

GSR GUIDE TO THE NORTHERN LIGHTS AREA OF NA SERVICE

Welcome, Kick Back, Relax and Don't Take Anything Too Personally

- Welcome to the Northern Lights Area Service Committee (NLASC) of Narcotics Anonymous, open to any NA member. If you have never attended an Area Service Committee meeting before, you may be feeling a bit confused. You may be asking yourself questions like: "What is going on here?" and "What am I supposed to do?" At this point, we suggest you sit back, relax, and take a deep breath.
- It may take you some time and effort to digest the information in this packet. NA service is a growing and learning experience for all who perform it. No one learned how to be an effective GSR all at once. So, easy does it! At first, you may find it helpful to sit with a more experienced GSR so that, as the meeting progresses, you can get immediate answers to your questions. You may also raise your hand and ask the ASC Chairperson to assign an experienced GSR to guide you.
- An Area Service Committee (ASC) meeting is nothing more (and nothing less) than a business meeting that can sometimes be complicated, sometimes be fun and most times quite productive. Once you become familiar with the meeting format and procedural guidelines what is happening here should soon start to make sense.
- Don't let the process overwhelm you. Some of these procedures might sound complicated, but they do become simpler with practice. Show up at the ASC meeting, ask questions (we never stop learning), share what you have learned and enjoy your term as Group Service Representative. Remember that the ASC is here to be of service to you and your group. Without your active participation, this cannot happen. IT WORKS!

Northern Lights Area Service Committee (NLASC) - The ASC conducts the business of the Area. Meets from 12:30 to 4:30 on the 1st Saturday of the even months: February, April, June, August, October, and December. Peace United Church of Christ, 1111 N 11th Ave E, Duluth, MN 55805. This is a potluck event. GSRs will receive a copy of the Agenda and the previous meeting meetings via email no later than 2 weeks before each ASC meeting. Those who do not have email access can request USPS delivery by notifying the Area Secretary.

Vermilion Committee – Meets from 11:00 to 12:00 on the same day and location of the NLASC. The Vermilion Committee is run by the Vermilion Chair and organizes an annual camping retreat activity open to both addicts and non-addicts. The committee meeting is open to all NA members. Lots of help is needed to pull off this three day event that is held the 2nd weekend in September.

What is an "Area"? The Northern Lights Area Service Committee is one of thousands of NA areas throughout our worldwide fellowship. This area covers from Duluth to Cloquet to Two Harbors to Superior, Wisconsin. Throughout this territory, there are many individual NA groups. These individual groups come together to form what is called an Area.

How does the ASC help Personal Recovery? Ask yourself how many of us found NA through a hospital or institution? How many of us found the fellowship through the helpline or as a result of public information work at schools or elsewhere? How many of us have been helped by having a meeting list to let us know where a meeting was when we needed one? How many of us have their recovery enhanced because of the widespread availability of NA literature, including our Basic Text, or by participating in activities or conventions? None of these would have happened had there not been an Area Service Committee. Without the ASC, Narcotics Anonymous would not be as organized and effective as it is today.

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How does an Area Service Committee work? The NA groups send GSR's to serve on the Area Service Committee. While still maintaining final responsibility and authority for area services, they invest enough delegated authority in their GSR's and through them in the area service committee for the necessary work to be done.

How does the Area Service Committee conduct its meeting? With the guidance of a loving higher power the ASC relies first on the Twelve Traditions of NA, the Twelve Concepts of NA Service, the Area Guidelines and the process of consensus in our decision making always remembering that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

BEFORE THE ASC MEETING BEGINS

- **Check-In** Sign in at the check-in table; pick up a nametag, a copy of the Call, the agenda, the minutes of the last ASC and any other flyers or handouts found at the check-in table. Once the ASC has your contact information the Call, the agenda and the minutes will be sent to you either electronically or through the US mail two weeks before each ASC.
- **Adopt a GSR** If this is your first ASC meeting or you are still unsure of the process; please let the check-in table know and they will direct you to the ASC New GSR Coordinator, who will pair you up with an experienced ASC member.
- **Event Flyers** Event flyers are located near the check in table. Pick up flyers and other area meeting guides. Use your judgment on the number of announcements to pick up. Many times there are only enough flyers to allow for just one per group.

DURING THE ASC MEETING

- **Agenda** The ASC begins promptly at 12:30 and ends promptly at 4:30. The order of business is set forth in the agenda. At the start of the ASC the chair will ask for additions or changes to the agenda. If you have a topic that needs to be addressed but is not on the agenda or is outside of your group report ask the Chair to amend the agenda to include the topic.
- **Open Forum** Anyone can discuss points of interest and seek solutions (on non-voting matters) from other members. This is an open discussion of whatever topics are brought up.
- **Reports** The majority of the ASC meeting consists of verbal and written reports from the various Executive Committee Members and working group members.
- **Group Reports** When your group is called, read your report aloud and turn in the written report to the secretary.
- **ASC Donation** Give the treasurer your group's ASC donation; wait for the treasurer to hand you a receipt. Give the receipt to your group's treasurer for their records.
- **Carry the Message Campaign** Each GSR is provided a volunteer signup sheet for group members who are willing to deliver information pamphlets, meeting lists, and NA posters to various hospitals,

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schools, and other locations in the Northern Lights Area. The form is brought to the meeting by the GSR and circulated to the members. The Carry the Message Campaign committee collects these forms at each ASC and at the next ASC will distribute the literature packets to the GSRs to bring back to their group members for delivery.

- **Decision Making** The NLANA utilizes a consensus decision making process (See page 6).
- **Notes** Take notes throughout the ASC to bring back to your group.
 - Make a note of any open service positions.
 - Take notes on what is said during open forum.
 - Take notes on all motions.
 - Pay close attention to any motions that are sent back to the groups to vote on. At the next ASC, you will need to carry the conscious of your group on these motions.
 - If you have trouble hearing or understanding what is said during the ASC raise your hand and ask for clarification.

AFTER THE ASC MEETING

- **Literature Order**
 - If your group needs assistance purchasing literature online, please see the Area Treasurer. The group can place an order through the NLA and pay the treasurer by check or cash.
- **Back at Your Group**
 - At your next group meeting bring the newly purchased literature and stock it accordingly.
 - Give the group treasurer the literature receipt and the donation receipt.
 - Update the meeting lists by discarding outdated lists with the new ones you received at the ASC.
 - Update your announcements. Discard the outdated ones and add the new ones to your GSR report.
 - At each meeting (*This may vary from group to group; some announcements are done through the secretary only*). When the chairperson asks for the GSR Report, stand up and announce the upcoming events and other important information from your notes.
 - At the next business meeting your group holds be prepared to give your report on the ASC meeting. (*Some meetings do not have a business meeting in which case keep notes brief to avoid taking up too much meeting time, have all reports available for any member to read.*)
 - Your report should consist of highlights from each report presented at the previous ASC meeting, topics under open forum, any motions voted on at the ASC, any new motions to be voted on by the group, and anything else that you think is noteworthy.
 - Make sure that any motions to be voted on by the group are brought up under new business at the group's business meeting or during regular meetings for those that have no business meeting. When these motions are brought up at the next ASC you will carry your group's conscious (which you received at your groups' business meeting).
 - It is good practice to leave the information for the GSR report with the meeting supplies so the GSRA or Secretary can make the report in your absence.

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APPROXIMATELY ONE TO TWO MEETINGS BEFORE THE NEXT ASC

- You should receive the Call to the next ASC meeting, the agenda, a Group Report form, minutes from the last ASC, a literature order form, and a new Carry the Message Campaign form via email or snail mail.
- Explain and circulate the Carry the Message Campaign form and distribute any literature packets to your group members for delivery.
- Ask for a group conscious on spending group funds to replenish the literature.
- Ask for a group conscious on an Area donation.
- If your group is in financial distress, please ask for assistance at the ASC during your group report.
- Your group report form should be filled out as completely as possible.
- Obtain the funds for the literature order and donation.
- Encourage the GSRA and any other interested group members to attend the ASC. All addicts are encouraged to join in.

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

- If you are unable to attend the ASC meeting, please contact your Alternate GSR to take your place.
- If the Alternate GSR is unavailable to take your place, then contact another trusted servant from the group. *Whenever a representative is unable to attend, be sure to mail your group report to NLANA, PO Box 16934, Duluth, MN 55816.*
- The group's representation is needed at the ASC.
- If your group misses two consecutive ASC meetings, the Outreach Chair will make a courtesy visit (or call) to ensure your meeting is still active; this is set in place by the ASC Administrative Committee.
- If your group misses three consecutive ASC meetings, the group will not be considered in the calculation of a quorum at the Area. A group becomes active again when a GSR or GSR alternate next attends the ASC.
- If a Group Report form is not received for three consecutive ASC meetings the Group may be removed from the meeting list so as not to send an addict to a meeting that may no longer exist.

ALPHABET SOUP

ASC = Area Service Committee

GSR = Group Service Representative

GSRA=Group Service Representative Alternate

H & I = Hospitals & Institutions

NAWS = Narcotics Anonymous World Service

NLANA=Northern Lights Area of Narcotics Anonymous

PI = Public Information

RBM = Regional Business Meeting (aka Regionals)

RCM = Regional Committee Member

RCMA = Regional Committee Member Alternate

MNNAC = MN Narcotics Anonymous Convention

WSC = World Service Conference

VERMILION = The NLANA annual three day campout held the 2nd weekend of September

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REMEMBER TO ASK QUESTIONS

- Talk to your Higher Power.
- Talk to your Sponsor.
- If you have any confusion, ask for help.
- If you have to stop the meeting to ask a question or get an answer, then do it.
- It is your meeting, and your group is depending on you to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions.

ADDITIONAL NA SERVICE MATERIALS

- NLANA Guidelines
- The Group Booklet
- Twelve Concepts for NA Service
- It Works How and Why
- The Basic Text
- A Guide to World Services in NA
- A Guide to Local Services in NA
- Information Pamphlets
 - “Hey! What’s the Basket for?”
 - Self-Support; Principle and Practice
 - An Introduction to NA Meetings
 - Group Business Meetings
 - Group Trusted Servants: Roles & Responsibilities
 - Disruptive and Violent Behavior



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CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING PROCESS

1) Broad Open Discussion - General Discussion

- a) Discussion at this level ought to be the broadest in scope. Try to encourage comments which take the whole proposal into account; i.e., why it is a good idea, or general problems which need to be addressed.
- b) Discussion at this level often has a philosophical or principled tone, purposely addressing how this proposal might affect the group in the long run or what kind of precedent it might create, etc. It helps every proposal to be discussed in this way, before the group engages in resolving particular concerns.
- c) Do not allow one concern to become the focus of the discussion. When particular concerns are raised, make note of them but encourage the discussion to move back to the proposal as a whole.
- d) Encourage the creative interplay of comments and ideas. Allow for the addition of any relevant factual information. For those who might at first feel opposed to the proposal, this discussion is consideration of why it might be good for the group in the broadest sense. Their initial concerns might, in fact, be of general concern to the whole group. And, for those who initially support the proposal, this is a time to think about the proposal broadly and some of the general problems.
- e) If there seems to be general approval of the proposal, the facilitator, or someone recognized to speak, can request a call for consensus.

2) Call for Consensus

- a) The facilitator asks, "Are there any unresolved concerns?" or "Are there any concerns remaining?"
- b) After a period of silence, if no additional concerns are raised, the facilitator declares that consensus is reached and the proposal is read for the record.
- c) At this point, the facilitator assigns task responsibilities or sends the decision to a committee for implementation.
- d) Any concerns for which someone stands aside are listed with the proposal and become a part of it.

3) Identify Concerns - List All Concerns

- a) At this point, only concerns are to be expressed, reasonable or unreasonable, well thought out or vague feelings.
- b) After all concerns have been listed, allow the group a moment to reflect on them as a whole.

4) Group Related Concerns

- a) At this point, the focus is on identifying patterns and relationships between concerns.
- b) This short exercise must not be allowed to focus upon or resolve any particular concern.

5) Resolve Concerns - Resolve Groups of Related Concerns

- a) Often, related concerns can be resolved as a group.

6) Call for Consensus

- a) If most of the concerns seem to have been resolved, call for consensus in the manner described earlier.
- b) If some concerns have not been resolved at this time, then a more focused discussion is needed.