

## Service Structure: Challenges & Resolution.

Many Groups register with A.S.I.S. and show up yearly to the Fellowship Service Conference. We can learn more about service within our Groups by talking with other Groups. This is also the place where we can carry our Group's Conscience. We gather together to help support one another.

Whether a Group chooses to be a part A.S.I.S. or not rests with their autonomy, they may still register the Group with A.S.I.S. Many times local Areas and Regions will remove Groups from their meeting lists that use Historical literature and documents. We need to be aware of the rough road ahead if we choose this route for our Group. We also need to make the locals aware of our Twelve Traditions and what makes the Group a Group.

If a Group decides not to be a part of the local service structure, such as an area or a region, they should be aware of certain challenges. Using historical literature especially will make a Group a target for questions and even animosity. A Group may show up in area or region minutes even though they don't participate. The Group may be called "Not NA" or labeled as a "Rogue Group." As long as a Group follows the Twelve Traditions they are an NA group. If such events arise the group can choose to ignore or address the claims.

There are several ways to address an area or region. One way is to attend an area meeting and calmly explain why you choose not to be involved in their service structure and what your Group does. If you feel that you cannot explain in person, whether it is because you are angry or a scheduling conflict, then you can write a letter. Explain in the letter how you heard about the claims, why you choose not to be apart of the structure, that your Group follows all Traditions and ask that all mention of your Group in a slanderous manner be stopped. Also invite them to visit your Group so they can see for themselves what goes on. Always remember: you have the freedom to choose if you want to be a part of any service structure!

# Formation of an N.A. Group



**Anonymi Foundation**

**P.O. Box 4404  
Allentown PA 18105**

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**Literary Work in progress.  
Please copy & share this with your  
local home group for Review and  
Input.**

**Developed and Distributed by the  
Groups in A.S.I.S. for NA,  
The Anonymi Foundation**

**Please send your input to  
[nahelp.org@gmail.com](mailto:nahelp.org@gmail.com)**

**World:**

**[www.nahelp.org](http://www.nahelp.org)  
[nahelp.org@gmail.com](mailto:nahelp.org@gmail.com)**

**Netherlands: [www.nahelp.nl](http://www.nahelp.nl)  
[nahelp.nl@gmail.com](mailto:nahelp.nl@gmail.com)**

**United Kingdom:**

**[www.freerecovery.org.uk](http://www.freerecovery.org.uk)**

**Sweden: [www.nahelp.se](http://www.nahelp.se)**

**[AntigenFriaNA@gmail.com](mailto:AntigenFriaNA@gmail.com)**

**Literary Work in Progress  
Input & Review  
Material Only**

### **Starting a Meeting:**

Starting an NA meeting can be rather simple. We can start by looking around our community at different facilities such as public agencies, libraries, and religious organizations. We contact them by phone or knocking on their door. We let them know who we are and ask if they have any rooms for rent at a rate that will meet the group's needs. Once we find a location we can then choose a time & day we will be meeting. We also need to be aware of the building we are wishing to meet in. Does the building have handicap ramps, wide doors, and are the bathroom's wheelchair accessible?  
Is the room that the meeting will be held in large enough for the Group?  
Does the facility have a kitchen that the Group can use to make coffee or have refreshments stored?  
Will the facility trust the Group with the key? Will the facility be open on holidays? We need to be aware of these things before we start.

### **What type of format should we use?**

Many Groups choose to study literature such as the Grey Book, Approval Form, Third Edition Revised with original fourth and ninth Traditions (Baby Blue), etc. Some Groups choose to study a paragraph at a time, and share on that paragraph.  
Others may read a Step or a Tradition each meeting. Some Groups may write literature in an open participatory process, and review them. Some Groups choose to have speaker meetings. There are a lot of different formats a Group can choose to do; we just need to be creative.

### **What are "open" & "closed" meetings?**

"Closed" NA Meetings are only for addicts or those who think they may have a drug problem. Closed meetings provide an atmosphere that addicts feel more comfortable attending because they're more certain that those attending will be able to identify with them. Newcomers may feel more comfortable at closed meetings for the same reason. At the beginning of a closed meeting the chairperson often reads a statement explaining why the meeting is closed and offering to direct non-addicts who may be attending the meeting to an open meeting.

"Open" NA meetings are just that—open to anyone who wants to attend. Some groups use open

meetings to do Public Information. Some "Closed" Meetings may make their group an "Open" Meeting once a month for celebrations and allow members to invite their family and friends.

Many Groups choose to ask an addict on any mind altering mood changing chemical to limit their share, not share at all, or speak with someone after the meeting. They choose to do this to maintain an atmosphere of recovery.

### **Forming the Group:**

When two or more addicts come together to help each other stay clean, they may form a Narcotics Anonymous Group. All members of a Group are drug addicts; all drug addicts with a desire to stop using are eligible for membership. As a Group, they are self-supporting. The Group should never take loans from the facility they meet in or any outside contributions. A Group's single goal is to help drug addicts recover through the application of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. A Group should have no affiliation outside of Narcotics Anonymous; this includes having no affiliation with local probation offices, parole offices, treatment centers, halfway houses, or other Fellowships. When a Group verifies an attendance paper from one of these agencies it implies affiliation with them, we should never verify attendance papers. Any agency that mandates an addict to N.A. can be contacted by the Group and a Public Information presentation may be presented to them.

A Group's public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. Our attraction is that we are successes in our own right. As groups gather together we offer recovery. We have found the success of our program speaks for itself; this is our "promotion".

### **Trusted Servants:**

When a Group is formed there are many service positions that need to be filled, such as a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Group Service Representative (GSR), and possibly an Alternate GSR. Their responsibilities vary and it is suggested to have clean time requirements to serve the Group. The Secretary is responsible to have the meeting room open on time and ready for the meeting, set up literature, and keep the minutes for the business meeting and Group's conscience. The Treasurer is responsible for the Group's funds.

They are responsible to make sure the rent is paid and other expenses are paid.

The GSR is responsible for carrying the Group's conscience to the Fellowship Service Conference or Local Area. It is strongly suggested that a Group chooses one structure to carry their conscience to. When choosing Trusted Servants a Group should look for accountability. Each member of the Group should be accountable to the Group, that's why we call them Trusted Servants.

### **Public Information:**

Many Groups choose to do Public Information, because most are not relying on the local Area or Region to do it for us. We print fliers and get them out to public places such as bulletin boards, laundry mats, convenience stores; anywhere an addict might see it and find us.

We also do this because we are not relying on the outside agencies to mandate addicts to our groups. This is the Labor of Love, when a Group can get together to hang posters and fliers in efforts to make the addict that still suffers able to find us, we grow.

We can create our own phone lines too. We get the number out to the local newspapers, and put signs around our towns. We do this so that any addict with the desire to stop using can find us. This is vital for our Group's survival.

Without Public Information how would anyone find us? We need to hold our Group accountable when we do Public Information. We are never finished, there's always more we can do. There's always an addict we haven't reached yet that has not become aware of where we are and who we are.

### **Open Participation Literature Writing:**

One of the biggest growing experiences with a Group can come from writing literature together. All we do is sit down with our Group, come up with an idea and write. It's that simple. We can schedule a day with our Group to start writing at the Group's business meeting. When addicts come together to share and write, we call this creative freedom. The Group's Autonomy allows a Group to do this. We can write a pamphlet, a booklet, or a book. As long as its recovery orientated and carries our message it's useful material. We can also approve these writings within our Group. No one can tell a Group what you can and can't approve.