



PUBLIC RELATIONS TRAINING

Sacramento Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous

05/19/2015

Narcotics Anonymous®



WELCOME!

Narcotics Anonymous®

INTRODUCTIONS

- What's your name?
- How did you first hear about NA?

WHY IS PUBLIC RELATIONS IMPORTANT?

- 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
- Prospective members hear about us through:
 - Public service announcements
 - Posters
 - Television ads
 - The Internet
 - Literature available in public places
 - Referral by judges, counselors, parole officers, corrections officers, or medical professionals
- **But perhaps most importantly through word of mouth!**
 - They’ve heard positive things about us from friends, family, or professionals
 - They have seen the program work for someone they know

WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC RELATIONS TASK GROUP DO?

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

HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Placing literature racks in public places frequented by addicts and keeping them stocked with IP's and meeting schedules
- Sending letters and emails to various organizations that affect the lives of addicts
- Giving presentations about Narcotics Anonymous
 - High Schools
 - Health Fairs
 - Prisons
 - Drug Court
 - Treatment Centers
- Holding PR learning events within the fellowship

WHO IS “THE PUBLIC”?

- Potential new members!
- Those that are close to or influence the lives of addicts:
 - Family members
 - Parole Officers
 - Corrections Officers
 - Treatment Facility Staff
 - Counselors
 - Medical professionals
 - Judges
 - Whoever else comes into contact with addicts

HOW DO WE AS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AFFECT OUR PUBLIC IMAGE?

- What we say, do, or not do, as individual members affects our relationships with the public and the still suffering addict:
 - Are we courteous to one another during and after meetings?
 - 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 welcome newer members?
 - Do we clean up after meetings?
 - Are we respectful to people outside the fellowship, especially those that provide us with our meeting spaces?
 - Do we wear NA logos or have NA bumper stickers and then act disrespectfully to others?
 - Do we act on PR matters alone?
 - Do we share our views on outside issues as if they were the views of NA?
 - Do we break our anonymity with members of the press?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TRADITIONS AND VALUES IMPORTANT TO PR?

Some of the principles vital to Public Relations:

- “Attraction rather than promotion”
- Cooperation vs. affiliation (matters of autonomy)
- Anonymity
- Unity
- Self-support

“ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION”

- Attraction:
 - When members act in a way that is attractive, newcomers and potential members are more likely to get a positive impression of NA
 - What 's attractive?
 - Reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery.
 - We can demonstrate the reliability of NA by showing up and fulfilling the obligations we make
- Promotion:
 - Exemplified in the difference between informing the public about NA and *insisting that NA is better* than any other recovery program.
 - Promotion is “fanfare, overblown claims, [and] celebrity endorsements.” (*It Works: How and Why*)

COOPERATION VS. AFFILIATION

We can cooperate with outside entities without compromising our traditions.

- Examples of **cooperation**:
 - Signing court cards as groups or individual members
 - 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
- Examples of **affiliation**:
 - Compromising our traditions and our autonomy to suit the needs of a particular facility
 - Taking any action that may blur the line between NA and the outside entity in the minds of prospective members

ANONYMITY

Anonymity supports our ultimate goal of focusing on our primary purpose instead of our individual concerns. The principles contained within our traditions encourage us to humbly join together in hope of forwarding the ideals of our fellowship.

- We work together to avoid being perceived as a sole representative of NA
- We avoid identifying ourselves as members at the level of press, radio, films, and the internet
- We focus on providing everyone an equal opportunity to recover within our fellowship

UNITY

NA is more attractive when we are able to demonstrate our unity. Our unity shows when we use our diversity as a strength in our meetings and our services. When a group of addicts from different backgrounds and with varying beliefs serves together, they highlight our unity in a way that is extraordinarily attractive.

- When we show our unity to the public we gain their trust. We show that we are a viable and effective program.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPEAKING AT AN NA MEETING AND SPEAKING AT A PR PRESENTATION?

- 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.

PRESENTING TO THE PUBLIC

Goals of presentation:

- Introduce NA and explain the nature of the NA program.
- Raise professional awareness of NA as a viable community recovery and ongoing peer support resource for relief from drug addiction.
- Provide NA contact information and gather contact information from all present.

BEFORE THE PRESENTATION

- Determine who is best suited to give the presentation. Match “task-to-talent”
- Rehearsing is a good thing!
- Make sure you have the IP’s and other literature appropriate for the presentation
- Dress appropriately to fit the environment, “business casual” at a minimum
- Remember to refrain from swearing

PRIOR TO THE EVENT

- Consider the setup of the room
 - Are there any sight barriers or hearing or lighting challenges to consider?
 - Are there any other distractions that might need to be addressed?
- Set up a literature table for handouts, IPs, or resource materials. Inform the audience where these materials are located
- Provide a box/basket for attendees to leave their business cards
- Be sure to be fully prepared to start and end the session **on time**

BEGINNING THE PRESENTATION – 10 MINS

- **Introductions**

- The lead presenter introduces all of the presenters for the session
- Introduce audience members or allow them to introduce themselves. Be sure to acknowledge any participants who helped to make the event possible, anyone representing the venue, etc.

- **Logistical issues**

- Ask the audience to turn off the ringers on their cell phones
- Explain where the bathrooms are, when the breaks will occur, what refreshments are available, etc.
- Inquire as to any special needs of any of the participants

BEGINNING THE PRESENTATION (CONT.)

- **Setup**

- Offer a brief outline of the agenda, why the presentation is taking place, and what to expect from it. Let the audience know that there will be time for audience participation and questions at the end.
- It is typical to ask at the beginning of the presentation: “How many are familiar with NA?” and “How many have had no exposure to or knowledge of NA?” This response may require you to adapt your presentation somewhat

THE PRESENTATION – 20 MINS

- **Origin of our name – Why “narcotics?”**
 - Terminology commonly used for all illegal substances at the time of our inception in 1953
 - NA is not a drug-specific program, but has universal appeal to all who have the disease of addiction
- **Historical background**
 - Adapted from AA; regular NA meetings started in Los Angeles, CA, in 1953
 - Explosive growth coincided with publishing of the book *Narcotics Anonymous* in 1983
 - In 2012, over 61,800 meetings in over 129 countries, speaking 77 languages

THE PRESENTATION (CONT.)

What is NA? – A vital resource

- Therapeutic value of one addict helping another – peer support network.
- Process for change through the Twelve Steps.
- The NA meeting – primary vehicle for delivering the NA message of recovery; peer support system and an environment within which people can help one another stop using drugs and learn to live drug-free.
- Meetings promote atmosphere of recovery from drug dependence.
- Members share personal experiences with addiction and recovery.
- Experienced older members support newer members.
- NA meetings and services are self-supporting by members' contributions (no fees or membership dues).
- Guidelines on how to conduct an NA meeting are available.
- A range of NA literature available in many languages on display here – (name)

THE PRESENTATION (CONT.)

- **Is NA culturally adaptable?**

- Long-term NA communities: Indian subcontinent, Japan, Western Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Iran.
- New growth: Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Africa.
- NA literature published in over 41 languages.
- If you know that your audience has ideas or opinions about challenges to adaptability and growth in your community, address your response to those ideas here.

THE PRESENTATION (CONT.)

- **NA Membership Survey**

- Survey handout – provide background on how/where survey is conducted.
- This survey has been carried out biennially since 1996.
- Gender: male 53%, female 47%.
- 63% rated “Importance of first NA meeting” very high or high.
- Influence to attend first NA meeting: Highest four were (1) another NA member, (2) treatment providers, (3) family, (4) court orders/drug courts. This shows the importance of our working with these organizations and families.
- Meeting attendance: members surveyed averaged 3.2 meetings per week.

THE PRESENTATION (CONT.)

- **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 PRESENTATION (CONT.)

- **Benefits to the client** (*specific for treatment, healthcare, and correctional audiences*)
 - NA assists with transition back into the community. Members can meet clients at meetings or provide rides to meetings. Often members will invite newer members to social gatherings such as dances or invite them out for refreshments following a meeting.
 - NA can support clients while they are still in treatment. If clients have phone privileges, they can contact NA members and begin building their peer support network.
 - NA provides a (peer based) support network and social community. Members maintain their support network through sponsorship, meeting attendance, and using a telephone network of recovering friends. This extends to the social community as members join together for movies, theatre, sports events, etc.
 - 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 offers drug-free social environment through conventions, dances, picnics.

THE PRESENTATION (CONT.)

- **Benefits to the professional** (*specific for treatment and healthcare audiences*)
 - Research states: improves retention of clients in treatment (*Each community will need to decide which researchers to identify for the audience. NAWS suggests studies conducted by J. F. Kelly, R. Stout, W. Zywaik [2006] and K. Humphries [2005] as two possible choices for you.*)
 - Immediate access for clients.
 - Valuable adjunct to treatment.

THE PRESENTATION (CONT.)

- **How to contact NA**

- Local contact information, SACFNA, PO Box 160343, Sacramento, CA 95816; website: sacfna.org; phone: 916-500-4810.
- NA World Services, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409; website: www.na.org; phone: 818.773.9999; FAX: 818.700.0700.

WRAP UP – 15 MINS

- Ask if there are any questions or comments.
 - If this is an audience that is familiar with NA and one that interacts with addicts in a professional capacity, you will want to make this portion as interactive as possible. The more you can derive from this type of audience and create a genuine exchange, the more effective the interaction will be.

WRAP UP (CONT.)

- **At the end of the presentation**
 - Point out the literature table, encourage the participants to take what they need, and to leave their business card.
 - Thank the audience for their attention, thank the dignitaries and the venue representatives again, and thank the other presenters.
 - Let the audience know that you will be available for additional questions after the presentation is over, and where you will be.
 - Ask the audience to fill out the session evaluation survey if you have decided it is valuable.

AFTERWARD

- **Onsite**
 - Collect the surveys, sign-in sheet, and business cards.
 - Be sure the room is left in order; collect any unused or discarded session material.
- **After the event**
 - Write thank-you notes to all who attended.
 - At regularly scheduled intervals, follow up with all who attended.

TIPS FOR ANSWERING PUBLIC FAQS

- Responding to questions in your own words often works best – the responses listed below can be used as a guide.
 - Short, simple, direct responses work best. Audience members or those who stop by an exhibit booth usually have limited time and will appreciate a brief response.
 - When we use NA specific language such as “home group”, please explain the meaning for the audience.
 - Try to keep responses focused on the questions asked. Remember, the goal is to inform members of the public about Narcotics Anonymous – personal disclosure is usually not appropriate or helpful. (For example, sharing about the step you are working, how many members you sponsor, and your service commitments is not necessarily relevant.)

GROUP EXERCISE

- We will roll play a Q&A session with the public.
 - We will offer difficult questions, and anyone who wishes, by raising their hand, may give an answer. We'll then discuss and possibly refine the answers.
 - Some questions will be hard. This is a safe place to make mistakes. In fact, that's the idea today. Have fun with it.
 - We will offer questions for a while, and may ask you to suggest a tough question a little later.

PUBLIC FAQs

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.

PUBLIC FAQs

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.)

PUBLIC FAQS

Are most of your members heroin addicts?

- 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.

PUBLIC FAQs

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.

PUBLIC FAQS

It was briefly mentioned that NA has a variety of recovery literature. What kinds of literature and recovery materials do you have, and how can I obtain these?

- NA has six book-length pieces:
 - *Narcotics Anonymous, Basic Text*
 - *Living Clean: The Journey Continues*
 - *It Works: How and Why*, which contains essays about the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
 - *Just for Today: Daily Meditations for Recovering Addicts Sponsorship*
 - *The NA Step Working Guides*, a companion piece to *It Works: How and Why*.
- We also have a host of informational pamphlets, booklets, and a quarterly journal called *The NA Way Magazine*. All of our literature and recovery materials can be obtained directly from www.na.org or by contacting the local NA area or region.

PUBLIC FAQs

How can we schedule an NA presentation?

- At the end of this presentation, please provide us with your contact information and we will arrange for a presentation with you.

PUBLIC FAQs

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.

PUBLIC FAQs

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.

PUBLIC FAQS

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.

PUBLIC FAQS

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.

PUBLIC FAQS

What happens at an NA meeting? (cont.)

- 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.

PUBLIC FAQs

Is NA connected with any religious organizations?

- No. 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.