

Panel Orientation Package
Piedmont Area H&I Subcommittee
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I. ORIENTATION

H & I Orientation is a process which allows NA members to become familiar with H & I work so they aren't thrust into it without any preparation for this important service. Many people are quite apprehensive about getting into H & I for a variety of reasons. Don't be put off: everyone has something to offer.

This packet has been developed by the Piedmont Area H & I subcommittee to give a brief outline of some the specifics that will be important for you as a panel member. If you decide you want to learn more about this rewarding type of service, the H & I Handbook gives a much more in depth look at H & I work in Narcotics Anonymous.

This Area, as a part of Orientation, brings those that are new to H & I to their first meeting or two as an observer. This will give you a chance to just listen at first and see how an H & I Meeting really works. Also, this helps many feel more comfortable when they come on the panel.

H & I volunteers must attend a business meeting and be on the H & I volunteer list – see the Subcommittee Guidelines for more information.

II. THE MEETING FORMAT

There are a variety of formats that we use when carry the message into hospitals and other institutions. There are some key points to keep in mind with all of them.

The format of any particular H & I meeting may vary from meeting to meeting, depending on the type of facility that we are servicing. In short term facilities the format will be more focused on the Panel Members carrying a message into the residents, while at a long term facility we may encourage more participation from the residents. The point is that in H & I we are carrying the message into the facility. We are not there to dump our problems but rather to help these addicts become aware of what NA is and how it works in our lives. H & I meetings also differ from regular NA meetings because they are a service provided by the Area H & I Subcommittee. Only those specifically invited by the Panel Leader are to attend from the outside. In effect an H & I meeting is an introduction to our fellowship for the addict who does not have full access to regular NA meetings.

The Panel Leader should let you know what the format is before the meeting and should be able to answer any questions that you may have about it. If you would like to see examples of a variety of formats, there is an explanation of several of them in the H & I Handbook.

Whatever format is chosen we normally get the residents involved with a question and answer session at some point in the meeting. Also, you may be asked to stay after the meeting for a while to talk with the residents.

When choosing a format, the first thing to consider is the Fifth Tradition, "Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." The format should provide a structure which ensures that the NA message of recovery is carried. For this reason, open sharing meetings are not typically used in an H&I meeting/presentation. The best formats are those in which outside members are delivering a message of recovery.

Specific Formats

Speaker Presentation – one or more members share their experience, strength, and hope. That tends to lay out some basic symptoms and characteristics of the disease, and show how NA has brought about recovery.

Panel Presentation – rather than all sharing on the same topic, panel members usually take one aspect of recovery in NA each and share on that subject. This way topics that supply a variety of relevant information and experience on different subjects can be selected in advance.

Topic Discussion (appropriate only in long-term facilities) – this type of meeting allows for the participation of the residents. One or two members from the outside normally share first to set the tone and direction of the meeting. The leader, or chairperson, may call on speakers one at a time rather than letting the discussion go spontaneously. Some suggested Topics from the H & I Handbook are:

1. Any IP or selection from the Basic Text
2. H.O.W (honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness)
3. Surrender or Acceptance
4. The basics (Don't use, meetings, phone numbers, literature, sponsor, the steps)
5. H.A.L.T.S. (Don't get too: hungry, angry, lonely, tired, or serious)
6. Responsible for our own recovery
7. Freedom from active addiction
8. Identify rather than compare
9. Spiritual, not religious, program
10. Going to any lengths

Literature Discussion- parts of the Basic Text or other conference-approved literature are read and discussed. Passing the literature around and allowing everyone a chance to read can be an easy way to get the residents involved. Residents can be involved with the sharing, but if it gets out of hand be sure to have a panel member prepared to shift the tone back to recovery.

Questions and Answers – allows residents to write or state questions and topics they may feel frightened or embarrassed about.

Step Study (appropriate for long-term facilities) – the Basic Text, Narcotics Anonymous, or other conference-approved literature is used to read the step and then the material is discussed. It is important to have members on the panel who have practiced the particular step being studied.

III. PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

Please **DO NOT** volunteer for an H & I meeting if:

- 1) You are not sure that you want to attend or;
- 2) You are not sure that you will be able to attend the meeting. If something comes up and you will be unable to make it, try to give the Panel Leader at least 48 hours notice so that he/she can invite someone to fill your spot. **DO NOT** ask someone to take your place or even to come along with you to the meeting. The Panel Leader is the only one that is allowed to invite people to the H & I meeting.

IV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

It is a good idea to encourage questions concerning what was presented at the meeting or other general questions about NA, but there are a few things you should keep in mind. Please remember that NA has no opinion on outside issues. Occasionally, during the question and answer period or when talking after the meeting, the residents will ask us to give an opinion on outside issues like:

- 1) Other recovery programs or Fellowships.
- 2) The facility i.e. "Do I need to stay in treatment?"
- 3) Many other issues that do not pertain to recovery from addiction in the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship.

It is very important that we are not drawn into these types of discussions! Always remember to share your experience, strength and hope about YOUR recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

V. WORKING WITH OTHERS

A. MEN WITH MEN, WOMEN WITH WOMEN.

When working closely on a one on one basis with the residents, men should work with men and women should work with women. Experience has taught us that we can avoid many potential problems if we follow this simple guideline. Problems that arise in this area can seriously damage the credibility of Narcotics Anonymous. Even though we may be innocent of any indiscretions, just the appearance of problems of this nature can do irreparable harm. PLEASE USE SOUND JUDGEMENT IN THIS AREA.

B. ADOLESCENTS

While working with adolescents in an H & I setting, there are some special concerns to keep in mind. First, you must be sure not to talk down to these younger members; we all suffer from addiction and we are all equal in NA. Adolescents seem to respond strongly to role modeling and tend to look up to and model themselves after significant adults around them. We are responsible members of NA and we need to be aware that our message should be exercised in the area of appearance or dress and obscene language should be kept to a minimum.

VI. H & I REQUIREMENTS

You have been invited to carry the message of recovery into an H & I meetings because;

- 1) You have at least 3 months abstinence from all drugs.
- 2) You have a strong NA message of recovery from addiction
- 3) You seem willing to comply with all H & I subcommittee's and the facilities requirements.
- 4) You are a responsible and caring person.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR H&I PARTICIPATION

DO'S

DO make directions of outside meetings to available to residents.

DO clarify the institution's rules with anyone you bring in.

DO start and end on time!

DO briefly explain what H & I is and why it is that type of meeting.

DO make it clear that NA is a separate and distinct thing from the facility as well as other fellowships.

DO try to get residents involved, especially those in long-term facilities(i.e. readings, handing out chips).

DO obey all dress codes. Exercise common sense and respect fo the facility in what you wear.

DO keep staff aware of your whereabouts at all times.

DO screen all panel members carefully, especially regarding the clean time or other requirements.

DO Adhere to the security regulations at all times

DO Arrive early to set up the meeting

DO Adhere to the clean time requirements of the treatment facility and the H&I committee

DO Ensure that a clear NA message of recovery is carried by all panel members

DO Use the literature recommended for H&I work. [As listed in the H & I Handbook this includes Meeting Lists, Basic Text, It Works: How and Why, White Book, Introductory Guide to NA, Behind the Walls, Staying Clean on the Outside, For the Newcomer, For Those in Treatment, Youth and Recovery, Sponsorship, Just For Today, Am I an Addict?, Recovery and Relapse, Just For Today Meditations, In Time of Illness]

DO Stamp all literature with the local phonenumber

DO Explain the language that we use (addict, clean, recovery, clean time) and why we use it (the First Step of NA and Sixth Tradition of NA)

DO Emphasize the importance of a sponsor, regular meeting attendance, and group commitments after release

DON'T

DON'T break another person's anonymity or tell his or her story.

DON'T debate any issues involving institutions rules or regulations.

DON'T get involved in discussions on outside issues, remember why we are here.

DON'T while sharing, put too much focus on what it was like. They already know!

DON'T debate which drugs are acceptable. NA is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs.

DON'T discuss conditions within the institution, or opinions about staff members.

DON'T carry excessive cash or wear expensive or flashy jewelry.

DON'T show favoritism to any resident(s)

DON'T give out any other person's address or phone number.

DON'T carry in any contraband items, such as cigarettes (if applicable) or weapons.

DON'T attend H&I facilities alone. This is strongly suggested.

DON'T discuss resident(s) with the treatment facility staff.

DON'T give anyone in the facility your address or telephone number

Remember at all times that you have a responsibility to the institution, to the resident's and to NA. If you observe the above suggestions and follow the Twelve Traditions, you will uphold your responsibilities to all three.