

# RESOURCES FOR

## chapter nine PHONELINES

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# PHONELINES TRAINING SESSION

The content and order of this session may vary depending on the time available. We encourage service committees to consider any individual circumstances that would require changes. Times referenced for particular segments of the session may vary.

## Goals of the session

- ▶ Discuss underlying public relations principles within our phonline efforts.
- ▶ Orient and train volunteers about how to respond to various types of phonline calls.
- ▶ Introduce NA members to local phonline technologies and policies.

On tables are pens, note sheets, phonelines flowchart, and any local phonline resources.

## Before the session begins

### Prior to the session

- ▶ Review Chapter Nine of the *Public Relations Handbook*.
- ▶ Prepare a sign-in sheet, asking for name and contact information, to be passed around the room during the session.

### Once onsite

- ▶ 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?
  - Do the size of the meeting and the seating plan allow for small group discussions?
- ▶ Set up a literature table for any additional phonline handouts or resource materials.
- ▶ Be sure to be fully prepared to start the session **on time**.

**Leader provides the setup of the session 5 minutes**

**Begin the session covering the following points:**

### Introductions

- ▶ The leader can introduce all of the presenters. Give a brief background of each presenter and their experience with phonelines.

## Logistical issues

- ▶ Ask members to turn off ringers on their cell phones.
- ▶ Explain where the bathrooms are, when breaks will occur, what refreshments are available, etc.
- ▶ Inquire as to any special needs of any of the participants.
- ▶ Ask members to sign in with their name and contact information, and collect this list for updated information.

## Setup

- ▶ Offer a brief outline of the session and what to expect, and state that any unanswered questions will be addressed at the end of the session.

### Leader introduces core phonenumber PR principles

10 — 15 minutes

Leader identifies core public relations principles. State the principles listed below. Choose one bullet point for each principle and offer an example or personal thought.

*(Inform the participants that chapter two of the Public Relations Handbook has essays on the principles of the traditions along with examples.)*

### Cooperation

- ☞ One of our public relations goals is to build long-lasting relationships with other organizations.
- ☞ Compromising any of our traditions in an effort to build these relationships is never beneficial to individual members or NA as a whole. We maintain a consistent focus on our primary purpose with the public.
- ☞ By creating positive relationships with those outside of NA, and with our own members, we foster unity and harmony with each other and the community around us.
- ☞ We put the common welfare of NA first, and we remember that we are only autonomous as long as our actions do not affect NA as a whole.

## Attraction

- ☞ What is likely to be attractive to the public and to professionals who interact with addicts is reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery.
- ☞ We can demonstrate the reliability of NA by showing up and fulfilling our obligations, whether it is to return a telephone call for information about NA or to supply meeting directories at a public library.
- ☞ We can draw on the experiences of NA members to fulfill the commitments we make to professionals.

**Leader poses questions for discussion by the group**

**5 — 10 minutes**

The following questions for discussion by the group are intended to help members consider cooperation and attraction as they apply to our phonline efforts. The group discusses one of the questions in this setting. The remaining questions may be a tool for the phonline committee to discuss at one of their meetings.

- ☞ How is our phonline used to cooperate with various outside organizations (such as the phonline service provider, an organization we may use as a referral, other public organizations in the community, etc.)?
- ☞ What cooperative actions do we, as committees and groups, take to ensure a smoothly running phonline?
- ☞ Why is it important that volunteers be consistent and reliable with their service, and how does that help NA's message of recovery remain attractive?
- ☞ How do we make phonline service an attractive NA commitment?

**Preparing volunteers**

**5 minutes**

With the previous discussion as a foundation, leader covers the following points:

- ☞ Responsiveness is a key principle for phonline service. This means that trusted servants should engage with callers in a sensitive, appropriate, and helpful manner.
- ☞ Leadership qualities such as integrity, the ability to listen, and sound judgment are essential in providing phonline service.
- ☞ Phonline volunteers often have to perform in higher-pressure situations, and they are likely to be the first contact that people have with NA.
- ☞ Avoid using NA jargon (such as "it works when you work it," "home group," "get a sponsor," etc.).
- ☞ Use NA literature to present an accurate and positive message of recovery and to clarify that the NA program is separate from treatment centers or other twelve-step programs.
- ☞ Do not make commitments on behalf of the area, region, or NA Fellowship. If a professional or member of the public contacts an NA phonline, volunteers should provide as much information about NA as they can, solicit information from the public contact log, and follow up with the appropriate trusted servant such as a committee chairperson or the area's media contact person.

**Training volunteers**

**15 minutes**

**Leader asks: "Who calls our phonelines?"**

Responses should include:

- ☞ Addicts (both potential members and current NA members).
- ☞ Nonaddicts.
- ☞ Family members and loved ones.
- ☞ Professionals.
- ☞ Clergy.

## Leader then asks participants to identify specific types of calls

- ☞ Requests for meeting information.
- ☞ Requests for general information about NA.
- ☞ Requests for public relations efforts (PI presentations, H&I meetings, etc.)
- ☞ Difficult calls from addicts who are:
  - ▶▶ under the influence of drugs.
  - ▶▶ prank calls.
  - ▶▶ calls from those who suffer from mental illness.

*One strategy is to continually bring the conversation back to how the caller can get to an NA meeting and end a problem call before the situation escalates.*

- ☞ Calls made by the public, including simple requests for information or calls made about problems created by the behavior of NA members.
- ☞ Crisis calls:
  - ▶▶ Volunteers should be very clear about where their responsibility ends. Phonenumber volunteers are not counselors or crisis workers.
  - ▶▶ Threats to commit suicide, a drug overdose, or talk about being a victim of violence are all examples of crisis calls.
  - ▶▶ Refusing to refer such callers to qualified outside crisis agencies could have legal implications, depending on local laws.
- ☞ Meeting recommendations:
  - ▶▶ Volunteers can respect callers' requests and recommend a meeting where they are likely to find addicts with whom they may identify. We do not, however, automatically assume that because someone is of a certain age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual identity, they will want a meeting recommendation.
  - ▶▶ If there are no common needs meetings in an area but there are meetings where, for example, a larger population of young people regularly attends, then phonenumber volunteers can suggest these meetings to a caller who is asking for a recommendation.
- ☞ Twelfth step calls:
  - ▶▶ A twelfth step call is usually a request for assistance to get to a meeting. We carry NA's message through twelfth step calls.
  - ▶▶ A twelfth step call can mean that two or more addicts provide a ride to an NA meeting or that volunteers simply talk with the caller, helping the potential member get to a meeting on their own.
  - ▶▶ When possible, members meet those requesting a ride to a meeting in a public place.

- ☞ Referrals:
  - ▶ We don't give referrals to one specific treatment center or detoxification unit. Instead, we can provide a list of any and all local treatment centers and not align or affiliate ourselves with one in particular, or we can inform members of generic treatment referral numbers, such as the National Treatment Referral Line in the United States.
  - ▶ If a caller has a local telephone directory, we can direct them to the services listed there. The same principle is true for suicide prevention numbers and other community service numbers.
  - ▶ Family members and loved ones of addicts frequently call our phonedines. Volunteers can provide numbers for Nar-Anon and Families Anonymous or other similar information. But remember that we don't recommend one program over another or offer our opinions about any of these programs.
- ☞ Review Phonedines Flowchart considering the above examples.
- ☞ Remind the participants that these points and additional points are contained in the "Phonedines" chapter of the *Public Relations Handbook*.

**Local  
phonedine  
process,  
technology,  
and other  
issues**

**10 minutes**

### **Leader discusses the details of the local phonedine system**

This portion of the session will be developed by the local committee; the information presented will depend on the type of system used and local policy and procedure.

- ☞ Review local requirements (cleantime, meeting attendance, etc.).
  - ▶ Consider any forms or logs that the committee requires the volunteers to complete.
- ☞ Review current phonedine opportunities.
- ☞ Discuss the telephone system used by phonedine volunteers.

### **Break: 15 minutes**

**Role-  
playing  
exercise**

**15 — 20  
minutes**

Leader facilitates an exercise designed to help volunteers get practical experience. Add some of the specific calls material to this session. This will help participants to be more involved in the training.

### **Role-playing – Phonedine volunteers**

- ☞ Set up mock telephone calls using two chairs, positioned back-to-back. Simulate common phone calls (from the list above) received by the volunteers.
  - ▶ Ask volunteers to respond to various types of calls using this process.

- ▶▶ After each scenario, allow members to offer their thoughts on how the participants responded.
- ▶▶ Using the phonenumber resources, offer your own thoughts on how the call should be handled.
- ▶▶ Once time has expired, ask participants what some of their real challenges have been. Talk about real issues and how to handle them, and then move on to questions and comments.

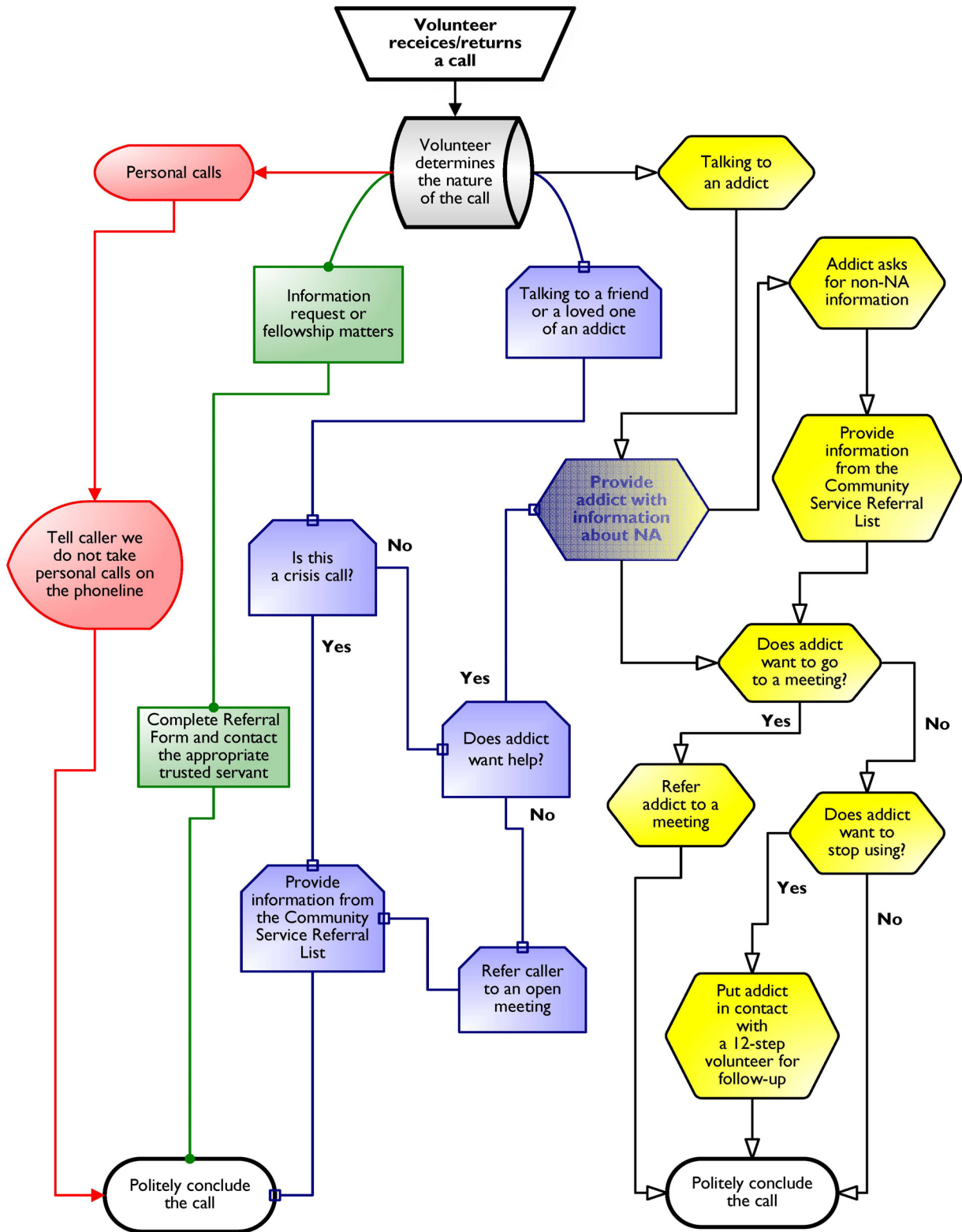
**Questions  
and  
comments**

**10 minutes**

**Leader responds to questions from members**

- ☞ Ask for questions or concerns.
- ☞ Remind members to complete the sign-in sheet.
- ☞ Thank everyone for attending.

# Phoneline Flowchart





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PHONELINE VOLUNTEERS' EXPERIENCE WITH CALLS

This resource can be used by volunteers answering phonenumber calls when interacting with addicts, loved ones, professionals, and the community at large. These frequently asked questions are meant to help trusted servants provide clear, consistent, and informative responses. When responding to a question using NA terminology, such as “leader”, please explain to the listener what we mean by that language. In an effort to gain an understanding of the information here, trusted servants can discuss and rehearse the questions and answers below.

What follows are possible answers to questions frequently asked by phonenumber callers.

## Questions asked by potential members

Q&A

1

**I’ve been using (smoking pot) for three years and I’m not sure if I am an addict. Can NA help?**

We suggest attending an NA meeting and speaking with some of the members there. Because NA meetings are a safe place, newcomers are encouraged to ask questions. Also, read some of our literature, which is available at most NA meetings, and decide for yourself. The informational pamphlet *Am I an Addict?* may help you in your decision making.

Q&A

2

**I am getting drug-tested by my parole officer; how long does cocaine stay in your system?**

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship for those who think they may have a problem with drugs. We are a self-help, recovery-oriented organization and employ no medical professionals. We do not give any medical advice or opinions, but we do help addicts find recovery through the NA program.

Q&A

3

**What should I expect when I go to my first NA meeting? Do I have to talk?**

Typically a leader or chairperson will conduct the meeting. There is usually time for participation in which members share about their experience, strength, and hope with staying clean. You do not have to speak during the meeting if you don’t want to. We encourage you to get there a little early so that you can speak with some of the members and pick up some literature before the meeting starts.

Q&A

4

**How much does NA cost? Are you counselors?**

There are no fees or dues to be a member of NA. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. We are not professional counselors; we are recovering addicts who share our experience to help each other stay clean.

**Q&A****5****I am a nurse by profession and I want to get clean. Where can I find a nurses' meeting?**

Some areas have common needs meetings while others do not. This area does/does not have a nurses' NA meeting. We can tell you, however, that recovering addicts from all types of professions attend our meetings.

**Q&A****6****I'd like to go to an NA meeting but I don't have a car. Can you help?**

Yes, we can try. Where do you live? Let me take your number down and see if I can find a ride for you. (Refer to area Twelfth-Step list)

**Note:** This may not be a service offered in some areas. If your area is interested in Twelve Step lists, you may refer to the *Public Relations Handbook*, Chapter Nine.

**Q&A****7****I'm suicidal and I don't want to live anymore. What should I do?**

We strongly suggest contacting the suicide prevention number, which is \_\_\_\_\_, or 911 to get immediate assistance.

**Questions asked by loved ones****Q&A****1****My boyfriend is using drugs, stealing, and cheating. What can I do to help him? Will you call him?**

Because Narcotics Anonymous is a self-help program, addicts must have the desire to stop using. Once he is ready to stop using drugs, please have him call us so we can direct him to an NA meeting in his area. In the meantime, you may want to call Nar-Anon or Families Anonymous. Although we are not affiliated with these organizations, we are happy to provide their telephone numbers.

**Q&A****2****My son/daughter is using drugs and wants to stop taking drugs. Can I go with him/her to their first meeting?**

You may attend an "open" NA meeting with your son/daughter. Open meetings welcome family members and the community at large. Closed meetings are for addicts only. Let me check our meeting list, so I can give you several choices of open meetings...

**Q&A****3****Will you call me if my son/daughter does not show up to meetings regularly?**

No, we are not able to do this. Because this is a self-help program, it is not our position to monitor an addict's willingness to attend meetings.

## Questions asked by community members

Q&A

1

**I heard that my old friend, Jane Smith, is in NA. Can I have her phone number?**

We are not at liberty to give out contact information for individuals who may or may not be members.

Q&A

2

**Drugs are being sold in my apartment complex. Can you come and arrest them?**

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship for those who think they may have a problem with drugs. We are a self-help, recovery-oriented organization and employ no law enforcement professionals.



# REFERRAL FORM

## For referring calls to the area or region

There are times when trusted servants within the area or at the regional service committee may be more experienced with answering certain phonenumber requests. This is a sample referral form for the tracking of such calls. This form will allow us to follow the referral to ensure that the request is answered and the callers' needs are met.

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_ Time of call \_\_\_\_\_

Phonenumber Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of agency or organization \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's telephone number \_\_\_\_\_ ext \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Time & date when caller is available to be called back \_\_\_\_\_

Caller or agency's email address \_\_\_\_\_

### Reason(s) for calling

\_\_\_ Atmosphere of recovery issue

\_\_\_ Leadership issue

\_\_\_ Predator issue

\_\_\_ Public image issue

\_\_\_ Request from media

\_\_\_ Problem with meeting at facility

\_\_\_ Request for NA literature

\_\_\_ Request for NA presentation

\_\_\_ Twelfth-Step call request

\_\_\_ Request for meeting directories

\_\_\_ Request for meeting at facility

\_\_\_ Request for activities schedule

\_\_\_ Request for NA booth

\_\_\_ Other (*describe in detail*): \_\_\_\_\_

Referred request to:  Area  Region

Committee member's name and position: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# COMMUNITY REFERRAL LIST

The following is a sample community referral list, to be used when the caller is asking for help that does not fall within our primary purpose and our traditions. We offer information in the spirit of cooperation. We can provide a list of numbers rather than any one specific number. We do not recommend one referral over another. We simply provide contact information as a courtesy. (In many parts of the United States and Canada, a community services helpline can be reached by dialing 211. If 211 service is available in your area, it may be the easiest and most complete referral that you can make.)

Child Abuse Hotline	_____
County/City/State Emergency Services	_____
Domestic Violence Services	_____
Drug Crisis Hotline	_____
Families Anonymous	_____
Intervention Services	_____
Local Homeless Shelter	_____
Mental Health Helpline	_____
Nar-Anon	_____
Poison Control	_____
Probation Department	_____
Rape Crisis Center	_____
Services for Runaways	_____
Suicide Prevention Hotline	_____
Additional community resources and numbers	_____
	_____