

**BIG RIVERS AREA
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS

**SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER
ORIENTATION PACKET**

Revised 06/2013

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ORIENTATION:

H & I orientation is a period that allows N.A. members to become familiar with H & I work so that they are not rushed into it without preparation for this service. Many people are quite apprehensive about getting into H & I for a variety of reasons. Don't be put off: everyone has something to offer.

This packet has been compiled by Big Rivers Area H & I Subcommittee to give a brief outline of some of the specifics that will be important to you as a Subcommittee Member. The H & I Handbook gives a much more in-depth look at H & I work in Narcotics Anonymous, if you decide that you want to learn more about this rewarding type of service.

In the Big Rivers Area of Narcotics Anonymous, you are invited to sit in on your first few H & I meetings as an observer, if you wish. This will enable you to just listen and see how an H & I meeting really works, and will give you the opportunity to feel more comfortable before you decide to join our Subcommittee.

MEETING FORMAT:

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

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

The Panel Leader should let you know what the format is before the meeting and should be able to answer any questions you may have about it.

Whatever format is used, we usually get the residents involved with a question and answer session at some point in the meeting. Also, you may be asked to stay after the meeting for a while to talk with the residents, if that is allowed.

Panel Leaders should also make it very clear that we carry the N.A. message of recovery only.

Our message: *We can recover from the disease of addiction.*

PERSONAL COMMITMENTS:

Please **DO NOT** volunteer if:

1. You are not sure that you want to attend the H & I Subcommittee meetings that are held as scheduled by BRASC for Orientation and at **least once yearly**. The Subcommittee voted that any Officer who misses two or more consecutive Subcommittee meetings would be replaced by another Subcommittee member, with the exception of employment, school schedules, or any other extreme emergencies. If working or attending school, members should be in contact with the H & I Chairperson or Co-Chair. If WE make the commitment WE all should take the responsibilities that go with it. H & I is an important part of Narcotics Anonymous. We need the communication between our Panel Leaders in order to insure that N.A. message is being carried to the addict who still suffers.
2. If you are not sure that you will be able to attend the Panel meetings you are scheduled for. For Treatment Facilities please contact the Panel Leader 48 hours prior to the Panel meeting, so the Panel Leader can invite someone to fill your spot. For Jail Facilities, please make every effort to get a replacement for your spot. If you are unable, please contact your partner & Jail Facility to cancel.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

It is a good idea to encourage questions concerning what was presented at the meeting or other general questions about N.A., but there are a few things that we should keep in mind.

Please remember that N.A. has no opinions on outside issues such as:

1. Other recovery programs or fellowships.
2. The facility (i.e. "do I need to stay in treatment?").
3. Many other issues that do not pertain to recovery from active addiction in the Narcotics Anonymous fellowship.

It is very important that we do not get drawn into these types of discussions!! Always remember to share only your experience, strengths, and hopes about YOUR recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

ADOLESCENTS:

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

Due to the Governmental Statutes regarding adolescents, we need to be especially aware of the facility rules and regulations, as they relate to interaction with these prospective members. For example, some facilities may require a staff member to be present during the meetings. One suggestion we make to administrators of facilities for adolescents is that they make attendance to H & I meetings voluntary. We have found that this reduces distraction, increasing the opportunity for the recovery in the N.A. member.

While some people maintain that adolescents respond better to people their own age, the bulk of our experience suggests that the age of the person sharing at the 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. All H & I meetings are highly structured and should be geared towards recovery through the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. Our experience has shown that we do not need to use a special format when carrying the message to adolescents.

In addition to the DO's and DON'Ts found at the end of this packet, we feel the following should be included:

DO's:

DO remember that this is a "WE" program. No addict should feel 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. dances, fellowship, etc.)

DO acknowledge their feelings and emotions.

DON'Ts:

DON'T glorify your past.
DON'T say "feel like I'm talking to my kids."
DON'T compare your bottom to theirs.
DON'T patronize adolescents.
DON'T use profanity.

H & I REQUIREMENTS:

You have been invited to carry the message of recovery through H & I meetings because:

1. You have at least 6 months abstinence from all drugs.
2. You have a strong message of recovery from addiction through N.A.
3. You seem to be willing to comply with all of the H & I Subcommittee's and facilities requirements.
4. You are willing to carry the message in a responsible way.

DO's AND DON'Ts FOR H & I SUBCOMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS:**DO's:**

DO make directories of outside meetings available.
DO clarify the facilities rules with anyone you bring in.
DO start and end the meeting on time.
DO briefly explain what H & I is.
DO make it clear that N.A. is separate and distinct from the facility and other fellowships, as well.
DO try to get residents involved, especially those in long-term facilities.
DO obey all dress codes. Exercise common sense and dress appropriately.
DO keep staff aware of your whereabouts at all times.
DO stamp all literature that you bring in with the Help Line phone number.
DO screen all Panel Members carefully, especially regarding their clean time or other requirements.

DON'Ts:

- DON'T break another person's anonymity or tell his or her story.
- DON'T debate any issues involving the facility rules or regulations.
- DON'T get involved in discussion on outside issues, remember why we are there.
- DON'T put too much focus on what it was like. They already know.
- DON'T debate which drugs are acceptable. N.A. is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs.
- DON'T discuss conditions within the facility, or opinions about staff members.
- DON'T carry excessive cash or wear expensive or flashy jewelry.
- DON'T show favoritism towards any resident(s).
- DON'T take messages in or out of the facilities.
- DON'T give out any other person's address or phone number without that person's consent.
- DON'T carry in any contraband items.
- DON'T discuss or debate other recovery programs other than Narcotics Anonymous.

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

Thank You for your interest in helping us to carry the message. If you have questions that this Orientation Packet does not answer, or would like more information, please feel free to call the H & I Subcommittee Chair or Co-Chair.

**Big Rivers Area Subcommittee
Hospitals & Institutions**