

Helpline Subcommittee

The purpose of the Helpline is to carry the message of recovery to those who call our helpline. By informing those who reach out to us we attempt to make NA available to any addict seeking recovery. We accomplish this task by giving out meeting information, sharing our experience, strength, and hope or putting the caller in touch with another recovering addict through the use of Twelve Step volunteers.

The membership of the Helpline subcommittee is open to all recovering addicts. The Helpline meets once a month at a time and location that is generally convenient to most members. The meetings are conducted with the following format:

1. Open with the Serenity Prayer
2. Reading of the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, and our Purpose
3. Chairperson's report
4. Secretary's report (minutes from the prior meeting)
5. Schedule Call Coverage Rotations
6. Open Forum
7. Old Business
8. Elections
9. New Business
10. Close with the Serenity Prayer

Voting

A member of the Helpline subcommittee is eligible to vote upon attending two (2) consecutive Helpline meetings. In order to vote a member must maintain attendance at the monthly subcommittee meetings. Missing two consecutive meetings will result in the loss of the ability to vote until the second consecutive meeting after the absences. Members are encouraged to contact the Meeting Coordinator prior to missing a meeting if possible. An attendance sheet is circulated at every meeting and it is the member's responsibility to make sure that they sign in at each meeting. If circumstances prevent advance notice of an absence, the member should contact the Meeting Coordinator to discuss the most recent meeting.

1. For most matters of business a simple majority vote is required for passage.
2. For establishing (or waiving) policy a 2/3 majority of the voting members is needed for passage.
3. Quorum is 25% of the voting members.
4. The Chairperson will vote only in the event of a tie. The Chairperson is not required to break a tie but may return the item to the committee for further consideration at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Chairperson

Requirements:

1. A willingness and desire to serve in the position
2. One year abstinence from all drugs
3. One year experience on the Helpline subcommittee
4. The time and resources necessary to complete the duties of the position
5. A working knowledge of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts

Duties/Responsibilities:

1. Organize and schedule volunteers
2. Work with all Helpline Communication services
3. Attend all ASC meetings and submit monthly reports

Vice-Chairperson

Requirements:

1. A willingness and desire to serve in the position
2. One year abstinence from all drugs
3. One year experience on the Helpline subcommittee
4. The time and resources necessary to complete the duties of the position

5. A working knowledge of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts
6. Attend at least 6 ASC meetings per year

Duties/Responsibilities:

1. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will temporarily perform all the duties of the Chairperson
2. Provide a copy of subcommittee guidelines to each member of the subcommittee
3. Provide at each subcommittee meeting to each Cell Phone Volunteer a call log and 5 of the following: White booklet, Am I an Addict, Welcome to NA, and Meeting Schedule

Cell Phone Coordinator**Requirements**

1. A willingness and desire to serve in the position
2. One year abstinence from all drugs
3. Six months experience on the Helpline Subcommittee
4. The time and resources necessary to complete the duties of the position
5. A working knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts

Duties/Responsibilities

1. Responsible for the cell phone rotation during the month.
2. Assist volunteers with any difficulties that may arise.
3. Responsible to check the system and resolve any problems.
4. Access the system to make any and all changes regarding meeting information and events.
5. Assist incoming Cell Phone Coordinator in making transition for a month.
6. Make test calls to ensure helpline is working

Secretary**Requirements**

1. A willingness and desire to serve in the position
2. Six months abstinence from all drugs
3. The time and resources necessary to complete the duties of the position
4. A working knowledge of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts

Duties/Responsibilities

1. Keep accurate minutes of all subcommittee meetings
2. Maintain all correspondence and logs of attendance sheets
3. Distributes monthly minutes in each meeting

Meeting Coordinator**Requirements**

1. A willingness and desire to serve in the position
2. Six months abstinence from all drugs
3. The time and resources necessary to complete the duties of the position
4. A working knowledge of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts

Duties/Responsibilities

1. Responsible to contact all Subcommittee members prior to the monthly meeting
2. Update and distribute accurate 12 Step volunteer lists and flyers

Cell Phone Volunteer**Requirements**

1. Attend two consecutive Helpline meetings and one workshop
2. A willingness and desire to carry and be responsible for cell phone
3. One year abstinence from all drugs
4. Develop knowledge of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts
5. Attend meetings on a regular basis

Duties/Responsibilities

1. Respond to all calls in a timely manner

2. Keep a log of all 12 Step and Emergency calls received
3. Attend all Subcommittee meetings
4. Maintain equipment in good working order and use for Helpline purposes only
5. Report communication problems to Cell Phone Coordinator (if not available, contact Vice-Chairperson)
6. To give or obtain accurate instructions to assist an addict in attending a meeting.

Twelve Step Volunteer

Requirements:

1. One year abstinence from all drugs.
2. A willingness to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
3. A working knowledge of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts.
4. Attend at least 2 Helpline subcommittee meetings to orientate on section XII 12-Step guidelines.

Duties/Responsibilities:

1. Never go alone on a twelve step call
2. Do not give out the names and/or phone numbers of any NA members
3. Meet the caller in a public place, not at their home
4. Men work with men and women work with women
5. We carry the message, not the addict
6. Keep the 12 steps and 12 traditions in mind

Subcommittee Member

Requirements

1. Complete abstinence from all drugs.
2. A willingness to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Duties/Responsibilities

1. Attend all Subcommittee meetings and workshops.
2. Assist with the function of the Subcommittee as needed.
3. Cannot accept money from a Helpline caller under any circumstances.

Removal From The Helpline

A member will be removed from the Helpline Subcommittee for either of the following reasons:

1. Absence from two consecutive Subcommittee meetings.
2. Use of the phone services for anything other than Helpline purposes.
3. Any other violation, as deemed warranted by the subcommittee.

Tradition violations will be dealt with as matters of principle rather than personality. All concerns regarding a possible violation of the Traditions of NA will be brought before the committee. If, after a group conscience, a violation has been determined to have occurred; a notation in the minutes will be made to reflect the thinking of the Subcommittee in this matter. This will be done to provide guidance for current and future volunteers.

When concerns exist that may result in the removal of a volunteer from the committee, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will notify the volunteer of the concerns for the purpose of discussion of the issues at hand. If **BOTH** the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson agree that the removal is necessary the member will be informed of that decision and the member will be asked to return and Helpline equipment to the Chair or Vice-chair . If the affected member disagrees with the removal they can appeal the decision through application of the 10th Concept. This appeal will be placed on the agenda at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Subcommittee.

Guidelines For Answering Helpline Calls

Get the caller on the phone BEFORE identifying yourself as an addict. Follow guidelines for Crisis Calls from section below. We carry the message of recovery to the caller when we share that:

1. Our primary goal is to get the addict to a meeting.
2. The program works.
3. We were once suffering ourselves.

4. We care and are willing to help.

Keeping a Log of Calls

Logs are turned in to the secretary at every subcommittee meeting. The log is important for the following reasons:

1. Means of keeping a record of the types of calls received;
2. By tracking the types of calls we can better train our volunteers on how to handle the calls.
3. Let us verify the number of calls that we receive each month against the billing of our service provider.

Calls from 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 is willing to talk with the volunteer, GREAT; if not it is suggested that the family member attend an open discussion meeting to find out more about NA. It can be suggested that the caller bring along the addict who is still suffering. The family member can be asked to give the Helpline number to the addict. Always treat the family member with kindness and respect. We need to keep in mind and convey our 6th Tradition (An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose) when talking with family members. Various reference materials have been supplied to assist in contact with family members. If the caller is a family member, provide guidance for Naranon and 211 referral services.

Requests for Information

Helpline volunteers will sometimes receive calls from a number of different sources including the media (radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, etc.) and law enforcement agencies. The way we handle these calls will determine how these agencies look at the program of Narcotics Anonymous. It is imperative that any time a member of the media calls that we refer them to the Public Relations Subcommittee. The referral to PR is best accomplished by obtaining what type of information the caller is seeking and then contacting the Helpline Chair (or Vice Chair). The Chairperson will pass the information along to the PR subcommittee as well as contacting the caller to assure them that we are taking the needed steps to process their request. Occasionally, the caller may attempt to gather information while working under a deadline; remember that the deadline affects the caller and not NA.

Twelve Step Calls

There are times when a caller may not be able to attend a meeting without the support of another member or needs to speak at length with someone. Obtain the following information from the caller before contacting the Twelve-Step volunteer:

1. First name of the caller
2. Age and gender of the caller
3. Telephone Number and Zip code where the caller lives
4. What types of drugs the caller has been using
5. Does the caller need medical attention before attending a meeting?
 - a. If yes, DO NOT pass the call to a 12 step volunteer, have the caller seek medical treatment and call us back. (see Crisis Calls section)
 - b. If no, contact a Twelve Step volunteer in that area and pass along the info.
6. If difficulty is experienced in locating a volunteer, re-contact the caller and let them know you are still working on finding someone to assist them.

Helpline And Twelve Step Volunteers Do's & Don'ts

Do's

DO Do always identify yourself with your first name only and state that you are an addict.

DO Do always have the necessary materials (white booklet, meeting list, NA pamphlets, Twelve Step list, and Phone log) close to the telephone, in order to avoid delay and confusion.

DO Do find out what the caller needs; ask questions.

DO Do, if you are returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as an addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous.

DO Do remember to be helpful and polite to all callers.

DO Do make appropriate referrals when necessary.

DO Do keep a log of all calls you answer.

DO Do contact the Helpline Chairperson if problems arise.

DO Do use the Twelve-Step list.

Dont's

DON'T Don't argue with the person whose views of addiction differ from yours or NA's. If the caller does not want to stop using, do not try to persuade him/her to stop.

DON'T Don't try to handle calls that you are not qualified to answer.

DON'T Don't give medical advice.

DON'T Don't give out other people's names or telephone numbers

DON'T Don't answer questions about who was at an NA meeting (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 Don't glorify active addiction by telling war stories

Crisis Calls

Always take them seriously. If you are not sure what to do use the helpline callout list below. Contact someone and ask for help. Ascertain if the individual is alone. Find out their address if possible. Once the type of crisis is determined refer them to the appropriate agency. If you hear evidence of domestic violence, abuse, or if the caller appears to be suicidal, you will need to make an individual decision on what to do. You can ask the caller for permission to call whomever you think needs to be notified. If the person is alone and appears to be having physical problems or seizures you, as an individual, may decide to call 911.

Helpline Callout List

1. Paging Coordinator
2. Chairperson
3. Vice-Chairperson
4. Another Volunteer

List of Emergency numbers

Police, Fire and Ambulance

911

Suicide/Crisis Prevention Center

(813) 234-1234

Poison Control (Florida)

(800) 282-3171

Rape Crisis

(813) 234-1234

Child/Adult Abuse

(800) 962-2873
Hillsborough Information Line
(813) 272-5900

Disclaimer

“NA is not affiliated with any other organizations and does not endorse the services that may be provided by them.” State the disclaimer when providing the number for any service or organization outside of NA in accordance with our Traditions.