

# **WSC Public Information Phoneline Handbook**

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## **I. - Getting Started**

### **Preface**

This Phoneline Handbook is a resource to for members interested in starting and maintaining a phoneline. These guidelines bring together suggestions and methods that reflect the collective experience, strength and hope of many phoneline and public information committees. The samples in this guide may be changed to reflect the needs or circumstances of your individual committees. We suggest that you first read through this handbook before beginning to do the work.

### **A. Do We Need a Phoneline?**

If your area or region is not currently covered by phoneline service, a thorough investigation needs to be made before establishing one. Interested members will need to consider:

What are your needs?

What resources will you be able to draw on?

What type of services are possible and which are -available in your area?

What type of services ,will best suit your area/region?

What are your local geographical boundaries?

Can you share resources with other ares or regions?

Make sure that you choose attainable goals.

Contact surrounding areas or regions who have successfully established and maintained a phoneline service. Their first-hand experience can begin to assist your subcommittee in determining what services may best meet your needs. Remember, those who came before us can provide valuable assistance and direction. Also, contact the World Service Office for specific examples of materials created by established phoneline subcommittees.

A subcommittee of an area or regional service committee is generally responsible for the operation and maintenance of the phoneline. Start small, it is easier to expand than to reduce services.

### **B. Can We Support a Phoneline?**

The following checklist of questions can be used by your area or regional service committee to take an inventory be-fore you start a phoneline in your community:

How much time will be required to do this work?

How many volunteers will we need to maintain the phoneline?

How much money will this cost in the beginning?

How much money will this cost each month?

What are the options for expansion as our needs increase?

Does the area or regional service committee have a long term commitment to this ongoing project?

Will our phoneline subcommittee receive enough support from the fellowship, in finances and time, to operate effectively?

Are other areas of service such as other subcommittees and group positions regularly filled?

Are we working in cooperation with PI, H&I, and our area or regional service committee to communicate and responsibly handle calls?

Have we checked, with surrounding areas and regions for their experience, strength, and hope in starting up and maintaining a phoneline and/or interest in joining or sharing services?

Have we contacted the World Service Office to ensure we have all the information that is available to help us?

What technologies are available? [See chapter two for technologies you may want to investigate.]

Have you purchased your number? What will happen if you change technologies or service, will the number go with you?

### **C. What Do We Need to Start a Phoneline Subcommittee?**

#### **Committee Development**

Committee membership will always be high on your priority list. Here are a few suggestions to get more NA members on your committee:

Work hard and accomplish things. People are attracted to a committee that gets things done.

Make Phoneline work positive in announcements. People want to work on a committee that is doing worthwhile things, carrying the message in concrete ways. They don't automatically want to work on a committee just because "it needs support."

Personally invite NA members to join your committee. It is very effective to tell someone how much they are needed and about the exciting ways the Phoneline committee is carrying the message, one on one. A personal invitation makes the individual member feel important, because they are. Give titles to volunteers, like Monday morning coordinator. Make them a part of by giving them a title and delegating responsibility.

Choose a consistent time and place to hold the subcommittee meeting. Just like an NA recovery meeting, members need to leave confidence that PI meets at the same time and the same place.

Train your volunteers. Do you have the experience, strength, and hope to train volunteers. If not, ask surrounding areas, or your regional committee for assistance. Give each volunteer a Phoneline Handbook, a PI Handbook, and other need information specific to you area, like a map showing the meeting locations.

Give presentations for groups, areas, and your region.

#### **Structure**

The most important thing to keep in mind when working on structure, guidelines, and procedures is to determine simple, attainable, and measurable goals. In keeping with the Traditions, policies and guidelines should it simple and allow for flexibility when circumstances change. Here are a few suggestions and reminders:

The Phoneline Committee Chair is the single point of accountability.

Each project should have one person who is responsible to get it done.

Communication should always be open with the fellowship and other subcommittees.

Make decisions by consensus and group conscience.

### Guidelines

Hopefully, guidelines for your committee are already in place, and you won't have to spend a great deal of time and energy to create them. Remember, guidelines are supposed to describe the way the committee actually functions. They should support our ability to carry the message. If changing or adding to the guidelines will help the committee do its job better, go ahead and change them. However, it is generally ineffective to try to make the guidelines an exhaustive set of specific rules which describe every possible situation.

Have faith, keep it simple, and get on with the business of carrying the message. Prayer, persistence, patience and a positive attitude help us reach our goal, to carry the message.

### Simple Area Phoneline Subcommittee Guidelines

#### Purpose

Carry the message to the addict that still suffers and to the public that NA is a viable option for recovery.

All participants shall have a working knowledge the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts for Service in NA.

#### Structure

Phoneline chair - Elected by and accountable to the ASC/RSC.

The chair submits an annual budget to the ASC/RSC for approval.

The chair submits a detailed report to the ASC/RSC at regularly scheduled meetings.

Members - All NA members who have been trained and consistently volunteer for phoneline service.

#### Group Conscience

All committee decisions are made by consensus.

## Meetings

The committee holds regular monthly meetings scheduled by the chair.

Extra meetings, learning days, and workshops are held when necessary.

## Functions

To educate the committee members to answer the phone according to established guidelines.

To refer addicts to meetings.

To refer non-fellowship calls to the proper subcommittees.

To maintain a referral list. [Note, this is a difficult issue to resolve. Many areas only refer callers to: emergency medical help (911 in most of North America), Suicide Prevention, Poison Control, or the local telephone directory.

Maintain the phonenumber, keeping it functioning with current information.

## Reports

What belongs in the phonenumber report? At the regular meeting of either the region or the area, the phonenumber committee chair is usually required to submit a written report. Even if it isn't required, it is a good idea. This keeps the area and the groups informed on what the phonenumber committee is doing and allows them provide experience, strength and hope, or even additional direction if necessary. A typical report should contain the following items:

Activity Plans: What we planned to do since the last report.

Actual Work: How many volunteers, hours, calls received, etc.

Budget to Date: How much money we spent.

Challenges: The problems or obstacles we encountered.

Solutions: How we solved them.

Goals/Objectives: What we plan to do before the next meeting.

## **D. Information Checklist**

The following is an information checklist for the beginning work of a phonenumber subcommittee.

Define the subcommittee's responsibilities.

Select the type of phonenumber service best suited to your area or region.

Figure out initial costs as well as monthly maintenance costs for the phonenumber service selected. Remember to include both financial costs and human resources. Keep an eye out for any hidden costs.

It is important that the area or region "owns" the number used for phonenumber services. Although this may require an additional cost, it will ensure that your area or region keeps the same phone number

for the, duration of the phonline's operation. This helps to maintain a positive image of NA in the community.

Request sample phonline guidelines from nearby areas and regions, and from the World Service Office. Prepare your own phonline guidelines to meet the specific needs of your subcommittee.

Hold regular volunteer orientations and phonline learning days.

Prepare a Phonline Log that can be used to account for all calls received. during each shift (refer to Addendum D).

Define geographical boundaries.

Ask surrounding areas if they would like to participate.

Check with the PI subcommittee. (Some areas choose to have the Phonelines be part of the PI subcommittee instead of a separate subcommittee. If separate, make sure close communications are established with the PI subcommittee.)

Maintain up-to-date phonline volunteer lists, and 12-step volunteer lists (if your location chooses to have organized 12-step volunteers).



## **II. - Phonline Technologies**

### **Introduction**

This section specifically discusses phonline technologies. The first portion describes different technologies used to answer the phone, gives generalizations about cost, and discusses advantages and disadvantages. The second portion (Other Features) describes some additional features that may be added to the phonline. The final portion (Other Issues) discusses some general issues some of these new technologies may create.

This section uses "area" generically, although phonelines can be either an area, multi-area or regional, or multi-regional. We will use the term "phonline" generically rather than hotline, helpline or information line.

Phones are answered either by a person or by a machine. People are paid special workers or may be NA volunteers. Machines can be answering machines, voice mail, or computers. Although answered by machine, some technologies offer the ability to transfer calls from a machine to an NA volunteer.

Decisions require consideration of many factors: cost to initiate, monthly operating costs, amount of NA people-power available, type of geography involved, volume of calls, and options available from phone companies.

### **Answering Machines**

The local service committee generally owns answering machines. They may be kept in a member's home, or at an NA service location. Answering machines can be simple, like a home answering machine, or more complex. Some of the more sophisticated answering machines can handle several incoming lines, forward calls to another location, and may have several voice mail boxes built in. Some answering machines can page a volunteer when messages come in. Prices may be less than a computer, but answering machines have limited programmable features. They can generally only handle one call forwarding order at a time.

Greetings, as well as the information to be left on an answering machine, should be developed by a committee. The information included could give daily meeting information, let the caller know how to get in touch with NA in your area, or how to leave a message for a return call. It is helpful to have a number of people with different levels of experience call in and listen to the greeting. Will the message be easily understood by newcomers, old-timers, visitors from outside your area, and people outside the fellowship looking for help or one of the business subcommittees? Remember that this may be the first impression someone has of NA. It is important that the greeting be attractive, cheerful, business-like, easily understood, and concise. Explain whether messages may be left and when they might be returned. You may want to include your area's mailing address for those that want additional contact with NA.

Costs may include purchase of the answering machine, installation of a phone line(s), message tapes, and basic phone company charges for a business line.

#### **Advantages:**

- It is low cost and easy to maintain when compared to other forms of technology.
- Callers can leave messages.
- It can give callers basic information- such as where meetings are and how to learn more about NA.

- More sophisticated answering machines can have several voice mail boxes built in. Machines with these mail boxes can offer the caller some basic options: choosing meeting information according to the day of the week, having a volunteer paged, or forward a call to a volunteer.
- Few NA volunteers may be needed.
- Some answering machines have voice mail options.

#### **Disadvantages:**

- NA service committees must purchase, rent, and maintains the equipment. Some areas may not be ready, willing, or able to accept these responsibilities.
- The equipment may need periodic repair or replacement.
- If an answering machine must be kept in a member's home, the phonenumber is essentially tied to that individual and their personal schedule. If that person relapses, or moves, NA's phonenumber must relocate.
- Rotation of service may become more difficult. When a member's commitment is up, it can be difficult to move the machine to another location.
- Having NA's answering machine in a member's home usually requires another phonenumber to be installed.
- The recorded message should give basic information, such as daily or weekly meeting listings. Sometimes there is too much information for one tape, and tapes must be changed periodically.
- The entire message may have to be re-recorded to change any information.
- The caller may not be able to speak to an addict directly.

#### **Answering Services**

An answering service is an outside organization used to answer our phone for us. They generally operate 24 hours a day. Most answering services are versatile. Most have non-addict operators answering the phone and giving out meeting information. Some services take a message and contact an NA volunteer by phone or pager. The volunteer then returns the call. Some services route the call directly to an NA volunteer's home. Some only automatically program call forwarding orders during each shift and never speak to any callers. We do not recommend the answering service giving out the phone numbers of NA volunteers. (Please refer to Section III.(?) for further discussion of this issue.)

The cost for answering services can vary. The more services provided, the higher the cost. Costs include monthly fees to the answering service, and sometimes also basic phone company charges for a business line, or to purchase a phone number.

Some answering services require an initial deposit to establish service. Some may request additional deposits if your volume of calls increases. Keep track of any deposits carefully. Many areas end service after many years and forget what deposits might be refundable. Some answering services have a limit on the number of calls received, and impose a surcharge when that limit is exceeded.

Some services patch calls through to an NA volunteer, which may also add to the cost. If calls are routed to an NA volunteer, ask how this is done. One area had an answering service that required phone-company operator assistance to route all calls and a fee was charged by the phone company for each call in addition to the answering service's fees. The cost to patch calls through to NA volunteers has significantly increased in the last decade. One area reported paying a large fee for each call patched. Another area's answering service required that their operator manually disconnect the line after the call

was completed. The line remained busy until then. When the answering service was busy, or staff inattentive, the NA phonenumber had a busy signal for long periods of time. One area's answering service charged for each attempt to patch through, whether the transfer was completed or not. When the answering service made several attempts for a single call, it got very expensive. With patch-through service, it is important to keep the volunteer list up-to-date. Shift assignments may be advisable. Some areas limit the number of attempts the answering service can make for each call. Another option is to have to have one member carry a pager, so that the answering service can reach someone, in case of emergency, or if a number of patch-through attempts have failed

It is important to ask the answering service how they bill for their services and what kind of reports they provide. It may be advisable to examine a number of services to find one that fits your area's needs, and does not cause a financial burden. Answering service costs in metropolitan areas have gotten quite expensive. It is also appropriate to ask for references, and then check those references.

Ask questions about their staff. Is the staff properly trained to handle your calls? Does a NA phonenumber coordinator need to be involved in training new employees? How often does staff change? Are they trained to handle a potential crisis call? One area hired an answering service owned by someone in recovery where all the employees were members of another fellowship. With the best of intentions, they referred all callers to NA to another fellowship. In another instance, two answering services merged resulting in two NA areas using the same answering service. The operators frequently confused the two and sent callers to meetings that were not the closest to their location. One area reported their answering service only gives out meeting information. Business callers needing to speak to a subcommittee are then mistakenly referred to meetings. It is important to keep in regular contact with the answering service so that consistency of service is maintained.

Some phonelines have a answering service liaison, or phonenumber coordinator. The phonenumber coordinator must provide up-to-date information for the answering service operators. This information should include accurate volunteer information (phone number, hours available, etc.), new meetings and/or meeting closings, and how to contact the phonenumber committee if needed. Extra work may be needed to give the service what it needs. The phonenumber coordinator also helps to resolve any problems that the answering service may be having.

The phonenumber coordinator may need to provide training to new answering service operators. Some areas provide their answering service with a set of guidelines, or instructions, on how to handle various calls. These guidelines should be developed by the phonenumber committee. These guidelines can provide the operators with the tools necessary to handle calls to NA more efficiently. Some areas periodically place test calls to evaluate the level of service being provided.

#### **Advantages:**

- Answering services are easy to set up. They do not require the purchase or maintenance of any equipment.
- Services provided can be adapted as the area grows.
- Costs can be kept to a minimum, and can be predictable, depending on the type of service provided.
- A human voice answers the phone.
- Operators may be able to provide immediate meeting information, and possibly give directions to meetings.
- Calls, and/or messages, can be transferred directly to NA volunteers.

- Some answering services can provide a record of the numbers of calls to the phonenumber. This could be helpful in predicting future costs, and gauging your area's Public Information Committees' efforts (projects).

#### **Disadvantages:**

- As an area grows, phonenumber costs can soar. It is important to keep an eye on your costs, and to work with the answering service in order for the phonenumber to remain cost effective.
- Patching calls to volunteers can get expensive. Watch out for hidden charges such as: charging for each attempt (whether successful or not), or additional charges for exceeding a certain number of attempts.
- As the number of calls increases, so does the need for volunteers. This will add responsibility to the phonenumber committee to recruit more volunteers.
- Answering service operators may be too helpful. They may overstep their instructions and give out inaccurate information about NA.
- Calls may not be answered promptly, or callers may be put on hold. It is important to look for an answering service that can meet your phonenumber needs. A large service may be too large, and a smaller service may be too small.
- Sometimes the answering service owns the phone number. This can cause difficulties if they change the number, or if you decide to change answering services. The phonenumber number on meeting lists and flyers would have to be changed. It may be advisable to own your own phonenumber number, although this will add to the initial cost of the phonenumber.
- Answering services may charge for administrative tasks, like changing meeting information or volunteer lists.
- *\*note-* Answering service bills may be difficult to read. The phonenumber committee (coordinator?) should regularly review the answering service bill, and look for any overcharges.

#### **Voice Mail**

Voice mail is an automated way to answer the phone. It is similar to an answering machine but with greater technological capabilities. Voice mail can be tailored to suit the needs of the area. Voice mail is available from phone companies, independent companies, answering services, or computers. Voice mail works with mail boxes that contain recorded information. The caller makes a selection on a touch-tone phone. The voice-mail system plays a specific recorded message. Information should be read slowly so the caller can write it down. The caller should have the option to repeat the information without having to call back. Some voice-mail systems can transfer the caller to an NA volunteer. Some allow the caller to leave a message. They should be checked frequently and responded to promptly.

Refer to the Answering Machine section for suggestions related to the outgoing message. It is may be helpful to have the subcommittee assign specific responsibilities for the voice mail: someone to record greetings, someone to record the meeting list and any changes, someone to respond to incoming messages, someone to coordinate and train the phonenumber volunteers, someone to interact with the voice mail provider.

Costs include initial setup fees and monthly charges for each mail box, and/or extra telephone lines. Costs might also include call forwarding and toll charges if a call-forwarding option is selected.

### **Advantages:**

- There may be not equipment to purchase or maintain.
- Voice-mail boxes and options can be added or deleted as the area changes.
- Voice-mail box costs may be predictable, with or without per call charges.
- Recorded information can be changed over the phone.
- Voice-mail systems can often handle multiple calls simultaneously.
- There may be need for only a few volunteers.
- Adds the ability to retrieve messages from a remote location.

### **Disadvantages:**

- Areas may not have the ability to maintain or purchase equipment when necessary.
- The entire message may have to be recorded when any change is made for that mail box. For large areas, this could be very time consuming.
- If you are using an answering service's voice mail system they may charge to re-record voice-mail messages. This can be expensive for areas with a large meeting list.
- Without a call forwarding feature or message boxes, the caller can only get recorded meeting information. These features may not be available in all areas.
- Call forwarding to a volunteer may have to be done manually at the beginning of each person's shift on some systems.
- The caller may get caught in a voice mail loop. Set up your system carefully. Make sure that there is an option that allows the caller to return to the main menu at any time. Also be sure to include an option for recording a message for callers who do not have a touch tone phone.
- Callers talk to a machine, not a person, and may not get a prompt response.
- Callers may not get the help they may need in an emergency when paging or call-forwarding options are not available.
- Calls could be forwarded to a number where nobody is available to answer the call.
- Some public telephones are unable to receive incoming calls. This makes it impossible for the phonline volunteer to return calls to a public phone.

## **Office with a Phonline**

Some areas maintain offices where, among other services, the phone is answered by NA volunteers. Most offices must have another phonline system when the office is closed. Some offices turn on an answering machine when volunteers are not available. Others forward calls to a volunteer's home.

Costs include rent for the office space and basic phone company charges. Costs might also include a secondary system for times when the office is closed.

### **Advantages:**

- There is direct addit to addit contact when the phone is answered.
- Responses to requests for information may be quicker.
- The cost of the phonline itself can be very low, incurring only basic phone charges.

### **Disadvantages:**

- Low cost offices may not always be in the best parts of town. Some areas report difficulty keeping their offices staffed after dark.
- Travel time to and from the office, and the availability of transportation, may discourage people from volunteering for phoneline service.
- It may be difficult, if not impossible, to keep an office staffed around the clock.
- A single point of accountability can be difficult to maintain for opening and closing the office.
- Another form of service (answering machine or answering service) may be necessary to provide 24 hour service.

### **Computer Owned and Maintained by NA**

Areas have begun purchasing their own computer to replace outside answering services or voice mail. The computer can be customized through programming to do just about anything you can imagine. NA-owned computers are the most flexible of all the systems. They may also be the most complicated to maintain.

The computer must be physically located somewhere and this usually involves rent in a public place. Outgoing calls may incur service-area message units or long distance charges. Some areas specifically located their computer in a central location to reduce those charges. The location must be secure and have good electrical power. Phonelines have to be installed. A surge protector is a wise investment along with a modestly-priced backup power supply to protect against short-duration electrical outages. The computer can be set to automatically default to the phoneline software whenever power is interrupted. Some areas forgo the backup power supply, but there is a chance you could lose the information on your hard drive if there is a loss of power.

On some systems calls are routed to the NA volunteer based on a shift assignment, others route calls based on a rotating list. While the call is being transferred, recorded information can be played for the caller. Most of these systems allow the computer be set up to imitate voice mail, and also give electronic information about meetings in a given area.

Computers can track information about each call that comes in and what happens to that call, as far as who (which volunteer addict) received the call. Reports can be customized to provide a trouble list for the phoneline coordinator. A printer would need to be available to produce a hard copy of the trouble list. Security is an important consideration when operating a system like this. Passwords can be part of the set up to keep people out of the system that do not have access to get into it. These systems can be accessed without permission ("hacked" into), but a good security system will make it more difficult. Most computer systems can handle more than one call at a time, but this would mean that multiple phonelines would have to be installed. Each area must decide how many or how few lines to have. For example, one line can be for English, one for Spanish or French. Calls can be limited to a specific time then automatically disconnected. This frees up the phoneline for other calls, but this could cause some resentments, not only with newcomers, but also with addicts who have been around for a while.

It is important to have more than one person trained to maintain the computer, as it helps to insure continuity of service, and becomes a shared responsibility. One area had the computer system fail when the only trained person was on vacation. The area had no phoneline for several days. Refer to the section on voice mail for additional responsibilities that should be assigned with an automated system.

Recorded information is stored in small voice files linked together. A single meeting change is recorded and then automatically added to the link by the computer. The computer can sort the meetings by day and time for playback.

In many locations, basic business lines will not give adequate service for computer-transferred calls and a loss of volume may occur. In many areas in North America, "Central Office Based Network System" lines may solve this problem. Talk to a telecommunications professional about these issues prior to establishing service.

Central Office Based Network System lines also allow the calls to come in and go out on the same line. Some areas take advantage of this feature to allow the computer to answer a second call while the first call is being handled by a volunteer. If only one volunteer is available at a time, the second caller will only be able to get recorded information. Other areas choose not to take advantage of this feature because they want the computer to monitor the call and limit the duration of the call freeing the volunteer for the next call. One drawback is that, generally, the minimum number of Central Office Based Network System lines is two and the second line may be unused (but paid for) if the computer does not take advantage of two incoming lines.

Costs include the initial cost of the computer and software. Monthly charges include basic phone company charges for a business line, rent, and outgoing calls transferred to the NA volunteer. Although there is a high initial cost to purchase the hardware and software, there is a very low monthly operating cost. One area reported paying for start-up costs with phonenumber savings in just nine months.

#### **Advantages:**

- NA has complete control and responsibility for the phonenumber system.
- Once up and running, the computer system may be easy to learn and operate.
- Little or no previous computer experience may be required.
- Some computer systems allow changes to be made remotely. In other words, you do not have to go to where the computer is located to make changes.
- Does not require a "state-of-the-art" computer.
- Hardware and software maintenance can be inexpensive.

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Startup costs can be expensive.
- Some level of computer proficiency is needed to make the buying decision for the hardware and software to get the system up and running.
- Some computers may require that changes be made at the site where the computer is located.
- Changes and upgrades to some of the services provided may require someone with extensive, or sophisticated computer knowledge.
- NA owns the equipment. Thus, if the equipment fails, or is damaged, NA must pay for repairs or replacement. Potentially, the need for replacement may be sudden, and expensive, although no areas have reported this type of catastrophic failure.
- The computer must be located somewhere that is safe, secure, and accessible at all times of the day and night. Locations that offer all these options may be expensive and difficult to find.

## Cellular Phone

Cellular phones enable NA volunteers to answer calls without going to an NA service office. Volunteers take turns carrying the cellular phone, and answering phonenumber calls.

Many areas have a variety of service-providers and their costs and features may vary greatly. Some cellular phone companies offer free air time during the evenings and weekends. Others offer free, or reduced rates, during normal business hours. Some services may have high monthly fees, and low per-call charges. Others offer low monthly rates, but high per-call charges. Some areas include call forwarding as an option so the phonenumber volunteer can transfer calls and avoid air-time charges. In many areas, call forwarding on a cellular phone line still incurs air-time charges, plus the cost to forward the call. It is important to thoroughly investigate the options in your area. It may also be advisable to contact other areas that are using this type of phonenumber service.

Costs may include purchase of the phone, monthly cellular service charges, cellular air-time, and battery replacement. Cellular air-time is more expensive than basic phone charges.

### Advantages:

- An NA member can answer calls and provide immediate addict to addict experience, strength, and hope.
- NA volunteers are not tied to a specific location while fulfilling their phonenumber responsibilities.
- Fewer volunteers may be needed than with other forms of phonenumber service.
- Some cellular phones can provide information about the phone call, such as caller identification.

### Disadvantages:

- Can be very expensive if your phonenumber receives a large number of calls, depending on the type of service selected. It is hard to predict when calls are going to come in, making it difficult to select between billing options.
- This system does not work well in areas where there are great distances between volunteers. This can make it difficult to get the phone to the next volunteer.
- Phonenumber volunteers may have long shifts before they turn the phone over to the next volunteer. This may mean taking the phone to work, grocery shopping, on dates, etc. We do not recommend phonenumber volunteers doing NA service at work.
- Volunteers must physically meet to change shifts, and exchange the phone.
- There is limited assurance that a trained phonenumber volunteer will answer the phone. If the cellular phone is lost or stolen the phonenumber service may be compromised by someone not associated with NA.
- If the cellular phone is lost, stolen or damaged the phonenumber is out of service.
- Batteries must be recharged and replaced periodically. If the battery wears out, or a member forgets to recharge it, the phonenumber is out of service.
- Some companies charge for calls made or received from outside your local calling area. This can be a hidden expense in larger areas.
- There are areas where reception is not available or inconsistent.



## **Pager**

A pager is carried by an NA volunteer(s) who returns calls when paged. Simple systems display the number entered by the caller. Others allow the caller to leave a voice message, then pages the NA volunteer. The volunteer retrieves the message, returns the call, or takes other appropriate action. Volunteers take turns carrying the pager.

Costs include purchase of a pager and monthly service charges. There may be costs incurred by volunteers returning calls. Some pager services have an upper limit on the number of pages received.

### **Advantages:**

- Pagers, and paging services, are very low cost.
- NA volunteers are not tied to a specific location while they have phonline responsibilities.
- Fewer NA volunteers may be needed.

### **Disadvantages:**

- This type of system does not work well in areas where there are great distances between volunteers, because volunteers must physically meet each other to exchange the pager.
- Phonline volunteers may have long shifts before they turn the pager over to the next volunteer. This may mean taking the pager to work, grocery shopping, out on dates, etc. We do not recommend a phonline volunteer do NA service at work.
- If the pager is lost or stolen the callers' anonymity may be compromised by someone not associated with NA.
- If the pager is lost, stolen, or damaged the phonline is out of service.
- Hang ups can be a problem. Callers may not want to leave their phone number.
- Callers using a pay phone may be blocked from receiving call backs.

## **Other Features**

### **Diverters and Remote Call Forwarding:**

There are four types of call forwarding:

- Remote call forwarding is from a number that exists in the local phone company's central office to a pre-programmed number, such as when you move or get a new number. This is done by the phone company and a fee is often involved.
- Variable call forwarding is programmed by a telephone instrument where the number exists. It may be forwarded to any number that you choose and changed whenever you want to change it. In some places you may be able to dial in from the outside to change the forwarding number. However, in most locations, it can only be programmed from an instrument at the physical location. The phonline can transfer calls to the NA phonline volunteers. The phonline is not tied to a single location.
- A diverter box, also called a remote program automatic dialer, enables variable call forwarding when those options are not available by the local phone company. Most diverter boxes can be programmed remotely, giving flexibility often not available with phone company variable call forwarding. A diverter box is a separate piece of equipment attached to the phonline instead of

a phone or answering machine. When a call comes in it redirects the call to another pre-programmed number using a separate outgoing line. A diverter box can be used to give out recorded information before transferring a call if a compatible answering machine is used.

- Busy/don't answer remote call forwarding will send the call to a number programmed for you by the phone company if the phonenumber is busy or does not answer after a pre-agreed number of rings. This might be used by an office that uses an answering service as a back-up for when the office is unattended. The number must be prearranged with the phone company and programmed by them.

Costs include phone company monthly charges for specific options selected, and perhaps an installation fee, forwarding fees and maybe also message unit or toll charges, depending on the distance forwarded. Cost for a diverter box include the diverter box, perhaps an installation fee, and basic phone company charges for two business lines.

#### **Advantages:**

- These options add greater flexibility to the phonenumber.
- Callers may be better served when they need to talk to an addict.

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Additional features usually mean additional cost.
- There may be a need for additional volunteers.
- May be a difficult or complicated system to operate.

### **Toll-Free Numbers**

Toll-free numbers are a type of technology that must be used with another phone system. Toll-free numbers only relate to who pays for the call. In North America, these toll-free numbers use the prefixes 800 and 888, with new prefixes being added. Non-U.S. communities should check with their local phone companies for toll-free availability. Toll-free numbers can be limited geographically, and they can be national or even international. With toll-free numbers, your NA phonenumber pays for all incoming calls.

Toll-free number services can forward calls to specific area phonelines based on the location of the caller. Features for toll-free numbers are changing rapidly. Contact your local telecommunications vendor to discuss options that might be suitable for your area.

In purchasing toll-free numbers, the per minute costs can vary widely from providers. It is best to shop for features and rates. Several areas may work together to qualify for a volume discount. In order to do this, a single toll-free number is purchased and the calls from specific area codes and/or exchanges are routed to a number that will handle those calls.

Be very specific about the area of coverage that your phonenumber wants to handle calls from. If this is not defined, you may get calls from all over, with questions you are not equipped to handle. Your area will be responsible for these calls, and the long distance charges to get them. Geographically limited toll-free numbers save money, but also prevent callers from outside the area getting through. This has been a problem for travelers trying to plan trips. People from nearby towns cannot get the correct phonenumber. People leaving jails or institutions may have trouble reaching the NA area they need. Areas that do not limit the calling area can incur high costs. If you use geographically limited service, you may want to list both the toll-free number and the local number.

*Refer to the section on phone books for more information about toll-free numbers.*

To reduce costs, some locations only publish toll-free numbers in Public Information efforts. They list the local number internally and on meeting directories.

Costs include set-up fees, basic monthly charges, and tolls for all calls.

**Advantages:**

- A single number can be used for a large geographic area.
- The use of a toll free number may encourage potential newcomers to call.
- Easy access for all callers.

**Disadvantages:**

- Toll free numbers may add to other phonenumber costs.
- An increase in the volume of calls may result in your phonenumber becoming too costly for your area.
- Costs are reported to be very high for areas not limiting access geographically.
- All public phones do not have access to toll free numbers.
- As the number of calls increases, the need for volunteers also increases.
- Callers to the toll free number may disregard the fact that there is a local number, resulting in added costs.

**Things to consider looking for a toll free service:**

**Rates and billing:**

- Billing increments-one minute or six second increments ? (6 second increments save 20% on same cost per minute).
- Initial billing increments-one minute, 30 second, 18 second, or 6 second? When a call is initiated and then terminated immediately, you will be charged an initial billing increment. This can significantly affect monthly costs.
- Cost per minute-Are the rates the same for outbound and toll free service? These costs can vary greatly between carriers. Get at least three quotes if possible.
- Monthly service charges-These should be avoided if possible. Some services have high per month charges, while others have no monthly fees.
- Monthly minimums-Many service providers charge a minimum usage fee. This means that if you do not spend a certain amount each month, you will be billed a minimum fee in addition to your monthly service charge.
- Monthly statements (bills)-Are the bills easy to understand? It is good idea to ask to see a sample of a bill and determine if you can understand it without difficulty.

**Term plans-**

- Often service providers ask for a term commitment of 1,2, or 3 years with a minimum monthly use fee. If the plan is canceled before the end of the term a penalty may be charged. This penalty is usually figured as a percentage of the average monthly bill multiplied by the number of months remaining on the contract. One-year plans may be the best compromise between rate and length of commitment.

- A deposit may be required if you don't have established credit.

**Network and customer service-**When choosing a provider it is important to determine the quality of the network. Ask the following questions:

- How often the network has had significant service interruptions affecting large numbers of customers over the last 24 months?
- Do they have automatic re-routing in the event of service interruptions?
- Who is the point of contact for customer service?
- In the event of a billing dispute how long does it typically take to get resolved and get credits posted?
- Are customized numbers available? Example: 1-800-555-NANA.

## **Other Issues**

New technologies have created some new decisions for phonline committees: how to get service and equipment, whether to set up a cooperative phonline, multi-lingual phone services, TDD/TTY lines, transferring calls, phone books, problems with caller ID features, and protection from phonline hackers. Finally, areas may want to consider combining several technologies.

## **Acquiring Service and Phonline Equipment**

### **Service:**

Phone service allows you to make and receive calls and get a phone number. Some services involve basic monthly fees, plus charges for outgoing calls. In some locations, a phone line and number can or must be purchased. A leased service would have a monthly fee. There have been areas reporting high costs just to buy a phonline to establish service.

When establishing a phonline through an answering service, find out who owns that phone number. Leaving the answering service may require additional costs and often involve getting a new phone number. One area paid high fees to give callers the new phone number until phone books were printed. Without this referral, the answering service would have said they had no information about NA. It may also be a good idea to look into buying your own phone number for your phonline. This may result in a slightly higher start-up cost, but could save money in the long run if you need to change your answering service.

### **Equipment:**

Equipment is hardware: the telephone, answering machine, pager, diverter box, TDD/TTY equipment, or computer. Equipment may be purchased or leased depending on your location. Some technologies (like voice mail) may not require any equipment at all. Cost is usually the deciding factor when deciding what kind of equipment to buy. Try and compare initial costs (startup) to long term savings. There may be instances where spending what seems to be a high start-up cost for equipment, could save you money over an extended period of time.

## **Cooperative Phonelines**

Any of the above phonline technologies are appropriate for cooperative phonelines. Phonelines are generally established by area service committees to serve the local area. In some locations, areas have split, but kept their phonline service intact creating a shared-service arrangement. Sometimes several separate areas will merge their phonelines and create a shared-service arrangement. Some areas have

moved their phoneline service to the regional level and eliminated area phonelines. In other locations, a regional phoneline has been added to the existing area phonelines.

When several areas share services, issues need to be clearly resolved: Who will pay the phoneline costs and how? Who will be responsible for maintaining the phoneline? Who will coordinate the answering service? Who will update the voice mail? Who will maintain the computer? How will changes be approved? Who will recruit and train NA volunteers? Who will review and approve bills? All these issues need to be discussed, clearly written, and made accessible to all areas. Specific, detailed, written agreements between the areas may reduce confusion when trusted servants change. It is best to equitably share these costs and responsibilities. This prevents one area from assuming a large human or financial burden.

Regional phonelines can replace area phonelines and serve all areas within the region. A single answering service could route calls to volunteers who serve the entire region. A regional office can answer all the phone calls. This is most feasible where the region is geographically small, such as within a metropolitan region. Long distance charges, for both the caller and the phoneline, may be a concern in larger regions. It may also be difficult to get updated information from several areas to phoneline volunteers quickly.

Regional phonelines can supplement area phonelines. In this model, each area maintains its own phoneline and a regional phoneline is added. The regional phoneline might give out only basic information. It could refer callers who want to speak to an addict to the area phonelines. This might be a service office where a special worker gives out business information only.

Regional phonelines that route calls to area phonelines are becoming more popular. This is often a toll-free number published for the entire region. It routes calls to the appropriate area based on the location of the caller. The major disadvantage is that a caller cannot get through to another area. Calls may be routed back based on the caller's location. Regional phonelines that supplement area phonelines are additional costs, not replacement costs.

### **Multi-lingual Phonelines**

Most locations needing multi-lingual services have a dominant language and one or more secondary languages. Phonelines can meet these needs several ways. A separate phone number with separate sets of volunteers may be difficult to coordinate. It may be hard to get enough volunteers in both languages. Some areas will have the primary-language volunteers answer the phone. Secondary-language volunteers return calls when needed. This can be difficult if the caller cannot speak in the primary language.

Some areas establish separate phonelines for each language. The phonelines may be completely different for the primary and secondary languages.

Some areas maintain an information-only line for the secondary languages using answering machines or voice mail. Recorded information from translated and published NA materials can provide the caller with information about NA. Callers can be directed to meetings available in that language. It is important to have volunteers retrieve and return messages promptly. An answering service with multi-lingual employees can route calls to language-specific volunteers.

### **TDD/TTY**

TDD/TTY, or Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, is a system designed for the deaf and hard of hearing. It allows the caller and phoneline volunteer to converse by typing. Some answering services will provide TDD/TTY services. If your phoneline committee wants to set up it's own TDD/TTY

service you will have to purchase TDD/TTY equipment and then train volunteers in its use. Both the caller and volunteer must have TDD/TTY equipment to completely converse with each other. The phoneline may have to be stationed at an office, or have a way to have the call transferred to them.

In some places a special relay service is provided for the hearing impaired to enable them to interact more readily with the hearing world. This service is available around the clock. The hearing impaired caller contacts a special operator using his or her TDD/TTY equipment. The operator contacts the NA phoneline and they converse by voice. The operator then types the information into the TDD/TTY equipment and relays the conversation back to the caller, essentially acting as a relay between the two people.

### **Transferred Calls**

Calls can be transferred to an NA volunteer several ways: by an answering service, by call forwarding, by voice mail, by computer routing, or by diverter box. Callers will expect the call to be answered with the name Narcotics Anonymous. A generic "Hello" may frighten an already paranoid caller. Computers and answering services usually announce it is an NA call before the connection is made. This allows the volunteer to greet the caller as an NA volunteer. When the volunteer is expecting an NA call during a specific time, he can answer accordingly. In some locations, the phone can have a special ring to indicate it is an NA call.

### **Phone Books**

Remember to talk to your local phone company about your listing at least six months before the new phone book is due to be published. After publication, check to verify the listing is correct. One area reported paying for an additional line in the yellow-page listing that reads "No dues or fees": to differentiate NA from all the fee-based treatment programs listed in that same section of the yellow pages.

Business numbers are generally listed in the white and yellow pages of the local phone book. The NA listing can be added to other phone books. The local phone company can suggest which books cover your geographic area. There are now multiple organizations printing phone books in some locations. Your area needs to carefully consider where to be listed. Listings generally need to be updated each year and there is a fee involved. White-page listings usually cost less than yellow page listings. With independent phone book companies springing up, your area may be solicited to advertise other places. Be careful! Sometimes these solicitations look like an invoice and get paid accidentally.

Many locations have a community-service section in the phone book, sometimes called the blue pages. A listing in the community service section may be free or at a reduced charge. Contact the publisher of the phone book for the agency responsible for community-service listings. Where NA is listed in the community pages is another consideration. Some suggestions: Alcohol and Drug Dependencies; Self-help Groups; Helplines.

When getting a new number, some areas timed the change with publication of the new phone books. Ask the phone company for the deadline that is often several months before distribution.

Although the phone book listings are correct, the directory assistance database may not be. The number may be listed only by the town where it is located. Listing in several phone books may not change the information database. Without knowing which town to ask for, directory assistance may not find NA. Call your local phone company to discuss these concerns. Check the directory assistance information given out periodically. One large metropolitan area reported not being listed in the primary phone book. The service committee did not make the call to have NA added to that directory.

Toll-free numbers are not listed free in the local phone book. They are not listed automatically in toll-free number phone books and directory assistance. Discuss this issue when your service is established. There are many toll-free numbers being used in NA. You may want to include the geographic location in the listing. Remember, your area's name may not be clear to the public and you might want to consider a more standard description for the phone listing.

Two or more NA phonelines may be listed in a single phone book. Both areas may want to consider adding geographic distinctions to their name to help the caller. Example: Narcotics Anonymous, West Valley and Narcotics Anonymous, East Valley.

### **Caller ID**

Caller ID is a feature available in many areas that a business or individual can choose. If a person has this feature, he gets a readout identifying the caller. The recipient may know the name, phone number and address of the caller. The NA volunteer should be able to protect their own anonymity. This feature can be blocked. Callers having Caller ID blocking may not accept return calls if they do not recognize the phone number. Likewise if the volunteer has their phone number protected against Caller ID, they may not be able to return a call to a person who will not accept calls with this type of protection. Check with your local phone company to find out about the various options and how they work.

### **Phoneline Hackers**

Any technology using remote call forwarding or transferring calls can become the victim of phoneline hackers. Hackers tap into the phone and dial out to numbers of their choosing. These are usually long distance numbers and can be quite costly. Review all phone bills carefully. Consider blocking 900 numbers and area codes outside the area served to reduce the potential liability. The phone company can set these blocks. Phoneline hackers also tap into the frequency codes used with cellular systems. Technology is changing quickly. Discuss these concerns with telecommunications professionals when considering your options.

### **Combining Technologies**

Some technologies can be combined to give an area the features it wants. Voice mail combined with the use of pagers allows the caller to leave a message. The volunteer can quickly return the call. An answering service with two pagers, one for a male and one for a female, can help make a phoneline gender-specific. After reviewing the various technologies available, consider a combination to best suit your area's needs.

### **Summary and How to Get More Information**

A Phoneline Technologies Referral List is available from the WSO. It gives the phoneline numbers for areas using particular technologies. Call PI or Phoneline chairs in several areas using the systems you are considering. These people may possess a wealth of information, with helpful tips and warnings about pitfalls. Call world or regional-level trusted servants for referrals. Multi-regional learning days and PI workshops at conventions are excellent sources of information. Ask if anyone knows who is using the type of service you are considering.

## **Glossary**

<b>Answering Machine</b>	A machine that automatically answers the phone, plays a pre-recorded message, and records messages left by the caller.
<b>Answering Service</b>	A company contracted to answer calls and record messages. Most use operators, but many are becoming increasingly more automated.
<b>Call Forwarding</b>	An option available through traditional phone services, or computer software. This option transfers a phone call from the originally dialed number, to one or more other phone numbers.
<b>Caller ID</b>	An option available through traditional phone services, or computer software. This option identifies the caller, and/or the phone number, to the person receiving the call.
<b>Caller ID Blocking</b>	An option, available through your local phone company, that protects your phone number from being identified by Caller ID.
<b>Cellular Phone</b>	A mobile telephone using a series of radio transmitters and computers for switching calls. The area served is divided into 'cells' and each cell is operated with a base station which forms the link between the customer's mobile phone and the switched network
<b>Computer</b>	An electronic device that stores information and performs pre-programmed functions, as commanded by it's user.
<b>Diverter Box</b>	An electronic device that is connected to a phone line and forwards calls to a pre-programmed phone number(s).
<b>Patching</b>	Transferring a phone call directly to a phonenumber volunteer. This service can be performed by an answering service operator, or by a computer.
<b>Pager</b>	An electronic device that receives a message, and/or phone number, from the person that dialed the pager number. This service may be provided by an answering service, paging service, or by a computer.
<b>TDD/TTY</b>	Telecommunications Device for the Deaf/Touch Teletype. Requires special equipment that allows



the deaf, or hard of hearing, to converse by typing on a special keyboard.

**Toll-Free Numbers**

A phone number that allows a caller to reach that number free of charge. The charges for each call are paid for by those who own the number.

**Voice Mail (Voice Mail Box)**

An electronic communications system that stores and routes voice messages interactively to the appropriate recipients..

### III - VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

#### Phoneline Volunteers

A phoneline volunteer is an NA member whose primary objective is to direct the potential newcomer to an NA meeting or direct questions about our fellowship to the appropriate subcommittee (refer to Addendum C).

The first NA member the caller will come in contact with is usually the phoneline volunteer. The response and attitude response, attitude, and language of a volunteer can have a lasting impression on the caller. This is a service position of great responsibility. Service of this type is a great responsibility.

Experience has shown that the most successful phoneline volunteers possess certain assets which are beneficial in the accomplishment of their responsibilities. These qualifications include:

- A suggested minimum of one year clean-time (however, this may vary from place to place)
- Appropriate training (e.g., group orientation session, personal orientation, etc.)
- A knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. (e.g., the only requirement...,our primary purpose...,never endorse related facilities..., nonprofessional..., no opinion on outside issues..., attraction rather than promotion..., anonymity..., etc.)
- The willingness to serve
- The willingness to give of personal time

Phoneline volunteers may receive calls from NA members, potential newcomers, family and friends of addicts, and other people interested in NA (professionals, students, and members of the media). Keeping a log of telephone calls received is a method by which we may evaluate the services that we provide. Prepare the Phoneline Log that can be used to account for all calls received during each shift (refer to Addendum D). This information should then be forwarded to the public information and/or phoneline sub-committee on a regular basis.

Upon receiving a call, the first thing to determine is whether the caller is an addict seeking help. Calls from potential newcomers are, of course, the most important calls received by a phoneline volunteer. The volunteer provides a brief introduction of the NA program and explains, in general, what the caller can expect at a meeting.

If the caller would like to talk to someone at length, he/she will be informed that another NA member (Twelfth-Step volunteer) can be contacted. The phoneline volunteer explains in general to the caller that all information is confidential, but some information is needed in order to help him/her (refer to Addendum I).

The phoneline volunteer also makes a note of any other pertinent information received from the caller in as short a time as possible. After hanging up, the volunteer should refer to the Twelfth-Step list and call a Twelfth-Step volunteer of the same gender and geographical area as the caller. The information gathered should be relayed directly to the Twelfth-Step volunteer as soon as possible.

A phonline volunteer will need to use good judgment regarding these calls. Never give out the name, address, or telephone number of any member of the NA Fellowship. Do not use last names, places of employment, etc.

NOTE: The phonline volunteer must be told if the Twelfth-Step volunteer is unable to return the call immediately. The addict seeking help is expecting a return call. The phonline volunteer must then call someone else to follow up on the call. If an area or region is using phonline and Twelfth-Step volunteers interchangeably, the phonline volunteer may be the person responsible for talking at length with the caller.

Calls from NA members are usually simple requests for meeting or event information. These should be answered quickly. Most members readily understand the need to keep the phonline open for other calls.

Calls from non-NA members, such as students, professionals, or community members, are usually requests for general information about NA. These also should be handled quickly. The caller can be advised that an informational packet is available, should your Area/Region practice mailing out information packets. Then, the volunteer takes the name and address of the caller and refers this information to the appropriate committee member (refer to Addendum C). Interested non-addicts can also be referred to open NA meetings.

If you are a volunteer, give callers requesting presentations, special meetings, literature, activities, etc., a brief description of NA, explaining then explain that these requests will be referred to the NA member designated to handle such calls. Never make these types of commitments on your own. The phonline volunteer takes the name, number, etc. of the caller, completes the Referral Form (refer to Addendum C) and passes it along accordingly.

## **Attracting and Keeping Phonline Volunteers**

### **Attracting Phonline Volunteers**

There are many ways to attract members to become phonline volunteers. They include volunteer sign-up sheets, flyers asking for volunteers, being host to learning days aimed at attracting new volunteers, volunteer celebrations, and asking qualified members one-on-one to volunteer.

Subcommittees use Phonline Volunteer Sign-up Sheets (refer to Addenda G & H) to attract new volunteers. Good results can be obtained by including a pen along with the form to encourage immediate action. Specific information may be requested (e.g., name, telephone number, address, clean-time, days and time available, etc.) as deemed necessary by your subcommittee. It is necessary to develop a procedure to insure the timely collection and use of all completed sign-up sheets. To achieve the best results, a subcommittee member should contact the volunteer. During such contact, the volunteer should be informed of a scheduled orientation session. Refer to Addendum H or the World Service Office for additional examples. Following are some ways to attract new volunteers :

Flyers asking for volunteers-These can be used to make announcements at meetings or can be posted where NA meetings take place. Make sure the flyers are tasteful and attractive. In

some cases permission must be obtained before displaying such a flyer. Refer to Addendum E or the World Service Office for additional examples.

**Learning days-** These can be geared toward the future volunteer and made to be fun and interesting. Current phonline volunteers can act as speakers sharing on what it is like to take calls, why they volunteer, and the rewards of volunteering. The section on Common Phonline Calls and the Flow Chart (refer to Addendum A) can be used as tools in illustrating what it is like to answer telephones. Be creative!

**Volunteer celebration-**These can be as simple as a potluck dinner, an informal get-together such as a picnic, or an elaborate fellowship activity. It can be an evening that starts with a speaker meeting, where the theme is phonline volunteering, followed by a dance or another fun activity. An important point needs to be made: don't allow the occasion to be exclusively for current volunteers. Make it obvious that it is for the entire fellowship by inviting all past, present, and future phonline volunteers.

There are well qualified members who do not become phonline volunteers for one reason or another: wanting to serve in other areas of the Fellowship, fear, thinking they don't have anything to offer, procrastination, etc. Sometimes all it takes is a gentle nudge after a meeting. However, do not put people on the spot by asking them in front of others. They might be offended or embarrassed to say no, even if they have a perfectly good reason for not volunteering at the time. Speak to potential volunteers in private.

This is an excellent time to mention two methods to avoid; guilt and intimidation. They do more harm than good, and can turn off a prospective volunteer. (Employing these methods is counterproductive and should never be used for any reason). However, sharing with the potential volunteer one on one after a meeting can be an effective method of offering general information about this type of service, providing encouragement, alleviating fears, answering questions and reassuring the potential volunteer that they may have something to offer. We need to remember that volunteering is voluntary. It is not an obligation or a compulsory part of being an NA member. Volunteering is something that we have found benefits us in our recovery from addiction. It is an honor to serve, but it is up to the individuals to decide how or if they will be of service.

The best way to get volunteers is to remember the spirit of NA's Eleventh Tradition in all of our efforts. The principle of attraction rather than promotion serves us well. The key word here is attraction. We do not need to use promotion to obtain volunteers. Complaining about service in NA, and or trying to play the martyr, is no way to attract volunteers. If we share the positive features when we talk about our experiences as volunteers, it is much more likely we will attract others.

#### **Keeping Phonline Volunteers**

There are many different ways to attract phonline volunteers. However, keeping these volunteers can be equally hard to accomplish.

Volunteers sign up to be a part of phonline operations. The most frequent complaint we hear is, "Why don't I get calls from the addict seeking help?" A solution to helping the volunteers

feel needed is to keep them actively involved. Suggest their involvement in other areas of phoneline service. Specifically, give the volunteer a particular job to do.

Some examples are as follows:

<b>Phoneline/Twelfth-Step volunteer list coordinator</b>	Distributes, collects, and organizes the volunteer lists. This person is the initial contact for the volunteer providing services to the subcommittee.
<b>Phoneline flyer coordinator</b>	Produces and distributes phoneline flyers to the groups and areas.
<b>Orientation coordinator</b>	Schedules group or individual orientation sessions for new volunteers.
<b>Orientation presenter</b>	Conducts orientation of phoneline and Twelfth-Step volunteers and sometimes to the professional answering service operators.
<b>Orientation package coordinator</b>	Copies and assembles orientation packages used in orientation sessions.
<b>Communications coordinator</b>	Responsible for the monthly mailings to the volunteers.
<b>Celebration coordinator</b>	Organizes volunteer celebration functions for attendance by past, present, and future volunteers (2-3 times per year).
<b>Poster distribution liaison</b>	Acts as liaison between public information and phoneline subcommittees in the acquisition of volunteers to distribute NA phoneline posters.
<b>Meeting list liaison</b>	Acts as liaison between phoneline, public information, and literature subcommittees in the coordination of the local meeting list, its production, and its distribution.
<b>Answering service liaison</b>	Acts as liaison between phoneline subcommittee and the professional answering service. Also responsible for keeping their information packages up-to-date.
<b>Special abilities coordinator</b>	Non-English, American Sign Language, Additional Needs, etc.
<b>P.I. Liaison</b>	Acts as a communications link between the P.I. and Phoneline Committees.

NOTE: These tasks may will take more than one individual's attention.

## **Special Considerations for Volunteers**

An important point needs to be made. Not all volunteers can or want to attend subcommittee meetings. However, this should not exclude them from being of service within the subcommittee. Regular communication with a participating subcommittee member will help to coordinate phonline activities.

During the subcommittee meetings, it is important to keep in mind that each person's ideas are worthy of attention. Consider the merits and allow active participation of all those present

Service work is often a thankless job. It is essential to remember that these are volunteer positions. Recognition of the accomplishments by our volunteers validates their feelings of worthiness and their efforts to contribute toward the subcommittee's common goal. We need to ensure that we take the time to recognize and thank our volunteers personally and individually.

### **Twelfth-Step Volunteers**

The Twelfth-Step volunteer is the person who will talk at length to the potential newcomer about NA, either on the telephone or in person.

Experience has shown that the most successful Twelfth-Step volunteers possess certain assets which are beneficial in the accomplishment of their responsibilities. These qualities include:

- A suggested minimum of one year clean time (however, this may vary from place to place)
- Appropriate training (e.g., group orientation session, personal orientation, etc.)
- A knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous (e.g., The only requirement . . ., our primary purpose..., never endorse related facilities..., nonprofessional..., no opinion on outside issues..., attraction rather than promotion..., anonymity..., etc.)
- The willingness to serve
- The willingness to give of personal time

After the Twelfth-Step volunteer receives some general information from the phonline volunteer, the Twelfth-Step volunteer calls the addict as soon as possible.

NOTE: If an area or region is using phonline and Twelfth-Step volunteers interchangeably, the phonline volunteer may be the person responsible for talking at length with the caller.

The Twelfth-Step volunteer spends time talking to the caller about recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. It may be beneficial to share one's own personal experience, strength, and hope. The volunteer will then offer information about meetings, their location and time. If the caller is willing, the volunteer offers to meet him/her or arranges to have another Twelfth-Step volunteer meet him/her at a meeting.

### **Things to Consider**

Going personally to meet the caller may have the potential for significant safety problems. The following points should be considered before making a Twelfth-Step call in person.

- Has the caller used today?
- Does it sound safe to meet the caller? Whenever possible, encourage the caller to meet you at an NA meeting.
- Before meeting with the caller, let them know you have to find another volunteer to accompany you. Never go alone. Never go alone!
- Make sure at least one of the Twelfth-Step volunteers is the same gender as the caller.
- Try to meet in a neutral, public location (e.g., restaurant, etc.). Meeting a newcomer in your home or in their home is an unnecessary risk. Inform the caller as to the specific time you will arrive, and meet them out front. If meeting or picking up the addict at their home is unavoidable, consider the circumstances and take precautions, remembering personal safety.
- Ensure that all arrangements for meeting the caller are accurate and understood by both parties.
- Upon arranging to meet the caller, it is suggested that the volunteer bring a current meeting list, some NA pamphlets, and a White Booklet.
- Tell someone where you are going, and call them when you get there.
- Don't stop anywhere on the way to a meeting, especially at the suggestion of the newcomer.
- The NA program has one must that applies to everyone: no drugs or paraphernalia in our possession. It is important that the Twelfth-Step volunteer tries to ensure that the newcomer follows this requirement. This is for the protection of the Twelfth-Step volunteer, the fellowship, and its groups.

Once an addict has been taken to a meeting, the Twelfth-Step volunteer may help the addict obtain telephone numbers and transportation to other meetings.

NOTE: If the addict requires medical attention, refer to the section on Handling Crisis Calls.

If the addict begins recovery in a hospital or a treatment center, Twelfth-Step volunteers can call regularly to let the addict know that members of NA care. When the Twelfth-Step volunteer visits, it is a good idea to bring along some NA literature to leave for the addict, such as An Introductory Guide To Narcotics Anonymous.

### **Do's and Don'ts - Phoneline and Twelfth-Step Volunteers**

#### **Do**

- Keep the necessary materials (e.g. White Booklet, meeting list, NA pamphlets, Twelfth-Step List, and Phoneline Log) close to the telephone, in order to avoid delay and confusion.

- Always identify yourself with your first name only and state that you are an addict.
- Find out what the caller needs by asking questions and listening to the answers.
- When returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as an addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous.
- Direct and refer calls promptly when necessary.
- Keep a log of all the calls you answer, direct, or refer.
- Always follow up on all calls you direct or refer to another part of the Committee.
- Communicate all your activities to the Phoneline Coordinator or Committee Chairperson.
- Remember to use the Twelfth-Step List.
- Know and apply the Traditions in all your interactions with callers.
- Always give accurate information about our Fellowship.
- Respond to all calls promptly.
- Execute good sense and judgement in all your interactions with callers.
- Keep the calls as brief as possible. We are not counselors or therapists.
- Remember to encourage others to become volunteers.
- Maintain the sign-up sheets, posters, and other forms of flyers that propagate our efforts.
- Perform orientations regularly and keep the Fellowship informed of such events.
- Always get permission to distribute, hang or post flyers from the group(s) where the distribution is taking place.
- Practice creativity in all aspects of providing and supporting a Phoneline and Twelfth-Step Services.
- Keep the lines of communication open at all times within the Phoneline Committee.
- When performing Twelfth-Step calls, let someone outside the execution of the call know what, where and when is happening.
- Exercise safety in performing Twelfth Step work.

#### **Do Not**

- In no way` argue with the caller.
- Don't try to respond to questions that you may not be qualified to answer. Use your emergency referral list where applicable.
- At no time should you ever give out the name, address, or phone number of any NA member.
- Never give out information about who was at an NA meeting (e.g., to police officers, probation officers, or significant others). However, general information may be given about NA's make-up (variance in size of meeting, NA open to all age groups, etc.).
- Don't glorify your active addiction or your recovery; this is not about you, it's about we.
- NEVER MEET ANYONE ALONE!
- Don't be rude, short, disrespectful, or use any foul language or profanity.



- Never guess the answer to a question. If you do not know, tell the caller you do not know.
- In no way commit to providing literature, presentations, or any other services without first consulting with the Committee or the appropriate member of the Committee.
- Don't demean anyone because they do not wish to serve in this arena of service.
- Never perform a Twelfth-Step call without at least one member of the same gender as the Twelfth-Step recipient.
- Never say that you will do something and not do it.
- Never stop anywhere at the request of the Twelfth-Step recipient.
- At no time allow someone with drugs or paraphernalia into your car.

## **IV - TRAINING and ORIENTATION**

### **Volunteer Orientation for Phonenumber & Twelfth-Step Volunteers**

It is essential that volunteers in these two vital areas have some sort of training or orientation. The ability to perform these services is not inherent, it is acquired. It is the responsibility of our subcommittee to help volunteers acquire the skills needed to do what we ask of them.

The easiest way to do this is to host an orientation on the subject. It may be best to have both types of volunteers together simultaneously for the orientation, since they rely on each other so often. Each type of volunteer may then hear what is important to the other and see how much they affect each other in the performance of their duties. The following outline can be used to conduct the orientation.

#### **Orientation Outline**

- I. Introduction
- II. Review of orientation package
- III. Review of A Guide to Phonenumber Service
  - A. General information for volunteers define and explain the role of phonenumber and Twelfth-Step volunteers, type of phonenumber, and the type of service used by your subcommittee.
  - B. Review of necessary forms to be completed.
- IV. Review of flow chart and common phonenumber calls.
  - A. Role-Playing Phonenumber volunteers:  
Set up mock telephone calls using two chairs, positioned back-to-back. Simulate common phone calls received by the volunteers.
  - B. Role-Playing Twelfth-Step volunteers:  
Review and discuss highlights of the section Twelfth-Step Process, found in A Guide to Phonenumber Service. Set up mock contacts between volunteers and addicts over the telephone and in person. Pay additional attention to the section Things to Consider, before meeting the addict in person.
5. Volunteer sign-up
  - a) Discuss particular time slots for answering the phonelines.
  - b) Discuss other volunteer opportunities available within the subcommittee.

NOTE: It is important to allow for questions and answers during various sections of this orientation.

### **Volunteer Orientation Package**

A Guide to Phoneline Service -- This can be excerpts from NA conference-approved literature or a package created by your local subcommittee.

White Booklet -- This is a helpful resource guide when answering certain questions and explaining what NA is to a caller.

Meeting lists -- Most of the calls received will be requests for meeting locations and times.

Phoneline volunteer lists -- This is a listing of the members currently involved in phoneline service.

Twelfth-Step volunteer lists -- This is a listing of all the members currently involved in Twelfth-Step service.

Current volunteer schedule -- This is beneficial for the volunteer to have in case of schedule changes, and to effectively pass along the necessary information to the next volunteer (refer to Addendum F).

Phoneline log sheets -- These are to be completed by all phoneline volunteers so that we may evaluate the services we provide (refer to Addendum D).

Local Newsletter/Activities sheet -- This will keep the volunteer up-to-date with meeting changes, upcoming subcommittee meetings, and activities.

Twelfth-Step Referral Form -- Complete this form when referring the caller to a Twelfth-Step volunteer (refer to Addendum I).

Referral Form -- Complete this form when referring information/requests to the appropriate NA member (refer to Addendum C).

### **Orientation of the Professional Answering Service Personnel**

Some phonelines currently in existence employ the assistance of a professional answering service. The particular format of the phonelines and the specific professional answering services contracted will vary from area to area. Just as we have seen the necessity to train our phoneline and Twelfth-Step volunteers, it is equally critical that we provide orientation for the professional answering service personnel.

Ideally, we would like to train the professional answering service operators in person. However, experience has shown that this is not always possible. Therefore, your subcommittee must develop an instructional package that clearly defines the procedures, policies, and guidelines for your phoneline operations. This package also contains special language to be used by the operator, meeting list, activity list, a statement regarding anonymity, and a list/schedule of volunteers to be contacted. Most importantly, keep it simple. When we provide long, drawn out explanations and guidelines, they are often ignored. If an orientation can be scheduled, the same orientation package may be used for the presentation.

Consistent communication between the professional answering service and the subcommittee will help insure the adherence to the procedures and practices of your subcommittee's phoneline operations.

## Learning Days

Learning days are held primarily to provide a forum in which experience in all aspects of phoneline work can be shared. Learning days are, for the most part, weekend-long events, with a broad spectrum of topics covered in meetings which are held throughout each day.

Why should we have a learning day? The purpose of a phoneline learning day is to provide a forum in which members involved with phonelines can share their challenges, innovations, and solutions with one another. Many areas have the same concerns which are specific to phoneline committees, such as how to train volunteers, logging calls, referrals to other organizations, and how to educate the members in their respective areas about the importance of the Twelve Traditions, maintaining anonymity, and a variety of other important issues.

Learning days also provide an opportunity for area phoneline committees and individual members to give and receive information. Any new materials being used by an area can be shared with others at these events. Whatever a committee or an individual learns about carrying the message more effectively can be passed on.

Who plans the event? Usually an area phoneline committee, with the support and coordination of the region, actually hosts the event. In some cases, the area phoneline committee will do all of the actual planning. Other times, a special ad hoc committee will be formed with members from both the area(s) and the region(s). In the case of a multi-regional event, participation should be sought from all the regions involved. Care should be taken to select members who are not responsible to maintain vital services, such as answering the local helpline or chairing recovery meetings, while the event is taking place.

Once the planning committee is formed or an area committee is selected to host the event, the actual work can get under way. Several decisions need to be made immediately, such as the dates of the event, what the program will include, and how much it will cost.

NOTE: Many phoneline learning days are held as a part of an area or regional PI learning day.

Who pays for the event? In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, the money to initiate this project will come from the sponsoring areas or regions. A projected budget should be drawn up as soon possible to determine a registration fee. While small amounts of money may be raised through pre-registration, it is hoped that fund-raising will not become the primary focus of the event. The goal is for the event to be self-supporting, which can be attained through careful planning. Your budget should include line items for printing, postage, rent, phone calls, and refreshments. You may also wish to consider adding line items for speaker travel, and lodging and merchandise, keeping in mind the size of the event.

When should we hold our learning days? It is very important to plan the event well in advance to allow ample time for committee work assignments, site selection, program development, speaker selection, printing of materials, and announcement of the event. It is suggested that at least six months be allowed for a multi-regional learning day. For a regional learning day, three to six months is sufficient. For an area event, one to two months is appropriate.

Selecting the date the learning days will take place can be a make or break factor in the success of your event. It is important that the event does not conflict with other major NA events, such as your regional convention. Non-holiday weekends are considered a good choice.

Where should we hold our learning days? Possible sites include hotels, college campuses, community centers, campgrounds, or any place that has sufficient meeting rooms and can accommodate your needs. Your committee will need to determine specific criteria including the number and size of meeting rooms, a registration area, facilities for preparing and serving refreshments, nearby lodging and restaurants, and space for an entertainment function, if one is to be included in your program.

Who should we invite? Absolutely everyone! As with all successful events, the more members in attendance, the more enriching the experience will be for all. As soon as you have decided on dates for the event, the WSO PI coordinator should be notified so that your event can be announced in all of the fellowship's publications. At this time, the WSC PI Committee should also be notified. The WSC PI Chairperson or your regional chairperson should be able to provide you with address lists for trusted servants in the surrounding areas so that they may also be invited. It is suggested that pre-registration flyers be mailed at intervals to surrounding areas and regions right up to the date of the event.

How much structure is required and under what circumstances? When discussing the theme and program, the size and duration of the event will most likely become the deciding factors. For a multi-regional learning day, it is suggested that the event be held over a weekend. Multi-regional learning days can be broad-based in focus and include meetings on several topics. The possibilities for a weekend-long event are virtually unlimited. Meetings can be held simultaneously in order to give those in attendance a choice of which topic they are most interested in, or you may choose to have one meeting at a time so that those in attendance can attend all of the discussions. Most weekend-long events include a recovery meeting along with some sort of entertainment.

For regional or area learning days, a day-long event is suitable. In addition, it is wise to narrow the focus of the event to two or three topical issues in phonelines. Consecutive meetings are the preferred format for a day-long event.

Many variations exist for the formats of the individual meetings. The style you choose for the meetings will depend on the availability of speakers, the issues that are of current interest in phonelines, and of course, the size of your event. You may choose to have mock presentations for answering services, skits, sharing sessions, mock phone calls, presentations, speaking rehearsals, or anything else your committee feels will stimulate discussion and a broader understanding of our Twelve Traditions as they apply to PI work. It is suggested that lecture type meetings be avoided and full audience participation be encouraged. If you plan to include speaker presentations, it is a good idea to allow plenty of time for those in attendance to ask questions and share experience. It is important that we provide a forum at all learning days in which all members can share this valuable experience with one another.

## Sample Program for a Regional or Multi-regional Learning Day

### Friday

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Registration begins (location)
8:00 - 10:00 p.m.	Kick-off meeting

### Saturday

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Reception and registration
9:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Phoneline start-up
9:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Attracting and keeping volunteers
11:00 - 12:30 p.m.	Phoneline and Twelfth-Step volunteer cooperation
11:00 - 12:30 p.m.	Do's and Don'ts & role playing
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Lunch break
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Role playing
4:40 - 6:00 p.m.	Open forum
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Dinner break
8:00 - 12:00 a.m.	Recovery meeting followed by a dance

### Sunday

10:00 - 12:00 p.m.	WSC PI panel
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Closing meeting

The preceding is only a sample. Topics will vary from time to time and place to place. The only requirement is that the topics address the needs of the participants involved.

## V - COMMON PHONELINE CALLS

The following section illustrates several types of calls commonly received by phonerline volunteers. These outlines are not meant to be a script for phonerline calls. Instead, they are offered as examples of appropriate responses in various situations.

On the following pages, possible responses appear in italics. Remember that we carry the message of recovery to the caller, when we express that:

- Our primary objective is to get the addict to a meeting
- The program works
- We were once suffering ourselves
- We care and are willing to help
- The Value of one addict helping another

Our tone of voice and delivery speed are just as important as the words we use. We acknowledge what the caller is saying and feeling. Do not use judgmental words or preach to the caller.

It is important to keep in mind that calls may not follow exactly the dialogue detailed in this section. However, familiarity with this information will make it easier to respond appropriately and to serve within the spirit of the Twelve Traditions of NA.

### **Fellowship Matter/Request for Information**

Give a brief description of NA to callers requesting presentations, special meetings, literature, activities, etc. The volunteer also explains that these requests will be referred to the NA member designated to handle such calls. Never make these types of commitments on your own. The phonerline volunteer takes the name, number, etc. of the caller, completes the Referral Form and passes it along accordingly (refer to the Addendum C).

In the event that a member of the media contacts the phonerline, we must be ready to respond appropriately. It is important to request help from the public information service members in your area, region, or at the world level (refer to A Guide To Public Information for the PI contingency plan).

(See Addenda Phonerline Flow Chart #1)

### **Personal Calls**

If the caller wants to meet with or talk to a specific individual in NA, politely tell them, "It is our policy that we cannot accept personal messages, and I cannot give out the telephone number of anyone who may or may not be in the fellowship." Keep in mind that the anonymity of our members is very important, and we must never acknowledge anyone's membership in our fellowship, either directly or indirectly.

### **Talking to a Friend or Family Member**

Crisis Calls-Although most of the calls taken by the phonerline volunteer are routine in nature, occasionally a crisis call may arise. Always take these calls seriously. When the volunteer has established that a caller is in a crisis, the volunteer can quickly refer the caller to the appropriate telephone number from the Community Service Referral List (refer to Addendum B). Make sure the person writes the number down, then say, "when the crisis passes, give our telephone number to your

loved one and suggest he/she call NA to hear about recovery from drug addiction." Invite the person to an open meeting to experience our fellowship firsthand, many of these people are also addicted.

### **Does The Addict Want Help?**

Find out if the addict wants to stop using. If the answer is yes and he/she would like to hear about recovery from drug addiction, talk to them (see the "Talking to an Addict" section).

If the addict doesn't want to stop using or come to the telephone, tell the caller, "We cannot do anything for your loved one until they want to stop using-the addict must want help. There are however, programs for loved ones of addicts. I can tell you how to contact one if you would like." NOTE:-Always explain briefly the principle of our Sixth Tradition. "Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with, nor recommends any other organization, institution, emergency service, agency, or program, in the spirit of cooperation not affiliation. We simply provide alternate telephone numbers to callers who need services other than NA. " Answer questions about NA politely, but don't tie up the telephone for long, "We need to clear the line now in case an addict is trying to call us. Feel free to attend an open meeting if you would like to find out more about NA. Your loved one may wish to attend with you. "

NOTE: For additional information, refer to the "How to Handle Special Calls" section.

### **Talking to an Addict**

Listen and respond to the caller. A suffering addict probably will indicate that he/she wants information or wants help.

*(See Addenda Phoneline Flow Chart #2)*

### **Addict Wants Information About NA**

Answer the caller's questions. If you sense that the caller wants more, ask, "Do you have any more questions about Narcotics Anonymous? " After the caller has asked all of his/her questions, and if you sense that the caller wants to continue the conversation, then respond, "It sounds like you are really hurting. I know the desperation that you must be feeling. Do you want help to quit using drugs?" The addict will indicate if he/she wants help.

### **Addict Interested-May Be Ready For Help: NO**

Conclude the call by saying, "When you are ready, we are here to help you. Our program works for those who want to quit using. Always remember that there is a way out. "

### **Addict Interested-May Be Ready For Help: YES**

If the caller wants help that is beyond the scope of services that NA can provide (e.g., detox, treatment information, etc.), furnish one or more telephone numbers from the Community Service Referral List (refer to Addendum B). Be familiar with the "How to Handle Special Calls" section. Do not hang up until you are fairly sure you have done all you can for this caller. If it is not a crisis call, listen to the caller and express your concern.

### **Addict Wants To Stop Using Or Is Not Sure**

Respond empathetically. Share a little about what it was like, what happened, and what it is like today. You might sum it up by saying, "There was a time in my life that I thought I'd never be able to quit using drugs. However, since I found NA I haven't had to use. Would you like to go to an NA meeting?" or "Would you like to talk at length to another member of NA ? "



### **Contact A Twelfth-Step Volunteer**

If the caller wants to talk at length, proceed to the heading within this section entitled, "Twelfth-Step Process." (If applicable)

### **Refer Addict To A Meeting**

Give the caller information (time, location, and directions if needed) about the next available meeting. Take a few moments and explain to the caller what he/she can expect at a meeting. Include the structure/format of the meeting (e.g., speaker, topic discussion, Basic Text study, etc.). It is helpful to go into some detail to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Conclude the call by saying, "To get the most out of the meeting, try to get there a few minutes early. If you need further help, give us a call again. You've done the right thing by calling us. I will/won't be at that meeting- I'm looking forward to meeting you. "

### **Addict Won't Go To A Meeting**

Ask them, "Why not?" The following are examples of ways to respond to excuses for not going to a meeting. The addict's questions and statements may sound like he/she is not ready yet, but remember that the caller has already expressed that he/she needs help. Our intention is to help the caller focus on the solutions, rather than the problems keeping him/her from attending NA meetings.

If the caller is on guard, "What happens at a meeting?" respond, "We are a group of clean addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. Addicts share about what it was like and what life is like today. You aren't required to do or say anything."

If the caller presents obstacles, "My car doesn't work, etc. " respond, "Does this problem have a solution? " or "I might be able to find you a ride to a meeting. "

If the caller uses his/her children for an excuse, "I don't have anyone to take care of my children, " respond, "If you have to, you can bring them to an open meeting. If they are school age, you can attend daytime meetings. "

If the caller says they are too scared respond, "You're not alone. During my first meeting I felt so self-conscious I was afraid to say anything. You don't need to worry, we're all pretty friendly. " Try to arrange for a Twelfth-Step volunteer to meet them at the meeting. If the caller says they are still using, "I can't stay clean long enough to go to a meeting, " respond, "If you want to stop using, then you are welcome. We ask that you not have any drugs or paraphernalia with you during the meeting. "

If the caller says they are too hopeless, "It won't work for me. I'm too far gone," respond, "I felt that way too, however, with the help of NA, I have a choice. I don't have to use today. If the caller has other excuses, "I can't go because: I have family or work obligations; my wife/husband doesn't approve; etc. " respond, "It sounds like if you don't get help you may not be able to keep your job, family, etc. "

After discussing the caller's reasons for not going to a meeting and some possible solutions, ask the caller, "Do you want to go to a meeting or would you like to talk at length with someone else about NA?" For a response refer to the appropriate heading within this section.

(See Addenda Phonline Flow Chart #3)

### **The Twelfth-Step Process**

The phonline volunteer briefly tells the caller what the Twelfth-Step call is about, "There are recovering addicts in the Fellowship of NA who will talk with you at length. I have to contact one of them who will then call you back. " Complete the Twelfth-Step Referral Form (refer to Addendum 1). "May I have your first name and telephone number, etc. Stay by your telephone and 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 them the information as collected.

If you have called all the Twelfth-Step volunteers who are the same gender as the caller and have not found one available, call the addict back and respond, 'V am unable to reach anyone right now. Would you like to talk with me for awhile, or do you want someone to call you in a few hours to talk with you? "

If the caller wants to keep talking, listen and express your concern. Conclude the call by stating, "I'll keep trying to reach someone who can call you as soon as possible. Again, you did the right thing by calling us. If you need more help, call us back. " Keep trying to find a Twelfth-Step volunteer available to return the call to this person. If by the end of your shift you haven't found someone to return the call, give the information to the phoneline volunteer about to begin their shift. They in turn, will continue to attempt to find a Twelfth-Step volunteer available to return the call.

### **How to Handle Special Calls**

A Narcotics Anonymous phoneline is strictly for dispensing information about the NA Fellowship, NA meetings, and recovery. The volunteer must always remember that they are only a recovering addict sharing their experience, strength, and hope. As volunteers, we are not professional crisis counselors, doctors, or psychologists, etc., and do not have the right to give professional advice. Callers with issues that, in the volunteer's opinion, are beyond the boundaries of Narcotics Anonymous should be quickly and politely given an appropriate referral number from the Community Service Referral List (refer to Addendum B). Before providing any other referral number, always explain that Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with, nor recommends, any other organizations, institutions, emergency services, agencies, or programs. We simply provide alternate telephone numbers for those callers who need services other than NA. Provide phoneline volunteers with the Community Service Referral List (refer to Addendum B) for the special calls they may encounter.

#### **Handling Crisis Calls**

Although most of the calls taken by the phoneline volunteer are routine in nature, occasionally a crisis call may arise. Always take these calls seriously. When the volunteer has established that a caller is in a crisis, the volunteer can quickly refer the caller to the appropriate telephone number from the Community Service Referral List (refer to Addendum B). Go next door and call, if no answer, O.D., suicide, etc. Stay on line.

(See Addenda Phoneline Flow Chart #4)

#### **Calls From Friends And Family Members**

Many calls come from family members or friends who are concerned with the welfare of the person who is using drugs. We must remember that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. If the addict is there and willing to talk with the volunteer, great; if not, suggest that the family member attend an open meeting to find out more about Narcotics Anonymous. It can be suggested that the caller bring along the addict who is still suffering. Second, the family member can be asked to give the phoneline number to that individual. Family members often want us to talk to an addict who is unwilling to do anything about his/her problem or they want us to call them personally. We cannot do this. Tell them that the addict needs to call us or be willing to get on the telephone. We can only help someone who is willing to help themselves. If family members persist in telling us how they are feeling, refer them to the appropriate telephone number(s) from the Community Service Referral List (refer to Addendum B). Remember to treat the family member or friend with kindness and the utmost

patience, they may be the one with the drug problem. Many addicts have come to the program after calling for someone else.

**HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT CALLS**

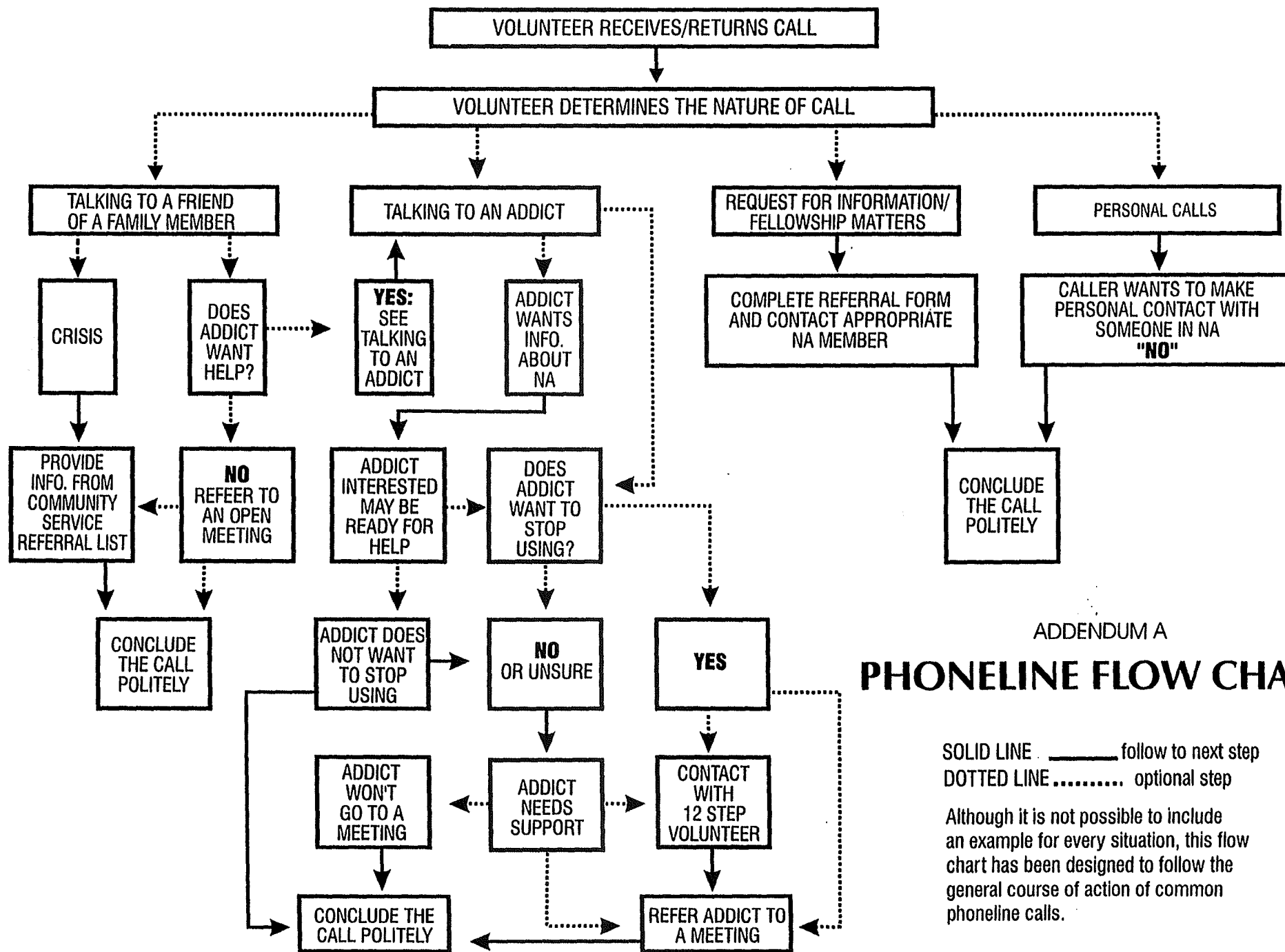
- "I'm looking for someone in the NA fellowship who I used to date, do you know where I can find them?"
- Heavy breathing, strange noises, several calls in a row.
- "Either talk to me or I'm going to kill myself" (judgement call talk to them or refer to local emergency services or both)
- "How long does (certain types of drugs) stay in your system."
- "Someone is poisoning my food with drugs, what should I do?"
- "How can I save someone from doing drugs?"
- "I need a ride to a meeting, can someone pick me up?" (thought NA was a taxi service)
- "Someone is following me and watching me, what should I do?"
- "How do I keep drugs from showing up on my drug test."
- "If I use this drug what will happen?"
- Newspaper reporter who called several times who's trying to get an interview and insistent upon getting information on the specific drugs the phone line person has used in the past.
- Person calls in the middle of the night and wants to talk all night.
- Family members calls in wanting someone to come and get their son and help him.
- Caller wants help and wants to be directed to a common needs meeting.
- Caller is being physically abused at the time of the call.
- Addict calls to tell you they took an over dose.

## **VI - ADDENDA**

This section contains lists and forms that your subcommittee might find useful. Additional examples may also be acquired through the World Service Office. We encourage your subcommittee to develop the materials that specifically meet your needs.

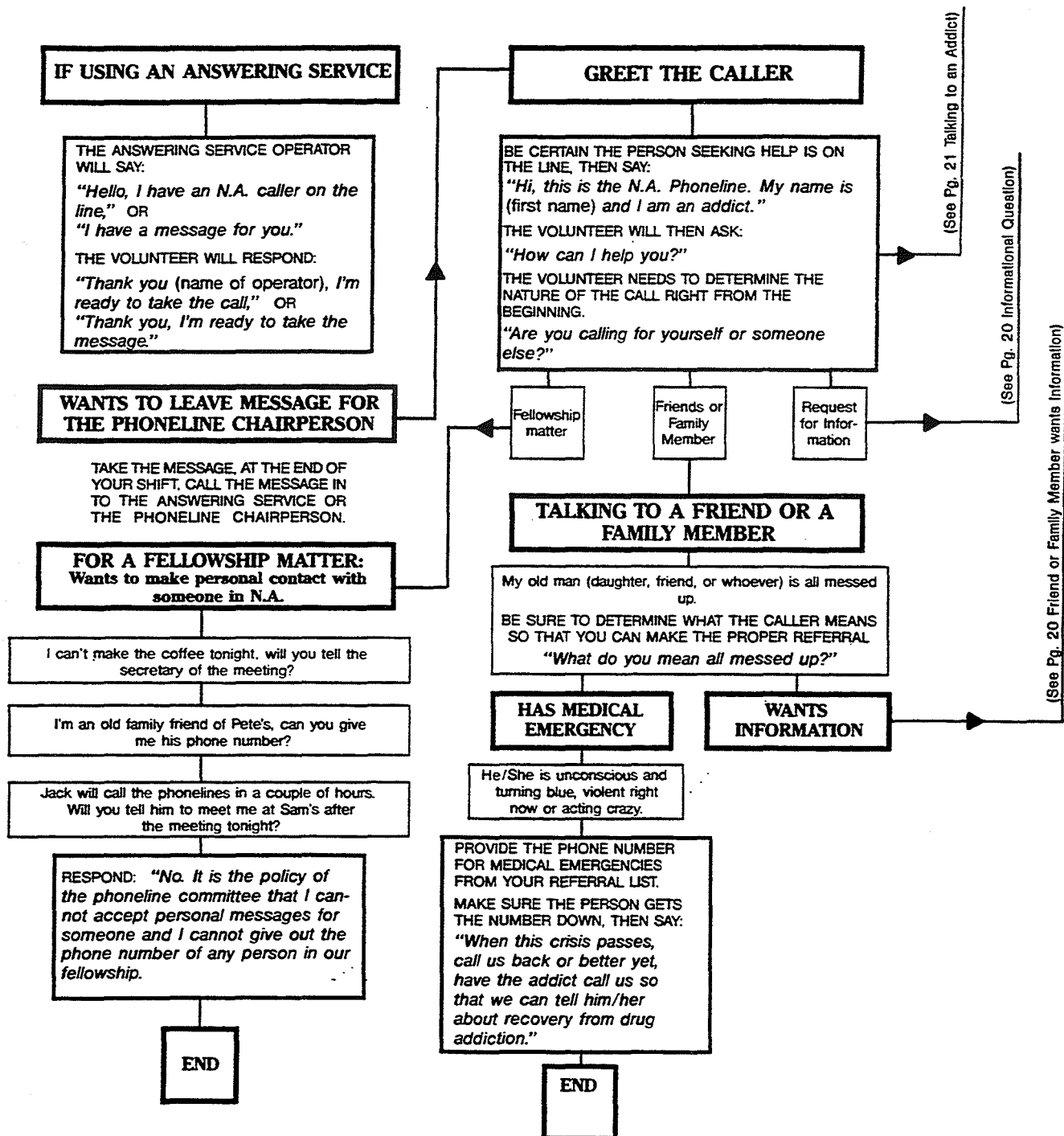
PHONELINE FLOW CHARTS  
COMMUNITY SERVICE REFERRAL LISTS  
REFERRAL FORM  
PHONELINE LOG  
PHONELINE VOLUNTEER FLYER  
PHONELINE VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE  
PHONELINE VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET I  
PHONELINE VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET 2  
TWELFTH-STEP REFERRAL FORM  
VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION OUTLINES

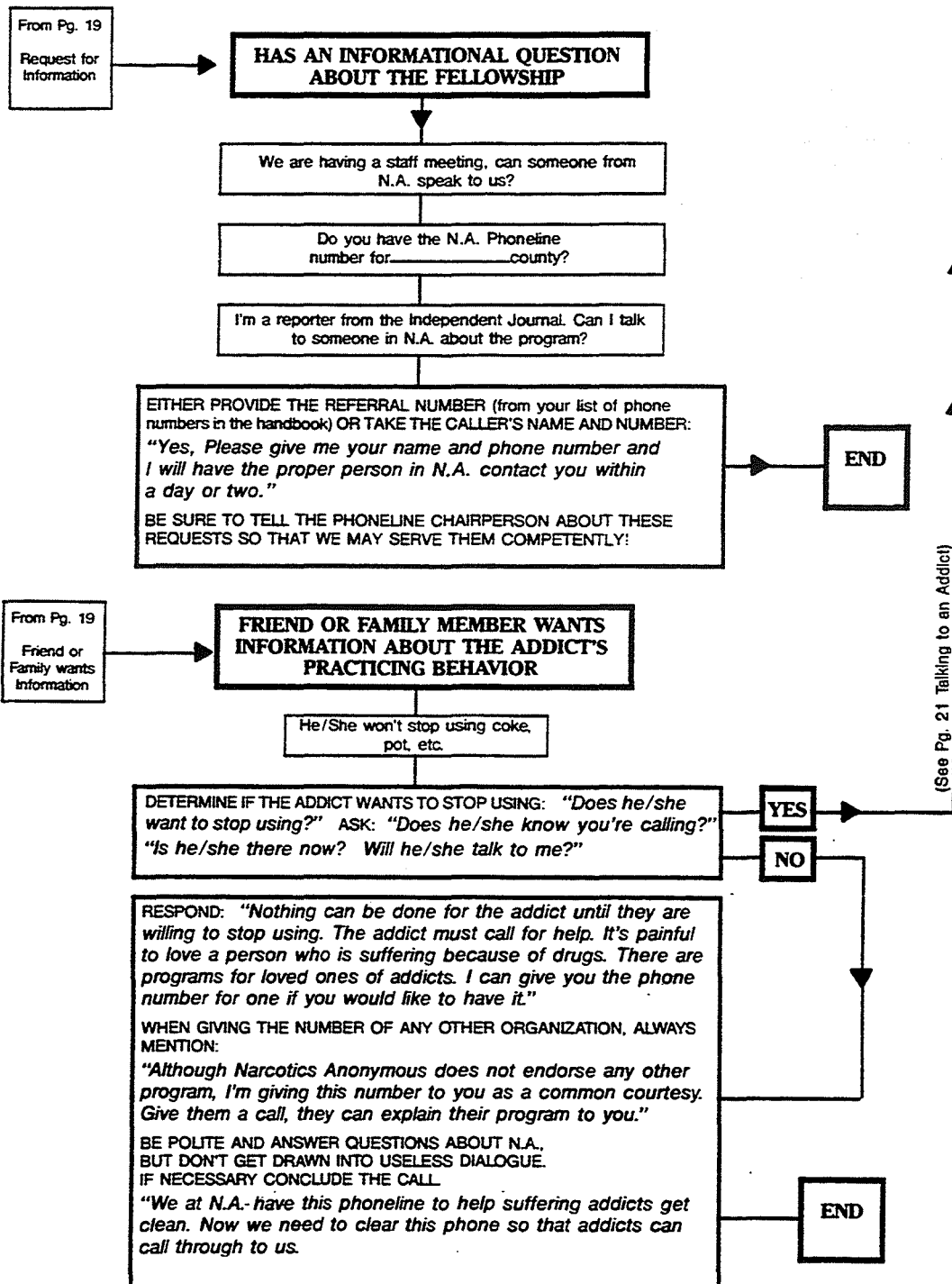
NOTE: Please send a copy of any materials created to the World Service Office so that others may benefit from your subcommittee's experience.

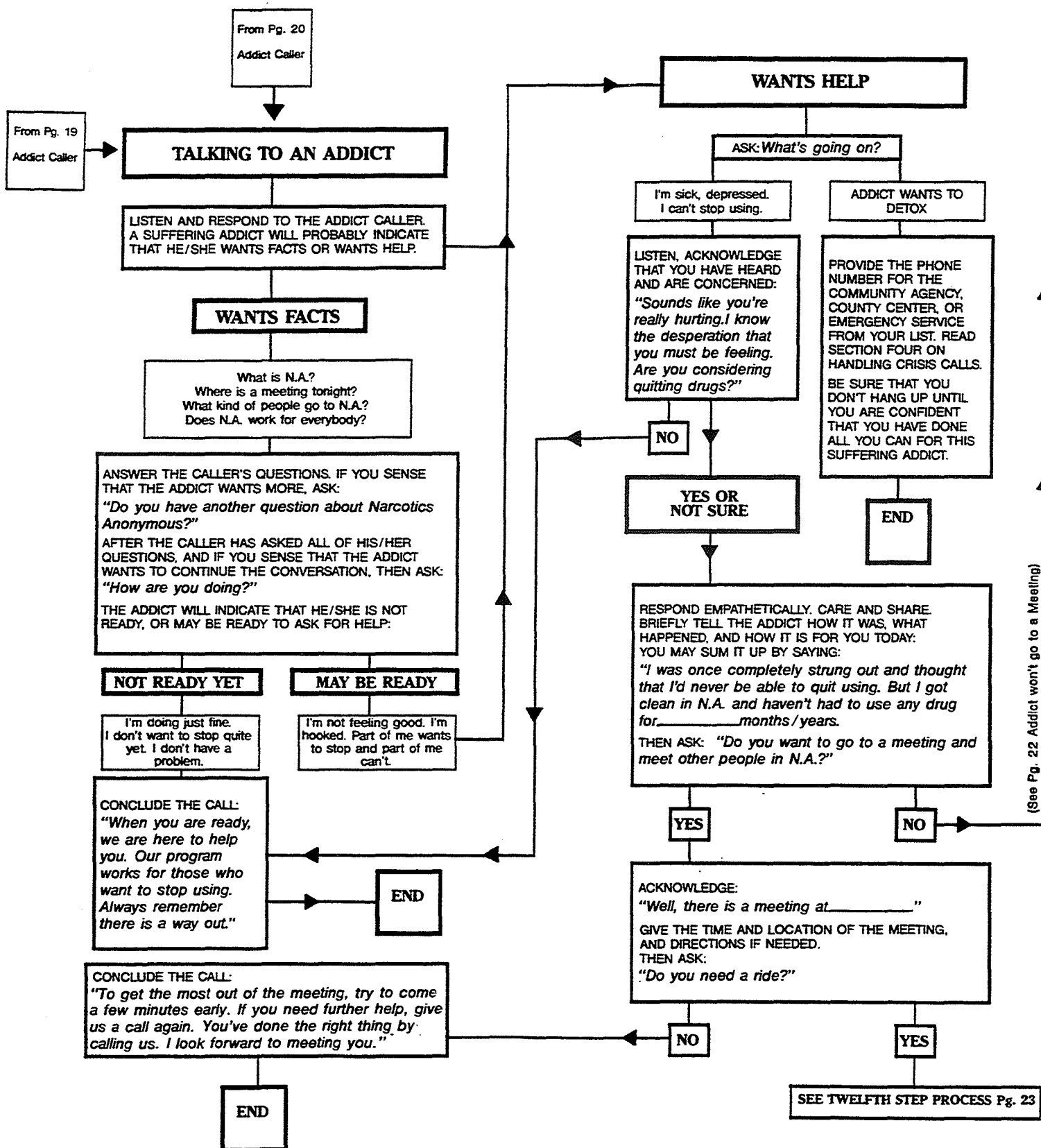


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**N.A. PHONELINE FLOWCHART**

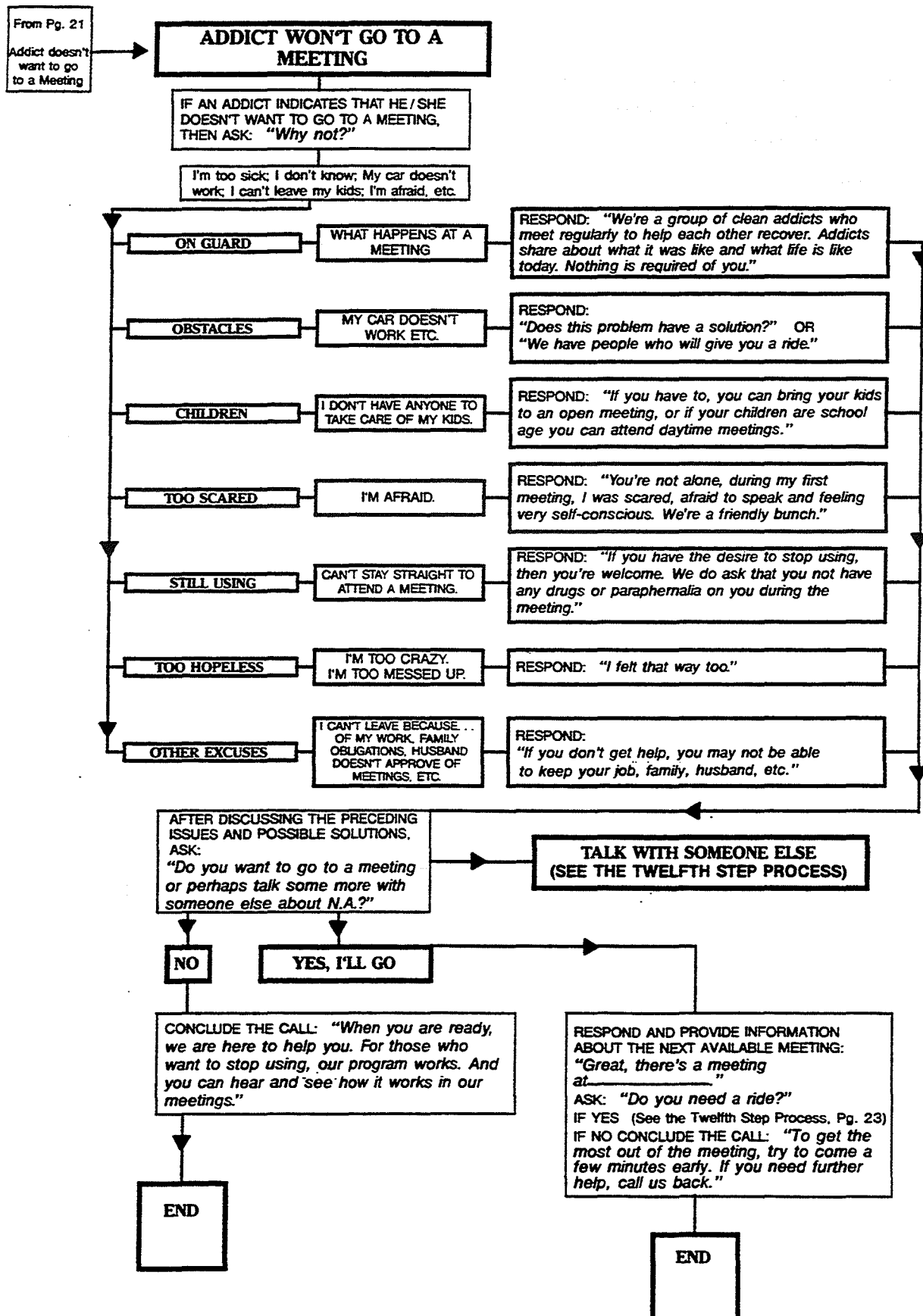
Note: The responses are paraphrased. Use phrases that work for you.

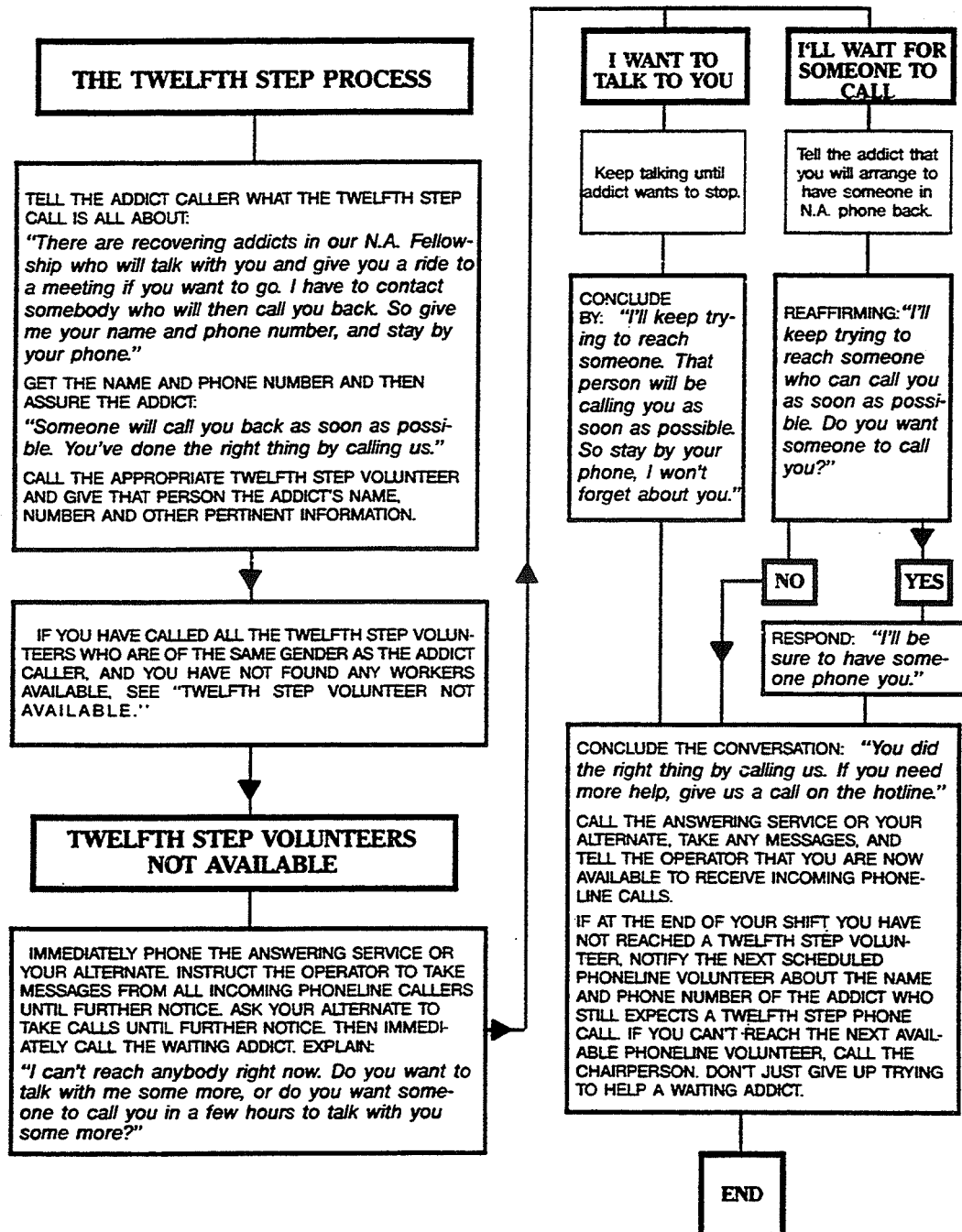












## ADDENDUM C

# REFERRAL FORM

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phoneline volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of agency/organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours available: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours Available: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason(s) for calling:

\_\_\_\_\_ Hospitals & institutions meeting request

\_\_\_\_\_ Hospitals & institutions problem

\_\_\_\_\_ Public information presentation request

\_\_\_\_\_ Request from media (newspaper, TV, radio)

\_\_\_\_\_ Literature request (meeting lists, pamphlets, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Request for general information

\_\_\_\_\_ Recovery meeting problem

\_\_\_\_\_ Schedule of activities request

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (describe in detail): \_\_\_\_\_

Referred request to (check the appropriate selections):

☐ Area

☐ Region

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Public information chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Hospitals & institutions chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Literature chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Activities chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Phoneline chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Service representative/alternate (circle one)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (describe in detail) \_\_\_\_\_

*Important:* Upon completion, contact the appropriate NA subcommittee.

Follow-up notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ADDENDUM B

# COMMUNITY SERVICE REFERRAL LIST

When providing these numbers, always explain that *Narcotics Anonymous* is not affiliated with nor does it recommend any other organizations, institutions, emergency services, agencies, or programs. We simply provide alternate telephone numbers for those callers who need services other than Narcotics Anonymous.

**DRUG CRISIS HOTLINE**

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**SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER**

---

**POISON CONTROL CENTER**

---

**MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES**

---

**RAPE CRISIS CENTER**

---

**SPOUSE ABUSE SERVICES**

---

**CHILD ABUSE**

---

**RUNAWAY HOTLINE**

---

**COUNTY/STATE-WIDE  
EMERGENCY NUMBER**

---

**FAMILY-ORIENTED  
RECOVERY PROGRAM**

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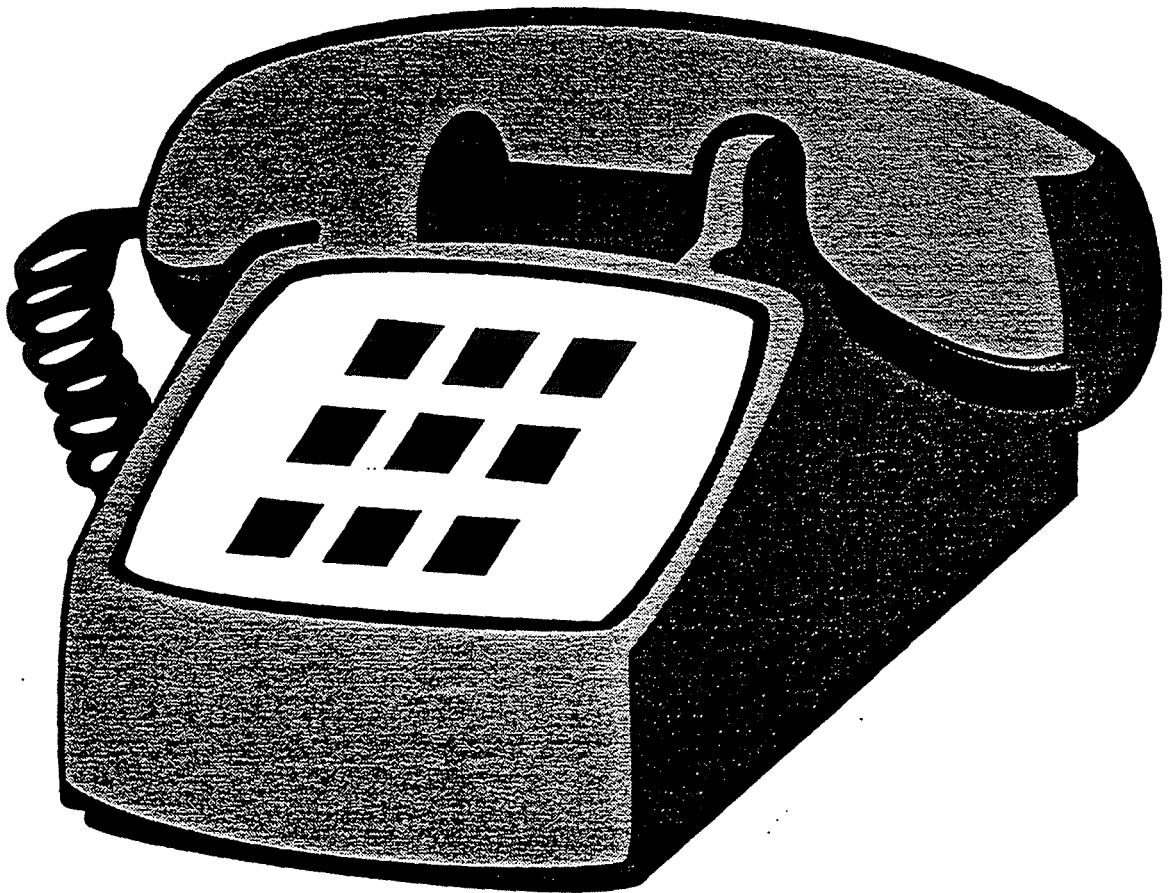
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**ADDENDUM E**  
**HELP ANOTHER ADDICT!**  
**BE A PHONELINE VOLUNTEER**



**ASK YOUR GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE  
ABOUT YOUR LOCAL NA  
PHONELINE SUBCOMMITTEE, OR CALL:**

**VOLUNTEER NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

TIME								
CALLER								MEMBER
								FAMILY MEMBER
								NON-ADDICT
								PROFESSIONAL
								OTHER
HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT NA?								POSTER
								PROFESSIONAL
								DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE
								TELEPHONE BOOK
								PSA/BUS SIGN
								FRIEND/FAMILY MEMBER
								OTHER
ACTION TAKEN								MEETING INFORMATION
								ACTIVITIES
								TWELFTH-STEP
								SOMEONE TO TALK TO
								PI
								H&I
								OTHER
TOWN / CITY / VICINITY								
LENGTH OF CALL								
TOTAL / AVERAGE								

## ADDENDUM F

### PHONELINE VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

**MONTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	NAME & # ALT.

SHIFT TIMES AND COMMITMENTS MAY VARY ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS.

# PHONELINE VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET 1

[illegible]



## ADDENDUM I

# TWELFTH-STEP REFERRAL FORM

Listed below is additional information needed to refer a Twelfth-Step call. The phonerline volunteer explains to the caller that all information is confidential, however additional information may be needed to help them.

A phonerline volunteer will need to use good judgement regarding these calls. *Never* give out the name, address or telephone number of any member of the NA fellowship. *Do not* use last names, places of employment, etc.

Date of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

First name of caller: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address, city: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the caller ever attended an NA meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the caller hear about NA? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the caller used drugs today? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the caller want from NA? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Information about NA.

\_\_\_\_\_ Talk to someone at length about NA.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (explain)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of phonerline volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Twelfth-Step volunteer to which this call was referred: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The phonerline volunteer also makes a note of any other pertinent information from the caller as soon as possible. After hanging up, the volunteer should refer to the Twelfth-Step list and call a Twelfth-Step Volunteer of the same gender and geographical area as the caller. The information gathered should be relayed directly to the Twelfth-Step volunteer as soon as possible.



## ADDENDUM J

# VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

### Orientation Outline

1. Introduction
2. Review of orientation package
3. Review of *A Guide to Phoneline Service*
  - a) *General information for volunteers*—define and explain the role of phoneline and Twelfth-Step volunteers, type of phoneline, and the type of service used by your subcommittee.
  - b) Review of necessary forms to be completed.
4. Review of flow chart and common phoneline calls.
  - a) *Role-Playing—Phoneline volunteers*  
Set up mock telephone calls using two chairs, positioned back-to-back. Simulate common phone calls received by the volunteers.
  - b) *Role-Playing—Twelfth-Step volunteers*  
Review and discuss highlights of the section Twelfth-Step Process, found in *A Guide to Phoneline Service*. Set up mock contacts between volunteers and addicts over the telephone and in person. Pay additional attention to the section Things to Consider, before meeting the addict in person.
5. Volunteer sign-up
  - a) Discuss particular time slots for answering the phonelines.
  - b) Discuss other volunteer opportunities available within the subcommittee.

**NOTE:** It is important to allow for questions and answers during various sections of this orientation.

## **Volunteer Orientation Package**

***A Guide to Phoneline Service***—This can be excerpts from NA conference-approved literature or a package created by your local subcommittee.

***White Booklet***—This is a helpful resource guide when answering certain questions and explaining what NA is to a caller.

***Meeting lists***—Most of the calls received will be requests for meeting locations and times.

***Phoneline volunteer lists***—This is a listing of the members currently involved in phoneline service.

***Twelfth-Step volunteer lists***—This is a listing of all the members currently involved in Twelfth-Step service.

***Current volunteer schedule***—This is beneficial for the volunteer to have in case of schedule changes, and to effectively pass along the necessary information to the next volunteer (refer to Addendum F).

***Phoneline Log sheets***—These are to be completed by all phoneline volunteers so that we may evaluate the services we provide (refer to Addendum D).

***Local newsletter/activities sheet***—This will keep the volunteer up-to-date with meeting changes, upcoming subcommittee meetings, and activities.

***Twelfth-Step Referral Form***—Complete this form when referring the caller to a Twelfth-Step volunteer (refer to Addendum I).

***Referral Form***—Complete this form when referring information/requests to the appropriate NA member (refer to Addendum C).