



Narcotics Anonymous

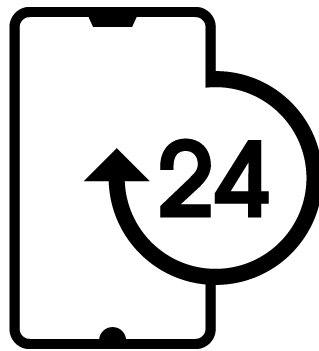
volunteer@na-helpline.org

Metro-Detroit Regional Helpline Orientation Packet

Approved: 8/14/2025

Drug Problem?

We Can Help!



(248) 543-7200

(248) 759-8032

Welcome to the Metro Detroit Helpline!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
Helpline Objectives	4
Our Vision	4
Who We Serve.....	4
Summary of Requirements for Helpline Volunteers	5
Helpline Tips	6
HELPLINE	6
Overview.....	6
How the Helpline Works	7
VOLUNTEERS	8
Helpline Volunteer Requirements	8
Helpline Volunteer Duties	8
Volunteer Responsibilities	9
12 Step Calls.....	9
Scheduling.....	10
TRAINING & SIMULATIONS	10
It's All About Public Relations.....	10
Types of Helpline Calls and Goals for Each Call	11
COMMON CONTACT NUMBERS	13
Community Access Numbers	13
Michigan Regional Helpline.....	13
Metro Detroit Region Helpline Committee Contacts.....	13

INTRODUCTION

Those who serve on the helpline know this service saves lives. Most importantly, it keeps us clean by giving away what we have been freely given. Thank you for your time, your willingness, and your service to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

Helpline Objectives

1. Our primary objective is to get the addict to a meeting.
2. Convey that the NA program works.
3. We were once suffering ourselves and now we are clean and in recovery.
4. We care and are willing to help.
5. For more information and supplemental forms, visit <https://na-helpline.org/>

Our Vision

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 our loving Higher Power.

Who We Serve

Our commitment is to serve the addict who still suffers. We hope by offering each volunteer of the Metro Detroit Regional NA Helpline this orientation packet, we will better carry our message of hope. Our commitment is to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in helping each other better understand the Traditions of NA. And through that understanding, we will know how to interact with people that may or may not be seeking recovery from the disease of addiction and be a source of hope in our communities across the Region.

Summary of Requirements for Helpline Volunteers

The following is a summary of requirements. The rest of this orientation booklet will give you more detailed information.

- At 90 days, you can take the Helpline Workshop and begin the training process.
- You must have at least 6 months of continuous clean time to answer helpline calls.
- You must sign up for at least one 2-hour shift per week.
- You must understand that the main purpose of the helpline is to get the caller to a meeting, not to provide extended listening sessions.
- You must have access to the most recent regional meeting directory during your assigned shift. This could be the most recent month's printed meeting list or electronic access to the Basic Meeting List Toolbox (BMLT) or the BMLT web interface at <https://michigan-na.org/metro-detroit-region/meetings/>.
- You are required to contact your area helpline chairperson or regional helpline chair if your schedule changes.
- You should not be driving during your helpline shift. Do not answer if you do not have access to a meeting list.
- You will always give accurate information about our Fellowship - but you will remember to say "I don't know" if you don't know.
- You will never give out medical, psychiatric, legal or other professional advice, even if you are one of these professionals.
- You will be polite, courteous and professional and remember to be respectful about people's problems no matter what they are.
- A volunteer will sometimes answer a Helpline call and be disconnected because someone else on that shift got to the call first. A volunteer must take this in stride and be willing to answer the next one and the next one even though they may not actually get connected every time to the caller.
- A volunteer must read and re-read the orientation packet to fully understand the Helpline's objectives and how to handle certain types of calls.

Helpline Tips

There are a number of tips you will need to learn when answering helpline calls.

Tip #1	When you answer a helpline call, you will be asked to press 1 to accept the call or press 2 to decline the call. If you press 1 to accept, please wait a moment and say, "Hello, this is Narcotics Anonymous. My name is _____, and I am in recovery. How can I help you?" You will get disconnected if you are not the first one to press 1.
Tip #2	Save (248) 543-7200 and (248) 759-8032 as a "Helpline" contact in your phone. Give this contact a special ring tone so that you can distinctly recognize an incoming helpline call.
Tip #3	If a call is missed, it will go to voicemail and be handled by another addict.
Tip #4	The Metro Detroit Region BMLT is most easily searched using https://michigan-na.org/metro-detroit-region/meetings/

HELPLINE

Overview

The Detroit Metro Regional NA Helpline is an automated phone system that provides callers with a push button choice of options to connect directly to a NA Helpline volunteer, receive information about downloading the BMLT Smartphone App, or accessing our NA Meeting List in a web browser.

The Metro Detroit Regional NA Helpline is an important public relations opportunity. Each Helpline volunteer as well as the recordings themselves either directly or indirectly represent Narcotics Anonymous. The more accurate the information we provide, and the more courteous and professional our direct interaction is with the individual caller, the more our reputation is enhanced. Conversely, the more inaccurate our information, and the less professional our conversation, the more our reputation is tarnished.

NA Helpline volunteers are the voice of Narcotics Anonymous each time one of us picks up the phone. This responsibility, and ultimately this gift, should be taken with great care and gratitude for what we have been given. We are all humbled by our fellowship's willingness to be of service.

How the Helpline Works

Callers call Narcotics Anonymous Helpline using (248) 543-7200. The automated phone system answers the call and walks the caller through a series of push button options.

Options:

- 0 For a recovering addict
- 2 Meeting Information

If a caller chooses to talk to a live person, then that call is forwarded to the scheduled volunteers for that particular 2-hour time slot.

The scheduled volunteers' phones will start to ring. There may be 1 or more volunteers for any given scheduled time-slot. The number of the helpline will show up on the volunteers' phone. Volunteers should have the Helpline numbers stored as a contact in their phone so that the incoming call "NA Helpline" contact name shows up on their phone when receiving a helpline call. The NA Helpline contact should also have a special ring-tone so that the volunteer knows immediately that they are receiving a helpline call.

If you are a volunteer while this call is received, you will want to answer the call ASAP. All of the volunteers who answer this call will be given an additional option: an automated voice will ask the volunteer to press "1" to accept the helpline call or press "2" to ignore the call. This additional option of having to accept or ignore the call is useful for a number of logistical reasons. Examples are 1) phones that are temporarily disconnected 2) phones that go directly into voicemail 3) Some parents find this feature useful in case their kids answer the phone during their shift.

The first volunteer that presses "1" will be connected to the caller. Other volunteers who are not the FIRST to Press "1" will be disconnected. It may sound like the call was cut off, but this means simply you were not the first to press "1." This means the system is working properly and is exactly how it is supposed to work. The caller is being helped by someone else on the shift. OUR SERVICE IS TO ANSWER THE PHONE REGARDLESS.

The volunteer who is the first to accept the incoming call will then assess the call and respond appropriately.

There is no limit to the number of callers who can call into the system at once. So, in the unlikely event that 4 people call the helpline exactly at the same time and all 4 people wish to speak to a volunteer exactly at the same time, then the system will continue to ring volunteers' phones until all the callers are answered. If none of the volunteers answer the

call, then the caller will be sent to a voicemail box. In that case the committee will be made aware of the voicemail and will respond to the voicemail appropriately.

Don't expect to be perfect or smooth during the first few times you answer the phone. Like anything, it will take practice and getting comfortable with the system and how we perform service. Later in your training, there will be some typical scenarios on how to handle certain calls.

VOLUNTEERS

Helpline Volunteer Requirements

- Have 90 days clean to take the Helpline Workshop and begin the training process.
- Minimum 6 months continuous clean time to be scheduled to have calls forwarded.
- Knowledge of the 12 Steps of Narcotics Anonymous
- Knowledge of the 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous (e.g., the only requirement. .. , our primary purpose... , never endorse related facilities... , non-professional... , no opinion on outside issues... , attraction rather than promotion... , anonymity... , etc.)
- Willingness to contribute personal time during the agreed upon schedule
- Working knowledge of the Helpline guidelines and procedures contained within
- Attended a Helpline Workshop
- Access to a phone (cell or landline)
- Access to a current meeting list, the BMLT Search App, or <https://michigan-na.org/metro-detroit-region/meetings> website
- Read and re-read the orientation packet

Helpline Volunteer Duties

A Helpline volunteer is a NA member whose primary objective is to answer Helpline calls and help those callers get to a NA meeting. The Helpline volunteer will assess the type of call and respond appropriately. A detailed list of common calls along with each call's goal is detailed later in your training. It will be of primary importance that the Helpline volunteer becomes familiar with the types of calls that he or she could receive. The vast majority of calls volunteers will receive will be questions about where meetings are located. A Helpline volunteer must become familiar with how to handle call scenarios located in your training packet.

It is important to remember that a caller's first interaction with Narcotics Anonymous may well be with a Helpline volunteer. The response and attitude of a volunteer can have a lasting impression on the caller. This is a service position of great responsibility.

As a volunteer you are encouraged to attend an annual training session even if you have answered an NA helpline for many years. It is important that we are all on the same page and understand what to expect.

Since the vast majority of calls you will receive will be to find an NA meeting, it will be critical for you to have access to a current meeting list, preferably access to the BMLT app or the Metro Detroit Region meeting website (this is also a BMLT meeting list interface). You may receive calls from individuals from all parts of the state or world. You will need to provide accurate information to the caller about meeting schedules. The most accurate schedule for our Metro Detroit Region can be found in our BMLT database which can be accessed through the BMLT App or our <https://michigan-na.org/metro-detroit-region/meetings> website. When receiving a call for meeting information outside the Metro-Detroit Region, volunteers or callers can find helpline information at www.na.org or most likely in the "BMLT SEARCH" App on a smartphone.

Volunteer Responsibilities

A call to our Helpline may be someone's first interaction with Narcotics Anonymous. These calls are vital; a Helpline call can make a major difference in whether or not an addict makes it to an NA meeting. We need to respond to callers in a way that makes them feel like they matter. You are encouraged to bring your experience and all your public relations awareness to this important service opportunity. When speaking with callers, remain objective and nonargumentative. A warm friendly voice can reassure a frightened, uneasy person in need of help. We also need to be respectful of all types of people regardless of the issue they ask about on the Helpline.

12 Step Calls

Remember, our 12th Tradition states, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." To be a 12 Step volunteer, you must have 6 months clean time and a good understanding of the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions of NA. A 12 Step volunteer is an NA member whose primary objective is to get a prospective newcomer to an NA meeting. A 12 Step volunteer is willing to talk at length about recovery. The 12 Step Volunteer's phone number is NEVER GIVEN OUT!

Always get the following information from the caller who will be contacted by the 12 Step volunteer:

1. First name, phone number with area code, and area in which they live.
2. The sex of the caller (men with men, women with women).
3. Has the caller ever been to a NA meeting before?

4. Any other information the caller gives you while you are on the line with them could be useful, so pass it on too.

Once an available 12 Step volunteer is reached, the Helpline Volunteer relays all the pertinent information regarding the 12 Step call. We need to stress the importance of PROMPTLY returning the 12 Step calls. We want the caller to know that they are important to us. WE CARE!! This can make a difference in getting the potential newcomer to a meeting.

When placing the 12 Step call, use *67 to block your number. Make sure you have the correct person on the phone before identifying yourself as a NA volunteer/member. If you are asked who is calling, it is suggested that you say that you are just returning a call you received from this number. If the addict is willing to go to a meeting, but doesn't have a way there, it is NOT the policy of this Helpline to try to find them a ride. Remember: Never try to force an addict into attending a meeting.

Scheduling

When scheduled to answer calls try to make yourself available to accept as many calls as possible during your shift. Do not get frustrated if you answer a call and the call is disconnected, this simply means someone else on the shift got to the call first. Keep answering the phone when a call comes in. If you are consistently unable to accept calls during your shift please alert your Helpline Chairperson so we can modify your schedule.

TRAINING & SIMULATIONS

It's All About Public Relations

When we answer the Helpline: "Hello, this is Narcotics Anonymous. My name is ____ and I'm in recovery. How can I help you?"

We have started a new public relations effort with the caller, regardless of whom the caller is and why they are calling. They have called seeking information, whether they are asking where a meeting is, how to find a treatment program, what to do about a loved one addicted to drugs, how to learn more about NA, or for any other reason. We need to treat each caller in a loving way with respect and dignity. Their call is probably their first contact with NA and they will form an opinion about NA based on your interaction and responses.

Our success as an organization is partly tied to the behavior of our Helpline volunteers. Be helpful. Be courteous. Be respectful. Be available. Be brief. Be precise. Be a good example. Become well versed in how to handle various call scenarios.

What is likely to be attractive to the public and to professionals who interact with addicts are reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflect recovery.

Responsiveness is vital for Helpline volunteers. First and foremost, this means answering the phone during your shift. It also means that trusted servants engage with callers in a sensitive, appropriate, and helpful manner. Leadership qualities such as integrity, the ability to actively listen while resisting the urge to talk over the caller, and discernment is essential in providing Helpline service.

Another quality relevant to a Helpline volunteer is to stay calm under pressure. This trait is important because Helpline volunteers sometimes must perform in higher-pressure situations such as an angry caller or an emergency. We can't let our emotions get the best of us and the situation. Remember, addicts are desperate and dying and are not in the best emotional state when they reach out for help. Do the addict a favor and stay calm. Never take things the caller says personally.

Use NA terminology but avoid using NA jargon (i.e. clean vs. sober; addict vs. some other identification). Practice avoiding using NA lingo such as "home group," "H&I," "PR," "get a sponsor," "IP's," "keep coming back," "fake it till you make it," "HP," and many others. Speak clearly and simply to the caller without using jargon. Don't expect callers to use NA terminology and DO NOT correct them if they do not.

Types of Helpline Calls and Goals for Each Call

Who Calls the Helpline?

Helpline volunteers may receive calls from NA members, potential newcomers, family and friends of addicts, and other people interested in NA (professionals, students, etc.).

- Calls from NA members are usually simple requests for meeting information.
- Calls from potential newcomers are, of course, the most important calls received by a Helpline volunteer. Our primary goal is to direct the addict to a meeting. The volunteer may also provide a brief introduction of the NA program and explains, in general, what the caller can expect at a meeting.
- Calls from family members and friends. Sometimes these calls can be looking for resources outside of Narcotics Anonymous. Please remember to state that we do not

endorse ANY outside organizations, then, these calls may be referred to the County Access Number listed on the last page of this packet or direct the caller to dial 211. Remember our primary purpose is to get the potential addict to a meeting.

- Calls from non-NA members, such as students, professionals or community members are usually requests for general information about NA or about scheduling a speaker or panel to present on Narcotics Anonymous at a conference or event.

The following four traditions are some of the most common that you will need to understand when answering calls for the helpline:

Tradition 3	"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using."
Tradition 6	"An NA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose."
Tradition 7	"Every NA group out to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."
Tradition 10	"Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

Please read the chapters on these traditions in "It Works: How and Why" when you get a chance to better familiarize yourself with these traditions.

It is important to remember that while we are answering the NA helpline, we are not counselors, medical professionals, or mental health workers. We should refrain from giving advice or suggestions on issues of this nature as it could have potential legal repercussions. Our primary function on the helpline is to direct the caller to an NA meeting. We are never to give out opinions on anything other than the NA program. If people would like to be referred to outside organizations, remember to state that we do not endorse ANY outside organizations and refer them to the County Access number listed on the last page of this packet, or call 211.

We, as NA members do one thing well, and that's carrying our message of hope and recovery to the caller. This document has stated several times our objectives, and it's useful to go over them one more time.

The primary purpose of the Helpline is to GET AN ADDICT TO A MEETING. Give callers information in a professional and courteous manner. Remember that to the general public, you represent Narcotics Anonymous. The attitude you project is important. You are a vital link in NA's public image. Try to always remain positive. You are representing a program that

helps addicts recover from the disease of addiction. Carry the NA message with humility and in a positive manner. Our tones of voice and delivery speed are just as important as the words we use. Acknowledge what the caller is saying and feeling. Do not use judgmental words or preach to the caller.

COMMON CONTACT NUMBERS

Write down, print, keep electronic reference to the common contact numbers as you will need these. These common contact numbers can also be found on our <https://na-helpline.org/> website.

Community Access Numbers

Community	Access Phone Number
Blue Water	(888) 225-4447
Macomb County	(855) 996-2264
Monroe County	(734) 243-7340 or (734) 884-0226
Oakland County	(248) 464-6383
Wayne County	(800) 241-4949

Michigan Regional Helpline

(For help in Michigan outside of our Metro Detroit Area Region)

(800) 430-2085

Metro Detroit Region Helpline Committee Contacts

Name	Title	Phone Number
Fuzu U	Regional Helpline Chairperson	(313) 766-8224
Jim P	Helpline Scheduler	(734) 258-0064