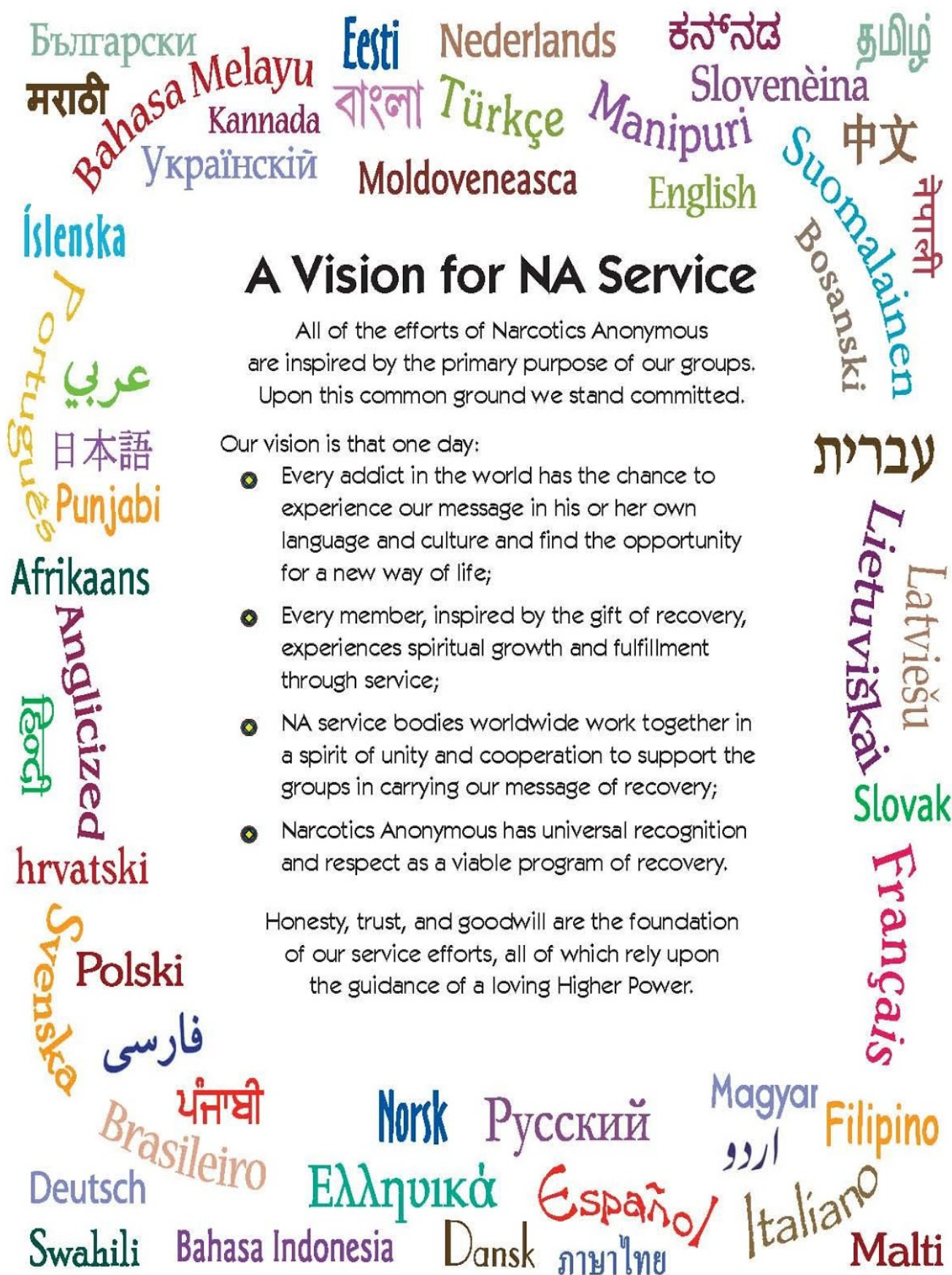


GSR SURVIVAL GUIDE



A Vision for NA Service

All of the efforts of Narcotics Anonymous are inspired by the primary purpose of our groups. Upon this common ground we stand committed.

Our vision is that one day:

- Every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life;
- Every member, inspired by the gift of recovery, experiences spiritual growth and fulfillment through service;
- NA service bodies worldwide work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to support the groups in carrying our message of recovery;
- Narcotics Anonymous has universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

Honesty, trust, and goodwill are the foundation of our service efforts, all of which rely upon the guidance of a loving Higher Power.

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INTRODUCTION

This manual has been designed as a tool to assist those trying to understand the role of Group Service Representatives (GSRs) and their alternates (Alt-GSRs). It is not intended to be a complete description of all of the duties of the GSRs and Alt-GSRs. *This document has not been approved by any service body and is not NA approved literature.* Those interested in better understanding the workings of the KIS Area and the role of GSRs and their alternates are encouraged to read and learn the Guide To Local Service. If you have any questions or concerns about the functions of a GSR and/or a Alt-GSR you are encouraged to contact the current administrative representatives of the Keep It Simple Area for assistance. Principles that a GSR and Alt-GSR should be familiar with are best understood by reading and discussing the following information:

- The Twelve Steps of NA
- The Twelve Traditions of NA
- The Twelve Concepts for NA Service

DESCRIPTION

Group Service Representative (GSR)

A Group Service Representative (GSR) role is very similar to the positions of a Regional Committee Member (RCM) and a Regional Delegate (RD). These leadership positions are seen as “conduits of information” in various segments of NA service. Remember that at no time do any of these positions govern: they are only trusted to serve as a resource for broader needs of NA as a whole. A GSR is the member that an NA HomeGroup elects to represent them at the Area Service Committee (ASC). A GSR votes for his/ her HomeGroups decisions and provides group conscience in discussions at the Area Service Committee meetings. The ASC has been incorporated and is chartered in SC and is recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt, nonprofit (501c3) corporation which serves the Fellowship of NA South Carolina.

Accountable

The GSR is directly responsible to the HomeGroup that elects them. They are the communication link between the worldwide fellowship and the Home Groups through their local Area Service Committee (ASC).

Communication Link

A GSR/Alt-GSR is responsible for the two-way communication between the HomeGroups and NA services worldwide. A GSR reports at the ASC meetings any group activities and concerns and carries back reports from the ASC/RSC/WSC to their HomeGroup. The position of GSR is one of the most vital links in the NA service structure — linking local NA communities to more geographically diverse communities on a State, National and Worldwide level.

Commitment

The position of GSR is usually a two-year commitment: the first year being served as Alternate-GSR and the second year served as GSR. GSRs also volunteer to be a part of a ASC subcommittee to get work done and to stay informed on various initiatives. Tradition 4 is a good source for this aspect of service. Not only do HomeGroup's contribute financial resources to accomplish service work, but human resources as well (the GSR's).

Additional information about the position of the GSR can be found in the Guide to Local Services (GTLS).

Alternate Group Service Representative (Alt-GSR)

The Alt-GSR is a training position and the GSR and other trusted servants of the ASC/RSC are the mentors. It is generally a two-year commitment: the first year is served as Alt-GSR and the second year is served as the GSR. The Alt-GSR substitutes for the GSR whenever the GSR is absent or out of the

room during the ASC. The Alt-GSR will step up and fulfill the role of GSR if, for some reason, the GSR is not able to finish his/her term. It is very important that the Alt-GSR learn the role and responsibilities of the GSR. The GSR passes along experience, strength, and hope on how to best perform the duties of the GSR position. Willingness is the key.

Full Participant

The Alt-GSR should attend all ASC meetings and is considered a non-voting participant, but their participation is valued by the ASC. The Alt-GSR is an important part of the Area Service structure. The alternate should become familiar with all of the responsibilities of the GSR.

The Alt-GSR is directly responsible to the HomeGroup that elects them. The Alt-GSR is also volunteer to be a member of ASC service.

RESOURCES

Documents that a GSR & Alt-GSR should be familiar with:

- HomeGroup Policies and Procedures
- Local Area Policy and Guidelines
- RSC Guide to Policy
- The Guide to Local Services in NA
- The Twelve Concepts for NA Service
- Guidelines of the ASC subcommittee(s)
- Online resources: NA.org "For Our Members"
- Become familiar with group decision making models and methods like consensus based decision making and/or Robert's Rules of Order.

Service Publications a GSR and Alt-GSR should subscribe

- The Conference Agenda Report (CAR) - is generated by NA World Services (NAWS) shortly before the World Service Conference (WSC) and may be available at the ASC, provides information on the upcoming conference and the status of world services.
- The Conference Approval Track (CAT) – is a World Services proposed planning document needing input at the World Service Conference.
- The NA Way Magazine: available by free subscription on na.org
- NAWS News: available by free subscription on na.org
- All Service and Recovery related publications that are submitted to the fellowship for review and input
- Fellowship Issue Discussion Topics, Project related Input and Review documents and NAWS Discussion/Bulletin Boards on na.org

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

(This should not be considered all-inclusive)

Attend all ASC meetings (up to 12 per year)

The GSR and Alt-GSR is responsible for transportation and support to and from ASC meetings. Representatives should stay for the whole ASC meeting as this is essential to best serve the HomeGroup.

Reports to ASC Meetings

Reports should be provided on the status of the HomeGroup, especially addressing any concerns and to seek feedback on topics from other HomeGroups. The GSR should provide a report on how his/her Area is doing that is well written(or typed) so that others can clearly understand the content. The report can include (but is not limited to) the number of meetings per week, the average number of members in attendance at the HomeGroup meetings (and number of newcomers), the status of HomeGroup Service and any involvement in ASC subcommittees, the state of HomeGroup finances, upcoming events in the HomeGroup and concerns that the HomeGroup or the GSR may want to bring before the ASC. The report will be turned in to the ASC Secretary and published in the ASC minutes.

Reports to HomeGroup

Matters at the Area level of service, Regional level as well as matters at the World Services as reported by the RCM/Alt-RCM, RD/Alt-RD and other World Level Trusted Servants. GSRs should keep their HomeGroup informed about ASC finances and fund flow. The GSR should carry back any proposals referred to the HomeGroups or Areas and any topic needing input, discussion and feedback. Not all information needing clarification will be in the form of a "motion or proposal". These topics demand member patience and time, and careful discussion. GSRs should get HomeGroup input on as many issues as possible that will come up at the Area, Regional, Zonal or Worldwide level.

Conscience

GSRs vote on all proposals/motions and issues at ASC meetings. There will be times when the GSR has a HomeGroup conscience on an issue--this means that the HomeGroup has told them how to vote on a particular issue, motion or proposal. But there will be many more times when the GSR is asked to vote without direct, HomeGroup conscience--this means that GSRs must have a general sense about what their HomeGroup would need, and what is best for the common welfare of NA as a whole and vote appropriately. This is a great responsibility. The GSR should involve the Alt-GSR in this process and help them understand how such a decision is made. The GSR is the single point of accountability for their HomeGroup at the ASC meeting.

Servants

GSRs & Alt-GSRs are strongly encouraged to volunteer and participate on one or more ASC subcommittees. This involves being a part of the subcommittee and attending meetings of that subcommittee. This assists the GSR in staying in touch with the Area process and assists the ASC by providing participation by HomeGroup representatives.

Trusted

The GSR should always be training an Alt-GSR. They should help the Alt-GSR understand the Area processes and how the ASC functions.

Broadening Our View

The GSR studies and workshops the Conference Agenda Report and shares the information with their HomeGroup and ASC, secures a HomeGroup decision on motions, proposals and discussion topics contained, and return these decisions and feedback to the RCM. The World Service Conference occurs every other year (even years).

Network

The GSR and Alt-GSR should strive to get to know other GSRs, Alt-GSRs, ASC administrative members and subcommittee chairpersons.

HELPFUL KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS

- Learn the skill of facilitating workshops for gathering fellowship input on various topics.
- Learn the skill of being a conduit of information
- GSRs should understand “The Rules of Order of the ASC”: especially the discussion process and the decision-making procedures of the ASC as well as the creation of motions or proposals.
- The GSR and Alt-GSR should have an understanding of ASC subcommittees and how these subcommittees can help his/her local NA communities and HomeGroups.
- The GSR & Alt-GSR should strive to understand the best fund flow practices for NA Worldwide and how their funds are being used. They should know to send all contributions to the ASC Treasurer or other NA Service bodies. All donations should be clearly marked as to where it comes from and should have a contact name and phone number in case there is a question. If a donation check is not deposited in a timely manner, the GSR should immediately contact the ASC Treasurer or other trusted servants.
- The GSR and Alt-GSR should understand Regional and World Services in general terms and know how this relates to Area and HomeGroup service
- The Conference Agenda Report (CAR) and Conference Approval Track (CAT) and know how to distribute and manage.
- How to deliver ASC motions or proposals to his/her HomeGroup.
- Terms and abbreviations used in NA service publications.
- How to fill out and submit an ASC motion form
- How to fill out HomeGroup update forms for World Services
- Roles and responsibilities of the Area and Regional officers, especially the RCM and the Alt-RCM.

REPORTING

HOMEGROUP REPORTING (ideas and suggestions)

1. Number of members in HomeGroup along with average attendance per meeting and newcomer reports (ie newcomer attendance).
2. Number of HomeGroup meetings per week

3. General status of HomeGroup Service position vacancies, finances and elections. If the HomeGroup needs help from other HomeGroups or the Area Service body.
4. Subcommittee Involvement:
 - a. *What Subcommittees homegroup members are involved with?*
 - b. *Questions to any Subcommittees.*
5. Activities and Events
A listing of any upcoming events, their dates/ times and specific location. Information on events should be sent to the RCM for publishing on Regional Web site (CRNA.org). This information may also be sent to WSO for listing in the NA Way. Communication is the key to successful service endeavors.
6. Any motions or proposals brought from HomeGroup to ASC to be voted on.
7. A list of requests for help and/or HomeGroup concerns (In keeping with the Guide To Local Service suggestion that Areas are a resource for HomeGroup: this is the meat of and most important part of the report.)
8. Comments about how the ASC might better serve your area.
9. Concerns/Feedback

AREA REPORTING (ideas and suggestions)

1. How many homegroups were present and/or absent.
2. Current ASC financial statement.
3. Information pertaining to Area sub-committees including:
 - a. *Area subcommittees in need support.*
 - b. *A listing of current projects being undertaken by area or regional subcommittees.*
 - c. *Future plans of area and regional subcommittees.*
 - d. *Area and Regional Sub-committee Service Day*
4. Highlights of RCM or RD report. Note: due to the timeliness of arrival of ASC minutes it may be difficult to cover all aspects of this or any other report. It is suggested that highlights be included in your report. Once the minutes arrive, it would be possible to include entire reports or extracts of reports or it may be more practical to leave a copy of these documents with the area secretary in case a GSR or other interested member requests the information. It is the GSR's responsibility to inform his/her homegroup about all matters affecting the NA fellowship and could be planned through regular Home Group workshops or ASC/RSC workshops.
5. A written summary of old and new business motions/proposals: the actual ASC minutes should be used as a resource. It is very important to include motions/proposals as written in area minutes that are to be decided by the homegroups. It is also advisable to note some pros and cons to these discussions that might require more in-depth explanation. This would insure that an objective group conscience could be obtained. This could decrease the potential for controversy or misunderstanding that could occur due to insufficient information being provided to an area.
6. A listing of group concerns and notes on solutions offered. Although this information may not currently apply to an area, it may in the future.

THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

SERVICE STRUCTURE

The following is a brief description of the service units of Narcotics Anonymous. A more complete description of service can be found in A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous.

The NA Group

NA groups are local, informal associations of recovering addicts. They are the foundation of the NA service structure. Groups are formed for the primary purpose of carrying the NA message of recovery, and all of their activities should reflect that purpose. Conducting Narcotics Anonymous meetings is the primary activity of an NA group. The group may conduct its own affairs in whatever way seems fit to its members, provided the group's actions are consistent with NA's Twelve Traditions and do not adversely affect other groups or the entire NA Fellowship. In the conduct of the affairs of NA as a whole, the groups delegate to the rest of the service structure the responsibility for the fulfillment of NA services. Group service representatives (GSRs) are elected to participate on behalf of the groups in the area committee and the regional assembly.

The Area Service Committee (ASC)

The area committee is the primary means by which the services of a local NA community are administered. The area committee is composed of group service representatives, administrative officers, subcommittee chairpersons, and the area's regional committee members. The area committees elect its own officers, subcommittee chairpersons, and RCMs.

The Regional Service Committee (RSC)

Regional service committees exist to pool the experience and resources of the areas and groups it serves. The RSC is composed of regional committee members (RCMs) elected by the region's member-areas; these RCMs elect regional committee officers from among a pool of members. RSCs organize assemblies at which group service representatives (GSRs) and regional committee members discuss a wide range of service matters. The region's delegate to the world conference is elected by the GSRs and/or RCMs at the regional assembly or RSC.

Zonal Forums

Zonal forums are service-oriented sharing and/ or business sessions that provide the means by which NA communities can communicate, cooperate, and grow with one another. Although not a part of NA's formal decision-making system, world services and zonal forums interact in many ways. Zonal forums are invited to provide reports on the floor of the World Service Conference and, when requested by the conference, may also answer specific questions or address the body. In order to improve communications, they are provided with conference participant mailings and are requested to send their minutes to world services. World services typically attend zonal forum meetings, and may provide funding for some participants' attendance at zonal forums. Maintaining effective communication between the zonal forums and world services is a high priority. In order to more effectively serve the fellowship, world services and zones should develop a partnership for the planning and conducting of the worldwide workshop system, and by assisting each other in the coordination of a variety of service efforts such as professional events and fellowship development activities. (Carolina Region is a part of the Southeast Zonal Forum with North Carolina Region, Georgia Region, Alabama/NW Florida Region, Florida Region, and South Florida Region)

NA World Services

World services are those services that deal with the developmental requirements and needs of NA as a whole and that NA offers to its members, its groups, and to society. The basic purposes of our world services are communication, coordination, information, and guidance. We provide these services so that our groups and members can more successfully carry the message of recovery and so that our

program of recovery can be made more available to addicts everywhere. Although all parts of our service structure affect and are affected by NA as a whole, only at this level do we find service bodies designed to deal with problems that involve our entire fellowship.

World Service Conference

The final part of our service structure is the World Service Conference (WSC). It is the nerve center of our fellowship worldwide. Our conference is the one time and place where all of our world services come together. Unlike all other service bodies of NA service, the conference is not an entity, it is an event — the coming together. Every two years, regional delegates, the members of the World Board, and the executive director of the World Service Office meet to discuss topics and material of significance to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. The purpose of the World Service Conference is to be supportive of the fellowship as a whole and to define and take action according to the group conscience of Narcotics Anonymous.

The World Board

The purpose of the World Board (WB) of Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc. is to contribute to the continuation and growth of Narcotics Anonymous. The board serves as a primary resource for the NA Fellowship by providing the support needed to carry our message while ensuring that the service and support provided are of the highest quality possible. The World Board manages all activities of world services including oversight of the operations of the fellowship's primary service center, the World Service Office.

The World Service Office

The purpose of the World Service Office (WSO), our main service center, is to carry out the directives of the World Service Conference in matters that relate to communications and information for the Fellowship of NA, its services, groups, and members. The World Service Office achieves this purpose by maintaining correspondence with NA groups and service committees, by printing and distributing WSC-approved literature, and by maintaining the archives and files of Narcotics Anonymous.

The Regional Delegate

The regional delegate (RD) serves as the primary contact between NA's world services and the local NA community. On the one hand, the delegate provides information on current world service projects to the regional committee. On the other, the delegate provides a local perspective to the work of world services. During the delegate's term, the RD attends the World Service Conference as a fully active participant. The regional delegate is elected by and accountable to the CRSC. The RD is not a mere messenger. The delegate is selected by the region's group representatives and/or RCMs to act in the best interests of NA as a whole, not solely as an advocate of his or her NA community's priorities.

The regional delegate works closely with the alternate delegate. Like the regional delegate, the alternate is a full participant in the CRSC meeting. The delegate often consults with the alternate, asking for different perspectives on world service affairs and seeking to involve the alternate in helping to carry the workload. Alternate delegates are welcome to attend the meeting of the World Service Conference in the company of their delegates; however, they will be recognized as full participants in the meeting of the World Service Conference only in the event of the primary delegate's absence. Seating on the floor of the conference will be limited to two — one delegate and one alternate per region.

Although not participants at the World Service

Conference, the conference has created two additional components to assist it in its responsibilities. They are: (1) The Human Resource Panel (HRP) who facilitates an election/selection process that will allow the World Service Conference to provide trusted servant choices based upon the principles of ability and experience. The HRP helps to allow members to be nominated from around the world without having to be present at the conference to receive due consideration, and creates a more open

opportunity for world services to benefit from our collective resources by providing an established and recognized process by which to do so. And (2),

The WSC Co-facilitators who preside over the business meeting of the World Service Conference and communicate with the World Board as necessary in order to be prepared for the conference meeting.

GLOSSARY

Additional needs, addicts with. Additional needs arise from physical challenges such as blindness, hearing impairment, or mobility limitations imposed by use of wheelchairs. Reaching addicts with additional needs and making our meetings and other services more accessible to them is an obligation our fellowship takes very seriously at all levels of its service structure.

Area Service Committee (ASC). A committee created to provide common services for NA groups in a specific locale. An ASC is composed of GSRs, ASC officers, and subcommittee chairpersons and is usually a part of a region, to which it sends RCMs.

Board Approved Service Material. Service resource publication produced and approved by the World Board for Fellowship use.

Closed Meetings. are an NA recovery meetings that are closed to non-addicts.

Common needs (special interests). A name tag referring to specialized groups formed to provide additional identification for addicts with particular needs or interests in common—for example, men's or women's groups and gay or lesbian groups.

Conference-approved service material. Material approved by the World Service Conference that is intended primarily for use within the context of an NA service board or committee.

Fellowship-approved literature. See NA approved literature.

Group Service Representative (GSR). are elected by an NA group to participate on the group's behalf in the ASC and the regional assembly.

Home group. The group an NA member calls "home." Home group membership calls for regular attendance of its recovery meetings, financial and voluntary service support, and participation in conscience-building and decision-making processes.

Hospitals and institutions (H&I). A field of service usually covered by one ASC subcommittee devoted to carrying the NA message primarily to correctional inmates and treatment facility patients.

NA Way Magazine, The. The NA Fellowship's quarterly journal, published in various languages.

NA-approved literature. Recovery literature officially sanctioned by the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as given voice by its groups through their delegates to the World Service Conference. This is also referred to as "fellowship-approved literature."

Narcotics Anonymous World Services (NAWS). Refers to Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc. which is the legal name for the World Board. (See World Board description.)

Open meetings. NA recovery meetings that allow attendance by nonaddicts.

Phoneline. An NA telephone contact service providing means by which an addict or a general community member can get information about Narcotics Anonymous, especially NA meeting schedules. Usually administered by an ASC subcommittee.

PR. See Public Information/Public Relations.

Public information (PI)/ Public Relations (PR). A field of service usually covered by one ASC subcommittee devoted to carrying the NA message to government and private agencies, the public media, community leaders, those in the helping professions, and the community-at-large so that addicts seeking recovery will be referred to Narcotics Anonymous.

RCM. See Regional Committee Member.

Regional assembly. A gathering of GSRs and RCMs, conducted by the RSC, to discuss issues affecting NA worldwide, usually in preparation for the biennial WSC meeting. The regional delegate is elected at the assembly.

Regional Committee Member (RCM). Elected by an ASC to participate on the area's behalf on the regional service committee.

Regional Delegate. A World Service Conference participant elected by a region's GSRs and/or RCMs.

Regional Service Committee (RSC). A body that draws together the combined service experience of a number of adjoining areas for those areas' mutual support. Composed of RCMs, the regional delegate and alternate delegate, and others as needed.

Service bulletins. Articles, position papers, and food for thought on a variety of NA service-related topics. A number of such bulletins are available from our World Service Office.

Shared services committee. A committee created by two or more area or regional committees to fulfill one or two needs both territories have in common. In a state, province, or nation with more than one region, such a committee would interact on those regions' behalf with state, provincial, or national government, professional, religious, and civic organizations. Funded by and accountable to those who created it.

Sharing session. A nonbusiness portion of the agenda of most NA service board or committee meetings. More informal than the rest of the meeting because of the suspension of the ordinary rules of order. Facilitates wide ranging, open discussion on committee issues and group problems. Allows for development of group conscience necessary before spiritually sound decisions can be made in ordinary business session.

Special interests (common needs). A name tag referring to specialized groups formed to provide additional identification for addicts with particular needs or interests in common—for example, men's or women's groups and gay or lesbian groups.

Trusted servant. An NA euphemism for "leader," "official," or "officer." Derived from NA's Second Tradition, in which NA leaders are characterized as "trusted servants" as opposed to governors.

Twelve Concepts for NA Service. One of three bodies of basic NA principle, the concepts apply specifically to the development, coordination, and maintenance of NA services on behalf of the groups.

Twelve Steps. One of three bodies of basic NA principle, the steps describe NA's regimen leading to personal recovery and a spiritual awakening.

Twelve Traditions. One of three bodies of basic NA principle, the traditions provide guidance for the behavior of NA groups, helping the groups maintain their independence while nurturing their unity.

World Board. The World Board is the service board of the World Service Conference. It provides support to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in their efforts to provide the opportunity to recover from addiction; and oversees the activities of NA World Services, including our primary service center, the World Service Office. The board also holds in trust for the NA Fellowship the rights for all their

physical and intellectual properties (which includes literature, logos, trademarks and copyrights) in accordance with the will of the WSC.

World Service Conference (WSC). A deliberative body composed of regional delegates and world-level trusted servants, the WSC provides an effective voice and active conscience for the worldwide NA Fellowship.

World Service Conference Report. The full reports of the World Service Conference and the World Board and its committees.

World Service Office (WSO). World Service Board headquarters (Los Angeles) and branch facilities (Canada, Europe). WSC. See World Service Conference. WSO. See World Service Office.

NOTES:

An Introduction to Facilitation Skills and Techniques

KEY SKILLS

Some simple skills can help us to improve as facilitators. The most basic skill is to understand your role - listening is a key action for a good facilitator. Your job is to encourage discussion while remaining focused on the issue and staying on time. Try to remain objective and guide the group towards consensus. Remember there is no substitute for preparation – be sure you know your topic and what you are hoping to achieve.

What we do physically can be a strong positive influence on a session. Some simple ideas are:

- Smile, show enthusiasm
- Make eye contact, even in a large group
- Try to vary your tone of voice and avoid sounding too 'dull'
- Speak from the heart – let your passion and enthusiasm show
- Be who you are – let your own style come through
- Use open hand gestures – no crossed arms
- Use your feet – walk out into the group and move around the room where possible
- Don't talk with your back to the group

KEY TECHNIQUES

Questioning

- Make sure everyone has a chance to participate
- Remember that some participants are shy so encourage them to share without making them uncomfortable
- Try to get to the root cause of an issue
- Ask for more details on shared ideas – try to gain clarity
- Explore what we learn from positive or negative experiences

Organizing

- Group common thoughts and ideas together
- Avoid repetition, but don't lose the details
- Combine ideas to build solutions
- Don't lose good ideas that are off topic – use the "parking lot"

Connecting

- Focus on the positive aspects of what can be accomplished
- Rephrase ideas so they relate to the issue we are discussing
- Encourage participants to use the ideas shared to find solutions or to reach goals
- Stress how important it is to involve ourselves in these discussions and how we are a part of the solution today

Key questions:

- What have we tried in this area that works?
- What would happen next?
- Is that what you mean?

Key questions:

- Are these ideas similar?
- What would happen if we tried these ideas together?
- Can anyone add anything to these ideas?

Key questions:

- How can we use that idea to help with our issue?
- What can we do today that will make a difference?
- Can we see some solutions or next steps emerging from our ideas?

Gathering Experience for a Fellowship Discussion

We can use input and experience from local members to either decide on a topic to discuss during a workshop, or to decide what aspects of a specific issue are most important. Gathering input **before** a discussion session can help you to create a clear, focused workshop that addresses the key points of an issue. It can also help to ensure that your members are discussing something that is important to them and the local fellowship.

Deciding on a Topic

If your discussion is on a group level (or something of a similar size) it might be possible to start out your session by deciding on what you want to discuss. If the workshop is any larger it is usually best to decide on a topic in advance.

Usually one or two simple questions are best. Try to include a positive question as well as a negative one to create a balance. A good example is: "What is working well in our group/area/local service efforts?" and "What is not working well in our group/area/local service efforts?" It is important to balance any issues we are experiencing with an understanding of the things we are doing well. We can use these strengths to build solutions.

Getting More Information

If you have already decided on a topic for your workshop then it can be helpful to gather experience and ideas to help shape the session. Again if you have a small group you might try this at the beginning of the session, but it can be a great help to gather input before the workshop in order to use the time you have on the day to get closer to a solution or a decision.

A few simple questions are usually the best idea. For example if we are talking about our public image then we could ask: "In what ways do we create a positive public image in our local community?" and "In what ways have we created a poor impression of NA in our local community?" If there are specific issues then use the questions to get details on these.

Ways to Gather Input

Here are some simple ways to gather input prior to a discussion session.

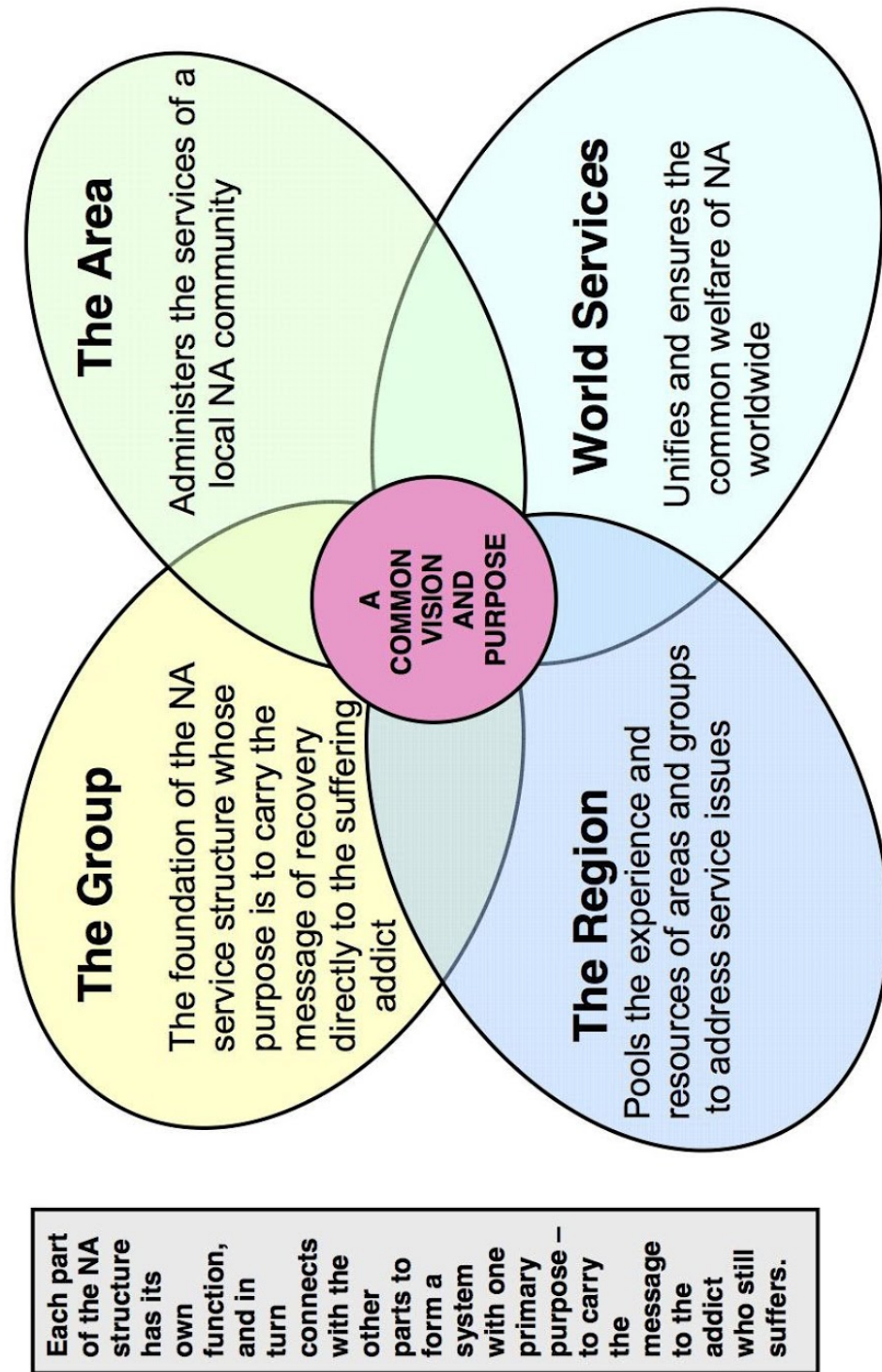
1. Existing sources – group records, RCM reports, inventory material etc.
2. Printed or emailed flyers or surveys distributed to members and groups
3. Separate input sessions before the main workshop
4. Online surveys or discussion boards

Prioritizing

Having gathered the input you will need to prioritize the ideas or topics so we can discuss the most important ones.

You can use the number of times something is mentioned during the input gathering process to prioritize it before the session. If you decide to prioritize during the workshop try writing them out on a large piece of paper and have everyone put a mark next to their choices, or vote with a show of hands.

Ideas or topics that are not as highly rated can be saved for future discussions.



- Diagram: Service System