THE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS HELPLINE
WORKSHOP GUIDELINES

Welcome to the N.A. Helpline Workshop for the MDRSCNA. I am an addict and my name is ____.
May we open this workshop with a moment of silence for the still suffering addict, followed by the
Awe® version of the serenity prayer. Will someone please read the Twelve Traditions of N.A.

[You may give the Quiz now, or you may give it at the end of the Workshop]

If you have any questions as we go along, please feel free to stop me and ask.

This Workshop applies to the MDRSCNA Helpline. Most of the information in our workshop
guidelines have been adopted from the Guide to Phoneline Service, published by the WSCNA.

This workshop has established a 90-day clean time requirement to take this workshop and to answer
the phones. You must also have a good understanding of the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions of N.A.

First I’d like to explain a little about our Helpline. This Helpline is run with the 12 Traditions of
N.A. Our primary purpose is to get the still suffering addict to their first N.A. meeting. We also
serve the fellowship by having the most up to date meeting information. The phones are answered in
the office 6 days a week. Our schedule consists of several 2 - 4 hour shifts per day.

Our Office Hours are:
   Tuesday - Friday 10 a.m. - 12 midnight
   Saturday 11 a.m. - 12 midnight
(The M.S.O. is closed on Sunday and Monday)

When we are not in the office, we use a Remote Call Forwarding System which consists of addicts
answering the Helpline directly from their home or cell phone as though they were located at the
office. Remote Call Forwarding is used whenever there is no one to physically answer the phone
from the office. [You must have six months Helpline telephone experience; however, this time can
be waived at the discretion of your Helpline Area chair.]

GENERAL INFORMATION
FOR HELPLINE VOLUNTEERS

A Helpline volunteer is a N.A. member who either directly receives calls while in the office, or has
calls forwarded from the office to a remote location such as their home phone or their cell phone.
The first N.A. member that the caller may come in contact with is usually a Helpline volunteer. The
response and attitude of the volunteer can have a lasting impression on the caller. IT IS
IMPERATIVE THAT THE VOLUNTEER BE AS POLITE AND HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE! This
is a service of great responsibility, and should NOT be taken lightly!

If you are not able to cover your shift in the office, be sure to CALL your Helpline Area Chair, ASAP. There is a lot of footwork that has to be done to replace you, and there cannot always be another volunteer available to take your place. If you know in advance that you cannot make your shift and can find another volunteer to take your place, post it on the board and also let your Helpline Area Chair know the name and telephone number of your replacement.

It is important to remember that we do not make direct, or implied endorsements of any other organizations or enterprise. When making a referral, it is important that you make the caller aware that N.A. is not connect with, or affiliated with any other organizations. Our 6th Tradition clearly states: An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility, or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Also, our 12th Tradition states: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Helpline calls are CONFIDENTIAL and are to be discussed with your Area Helpline Chair ONLY!!!

Helpline volunteers may receive calls from N.A. members, potential newcomers, family and friends of addicts and others who are interested in N.A. Calls from non-addicts (such as students, members of the media, or professional people) are usually simple requests for general information. All of these calls, or calls requesting speakers, interviews, etc., should be referred to the M.S.O. at 248/544-2010. When referring a call to the M.S.O., inform the caller that the office personnel will be better able to assist them. We don’t want them to think that they are getting the run around.

When a friend or family member calls N.A. for help for an addict, the volunteer should always ask, Does the addict want help? We can only suggest that they make the Helpline number available, and encourage the addict to call. We can also give them a little information about N.A. to pass along to the addict to lessen their fear of calling, such as the Helpline is run by other addicts. The friend or family member should be treated with the utmost respect and patience. They can also be referred to a family oriented recovery program, such as Naranon, or Alanon. Remember though the 6th Tradition: N.A. does not endorse any other organizations or institutions, and is no way affiliated with any other organization, services, agencies, or programs.

WHAT DOES A HELPLINE VOLUNTEER NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ANSWERING A CALL?

Upon receiving a call, the first thing to be determined is whether or not the caller is an addict seeking help. By identifying the type of call you are answering, we are able to keep non-addict calls as short as possible. Calls from N.A. members are usually simply requests for meeting information. These calls should be handled as quickly as possible, because of the need to keep the lines open for other
calls. ONLY GIVE OUT MEETING INFORMATION OUT OF THE THREE RING BINDERS!
This is the most up to date list available. NEVER make changes in the binders. If you receive
meeting information (closing, opening, time change, etc.) Please post a note on the board for the
appropriate Chair.

Calls from potential newcomers are, of course, the most important calls received by a volunteer. The
volunteer will give a brief introduction of the N.A. program, explain what the caller can expect at
their first N.A. meeting and, if necessary, have another N.A. member (12 Step volunteer) call them
back, and talk at length. If time permits, the volunteer can tell the caller what N.A. has done for
them. You may suggest that the caller try attending a meeting. Give them some meetings close to
where they live, if they would like (from the 3-ring binder). If they agree to try a meeting, suggest to
them that they introduce themselves to another members of the same sex when they arrive. This is
not to embarrass them but to help to put them at ease. Explain to them our members will help them
to get a meeting list, I.P.s and to a first step table. Explain that there are no costs, that they may make
a donation if they would like, but THEY ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THEIR MONEY! If
they are interested in our literature, you may give them an idea of costs. Please inform the caller that
there is only one requirement for membership, that is the DESIRE TO STOP USING. N.A. has only
one must that applies to everyone attending a meeting: that NO WEAPONS, DRUGS OR DRUG
PARAPHERNALIA are to be in your possession when attending a meeting. This is for the
protection of the Fellowship, the group, and the facility in which we meet.

We may also get requests for meeting lists to be mailed out to members or newcomers. Our goal is
to get addicts to a meeting. Once at a meeting, they can pick up a meeting list. Stamps, envelopes and
meeting lists can add up over the course of a year, so use discretion on sending them.

BEGINNING YOUR DAY IN THE OFFICE

It is necessary for the first shift of the day to unlock the phones, that is to return the calls from the
remote answering location back to the office. You must also do this if there was no one working in
the office before you arrive. If this is not done, the telephone of the person assigned to answer the
phones from a remote location will still be receiving the calls. If they have left their home
anticipating someone relieving them at the office, these calls may be answered by their
personal voice mail or answering machine. To return the calls to the office, dial 73 # on each line
you want to open.

As a matter of courtesy it is suggested that before you return the calls to the office, dial 1, 248, 543-
7200 and let the person who answers know that you are now in the office and are going to transfer
the calls back to the office. Then dial 73 # on each line.

TREATMENT REFERRALS
We have referral agencies numbers that are used for this. There are different numbers according to the area the caller lives in. These agencies make the appropriate referrals according to the specific situation. These numbers are listed on the wall. [Remote Call Forwarding volunteers will have a list of the agencies and numbers in their packet.]

**OUR GOAL IS TO GET THE NEWCOMER TO A N.A. MEETING**

**HOW TO DO A TWELVE STEP CALL**

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 N.A. A 12 Step volunteer is a N.A. member whose primary objective is to get the prospective newcomer to a N.A. meeting. A 12 Step volunteer is willing to talk at length about recovery in N.A. The 12 Step volunteer’s phone number is NEVER GIVEN OUT!

Always be sure to 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 N.A. 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 pertinent information regarding the 12 Step call. We need to stress the importance of PROMPTLY returning 12 Step calls. We want the caller to know that they are important to us. WE CARE!! This can make the difference in getting the potential newcomer to a meeting.

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 ride. Remember: Never try to force an addict into attending meeting.

If the 12 Step volunteer takes it upon themselves to take the newcomer to a meeting, we suggest that they bring along another N.A. member. A good person to take is their sponsor, or someone with 12 Step experience.

**HOW TO HANDLE SPECIAL CALLS**

The N.A. Helpline is strictly for dispensing information about the N.A. Fellowship, meetings and recovery. The volunteers must always remember that they are only a recovering addict sharing their experience, strengths and hopes. The volunteers are not crisis counselors, doctors,
psychologists, therapists, etc. and has no right to give out professional advice.

We have learned through experience that certain kinds of calls require special attention by the volunteer, for example, suicide or overdose calls.

How will we know? Trust in our Higher Power?

DO NOT PANIC

EXAMPLE OF OVERDOSE OR SUICIDE CALL

The caller may present themselves in a depressed manner. The Caller may be distant or speech may be impaired.

It is imperative that the volunteer keep the caller as calm as possible. Keep them talking and gather as much information as you can (their name, what they used, how much, when, why, location, etc.) Is the caller willing to seek medical attention? Once again, remain as calm as possible. If you alarm the caller they may hang up. Once you have determined this to be an emergency call, signal the other volunteer to call Ameritech Security. The number and procedure is on the wall. The volunteer phoning Ameritech Security should dial the phone, then step away to avoid being overheard by the caller. Upon contacting Ameritech Security the volunteer must say:
1. My name is: _______
2. I am with Narcotics Anonymous Helpline
3. I have a crisis call on line 248/ 543-7200, 7201 or 7202
4. Answer any other questions they may have.

They will trace the call, and dispatch an ambulance and the police to the location. The volunteer talking to the caller, should try to keep the caller talking as long as possible. Tracing under normal circumstances takes about ten minutes.

The outcome of these calls are NOT the responsibility of the volunteer. Please leave this responsibility where it belongs, WITH YOUR HIGHER POWER!

**Please contact your Helpline Chair as well as the Metro Detroit Region Helpline Chair and inform them of this call immediately.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5. Explain how to put a call on hold
6. Explain how to log calls
7. There should be 1 volunteer and 2 trainees to a shift. Children are not allowed in the Helpline room
8. NEVER give out meeting information for other Fellowships
9. We do accept relay calls or T.D.D. calls (tele-communications device for the deaf)
10. Only give out meeting information from the 3 RING BINDERS
11. Do Not give out activities information. The Activity Line is 248/399-2525

**FORWARDING CALLS**

*NEVER FORWARD CALLS TO A BUSY SIGNAL; NEVER FORWARD CALLS TO AN ANSWERING MACHINE !!!*

If no one works the shift in the office after yours, you will need to forward the calls. Contact the Area Helpline chair for the day to get the name and telephone of the person available for Remote Call Forwarding.

First, call the person to let them know you will be forwarding the calls to them.
Second, hang up.

Next: To forward the calls (543-7200), dial 72 #, wait for the dial tone, then dial the person=s number. Be sure to include 1 + the (area code) [even if the person is in the 248 dialing area]

*PLEASE WAIT FOR THE PERSON TO ANSWER and let them know that you have transferred Line 1. Hang up.*

Repeat the process for 543-7201 and let the person know that you have transferred Line 2. Hang up

Do Not transfer more than two lines (543-7200 and 543-7201).

*NEVER FORWARD CALLS TO A BUSY SIGNAL; NEVER FORWARD CALLS TO AN ANSWERING MACHINE !!!* If no one answers, or you get an answering machine, notify the Helpline Area Chair, or the Regional Helpline Chair for further instructions before leaving the office.

**HOW TO HANDLE SPECIAL CALLS AWAY FROM THE OFFICE**

In essence, you will follow the same procedure; however, from your home, you must have either three-way calling, or a separate phone line or a different cell phone on which you are not talking.

Then:

12. Dial 911
13. Give the operator your name and say that you are with Narcotics Anonymous Helpline working from your home (or cell phone)
14. Let the operator know that you have a crisis call on _________ [Give them the area code and phone number on which you have the caller]
15. If you have caller id, give the operator the caller=s number
16. Ask: What do I need to do in order for you to trace this call and provide medical assistance?@
17. Listen carefully and answer any questions they may ask you. Remember to stay calm and keep the caller calm and talking as long as possible. Also remember the outcome of these calls are NOT your responsibility. Please leave this responsibility where it belongs, WITH YOUR HIGHER POWER! Again, **Please contact your Helpline Chair as well as the Metro Detroit Region Helpline Chair and inform them of this call immediately. @
ANSWERING CALLS FROM YOUR HOME  
OR FROM ANOTHER REMOTE LOCATION

When answering the calls from home, it is proper to answer by saying, "Narcotics Anonymous Helpline, I’m an addict named _____. How may I help you." However, we recognize that this is an anonymous program and because of your personal anonymity, it may not be in your best interest to answer your personal phone in this matter. In this case, we recommend you answer your phone in a pleasant and professional manner, such as

- Hi, my name is ___, how may I help you?
- ____ speaking. How may I help you.

The very moment you recognize the call as a Helpline call, identify yourself as a N.A. member and proceed with the call as trained.

[If the Quiz has not already been given, do so now]

Check to find out when the Helpline Subcommittee meets and come get more involved.

WELCOME ALL NEW VOLUNTEERS TO THE HELPLINE

Close the workshop with the gratitude slogan:

OUR GRATITUDE SPEAKS
WHEN WE CARE AND
WHEN WE SHARE
WITH OTHERS THE N.A. WAY