

H&I Subcommittee Guidelines

For the East Texas Area Narcotics Anonymous

OVERVIEW

The ETXNA H&I subcommittee consists of volunteers who carry NA meetings into hospitals, institutions, rehabs, detox and other treatment facilities. The subcommittee includes recovering addicts who serve as an outreach resource for people who cannot get out to regular NA meetings. This subcommittee serves various facilities across East Texas. Being part of the H&I subcommittee allows recovering addicts to be of service to our community and ourselves. Everything that occurs in the course of NA service must be motivated by the desire to successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. It is for this reason that these guidelines have been prepared.

PURPOSE

The purpose of an H&I meeting is to carry the NA message of recovery to addicts who do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. H&I meetings are intended to introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA program. The purpose of the subcommittee is to effectively carry a clear NA message to the facilities we serve. H&I meetings are often the first glimpse of Narcotics Anonymous meetings that people experience. The role of our H&I panels is to provide hope to these addicts in facilities until they are able to attend their local meetings.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUBCOMMITTEE

Take meetings into facilities according to the schedule in place.

Conducts consistent scheduled meetings bi-monthly.

Create and establish a working plan bi-monthly.

Holds H&I orientation every 6 months for addicts wishing to be added to the panels. (Or quarterly as needed)

Maintain a database of addicts who have completed orientation.

Provide a communication link between the regional H&I chair and the ETXANA.

Maintain a list of all appropriate hospitals and institutions in the area.

Maintain a list of all facilities serviced and who the panel consists of.

Maintain a list of facilities not serviced by H&I.

Provide the ASC with the bi-monthly plan.

Provide the ASC with any literature requests and expenditures every month.

SUBCOMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

The committee shall consist of an H&I Chairperson, H&I Alternate Chairperson, Secretary, Panel Leader(s), Panel Leader Alternate(s), Panel Members and Silent Panel Members. The H&I Chair and the H&I Alternate Chair are elected at the ETXANA level. The other committee officers are voted into position by a majority vote of the H&I subcommittee members. All subcommittee meetings are open to interested NA members. Only members of the committee have a right to vote. GSRs can be subcommittee members, however at the ASC meetings they cannot vote on proposals pertaining to the H&I subcommittee.

H&I Chairperson

Must have 2 years clean.

Service Commitment for 1 year.

Has read ASC guidelines, H&I Handbook and read and understands the subcommittee guidelines.

An example of living recovery through the application of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts of Narcotics Anonymous.

Ensures the Traditions are being upheld in all matters.

Arranges time, place and agenda for all subcommittee meetings.

Responsible for all literature orders for H&I use.

Attends all monthly Area meetings prepared with a summarized report of all H&I business.

Reports all dealings to the ASC; monthly expenses, ensures all expenditures are within budget and requests additional funding when necessary.

Responsible for files, records, and overall function of the committee while facilitating the meetings.

Maintains meeting referral info/meeting lists for the panel leaders to distribute to the facilities and those leaving the facilities.

Mentors the H&I alternate pertaining to chair duties.

Works closely with and communicates with the PR chairperson.

Has a homegroup within the ETXA and is working with a sponsor.

H&I Alternate

Must have 1 year clean.

Service commitment for 1 year.

Has read and understands the subcommittee guidelines and has an understanding of the East Texas Area service structure.

An example of living recovery through the application of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts of Narcotics Anonymous.

Will work closely with and assist in all duties of the subcommittee to learn the responsibilities of the H&I Chairperson.

Keeps track of any updates to the H&I Handbook.

Keeps these guidelines up to date with any changes.

Attend the ASC meetings in the absence of the H&I Chairperson.

Will assist in absences of Panel Leaders if needed.

Perform duties of H&I Chairperson if that position becomes vacant until the term is up, or until another Chair is elected.

Has a homegroup within the ETXA and is working with a sponsor.

Secretary

Must have 6 months clean.

Service commitment for 1 year.

Has read and understands the subcommittee guidelines.

Has completed an H&I orientation.

An example of living recovery through the application of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts of Narcotics Anonymous.

Secretarial experience preferred.

Takes accurate minutes at each bi-monthly subcommittee meetings, and distributes them to members within 1 week.

Uploads bi-monthly minutes to the ASC google drive within 1 week 

Keeps a contact list of all active subcommittee members.

Has a homegroup within the ETXA and is working with a sponsor.

Panel Leader

Must have 1 year clean.

Service commitment for 1 year.

Has read and understands the subcommittee guidelines.

Has completed an H&I orientation.

An example of living recovery through the application of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts of Narcotics Anonymous.

Decides how many panel members will attend each H&I meeting. Up to 6 members per meeting. Maintains a rotation of members if needed.

Assists in choosing panel members.

Ensure meetings are carried out in accordance with the H&I guidelines and the rules of the facility.

Acts as a liaison between the H&I subcommittee and the facility they serve.

Make sure meetings start and end on time.

Follow format provided according to what type of facility is being served.

Provide a report at the bi monthly subcommittee meetings.

Has a homegroup within the ETXA and is working with a sponsor.

Panel Leader Alternate

Must have 1 year clean.

Service commitment for 1 year.

Has read and understands the subcommittee guidelines.

Has completed an H&I orientation.

An example of living recovery through the application of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts of Narcotics Anonymous.

Acts as Panel Leader in case of absence.

Assists Panel Leader in choosing panel members.

If the Panel Leader position of a facility becomes vacant, the alternate Panel Leader serves as acting Panel Leader until term is up or filled.

Has a homegroup within the ETXA and is working with a sponsor.

Panel Member

Must have 6 months clean. 1 year for detention centers.

Has read and understands the subcommittee guidelines.

Has completed an H&I orientation.

Willing to share their experience, strength and hope.

Have a good understanding of the fellowship and carry a clear NA message.

Has a homegroup within the ETXA and is working with a sponsor.

Silent Panel Member

Must have 3 months clean.

Has read the subcommittee guidelines.

Has completed an H&I orientation.

Attend H&I meetings with the panel, but only observes and may not share until required cleantime is established.

Has a homegroup within the ETXA and is working with a sponsor.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Voting

Voting privileges are granted to all members who have been appointed in accordance with the H&I guidelines and have attended 2 consecutive subcommittee meetings; privilege is established at the start of the third meeting. Any member who is absent from two consecutive meetings without notifying the Chairperson will forfeit voting rights. Voting privileges can be re-established through necessary attendance.

Waiving Cleantime Requirements

To prevent unnecessary issues there will be no waiving of cleantime. All members must meet all cleantime requirements for appropriate positions.

Terms of Service

All officer positions (H&I Chair, H&I Chair Alt, Secretary, Panel Leader and Panel Leader Alt) will serve for one year. They are eligible for re-election for one additional term followed by one year of ineligibility for the same position.

Literature

Panel Leaders can request literature for the facilities they are serving. All literature must stay in possession of the Panel Leader or be stored at a safe location at the facility. Literature should be passed out during the meeting and collected at the end of the meeting. Do not leave literature in the common area of the facility. No literature may be sold to clients at the facilities. Please have all requests ready at the time of the bi-monthly subcommittee meeting. If cleared by the body, the request will be put on the agenda at the next ASC.

Dismissal and Resignation

Officers may be dismissed from their positions at any time for relapse, gross negligence

of responsibilities, continuous absences of two consecutive meetings, sporadic attendance of subcommittee meetings, inability to perform duties, refusal to comply with this document, abuse of power, or mistreating other committee members.

In cases of dismissal, a written motion for dismissal with due cause stated must be entered and seconded at the bi-monthly subcommittee. The person must be notified and shall be allowed to speak on their behalf before any vote is taken. If the person objects, it is then taken to the ASC as a proposal and voted on by that body. Any members have the right to go before the ASC to redress any grievances.

Officers may resign. Voluntary resignation should be submitted in writing to the H&I Chairperson or if needed the Alternate Chairperson. If the chairperson wishes to resign, it must be done in writing and submitted to the ASC. The ASC may appoint an acting member.

Any member of the subcommittee is automatically disqualified from H&I subcommittee membership upon relapse. Individuals may be eligible again when they comply with the H&I guidelines.

If any complaints are received from a facility regarding the behavior of a Panel Member, that member will be removed from that particular facility. The decision to remove members from facilities is out of our desire to maintain our relationships with the facilities and their staff. The member will then be required to attend H&I orientation before entering facilities again.

Institutions

H&I Subcommittee members shall not engage or interfere with the policies, procedures, or processes of any institution.

There is no set maximum amount of Panel Members allowed into a facility at one time in the H&I Handbook, however it is suggested no less than 2 and no more than 5. For short term facilities in the East Texas Area a limit of 6 members per panel will be allowed. Facilities may have their own limitations which we will adhere to. Depending on what type of facilities are being served, the size of a panel may be adjusted. (prisons or long term facilities)

All Panel Members must follow the 12th tradition regarding the anonymity of all clients of the facilities we serve.

Regarding all institutions, should a client ask a Panel Member to be their sponsor, we

should encourage them to visit their local meeting when they graduate from their facility and then seek a sponsor. Please do not sponsor active clients in facilities.

Please see the H&I Training below for detailed breakdowns of facilities.

Hospitals & Institutions Training

Introduction to H&I

We would like to welcome everyone to this H&I Learning Day. Many members have found Hospitals & Institutions service to be an important part of their personal recovery. Our members who actively participate in H&I service are some of the greatest resources available in the Fellowship. A commitment to H&I service is one of the many ways to get involved with the NA service structure and begin to feel a part of the Fellowship.

We know that addiction leads to “jails, institutions and death” and that NA’s primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. It is not surprising then, that carrying the message into hospitals and institutions is one of our priorities. NA members have consistently supported this belief by forming Hospitals and Institutions subcommittees around the world. It is through these meetings that 47% of the members of our Fellowship were introduced to this new way of life.

Still, some NA members have been reluctant to become involved in H&I service because they have never spent time in an institution or hospital. With our personal experience we are uniquely qualified to carry our message of recovery, and with the proper preparation, we can do so in H&I.

How Do I Get Involved?

An area H&I Committee is the center for planning and organization and is the best place

to start getting involved. The first thing to do is show up at an Area H&I Committee meeting and attend an H&I Training Day. These meetings are where members become familiar with the information and clean time requirements necessary for service in H&I. At these meetings members are selected to carry our message into facilities. Through this process we will gain a basic understanding of H&I service and will be able to decide on our level of involvement.

Why Do I Get Involved?

H&I offers us the opportunity to show our gratitude; to be responsible; and to learn to share the NA message with no strings attached. For those of us involved, H&I service is seen as an effective tool that helps us stay clean and keep coming back.

What Is Our Message?

The message is, that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom.

Why Do We Need To Attend An H&I Training Day?

The purpose of an H&I training day is to educate the members of the fellowship about hospitals and institutions work. Training days are one way to prepare the NA member to carry the message to addicts who do not have full access to regular NA meetings. We have training days so that we may benefit from the collective experience of other NA members.

Our greatest single source of reference is the Hospitals and Institutions Handbook. It is suggested that each member who does H&I work obtain the handbook and study it. It is an important tool for learning about H&I, and forms the basis for our training days.

Why Is An H&I Presentation Needed?

The purpose of an H&I meeting/presentation is to carry the NA message of recovery to addicts who do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings. H&I meeting/presentations, except for those in longer-

term facilities, are intended to simply introduce those attending to some of the basics of

the NA program.

What Constitutes An H&I Meeting/Presentation?

1. In order to form a clear understanding of an H&I meeting/presentation, it is important to know where it fits in our service structure. Rather than being an NA group, which may be represented at the area service committee by a GSR, an H&I meeting/presentation is a service provided by that area service committee through its H&I subcommittee.
2. An H&I meeting/presentation is always held under the auspices of an H&I subcommittee. Any meeting not linked into the service structure in this way is not an H&I meeting.
3. H&I meetings/presentations are held in facilities where addicts do not have full access to regular Narcotics Anonymous meetings.
4. Meetings which are held in a facility, but which are fully self-supporting and free of restrictions, are not H&I meetings.
5. All H&I meetings/presentations are closed to outside participation. NA members from the outside should attend the H&I meeting only when invited by the panel leader. The only people to attend H&I meetings are the panel leader, panel chair, panel member, and speaker, or anyone approved by the H&I subcommittee to go into that H&I meeting. If there is any confusion over whether or not a meeting should be an H&I meeting/presentation or a regular meeting, please contact your H&I subcommittee for assistance.

Who Is Best Suited To Carry The Narcotics Anonymous Message In A Hospital & Institution Meeting?

In our experience, it is for members to have three months clean before attending an H&I training, and six months clean before speaking at one. It is not important whether or not we have been in a similar facility ourselves.

Anyone with a clear and consistent Narcotics Anonymous message who is willing to share is well suited for H&I

work.

Many people are at least a little apprehensive about sharing in a prison, treatment facility, or mental health setting. You might feel intimidated or vulnerable. If you have never spent time in one of these institutions, you may feel that you have nothing to offer. We understand that and can offer the reassurance that the only thing that really matters is whether you are willing to carry a message of recovery in NA.

Those of us in active H&I service work find it not only interesting, but also intensely rewarding, and it is a major part of our own personal recovery. Our initial fears have been replaced by gratitude and enthusiasm.

To watch the eyes of someone who is hearing the NA message for the first time slowly come to life, to hear that person begin to ask questions, to see that first glimmer of hope that there is a way out, and to later witness that person receiving a key tag on the outside, these experiences await us all.

What is a clear NA message?

A large majority of the facilities where our H&I subcommittees provide an H&I meeting/presentation have other Twelve Step fellowships providing H&I meetings as well. Clients and/or inmates will hear a variety of recovery messages. Other Twelve Step Fellowships do not need our assistance in carrying their message. References to other fellowships and their literature may lead one to believe that the only way an addict can recover is to attend meetings of all Twelve Step Fellowships. As a fellowship, we need to allow the addicts we come into contact with the opportunity to choose for themselves which one is best suited for them. (Example: Basic Text, clean time, addict)

Any fellowship utilizing twelve step recovery has a set of traditions. The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, as directed by our Fifth Tradition, has but one primary purpose. Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who stills suffers. Unity of purpose keeps our focus in carrying the message. What is the message that we are asked to carry? That an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, find a new way to live, and that the freedom of recovery (today) can be theirs also.

H&I In Treatment Facilities

SHORT-TERM FACILITIES

Detox Centers:

When doing H&I work in detoxification centers, keep in mind that the addicts you are working with are in the earliest stage of recovery. Some serve as interim care for addicts who are waiting to go to a treatment unit and may therefore remain in the detox for two or three weeks. The panel format is suggested for meetings/presentations held in detoxification centers. You may wish to allow time for a brief discussion and/or questions about NA. Do not plan a meeting/presentation which lasts more than one hour. These addicts will often be in withdrawal, with scattered thinking and short attention spans.

Because of the physical and mental state of these addicts, topics for the meeting should be selected carefully. There is a need for panel members to talk about what it used to be like so that the addicts in the facility can identify. Be sure that the NA members you take are able to talk about their using without glorifying it. In addition to talking about what it used to be like, the panel will wish to discuss what happened when they were in the earliest stages of recovery. Some suggested topics include: “denial,” “Step One,” “Just For Today,” “we do recover,” or “my first NA meeting.” It is a good idea for panel members to also speak about what it’s like now, but they should remember that these addicts will not be as likely to identify with what our lives are like after living clean for a while. Try to include at least one panel member with the minimum amount of clean time required. Often newcomers will identify more readily with a relative newcomer than with a member with long-term clean time.

Twenty-eight Day Facilities

These facilities may utilize various methods of detoxing residents. Once again we are reminded that Narcotics

Anonymous has no opinion on methods of detoxification. In these facilities, as in detoxes, it is important to keep in mind that the addicts you are carrying the NA message to are in the earliest stage of recovery.

It may be appropriate to change the meeting format weekly, so that the residents are exposed to four different formats during their twenty-eight day stay. Formats recommended include: speaker meetings, topic discussion, questions and answers, and literature/Basic Text discussion. Some topics might include: “the basics,” “the first three steps,” “sponsorship,” “we do recover,” “just for today,” etc.

Some facilities encourage residents to attend regular NA meetings during their treatment. The H&I panel may inform residents about regular meetings, covering such topics as the language used in NA meetings, meeting formats, etc. You may also provide them with meeting lists.

LONG-TERM FACILITIES

Recovery Houses and Therapeutic Communities

Recovery houses and therapeutic communities which house residents for longer than twenty-eight days are considered long-term facilities. The H&I services which are provided by the area or region are performed in a variety of ways. Successful H&I meetings/presentations in long-term facilities usually use the panel system. Since NA meetings are not “therapy groups,” and residents in these facilities often easily fall into their familiar therapy group behavior in an NA meeting, panels often work well to avoid that problem and maintain an atmosphere appropriate to an H&I meeting/ presentation.

The panel system format may consist of speaker presentations, panel presentations, topic discussions, step study, or literature discussions. These formats will give the residents an idea of recovery from the disease of addiction by hearing the panel members share their experience, strength, and hope. The fact that these residents will be leaving and eventually be back in society is of importance to the panel coordinator. With this knowledge the panel coordinator can coordinate meeting/presentation formats to give the residents the best opportunity for

experiencing recovery in the Narcotics Anonymous program when they leave the facility.

The H&I panel may inform the residents of the terminology used in NA meetings to better acquaint them with the Narcotics Anonymous program. Meeting lists may be given to the residents upon their release. The most important thing an H&I subcommittee can give the residents is hope that there is recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

Halfway Houses or 3/4 Houses

These types of facilities are usually for addicts who are newly released from jails, hospitals, or treatment facilities. Some of these places have a structured program and some do not. We have found that panel presentations, question-and-answer, or topic discussion are the best types of meeting/ presentation formats for these facilities. Because the residents usually have free access to outside meetings, these types of facilities should not be considered as having high priority for H&I.

Meetings/presentations in these settings should be structured to avoid having the meeting become a therapy group. Within that structured meeting, you may wish to encourage more participation from the residents and suggest that they attend outside meetings where possible.

Our Role with Facilities that Provide Medication to Their Clients/ Residents

During the initial planning meetings with the facility, we must be very clear about what NA is and what our basic message is. NA is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. We have no opinions on outside issues and our approach is non-professional, so we must be very sure that it is understood that we do not advocate going against a physician's advice. Neither do we endorse the use of any drug. In facilities which provide medication, residents inevitably ask the question, "Am I clean if the doctor has me on medication?" When that question comes up, it is important not to judge.

Our Eighth Tradition tells us that we are not physicians, psychiatrists, or therapists. We are recovering addicts. The principles underlying the Eighth Tradition are eminently practical ones: Prudence, anonymity, and integrity.

The Tenth Tradition states that, "We have no opinion on outside issues..." Our primary

purpose, as a member of H&I, is to share our experience, strength, and hope with addicts in an H&I setting. Aside from that, we have no opinion whatsoever. By refusing to take sides on other issues, we avoid becoming embroiled in controversies that could detract us from our primary purpose. We can only tell them to keep coming back, they are welcomed at meetings, and to read the Basic Text. The people on the H&I panels should not tell residents to stop taking their medication. We are not doctors!

Interaction With The Staff

Our relationship with the staff of the facility is important for the continued success of the H&I meeting/presentation.

At some H&I meetings/presentations, a staff person may be expected to attend. We should make it clear, not only at the initial stage of setting up the meeting, but also on an ongoing basis, that their role will be as observers only. This also applies if the staff member happens to be a member of NA. While this person is functioning as an employee of the facility, they wouldn't be able to share about NA without the residents becoming confused about NA's relationship with the facility. This is in keeping with our traditions concerning non-professionalism and non-affiliation (Tradition Eight and Six).

Do's and Don'ts for H&I Work in Treatment Facilities

Treatment Facility Rules

Do Attempt to get the treatment facility agreements in writing

Do Clarify the rules with whomever you bring into the facility

Do Adhere to the security regulations at all times

Do Arrive early to set up meeting

Do Keep the staff informed of your whereabouts

Do Obey the dress code, exercise common sense

Panel Leaders and Members

Do Screen all panel members, speakers, and chairpersons

Do Adhere to the clean time requirements of the treatment facility and the H&I committee

Do Ensure that a clear NA message of recovery is carried by all panel members

Literature

Do Make directories of outside meetings available to the residents

Do Use the literature recommended for H&I work

Do Stamp all literature with the local phoneline number

Do Provide facilities with literature order forms and encourage the facility to supply its own NA literature

Treatment Facility Meetings

Do Start and end on time

Do Explain briefly, during the meeting, what H&I is

Do Clearly state that Narcotics Anonymous is separate from the treatment facility and from other fellowships

Do Emphasize that NA recovery is available to all addicts, regardless of drug(s) used

Do Explain the language that we use (addict, clean, recovery, clean time) and why we use it (the First Step of NA and Sixth Tradition of NA)

Residents Meeting Participation

Do Involve residents with the meeting, especially those in long-term treatment facilities (readings, etc.)

Do Emphasize the importance of getting to an NA meeting the first day out of the

treatment facility

Do Emphasize the importance of a sponsor, regular NA meeting attendance, and group commitments after release

Panel Leaders and Members

Don't Bring any contraband items or weapons into the treatment facility

Don't Take messages and carry letters in or out of the facility

Don't Show favoritism to any resident(s)

Don't Bring an NA member who has friends and/or family in the treatment facility

Don't Wear flashy jewelry and don't carry excessive cash

Don't Use excessive profanity

Don't Attend H&I facilities alone.

Facility Guidelines

Don't Debate any issue involving the treatment facility's rules, regulations, programs, or other fellowships with residents and staff

Don't Discuss conditions within the treatment facility

Don't Discuss treatment staff members with resident(s)

Don't Discuss resident(s) with the treatment facility staff

Don't Sponsor resident(s) in the treatment facility that you are attending as an H&I member

Don't Accept money or gifts from, or give money or gifts to, any resident

Meeting Guidelines

Don't Give anyone within the facility your address or telephone number

Don't Provide anyone with another NA member's address or telephone number

Don't Bring in anyone who is not supposed to be there (sponsee(s), friends, guests)

Don't Break another person's anonymity

Don't Emphasize 'using days' while sharing an NA message of recovery

H&I In Correctional Facilities & Jails

Correctional Meeting Formats

There are many different types of facilities with different rules and regulations. One thing which is common to all H&I meetings is that they are closed, unless by invitation of the panel leader or the H&I subcommittee. The format should provide a structure which ensures that the NA message of recovery is carried. For this reason, open sharing types of meetings are not used in the H&I setting.

The best formats are those in which outside members are delivering a message of recovery in NA. The best examples are: speaker presentations, panel presentations, topic discussion, literature discussion, Question and answers and step study. Remember, it is our responsibility to maintain an atmosphere of recovery.

There are many different meeting/presentation formats that may be used; however, whichever format is chosen it is important that the H&I panel maintain control in the meeting. Many times the use of extremely liberal meeting formats will cause the meeting to be unruly and difficult to control.

Speaker Presentation

In a speaker meeting, one or more NA members share their experience, strength, and hope. This tends to lay out some basic symptoms and characteristics of the disease, and to show how NA has brought about recovery.

A narrative of events accomplishes little, but a sharing of feelings, self-image, turning points,

Panel Presentation

This is similar to a speaker presentation. Rather than all sharing on the same topic, panel members usually take one aspect of recovery in NA each and share on that subject. In this way, topics can be selected in advance that give information and experience on a variety of relevant subjects.

Topic Discussion

This type of meeting allows for the participation of the residents. This format differs from open participation in that more structure is provided for the discussion. One or two members from the outside should share first to set the tone and direction of the meeting. It is a good idea to keep another experienced member in reserve to call on if the discussion gets away from recovery from addiction. The leader, or chairperson, should call on speakers one at a time rather than letting the discussion go spontaneously. This will allow for more control in keeping the meeting recovery-oriented.

Topics should be chosen carefully, with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in mind. There are a multitude of topics that relate to our personal recovery in NA. There are many topics that have nothing to do with recovery. It is important to remember in most H&I meetings we are dealing with addicts who are relatively inexperienced with recovery. When we select the topic for an H&I meeting, their needs should be considered first. The following list is not complete, but you will find a number of topics that are appropriate for most H&I meetings/presentations. You are not restricted to this list by any means. It is only presented as a resource so that you may get some ideas.

Some Suggested Topics

1. Any IP or selection from the Basic Text
2. H.O.W. (honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness)

3. Surrender
4. Acceptance
5. The Basics (Don't use, meetings, phone numbers, literature, sponsor, and the steps)
6. H.A.L.T.S. (don't get too: hungry, angry, lonely, tired, or serious)
7. Responsible for our own recovery
8. Freedom from active addiction
9. Identify rather than compare
10. Spiritual, not religious, program
11. Going to any lengths
12. Transition from correctional facilities to the fellowship
13. Tools of the fellowship
14. Letting go
15. Feelings
16. Learning to trust
17. Giving up old playmates, playgrounds, and playthings
18. Living just for today
19. The first three steps
20. Denial
21. Reservations
22. Sponsorship

Literature Discussion

For a literature discussion meeting, parts of the Basic Text or other conference approved literature are read and

discussed. Passing the literature around and allowing everyone a chance to read can be an easy way to get the residents involved. If you do that, though, be sure to include in the format a statement like, “Feel free to pass the literature along if you’d rather not read.” Not everyone is willing or able to read out loud.

Questions and Answers

The question and answer format allows residents to write or state questions and topics they might feel frightened or embarrassed about. This format seems to be especially well received at adolescent facilities. The panel leader asks the residents to write topics or questions that are of concern to them and place them in a basket. After introducing the format, the questions are pulled one at a time and one or two of the panel members respond. If the question has already been adequately addressed the next question would be drawn and so on. The panel leader must judge whether a topic or question is appropriate to the meeting/presentation before it is read out loud. If not, just move on to the next question.

Step Study

A step study meeting may be held in an H&I setting. The Basic Text, Narcotics Anonymous, or other conference-approved literature is used to read the step and then the material is discussed. It is important to have members on the panel who have practiced the particular step being studied. This type of meeting/presentation usually works well in longer-term facilities where the residents have had some previous exposure to the Narcotics Anonymous program of recovery. This format allows the residents of the facility to have more participation.

General Hints About Conducting H&I Meetings/Presentations

Regardless of the format you use, a question and answer session can be included somewhere toward the end of the meeting. In this way, the speakers can fan any sparks of hope or interest that may have ignited during the meeting. We may not have all the answers to the residents’ questions, but we can always convey our interest in the person who asked. That may do more than the information contained in our answers. In a facility where residents are incarcerated for long periods of time, step meetings have

been very beneficial to the incarcerated addicts. They give a sense of belonging, and of being a part of the NA Fellowship.

Short-Term Facilities

The term “short term” is used to refer to facilities in which inmates are held for less than one year. In short-term facilities, formats may be suitable which allow for limited participation by incarcerated addicts. Because these addicts will be held for a period of some months, panel members may wish to share about their experiences in early recovery. We feel it is important to give practical information about the NA program of recovery.

If you choose a format that allows for inmate participation, you may want to alternate sharing by outside members and inmates. This will help keep the discussion on recovery in NA.

Be sure you are familiar with the rules of the facility. You may be asked to meet them upon their release or for personal information so they may contact you. Some members choose, as individuals, to arrange to meet inmates upon release. This is not a service provided by an H&I subcommittee. Our do’s and don’ts, and most facility rules, discourage giving out phone numbers. While we may be clear about this difference, it is not reasonable to expect the inmate or facility to understand it, especially since we made the contact with the inmate while participating on an H&I panel. In general, all our actions involving a facility or its inmates will be seen as reflections of Narcotics Anonymous.

The facility may have a staff member in attendance at the meeting, or we may request that a staff member be present. If we maintain communications with administrators and staff, they may become willing to remove the staff person from the meeting after a period of time.

Long-Term Facilities

We consider facilities to which addicts are sentenced for more than one year to be long-term facilities. In these facilities you are more likely to be dealing with addicts who are maintaining their recovery while incarcerated. Increased participation and sharing by residents should be encouraged. That participation may range from having

inside members reading from NA literature, to opening up the meeting. In a long-term facility, this H&I meeting may be the only NA recovery these addicts will experience for years. By allowing them to be more directly involved forms a common bond for them to work the program within and throughout their stay.

Addicts incarcerated in long-term facilities may have started a meeting on their own, separate from the presentation of the H&I subcommittee. If there is no involvement and participation by H&I subcommittee members, it is not an H&I meeting. These meetings are not within the scope of the H&I subcommittee. The responsibility for supplying them with literature or other services falls on the local ASC.

Do's And Don'ts For H&I Work In Correctional Facilities

Do follow the guidance found in the WSC H&I Handbook

The World Service Conference H&I Committee has compiled this list based upon the experiences of subcommittees around the world that have sent input on H&I service matters. They provide some very helpful guidelines, and should help you avoid some of the common pitfalls.

Correctional Facility Rules

- Do Attempt to get all agreements in writing
- Do Clarify the rules with whomever you bring into the facility
- Do Adhere to the security regulations at all times
- Do Arrive early to satisfy security requirements
- Do Keep staff informed of your whereabouts
- Do Obey the dress code, exercise common sense

Panel Leaders and Members

- Do Screen all panel members, speakers, and chairperson(s)

Do Always clear a member who is on parole/probation with the facility and parole/probation officer

Do Adhere to clean time requirements of the correctional facility and of the H&I committee

Do Ensure that a clear NA message of recovery is carried by all panel members

Do Choose panel members and speakers according to H&I guidelines

Literature

Do Provide NA literature for correctional facility meetings

Do Make directories of outside meetings available to the inmates

Do Use NA literature recommended for H&I work and stamp all literature with the local phoneline number

Do Provide facilities with literature order forms and encourage them to supply their own NA literature

Correctional Facility Meetings

Do Start and end on time

Do Explain briefly in the meeting format what H&I is

Do Clearly state that Narcotics Anonymous is separate from the correctional facility and from other fellowships

Do Emphasize that NA recovery is available to all addicts regardless of drug(s) used

Do Explain the language that we use (addict, clean, recovery, clean time) and why we use it (the First Step of NA, and the Sixth Tradition of NA)

Inmates Meeting Participation

Do Involve inmates with the meeting, especially those in long-term facilities (readings, etc.)

Do Emphasize the importance of attending a Narcotics Anonymous meeting the first day out of the facility

Panel Leaders and Members

Don't Allow a member who has outstanding warrants to participate in a correctional facility meeting

Don't Bring any contraband items or weapons into the facility

Don't Take messages or carry letters in or out of the correctional facility

Don't Show favoritism to any inmates

Don't Bring an NA member who has friends and/or family in the correctional facility

Don't Wear flashy jewelry and don't carry excessive cash

Don't Use excessive profanity

Don't Attend H&I facilities alone

Facility Guidelines

Don't Debate any issues involving the correctional facility's rules, regulations, programs, and other fellowships with inmates and staff

Don't Discuss conditions within the correctional facility

Don't Discuss correctional facility staff members with inmate(s)

Don't Discuss inmate(s) with correctional facility staff members

Don't Sponsor inmate(s) in the correctional facility that you are attending as an H&I member

Don't Accept money or gifts from, or give money or gifts to any inmate

Meeting Guidelines

Don't Give anyone within the correctional facility your address or telephone number

Don't Provide anyone with another NA member's address or telephone number

Don't Bring in anyone who is not supposed to be there (newcomers, friends, guests)

Don't Ask what type of crime an inmate has been convicted of, or discuss guilt or innocence

Don't Break another person's anonymity

Don't Emphasize 'using days' while sharing an NA message of recovery

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Adolescents

Any addict on any H&I panel is qualified to speak at adolescent facilities. Whatever type of facility we are in, regardless of age, race or sexual identity the message is always the same. We carry a message of recovery from the disease of addiction through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. We focus on our similarities, not our differences which are insignificant compared to our purpose. Just as addiction does not discriminate, our members learn to practice the spirituality of anonymity. All addicted persons seeking recovery are welcome in NA.

When adolescents are referred to in this handbook, we are referring to anyone under the legal age of majority in your state or country. We need to remember that adolescents are prospective members, and should be treated with respect. Don't preach to or patronize them. Avoid saying things like "I feel like I am talking to my children." Validate their feelings and emotions. When sharing in an H&I meeting/presentation, we need to remember that to an adolescent, the stress experienced due to peer pressure, or the relationship with their parents and/or teacher may be just as much a crisis to them as losing a job, marriage, or house may be to others. In NA, we learn to deal with our feelings and emotions and share with others how we have been able to work through them by utilizing the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. We practice empathy and patience as we share the hope of recovery we have found. We believe that no addict anywhere need die without a chance to learn a better way of life. We should acknowledge their clean time and let them know there is fun in recovery. Share about activities and other positive experiences such as friendships you have formed in the

fellowship.

Don't compare your bottom to theirs or use profanity. They may not have been exposed to many behaviors common to our illness, and we do not want to expose them unnecessarily.

Some facilities may require a staff member to be present during meetings. One suggestion we may make to administrators of facilities for adolescents is that they make attendance at the H&I meeting voluntary. We have found this reduces distraction, increasing the opportunity for recovery in the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship. All meetings should be structured toward recovery.

While some people maintain that adolescents respond better to people closer to their own age, the bulk of our experience suggests that the age of the person sharing at an adolescent H&I meeting is secondary to their ability to share a strong, clear message of recovery. Adolescents seem to respond more to the message than to the messenger. In addition to the do's and don'ts found on previous pages, we feel that the following should be included.

DO's

Do Remember that this is a "we" program. No addict should feel that he/she is being preached to.

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

Do Tell them that there is fun in recovery, i.e., social events, fellowship, etc.

Do Acknowledge and validate their feelings and emotions.

Do Acknowledge and validate their clean time.

DON'TS

Don't Glorify your past.

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

Don't Compare your bottom to theirs.

Don't Patronize adolescents.

Don't Use profanity.

Working with Others: Men with Men, Women with Women

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve step program which is based on suggestions, one of which is “men work with men, women work with women.” This suggestion is the result of countless members experience in both service work and personal recovery. This suggestion is highly recommended in H&I service work, where our contact with future members of our fellowship is forged.

Some facilities house only men or only women. Other facilities house both men and women, but keep them separate. In these facilities, where your meetings will consist of only men or only women, we feel strongly that only same-sex Narcotics Anonymous members should participate.

Remember, our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery, not to make our meetings more popular with the addicts we are trying to help. Problems that arise in this area have the potential to seriously damage the credibility of Narcotics Anonymous. Experience has taught us that we can avoid these problems if we follow this simple guideline.

H&I service brings us into contact with future members in the initial stage of their recovery. At times members of an H&I committee may act in ways that detract from our primary purpose. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, we are not only risking the reputation of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, addicts who need to hear our life saving message may not do so and may die as a result. This may seem dramatic, but past experience has proven it true.

Lack of the same sex addicts to carry the message into facilities is a common problem; however, it can not be used as a justification for not following this guideline. Some members have taken matters into their own hands and have reported doing so without repercussions, but for others the repercussions have been traumatic. If we lose one addict or facility because of this practice, it is one too many. The reputation of Narcotics Anonymous, our members, and the people we serve depend on honoring this principle.

Just as we ask in our regular recovery meetings that men work with men and women work with women, we emphasize this in H&I work for many of the same reasons which range from explicit sexual behaviors or

harassment to our perception of the opposite sex clouding our ability to hear the message being shared. People new to our fellowship often find it difficult to focus on recovery. We need not give them more reasons to lose their focus. Just as importantly we, as H&I members, should not place ourselves in situations that may become awkward for us. Even with the best of intentions we are only human and, therefore, fallible. By following this suggestion, we avoid the pitfalls associated with this issue.

SERVICES OTHER THAN MEETINGS

Often H&I subcommittees are requested to provide services other than H&I meetings/presentations. In responding to such requests it is essential that we are clear about what kinds of services are appropriate for an H&I subcommittee to provide.

We do provide

Literature: When the facilities themselves are unable to provide approved literature to their residents H&I subcommittees should do so. This is especially important in facilities where there is not a regular H&I meeting/presentation.

Tapes: Only tapes that have been approved for sale by the WSO should be used at H&I meetings/presentations. The most current WSO order form lists tapes that have passed through the review and approval process.

Serial Publications: Reaching Out and The NA Way may be taken into facilities for the residents' use, but since they are not conference-approved, they should not be used during meetings/ presentations.

Coordinator: Coordinators of meetings in facilities should be connected to an H&I service subcommittee where there is no panel system in place. No individual NA member should agree to "sponsor" an H&I meeting on his/her own. A meeting that is held in a facility where there is no connection with an H&I service body is not an

H&I meeting/presentation. Facilities often use the term "sponsor" for a member of NA who is considered the outside contact. We have used the term coordinator to prevent any possible confusion with personal sponsorship.

We do not provide

Transportation: H&I subcommittees do not provide transportation for residents to outside NA meetings. Providing rides could create a liability for the H&I subcommittee and the fellowship, i.e., accidents, escapes, and false accusations.

Pen Pal/Jail Mail: This is not a function of an H&I subcommittee.

NA Sponsors: In NA sponsorship is a personal and private relationship and is not a function of an H&I subcommittee.