



SESSION OUTLINE

Icebreaker

What is NA's image in your local community?

What are some of NA's public image problems in your local or regional community?

This Powerpoint is set as a toolbox and can be used for workshops or introduction sessions.
Each module can be combined to requested needs.

Module 1+2:

Can be used as a single Workshop to introduce PR Basics to members who are not familiar with PR.

Module 3+4:

Is addressed primarily to those, who consider being involved in PR Committee service.

Module 1: PR Basics

PI vs. PR

Goals and Principles

PR and the Public

Module 2: Tradition Scenarios

Our Traditions and Values

Small Group Discussion

Experience

Module 3: The PR Committee

How to Start

Planning

Resources

Module 4: The PR Presentation

Preparation

Giving a PR Talk

FAQ at PR Presentations

Module 1:
PUBLIC RELATIONS BASICS

PI vs. PR
Goals and Principles
PR and the Public

Module 3:
THE PR COMMITTEE

How to Start
Planning
Resources

Module 2:
TRADITION SCENARIOS

Our Traditions and Values
Small Group Discussion
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Module 4:
THE PR PRESENTATION

Preparation
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Module 1:
PUBLIC RELATIONS BASICS

PI vs. PR
Goals and Principles
PR and the Public

PUBLIC RELATIONS STATEMENT

The NA message is “that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live.”

- Our relations with the public enable us to share this message broadly so that those who might benefit from our program of recovery can find us.
- We perform public relations service to increase the awareness and credibility of the NA program.
- The spiritual principles of our steps, traditions, and concepts guide us in pursuing our public relations aims.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

What is NA's image in your local community?

What are some of NA's public image problems in your local or regional community?

Why is it important to improve Public Relations? >>>

PUBLIC RELATIONS TRADITION 11

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. - and internet.

- NA is meant to have a public relations policy.
- We provide information about our program.
- We engage in meaningful relationships with others (who have similar goals).
- We can grow by taking on a more active role in our relationships with members of the public.

We can provide PR services less reactive and more proactive.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

TRADITION 5

PR is a crucial part of our primary purpose “to carry the message to the addict who still suffers” because it let’s prospective members and those who seek to help them know who we are and where to find us.

- Without newcomers, the **most important people** in our meetings are absent.
- NA cannot help addicts if they never hear of us, or if **our reputation** is such that addicts are advised to steer clear of us.
- NA will reach **some addicts directly**, good community relations or not. (members invite friends, family members, coworkers, etc.)
- However, **most addicts must be reached indirectly** through others in the community (media reports/announcements, professional refferral, ...)

WHAT IS PUBLIC INFORMATION?

Public information service in NA has naturally evolved

- In the recent past, our program was relatively unknown. Initially, the focus of our PI efforts was **on informing the public** of the existence and purpose of our program.
- As we have grown as a fellowship and developed services, we have recognized the **increasing need for public awareness** in order to reach the still suffering addict.

PI had a history of no (communication) follow-up.

WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATION?

PR is a process: Simply the building and maintaining of relationships with people and organizations outside NA.

- PR is just another way of saying: **Taking care of our relationships.** They will change and grow over time.
- **ALL** the relationships that we create and maintain are PR.
- Many communities have renamed their committees “public relations,” which fosters the building and **maintaining of relationships with the public.**
- PR needs good communication: **Listening, Following Up, Responding.**

It needs more than just the words which comes out of our mouth.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

THE WAYS WE PROVIDE INFORMATION

Public Relations helps addicts to find NA.

- **Distributing PR material:** posters, billboards, fliers, and other public service announcements to inform the public of how to reach us.
- **Providing website information,** meeting directories, informational letters, and pamphlets to people who may come in contact with addicts.
- **Holding community Learning Days** and workshops to educate and train our members.
- **Responding to requests** for presentations, attending exhibits and providing booths at conferences/health fares to reach out to pros who work with addicts.
- **Phonelines !!!**

WHO IS “THE PUBLIC”?

Potential new members!

Na Members! (Internal Public: one of the greatest influence in attracting new members)

Those that are close to or influence the lives of addicts:

- Treatment Facility Staff
- Health Care Facilities / Social Service Facilities (f.e. Job Center)
- Medical professionals
- Prison Officers / Parole Officers
- Health Fairs / Addiction Conferences
- Family members
- High Schools / Universities (Social Worker / Physicians)
- Internet / Social Media

PUBLIC RELATIONS

UNITY

It is through the unity of members in their service efforts, and a cooperative attitude toward the public that helps the NA message of recovery to grow.

- **Our common welfare** – the good of NA as a whole - must be at the forefront of our consideration.
- **Unity does not equal uniformity.** Creative action of the spirit takes many shapes and forms throughout our Fellowship.
- Thinking about principles before acting is never a mistake, but we can get lost in policy and procedure and **not get very much done** at all.
- Our actions in forming relationships with the public can have a profound effect on **whether or not addicts can find NA.**

PUBLIC RELATIONS GOALS

1. We clarify what services NA can and cannot provide to the community.

NA offers a safe place for addicts where members learn from one another how to live drug-free and recover from the effects of addiction in their lives.
NA doesn't offer: Social Work, Housing, Jobs, Counseling, Dating Platforms.

2. We make NA members more aware of their role in NA's public image.

Newer members see how we behave and make choices about our fellowship. They may also share their views with their PO's and others.
Do we share our views on outside issues as if they were the views of NA?

PUBLIC RELATIONS GOALS

3. We aim for the public to recognize NA as a positive and reliable organization.

The public does not necessarily recognize addicts as positive and reliable members of their community. The way we communicate with the public has an effect of how the public refers to NA as an reliable and safe ressource.

4. We develop valuable relationships with professionals and the general public.

Our communication should be informative and should directly address any misconception the public may have. Our relationships will change and grow over time.

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF PR IN ACTION!

BE RESPECTFUL - We show respect to earn respect

- We share information with outside groups and community organizations about NA's program of recovery and our traditions.
- We also take the time to learn about the goals, language, and values of the organizations we are working with to create a more successful interaction.

BE TRUSTWORTHY - We keep our word

- We act with integrity and honesty that allow our partners in the community to rely on our clear, consistent message and reliable actions.

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF PR IN ACTION!

BE FLEXIBLE - We work with them, not against them

- We may need the organizations we are working with to respond to our needs with flexibility, and we can work to do the same.
- We take care to listen to their requests and, while keeping in mind our underlying principles, consider whether or not we can accommodate them.

BE CONSISTENT - We keep in touch with the organization

- We strive to provide accurate information and facilitate an ongoing dialogue, to let other organizations know that they can count on us.

These spiritual principles foster strong relationships among service members as well!

PR AND THE NA MEMBER

Much of the goodwill that exists between NA and the community at large is based on the relationships that we develop and maintain as NA members.

- We can improve these relationships by taking care to treat others with courtesy and respect.
- As a fellowship, we have no control over the behavior of individual NA members.
- We can communicate to them that a bad image of NA could easily keep the message of recovery from reaching the addict who still suffers.

Na Members are one of the greatest influence in attracting new members to meetings.

PR AND THE NA GROUP

Members of NA groups can and often do perform some basic PR work to help carry the message of recovery to addicts.

Posting bulletins. Printing and distributing meeting schedules. Informing other addicts about their meetings.

- Groups should always be careful not to make statements or commitments that overstep their abilities.
- The need for additional services to the groups is usually met by the formation of area service committees, so that the groups are not distracted from their own primary purpose.
- PR projects may cause an increase in newer members attending meetings.

Groups may need to get prepared for this influx.

PR AND THE H&I COMMITTEE

Cooperation between committees is an important part of providing service in Narcotics Anonymous.

- We may understand our own functions well but **know little of how other committees operate.**
- The basic difference in function.
H&I panels present the program **primarily to addicts.**
PR committee makes its presentation primarily to **non-addicts.**
- **PR and H&I committees should cooperate**, if contacts were to become an opportunity for a PR presentation at the hospital, or during a presentation it occurs that participants request a H&I meeting.

Module 2:
TRADITION SCENARIOS

Our Traditions and Values
Small Group Discussion
Experience

OUR TRADITIONS

THE 12 TRADITIONS (READING)

We probably hear in meetings that “our traditions are not negotiable.”
While they are not negotiable, our traditions are certainly open to interpretation.

- We all have **personal opinions** about how to apply the traditions in service, but the best way to ensure we remain in harmony with our guiding principles is through the process of **group conscience**.
- While other organizations may not be bound by the same principles as we are, **they certainly have values**, particularly social services, which gives us space for cooperation.

TRADITIONS AND VALUES IMPORTANT TO PR

ATTRACTION rather than **PROMOTION** (Trad. 11)

COOPERATION not **AFFILIATION** (Trad. 6)

Anonymity and the PR Member (Trad. 11)

Outside Issues (Trad. 10)

Responsibility and Accountability (Concept 1 & 5)

Forever Nonprofessional (Trad. 8)

Communication (Concept 8)

Unity (Trad. 1)

Self-Support (Trad. 7)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Choose your table.
- . Take 2 min. of silence and concentrate on what you want to share with the others. Feel free to use pen&paper to write down your own notes.
- Choose a facilitator..
- Start sharing your experience and solutions.
- Compile the relevant notes to a flip chart.
- Choose someone who present the flip chart.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

ATTRACTION rather than **PROMOTION**

1. What is the difference between attraction and promotion?
2. What can our group do to help make our meetings attractive, safe, and welcoming?
Does our group have a strong home group identity?
Do we celebrate group anniversaries?
Have group T-shirts?
Group specific events or customs?
3. How does the behavior of our members around our meetings or in our service efforts reflect on NA as a whole?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

COOPERATION not AFFILIATION

1. How do autonomy, cooperation, and affiliation relate to one another?
2. How can issues of affiliation affect the atmosphere of recovery in our group?
3. What can we do as a group to maintain or improve our relations with outside entities?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

ANONYMITY and the PR member

1. What do members need to consider when being involved as PR Committee members?
2. Why shouldn't any single member be a spokesperson for NA?

ATTRACTION

RATHER THAN PROMOTION (HUMILITY)

ATTRACTION:

- Our attraction is: It works for us, it's free, and we are available to the addict that still suffers.
- Reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery.
- When we create a space where addicts feel safe and comfortable and the message is clear.
- Sharing from the heart is the most attractive thing we have to offer.

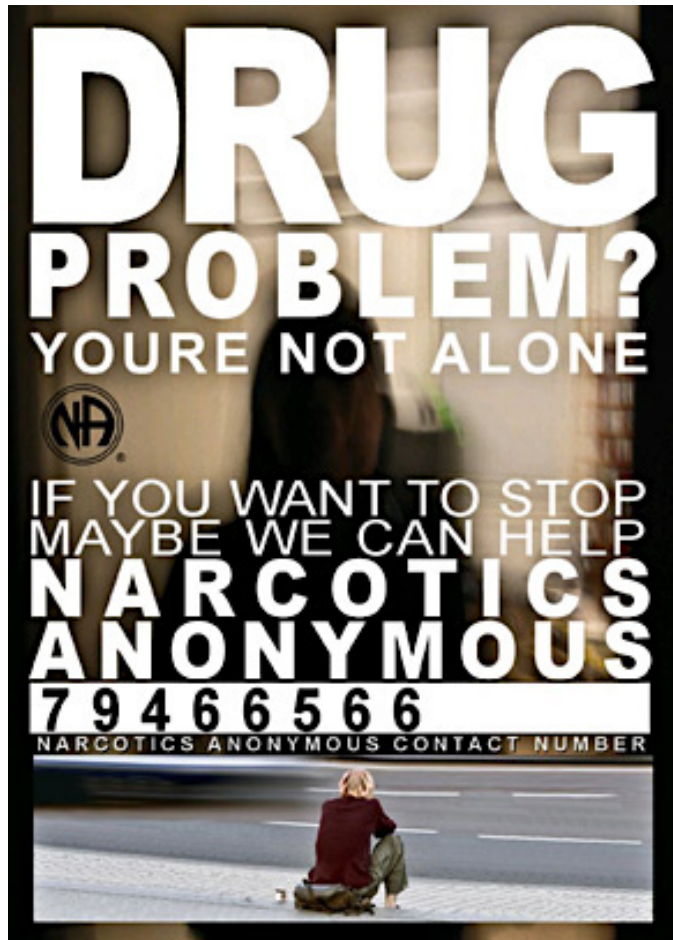
PROMOTION:

- Overblown claims about the effectiveness of our program (NA works for all addicts, under all circumstances)
- Promises, Comparisons, (celebrity) endorsements.

TRADITIONS

EXAMPLES

ATTRACTION OR PROMOTION?



TRADITIONS

EXAMPLES

HAVING FUN IS ATTRACTIVE

Wichita Metro Area of Narcotics Anonymous Presents:

Winter Bowling

No matter your skill level come on out and play.

If you have no skill level, come out and spectate.

Where: Seneca Bowl
1909 S. Seneca, Wichita

When: Third Saturday in December,
Second Saturday of every Month
(January thru April)

Time: 4:00 Pm (Don't be late!!!)

Cost: \$2.75/Game
\$3.00 /Shoe Rental



Fellowship Activities



Meetings
Flyer



Meetings
Anniversary

Group T-Shirts



TRADITIONS

COOPERATION

NOT AFFILIATION

COOPERATION:

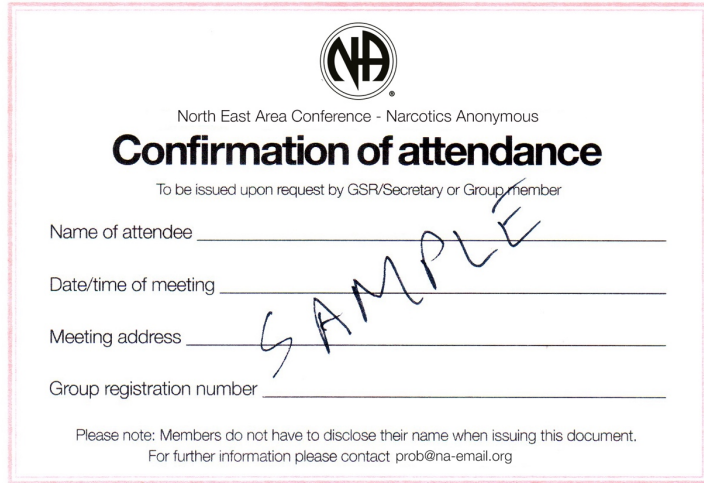
- Working with public entities to provide them with as much accurate information about us as possible in order for them to better understand NA and to refer individuals to our program.


AFFILIATION:

- Affiliation means being joined or connected.
- We want to work with other organizations, but we do not want to be merged with them in the mind of prospective members and the public.
- If NA becomes strongly identified with any “related facility or outside enterprise”, our primary purpose and independence can become confused with the priorities of others (matters of autonomy).

EXAMPLES

COOPERATION OR AFFILIATION?




North East Area Conference - Narcotics Anonymous
Confirmation of attendance
To be issued upon request by GSR/Secretary or Group member

Name of attendee _____
Date/time of meeting _____
Meeting address _____
Group registration number _____

SAMPLE

Please note: Members do not have to disclose their name when issuing this document.
For further information please contact prob@na-email.org

Meeting
Attendance
Card

TV Spot
Emergency
Ward



Pharmacy
NA Contact
Cards



PR at
Gay Parade

ANONYMITY

AND THE (PR) MEMBER

**We need always maintain personal anonymity in the public media.
At other levels, personal anonymity is a matter of personal choice.**

- We work as a team to avoid being perceived as a sole representative of NA.
- Doing PR demands to disclose personal anonymity for specific purposes. (PR Presentations, Prison, Addiction Conferences)
- Anonymity protects us from our own defects of character and makes it impossible for personalities to come before principles.
- Anonymity supports our ultimate goal of focusing on our primary purpose instead of our individual concerns. (Principles before personalities)

Module 3:
THE PR COMMITTEE

How to Start
Planning
Resources

THE PR COMMITTEE

PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITY

- 1. We clarify what services NA can and cannot provide to the community.**
- 2. We make NA members more aware of their role in NA's public image.**
- 3. We aim for the public to recognize NA as a positive and reliable organization.**
- 4. We develop valuable relationships with professionals and the general public.**

Examples see PR Basics.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

These question are just a collection of possible discussions at PR committees.

1. What is the reputation of NA in this community? How do we serve that reputation, or compromise it?
2. What organizations do we come in contact with? What part can these contacts play in helping us to carry our message?
3. What tools do we have to assess the PR needs in our community?
4. What are some qualifications for PR service beyond the desire to recover?
5. What different kinds of opportunities to serve are available in this service committee?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

6. What kind of support do we provide to new trusted servants?
7. How do we exercise group conscience in this service?
8. What tools do we have to assess the PR needs in our community?
9. How can we help our groups to carry the message when our PR efforts are successful?
10. What can we do to avoid situations where a member might be seen as a spokesperson for us?

THE PR COMMITTEE

PLANNING

Planning paves the way for that to be a reality and is an important part of providing effective services for NA.

- It is much easier to provide effective services if everyone involved understands their tasks, their responsibilities, and the desired end result.
- Based on the needs and resources of your area, you can decide which of the following planning methods will work best for you.
- Some methods are:
 - Inventory Local Services
 - Prioritization
 - Human Resources
 - Financial Resources

INVENTORY LOCAL SERVICES

IDENTIFY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

An inventory can help identify what is being done well and what needs improvement.

- Most projects depend as much on ideas, information, conscience, and members' time and willingness as they do on money.
- The idea is to identify if there are potential members or people who come into contact with addicts in the community and who need to be reached with our message and where NA may be needed in the community.
- This may mean looking where the calls are coming from on the helpline.

PRIORITIZATION

WHICH PROJECT SEEM MOST NEEDED

Evaluate which projects seem most needed for furthering our Primary Purpose in a local area.

- Inviting all members and trusted servants to be part of the prioritizing process helps us to better focus on the broader services needed.
- Rather than the desires of individual subcommittees and individual members (to let go of service projects about which they are personally passionate about)
- How to prioritize:
 - Make a list of all desired projects.
 - Rank the top 3 projects.
 - Review the areas' highest priorities.
 - Look at area financial & human resources.

HUMAN RESOURCES

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

There is a role for every interested member in their local PR or PI committee.

- Identify members who may have skills, but not much experience, and support their involvement in service.
- Invite those members who may have been of service in the past to join in current local efforts.
- Create a pool of former trusted servants.
- Invite them to come and check it out for themselves
- Focus on a single project might be easier to involve members who have experience, but lack of time (time expences are forseeable).

Your input, suggestions, feedback, and participation are needed and valued.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Examine local financial resources available for prioritized service projects.

- One question to consider is if any projects will take funds away from a committee's routine finances (such as for phonelines).
- Project timelines can be created to ensure that financial resources will be available when needed at crucial points during the project.
- Our ideal is for contributions to support our services, but many areas turn to fundraising to make service projects possible.?

THE PUBLIC RELATION PLAN

IDENTIFYING OUR GOALS

One way to find out which steps are needed is to consider the ideal end result of the goal and then work backwards.

It is important to establish achievable goals that can be realistically accomplished.

1. Establish the goal of the project based on prioritized needs and available resources of the area.
2. Plan step-by-step actions or approaches to reach the identified goal.
3. Use the goal to measure the progress of the project.

(Example: see notes)

PUBLIC RELATION

EFFECTIVE SERVICES

An area's PR goals can have significant impact on the groups.
Successful PR projects depend on meaningful group involvement.

1. Group members should take the time to have step-by-step discussions about the area's PR efforts.
2. A committee structure may also use an ad hoc committee or workgroups to get specific projects done.
3. The use of a coordinators can also help service committees to cooperate more directly with each other.
4. Use the goal to measure the progress of the project.
5. Create guidelines (many are available and can be

Module 4:
THE PR PRESENTATION
Preparation
Giving a PR Talk
FAQ at PR Presentations

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

What's the difference between speaking at an NA Meeting and speaking at a PR presentation?

THE PR PRESENTATION

GIVING A PR TALK

Being the speaker in an NA meeting:

- Speaking directly to addicts, seeking to convey our message of hope through our personal experiences.

Giving a PR talk:

- Speaking primarily to those who may influence an addict seeking recovery, convey a clear and attractive picture of what NA is and how it can be a resource for addicts.
- Sharing our personal experience is not always appropriate, unless we have been invited for that purpose specifically.
- Use audience appropriate language – no NA jargon (in PPT as well)

THE PR PRESENTATION

PREPARATION

- Determine who is best suited to give the presentation. Match “task-to-talent”.
- Invite diverse members (age, gender)
- Learn your presentation. Focus on audience, not on your PPT.
- Rehearsing is a good thing! Role-play! FAQ’s! Read and re-read.
- Dress appropriately to fit the setting. “Business casual” if needed.
- Make sure you have the IP’s and other literature appropriate for the presentation. And business cards !

THE PR PRESENTATION

TIPS FOR SPEAKING

- Good preparation will help you **to overcome tension**. Use notes as well.
- Many members of the public are more than happy to help us fulfill this purpose, and they appreciate our Goodwill. Relax!
- Avoid talking too fast – utilize the powerful speech pause.
(We think 600 wpm but we speak 150-225 wpm)
- Vary the volume and rate of your speech. A monotone voice is absolutely toxic to keeping the attention of an audience.
- Looking at one person – for audience it feels like you are looking at each person (walk closer to the person who ask a question)
- When we are excited we forget to breathe and tend to be too serious. Find your humor. Use words that evoke emotions. It will help you to get in touch with your audience and with yourself.

THE PR PRESENTATION

WARM UP (10 MIN.)

- Give a warm welcome to everyone, introduce presenters and audience members or allow them to introduce themselves.
- Refer to the audience and their world
- Get to know audience background:
“How many are familiar with NA?”
“How many have had no exposure to or knowledge of NA?”
- Offer a brief outline of the agenda, before you do your PPT, why the presentation is taking place, and what to expect from it.
- Let the audience know that there will be time for audience participation (its a term) and questions at the end.

THE PR PRESENTATION

INFORMATION (20 MIN.)

What is NA? – A vital resource

- Origin of our name – not just opiates
- Historical background - local and global – number of countries/meetings
- How it works
 - Membership
 - Anonymity
 - Spiritual Approach
 - NA Recovery Meetings
 - Sponsorship
 - NA Step description and Service Opportunities (if appropriate)
 - NA Conventions (invite the audience)
- Statistics / Membership Survey

THE PR PRESENTATION IS NA CULTURALLY ADAPTABLE?

- NA is well established in Northern America, Central America, South America, Western Europe, Western Russia, Australia, New Zealand, India and Iran.
- New growth: Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Africa.
- There are more than 67.000 meetings each week in 132 countries.
- NA literature published in over 41 languages.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

What has to be considered when members share personal experience at a PR presentation?

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

AT A PR PRESENTATION

- Sharing our personal experience can be an effective way to make a PR presentation emotional and raise attention of the audience, but it needs to be appropriate and only by invitation.
- Personal experience should support PR information.
(private issues are not relevant for the audience)
- Speaker should be selected, focused on recovery and familiar with PR basics.
- Spatial separation of PR presenter and speaker (audience should see the difference between official NA committee and personal experience)
- It's common to use personal stories in schools (in US).

THE PR PRESENTATION

COOPERATING WITH PROFESSIONALS

- NA can assist with welcoming your clients to meetings.
- Presentations to professionals and clients.
- Printed material, audiovisual, helplines, websites.
- Subscription to NA publications (The NA Way Magazine), and literature useful for clients' introduction to NA.
- No charge or fee for your clients to attend NA recovery meetings or for NA presentations.

THE PR PRESENTATION

BENEFITS TO THE CLIENT

- NA assists with transition back into the community.
- NA can support clients while they are still in treatment.
- NA provides a (peer based) support network and social community.
- NA provides drug-free role model reinforcement. Often clients have had minimal exposure to drug-free living. Members of NA provide that role model in their work and home environment.
- NA provides a drug-free social environment through aftermeetings, conventions, dances, picnics. (New Friendships)

THE PR PRESENTATION

BENEFITS TO THE PROFESSIONAL

- Immediate access for clients.
- Valuable adjunct to treatment.
- Research indicates: improves retention
- Immediate access to aftercare support
- Research material:
NAWS suggests studies conducted by
J. F. Kelly, R. Stout, W. Zywaik (2006) and
K. Humphries (2005) as two possible choices for you.
- NA membership survey evaluated by an outside company.

THE PR PRESENTATION

AFTERWARD

Onsite

- Collect the sign-in sheet, and business cards.
- Don't runaway – get engaged in conversations
- Use feedback to improve for next time
- If your audience has ideas or opinions about challenges to adaptability and growth in your community, consider your response to those ideas.
- Survey the audience.

After the event

- Write thank-you notes to all who attended.
- At regularly scheduled intervals, follow up with all who attended.

SMALL GROUP ROLE PLAY I.

Presentation (30 minutes)

Break the room into three sections. For this exercise we will focus on three presentation scenarios:

1. Treatment Centers/Hospitals (Addiction Professionals)
2. NGOs/government institutions (Politicians)
3. Corrections/Legal (Parol Officers, ...)

Assign one of the presentations to each section.

- Each presentation will be 5 minutes, with an additional 5 minutes for questions.
- Ask members to take a few moments to choose who will present to the entire group. Members who do not present are the professionals who will ask questions.
- Encourage the groups to use the packet to prepare the presentation and to use the FAQ's to provide questions. Keep points made earlier in mind with presentations.
- Remind entire group that it takes courage to present to peers – we will applaud their efforts.
- Remind entire group that only members from each section will ask questions.

THE PR PRESENTATION

LARGE GROUP ROLE PLAY II.

Presentation (30 minutes)

- Ask for volunteer presenters; otherwise choose a section to start
- Monitor time and move along if they run over
- After each presentation role-play, CLAP and praise their efforts

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Recap session, including some of the high points from the presentations.
- Challenge members to share how they might utilize or put into action what they heard here today. Hear from a few members.
- Invite members to share some of the things they learned here, try these ideas in their communities, and share their experience.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

QUESTIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS

1. What can NA do to become a better-known resource for addicts who desire recovery?
2. What specific information could NA provide to make us more accessible?
3. What do you perceive as the shortcomings of NA in the community?
4. How can NA improve the way it is perceived in your field?
5. What do you think we are doing right? How can we do better?

PR session with professional at ECCNA 31 in Birmingham 2015.

THE PR PRESENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is the difference between AA and NA?**

AA helped start NA in 1953 by giving NA's founding members permission to adapt their traditions and steps. The primary difference between the two programs is that AA's focus is alcohol and alcoholism, whereas NA's focus is recovery from addiction. In NA we believe that use of drugs, including alcohol, is but a symptom of the disease of addiction.

2. **How can I find NA meetings in my neighborhood or in various countries around the world?**

The easiest way to find NA meetings is by visiting NA World Services website, www.na.org. Since our members provide the data for the meeting locator, we cannot guarantee the information is completely accurate (some meetings may have changed locations, for example). Contacting local area and regional helplines or websites (also listed at www.na.org) will often provide more accurate meeting information (Have a local meeting directory with you during the presentation.).

3. **NA is only for junkies and crackheads.**

When NA first started, it is possible that the majority of our members used heroin. Today, as indicated in our Membership Survey, our members use a variety of drugs, including alcohol. Interestingly, 78% of those surveyed list alcohol as one of the drugs used on a regular basis. This survey also provides information about employment status, occupation, gender, and age. Our basic tenet about addiction is that it is a disease and not related to a specific substance.

THE PR PRESENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

4. **Is someone who is still using drugs welcome to attend NA meetings?**

Yes, they are more than welcome to attend meetings. Many of our members actually came to meetings while still using drugs and are now drug-free and recovering today. Often, if a member is still using, he or she will be asked to refrain from speaking during a meeting. Instead, these addicts are encouraged to speak with members during break or before or after the meeting.

5. **There will be people present at NA meetings who have not yet achieved stable abstinence.**

6. **What happens at an NA meeting?**

An NA meeting is where two or more addicts gather for the purpose of recovery from the disease of addiction. Members offer each other peer support by sharing experiences about how they manage life situations without returning to using drugs. Some meetings have speakers who share their experience with getting and staying clean, while others have structured formats that focus on NA literature (our Basic Text, informational pamphlets, or our Just for Today daily meditation book). All meetings focus on recovery and supporting each other in recovery.

Here are some other things that can occur at an NA meeting:

During the course of a meeting, a basket is passed for our members to contribute money to support the cost of the meeting facility and other services. One of our traditions speaks to our self-support through our own contributions.

Meetings often open and close with the Serenity Prayer or some quote from NA literature.

[In some communities this may require some explanation. The word “prayer” could be troublesome.]

Some meetings also provide keytags to recognize days, months, and years of continuous abstinence from drugs.

THE PR PRESENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

7. I referred someone to NA who was taking medication, and NA members said they were not clean. Would you explain what you mean?

NA is a program of complete abstinence, and members refer to time (days, weeks, months, years) without using drugs as “cleantime.”

Since Narcotics Anonymous is an abstinence-based recovery program, persons who are taking drug replacement medication are not considered drug-free. These persons are encouraged and welcome to attend NA meetings; however, they are asked to listen rather than speak at meetings, and it is suggested they talk to members on a break, or before or after a meeting. Meetings that follow this format do so to preserve the atmosphere of recovery.

For members who have a need to take prescribed medication for medical or mental health issues, we suggest reading the booklet *In Times of Illness*. This piece provides helpful, experience-based information regarding medication and illness, and outlines the idea that the decision to take medication is left to the member, physician, and sponsor. This pamphlet was written to help members who have achieved total abstinence from drugs and are faced with a need to take medication.

Unfortunately, our members often voice their own opinions about the use of medication even though NA has no opinion. Although this may be a disconcerting issue for professionals, it can be equally as confusing to many members. Typically, members of NA make a distinction between drug replacement medication and medication that a person needs to take once they are completely abstinent from drugs.

8. NA meetings are based on monologues and lack the possibility to ask questions in order to get some helpful response.

THE PR PRESENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

9. NA is not religious, but you talk about God? And why do you talk about Higher Power at the first place?

The NA program is based on a set of spiritual principles that are not associated with a particular religion. Although our steps call for finding and believing in a “power greater than oneself,” this is a personal decision for each and every member to make. Members choose their own “power greater than themselves.” Members’ beliefs range from nature to organized religion, from no belief that a power exists, to belief in the power of inanimate objects such as rocks. Members are free to choose a belief that works for them personally, and there is no opposition to anyone’s choice within the fellowship. We perceive this to be a strength of our program — the unconditional freedom members have with choosing their own personal belief — and in NA meetings one can hear members state that this was an attractive and safe aspect of the fellowship. NA doesn’t oppose or endorse any religion. Experience of our members has shown that the spiritual principles work for all members, from the devoutly religious to the atheist and agnostic.

10. In meetings it often says „Addicts are powerless“? Don't they need power? (even members have huge difficulties with this question. The answers are often quite odd or not reasonable at all)

11. My clients would be offended by the profanity at NA meetings.
(well, this statement appears every now and then)

12. What's your opinion on the current administration's drug policy?

Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on the current administration’s drug policy as this is outside our scope. We offer no opinion on any outside issues, including drug policy, so as not to divert us from our primary focus — one addict helping another to recover from the disease of addiction.

THE PR PRESENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

13. What support does NA have for adolescents?

Adolescents are welcome at all NA meetings. If there are meetings in a local NA community specifically designated for young people, the meeting schedule will identify those meetings as such. Although any NA member is welcome at any NA meeting, specially designated youth meetings can help younger addicts find their peers.

14. What resources do you have for single parents? Are children welcome at meetings?

Most groups welcome children who are behaved and under the supervision of a parent. Sometimes a group will offer babysitting services for its members. Contact the local NA helpline for additional information or look for meetings in the local NA meeting directory that indicate childcare or that the group is children-friendly.

15. What an Addict Can Expect at NA Meetings?

Many addicts attending their first NA meeting may feel that they are visiting “another planet.” NA meetings have their own language and culture. Language often heard in meetings includes the words clean, Twelve Steps, Higher Power, and sponsor. Cultural norms within NA meetings may include greeting addicts with welcoming hugs, handing out keytags for various lengths of cleantime, reciting common readings, first-nameonly introductions, and lots of clapping. These examples are a small sample of the distinctive language and culture within NA, and these customs can be overwhelming to new attendees.

THE PR PRESENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

16. How many NA members have been incarcerated? How many NA members have been convicted of sex-related crimes?

We do not collect that type of data.

17. What's your opinion on methadone?

In general, we cannot assess anyone's desire to abstain from drugs, and NA has no opinion on drug replacement therapies used by professionals in the management of addiction.

NA is a program of total abstinence. This provides the foundation for recovery from drug use and for further personal growth. Narcotics Anonymous has only one membership requirement: a desire to stop using drugs. Drug addicts who are participating in drug replacement therapies are welcome in NA meetings.

Most meetings ask that people under the influence of any mind- or mood- altering substances listen (rather than speak) during the meeting, and speak to members on an individual basis before and after the meeting. Meetings that follow this practice do so to preserve an atmosphere of recovery in the meeting.

18. Do you think complete abstinence is needed?

We think complete abstinence is needed in order to recover. Therapy while active using doesn't really make sense.

THE PR PRESENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CLEAN

Clean in NA typically refers to being free of all drugs, or abstinent. However, an addict who is not clean is free to attend meetings; we hope through attendance at meetings addicts will gain a sense of belonging and identification with other recovering addicts. Abstinence and membership are not synonymous terms. Membership is based on a desire to stop using, not abstinence itself. "Our program of recovery begins with abstinence from all drugs, including alcohol. Sometimes people come to NA meetings while still using drugs, detoxing from drugs, or on drug replacement therapy. Regardless of what you may be taking when you first come to NA, you are welcome." (Informational Pamphlet #29, An Introduction to NA Meetings)

SPONSOR

A sponsor is an individual recovering member who serves as a guide or mentor to new persons. A sponsor can share experience on how to live drug-free and face life on life's terms without using drugs. A sponsor also helps members to work the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous, the basis for recovery in NA.

KEYTAGS

Keytags are given to addicts for lengths of cleantime. Cleantime is a significant accomplishment within NA and is recognized at NA meetings. One keytag—the "welcome to NA" keytag—is given to any addict attending their first meeting regardless of whether they are clean or not.

THE PR PRESENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PRAYER

Another practice is meetings usually opening and closing with a prayer. This is not intended to connote any religiosity. Each person is free to choose his or her own Higher Power, which some equate to a force greater than themselves helping them to remain drug-free. This is a personal decision made by each addict.

FORMAT

Meeting formats vary from meeting to meeting. Some of the more common formats are topic/discussion meetings and speaker meetings. NA also holds open meetings, where anyone is welcome to attend; however, only addicts share at these meetings. Closed meetings are for addicts only.

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European Delegates Meeting**

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