



# Recovery Speaker Guidelines

The Speaker Guidelines are the framework for our members speaking at school – and community – based events.

**They provide clear and consistent messaging for our presentations, which our hosts rely upon.**

## INTRODUCE YOURSELF AS “A PERSON IN RECOVERY”.

**START** with your name, age, the school you attended, our mission, why participating is important to you, what being in recovery means, and why you abstain from alcohol/drugs.

**ASK** the audience if they're aware of the **GOOD SAMARITAN LAW** (*see below*).

**KEEP IT SHORT** – Speak for 15 minutes. If you are one of three presenters, the first presenter can “lead” and do the introduction. Always use age relatable content, which will keep your audience engaged throughout.

**MAKE IT PERSONAL** – Discuss where you were at their age; include your feelings, behavior, activities, and school performance, prior to substance use. Be specific about how you felt, so they can relate to you better.

**SHARE** how and when the path of drug/alcohol misuse started. Emotional stressors, familial problems, traumatic events, or any co-occurring issues. Emphasize age-relatable moments.

**ENCOURAGE STUDENTS** to ask for help and opt for positive choices. Provide healthy alternatives and discuss the importance of supportive friends who value smart and healthy choices.

## GOOD SAMARITAN LAW

In regard to alcohol and drug overdoses, this law offers legal protection to people who give reasonable assistance to those who are, or who they believe to be, injured, ill, in peril, or otherwise incapacitated.

The protection is intended to reduce bystanders' hesitation to assist, for fear of being sued or prosecuted for unintentional injury or wrongful death.

**STAY ON TOPIC: JOURNEY FROM YOUTH -> ADDICTION -> RECOVERY & RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU!**

**DEFINE TERMS** such as detox (aka withdrawal management), rehab, abstinence, recovery, stigma, and withdrawal. **Explain** symptoms of withdrawal, alcohol, opiates, and benzodiazepines (i.e. Xanax); Inform about overdose; fentanyl.

**ASK QUESTIONS** – Students may not be familiar with words/terms.

**WHAT DOES ABSTINENCE MEAN?** – Define the word abstinence. How you live a life free of drugs and alcohol as part of recovery, and the choices you make as a result of a clear and sober mind.

**REFERENCE NAMES** of school administrators and/or law enforcement, only in regard to positive experiences or of neutral information.

**AVOID** glorifying drug/alcohol use, detailed illegal activities, long stories/tangents, and talking about prison activity. Be mindful when discussing how drugs and alcohol made you feel, frame it carefully for educating youth. Remember, this is a prevention-based presentation; they are not your peers.

## Q&A!

Leave adequate time for students to ask questions at the end of your presentation. If they have none, ask them questions.



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**NO PROFANITY & NO SLANG WORDS** - *Please be responsible for the words you use – they matter!*

**DON'T WEAR** midribs or clothing w/opinionated statements (not including sports teams). Be mindful of what you are wearing.

**DON'T ASSUME** they know the terms/words you are using. Ask the students if they need clarification.

**DON'T LABEL** any of the students as alcoholics or addicts, or that they will become one — just that substance use is the potential path. Keep it generalized, and do not go off the topic of addiction to make points. Stay in the scope of substance use disorder and your personal experience.

**DON'T SINGLE OUT** any students to make a point for any reason.

**DON'T TAKE PICTURES OF STUDENTS' FACES** when taking photos of presentations for AinR™ purposes. Photos are to be taken with staff permission only.

**DON'T SPEAK ON OUTSIDE ISSUES** (i.e. religious, political, causes), or anything beyond the scope of these guidelines as it pertains to your own experience and the general facts of addiction.

**NEVER GIVE YOUR PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION TO STUDENTS** - You may give the school staff your info if they wish to reach you about connecting with a particular student under their supervision. If you prefer not to give your information, you can refer them to your AinR™ Coordinator. It is not part of our organization's mission, nor in our scope of practice, to meet with any students outside of staff supervision.

**NO PROMOTING OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR BUSINESSES** - These include AA, NA, and professional services during your speaking presentation in schools, to the media and to the general public. Exceptions made if it is part of school agenda, although please share resources valuable to you on your journey.

## SHARING RESOURCE INFORMATION

You can offer to speak with anyone after the presentation to offer more info. If you are asked for a list of resources from staff, and are unclear how to answer, ask a local AinR™ Coordinator. If students want more resource information, and you are unsure how to answer a question, refer them back to their school counselor.

## ABOUT 12-STEP PROGRAMS:

**AinR™ is a separate organization educating on substance use prevention and not affiliated with 12-step programs. You are not breaking any AA/NA traditions.**

Although, be mindful to limit sharing any AA/NA experiences. You are speaking as "a person in recovery" (instead of the AA/NA verbiage such as "My name is (---), and I am an alcoholic/addict"). No need to speak about steps, sponsorship, or any AA/NA rhetoric. You can refer to AA/NA as "12-step programs".

**RESPECT AA/NA ANONYMITY during presentations.** Do not refer to other members as part of any AA or NA program fellowship ties - They can be support/friends, etc., other than AA or NA fellowship friends.

**AA or NA can be a resource for students:**

**AA:** (800) 245-1377 or [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) **NA:** (908) 687-8566 or [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

**All members must read the AinR™ Speaker Guidelines and get vetted by a coordinator prior to their 1st speaking presentation.**

# AinR™ Social Media & Publicity POLICIES

- **ABSOLUTELY NO STUDENTS' FACES ARE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED OR VIDEOTAPED** (as per confidentiality laws).
- Always ask staff if pictures or videos can be used on our social media and email platforms.
- Personal page posts are permitted, but obtain the permission of coordinators, social media managers, and other members present before posting. When posting, mention and tag **Alumni in Recovery**. You are a member of the organization, so please post as such.
- It is not permitted to have conversations online with any students.
- Follow us on social media and encourage others to share and like our page.

## A NOTE ON PERSONAL DISCLOSURE:

Be mindful of what you share in detail. As a public community and school speaker, your story may need to be curtailed and generalized.

- As **Alumni in Recovery** becomes more well-known, we are exposed to more coverage in newspapers, social media, radio, and local television news. This publicity is core to our mission of raising awareness through our experiences for they are powerful testimonies. However, we realize that each Recovery Member and Parent Member has a deeply personal story that is theirs alone to determine how it should or should not be disseminated. As a result, we all need to realize that **Alumni in Recovery** cannot control the coverage of events, especially large community-based events. With this in mind, each **Alumni in Recovery** speaker should carefully prepare their presentation before their speaking event. You should just presume that anything that you share will be covered by news media or other coverage of the event.
- Your stories are immensely powerful and moving, and we have all seen how your bravery in sharing them has made **Alumni in Recovery** grow into the success that it is today, but your ability to continue to share your journey relies on respect for your privacy and it is critical to all of us that you feel comfortable to set whatever boundaries you feel appropriate.



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