, THEN TURN TO "TWELFTH STEP VOLUNTEERS NOT AVAILABLE" PAGE # 26

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## TWELFTH STEP VOLUNTEERS NOT AVAILABLE

IMMEDIATELY PHONE THE ANSWERING SERVICE OR YOUR ALTERNATE. INSTRUCT THE OPERATOR TO TAKE MESSAGES FROM ALL INCOMING PHONELINE CALLERS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. ASK YOUR ALTERNATE TO TAKE CALLS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. THEN IMMEDIATELY CALL THE WAITING ADDICT. EXPLAIN:

*"I can't reach anybody right now. Do you want to talk with me some more, or do you want someone to call you in a few hours to talk with you some more?"*

I want to talk to you



I'll wait for someone to call

Keep talking until addict wants to stop.



Tell the addict that you will arrange to have someone in N.A. phone back.:

CONCLUDE BY REAFFIRMING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE TWELFTH STEP VOLUNTEER:



*"I'll keep trying to reach someone. That person will be calling you as soon as possible. So stay by your phone, I won't forget about you."*



*"I'll keep trying to reach someone who can call you as soon as possible. Do you want someone to call you?"*



No



Yes

● RESPOND:

● "I'll be sure to have  
someone phone you."

CONCLUDE THE CONVERSATION:

*"You did the right thing by calling us. If you need more help,  
give us a call on the hotline."*

CALL THE ANSWERING SERVICE OR YOUR  
ALTERNATE, TAKE ANY MESSAGES, AND TELL THE  
OPERATOR THAT YOU ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO  
RECEIVE INCOMING PHONELINE CALLS.

IF AT THE END OF YOUR SHIFT, YOU HAVEN'T  
REACHED A TWELFTH STEP VOLUNTEER, NOTIFY THE  
NEXT SCHEDULED PHONELINE VOLUNTEER ABOUT  
THE NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OF THE ADDICT WHO  
STILL EXPECTS A TWELFTH STEP PHONE CALL. IF  
YOU CAN'T REACH THE NEXT AVAILABLE PHONELINE  
VOLUNTEER, CALL THE CHAIRPERSON. DON'T JUST  
GIVE UP TRYING TO HELP A WAITING ADDICT. \END\

---

## FOR THE FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER OF AN ADDICT

THE CALLER INDICATES THAT HE/SHE WANTS HELP  
FOR SOMEONE ELSE

(My old man (daughter, friend, or whoever) is all messed up)

BE SURE TO DETERMINE WHAT THE CALLER MEANS  
SO THAT YOU CAN MAKE THE PROPER REFERRAL:

*"What do you mean "all messed up?"*

(He is unconscious and  
turning blue)  
(He is violent right now)  
(He is acting crazy)

(He won't stop  
using coke, pot,  
etc.)

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

TURN TO "FRIEND  
OR FAMILY  
MEMBER.." BELOW

PROVIDE THE NUMBER FOR  
MEDICAL EMERGENCIES IN  
YOUR REFERRAL LIST.

RESPOND:



"Here is the phone number for this kind of problem...."

MAKE SURE THE CALLER GETS THE NUMBER DOWN.  
THEN SAY:

*"When this crisis passes, call us back." Or better yet, give the  
addict the phoneline number so that we can tell him about  
recovering from drug addiction." \END\*

---

## FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WANTS INFORMATION ABOUT THE ADDICT'S PRACTICING BEHAVIOR

The issue of the relationship between N.A. and other recovery Fellowships is emotional and complicated for many people. N.A. can only help the addict. The family member or friend may be referred to a family oriented recovery program. Always explain that Narcotics Anonymous does not endorse or recommend any other organization or institution and in no way is N.A. affiliated with any other programs.

DETERMINE IF THE ADDICT WANTS TO STOP USING:

*"Does he want to stop using?"*

Yes:

Ask:

*"Does he know you're calling?"*

Ask:

*"Is he there now? Will he talk to me?"*

Yes: Turn to page # 20

No: RESPOND AS FOLLOWS:

*"Nothing can be done for the addict until he is really willing to stop using. The addict must call for help. It's painful to love a person who is suffering because of drugs. There are programs for loved ones of addicts. I can give you the phone number for one if you would like to have it"*

GIVE THE NUMBER FOR THE FAMILY ORIENTED RECOVERY PROGRAM IN YOUR AREA FROM YOUR REFERRAL LIST

*"Here's the \_\_\_\_\_ phone number for \_\_\_\_\_ county/city 000-0000. Although Narcotics Anonymous does not endorse any other program, I'm giving this number to you as a common courtesy. Give them a call, they can explain their program to you." \END\*

BE POLITE AND ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT N.A., BUT DON'T GET DRAWN INTO USELESS DIALOGUE. IF NECESSARY CONCLUDE THE CALL:

*"We at N.A. have this phoneline to help suffering addicts get clean. Now we need to clear this phone line so that addicts can call through to us." \END\*

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## FOR A FELLOWSHIP MATTER

IN RESPONSE TO YOUR QUESTION (HOW CAN I HELP YOU?) THE CALLER WANTS:

1. To make a personal contact with someone in N.A.

2. To leave a message for the phoneline chairperson.
3. Information about the Fellowship.
1. IF IT IS A PERSONAL CONTACT TO SOMEONE IN N.A.  
(I can't make coffee tonight, will you tell the secretary of the meeting?)  
(I'm an old family friend of Pete, can you give me his phone number?)  
(Jack will call the phoneline in a couple of hours. Will you tell him to meet me at Sam's after tonight's meeting?)

ANSWER NO:

*"No. It is the policy of the phoneline committee that I cannot accept personal messages for someone and I cannot give out the phone number of any person in our Fellowship." \END\*

2. IF IT IS A MESSAGE FOR THE PHONELINE CHAIRPERSON

ANSWER YES

TAKE THE MESSAGE. AT THE END OF YOUR SHIFT, CALL THE MESSAGE IN TO THE ANSWERING SERVICE OR THE PHONELINE CHAIRPERSON. \END\

3. IF IT IS AN INFORMATIONAL QUESTION ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP?

(We are having a staff meeting, can someone from N.A. speak to us?)  
(Do you know the N.A. phoneline number for Sonoma County?)  
(I'm a reporter for the Independent Journal, can I talk to someone in N.A. about the program?)

ANSWER YES

EITHER PROVIDE THE REFERRAL NUMBER (FROM YOUR LIST OF PHONE NUMBERS IN THE HANDBOOK), OR TAKE THE CALLER'S NAME AND NUMBER:

*"Yes. Please give me your name and phone number and I will have the proper person in N.A. contact you within a day or two."*

BE SURE TO TELL THE PHONELINE CHAIRPERSON  
ABOUT THESE REQUESTS FROM CITIZENS SO THAT WE  
MAY SERVE THEM COMPETENTLY! \END\



## **WSC PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE A GUIDE TO PHONELINE SERVICE**

### **APPENDICIES**

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#### **APPENDIX I SUGGESTED LIST OF EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

1. Drug crisis hotline, \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Suicide prevention center, \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Poison control center, \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Mental health emergencies, \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Rape crisis center, \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Abused women/men services, \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Child abuse lifeline, \_\_\_\_\_
  8. Runaway hotline. \_\_\_\_\_
  9. County/State Wide  
Emergency # \_\_\_\_\_
  10. Family Oriented  
Recovery Program \_\_\_\_\_
- 

#### **APPENDIX II PHONELINE COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

##### **I. PURPOSE**

Our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. The best way to make ourselves available to those who need help is to provide a phoneline service, where someone can call and talk anonymously with a recovering addict.

The phonline committee provides service in accordance with the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

II. Committee members

A. Chairperson

1. Requirements
2. Duties

B. Phonline Volunteers

1. Number of phonline volunteers
2. Requirements
3. Duties
4. Shifts
5. Alternates

C. Twelfth Step Volunteer

1. Number of Twelfth Step Volunteers
2. Requirements
3. Duties
4. Shifts
5. Alternates

D. Representative to ASC or RSC

III. Meeting Times and Procedures

IV. Voting Procedures

A. What constitutes voting membership

B. Requirements to vote

1. Attendance

[illegible]

## EXAMPLE OF SHIFT LOG FOR HOTLINE/HELPLINE CALL

\*\*\*\*\*

(Example)

Date 09/10/84 Day of Week Monday

<u>Time called</u>	<u>Who called</u>	<u>How was the caller served</u>
5:55	(message from) Joe B.	called him at 6:00. directed to meeting at Marin General
6:15 to 6:30	Mary Blue (loved one)	Referred to a family program
8:45 to 8:55	Betty Aloy	Referred to S.F. N.A. hotline
9:00 to 9:05	Ralph J.	Referred to Dean H. (Twelve step call)
9:40 to 9:50	male name unknown	Read him meeting locations and times for Wednesday
9:50 to 9:55	John Brown (clergy)	Called in to Jaqui O. 9am Tuesday 9/11/84

(If you need more space, use the other side of this page)

\*\*\*\*\*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Day of Week \_\_\_\_\_

Time called      Who called      How was the caller served

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Day of Week \_\_\_\_\_

Time called      Who called      How was the caller served

**THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS  
ANONYMOUS**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. group ought to never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.