



**Narcotics Anonymous<sup>®</sup>**  
**World Services**

## **Basic Hospitals & Institutions Guide**

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### **Why is an H&I Meeting/Presentation Needed**

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/presentations, except for those in longer-term facilities, are intended to simply introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA program. H&I and Public Information Cooperation

Generally, a PI activity is geared to people outside our fellowship and includes people who come in contact with addicts and can help addicts to find NA.

If a PI subcommittee doesn't exist in an area or region, H&I subcommittees may take on many of the responsibilities generally taken on by PI subcommittees.

### **Meeting / Presentation Format**

The format of any particular H&I meeting/presentation 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 a message in to the residents, while at a long term facility we may encourage more participation from the residents.

Whatever format is chosen, we normally get the residents involved with a question and answer session at some point in the meeting/presentation.

### **Who is Best Suited to Carry the NA Message in an H&I Meeting**

In our experience, it is best for members to have three months clean before attending an H&I meeting, 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.

### **H&I Meetings/Presentations where no Area Service Committee or H&I Subcommittee Exists**

As Narcotics Anonymous grows, meetings are starting up more and more frequently in smaller communities and rural areas. Often because of their geographical location,

or because of the limited development of an NA service structure in an area or region, formation of and participation in an ASC and its H&I subcommittee is not yet possible or practical. Yet once an H&I meeting/presentation is started, the news seems to spread very quickly. Facilities may seek out local members and request an NA meeting. Usually, these original members in an area are very committed and try to say "yes" to all requests, so H&I meetings are started.

These commitments are many times taken on by one or a few dedicated members who mean well, but usually discover that the demands of supporting one or more H&I meetings, week in and week out, can quickly lead to burn-out. It is possible to do H&I work in such circumstances, but be sure to use some common sense. Here are some tips:

- . Never take on an H&I commitment alone. In the absence of an area H&I subcommittee, any H&I work has to be the effort of one or more groups. Remember, I can't--we can. The H&I member working alone may end up doing more harm than good in the long run.
- . Make sure the group is ready for the responsibility. Don't be afraid to say "no, we're just not able to support a meeting in your facility at this time." Don't take on additional commitments until you are ready.
- . Get other groups involved whenever possible, perhaps alternating weeks or months. Reach out. There is the possibility that some member from neighboring areas or the region would be able to come and help occasionally.
- . Use these guidelines. You will find much material in here that will be helpful in your efforts.
- . If you find that you have over-committed yourselves, go to the facility and let them know that you need to discontinue the meeting for a while. They will respect you more for letting them know face to face than if you just stop showing up.
- . Always keep an awareness that H&I work is best done by area H&I subcommittees using the panel system. As soon as it is possible to form an ASC (Area Service Committee) or join one, do so.

### **DO'S & DON'TS**

#### **DO'S**

- . Do Make directories of outside meetings available to residents.
- . Do Clarify the rules with whomever you bring into the facility.
- . Do Start and end on time!
- . Do Emphasize that NA recovery is available to all addicts regardless of drug(s) used.

- Do Clearly state that Narcotics Anonymous is separate from the facility and from other fellowships. Do Involve residents with the meeting, especially those in long-term facilities (readings, etc.).
- Do Obey the dress code, exercise common sense.
- Do Screen all panel members, speakers, and chairperson(s).
- Do Attempt to get all agreements in writing. Do Adhere to the security regulations at all times. Do Ensure that a clear NA message of recovery is carried by all panel members.

### **DON'TS!**

- Don't Attend H&I facilities alone.
- Don't Emphasize using days while sharing an NA message of recovery.
- Don't Give anyone within the facility your address or telephone number.
- Don't Use excessive profanity. Don't Break another person's anonymity.
- Don't Debate any issues involving facility rules, regulations, programs, or other fellowships.
- Don't Get involved in discussions on outside issues, remember why we are there.
- Don't Discuss conditions within the facility.
- Don't Discuss facility staff members with inmate(s).
- Don't Wear flashy jewelry and don't carry excessive cash.
- Don't Show favoritism to any resident(s).
- Don't Take messages or carry letters in or out of the facility.
- Don't Bring an NA member who has friends and/or family in the facility.
- Don't Ask what type of crime an inmate has been convicted of, or discuss guilt or innocence.
- Don't Accept money or gifts from, or give money or gifts to any inmate.

### **Additional Resources**

For more detailed information refer to the Hospitals & Institutions Handbook. More information may also be obtained from neighboring H&I committees. NA World Services may help in contacting others close to you with H&I experience. Sharing our experience, strength, and hope in this area of service can greatly enhance the ties that bind us together.

We recognize that there are legal restrictions in many countries prohibiting the congregation of addicts. Please contact NA World Services for additional information before moving forward with H&I efforts in areas where these restrictions exist.

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