

**A Guide to
Service in
Narcotics
Anonymous.
Spring 1990**

WSC Ad Hoc Committee
on N.A. Service
Report to the 1990
World Service Conference
NOT CONFERENCE APPROVED

The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous®

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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**WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service
Report to the 1990 World Service Conference,
including a working draft of**

**A GUIDE TO SERVICE
IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service Report to the 1990 World Service Conference	vii
The Guide, so far	vii
Major differences between current structure and the Guide.....	viii
Service without guiding principles—literature development	ix
A structure divided—how and why.....	xi
The inherent potential for conflict.....	xiii
Between WSC committees and WSB committees	xiii
WSC Administrative Committee	xiv
Coordinating public relations	xiv
Coordinating international development.....	xiv
The election process.....	xv
No single point of decision	xv
Unified, coordinated services	xvi
The Guide and the fellowship's grassroots	xvi
The ultimate authority for N.A. services	xvii
The role of the group service representative	xvii
Areas and regions	xviii
National and world service division.....	xviii
Conclusion.....	xx
Completion and approval plan	xxi
Topics for further attention	xxii
Regional division, state assemblies, and delegate recognition	xxii
Metropolitan services.....	xxiii
National Magazine Corporation status.....	xxiii
The role of special workers.....	xxiv

**A GUIDE TO SERVICE IN
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Foreword..... 1

What is the N.A. service structure?..... 2

The N.A. group..... 2

Area service committee..... 3

Regional service committee..... 3

Regional assemblies..... 3

National services..... 3

World services..... 4

Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service..... 5

First Concept—*The responsibility and authority for N.A. services rests ultimately with the N.A. groups*..... 6

Second Concept—*The N.A. groups delegate to the service structure the responsibility to develop and maintain services on behalf of N.A. as a whole*..... 7

Third Concept—*Each service responsibility must be matched by a carefully defined service authority*..... 8

Fourth Concept—*For each responsibility, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined*..... 9

Fifth Concept—*Group conscience is the spiritual means by which a loving God influences our decisions*..... 10

Sixth Concept—*Leadership qualities are highly valued, and should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants*..... 12

Seventh Concept—*Our service boards and committees ought to be given the ability to determine which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation*..... 13

Eighth Concept—*All those entrusted with substantial responsibility for our services should take part in the decision-making processes affecting those services*..... 14

Ninth Concept—*Our service boards and committees have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes*..... 15

Tenth Concept—*Any member of our service structure may, without fear of reprisal, make petition for the redress of a personal grievance*..... 15

Eleventh Concept—*At all levels, the N.A. service structure should take care never to accumulate funds beyond those sufficient to operate*..... 16

Twelfth Concept—*Our structure at all levels is one of service, never of government. No one element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over any other*..... 18

Developing N.A. communities..... 20

The first group..... 20

Initial N.A. service development—function, not form..... 20

 Literature..... 20

 Public information..... 20

 Phonelines, or central contact points..... 21

 Hospitals and institutions..... 21

 Internal support..... 21

The national community grows	21
Assemblies	22
Central service coordination.....	22
Relations with N.A. worldwide	22
 The N.A. group	
Introduction	23
What is an N.A. group?	23
What is a "home group"?	24
Who can be a member?.....	25
What are "open" and "closed" meetings?.....	25
Where can we hold N.A. meetings?	26
What kind of meeting format can we use?.....	27
Participation meetings	27
Topic discussion meetings	27
Study meetings	27
Speaker meetings.....	27
Newcomer meetings.....	27
Question and answer meetings.....	27
Developing your format	28
What kinds of literature should we use?	28
What is a group business meeting?	28
How does the work get done?	29
How do we choose group officers?	30
What officers does a group need?	30
Secretary	30
Treasurer	31
Group service representative	31
Alternate GSR.....	32
What about rotation?	33
What responsibilities does an N.A. group have?	33
How can our group support other N.A. services?	34
How can our group better serve our community?	34
How can our group solve its problems?	35
<i>Group services bulletins</i>	36
<i>Other publications of group interest</i>	36
 The area service committee	
Introduction	37
The area committee and other N.A. services.....	38
Area committee participants.....	38
Group service representatives.....	39
General officers	39
Chairperson.....	39
Vice chairperson	39
Secretary	40
Treasurer	40
Regional committee members	41

page iv, table of contents

Subcommittees 41

 Hospitals and institutions..... 42

 Public information 42

 Phoneline..... 42

 Literature supply 43

 Newsletter..... 43

 Activities 43

 Outreach..... 44

 Meeting lists 44

Elections and rotation 45

Area committee policy and guidelines 45

Area inventory 47

Participation..... 48

Area budgeting..... 49

Other funding considerations 49

The monthly meeting 50

The sharing session 50

 On group problems..... 51

 On committee goals..... 51

Area committees in rural areas..... 52

Learning days, workshops..... 52

Growing area committees..... 53

Creating new area committees..... 54

Group services bulletins..... 56

Other publications of interest to area committees 56

The regional service committee

Introduction 57

How the regional committee works..... 57

Regional committee members..... 58

Regional resource assignments 59

Conference delegate..... 59

The sharing session 60

Service seminars 61

Conventions 62

Activities..... 63

Regional finances..... 63

The regional assembly 63

Electing conference delegates 64

Rotation of delegates 64

Dividing regions..... 64

Local service centers 66

National services

Introduction 68

Basic organization—national conferences or assemblies..... 68

National service board 68

National service office..... 69
N.A. literature..... 69
Relations with N.A. worldwide 70
Nonaddict trusted servants..... 70
More will be revealed 70
ADDENDUM 1: Sample meeting format, anonymity statement72
ADDENDUM 2: Starting a new N.A. group—a checklist..... 74
ADDENDUM 3: Sample area committee agenda..... 75
ADDENDUM 4: Sample rules of order 76
Decorum statement..... 76
Debate, limits..... 76
Motions 76
Main motions..... 76
Parliamentary motions 77
 1. Amend 77
 2. Previous question 78
 3. Table 78
 4. Remove from the table..... 78
 5. Refer 79
 6. Reconsider or rescind..... 79
 7. Withdraw a motion..... 79
 8. Substitute motion..... 80
 9. Adjourn..... 80
Other procedures..... 80
 Order of the day 80
 Point of order 80
 Point of appeal 80
 Parliamentary inquiry..... 81
 Point of personal privilege 81
Voting procedures..... 81
 Show of hands 81
 Roll call vote..... 81
Committees 81
 Standing subcommittees..... 81
 Special (ad hoc) committees..... 81
ADDENDUM 5: National services in the United States..... 83
American national services—conference and board..... 83
NSB, Inc.—accountable to those it serves..... 83
Conference advisory actions—setting priorities for national services 84
Approval of literature..... 85
Recall and reorganization of the board by the conference 86
The "single board" model in American services..... 86

page vi, table of contents

Trustee committees..... 87
 Committee on the conference and forums..... 87
 Literature committee..... 88
 Public information committee (P.I.)..... 88
 Hospitals and institutions committee (H&I) 88
 Budget and finance committee 88
NSB subsidiary corporations..... 88
 National Convention Corporation 88
 National Service Office Corporation 89
 Group services department..... 89
 Literature department 89
 Public information department..... 89
 Hospitals and institutions department 89
 National Magazine Corporation 89
Delegate review panels 89
The annual conference meeting 91
Conference election of trustees..... 92
National Service Board meetings 93
Input to national services..... 93
Sample conference agenda listing 95

**WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service
Report to the 1990 World Service Conference**

The following is the report from this committee to the 1990 annual meeting of the World Service Conference of Narcotics Anonymous. Since the last conference meeting, we've completed a fairly well-developed draft of 90% of *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*, and have made significant changes in the former Twelve Principles of Service, now called the Twelve Concepts. The latest draft of the *Guide* is included under the same cover with this report. On page xxi, you'll find our schedule for completing, reviewing, and approving the *Guide*.

This year, the committee was chaired by Reuben Farris, who has served three years on the committee. Others on the committee were Mark Daley (four years on the committee), Ed Duquette (four years), Chuck Lehman (three years), Becky Meyer (one year plus), Debbie Ott (two years), Bob Rehmar (six years total), Leo Smothers (three years), David Taylor (one year plus), and Dave Tynes (four years). Mark Daley and Bob Rehmar resigned from the committee in February 1990, and were sorely missed in our two most recent sessions. We extend our appreciation to Messrs. Daley and Rehmar for their years of faithful service on the committee.

The committee had thirteen meetings this year. Two of those were meetings of small working groups, two were input sessions conducted with the world service leadership in Albuquerque, and nine were full committee meetings. The following lists our meetings:

1989: May 12-14. July 7-9. July 14-16 (input session). August 5-6 (small working group). August 18-20. September 15-17. October 27-29.
November 10-12 (small working group). November 18-19. December 9-10.
1990: January 26-28 (input session). February 16-18. March 3-4.

We've worked very hard this year, with meetings held on an average of every four weeks, but we are closer to completion than we've ever been before, with material in hand that's more substantial than anything we've previously presented to the conference. We are confident that we can complete the project within the framework described on page xxi.

The Guide, so far

Included with this report is the entire body of *Guide to Service* material completed to date by the committee, including:

- * a brief introductory chapter;
- * the Twelve Concepts;
- * a chapter written especially for developing N.A. communities in new countries;

**WSC AD HOC COMMITTEE ON N.A. SERVICE
REPORT TO THE 1990 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE
NOT CONFERENCE APPROVED MATERIAL**

- * chapters on the group, area, and region;
- * a general chapter on national services; and,
- * an addendum specifically focussed on American national services.

We've included all of it under one cover, to make it easier for you to see the full scope of the project.

Only one chapter of the *Guide* has yet to be completed: the chapter on world services. We'll talk later in this report about where the committee's discussions stand, so far, on some of the basic elements of world services. We intend to complete the chapter in the coming conference year.

Major differences between current structure and the Guide

There are four major differences between the N.A. service structure as it operates today and the kind of structure described in *A Guide to Service*, foremost being the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service. Too often we've fought in N.A. service over matters of participation, leadership, authority, accountability, and the right to be heard. The Twelve Concepts spell out, simply and directly, the kinds of things that should be considered in establishing the extent and limits of delegated service authority in Narcotics Anonymous. The new descriptions of N.A. service units, operations, and participants provided in the *Guide* spring from the Twelve Concepts. The concepts give clear, sharp philosophical focus to what N.A. service is all about, and comprise the most significant innovation offered by our committee.

This is not, however, to undercut the significance of the *structural* innovations offered in the *Guide*. The *Guide's* regional service committee, for instance, may look like an entirely new kind of service body to some people, functioning as a service resource pool for the region's areas and groups, rather than as a committee delivering direct services like phonelines, H&I panels, or P.I. coordination. In many places today, the region functions more like a "super area," with just as many subcommittees as you'll find at the area level, often duplicating services best delivered by the ASCs themselves. We've tried to provide greater clarity to the N.A. service model by describing area and regional committees as having distinctly different functions. The area committee, closest to where most direct local N.A. services are actually used, is defined as the body most capable of effectively administering those kinds of services. The regional committee, on the other hand, serves in the *Guide* model as a place where each individual area's experience in these services can be collected for easy access by all the other areas in the region. The regional assembly, conducted by the RSC, pools the experience of all the *groups* in the area, bringing it to bear on national service issues.

The third new *Guide to Service* feature is the division of national and world services. Today, organized N.A. service committees operate in over fourteen countries. The *Temporary Working Guide*, however, offers no guidance whatsoever for administering services on a national basis. All it offers is the "world" service

structure, which expends better than 85% of its budget and manpower on services to the fellowship in one particular country, the United States. The *Guide's* description of *national* services provides a framework within which well-developed national N.A. communities can take responsibility for their own internal affairs. In addition, the ad hoc committee is working on material describing the kind of *world-level* services which could address issues relevant to the entire fellowship, services able to focus energy on assisting young, developing N.A. communities in new countries.

The fourth major difference between today's N.A. service structure and the *Guide* is in the configuration of national services, and particularly the configuration of American national services. But first, you might ask, why has an ad hoc committee of the World Service Conference developed a specific design for national services in one particular country? The reason is that, when we began to look at a truly *world* level of service, we realized such a system would cut off 85% of the world's groups--those in the United States--from services administered by today's world services. If we were going to responsibly propose a distinct international level of service, we would have to come up with something alongside it capable of administering the American services *not* provided by N.A. World Services. At the same time, we developed simple, solid material describing national services in general, appropriate for use in any country, not just in the U.S.

The difference between the way *A Guide to Service* describes national services--and particularly American services--and the kind of system presently administering services in the U.S. can be summed up in one word: *focus*. Today's service system has three distinct service bodies whose defined responsibilities conflict with one another, and no one agency authorized to focus all of them together on a single set of coordinated goals. The *Guide* description of national services, on the other hand, offers a single national service board, able to clearly focus all its energy in administering national conference-established priorities between the conference's annual meetings.

All of these structural differences between today's N.A. services and those described in *A Guide to Service* are based on the foundation in clear, sound principle provided by the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service. The absence of that sort of foundation in our services to date has not served us well.

Service without guiding principles--literature development

The clearest and most significant example of how a lack of service principles has crippled our service abilities is in the area of N.A. literature development, and particularly in the development of our step-and-tradition book, *It Works: How and Why*. The World Service Conference Literature Committee began developing a first draft of the book immediately after the approval of N.A.'s Basic Text in 1982. The material published early in 1985 as the blue-covered review form of *It Works* was a good place to start from, perhaps, but nothing close to what our fellowship needed

in the final product. Shortly after it was released, the world service leadership approached the leaders of the literature committee with the idea of using a new process to complete the project: a small group of some of our most experienced trusted servants, chosen from each of the three service arms, would guide a professional writer in producing the book. The idea was accepted.

Such a process, however, was not sanctioned in the applicable guidelines of the day. The literature development guidelines in place at that time were long on complicated, binding regulations, but short on practical guiding principles. Rather than abide by those guidelines, world service leaders chose to take matters into their own hands and do what was necessary, in their judgment, to produce the best-quality book they could for our members. They did not consult the World Service Conference on all aspects of the project before proceeding.

The completed book was released to the fellowship in 1986, and was rejected by the conference in 1987. The book's quality was not particularly at issue; the white-covered approval form of *It Works* was rejected because the leadership had acted willfully in developing it. It seemed apparent that the overly-restrictive literature development guidelines were the source of the problem. But, rather than fix the guidelines, the World Service Conference made them even more restrictive.

The basic problem our trusted servants have encountered in developing literature for N.A. is the absence of clearly defined, universally recognized principles of leadership, delegation, and accountability. The literature committee had *laws*, but not the sort of *principles* that would allow trusted servants, once given a job, to effectively fulfill their responsibilities. The trusted servants involved in developing the white-covered approval form of *It Works* acted as if clear principles of leadership and delegation were already in place, before any such principles had been agreed upon by the World Service Conference. Today, eight years after the project began, Narcotics Anonymous still does not have a book on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Perhaps it's time to start looking at the kinds of service principles needed for our structure.

The Twelve Concepts spell out a series of sound principles about delegation, quite appropriate for application in the development of literature. The multitude of N.A. groups, clearly, cannot together write a book. They delegate that responsibility to a smaller, carefully selected group of qualified trusted servants; that group is charged to develop a book on behalf of N.A. as a whole. So that these trusted servants can get the book written, their responsibility is matched with the kind of authority needed--not more authority than is needed, nor less, but a carefully defined, balanced service authority.

To prevent confusion, only *one* group of trusted servants is assigned responsibility to develop the book. Everyone may be interested in the project, but if the book is to be completed, not "everyone" can take part in the decisions involved in creating it. After all, if *everybody* is responsible for the project, *nobody* is accountable for it.

Substantial authority must be delegated to the trusted servants responsible for this book, including the authority to exercise the good judgment for which they were chosen. Unexpected problems may arise, and unexpected questions may occur, leading these trusted servants to consult with those who've delegated them their authority. But, once we've given these trusted servants a job, and the authority needed to do it, we must trust the judgment *we* exercised in selecting them, and give them the leeway to determine for themselves which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which will be brought back for further guidance. Our only other option is to constantly look over their shoulders, questioning everything they do and forcing them to progress at a snail's pace, never sure of their authority to proceed.

The idea that *this* kind of delegation may be what is needed in order to develop literature and other services will frighten some of us; but, given careful selection of trusted servants, careful definition of the amount of authority being delegated them, and carefully crafted checks and balances in place in our service structure, we should be able to proceed confidently. This kind of understanding of service, spelled out point by point in the Twelve Concepts, by itself, will go a long way toward untangling the knots we've tied for ourselves in such areas as literature development. But more is needed, particularly at what we now know as the world level of service--we need *one* service structure, not three.

A structure divided--how and why

The Narcotics Anonymous service structure did not really begin to function as a whole until the late Seventies, when the World Service Conference first met. Prior to that time, our fellowship existed only as a loose association of groups, with no pressing need for a complex structure or extended organization. Our message was carried primarily by word of mouth, from one addict to another. We had five pamphlets, a little white booklet, and no basic text. Our World Service Board of Trustees was the only service body responsible for encouraging the development of the fellowship as a whole.

Our first service manual was called *The N.A. Tree*. Developed in the mid-Seventies, it was a very simple outline of how groups, areas, regions, and world services could work together. The primary service agency for N.A. as a whole would be the Board of Trustees, according to *The Tree*. They would meet throughout the year, working through their committees and the World Service Office, which they were to manage. The plan called for them to get together once a year with regional delegates at the World Service Conference. At the conference, trustee committees would meet with delegate panels to review each field of service, and the conference as a whole would give the board guidance for the coming year's work. The plan described in *The N.A. Tree* was put into limited effect when the World Service Conference first met in 1976, as a business meeting held in conjunction with N.A.'s

World Convention. In 1978 the conference met for the first time as an event in its own right, and has been meeting annually ever since.

The plan described in *The Tree* was simple, except that there wasn't any money. Our young fellowship was unable to fund the trustees, the World Service Office wasn't generating a penny beyond its immediate expenses, and the trustees could not continue funding the work from their own pockets. Because of the lack of resources, the *Tree* plan, with working trustee committees supported by a trustee-administered office, could not be effectively implemented at the time. The conference altered the plan in 1979, shifting primary responsibility for development of services affecting the whole fellowship from the non-functioning *trustee* committees to the new *conference* committees. Drawing on volunteers from across the United States, the conference committees set about creating new service materials on a wing and a prayer.

The trustees' responsibilities for administering the World Service Office were also diminished, though not by actual intent of the World Service Conference. In the course of printing up the 1979 conference-approved revision of the service manual, language describing the World Service Board's authority over the office was not included. In its place was a description of an independent WSO board, entirely responsible for office operations. The oddest part of that bit of history is that nobody--including the trustees--remarked upon the changes, at least at the time. And so by the end of the Seventies, N.A. had gone from having a single primary world service agency to a system with three separate arms.

Conflicts developed among those arms over a variety of issues, pitting the conference committees sometimes against the trustees, sometimes against the World Service Office board, sometimes against other conference committees, and sometimes against all of them all at once. Those conflicts and misunderstandings continue to this day. Our current service structure, and our current understanding of service itself, suffers from what a diagnostician might call *systemic dysfunction*. By its very design (or lack thereof), it is unable to do what must be done. The need for fundamental change, not superficial bandages, is indicated.

We have a confusing system. Each of our three world service arms--the World Service Conference, the World Service Office and its board of directors, and the World Service Board of Trustees--is responsible for various services, but oftentimes nobody knows *who* is responsible for *which* particular area of service. The amount of authority delegated to each body does not match the responsibilities assigned them. And the degree of accountability each of these bodies is held to is all out of proportion with the authority delegated them. One body--the group of *conference committees*--has large responsibilities for developing and maintaining services, and highly detailed guidelines describing the degree of accountability they are to be held to. Yet the conference committees have almost no authority when it comes to making decisions concerning allocation of the resources necessary for fulfilling those

services. A second body--the *World Service Office Board of Directors*--also has large responsibilities, but its fiscal authority far exceeds those responsibilities. WSO directors, despite their substantial responsibilities and authority, are the most distant from the World Service Conference of the three service arms. Only one member of the board--its chairperson--is a conference participant, and only three of its twelve members are directly elected by the conference. The third world service body, the *World Service Board of Trustees*, has only the most vaguely defined responsibilities, and no authority whatsoever. Yet all the trustees are voting members of the World Service Conference, and all are elected by the conference, as if the conference believed them to be in positions requiring substantial participation and accountability.

The inherent potential for conflict

A whole slew of problems exist in our service system today, and straightening them out is not going to be as simple as making a few minor adjustments in the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*. Here are just a few of the conflicts, and potential conflicts, which arise from our current service arrangement.

Between WSC committees and WSB committees. Of the three service arms, the Board of Trustees has the fewest responsibilities in today's system. The *Temporary Working Guide* says only that "the purpose of the Board of Trustees is to contribute to the continuation and growth of Narcotics Anonymous and to serve as a primary resource for the Fellowship of N.A." Though that language rings with high purpose, it hasn't helped much in directing the trustees toward what they're actually supposed to do.

In its struggles to find an effective purpose for itself, the World Service Board of Trustees recently reactivated the trustee standing committees. Those trustee committees, you'll recall, were originally designed as the *primary* world service committees, but were replaced in 1979 by the newly-active World Service Conference committees. Revised trustee guidelines approved by the conference in 1984 restored the trustee committees, at least on paper, but it was not until 1988 that they actually began meeting again. The World Service Board currently has three active standing committees: internal/external affairs (I/E); policy, structure, training, and education (PST&E); and literature review.

The problem is, the areas of responsibility now being addressed by these three committees have, since 1979, been addressed by conference committees. Therein lies the potential for conflict. If the WSC Public Information Committee is responsible for developing an active, effective public relations policy for N.A., what can the trustee I/E committee do in that area? The conference already has a policy committee; it has an ad hoc committee examining the service structure; and the four standing conference committees (P.I., H&I, literature, and policy) already have responsibility for training and educating members of local service committees in

each conference committee's area of expertise. What, then, does the trustee PST&E committee do? The trustee literature review committee can *review* the WSC Literature Committee's work--but can the trustees *revise* it, or write new material themselves?

WSC Administrative Committee. "The *only* thing I'm sure of," one conference chairperson has said, "is that I have to chair the meeting in April." The WSC Administrative Committee is asked to make a lot of decisions in the course of the conference work-year, yet has very little in the way of clear, specifically defined authority. It's certain from the *Temporary Working Guide* that the administrative committee is responsible to manage the budget for conference committees. But is it also supposed to administer the World Service Board of Trustees budget, as it currently does? If so, doesn't that put the conference administrative committee in a position of authority over the WSB?

And what of the fiscal decisions made at the World Service Office regarding financial and personnel support for conference activities--who coordinates committee needs with office resources? No one; and certainly not the WSC Administrative Committee. While the conference literature committee, for instance, is held responsible to develop new books and pamphlets for our fellowship, the fiscal and personnel resources necessary for actually doing so lie with the World Service Office, completely out of their hands. No single body in our current structure has the authority necessary to match the one with the other.

Coordinating public relations. To accommodate the existence of three separate service arms in P.I. decision-making, a contingency plan has been developed. The plan provides that whenever a significant contact is received from the media, a professional organization, or some other agency, the leaders of all three arms are to be notified so that they can agree on a response. Yet the communication and coordination necessary to make the plan work have not occurred. The result has been, on the one hand, an unwillingness to push forward vigorously in public relations, or, on the other, one service arm pushing forward too vigorously on its own without adequate authority to do so.

Coordinating international development. With the expansion of international development activities over the past year, new conflicts have arisen between the three arms of world service, particularly when trips outside the United States have been organized. The questions have been, who goes? What do they do when they get there? Why? Who pays for it? And, again, with three separate service arms, even communications concerning these questions have been difficult, not to mention the difficulty in establishing priorities for such visits. No single point of decision for such issues exists; no one body in the current model is capable of coordinating priorities.

The election process. Today, the conference has no effective means of getting to know everyone nominated for service positions; voting participants are sometimes left to go only on hearsay when electing committee chairs, conference officers, and trustees. The elections themselves further highlight the imbalance in our current service system: those in the most responsible positions require the least support from the World Service Conference in order to be elected, and those with the fewest responsibilities require the largest margin for election.

The directors of the World Service Office have what some consider to be the most substantial responsibilities of any world-level trusted servants: they hold the legal rights to our fellowship's name and literature, including the Basic Text, and are responsible to publish and distribute our books and pamphlets. The WSO board also has hefty fiscal authority: complete control of all literature sales income, amounting to about \$5-million this year, twenty times the amount contributed to the World Service Conference in 1989. Yet the large majority of members of the WSO Board of Directors--nine out of twelve--are elected by the board itself, not by the World Service Conference, to three-year terms. The three conference-elected directors serve only one-year terms.

The World Service Board of Trustees is in quite a different situation. As we've noted already, it has no specific responsibilities, yet the entire membership of the WSB is elected directly by the conference. In order to serve on this board, trustee candidates must receive the approval of two-thirds of all voting conference participants. This, when compared with the election requirements placed on the WSO directors, seems imbalanced.

No single point of decision. In our current world service system, conference committees are left, for the most part, to establish their own priorities, or to establish no priorities at all; there is no single body with the authority to coordinate, on behalf of the conference, the overall priorities of our world services. One of the results of this situation has been the WSC Policy Committee's lack of direction and low level of productivity. The only project left on its agenda, the development of guidelines for the seating of new regions, is one the committee thought up for itself a few years ago, yet which the committee has consistently been unable to come to agreement on.

The World Service Conference has not seen fit to redirect the policy committee or to disband it. The Joint Administrative Committee, established in 1986, has nominal responsibility for coordinating the various individual conference committees, but no explicit authority to redirect a committee.

The WSC Policy Committee has received next to no coordination from either the WSC itself or the JAC in recent years, and has little internal sense of direction. It is left open for exploitation as a lobbying ground, serving not the interests of the fellowship as a whole but those of the regions who can afford to pay someone's way to the committee's meetings. The same situation--or the potential for such a

situation--exists, to a greater or lesser degree, in all the conference committees, not just the policy committee.

Unified, coordinated services

Today, Narcotics Anonymous has no single, central agency for prioritizing, coordinating decision-making, or cooperatively determining the need for resource allocation throughout its world service system. The result has been the development of very little in the way of actual services. We need coherency in our service administration, and what the committee offers in the chapter on national services and the addendum, "National Services in the United States," is a unified service system which provides such coherency. The *Guide* describes a model wherein priorities for *all* national services are determined by the conference; allocation of resources for *all* national service projects is coordinated by a single national service board; *all* national service resources are available to high priority projects. A *single* point of decision and accountability is clearly defined for service responsibilities--not three.

The service model described in the *Guide* eliminates the current potential for conflict between the conference committees and trustee committees in service development; between the three current service arms in developing our public relations and international development policies; and between the WSC Administrative Committee, the World Service Board of Trustees, and the World Service Office in matters of resource allocation and budget management--it accomplishes all this by creating a single active service board. Each National Service Board committee or subsidiary corporation would be the only body at the national level with responsibility for developing and administering services in its area of expertise. Priorities and expenses for each would be balanced against one another by the whole board. Through the screening provided by the *Guide's* conference nominations panel, we would be better assured of having qualified service candidates to select from in choosing trusted servants, and all but two members of the single board--those two trustees filling the NSB seats specially reserved for nonaddicts--would be elected directly by the conference.

A single point of decision and accountability, clearly defined for each responsibility, is necessary for effective, coherent service administration. The Twelve Concepts and *A Guide for Service* provide the theoretical and practical means for such administration, particularly at the national level. But national service is only one part of the structure described in the *Guide*; what about local services?

The Guide and the fellowship's grassroots

In the course of our fellowship's growth, some basic problems have developed in the delivery of local services. Our committee has identified a few of them, and has

incorporated solutions to those problems into the *Guide to Service* chapters on the group, area, and region.

The ultimate authority for N.A. services. In the First Concept, we talk about both the responsibility and the authority for N.A. services--the responsibility to fund the service structure, and the authority to elect delegates to serve in the structure. Today, that kind of responsibility and authority resides in the regional committees, not in the N.A. groups. Our "fund flow" system of passing surplus funds on from the group, to the area, to the region, to the World Service Conference, creates a situation wherein the regional committees are almost exclusively in control of how well the conference is funded, and, hence, what projects it is able to undertake. And the election of RSRs by regional committees means that, in practice if not in theory, the RSCs, not the groups, control the majority of conference participants.

A Guide to Service proposes two specific measures to remove that kind of responsibility and authority from the regional committees and restore it to the N.A. groups. First, it recommends that group surplus funds--the original source of most service contributions in N.A.--be divided up by each N.A. group itself, as each N.A. group sees fit, and contributed directly to the area committee, the regional committee, and national services. Second, as we noted earlier in this report, the *Guide* establishes regional assemblies, attended by representatives of all the groups in each geographical territory, which elect conference delegates.

The role of the group service representative. In theory, today's GSR has great responsibility; in practice, though, group service representatives have only a limited role in our service structure. They show up at the area service committee, take notes, report back to their groups, and return to the ASC with their groups' comments. It's no wonder that, according to our own experience and what we hear from others, many if not most GSRs are elected with about six months clean and don't follow through on their full term of commitment.

A Guide to Service describes a new world of service, both for the N.A. group and for the group service representative. Narcotics Anonymous groups would be much more directly involved in N.A. services which directly affected all groups; proposals affecting the basic identity of the fellowship, and new N.A. books, would be submitted directly to all N.A. groups for approval. At the area level, GSRs would be considered area committee participants in their own right, delegated by the groups with the authority to take a responsible, substantive role in the committee's activities. The group, through its GSR, would be tied directly into the national service system through the annual regional assemblies; GSRs would not only discuss national service affairs face-to-face with their conference delegate, they would elect that delegate. All of this would call for more careful selection of GSRs than currently takes place, but the benefits in the quality of service and communication would more than make up for the extra effort, we believe.

Areas and regions. In today's service structure, there is no clear delineation between the responsibilities of the area committee and the regional committee. In many places, regions perform the same kinds of service as those fulfilled by their local areas, even though most direct services are best fulfilled by the area committee, closest to where those services will be used. The result, all too often, is that regional committees draw the people with the most experience in direct service administration away from the area committees, leaving the ASCs unable to adequately fulfill their responsibilities.

By clearly delineating between the roles of the ASC and the RSC, *A Guide to Service* allows for the kind of pooling of experience that serves all areas well in their direct service efforts, but leaves most of the people actually fulfilling those services in place at the area level.

National and world service division

Today, organized N.A. service committees operate in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, the Irish Republic, Israel, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and perhaps elsewhere as well. Some of these national communities have only an area committee; others, a national region; three have organized their own national conferences or assemblies. But the *Temporary Working Guide*--created in 1983, when very few N.A. service committees had been organized outside North America--doesn't even mention national services, much less give them guidance. When these countries' *national* representatives take part in the World Service Conference, they find themselves on an equal footing with fifty-eight *local* U.S. representatives--the American RSRs--because the *Temporary Working Guide* does not account for national representation at the WSC. The *Temporary Working Guide* is not sufficient to meet the needs of our fellowship today, not to speak of our needs in the future.

Our fellowship's "world" service units were created when Narcotics Anonymous was an almost exclusively American phenomenon, when no separate national service system was needed in the United States. However, with N.A. communities now organized in over a dozen countries, it is not appropriate for those world service units to continue to spend the great majority of their time, money, and personnel resources on the N.A. Fellowship in the United States, as they do today. Nor is it appropriate for the American community to use our world service agencies to meet the internal needs other national communities must meet for themselves. We need to change the way we organize our world services.

The idea of dividing responsibility for specifically national services from those affecting the entire fellowship worldwide, and assigning those responsibilities to different levels of service, is not a new one. As early as September 1987, the proposal has been seen in publications such as the *Fellowship Report*. This committee took the idea one step further in its report to the conference last year,

and was met with encouragement by the gathered RSRs, particularly those from regions outside the United States. *World services*, as this committee understands them, are those which affect us all, performed on behalf of the entire fellowship--services which, by their very nature, should not be administered by one nation alone.

The WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service has not yet achieved a consensus on how an N.A. world service body should be configured, but we have agreed on the general aims such a body would pursue. First, it would coordinate assistance for emerging N.A. communities, either by linking those young communities with more mature ones, by coordinating development workshops, or by making translation and production services for N.A. literature available to those communities not capable of supporting their own. Second, as the agency charged with holding N.A.'s registered trademarks and copyrights in trust for the entire fellowship, it would safeguard the integrity of the N.A. message, both in the course of reviewing translations of existing N.A. materials, and in reviewing new materials developed by autonomous national communities. And third, it would serve as a liaison between N.A. as a whole and other international organizations, whether they be professional, voluntary, business, government, or press agencies.

Our committee is also agreed on a proposition designed to protect our fellowship's identity: "Any proposed change in our fellowship's name, Narcotics Anonymous, or in N.A.'s Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, or Twelve Concepts for Service must first be approved by a three-quarters majority of all N.A. groups registered with all of N.A.'s various national service offices." This provision would be included in whatever world service charter is developed in conjunction with future materials.

The primary difficulty we've had in agreeing on what kind of structure to recommend for world service is the fact that, today, the American N.A. community is far more developed than any other national community. Could we set up an international board to administer services on behalf of the entire fellowship worldwide, fill that board with experienced N.A. leaders, and have any greater than token representation on that board from any other community than the United States? And, regardless of being expressly established to serve the worldwide fellowship, wouldn't almost all of such a board's financial resources be provided, at least for the foreseeable future, by the American N.A. community? We've considered two options:

- 1) drawing the board with equal numbers from each country with a national service structure, depending on principles to guide the board toward the right course of action; or,
- 2) drawing members proportionately from each national community, based on the number of members or groups in each country, creating a strong American presence on the board until other national communities develop further.

We've also considered the idea of continuing to support a service conference composed of representatives from *regions* worldwide, meeting every two years to

provide guidance to a single service board and office for the entire fellowship. This conference, however, would have a separate *section* meeting once a year, composed only of American representatives and dealing only with American services, providing guidance to the board on their American activities. No one on the committee sees this as a long-term solution to our problems, but it is seen by some as a viable plan that could be put into action in the short run, until the fellowship outside the U.S. is developed to the point where it can take an equal partnership role in a more completely distinct world service structure.

Conclusion

The service structure we have today has developed haphazardly. Each year, changes have been implemented in the structure without any long-term vision in mind--and the structure shows it. Our current service manual, the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*, was offered seven years ago as a transitional source of direction, and was not expected even then to meet our need for a firm, all-encompassing service framework. Our committee has been six years in developing *A Guide to Service for Narcotics Anonymous*. After releasing two earlier, less comprehensive drafts--one in 1985, another in 1987--the committee has now developed material based on a realistic assessment of the needs of our growing, worldwide fellowship, offering sound, consistent, principled solutions to our developmental problems.

There is one point, however, which needs to be made crystal clear: we are *not* proposing any of this material for approval at this year's World Service Conference meeting--not the Twelve Concepts, not the chapter on the group as it appears here, not *anything*--and we will stand unanimously against any proposal to do so at this time. The work, even on the drafts presented with this report, is not yet complete.

In the coming conference year, and in the year following that, we plan to conduct a series of multi-regional workshops. At those workshops, we will present the current material and listen to what the N.A. membership has to say about it. We will incorporate members' responses into final drafts of the Twelve Concepts and the remainder of the *Guide*, and seek additional review periods for those final drafts. Without that kind of lengthy, thorough, fellowshipwide review of a project of this magnitude, none of us on the committee or in the conference itself can responsibly suggest that the material is ready for implementation.

We welcome your comments on the work of this committee to date, and look forward in the coming year to meeting those of you interested in the project but unable to attend WSC'90. Until then, Godspeed to us all.

In service to Narcotics Anonymous,
WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service

Completion and approval plan

- March 1990**distribution of *Guide* draft, less world service chapter
- April 1990***World Service Conference annual meeting*
- May 1990**
through April 1991complete world service chapter;
resolve other topics noted for additional attention (see
pages xxii through xxiv, immediately following);
encourage fellowshipwide review of the *Guide*,
including the Twelve Concepts;
multi-regional workshops
- April 1991***World Service Conference annual meeting*:
approval form of Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service
released for twelve-month review period
- May-September 1991**continued review and comment on *Guide*;
make necessary adaptations to finish the *Guide*;
develop plan for transition to *Guide* model for national
and world services
- September 1991**approval form of *A Guide to Service in N.A.* released for
eighteen-month review period;
draft transition plan released for six-month review
period
- April 1992***World Service Conference annual meeting*:
approval sought for Twelve Concepts;
straw poll taken on *A Guide to Service*;
approval form of transition plan released for twelve-
month review period
- April 1993***World Service Conference annual meeting*:
approval sought for *A Guide to Service in Narcotics*
Anonymous, and the transition plan;
if approved, both the *Guide* and the transition plan
would be implemented immediately

Topics for further attention

In addition to the material describing world service arrangements, four other unresolved matters will be carried over from this conference year's work to the next:

1. Delegate recognition
2. Administration of services in large multi-area cities
3. Status of the proposed National Magazine Corporation
4. Special workers

Regional division, state assemblies, and delegate recognition

Questions related to the division of existing regions and the recognition of new conference delegates have been troubling us for some time now. When the N.A. service structure was first forming, it was recommended that regional or state committees be developed, mostly for the purpose of electing delegates to the new World Service Conference. Since then, new regions have been created out of existing ones in the United States for a variety of reasons--some good, some not so good--and new regions continue to be created every year.

In many countries, this situation will not create a major problem, since it's likely that national services will draw in many places directly from the area level for conference delegates. But in the U.S., where multi-area regions are a necessity, the continued proliferation of regions could create substantial problems, especially if delegates are selected at regionally-organized assemblies.

Two possible solutions have occurred to us. The first is to wipe clean the current U.S. regional slate. New regions would be organized on a state-by-state basis, except in the most heavily-populated or geographically farthest-flung states. This would give each state a service unit capable of interacting on behalf of the fellowship with state agencies and voluntary organizations. It would also limit the number of conference delegates to a viable number.

The other possible solution is that, rather than organize assemblies on a regional basis, we recommend they be organized in each state, regardless of how many regions may serve the various portions of any given state. The only problem the national conference would have to consider, then, would be that of *delegate* recognition, not *regional* recognition.

Both ideas have a number of serious complications yet to be resolved by the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service. Our final proposal in this matter may represent a variant of one of the above proposals, something entirely different from either of them, or a renewed commitment to the material currently appearing in the draft *Guide to Service*. We will keep you informed as our discussions progress.

Metropolitan services

The provision of direct services--H&I panel coordination, phonline administration, public information activities, and the like--can be handled fairly simply in smaller cities by a single area service committee. But in larger cities, particularly in the U.S., we've encountered problems when local N.A. communities have grown beyond the point where a single ASC can accommodate all its GSRs. The point is, when a single city is served by more than one area committee, how are services affecting the *entire* N.A. community in that city coordinated in an effective, equitable way?

In the conference year prior to the one now concluding, this committee held a "brainstorming" session with trusted servants from cities in just such circumstances. This conference year, we've talked much about a variety of tools for coordinating metropolitan direct services, but have not yet resolved on a single set of proposals for inclusion in *A Guide to Service*.

In the coming year, we plan to again consult directly with service committees in large metropolitan cities, sharing with them the ideas we've had so far, and learning from them what they have found to be most effective. The material we are able to develop from those contacts, and from our subsequent discussions, will be included in the review form of the *Guide*.

National Magazine Corporation status

In Addendum 5 of the *Guide*, "National Services in the United States," we've described three subsidiary corporations which would be attached to the U.S. National Service Board: the National Service Office Corporation, the National Convention Corporation, and the National Magazine Corporation. The committee as a whole is quite clear in its understanding of the legal and administrative benefits of managing the NSO and the national convention through sub-corporations. A substantial minority of the committee, however, is not in such clear agreement concerning the need for a National Magazine Corporation.

Those in support of a separate sub-corporation for the magazine cited their perception of the need to safeguard both the administrative and editorial integrity of the fellowship's monthly journal. The business skills and organization required for a monthly periodical, they said, differed so substantially from those required for other National Service Board activities that a distinct sub-corporation should be established to administer the magazine's affairs. And the different kinds of judgment required to manage the National Service Office and the national magazine, they thought, would make it difficult for an NSO Magazine Department, responsible to NSO management, to pursue the innovative tracks in editorial development necessary to produce a lively, interesting, readable publication.

Those not in support of a separate sub-corporation for the magazine thought that the creation of such an entity would needlessly duplicate administrative structures already projected for the National Service Office. If a skilled editorial staff is hired

for the magazine, and if individuals with appropriate skills and background are appointed to an NSB Magazine Committee to guide editorial development, the national magazine should have all the creative integrity it needs to develop a quality periodical for our members.

The committee will look again in the coming year at whether or not the national magazine should be managed by a separate sub-corporation of the National Service Board.

The role of special workers

Conspicuously absent in the current drafts of the Twelve Concepts and *A Guide to Service* are references to special workers and their role in our service structure. This omission warrants further explanation, especially since the first draft of the Twelve Principles of Service mentioned them repeatedly.

After hearing input from other world-level trusted servants at a session in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the ad hoc committee was unable to reach any sort of consensus on the appropriate role of the special worker in the N.A. service structure, particularly with regard to decision-making. The basic question we are faced with is, do the Twelve Concepts imply that special workers with significant responsibilities ought to take part in the decision-making process at their level of service, or does the nature of the employer/employee relationship preclude such participation? Discussions of this issue within the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service have run the gamut of possibilities, from full participation of special workers as voting conference participants, to *no* participation whatsoever in decision-making processes, to allowing a degree of participation equivalent in some way to the degree of responsibility each special worker is charged with, to simply leaving the decision to the best judgment of each individual service committee faced with the issue.

Discussions have been extensive, but the committee has still been unable to reach a consensus all of its members could support. Since our current work on *A Guide to Service* and the Twelve Concepts stands independent of any decision to be made regarding the role of special workers, all references to special workers have been dropped from the drafts for the time being.

We hope to gain whatever additional guidance may be available on this subject from the World Service Conference and from the fellowship at large. However, the committee expects that we will all have to spend more time actually utilizing special workers, gaining more experience and perspective as we go, before a conclusion to this discussion will be possible.

**A Guide to
Service in
Narcotics
Anonymous.
Spring 1990**

WSC Ad Hoc Committee
on N.A. Service
Report to the 1990
World Service Conference
NOT CONFERENCE APPROVED

Foreword

1 *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous* is intended to serve as a resource to
2 those in every country who have committed themselves to providing the services
3 necessary to carry our message to the still-suffering addict. Portions of it may prove
4 to be inappropriate for use in your country, either because of geography, national or
5 provincial law, cultural differences, or the developmental state of your national N.A.
6 community. If this is the case, the N.A. community in your country should feel free
7 to adapt the *Guide* to meet your own needs, provided that those adaptations are
8 consistent with N.A.'s Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts for
9 Service. For further information concerning local adaptation of material from *A*
10 *Guide to Service*, contact N.A. World Services.

WSC AD HOC COMMITTEE ON N.A. SERVICE
REPORT TO THE 1990 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE
NOT CONFERENCE APPROVED MATERIAL

What is the N.A. service structure?

1 The N.A. service structure is a loosely-knit network of groups, committees, and
2 boards, bound together by common principles and a common goal: to carry the N.A.
3 recovery message to the addict who still suffers. The activities of the service
4 structure are guided by N.A.'s Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts for Service.
5 Those spiritual ideals underlie the relationships between all the service units
6 described in this book: sufficient authority is delegated to each unit of the service
7 structure to get the job done; each unit of the service structure determines what
8 matters it will itself act upon, and what matters it will refer elsewhere for broader
9 discussion; every individual member of a service unit has the same rights of
10 participation as every other member; our service units exist to serve only, never
11 govern. Each N.A. community will determine for itself how to apply these ideals in
12 its service activities.

The N.A. group

13 N.A. groups are local, informal associations of recovering drug addicts. They are
14 the foundation of the N.A. service structure. Groups are formed for the primary
15 purpose of carrying the N.A. message of recovery, and all their activities should
16 reflect that purpose. Conducting Narcotics Anonymous meetings is the primary
17 activity of an N.A. group.

18 Here are six points¹ based on our traditions which describe an N.A. group:

- 19 1. All members of a group are drug addicts, and all drug addicts are eligible for
20 membership.
- 21 2. As a group, they are self-supporting.
- 22 3. As a group, their single goal is to help drug addicts recover through application
23 of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.
- 24 4. As a group, they have no affiliation outside Narcotics Anonymous.
- 25 5. As a group, they express no opinion on outside issues.
- 26 6. As a group, their public relations policy is based on attraction rather than
27 promotion.
- 28

29 The group may conduct its own affairs in whatever way seems fit to its members,
30 provided the group's actions do not adversely affect other groups or the entire N.A.
31 Fellowship. In the conduct of the affairs of N.A. as a whole, the groups delegate to
32 the rest of the service structure the responsibility for the fulfillment of N.A. services.

¹ The six points describing a group have been adapted from The A.A. Group, published by A.A. World Services, Inc.
Reprinted by permission.

1 Group service representatives (GSRs) are elected to participate on behalf of the
2 groups in the area committee and the regional assembly.

3 Area service committee

4 The area committee is the primary means by which the services of a local N.A.
5 community are administered. The area committee is composed of group service
6 representatives, committee general officers (chairperson, vice chairperson,
7 secretary, treasurer), subcommittee chairpersons, and the area's regional committee
8 member(s) (RCM[s]). The area committee elects its own general officers,
9 subcommittee chairpersons, and RCM(s).

10 Regional service committee

11 The regional committee exists to pool the experience and resources of the areas
12 and groups it serves. One of its primary tasks is the coordination of various types of
13 regional gatherings to promote better understanding of N.A. services, concepts, and
14 traditions among local members. The regional committee is composed of RCMs,
15 the conference delegate, and others, according to the needs of the committee. The
16 regional committee elects administrative officers from among the RCMs; these
17 officers continue to serve as RCMs.

18 Regional assemblies

19 Regional committees organize assemblies at which group service representatives
20 and RCMs discuss a wide range of service matters, including those likely to come
21 before the national service conference (NSC). *The region's delegate to the national*
22 *conference is elected by the GSRs and RCMs at a regional assembly.*²

23 National services

24 While N.A. groups conduct recovery meetings, area committees administer local
25 services, and regional committees pool local experience, N.A.'s national service
26 bodies provide the national N.A. community with means of carrying out tasks which
27 benefit the entire national community, and of maintaining an active voice and
28 effective conscience concerning issues affecting N.A. nationwide. *National*
29 *conferences* (sometimes called *national assemblies*) periodically bring together
30 delegates from local communities to consider these issues. Some national
31 conferences assign the fulfillment of tasks resulting from those considerations to the
32 delegates themselves; others elect *national boards*, which administer national
33 services between conference meetings.

34 Each national community is encouraged to develop its own services to meet its
35 own needs, in accordance with its own national laws, and cognizant of its own

2 The different possible means for selecting conference delegates is a subject the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service is quite concerned about, for a number of reasons. For a discussion of the subject, see page xxii in the report from the committee at the front of this book.

1 cultural background, provided that the structure which is developed does not
2 conflict with the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, or the Twelve Concepts for N.A.
3 Service.

4 **World services**

5 N.A. World Services coordinates assistance for emerging N.A. communities, acts
6 as our fellowship's liaison with other international organizations, and helps
7 safeguard the integrity of the written N.A. message.³

³ The WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service has not yet developed a consensus on how to configure our fellowship's world services. For a look at some of the issues currently being considered by the committee, see page xviii in the report from the committee at the front of this book.

Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service

1 The Twelve Traditions of N.A. have guided our groups well in the conduct of their
2 individual affairs, and they have always formed the foundation for N.A. services.
3 They have steered us away from many pitfalls that could have meant our collapse.
4 Our various service units *serve*, for example, they do not *govern*; we stay out of public
5 debate; we neither endorse nor oppose any of the many causes that our members
6 may feel strongly about; our approach to addiction is a non-professional one; we are
7 fully self-supporting. The traditions have provided our fellowship with essential
8 guidance throughout its development, and they continue to be indispensable at
9 every level of service.

10 The Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service described here are intended to be
11 practically applied to our service structure at every level. The spiritual ideals of our
12 steps and traditions provide the basis for these concepts, which are tailored to the
13 specific needs of the various service boards and committees that make up our
14 service structure. The concepts allow our groups the freedom to more readily
15 achieve our traditions' ideals, and our service structure the freedom to function
16 efficiently and responsibly in the face of the complex realities of the world around
17 us.

18 When we conscientiously study and apply these concepts, our services are
19 stabilized, much as our steps have stabilized our lives and our traditions have
20 stabilized and unified our groups. It is in this spirit that we present a set of concepts
21 to guide our services and help insure that the message of Narcotics Anonymous is
22 available to all addicts who have a desire to stop using and begin practicing our way
23 of life.

- 24
- 25 1. The responsibility and authority for N.A. services rests ultimately with the N.A.
26 groups.
 - 27 2. The N.A. groups delegate to the service structure the responsibility to develop
28 and maintain services on behalf of N.A. as a whole.
 - 29 3. Each service responsibility must be matched by a carefully defined service
30 authority.
 - 31 4. For each responsibility, a single point of decision and accountability should be
32 clearly defined.

Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service copyright (c) 1989, World Service Office, Inc. The Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service were modeled on A.A.'s Twelve Concepts for World Service, published by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., and have evolved specific to the needs of Narcotics Anonymous.

**WSC AD HOC COMMITTEE ON N.A. SERVICE
REPORT TO THE 1990 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE
NOT CONFERENCE APPROVED MATERIAL**

- 1 5. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which a loving God influences our
- 2 decisions.
- 3 6. Leadership qualities are highly valued, and should be carefully considered when
- 4 selecting trusted servants.
- 5 7. Our service boards and committees ought to be given the ability to determine
- 6 which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which will be
- 7 brought back to the delegating body for further consultation.
- 8 8. All those entrusted with substantial responsibility for our services should take
- 9 part in the decision-making processes affecting those services.
- 10 9. Our service boards and committees have the responsibility to carefully consider
- 11 all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.
- 12 10. Any member of our service structure may, without fear of reprisal, make
- 13 petition for the redress of a personal grievance.
- 14 11. At all levels, the N.A. service structure should take care never to accumulate
- 15 funds beyond those sufficient to operate.
- 16 12. Our structure at all levels is one of service, never of government. No one
- 17 element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over any
- 18 other.

* * * * *

22 1. The responsibility and authority for N.A. services rests ultimately with the
23 N.A. groups.

24 The ultimate authority for Narcotics Anonymous service is "a loving God as He
25 may express Himself in our group conscience." As we shall see in the concepts to
26 follow, the expression of a loving God is sought and respected at all levels of service.
27 Concept One, by affirming the authority of the N.A. groups, calls upon the service
28 structure to be especially responsive to that expression as it occurs at the group
29 level. The First Concept also calls upon the groups to accept and exercise the
30 ultimate responsibility for all services performed in N.A.

31 The groups support N.A. services in a number of ways. First, they send into the
32 service structure a constant stream of trusted servants. Group service
33 representatives (GSRs), elected directly by each N.A. group, form the foundation of
34 our service structure. By participating in area service, and by attending forums,
35 assemblies, seminars, and workshops at both the area and regional levels, the GSRs
36 provide constant, active influence over the discussions being carried on within the
37 service structure.

38 A second way in which the groups exercise their responsibility for N.A. services is
39 by providing the funds for those services. Groups send any surplus money they have
40 directly into the service structure. They also purchase and distribute our fellowship's

1 literature, and the proceeds from those literature sales are used to further our
2 primary purpose.

3 Groups further exercise their fundamental responsibility for service by providing
4 services of their own. Meeting places need to be maintained, financial records kept,
5 literature and supplies purchased, and a variety of other group-level responsibilities
6 met. Trusted servants at this level, by providing the atmosphere of personal
7 recovery in our meetings, form the bedrock of our fellowship.

8 The entire N.A. service structure applies this First Concept by remaining
9 responsive to the guidance of the groups. Each level of service is designed so that,
10 as much as possible, the collective voice of the N.A. groups is heard in the decision-
11 making process. Group service representatives form the core of the area service
12 committee. The regional service committee sponsors various events throughout the
13 year that provide opportunities for GSRs to maintain contact with their national
14 service conference delegate, and to remain informed and active in the discussions
15 being carried on at the national level. At regional assemblies, GSRs meet directly
16 with their conference delegate for a thorough and open discussion of current N.A.
17 service issues. In some matters of the highest importance and sensitivity--for
18 example, a proposed change to the Twelve Steps or Twelve Traditions--all
19 registered groups may be directly polled through the mail.

20 Besides those formal ways in which the groups' collective voice provides ongoing
21 influence, more subtle and informal signals may come from the groups to the service
22 structure. Trusted servants serve the groups best by being attentive to these as well.
23 Have group contributions to the rest of the service structure decreased--or
24 increased--lately? What pieces of N.A. literature have the groups been buying--or
25 not buying--of late? Are groups taking part in local fellowship activities? Are the
26 groups sending enough committed members to fully support the service projects that
27 need to get done? If support of that kind is lacking, what kind of improved
28 communication or service might engender more support from the groups?
29 Questions like these, asked by responsible trusted servants when establishing goals
30 and plans for N.A. service, indicate a healthy respect for the role of the groups in
31 guiding our services.

32 The First Concept is being applied to the fullest when groups are actively
33 supportive of the service structure they have created, and when that structure is
34 open and responsive to the guidance of the groups, both direct and indirect.

35 **2. The N.A. groups delegate to the service structure the responsibility to**
36 **develop and maintain services on behalf of N.A. as a whole.**

37 The First Concept says that the groups are ultimately responsible for our services.
38 Yet the issues involved in providing those services worldwide have become
39 increasingly complex, requiring intensive planning and careful, studied execution.
40 Even our local services require a level of involvement that would distract groups
41 from fulfilling their primary purpose. How, then, can the groups give their attention

1 to these responsibilities *and* carry the message to the addict who still suffers? To
2 effectively accomplish both of those important functions, the groups focus their own
3 immediate energies on carrying the message of recovery at their meetings, and they
4 delegate much of the remaining responsibility to the service structure.

5 The first level of that delegation occurs when groups send their GSRs into the
6 service structure. The groups trust those servants to become part of a team, a team
7 which will do what it would not be practical for the groups to do themselves.
8 Together, these trusted servants make up the foundation of the N.A. service
9 structure.

10 The delegation of service responsibilities throughout this structure requires trust--
11 trust in a group of addicts, many of whom once lived the kinds of lives that did not
12 inspire a great deal of trust. The Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service, however, are
13 firmly rooted in the belief that the steps and traditions work. They express our faith
14 that when we ground our lives individually in those principles, and when at all levels
15 of service we pause to consult a loving God in all matters, then we can come
16 together as a community in a spirit of service, our trust well founded.

17 Perhaps early in the development of an N.A. community, when most of us are new
18 in this way of life, greater caution about delegation is called for. But as time passes,
19 and our spiritual principles of recovery and unity have had a chance to produce a
20 substantial change in our lives and in the life of our N.A. community, proper
21 delegation becomes an essential part of maintaining effective services. Trust in one
22 another, and in the collective conscience expressed among us when we each
23 individually consult a loving God, is one of our highest spiritual ideals.

24 These first two concepts provide a basic foundation for service in Narcotics
25 Anonymous. They establish clearly that the N.A. groups bear the responsibility and
26 authority for the service activities of our fellowship, and that the service structure
27 bears the delegated responsibility for performing those services. The rest of the
28 concepts describe the delicate balance of authority and responsibility required at all
29 levels of service for the realization of the ideal described in these first two concepts.

30 **3. Each service responsibility must be matched by a carefully defined**
31 **service authority.**

32 This concept lends greater definition to the kind of delegation called for in
33 Concept Two. When we give responsibilities to our trusted servants, we also grant
34 them the authority necessary to carry out those responsibilities. We look carefully
35 at the amount of responsibility we are placing on a given board, committee, or
36 trusted servant, and then match it with the authority necessary to fulfill it.

37 By "authority," we do not mean the power to tell someone else what to do. The
38 word authority used in that way would not be consistent with the spiritual principles
39 in our steps, traditions, and concepts for service. Instead, our approach is to build
40 consensus regarding the best direction of our services, and then respect that
41 consensus in taking responsible actions in service to N.A. By "authority," rather, we

1 mean permission to exercise judgment and take action to accomplish the service
2 tasks for which one is responsible. Authority of this kind originates at the group
3 level, and is granted by the groups to the other levels.

4 We don't ask a member to chair a committee, and then expect that member to
5 come back to ask our permission or guidance on every decision that must be made
6 in carrying out the work. Instead, when we ask our members to coordinate specific
7 service tasks, we grant them the freedom to make decisions and take actions to a
8 degree that matches the level of responsibility they are given. We then send them to
9 do the work with our blessings and our trust, confident that they will exercise the
10 leadership and judgment needed to serve our fellowship well--confident, because we
11 have taken great care in selecting each one.

12 The process of determining the degree of responsibility that a given task entails,
13 and establishing clear limits of authority that match it, is one that will vary from
14 committee to committee. The ideal is to maintain the accountability of the
15 committee, board, or trusted servant who has been delegated the authority, and at
16 the same time provide enough latitude so that the work can be done efficiently. The
17 creativity, experience, and willingness of our trusted servants should be tapped to
18 the fullest, while at the same time preserving the delegating body's broader
19 authority.

20 Accountability can be established readily when a high value is placed on clear,
21 open communication. The delegating body receives thorough reports from those to
22 whom it delegates responsibilities, and those charged with responsibilities seek
23 broad consultation before executing their plans. Good communication is a key
24 factor in effective delegation.

25 Without the authority to perform the tasks we assign them, our service entities
26 would bear significant responsibilities but have no effective means of fulfilling them.
27 They would be without the capacity to exercise effective leadership. This concept
28 calls us to a higher level of faith and trust. It allows for the exercise of sound
29 judgment, creativity, trust, and faith in the loving God whose expression in the
30 conscience of each trusted servant forms the heart of all our service efforts.

31 **4. For each responsibility, a single point of decision and accountability**
32 **should be clearly defined.**

33 There is a challenge in striking a balance between insuring on the one hand that
34 sound decisions are made, reflecting the guidance of a broad-based group
35 conscience, and on the other hand providing services in a decisive, efficient manner.
36 The Twelve Concepts seek to provide a framework in which trusted servants can
37 create and maintain that balance. The Fourth Concept does its part by further
38 refining our approach to effective delegation.

39 Concept One stresses the responsibility and authority of the N.A. groups, and the
40 responsibility of our service boards and committees to remain attentive to the
41 groups' needs and concerns. Concept Two provides for delegation by the groups of

1 many of the hands-on service responsibilities to the service structure. Concept
2 Three says that each responsibility delegated throughout the service structure
3 should be matched with enough authority to accomplish it. Now Concept Four says
4 that the authority for making the final decision about each responsibility should be
5 located in a single point.

6 This concept describes a basic principle of sound decision-making. As we have
7 seen clearly in the discussion of the previous concepts, consultation and careful
8 consideration go into good decisions, with many perspectives coming together in
9 search of the best approach. But ultimately a decision must be made, and someone
10 must be charged with the responsibility to make it.

11 Accountability in our service structure is also addressed by the Fourth Concept.
12 The single point of decision for any given N.A. service responsibility is not merely a
13 seat of authority. By defining a single point of decision, the delegating body also
14 defines the place where anyone concerned can go for information about the project,
15 and from which regular reports must be issued. The defined point of decision is also
16 the point of accountability; if the delegating body needs to offer redirection for the
17 project, those directions can be given straight to whatever single point of decision
18 has been defined.

19 Major decisions in N.A. service are usually made by a board or committee, in
20 cooperation and consultation with others. In our service centers, the point of
21 authority for routine management decisions usually rests with a single person. In
22 both cases, the *final* point of decision is a *single* point, though that single *point* is not
23 necessarily a single *person*. Whatever the circumstances, experience suggests that
24 disharmony as well as a lack of accountability results when we expect two boards or
25 committees, or two trusted servants, to have final say in a particular decision.

26 The application of Concept Four helps us to avoid confusion and disharmony in
27 our service environment. It balances the Twelve Concepts' overall call for
28 substantial consultation and cooperation with the ability to make clear decisions
29 from a single point, a point of accountability as well as of delegated authority. That
30 balance is the cumulative effect of the first four concepts, and is the basis for sound
31 decision-making throughout the N.A. service structure, an ability enhanced and
32 refined by each of the concepts to follow.

33 **5. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which a loving God influences**
34 **our decisions.**

35 In Narcotics Anonymous, we believe that group conscience is the means by which
36 a loving God provides guidance to our fellowship. The exercise of group conscience
37 is the act by which our members bring their spiritual recovery directly to bear in
38 resolving issues affecting N.A. services. As such, it is a subject which must
39 necessarily command our most intent consideration.

40 The first stage in the development of group conscience is the application of the
41 steps in the lives of each individual. As our spiritual awakening progresses, we

1 become people of conscience. As we steadily apply spiritual principles in our lives,
2 our decisions and actions increasingly become less motivated by self-interest, and
3 more motivated by what our conscience tells us is good and right. Then, as
4 individuals revive a healthy conscience--one which reflects the guidance of a loving
5 God--they come together to form group conscience. The principle of group
6 conscience is being applied whenever members share with one another their honest
7 reflections, having consulted their conscience.

8 When a single member's understanding is shaped by his conscience, that
9 understanding should influence his important decisions. But in an imperfect world,
10 as a member of the human race, he can never be sure whether his individual
11 reflections on the matter represent only his own thinking, or whether they reflect
12 sound spiritual guidance. When we each share those reflections in a group setting,
13 and we establish a fairly strong consensus, we can be more confident of spiritual
14 guidance. That is the essence of group conscience. It is the means by which we seek
15 the ongoing guidance and influence of our ultimate authority, a loving God. With
16 that kind of process at the foundation of our fellowship's service decisions, we can
17 confidently delegate responsibility and authority for those services to our trusted
18 servants.

19 Group conscience is not a decision-making mechanism. There are many different
20 ways, once group conscience is adequately exercised, for a final decision to be
21 reached. An N.A. group, for example, will exercise group conscience by allowing
22 members to freely share their perspectives before a decision is made. Each
23 individual member, during the exercise of group conscience, is making a clear effort
24 to consult conscience rather than the more ego-driven forces within. Once that
25 discussion has developed a sense of the collective conscience of the group, a sound,
26 spiritually based decision can be made. N.A. groups almost always opt for a purely
27 democratic method--a majority vote--of actually making the final decision.

28 Another example further highlights the difference between group conscience and
29 the decision-making mechanism it influences. Consider the case of a staff meeting
30 at a large N.A. service center. The office manager has an important decision to
31 make. The decision will have significant impact on the office's operations. The
32 issue is raised for broad discussion among the staff. Discussion is vigorous, with
33 several different viewpoints shared. A group conscience is developed. With the
34 insight offered by that group conscience, the manager will make the final decision,
35 and the staff will receive their instructions regarding its implementation. In this
36 case, the decision-making mechanism is "executive authority" rather than "majority
37 rules," but group conscience still plays an important part in making the decision.

38 These two examples are used to demonstrate the clear separation between the
39 expression of group conscience and the particular method used to make a decision.
40 Individuals who are personally involved in the process of spiritual growth make their
41 best effort to express their conscience to the group. That pooling of conscience in a

1 group setting is the means by which a loving God guides and influences our
2 decisions. Finally, by the method most appropriate to the nature of the body in
3 question, that decision is made.

4 **6. Leadership qualities are highly valued, and should be carefully**
5 **considered when selecting trusted servants.**

6 No group or society can function well without able leadership. N.A. is no
7 exception. Leadership at every level of service is one of our most valued assets.
8 Good leaders may be confident and decisive in taking the actions that serve the
9 fellowship, but they plan thoughtfully and consult thoroughly with others before
10 acting. Leaders in N.A. are not dictators or order-givers; they are servants. Able
11 leadership in the spirit of service does not drive by mandate, demanding conformity;
12 it leads by example, commanding respect.

13 N.A. leadership begins at the group level, where many thousands of group service
14 representatives (GSRs) are chosen every year. They are the foundation of our
15 service structure. If we are vigilant in choosing stable, qualified leaders at this level
16 of service, the remainder of the structure will almost certainly be sound. From this
17 strong foundation, a service structure can be built that will nourish, inform, and
18 support the groups, as the groups nourish and support the structure.

19 An N.A. leader is a person who is well versed in this fellowship's principles and
20 policies, and remains consistent with them in taking carefully planned action. He
21 consults with others, and seeks always to establish an appropriate level of consensus
22 before exercising his delegated authority to act on the matters at hand. Good
23 leadership understands that plans and ideas can come from anyone, anywhere. The
24 kind of leader the Sixth Concept refers to is a person of integrity, ready at any time
25 to discard his own ideas and plans for those that are better, crediting the source.

26 A quality often associated with good leadership is the ability to compromise when
27 compromise is called for. In a society which places a high value on broad consensus
28 in its decision-making process, progress is usually characterized by a series of
29 compromises. Leaders in N.A. watch for opportunities to compromise in ways that
30 will improve our prospects for effective action and increased unity.

31 A good leader does not, however, compromise blindly. Sometimes he stands up
32 for his convictions, sticking faithfully to his position. Sometimes during a group
33 discussion a member may believe that the majority is on the wrong track; under such
34 circumstances, the lone voice must persist in making the case for sound principle
35 and sound thinking. Our Ninth and Tenth Concepts for N.A. Service provide for the
36 thorough exercise of this kind of leadership. When the appeals are exhausted, and
37 the minority opinion has been considered carefully without prevailing, a good leader
38 also knows how to surrender and accept the decision that has arisen from group
39 conscience. No matter how right we think we are, our respect for group conscience
40 in N.A. must always prevail.

1 The ability to accept criticism is another characteristic of good leadership.
2 Constructive criticism may provide new perspectives or information that will modify
3 positions our leaders have taken. Sometimes, after receiving criticism, a member in
4 a leadership position will still disagree with it. Though he may hold his ground, he
5 accepts the criticism gracefully. If those in leadership positions are unable to accept
6 criticism, our fellowship has fewer options for growth and development at its
7 disposal.

8 There will always be those who offer harsh criticism that may seem to be less than
9 constructive. But the Ninth Concept requires that our leaders hear these voices
10 well. Some truth may be contained even in personal attacks, and a good leader
11 must be able to look for the truth and discard the rest.

12 Effective leadership will always be highly prized within our fellowship. Our service
13 structure can only be as good as the individuals who serve in it. Therefore, we must
14 constantly elect good leaders, men and women of integrity, to N.A. service positions
15 at every level.

16 **7. Our service boards and committees ought to be given the ability to**
17 **determine which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which**
18 **will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation.**

19 This concept gives our trusted servants the discretion and latitude they need in
20 order to act effectively. The Seventh Concept gives them the freedom to decide,
21 within the framework of their responsibilities, how best to respond to problems and
22 situations as they arise.

23 This concept is closely related to Concepts Three and Four. Concept Three calls
24 for the delegation of authority in a measure that matches the delegation of
25 responsibility, and Concept Four notes that the final point of delegated authority
26 should be singular. The Seventh Concept places the responsibility on each service
27 entity to determine whether or not a specific decision or action falls within one's
28 own sphere of authority as established under those two concepts. Such judgment
29 calls required while performing N.A. services then become matters of conscience
30 rather than matters of enforcement. The recognition of this ability is grounded in
31 the assumption that the principles of our program, as applied in the lives of trusted
32 servants, build into our service units a basic integrity that can be trusted.

33 The Seventh Concept works most effectively when those responsible for our
34 services make regular reports of all significant actions they take. This, along with an
35 active commitment to consult with others before making important decisions, serves
36 as a safeguard against possible abuse of this ability. As a spiritual fellowship, we
37 look with love and understanding on inevitable human error--including errors in
38 judgment. No one can be expected to exercise this ability perfectly. But through
39 practice--sometimes trial and error--each service body and each trusted servant will
40 work out an understanding of how to most properly apply this ability.

8. All those entrusted with substantial responsibility for our services should take part in the decision-making processes affecting those services.

The Eighth Concept seeks to insure that our service structure will always be designed to include active, experienced trusted servants in the decision-making process. There are many roles at the various levels of N.A. service. There are elected representatives, committee and subcommittee officers, board members, group officers, and volunteers of various kinds. At each level it is important to identify the roles that entail "substantial responsibility for our services," and to include those people in the decision-making process at that level. Each board or committee at each level of service will necessarily make its own decisions concerning the application of this concept.

N.A. service is a team effort. The voice of each member of the team is of great value as we seek to express the collective conscience of the whole. We ought never allow a base of valuable experience to be created, and then leave that resource to lay fallow. Area administrative officers and subcommittee chairs, for example, bear substantial responsibility for the fulfillment of area-level services. Their ongoing growth and experience in carrying out their duties is an invaluable resource to the area. The area committee as a whole recognizes them as full participants, putting valuable experience to best use.

Our service boards and committees represent the best cross-section of N.A. perspective and experience. Each participant's contribution to the discussion is important. Clearly, GSRs should participate fully in area committee discussions. The general officers and subcommittee chairs on that area committee bring a different experience base, and therefore a different perspective to the team. It's the conscience, the perspective, and the voice of all of these servants together that make for the strongest decision-making process available to us at each level.

Again, a key idea throughout these concepts is *delegation*. We call our region's representative to the national service conference a *delegate*, whom we expect to participate fully in the conference. Freely expressed individual conscience is the essential element in group conscience on any level. Our service representatives are responsible to the fellowship as a whole, rather than to any specific constituency; so are all the other trusted servants on the team. The delegates are the regions' offerings to the spiritual mix that makes up the group conscience of the national service conference, and the rest of the trusted servants with responsibilities on that level make up the balance of that same mix.

There is no firm rule about how to best apply the principle of participation to every situation. In an atmosphere of love, mutual respect, and frank, open discussion, each service body decides these things for itself. N.A.'s principle of spiritual anonymity is the foundation for the kinds of decisions a service body must make with regard to the Eighth Concept. This principle points our fellowship toward a leveling of the individual's relative importance as a participant in N.A.

1 service. The Eighth Concept, with its emphasis on equalizing the relative weight of
2 each voice on the team, puts the spiritual principle of anonymity into practice.
3 Though we don't *all* participate in *every* decision, we all have the right to participate
4 in the decision-making process in proportion to the level of responsibility we bear.

5 **9. Our service boards and committees have the responsibility to carefully**
6 **consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.**

7 This concept acknowledges that all sides of an issue ought to be carefully
8 considered by a service body before decisions are made. Voices of dissent against
9 majority opinion perform a valuable service by forcing thorough debate on
10 important issues. Well-heard dissent protects us from the dictates of a misinformed
11 or hasty majority. In the best interests of the fellowship, any member of the service
12 structure should be encouraged to enter debate or issue minority reports on matters
13 at hand. The body should always take the time to hear them well before making
14 final decisions.

15 Members may at times feel that decisions made by those with delegated authority
16 have the potential to be harmful to the fellowship, or are not consistent with the
17 spirit of our steps, traditions, or concepts for service. Voicing dissent at such times
18 is not simply the right of those members, it is their responsibility.

19 One way such responsibility is exercised is in the presentation of reports. When a
20 decision is reached, those who spoke against that decision can prepare a report
21 outlining the reasons for their objections. The chairperson of the committee,
22 conference, or board in which the decision was made may specifically request such a
23 report, or the dissenting parties may choose on their own to prepare it. In any case,
24 those responsible for implementing the decision then have the responsibility to
25 carefully consider the points raised in the dissent.

26 In some cases the decision may even be overturned; in others, it may stand. Our
27 decision-making process is not perfect. This concept encourages us to continue to
28 consult group conscience when the wisdom of a decision is questioned. On the
29 other hand, once thorough debate has been held, and a decision still stands, the time
30 comes for all to accept and cooperate with the final decision.

31 The expression of the individual conscience to the group is the foundation of group
32 conscience. Without it, we block out the guidance of a loving God who is our
33 ultimate authority. The majority whose position is being challenged should always
34 treat such input with great respect and careful consideration. This concept,
35 cherished by the majority and minority alike, is vital to the delicate overall balance
36 of our concepts for service.

37 **10. Any member of our service structure may, without fear of reprisal, make**
38 **petition for the redress of a personal grievance.**

39 The Tenth Concept provides an important safeguard in the overall design of our
40 services. Petitions for the redress of personal grievances may be made when any

1 trusted servant feels he or she has been treated unfairly. This concept builds into
2 our structure a sense of respect for the individual.

3 The Tenth Concept is designed especially to protect those who exercise the Ninth
4 Concept. Together, the Ninth and Tenth Concepts support an atmosphere in which
5 all participants in a service board or committee feel free to express themselves
6 frankly on the matters at hand. This open atmosphere is essential for the exchange
7 of widely varying viewpoints necessary in effectively developing a collective
8 conscience. If, after having demonstrated the courage of their convictions,
9 individuals become the subject of reprisals initiated by those who disagree with
10 them, the Tenth Concept allows them to petition the appropriate service body for
11 redress of their grievance. Thus, the respect of our service structure for the rights of
12 the individual N.A. member is guaranteed. In a fellowship such as ours, whose
13 success is based upon mutual support and cooperation, that kind of respect for the
14 individual is irreplaceable.

15 This concept is applied in various ways, depending upon the particular kind of
16 service body in which the issue arises. An area or regional committee might
17 consider such a matter during its sharing session. The board of directors of one of
18 our service centers, on the other hand, may have more formal grievance procedures
19 written into its employment policy to accommodate this concept. However it is
20 applied in a given situation, the right to petition for the redress of a personal
21 grievance should be accessible to all members of the N.A. service team at all levels
22 of our service structure.

23 At the same time, members should not exercise this right hastily. We consult with
24 others, check our motives, and ask ourselves honestly, were we actually wronged by
25 an inappropriate action? If we have open, frank discussion, and sound application
26 of our recovery principles in our services, this right will seldom need to be exercised.
27 It is included here as an assurance of our respect for each individual member.

28 **11. At all levels, the N.A. service structure should take care never to**
29 **accumulate funds beyond those sufficient to operate.**

30 The Narcotics Anonymous program is a spiritual one. One way of understanding
31 that is to say that it is a "non-material" program. The essential act that defines N.A.
32 is one addict freely helping another apply the principles of recovery, asking nothing
33 in return. No payment is ever made for this service. No fee is ever charged. This
34 keeps the spiritual essence of what we do primary, and keeps troublesome
35 diversions from that spiritual essence at a minimum.

36 N.A. groups, as the primary vehicles for carrying this message, function best when
37 they are not diverted by conflicts over money. Only through experience will a group
38 learn how much money is truly needed to keep the group's work going, and how
39 much causes controversy. Groups that do not take on the distraction of managing
40 large sums of money can give their full attention to freely giving away the spiritual
41 message of N.A.

1 Does this mean that groups should not pass a basket at every meeting, or that
2 members should feel that there is no need to place money in the hat at meetings?
3 No, it doesn't. N.A.'s principle of self-support holds that we accept no money from
4 outside sources, so our own willingness to provide the money for N.A. services is
5 essential to our primary purpose. If the area, for example, is to provide adequate
6 public information, phonline service, literature for institutionalized addicts, and all
7 the other services it is responsible for, money is required.

8 This concept acknowledges that money is needed to effectively carry the N.A.
9 message. For the group, it is a statement that its expenses should be paid, that a
10 small sum should be kept to cover unforeseen expenses that may arise, and that the
11 remainder should be passed along to the rest of the service structure.

12 At all levels of N.A. service, the same principle applies. The size of the budgets
13 may vary greatly at different levels of service, but at no level should there be an
14 excessive hoarding of funds. If we've delegated a particular responsibility to
15 someone else, it becomes our responsibility to provide them with the means to carry
16 it out. It is always unacceptable to have a large sum of money sitting idle, begging to
17 become the subject of squabbling over what to do with it.

18 Money in Narcotics Anonymous is always used to further our primary purpose.
19 The group uses it to buy literature and pay expenses related to renting the meeting
20 room and purchasing supplies. At other levels it is in various ways turned into
21 services. All of this is done in support of N.A.'s spiritual aim--to carry the message
22 to the addict who still suffers.

23 It is not likely that we will ever see in N.A. an accumulation of money that is
24 greater than the need for our services. That is our best safeguard that this concept
25 will be upheld by our fellowship as a whole. It is entirely possible, on the other
26 hand, that a given service committee might wish to engage in fundraising efforts to
27 accumulate large sums, hoarding the money in an excessive reserve fund or making
28 poor decisions about spending priorities.

29 In order for our service efforts to be effective, our service boards and committees
30 must handle money responsibly.¹ Committees should have clearly established
31 priorities, and should measure each expenditure against that priority list. There is
32 often more on the priority list than our budgets will allow. Until the fellowship
33 grows and is able to provide more money, only the highest priorities can be funded.
34 This is a familiar picture to most committees, and one that points clearly to the
35 importance of properly applying this concept.

36 In setting priorities, a committee may be tempted to look at its own needs only,
37 holding on tightly to its own funds and spending money on its own projects,
38 neglecting its role in providing needed funds to the next level of service. That kind
39 of thinking is contrary to the Eleventh Concept. High on the list of priorities should
40 be a commitment to further the goals of N.A. as a whole. Our service boards and

¹ For more information, see the Group Treasurer's Handbook, available from the national service office.

1 committees need money to do this, and they are given that money by the other levels
2 of N.A. service. For N.A. as a whole to deliver the services necessary to keep
3 growing and fulfilling our primary purpose around the world, the flow of funds must
4 not bottleneck at any point in our structure.

5 Money is needed to provide internal support and guidance to our own committees;
6 to produce, translate, and distribute our message in written form; to bring our
7 members together in a worldwide service community committed to the vision of
8 spreading our message to those in need--particularly as we spread into more and
9 more countries and across more and more cultures. It is needed to inform the
10 public about N.A. and to reach addicts who can't get to meetings. These needs will
11 always challenge our ability to meet them. That's why it's important that we do not,
12 at any level of service, interrupt the flow of funds needed to accomplish these
13 important goals. We set budgets that are appropriate to the size and nature of the
14 tasks at our level of service, we establish a modest reserve so that those services are
15 not interrupted if unforeseen financial problems arise, and we pass some along to
16 other levels of service. If we do this within a framework of budgeting priorities that
17 holds our primary purpose always foremost in mind, the spirit of this concept of
18 service is well served.

19 **12. Our structure at all levels is one of service, never of government. No**
20 **one element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over**
21 **any other.**

22 Taken as a body, the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service go to great lengths to spell
23 out guidelines for effective delegation of authority. At first glance, such authority in
24 the N.A. service structure may seem more like government than service. This
25 concluding concept serves as a reminder that this may never be so.

26 But we have been using the word "authority" throughout these concepts. Doesn't
27 the use of that word imply a degree of government? No. In Concept Three, we
28 briefly described the sense in which we are using the word here. "By authority," we
29 stated, "we mean permission to exercise judgment and take action to accomplish the
30 service tasks for which one is responsible. Authority of this kind originates at the
31 group level, and is granted by the groups to the other levels." Government would be
32 the other way around.

33 The area committee has the authority to develop and implement an approach to
34 H&I, for example, without asking every member of every group in the area for his
35 input on just exactly how to do that. The groups have sent their GSR to provide that
36 kind of input. The GSR has the authority to participate in those discussions on
37 behalf of the group, and helps shape that H&I approach without having to ask each
38 individual member of his group what to do. The area committee has been given
39 "permission to exercise judgment and take action to accomplish the service tasks for
40 which [it] is responsible," tasks which in this case will introduce addicts to the
41 recovery message through the presentation of H&I panels. That's *service--service*

1 provided to the addict who still suffers, service that supports the groups' primary
2 purpose. On the other hand, if the area committee claimed authority to tell the
3 groups how to conduct group meetings, the area would then be attempting to *govern*.

4 The kind of authority that's delegated to our boards and committees is the
5 authority to serve, not to govern. The service structure does not have the authority
6 to mete out punishments. When individual trusted servants appear to have acted
7 incorrectly in some way, actions of a punitive nature must not be taken by any of our
8 service boards or committees. Even if, after careful study, it seems clear that an
9 impropriety has occurred, the service board or committee affected should not
10 respond with punishment. The committee might offer the opportunity to make
11 amends, and seek assurances that the problem won't come up again. It might even
12 choose to remove the trusted servant from office, should that be necessary for the
13 protection of the fellowship. But a board or committee which offered punishment
14 as a response to impropriety would not be serving the highest ideals of our spiritual
15 fellowship. Our boards and committees are created to serve, not to govern.

16 The service structure doesn't rule the groups; the national service conference
17 doesn't run the regions. Those things are clearly implied in this concept of service.
18 But there's another side to the Twelfth Concept. "No one element of our service
19 structure should have unqualified authority over any other." Groups delegate
20 responsibility to their area committee to administer certain services. The groups
21 grant the committee the authority necessary for it to fulfill those services. The
22 groups cannot get their full measure of service if they constantly "pull rank" on the
23 committee, giving it explicit instructions on every detail of its work. The same
24 principle applies in all matters of delegation at all levels of service; even *ultimate*
25 authority and responsibility must be tempered--"qualified," if you will--by trust and
26 common sense.

27 No element of the service structure has the authority to govern another; all, rather,
28 serve together as a team, striving toward a common goal, "that no addict seeking
29 recovery need die without having the chance to find a new way of life." It is our
30 sometimes hard-won experience that quality recovery and service can only be
31 accomplished in an atmosphere of mutual respect, mutual support, and mutual trust.

Developing N.A. communities

1 In many countries, the N.A. community is very young and very small; there are no
2 area committees, no regions, no national services. This chapter is aimed specifically
3 at Narcotics Anonymous communities in those countries. The basic question it
4 addresses is this: how does a developing N.A. community begin establishing the
5 services which help carry our message to any addict seeking recovery?

6 The first group

7 A new national recovery community begins when a single group opens the door on
8 the nation's first N.A. meeting. Most new groups, even those in established N.A.
9 communities, grow slowly, and that can be frustrating. Contact with others who've
10 been through the same experience can help reduce the frustration. N.A. World
11 Services can put the members of a new group in touch with addicts in other N.A.
12 communities who will be happy to share their experience. World services can also
13 provide other resources that may prove useful to a new group, such as recovery and
14 service literature in translation. A call or letter to N.A. World Services can help
15 ease the growing pains that all new groups go through.

16 Sooner or later, the pioneer members of a new group in a new country attract
17 other addicts to their meeting, help those newcomers find recovery, and find their
18 group growing. New meetings are started as more new members gain the necessary
19 stability to begin lending a hand. And before you know it, N.A. meetings are
20 available seven days a week to any addict seeking recovery.

21 Initial N.A. service development--function, not form

22 As more N.A. members stay clean longer, the local leadership base expands. As
23 more N.A. leaders become available, it becomes possible for the original group to
24 sprout a number of groups. At this point, new questions present themselves. How
25 can the N.A. community provide more and better services to its groups and
26 members? And how can the recovery message be carried to more addicts? Five
27 types of work present themselves:

28 **Literature.** The availability of N.A. books and pamphlets in the local language has
29 proven very important to the growth of the fellowship, and to informing others
30 about Narcotics Anonymous. If literature is already available in translation from
31 N.A. World Services, all that needs to be done is insure a steady supply. However, if
32 N.A. literature has not yet been translated into the local language, or if only a few
33 pieces are yet available, translation work will be of primary importance.

34 **Public information.** N.A.'s friends in government, medicine, the clergy, community
35 organizations, the public media, and other twelve-step fellowships can carry the

1 message that N.A. exists, sometimes to places we couldn't possibly go ourselves.
2 Making such friends, and making them aware of what Narcotics Anonymous is and
3 what it can do, is a very important factor in N.A.'s growth.

4 **Phonelines, or central contact points.** An N.A. telephone number or post office
5 box address can make it easier for addicts seeking recovery to find us, and for our
6 nonaddict friends to get more information on the N.A. program.

7 **Hospitals and institutions.** Panels can be formed to carry our message of
8 recovery directly to addicts housed in medical, psychiatric, or correctional facilities.

9 **Internal support** With the division of the original group into a number of groups,
10 some vehicle will have to be established for keeping the groups in touch with one
11 another. By doing so, the groups can share their experience with one another, take
12 decisions together regarding questions that affect them all, and combine their
13 strength in reaching out to the community around them.

14 These are the essential functions of an *area service committee*. In another chapter
15 of this book, we describe the full range of services offered by area committees.
16 While all these services have their place and their time, it is not important that all of
17 them be established all at once. Nor is it necessary to develop a full-blown area
18 committee right from the start. *It's the function, not the form*, that's important.

19 It's not necessary for a new N.A. service effort to invent all its own tools from
20 scratch. Other N.A. communities in other countries have gone through the same
21 process. To tap their experience, simply contact N.A. World Services.

22 An N.A. community may only be capable of supporting a small committee which
23 focuses on a single task--for instance, working with N.A. World Services in
24 developing translations of N.A. literature. If that is all the community can support,
25 aside from its groups, then it shouldn't take on anything else, at least not right away.
26 With time, the N.A. community will grow. More N.A. leaders will surface, and it
27 will be possible to accomplish more tasks. But, especially at the start, remember:
28 keep your priorities in order.

29 **The national community grows**

30 As N.A. communities and service committees develop in other towns and other
31 districts, the question arises: how does N.A. combine its experience and strength,
32 maintain its unity, and carry its message further? This question is addressed in fully-
33 developed N.A. communities by regional committees and by the country's national
34 service conference. Still-developing communities will be long in forming a fully
35 operational national conference; some communities, for a variety of reasons, may
36 choose never to develop regional service committees. The same principles which
37 applied to developing local services--*function, not form*, and the importance of
38 prioritizing--apply to developing services affecting a number of locales and the N.A.
39 community nationwide.

40 What functions need to be accounted for?

1 **Assemblies.** Group service representatives from a number of locales can gather
2 from time to time to discuss issues affecting N.A. on a territorial or national level. If
3 a service body has been created to coordinate services affecting Narcotics
4 Anonymous nationwide, such assemblies can give that national committee or
5 conference the guidance it needs to fulfill its responsibilities. If no such national
6 entity has yet been organized, the GSRs can discuss national development issues
7 and equitably divide responsibility for addressing those issues among themselves.

8 **Central service coordination.** Some N.A. services affect the fellowship
9 nationwide. The production of translations of existing N.A. literature and the
10 development of new N.A. literature are two such responsibilities. It is also in the
11 best interests of the entire national community to responsibly handle requests for
12 information or other services from national civic, professional, religious, and
13 government organizations. Some means need to be created for coordinating these
14 national services. These means may be as simple as the GSR assemblies described
15 above. If enough leadership can be spared from group and local service
16 responsibilities, a national committee might be formed. The national committee
17 can either handle these services themselves or make arrangements for local
18 committees to fulfill them.

19 **Relations with N.A. worldwide.** It's not necessary to funnel all communications
20 between N.A.'s world services and the national fellowship through one person or
21 one small group of people--in fact, just the opposite. The benefits derived from
22 regular communications with N.A. World Services, and from contact with N.A.
23 communities in other countries, need to be shared with as many people as possible.
24 In order to facilitate that, it may be helpful to establish a forum in which
25 information gathered from those contacts can be shared. That forum may be as
26 simple as a GSR assembly, or as sophisticated as a full-fledged national service
27 conference, with its own board and office--whatever the national community needs
28 and is capable of supporting.

29 The regional-type services described elsewhere in the *Guide*--or the most
30 important of them, anyway--don't have to be administered by a regional service
31 committee. And a national N.A. community doesn't need to wait until it can support
32 a fully-staffed national office before it can start addressing the needs of groups
33 nationwide. Remember, it's the *function* that's important, *not the form*, so keep your
34 priorities in order. It works--but not overnight.

The N.A. group

1 Introduction

2 Narcotics Anonymous groups are self-governing (the Twelve Traditions use the
3 word *autonomous*). An earlier chapter in this book reinforces that idea: "The group
4 may conduct its own affairs in whatever way seems fit to its members, provided the
5 group's actions do not adversely affect other groups or the entire N.A. Fellowship."
6 So what we offer here is not a "rule book," but the shared experience of how many of
7 our groups have met with success in conducting meetings and tending to business.
8 Newer members may find this chapter helps them understand who does what to
9 keep the group going, and how to help. For more experienced members, it may lend
10 some perspective to their group involvement. But no matter how much information
11 we pack into this chapter, you're still going to find that the best source of guidance
12 for your group is in your group itself.

13 There are many ways of doing things in Narcotics Anonymous. And just as all of
14 us have our own individual personalities, so will your group develop its own identity,
15 its own way of doing things, and its own special knack for carrying the N.A. message.
16 That's the way it should be. In N.A. we encourage *unity*, not *uniformity*.

17 This chapter does not even attempt to say everything that could be said about
18 operating an N.A. group. What you'll find here are some brief answers to a few very
19 basic questions: What is an N.A. group? How does the work get done? What kinds
20 of meetings can a group have? When problems arise, how are they solved? We
21 hope this chapter proves useful as your group seeks to fulfill its primary purpose: to
22 carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

23 What is an N.A. group?

24 When two or more addicts come together to help each other stay clean, they may
25 form a Narcotics Anonymous group. Here are six points¹ based on our traditions
26 which describe an N.A. group:

- 27 1. All members of a group are drug addicts, and all drug addicts are eligible for
28 membership.
- 29 2. As a group, they are self-supporting.
- 30 3. As a group, their single goal is to help drug addicts recover through application
31 of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.
- 32 4. As a group, they have no affiliation outside Narcotics Anonymous.
- 33 5. As a group, they express no opinion on outside issues.

1 The six points describing a group have been adapted from The A.A. Group, published by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

1 6. As a group, their public relations policy is based on attraction rather than
2 promotion.

3 N.A. *groups* are formed by addicts who wish to support one another in recovery, in
4 carrying the message directly to other addicts, and in participating in the activities
5 and services of N.A. as a whole. One of the primary means an N.A. group uses to
6 fulfill these ends is to conduct N.A. *meetings* where addicts can share their recovery
7 experience, thus supporting one another and at the same time carrying the message
8 to others. Some groups host a single weekly meeting; others host a number of
9 meetings each week. The quality of an N.A. meeting is often directly dependent on
10 the strength and solidarity of the N.A. group which sponsors it.

11 N.A. *groups*--not N.A. *meetings*--are the foundation of the N.A. service structure.
12 Together, the N.A. groups are responsible for taking decisions fundamentally
13 affecting the identity of Narcotics Anonymous. New book-length pieces of N.A.
14 literature are submitted by the national service board directly to all groups for
15 approval. Proposed changes in N.A.'s Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, or Twelve
16 Concepts for Service, or in the fellowship's name, must be submitted to a direct
17 group ballot, and must be approved by three-quarters of all registered N.A. groups
18 worldwide in order to become effective.

19 Groups maintain contact with the rest of Narcotics Anonymous through
20 representatives selected to participate on the groups' behalf in the N.A. service
21 structure. Mailings from the national service office, including the national service
22 newsletter, keep N.A. groups informed on issues affecting the fellowship nationwide.
23 If your group is not receiving the national service newsletter, ask your secretary to
24 register the group's current mailing address with the national service office.
25 Narcotics Anonymous groups also support the service structure through their
26 donations to N.A. service boards and committees.

27 Sometimes specialized N.A. groups form--men's or women's groups, for example--
28 to provide additional identification for addicts with particular needs in common.
29 But the focus of any N.A. meeting--even if it's conducted by a specialized group--is
30 on recovery from drug addiction, and any addict is welcome to attend.

31 N.A. meetings are events at which addicts share with one another their experience
32 in recovery and in the application of the Twelve Steps. While many--if not most--
33 N.A. meetings *are* in fact hosted by an N.A. group, other N.A. meetings occur all the
34 time: informally among friends, at large area or regional speaker meetings, at
35 conventions, in schools, and so forth. The N.A. group is an *entity*; the N.A. meeting
36 is an *event*; and N.A. meetings may be held without the sponsorship of an N.A.
37 group.

38 What is a "home group"?

39 In some N.A. communities, it has become customary for members of the
40 fellowship to make a personal commitment to support one particular group--their

1 "home group." Though this custom is not universal, many believe its practice can
2 benefit the individual member as well as the group. For the individual member, it
3 can provide a stable recovery base--a place to call "home," a place to know and be
4 known by other recovering addicts. For the group, it insures the support of a core of
5 regular, committed members. A strong home group can also foster a spirit of
6 camaraderie among its members that makes the group both more attractive and
7 more supportive of newcomers. The home group is one very specific way in which,
8 by making a personal commitment to N.A. unity, group members can enhance their
9 own recovery as well as insure that the same opportunity exists for others.

10 While the home group concept is the accepted norm in some N.A. communities,
11 it's unheard of in others. There are many, many ways of talking and thinking about
12 the bond established among addicts in their groups. Do what seems most suitable in
13 your own N.A. community.

14 Who can be a member?

15 If a drug addict wants to be a member of Narcotics Anonymous, all he must have is
16 a desire to stop using. Our Third Tradition insures that. Whether the individual
17 member of Narcotics Anonymous chooses to be a member of a particular group as
18 well is entirely up to the individual.

19 What are "open" and "closed" meetings?

20 "Closed" N.A. meetings are only for drug addicts or those who think they might
21 have a drug problem. Closed meetings are the norm in many places, because they
22 provide an atmosphere in which addicts can feel more certain that those attending
23 will be able to identify with them. Newcomers may be more inclined to show up at a
24 closed meeting for the same reason. The leader often reads a statement at the
25 beginning of a closed meeting, explaining why the meeting is closed and offering to
26 direct nonaddicts who may be attending to an open meeting.

27 "Open" N.A. meetings are just that: open to anyone who wants to attend. Some
28 groups have open meetings once a month to allow nonaddict friends and relatives of
29 N.A. members to celebrate recovery anniversaries with them. Groups that have
30 open meetings may structure their format in such a way that opportunities for
31 participation by nonaddicts are limited only to short birthday or anniversary
32 presentations, so that the meeting retains its focus on recovery shared one addict to
33 another. It should be made clear during the meeting that N.A. groups do not accept
34 monetary contributions from nonaddicts.

35 Other groups use carefully planned open meetings--particularly open speaker
36 meetings--as an opportunity to let members of the community at large see for
37 themselves what Narcotics Anonymous is all about, and even to ask questions. At
38 such public meetings, a statement regarding our tradition of anonymity is often read,
39 asking visitors not to use full-face photographs, last names, or personal details when
40 they describe the meeting to others. A sample anonymity statement appears at the

1 back of this book. For more information on public meetings, see *A Guide to Public*
2 *Information*, available through your group service representative or by writing the
3 national service office.

4 **Where can we hold N.A. meetings?**

5 N.A. meetings can be held almost anywhere. Groups usually want to find an easily
6 accessible public place where they can hold their meetings on a weekly basis.
7 Facilities run by public agencies and religious and civic organizations often have
8 rooms for rent at moderate rates that will meet a group's needs. Others in your
9 N.A. community may already be aware of appropriate space available for your
10 meeting; speak with them.

11 Before securing a location, it may be well to consider whether or not the room will
12 be accessible to addicts with physical limitations. Does the building have ramps,
13 elevators with wide doors, and bathroom facilities able to accommodate someone in
14 a wheelchair? There are other similar considerations your group may wish to make
15 itself aware of. Ask your group service representative for the bulletin, *Addicts with*
16 *Additional Needs*, or write to the national service office.

17 It's generally recommended that group meetings not be held in members' homes.
18 Most groups find it desirable to hold their meetings in public facilities, for a variety
19 of reasons. Stable meetings held in public places tend to enhance N.A.'s credibility
20 in the community. Because of varying work and vacation schedules, it is often
21 difficult to maintain consistent times for meetings held in individuals' homes.
22 Holding a meeting in an individual's home may affect the willingness of some
23 members to attend. A group asking a member to host meetings in his home is
24 asking him to risk potential personal loss from theft and property damage.
25 Although some groups may hold their first few meetings in a member's home, it's
26 generally recommended that they relocate their meetings to public facilities as soon
27 as possible.

28 Holding regular N.A. group meetings in some types of facilities--drug addiction
29 treatment centers, clubhouses, or political party headquarters, for instance--can
30 compromise the independent identity of the group. Before deciding to locate your
31 meeting in such a facility, your group may wish to consider a few questions: Is the
32 facility open to any addict wishing to attend the meeting? Does the facility
33 administration place any restrictions on your use of the room that could challenge
34 any of our traditions? Is it clear to all concerned that your N.A. group--not the
35 facility--is sponsoring the meeting? Do you have a clear rental agreement with
36 facility management, and is the rent you're being charged moderate enough to allow
37 your group to contribute funds to the rest of the N.A. service structure? Are so
38 many of your community's N.A. meetings already located in this particular facility
39 that, if it were to fold, your N.A. community as a whole would be crippled? These

1 are some of the questions a group should carefully consider before deciding where
2 to hold an N.A. meeting.

3 **What kind of meeting format can we use?**

4 Groups use a variety of formats to enhance the atmosphere of recovery in their
5 meetings. Most meetings last an hour or an hour and a half. Some groups have a
6 single format for their meetings. Other groups have a schedule of rotating formats:
7 one week a step study, the next week a speaker meeting, and so forth. Still others
8 divide their large meetings into several sessions after the meeting has opened, each
9 with its own format. Here are a few basic descriptions of some of the meeting
10 formats that, with variations, seem to be among the most common. For reference,
11 we've also included a sample meeting format at the end of this book.

12 **Participation meetings.** The leader opens up the meeting for members to share
13 on any subject related to recovery.

14 **Topic discussion meetings.** The leader selects a particular recovery-related
15 topic for discussion, or asks someone else to provide a topic.

16 **Study meetings.** There are a number of different types of study meetings. Some
17 read a portion of an N.A. conference-approved book or pamphlet each week and
18 discuss it--for example, a Basic Text study. Others have discussions focussing on the
19 Twelve Steps.

20 **Speaker meetings.** Some meetings ask a single speaker to share his recovery
21 story, or his experience in a particular aspect of recovery. Others ask two or three
22 speakers to talk for a shorter period. Still others use a combination format, with a
23 speaker sharing first, and a topic discussion afterward.

24 **Newcomer meetings.** These meetings are often conducted by two or three of the
25 group's more experienced members. The "oldtimers" share their experience with
26 drug addiction and with recovery in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. If time
27 allows, the meeting is then opened for questions from the newer members.

28 Newcomer meetings are sometimes held a half hour before or after the group's
29 regular meeting. Other groups conduct them as smaller sections of a large meeting.
30 Still others hold a newcomer meeting one day of the week, their regular meeting
31 another. Whatever the format, newcomer meetings provide a means for your group
32 to give addicts new to N.A. an introduction to the basics of recovery.

33 **Question and answer meetings.** At Q&A meetings, people are asked to think of
34 questions related to recovery and the fellowship, write those questions down, and
35 place them in "the ask-it basket." The leader of the meeting pulls a slip of paper
36 from the basket, reads the question, and asks for someone to answer it. After one or
37 two members have spoken to one question, the leader selects another question from
38 the basket, and so forth, until the meeting is over.

1 **Developing your format**

2 These are basic descriptions of just a few of the many different types of formats
3 used in N.A. meetings; the variations on even these few format types can be endless.
4 Feel free to innovate. Vary the format in whatever way seems to best suit the
5 "personality" of your group and the needs of addicts in your community.

6 Often, a meeting will grow far larger than the group originally foresaw. A meeting
7 format that worked well for a small meeting may not work as well for a larger one.
8 When one of your group's meetings experiences that kind of growth, you may want
9 to consider making some adjustments in your format, perhaps even replacing it
10 altogether. Many groups experiencing such growth break their larger meetings
11 down into smaller sections (although many do not) to allow more members the
12 chance to participate. Some even use a different type of format in each section.

13 **What kinds of literature should we use?**

14 It's up to each group to determine for itself what N.A. literature is appropriate for
15 use in its meetings. Various service boards and committees in Narcotics
16 Anonymous produce a number of different kinds of publications. When
17 determining whether to use a particular publication, a group may want to consider
18 whether the publication or particular article is *recovery* oriented or *service* oriented.
19 Most groups find that reading recovery oriented material in their meetings better
20 supports the primary purpose of the meeting than reading handbooks or bulletins.
21 And while groups may not wish to have service oriented publications read aloud
22 during their recovery meetings, they usually make those publications available on
23 their literature tables.

24 The group may also want to consider the process used to insure the publication's
25 fidelity to the N.A. message. Each individual piece of Narcotics Anonymous
26 *conference-approved* literature--N.A. books and pamphlets on recovery--is subject to
27 the most rigorous kind of approval process. Selections from conference-approved
28 books and pamphlets are usually read at the beginning of an N.A. meeting, and
29 some meetings use them as the core of their format. N.A. conference-approved
30 literature represents the widest range of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

31 Groups often make other kinds of N.A. literature available at their meetings: the
32 national service newsletter, various N.A. service bulletins and handbooks, the
33 national fellowship magazine, and local N.A. newsletters.

34 Literature produced by other twelve step fellowships, or by other organizations, is
35 inappropriate either for display on group literature tables or for reading at group
36 meetings. To do either implies an endorsement of an outside enterprise, directly
37 contradicting N.A.'s Sixth Tradition.

38 **What is a group business meeting?**

39 The purpose of the group business meeting is fairly self-explanatory: to conduct
40 the business of the group in such a way that the group remains effective in carrying

1 the recovery message. Some of the questions a typical group business meeting
2 addresses are:

- 3 * Is the group effective in carrying the N.A. message?
- 4 * Are newcomers being made welcome?
- 5 * Do solutions for problems at recent meetings need to be sought?
- 6 * Is the meeting format providing sufficient direction?
- 7 * Is attendance steady, or growing?
- 8 * Are there good relations between the group and the facility in which the
9 meeting is held? Between the group and the community?
- 10 * Are the group's funds being used wisely?
- 11 * Is there enough money being donated at meetings to meet the group's needs
12 and also provide for contributions to the rest of the service structure?
- 13 * Are literature and refreshment supplies holding up?
- 14 * Is there a service vacancy in the group?
- 15 * Has the area, the region, or the national service conference asked the group for
16 advice or support?

17 Group business meetings--sometimes called steering committee meetings--are
18 usually held before or after a regular recovery meeting, so that the recovery meeting
19 remains focused on its primary purpose. The group selects someone to lead the
20 business meeting. Group officers give reports on their areas of responsibility, and
21 subjects of importance to the group are raised for discussion. Some groups hold
22 business meetings on a regular basis; others only call them when something specific
23 comes up that needs the group's attention. All group members are welcome--even
24 encouraged--to attend, raise questions related to the group's work, and take part in
25 discussion.

26 The group, as the foundation of the N.A. service structure, is guided by both the
27 Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service. A good
28 understanding of both will help a group business meeting steer a straight course.
29 N.A.'s step and tradition book, *It Works: How and Why*, provides a wealth of
30 information about the Twelve Traditions. Interested members can read essays on
31 the Twelve Concepts in another chapter of this book.

32 **How does the work get done?**

33 Setting up chairs, preparing refreshments, buying literature, arranging for
34 speakers, cleaning up after the meeting, paying the bills--most of the things an N.A.
35 group does to host its meetings are pretty simple. But if one person had to do them
36 all, those simple things would quickly become overwhelming. That's why a group
37 elects officers (or, in the language of the Second Tradition, *trusted servants*): to help
38 divide the work among the group's members.

39 Electing officers is one way the group practices N.A.'s tradition of self-support:
40 "Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting . . ." Sometimes it seems that

1 groups run all by themselves, but the fact is that someone has to do the work needed
2 to support the group. By dividing the work, the group insures that the group as a
3 whole is self-supporting, and that the group's burdens don't settle unevenly on the
4 shoulders of just one or two individuals.

5 Electing officers provides the group with an opportunity to strengthen its members'
6 recovery. When a group member agrees to serve as secretary or treasurer or tea- or
7 coffee-maker, that acceptance of responsibility often helps advance his personal
8 growth. It also gives that member a chance to help enhance the group's ability to
9 carry the recovery message.

10 You don't have to be a group officer to be of service to the group. Every week,
11 there's work to be done: helping set up the meeting, greeting newcomers, cleaning
12 up, bringing refreshments, and other things of that sort. Asking new members to
13 help with these kinds of jobs can make them feel a part of the group more quickly.

14 How do we choose group officers?

15 When a vacancy occurs in a group office, the group holds a business meeting to
16 consider how to fill it. There are a couple of things to consider when looking for a
17 group officer. One is maturity in recovery. When those newly clean are elected to a
18 position, they may find themselves deprived of time and energy they need for their
19 early recovery. A group member with a year or two clean is probably already well-
20 established in his personal recovery. He is also more likely than a new member to
21 be familiar with N.A.'s traditions and service concepts, as well as group procedures.

22 A second thing to consider is consistent participation in the group. Do the
23 candidates attend meetings regularly? Do they take an active part in the group's
24 business meetings? Those who've demonstrated their commitment to the group by
25 showing up every week will probably make better trusted servants than those who
26 only attend sporadically.

27 What officers does a group need?

28 In different areas the work is divided differently, and the particular jobs are
29 sometimes called by different names. What's important is not who does the job or
30 what the job is called, but that the job gets done. What follows are general
31 descriptions of some of the most common sorts of jobs N.A. groups have.

32 The **secretary** arranges the affairs of the group. What he doesn't do on his own,
33 he finds other group members to do. One of the first jobs for a new secretary is
34 registering the group's current mailing address and meeting information with the
35 area committee secretary and the national service office. Each time a new secretary
36 or group representative takes office, each time there is a change in the group's
37 mailing address or in the time or location of a group meeting, both the area
38 committee and national service office should be informed. Other things a group
39 secretary is responsible for may include:

- 1 * Opening the meeting room well before the meeting is scheduled to begin,
- 2 setting up chairs and tables (if necessary), and cleaning and locking the room
- 3 after the meeting is over.
- 4 * Arranging a table with N.A. books and pamphlets, local meeting lists, N.A.
- 5 activity fliers, service bulletins, the national fellowship magazine, and N.A.
- 6 newsletters.
- 7 * Making tea or coffee.
- 8 * Buying refreshments and other supplies.
- 9 * Selecting meeting leaders and speakers.
- 10 * Keeping a list of group members' recovery anniversaries, if the group wishes.
- 11 * Conducting group business meetings.
- 12 * And doing whatever else needs to be done.

13 Many groups break all these jobs down separately: someone to open and close the
14 room, another person responsible for refreshments, a third to take care of the
15 literature table, and so forth. Groups that host more than one meeting will often
16 have a different person responsible for all these jobs at each of their meetings.

17 The **treasurer** is responsible for the group's money. Because of the peculiar
18 pitfalls associated with service as a group treasurer, it's important that groups look
19 carefully at those they elect as treasurers. If the group elects someone who is not
20 capable of handling the responsibilities of the job, then the group is at least partly
21 responsible if something goes wrong. It's recommended that groups elect members
22 who are financially secure, are good at managing their personal finances, and have
23 at least a year clean. Because of the need to keep consistent records, it's also
24 strongly recommended that groups elect treasurers to serve for a full year.

25 What do group treasurers do? They count the money that members have
26 contributed at each meeting, pay back the people who buy group refreshments and
27 literature, and keep good, simple records. The group treasurer's job requires close
28 attention to details. To help the treasurer in managing those details, a *Group*
29 *Treasurer's Workbook* is available from your area committee or from the national
30 service office.

31 The essays on N.A.'s Twelve Concepts offer a basic description of the role of the
32 **group service representative**: "Group service representatives, elected directly by
33 each N.A. group, form the foundation of our service structure. By participating in
34 area service, and by attending forums, assemblies, seminars, and workshops at both
35 the area and regional levels, the GSRs provide constant, active influence over the
36 discussions being carried on within the service structure."² "If we are vigilant in
37 choosing stable, qualified leaders at this level of service, the remainder of the
38 structure will almost certainly be sound. From this strong foundation, a service

2 See the First Concept for N.A. Service.

1 structure can be built that will nourish, inform, and support the groups, as the
2 groups nourish and support the structure."³

3 Group service representatives bear great responsibility. While GSRs are *elected*
4 by the group, they are not mere group *messengers*. They are selected by their groups
5 to serve as active members of the area service committee. As such, they are
6 responsible to act in the best interests of N.A. as a whole, and not solely as
7 advocates of their own groups' priorities.

8 As full participants in the area committee, GSRs need to be as well informed as
9 they can be concerning the affairs of the committee. They study the reports of the
10 committee's officers and subcommittee chairpersons. They read the various
11 handbooks published by the national service office on each area of service. After
12 carefully considering their own conscience, they take active, critical parts in the
13 discussions which form the group conscience of the entire committee.

14 Once a year, the group service representative attends the regional assembly. Since
15 broader discussion of regional assemblies occurs later, in the chapter on regional
16 service committees, we won't go into any detail about assemblies here, except to
17 mention that attendance at the regional assembly is one responsibility of the GSR.
18 Where called for, most groups agree to cover the expenses associated with the
19 GSR's attendance at the regional assembly.

20 Group service representatives link their groups with the rest of the N.A. service
21 structure, particularly through the information conveyed in their reports to and from
22 the area committee. At group business meetings, the GSR report provides a
23 summary of area committee activities, often sparking discussions among group
24 members that provide the GSR with a feel for how the area can better serve the
25 group's needs. In group recovery meetings, GSRs make available fliers announcing
26 area and regional activities.

27 At area committee meetings, GSR reports provide perspectives on group growth
28 vital to the committee's work. If a group is having problems, the GSR can share
29 those problems with the committee in his report. And if the group hasn't found
30 solutions to those problems, the area chairperson will open a slot on the committee's
31 "sharing session"⁴ agenda so that the GSR can gather the experience others have
32 had in similar situations. If any helpful solutions arise from the sharing session, the
33 GSR can report those back to the group.

34 Groups also elect a second representative called an **alternate GSR**. The alternate
35 GSR attends all the area service committee meetings (as a non-voting participant)
36 with the GSR, so that she can see for herself how the committee works. And if the
37 GSR cannot attend an area committee meeting, the alternate GSR participates in
38 the GSR's place.

3 Sixth Concept.

4 In the chapter on the area service committee, see the section titled, "The Sharing Session."

1 The alternate GSR, along with others, also serves on an area subcommittee.
2 Subcommittee experience will give the alternate GSR added perspective on how
3 area services are actually delivered. That perspective will make her a more effective
4 area committee participant if her group asks her later to serve as its GSR.

5 **What about rotation?**

6 *Rotation* is the practice many groups have of electing new people to service
7 positions at set intervals, rather than having the same person serve in the same
8 position year after year. Rotation offers very definite benefits for the groups who
9 practice it. By providing diversity in leadership, it helps a group stay fresh and
10 energetic. It provides assurance that no one individual exercises so much influence
11 that the group becomes a mere extension of his personality. The practice of rotation
12 also reinforces the N.A. emphasis on *service* rather than the *servant*, consistent with
13 our belief in the value of spiritual anonymity--what's important is the job being
14 done, not the particular person doing it.

15 Some groups allow their members to serve more than one term in any given
16 position, so that the group can take advantage of its trusted servants' experience.
17 Once group officers have completed their terms, rotation allows them to step aside
18 for a time, or to accept responsibilities elsewhere in the N.A. service structure,
19 giving other members the chance to serve the group. The impact of rotation on the
20 stability of the group is balanced by the continuing presence of its long-term group
21 members. Those who have served in the past as group officers, and who maintain
22 an active role in the life of the group, can provide a much-needed maturity of
23 perspective to a growing group's discussions.

24 **What responsibilities does an N.A. group have?**

25 The first and most important responsibility of any N.A. group--its "primary
26 purpose," according to the Fifth Tradition--is "to carry the message to the addict who
27 still suffers." And the single most important thing a group can do to fulfill that
28 primary purpose is to conduct meetings that provide an atmosphere in which N.A.
29 recovery can be effectively shared between addicts. Groups conduct the details of
30 their meetings in very different ways, but all of them seek the same end: to make
31 recovery from drug addiction available to any addict in the community who seeks it.

32 As the foundation of the worldwide N.A. service structure, groups have another
33 responsibility: to develop an understanding of the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve
34 Concepts for N.A. Service. By doing so, they take part in the continuing evolution
35 of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, as well as providing for themselves an
36 understanding of how the highest ideals of our fellowship are to be applied in their
37 group activities.

1 **How can our group support other N.A. services?**

2 The First Concept of Service says that, ultimately, the N.A. groups bear both the
3 responsibility and the authority for all the services of the extended N.A. Fellowship.
4 Each group should send stable, active GSRs to participate in the work of the service
5 structure on the groups' behalf. And each group should consider how best to
6 provide the funds the N.A. service structure needs to do its work.

7 Most groups set a little bit of money aside to use in case an emergency arises. But,
8 oddly enough, groups usually find that too much money in the till causes far more
9 problems than too little money. See the Eleventh Concept for N.A. Service for
10 more discussion of this phenomenon.

11 If there's any money left after paying the bills, most groups contribute funds
12 directly to the area committee, the regional committee, and the national service
13 board. Groups may use a percentage formula to decide how much of their extra
14 money to send to each of these service units--70% to their area committee, 20% to
15 the region, and 10% to national services, for example. Your group should decide on
16 whatever formula seems best to you.

17 **How can our group better serve our community?**

18 By its very existence, the group is already providing a substantial service to the
19 community. It's providing the support addicts in the community need to reenter the
20 mainstream of society. But how can a group become more effective in reaching out
21 to addicts who've not yet found N.A.? There are two general ways in which a group
22 can better serve its community: through activities coordinated by the group itself,
23 and through the area service committee (ASC).

24 Some N.A. groups reach out to their communities themselves. This is particularly
25 the case in small communities, and in areas where Narcotics Anonymous is very
26 new. An N.A. group in a rural town obviously does not have as many people or as
27 much money available as an area service committee in a large city, but opportunities
28 exist nonetheless for carrying the recovery message effectively to others who may be
29 seeking the solution we've found. If your group needs help in reaching out to the
30 community, write to the national service office. Ask for their bulletin, *N.A. Groups
31 in Small Communities*.

32 Most N.A. groups are served by an area committee.⁵ Area service committees
33 coordinate efforts to carry the N.A. message on behalf of all the groups they serve.
34 Community public information services, telephone contact lines, and panel
35 presentations to addicts in treatment centers and jails are three ways in which most
36 area committees carry the message, either directly to the addict who still suffers or
37 to those who may refer an addict to an N.A. meeting. Your group service
38 representative can tell you more about how you and your group can more effectively

5 If you don't know how to contact the nearest area service committee, write to your national service office. They'll be happy to put you in touch.

1 join in the work of your area service committee. For further information, see the
2 chapter later in this book on the area service committee.

3 **How can our group solve its problems?**

4 N.A. groups encounter a wide variety of problems: meetings are disrupted;
5 treatment centers bus in large numbers of clients when the group is ill-prepared to
6 receive them; the format goes stale; the clarity of our message becomes an issue; the
7 coffee tastes like industrial strength cleanser; the readings at the beginning of the
8 meeting go on, and on, and on. These are just a few of the problems the average
9 N.A. group must deal with from time to time. This book doesn't "lay down the law"
10 on how to deal with these problems. It does point out some effective tools group
11 members can use in solving their own problems.

12 The best source of solutions for the group's problems, in most cases, is the group
13 itself. "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps," our Twelfth Step
14 says, "we tried . . . to practice these principles in all our affairs." When we
15 collectively apply the insight received from that spiritual awakening to our group's
16 problems, we call that *group conscience*. Common sense, open minds, calm
17 discussion, accurate information, mutual respect, and healthy personal recovery
18 enable a group to deal effectively with almost anything that comes its way.

19 There are a number of printed resources the group may choose to use in gathering
20 the information it needs to reach sound decisions. The Basic Text and our step and
21 tradition book, *It Works: How and Why*, both provide a great deal of information
22 about how N.A.'s Twelve Traditions can be applied to given situations. The chapter
23 in this book on the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service gives in-depth explanations of
24 the essential ideals underlying service activities in Narcotics Anonymous.
25 Periodicals such as the national fellowship magazine and the national service
26 newsletter often have articles addressing problems the group might face. And
27 bulletins available from the national service office deal in detail with a variety of
28 subjects relating to the group's work.

29 Another source of information the group might tap is the experience of other
30 groups in its area or region. If the group has a problem and can't come up with its
31 own solution, it might want to ask its group service representative to share that
32 problem at the next area service committee meeting. Many ASCs set aside a
33 portion of every meeting for exactly that purpose. And while the area committee
34 can't tell a group what to do, it can provide a forum in which groups can share with
35 one another what's worked for them. Workshops conducted by the regional service
36 committee provide the same kind of opportunity on a larger scale. For details on
37 how the area or regional committee can help with group problems, see the chapters
38 on those committees later in this book.

- 1 **Group services bulletins**
- 2 **(available in the U.S. from the National Service Office)**
- 3 *Starting a New N.A. Group--a Checklist*
- 4 *Conducting a Group Business Meeting*
- 5 *Addicts with Additional Needs*
- 6 *N.A. Groups in Small Communities*
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12 **Other publications of group interest**
- 13 **(available in the U.S. from the National Service Office)**
- 14 *Narcotics Anonymous, the Basic Text of recovery.*
- 15 *It Works: How and Why, essays on N.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.*
- 16 *Group Treasurer's Workbook*
- 17 *"Hey! What's the Basket For?", a pamphlet on N.A.'s tradition of self-support.*
- 18 *A Guide to Public Information*
- 19 *The N.A. Way Magazine, the U.S. national fellowship journal (published monthly).*
- 20 *Fellowship Report, the U.S. national service newsletter (published quarterly).*

The area service committee

1 **Introduction**

2 "Workhorse" of the service structure--maybe that's the best way to describe the
3 area service committee. Most of the hands-on work of delivering N.A. services to
4 the groups and to the community occurs at the area level.

5 N.A. groups support meetings where addicts can share their recovery with one
6 another. Only minimal organization is necessary to hold those meetings. But
7 there's lots more that can be done to further the aims of Narcotics Anonymous:

- 8 * N.A. panel presentations at addiction treatment centers and correctional
9 facilities can reach addicts particularly in need of what we have to offer.
- 10 * Public information presentations to schools and community groups, mailings to
11 addiction treatment professionals, meeting notices in newspapers, and public
12 service announcements on local radio and television stations can help direct
13 people to N.A.
- 14 * A phonenumber service can help addicts seeking recovery find a meeting in their
15 area, and also provide information about N.A. to interested community
16 members.
- 17 * A readily available supply of N.A. books and pamphlets can make it easier for
18 groups to stock their literature tables.
- 19 * Social activities can help addicts feel more comfortable in their local N.A.
20 community, and can increase unity and camaraderie among area members.¹

21 All of these services require a certain degree of organization, the complexity of
22 which could easily divert N.A. groups from the week-in, week-out task of conducting
23 Narcotics Anonymous meetings for their members. Most of these services also
24 require more money and manpower than any single group could possibly muster.
25 How do groups stay focused on their primary purpose, and still see that these other
26 services are developed and maintained? They "...create service boards or
27 committees," in the words of N.A.'s Ninth Tradition, "directly responsible to those
28 they serve." And the service committee closest to home, the committee best situated
29 to provide the most direct service to the groups and to the community, is the area
30 service committee.

31 A newly formed area committee will not be able to provide the same level of
32 service as a longer established committee. That's as it should be, and a new area
33 service committee should not expect to hit the ground running at full speed. The

¹ Various handbooks describing these and other local services are available from your national service office, including the Hospitals and Institutions Handbook, A Guide to Public Information, A Guide to Phonenumber Service, and the Area Literature Workbook. For further information, see the section titled "Subcommittees" later in this chapter.

1 development of the full range of area services described in this chapter often takes a
2 few years. Be patient, and keep plugging; it's worth the effort.

3 Just as individual members of N.A. rely upon one another for support, so do area
4 committees. New committees in particular can draw upon the experience of their
5 neighbors--whether those neighbors be in the next county or the next country--in
6 charting a course for local services, and can also draw encouragement from their
7 neighbors' assurance that, given time, effort, and the application of principles, "it
8 works." None of us has to do it alone--not in personal recovery, and not in service
9 either, not any more.

10 The area committee and other N.A. services

11 Area service committees are ultimately responsible to the groups they serve.
12 Narcotics Anonymous groups send GSRs--group service representatives--to serve on
13 the area committee and its subcommittees. While still maintaining *final*
14 responsibility and authority for area services, they invest enough *delegated* authority
15 in their GSRs--and through them, in the area committee--for the necessary work to
16 get done.

17 N.A. groups also send money to the area committee, money needed to coordinate
18 panels, maintain phonelines, and conduct public information activities. Through
19 their contributions of money and manpower, the groups exercise both their
20 responsibility and their authority for N.A. services.

21 How does the area service committee relate in turn to N.A.'s regional, national,
22 and international services? In principle, in much the same way as the group relates
23 to the area committee: through carefully selected representatives, delegated with
24 the authority necessary for effective service. The chapter at the beginning of this
25 book, "What is the N.A. Service Structure?," generally describes the way all these
26 elements relate to one another.

27 Area committee participants

28 There are three groups of participants in most area service committees: GSRs and
29 their alternates, general officers, and subcommittee chairpersons. The Eighth
30 Concept for N.A. Service says that "all those entrusted with substantial responsibility
31 for our services should take part in the decision-making processes affecting those
32 services." Group service representatives provide input to the area decision-making
33 process from the "grass roots" level, helping insure that the committee's feet are
34 planted firmly on the ground. Committee officers and subcommittee chairpersons
35 "bear substantial responsibility for the fulfillment of area-level services. Their
36 ongoing growth and experience in carrying out their duties is an invaluable resource
37 to the area... We ought never allow a base of valuable experience to be created, and
38 then leave that valuable resource to lay fallow." Each area is responsible to create
39 its own decision-making plan. Area committees should carefully consider the
40 Eighth Concept when determining who votes.

1 **Group service representatives**

2 The group service representative (GSR) is the person who links the group with the
3 rest of Narcotics Anonymous. Most groups also elect an alternate GSR who can fill
4 in for the group representative when needed. The GSR takes part on the group's
5 behalf in the area committee and the regional assembly, and brings back
6 information on what's happening in the larger world of N.A. For more information
7 on the GSR's job, see the earlier chapter in this book on the N.A. group.

8 Basic equipment for group service representatives usually includes copies of *A*
9 *Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*, area guidelines (if the area has them), and
10 the log of area policy actions (available from the area secretary). Qualifications and
11 terms of service for GSRs are determined by the groups which elect them.

12 **General officers**

13 Most area service committees have six general officers: a chairperson, a vice
14 chairperson, a treasurer, a secretary, and two regional committee members. These
15 individuals are responsible for administering the general affairs of the entire area
16 committee. Because of that, it's important that great care be taken in their
17 selection. A substantial amount of clean time and personal maturity should be the
18 first consideration, along with experience in the steps, traditions, and concepts of
19 service. Our trusted servants should demonstrate the stability and personal sense of
20 direction that serve as an example to others. They should be capable of serving
21 without attempting to govern. The specific amount of clean time required for each
22 office will vary from area to area, according to how long the local N.A. community
23 has been in existence.

24 Significant area service experience often makes more effective general officers.
25 Experience both as a group service representative and an area subcommittee
26 member is helpful. Recent leadership experience as a subcommittee chairperson
27 will prove invaluable. For more discussion of the role of leadership in N.A. services,
28 see the essay on Concept Six in the Twelve Concepts of Service.

29 **Chairperson.** The area committee chairperson is responsible for conducting
30 committee meetings, preparing the agenda, and various administrative duties. His
31 primary tools are the rules of order which appear at the end of this book, a firm
32 hand, a calm spirit, and a clear mind. Careful study of *Robert's Rules of Order* will
33 help broaden a chairperson's understanding of how to conduct a well-ordered,
34 productive business meeting.

35 **Vice chairperson.** The primary responsibility of the area committee vice
36 chairperson is the coordination of the area subcommittees. She keeps in regular
37 touch with the chairpersons of each subcommittee, even attending subcommittee
38 meetings when possible, in order to stay informed of their projects and problems. If
39 disputes arise, within a subcommittee or between subcommittees, she helps find

1 solutions to them. She works closely with subcommittee chairs when they prepare
2 their annual reports and budget proposals.

3 The vice chairperson is also responsible to conduct area committee meetings in
4 the chairperson's absence.

5 **Secretary.** If the area committee is the "workhorse of the service structure," then
6 the area secretary is the "workhorse's workhorse." He handles all the committee's
7 paperwork, a formidable job. His first responsibility is to take clear, accurate
8 minutes of area committee meetings, and to distribute those minutes to all
9 committee participants within a reasonable period of time after each meeting.

10 In the process of keeping the minutes of each meeting, the secretary should
11 regularly update a log of area policy actions. The log lists motions the committee
12 has passed regarding the activities of general officers and subcommittees. These
13 motions should be listed chronologically under a heading for the officer or
14 subcommittee they affect. The secretary should periodically distribute an updated
15 log of policy actions to all area committee participants. He should also have copies
16 of the most recent printing available for new GSRs.

17 Because most secretaries mail minutes to area committee members, they need to
18 keep an updated list of participants' addresses. With their committee's permission,
19 they should mail a copy of this list once or twice a year to the national service office.
20 That list will make it possible for the NSO to provide groups, subcommittees, and
21 committee officers with current information pertinent to their areas of service, and
22 with timely national service reports.

23 **Treasurer.** The area treasurer's job is critical to the committee's work. As
24 mentioned in the chapter in this book on the N.A. group, there are certain pitfalls
25 peculiar to service as an N.A. treasurer. Because of that, it's especially important
26 that area committees select their treasurers with care. If the committee selects
27 someone who is not capable of handling the job, then the committee is at least
28 partly responsible if something goes wrong. It's recommended that areas elect
29 people to this position who are financially secure, are good at managing their
30 personal finances, who inspire the trust of the committee, and who have substantial
31 clean time. Experience in business, accounting, bookkeeping, or as a successful
32 group treasurer is also very helpful.

33 The treasurer receives contributions from the groups, reimburses officers and
34 subcommittee chairs for their budgeted expenses, keeps careful records of all
35 transactions, and reports on the financial condition of the area committee at each of
36 its meetings. As the administrator of the area's unified general fund, she is also
37 responsible to prepare an annual budget² for the area committee. The *Treasurer's*
38 *Handbook*, available from the national service office, contains a more detailed

2 See the section later in this chapter, "Area Budgeting."

1 description of the treasurer's job, as well as most of the forms the treasurer will need
2 to keep her records.

3 Along with other officers, she administers the area's checking account. When at
4 all possible, group contributions should be made in the form of checks payable to
5 the area service committee. Wide experience also strongly suggests that area
6 committees should only use two-signature checks to pay their bills. These strong
7 suggestions are offered to protect the treasurer from controversy as well as to
8 protect area funds. Discussions of other considerations relating both to the
9 treasurer's responsibilities and to area finances appear later in this chapter.

10 **Regional committee members.** Regional committee members are just that:
11 they serve as the core of the regional service committee, a body which coordinates
12 service seminars throughout the region, is responsible for the regional convention,
13 and conducts the regional assembly. The regional committee also serves year 'round
14 as a contact point between N.A. national and local services. RCMs keep their areas
15 in touch with the larger world of N.A. by providing information on activities in
16 neighboring areas, on functions being sponsored by the regional committee, and on
17 important national service issues. Detailed information on the services provided by
18 regional committees can be found in the next chapter of this book.

19 Regional committee members serve two-year terms. Some areas have two RCMs
20 serving at any one time, one who is elected in odd-numbered years, the other in
21 even-numbered years. This helps regional committees maintain a balance between
22 experienced members and those just learning the ropes. It also insures that a
23 regional committee serving only three or four areas will have enough members to be
24 able to do its work.

25 **Subcommittees**

26 Area subcommittees deliver the direct services of the area committee: H&I, P.I.,
27 phonelines, activities, and the rest. And much of the agenda of any area committee
28 meeting is taken up with reports from subcommittee chairpersons and discussion of
29 subcommittee activities. Most newly-formed area service committees will probably
30 not be able to support the same wide range of subcommittee services as a longer
31 established committee. Rather than attempt to set up all their subcommittees at
32 once, it's recommended that new area committees take their time. Bring
33 subcommittees on line one at a time, and give a great deal of attention to
34 developing each subcommittee before bringing on another. *Easy does it.*

35 Since the area committee bears final responsibility for the operations of its
36 subcommittees, all area committee participants need to be as informed as they can
37 possibly be about subcommittee activities. Handbooks are available from the
38 national service office for most of the subcommittees listed below. Specific
39 directions for subcommittees in your area can be found in your log of policy actions,
40 and (if applicable) in your area guidelines.

1 **Hospitals and institutions** subcommittees conduct panels presenting the
2 Narcotics Anonymous program to addicts at two different kinds of facilities.
3 *Treatment panels* are conducted for patients at addiction treatment centers, mental
4 health facilities, and therapeutic communities. *Correctional panels* are held for jail
5 and prison inmates. The *Hospitals and Institutions Handbook*, available from your
6 local H&I subcommittee or by writing the national service office, explains more
7 about how to conduct panels, interact with facility administrators, and organize
8 subcommittee work. The amount of work your local H&I subcommittee does will
9 depend on a number of factors: the number of treatment and correctional facilities
10 in your area, the number of N.A. members in your area interested in H&I service,
11 and the amount of collective experience in H&I work in your N.A. community.

12 **Public information.** The general mission of your area public information
13 subcommittee is to inform addicts in the community, and others who might refer
14 addicts, of the availability of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Services provided
15 by P.I. subcommittees vary widely from area to area. The simplest kind of P.I.
16 project is the production and distribution of fliers throughout the community,
17 announcing that N.A. is available and that more information can be had either by
18 calling the local N.A. information phonenumber or by attending an N.A. meeting. As
19 P.I. subcommittees become better developed, they often conduct public meetings
20 for community members, distribute public service announcements to local radio and
21 television stations, and respond to public media inquiries. Some P.I. subcommittees
22 develop separate working groups, called CPC panels (short for *cooperation with the*
23 *professional community*), to focus especially on the N.A. community's relations with
24 local treatment professionals. *A Guide to Public Information*, available from your
25 local P.I. subcommittee or by writing the national service office, provides detailed
26 information on conducting a wide range of projects designed to increase community
27 awareness of Narcotics Anonymous.

28 Many public information projects serve primarily to encourage people to call the
29 local phonenumber for more information on N.A. Because of the close link between
30 P.I. and phonenumber work, it will often benefit these two subcommittees to cultivate
31 close relationships with one another. Some phonenumber and P.I. subcommittees make
32 it a standard policy to send members to one another's meetings to better facilitate
33 communication between the two.

34 The **phonenumber** subcommittee maintains a telephone information service for
35 Narcotics Anonymous that helps addicts and others in the community find us easily
36 and quickly. Phonenumber volunteers often serve as the first point of contact between
37 the community at large and the N.A. Fellowship. For this reason, it's vital that
38 careful attention be paid the work of this subcommittee.

39 Phonenumber subcommittees in different N.A. communities organize their work in
40 different ways to meet local needs. In some areas, P.I. and phonenumber services are

1 operated jointly by a single subcommittee. In smaller communities, the phonenumber
2 may be as simple as a call forwarding service, connecting callers with N.A. members'
3 home telephones. In the largest metropolitan areas, computerized systems may
4 route incoming calls to the appropriate people and information. For more details
5 on N.A. phonelines, consult *A Guide to Phonenumber Service*, available from your local
6 phonenumber subcommittee or by writing the national service office.

7 **Literature supply.** One service of an area committee is the maintenance of a
8 stock of N.A. books and pamphlets, available for group purchase. Many groups find
9 they are able to keep a regular supply of literature on their meeting tables if they
10 are able to purchase it easily at their area committee meeting. In some areas, this
11 subcommittee may consist of only one or two people; in others, it may involve as
12 many as half a dozen members who take responsibility for processing group orders,
13 monitoring stock levels, and reordering materials from the local N.A. office or the
14 national service office. In order to keep area funds in a single account, most areas
15 ask their treasurers to serve as cashier for literature sales, and to write the checks
16 when new material needs to be purchased to replenish stocks. To help organize the
17 job of processing group orders, tracking inventory, and reordering depleted items,
18 an *Area Literature Workbook* is available from the national service office.

19 **Newsletter.** Some areas form subcommittees which publish local newsletters,
20 listing area and regional events. Some newsletters also run articles on local service
21 activities, and on members' recovery experiences. Because of the highly visible
22 nature of newsletters, the area committee is strongly encouraged to take steps that
23 insure adequate control is maintained over the newsletter's editorial content. A
24 *Handbook for N.A. Newsletters*, available from the national service office, provides
25 more information on the work of the newsletter subcommittee.

26 **Activities.** Dances, picnics, campouts, special speaker meetings--these events are
27 put on by area activities subcommittees. Activities like these can provide a greater
28 sense of community for the local N.A. Fellowship and produce additional area
29 income. It should always be kept in mind, however, that these functions are
30 designed to enhance N.A.'s primary purpose, not to replace group contributions in
31 funding area services. Because most of the arrangements necessary for a local
32 activity depend on the kinds of local facilities available, and the money and
33 manpower the local activities subcommittee has at its disposal, it's not possible to
34 prepare a comprehensive handbook for N.A. activities subcommittees. Your local
35 subcommittee members will have to exercise their creativity to discover the best
36 ways of conducting activities for your N.A. community.

37 A couple of remarks must be made regarding legalities relevant to N.A. activities.
38 Most activities subcommittees distribute fliers announcing their next event to N.A.
39 groups in the area. If your subcommittee's flier displays one of the N.A. logos--
40 either the stylized initials "N.A." within a circle, or the diamond in a circle--a small

1 circled letter "R" should appear to the right of the logo. This mark shows that the
2 logo is a registered trademark of Narcotics Anonymous worldwide, and helps
3 protect the logo from misuse outside the fellowship.



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4 Some activities subcommittees have conducted raffles of one sort or another,
5 either as separate fundraising efforts or as parts of another activity. It should be
6 noted that, in many U.S. states and in some other countries, such raffles are illegal.
7 Activities subcommittees should also consider whether raffles--and especially cash
8 raffles or lotteries--appeal more to the spirit of self-interest, rather than inspiring
9 the spirit of voluntary support implicit in our Seventh Tradition.

10 **Outreach** subcommittees serve as the outstretched hand of an established N.A.
11 community to isolated groups and addicts, particularly in large, rural areas. By
12 phone, by mail, and by car, they make sure, if at all possible, that no group, no
13 addict has to go it alone. The subcommittee helps keep geographically isolated
14 groups and addicts in touch with the mainstream of the N.A. Fellowship.

15 The outreach subcommittee is not the only subcommittee concerned with reaching
16 out to isolated addicts. Sometimes addicts are isolated by factors other than
17 geography--social, economic, and cultural factors, for instance. P.I., H&I, and
18 phoneline subcommittees can help an area committee focus additional attention on
19 the needs of addicts in our own towns who, for one reason or another, have not
20 found N.A. accessible. Area service committees and their subcommittees need to
21 do whatever they can to insure that recovery is available to *any* addict who seeks it,
22 "regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion." Area
23 subcommittees engaging in community outreach activities may find help in the NSO
24 bulletin, *N.A.: Serving the Community*.

25 **Meeting lists.** Though production of meeting lists does not usually require the
26 creation of a separate subcommittee, most area committees do have one or two
27 people who are responsible for printing meeting schedules on a regular basis. In
28 some areas, this job is handled by one of the committee's general officers; in others,
29 by one of the regular subcommittees. Meeting lists show days, times, locations, and
30 other pertinent information for local N.A. meetings. Meeting schedules often show:

- 31 * whether the meeting is "open" or "closed,"
- 32 * meeting format (Basic Text study, discussion, etc.),
- 33 * whether or not smoking is allowed at the meeting place,

- 1 * additional needs services (wheelchair accessibility, availability of sign-language
2 interpreter, etc.), and
3 * if the meeting is conducted by a specialized group (for instance, a men's or
4 women's group).

5 Most area committees have asked themselves, at one time or another, whether a
6 particular meeting should be included on the list. The list of six points describing an
7 N.A. group, appearing at the beginning of the "Group" chapter in this book, have
8 given most such area committees the criteria they've needed in making such a
9 decision.

10 Area committees are encouraged to send a copy of their meeting schedule to the
11 national service office each time the list is updated. Accurate, current lists of
12 meetings help NSO maintain an up-to-date directory for use in answering questions
13 from around the country.

14 **Elections and rotation**

15 Most area committees hold officer and subcommittee chairperson elections at the
16 same time each year. General officers (with the exception of RCMs) and
17 subcommittee chairpersons usually serve one-year terms, and generally serve no
18 more than two terms consecutively in the same position. This allows for the rotation
19 of a variety of individuals through an area's trusted servant positions, providing a
20 diversity of viewpoints and talents and a freshness of perspective that would be
21 lacking were these positions to be held year after year by the same individuals. The
22 rotation of trusted servants at the area level also helps insure that the committee
23 reflects the full range of insight available among committee members, preventing
24 the area committee from becoming the mere extension of an individual's
25 personality. The practice of rotation is founded on this fellowship's belief that
26 service is more important than the servant, an extension of our tradition of spiritual
27 anonymity.

28 Area committees maintain continuity in their services by encouraging those who
29 have completed terms as general officers and subcommittee chairs to remain active,
30 either informally or as individual members of one of the area's subcommittees. By
31 balancing the practice of rotation with the kind of experience available from past
32 officers, an area committee can partake of the best of both worlds.

33 **Area committee policy and guidelines**

34 One particular word comes to mind regarding area committee policy and
35 guidelines: *caution*. Some area committees have found themselves so tangled in
36 discussions of service policy and area guidelines--sometimes for months or even
37 years at a time--that they have been sorely hampered in providing the kinds of
38 services they were created to deliver in the first place. Here are a few points to
39 consider when entering into policy discussions, points that may keep the confusion
40 to a minimum and the committee squarely on track.

1 N.A.'s Twelve Concepts for Service can be of great value in untangling knotty
2 policy questions; some consider the concepts tailor-made resources for such
3 discussions. Time invested in studying the Twelve Concepts will repay itself many
4 times over with the clarity they provide. In particular, the concepts speak to the
5 subject of delegated authority. For instance, according to the concepts, when groups
6 want the area committee to perform services on their behalf, they delegate to the
7 committee sufficient authority for the work to get done. And when the area
8 committee elects officers and subcommittee chairs, expecting them to perform
9 particular tasks, the committee also delegates to them the authority to apply their
10 best judgment to the fulfillment of those tasks. Our trusted servants do not govern;
11 but they must be given the trust necessary for them to effectively serve. These kinds
12 of simple, direct principles can be effectively applied to any number of service-
13 related policy questions.

14 Another tool that can help an area committee find its way out of "the policy maze"
15 is, simply, a moment's reflection on N.A.'s primary purpose. Unsophisticated as this
16 may seem, it can be quite effective in solving some pretty complex problems. Area
17 committees exist primarily to help make N.A. groups more effective in carrying the
18 recovery message to the still-suffering addict. Area committee services either:

- 19 * attract addicts to meetings,
- 20 * provide materials for use in meetings,
- 21 * conduct activities designed to strengthen meetings, or
- 22 * perform the administrative functions necessary to do these things.

23 When caught in a conflict for which there seems to be no resolution, an area
24 committee can stop, call for a moment of silence, and ask itself, "What does this
25 discussion have to do with carrying the message?"

26 A regularly updated log of area policy actions can be of tremendous help. When
27 confronted with a policy question, area committees can consult it to see what
28 decisions have already been made regarding it. The policy log makes it unnecessary
29 for area committees to rehash the same question over and over and over again.

30 Hopefully, enough tools already exist to provide adequate guidance for the work of
31 most area committees: this chapter of *A Guide to Service*, the log of area policy
32 actions, and the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service. Some areas, though, will want to
33 develop their own area guidelines, giving specific directions to their general officers
34 and subcommittees. This will be the case particularly for large metropolitan area
35 committees, whose subcommittees have substantial responsibilities. It's suggested
36 that area committees give themselves some time to see what kinds of needs for
37 guidelines actually exist in their areas before beginning to draft their own. An area
38 committee equipped with a year or two of entries in the log of policy actions will be
39 in a better position to see what kind of guidelines ought to be developed than an
40 area committee trying to write guidelines during the committee's formation. You
41 can get sample guidelines by writing to the national service office. Areas who wish

1 to prepare their own guidelines may wish to appoint an ad hoc committee to adapt
2 those sample guidelines to local needs.

3 It should be remembered that guidelines, rules of order, logs of policy actions, and
4 similar tools are designed to help keep things simple. If an area committee finds
5 these tools, instead, making things more complicated, time should be scheduled
6 during the sharing session to talk about it.

7 **Area inventory**

8 Some area committees set aside one day each year for conducting an area service
9 inventory. Why? For much the same reason as N.A. members do personal
10 inventories: to stop, consider their actions and attitudes, and rededicate themselves
11 to their ideals. The area inventory considers three general topics:

- 12 1. How well has the area committee done this year at serving the *groups*, and how
13 can it better serve them in the coming year?
- 14 2. How well has the area committee served the larger *community*, and how can the
15 committee better serve the community at large?
- 16 3. How well has the area committee done at supporting N.A.'s *regional, national,*
17 *and international services*? How can the area provide better support for these
18 services?

19 A substantial amount of preparation is required on everyone's part for an effective
20 area inventory. GSRs, officers, and subcommittees must take a fearless, searching
21 look at their work over the last year, and come to the inventory session prepared to
22 review their roles on the committee. GSRs should spend time with their groups
23 considering what needs might be addressed by the area committee in the next year,
24 and come to the inventory session with ideas in hand. Officers and subcommittees
25 should take the time to look at the make-up of the larger community they live in,
26 ask themselves how N.A. could be more effective in reaching out to that community,
27 and be prepared to share their thoughts with the entire area committee. And
28 perhaps most importantly, all area committee participants should make an extra
29 effort to prepare themselves spiritually to make the most of the area inventory
30 meeting. Because of the great differences among area committees in size, local
31 custom, and specific services, each area committee will have to craft an inventory
32 agenda suitable to its own activities and needs.

33 Having conducted an area inventory, many committees will come to the conclusion
34 that certain aspects of their work need to be altered. It should be remembered that
35 there is no one model for area service committees that will be completely
36 appropriate to all areas. A number of factors will affect the kinds of services an
37 area committee offers, and the ways in which it offers them: community size,
38 number of meetings, availability of experienced N.A. members, geography, local
39 laws and customs, and other such considerations. What works in a major
40 metropolitan setting probably won't work at all in a rural community. What *will*

1 work--in any setting--is an effort to maintain sensitivity to the needs of the groups
2 and the community. Each area committee will, to a great degree, have to find its
3 own way of effectively providing services to those groups, and to the larger
4 community of which those groups are a part.

5 Versatility is called for. Area committees in small or mid-sized communities may
6 see fit to combine the work of some subcommittees, while well-established
7 metropolitan committees might find themselves with a large number of highly
8 specialized subcommittees, each with its own specific focus. Given reasonable
9 consideration, an area committee should not be afraid to configure its services in
10 whatever way it sees fit, so that it may help carry the N.A. message in the most
11 effective way possible.

12 Participation

13 Participation is a critical factor in delivering services at any level. Lagging
14 subcommittee participation and poor attendance at area committee meetings are
15 problems all area committees must address from time to time, particularly during
16 the annual inventory session. Sometimes the solutions to these problems are simple
17 and quick; more often, they require deliberate, extended attention.

18 An area lacking support for the work of its subcommittees, or with little
19 participation by GSRs at area committee meetings, probably has one or more of the
20 four following problems:

- 21 * Either the area is new or sparsely populated;
- 22 * Groups and members in the area are not sufficiently informed concerning the
23 role of the area committee and the kind of work being done by its
24 subcommittees;
- 25 * The area is not providing services that attract members' support;
- 26 * Or, members are simply not interested in supporting area services.

27 Of these four general types of problems, the first is generally the easiest to
28 address. If a new area is lacking in members available for service, the passage of
29 time alone may well provide a solution; the section later in this chapter, "Creating
30 New Area Committees," discusses this further. And if an area committee serves a
31 sparsely populated territory, there are ways in which it can structure its services to
32 match its circumstances. Write to the national service office and ask for the
33 bulletin, *N.A. Groups in Small Communities*.

34 If one of the remaining three is actually the case, an area committee can
35 determine which one it is by sending current committee participants out to the
36 groups--especially to those groups who are not sending GSRs--and simply ask them
37 what *they* think. If local N.A. members are unaware of the kind of work being done
38 by the area committee, an ad hoc committee can be appointed to organize a service
39 workshop. Such workshops, creatively conducted, can present groups and members

1 with options for service of which they'd previously been unaware, and pique their
2 interest in becoming a part of those services.

3 If the area committee is not currently providing services that local members are
4 interested in supporting, such a workshop could serve as a combination open forum
5 and brainstorming session. Drawing from the experience and insight of everyone
6 who cares to be involved in the discussion, such a forum could pinpoint
7 inadequacies in current services and develop directions for future services that have
8 the support of a broad spectrum of the local N.A. community.

9 Some N.A. groups, no matter how effective and inviting area services might be,
10 will not be interested in taking part. They may feel that their experienced members
11 have more than enough to do with just supporting their recovery meetings (which is,
12 after all, the group's primary purpose). N.A. groups *are* responsible to support N.A.
13 services--but they are responsible first to conduct N.A. meetings. Our tradition of
14 group autonomy gives them the right to decide for themselves whether or not they
15 are able or willing to extend their support to the area committee. And the area
16 committee has a responsibility to serve *all* the groups in its service territory,
17 regardless of whether or not a particular group has chosen to participate in the work
18 of the committee.

19 Area budgeting

20 A budget helps an area committee be a better steward of the funds it receives.
21 The basic process for developing an area committee budget is pretty simple. On a
22 quarterly or annual basis, general officers and subcommittee chairpersons present
23 their plans for the next work period, along with estimates of how much that work
24 will cost. By comparing the projected work plans and expenses with income reports
25 from the last work period, the area committee will have a pretty good idea of how
26 feasible the budget proposal is, and can vote to either adopt it or alter it.

27 Other funding considerations

28 Narcotics Anonymous groups directly support area, regional, and national services
29 from money left over after covering their own expenses. Area committees, after
30 setting a little aside to account for unforeseen expenses, are encouraged to do the
31 same with their surplus funds, providing much-needed financial support for N.A.'s
32 regional and national services.

33 Area committees generally maintain all their funds in a single account for which
34 the area treasurer is responsible. When an officer or subcommittee chairperson
35 needs money for a budgeted project, they go to the treasurer at the area committee
36 meeting and ask him to write them a check. The same general procedure can be
37 applied by area committees that do not develop quarterly or annual budgets, except
38 that specific spending proposals must be presented by officers and subcommittees to
39 the full area committee before funds can be drawn from the treasury. The officer or
40 subcommittee chair turns receipts for their expenses in to the treasurer, along with

1 whatever money may be left over from their advance. If the project produces
2 income, that money is also returned to the treasurer, to be deposited back into the
3 general fund. A single general fund helps insure that the area committee is able to
4 maintain final responsibility for the activities of its subcommittees. It also
5 eliminates the need for each subcommittee to duplicate the treasurer's job.

6 Most areas periodically struggle with the question of fundraising versus group
7 contributions for support of their work. Activities subcommittees usually plan to
8 have their projects come out in the black (as opposed to coming out in the red), so
9 that unexpected expenses can be covered. As a result, most activities do in fact
10 generate some excess funds. The time and energy that goes into putting on activities
11 is contributed by N.A. members in the spirit of our Seventh Tradition, so plowing
12 the extra money generated by those activities back into the area committee's general
13 fund is not inappropriate. But the primary purpose of an area activity is to promote
14 unity within the N.A. community, not specifically to raise funds for the area
15 committee.

16 Some area service committees come to depend too greatly on extra income from
17 activities. These area committees then sometimes tend to ignore the expressed
18 needs of the groups. An area committee that finds itself in such a situation must ask
19 itself whether it has become more a fundraising agency than a group of trusted
20 servants devoted to the delivery of Narcotics Anonymous services. Once the
21 question has been asked, and the committee has engaged in an honest evaluation of
22 its activities, the area committee can correct its course and return to its work.

23 The monthly meeting

24 The monthly area service committee meeting, open to any N.A. member, is the
25 event at which the work of the subcommittees and the well-being of the groups all
26 comes into focus. Officers, group service representatives, and subcommittee
27 chairpersons give reports on what's happened since last the committee met. The
28 sharing session gives all participants the opportunity to engage in wide-open
29 discussion of issues raised by the reports. After the sharing session, the committee is
30 ready to go straight to business, considering questions about the work of its officers
31 and subcommittees. The sample agenda which appears at the end of this book can
32 be used by most area committees as a tool for organizing the monthly meeting. And
33 the short-form rules of order, also appearing at the end of this book, can help the
34 business of the committee be processed in an orderly, respectful fashion.

35 The sharing session

36 The sharing session has two types of agenda: discussion of group problems, and
37 consideration of philosophical issues relating to the goals of the area committee.
38 Agenda items for the sharing session usually come up during reports from group
39 service representatives, general officers, and subcommittee chairpersons. After
40 each report is given, anyone on the area committee—including the person who gave

1 the report--can ask the committee chairperson to place a particular question on the
2 sharing session agenda. Items discussed during the sharing session often relate to
3 motions considered later in the committee meeting; but no voting takes place during
4 the sharing session itself.

5 The Fifth Concept of Service talks about group conscience as "the spiritual means
6 by which a loving God influences our decisions," and carefully distinguishes the
7 spiritual discipline of group conscience from the decision-making mechanism.
8 Perhaps nowhere is that distinction more evident than in the sharing session. In the
9 sharing session, committee participants consult their individual consciences--and
10 their Higher Power--on the broad issues at hand, share the insights resulting from
11 that, and together develop a collective direction for the committee. In the business
12 portion of the meeting, those same participants try to express that group conscience
13 in the specific form of motions and votes. But committee motions cannot be an
14 effective expression of the spiritual aims of our fellowship without the free exchange
15 necessary for the development of a group conscience having first occurred. The
16 sharing session is designed specifically to facilitate that occurrence.

17 For area committees who've not conducted sharing sessions as part of their regular
18 format, some trial and error may be required before the session runs smoothly. But
19 with a minimum of "traffic direction" from the chairperson, and the mutual respect
20 and common courtesy of committee members, most areas will find that a little time
21 in the sharing session can save a lot of time on business motions.

22 **On group problems.** Groups are encouraged to seek their own solutions to the
23 challenges they face--and most of the time, they find them. But sometimes a group
24 faces a problem that is beyond any of its members' experience. When that occurs,
25 groups can send their GSRs to the area committee sharing session with a request for
26 help.

27 That help usually comes in the form of the shared experience of other groups in
28 dealing with the same kinds of questions. Since N.A. groups are entirely self-
29 governing, only rarely can an area committee motion deal in any appropriate way
30 with a group problem. The sharing of committee members' experience with
31 solutions to similar problems in their groups may, however, provide a GSR with just
32 the information or insight her group has been lacking.

33 **On committee goals.** The sharing session is also a time when the area
34 committee can focus on *issues* rather than *motions*. Although the rules of common
35 courtesy are in place, Robert's Rules are not. It's an informal time in which ideas
36 can be freely shared, ideas which can help the committee be more effective in
37 fulfilling its mission.

38 How does it work? Well, let's say the public information subcommittee's report
39 suggested in general terms the need to be more energetic in reaching out to drug
40 abuse treatment professionals in the area. During the sharing session, a variety of

1 issues pertaining to P.I.'s suggestion can be discussed: What's the difference between
2 "energetic" P.I. work and outright promotion of N.A.? Beyond that, to what extent,
3 if any, does cooperation with the professional community border on the
4 endorsement of outside enterprises? And is *this* where the area wants to spend
5 more money, or are there other projects that have been on the back burner a while,
6 projects more deserving of immediate attention? No motions, no calling of the
7 question, no parliamentary inquiries--just a free exchange of ideas among N.A.
8 trusted servants, producing greater understanding of directions in which area
9 services might head.

10 The sharing session is the appropriate time for members to exercise N.A.'s Ninth
11 and Tenth Concepts. These concepts remind us that our committees are
12 responsible to listen to *all* participants' voices with respect, and that all members
13 have a right to be heard. Minority opinions on committee business can be expressed
14 freely and clearly in the sharing session. And problems potentially calling for the
15 redress of a personal grievance on the part of a committee member can be aired in
16 an open, supportive atmosphere.

17 Area committees in rural areas

18 In many rural towns, even after many years of existence, only one N.A. group may
19 have formed. The distances between those towns may make it impractical for an
20 area committee to conduct any common services for its groups. The relatively few
21 members available to serve on a rural area committee may also make it difficult to
22 conduct the kinds of activities a metropolitan area committee conducts. It's more
23 common in such areas for the individual groups to administer what direct services
24 there are in each community. An NSO bulletin, *N.A. Groups in Small Communities*,
25 provides more information on how individual groups in rural settings can carry the
26 recovery message to their community.

27 Rural area committee meetings often become mostly a sharing session. Group
28 service representatives discuss their groups' progress with one another, and provide
29 solutions to each others' problems. Some rural areas conduct joint activities--
30 dances, speaker meetings, and workshops--to promote unity and enhance their
31 groups' effectiveness. Many rural committees appoint individual members as
32 resource contacts for particular fields of service, whose job it is to gather
33 information on H&I, P.I., or phonelines for other groups to use. Most rural groups
34 find it easier to order literature by mail, either from the nearest local service center
35 or directly from the national service office. Rural area committee operations are
36 simple, but the strength gathered from the unity provided is just as important there
37 as it is in the metropolitan setting.

38 Learning days, workshops

39 Learning days and workshops sponsored by area subcommittees are valuable tools
40 for increasing area members' awareness of the work conducted by the area

1 committee. For most fields of service--H&I, P.I., phonedines, etc.--complete
2 descriptions of how to conduct local learning days and workshops are provided in
3 the respective service handbooks. Many area committees also conduct topical
4 workshops on the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service,
5 sponsorship, and other subjects. If experience in a particular subject or field of
6 service is low in your area, you can ask your regional committee to conduct a
7 workshop to help strengthen understanding of that branch of service in your area.

8 Group service workshops, conducted by an area ad hoc committee, can help
9 trusted servants of local groups focus on their primary purpose and the tools
10 available for fulfilling it. Some group service workshops begin with members of the
11 area committee sharing their experience in different group service positions, using
12 the chapter on the N.A. group from *A Guide to Service* as a reference. The
13 workshop can then be opened for questions from those attending, or discussion.
14 Others break up into small groups to review different topics relevant to group
15 services--meeting formats, for example, relations with the community, or conducting
16 group business meetings. However it's conducted, a group service workshop is one
17 direct way for the members of an area committee to share their experience with the
18 groups they serve.

19 Growing area committees

20 Areas grow and change. As time passes, some area committees find themselves
21 with so many GSRs attending that it's almost impossible to conduct orderly monthly
22 meetings. Others start to ask whether an area committee that serves many towns,
23 established when N.A. was young, might not be more effective if broken up into a
24 number of committees separately serving those towns. Still others experience
25 internal conflicts, and wonder whether it wouldn't be easier just to separate the
26 camps into their own area service committees. Regardless of where the question
27 comes from, it's important that the answer follow only upon careful consideration of
28 the group conscience of the entire area committee. There's much to consider in
29 dividing an area committee.

30 If, after careful discussion in the sharing session, an area committee feels it must
31 divide in order to provide effective services, it may want to ask the regional
32 committee for guidance on how to go about it. The regional committee can
33 coordinate a workshop to help the current area committee facilitate a smooth
34 transition to multiple area services. Following the regional workshop, an area may
35 appoint an ad hoc committee to develop a timetable for division. That timetable
36 should be carefully considered by all parties, including the groups belonging to the
37 current area. An area partition conducted in this way insures that the new areas
38 begin their service with adequate resources, and on good terms with their neighbors.

1 **Creating new area committees**

2 Each year, as Narcotics Anonymous grows, groups are formed where no area
3 service structure exists. The first priority of such groups is, of course, getting the
4 group on its feet and developing stable meetings. In larger communities, a stable
5 group often sprouts new groups and new meetings. At some point, those groups
6 begin to think about creating a common committee for themselves--what we call an
7 area service committee--to serve their mutual needs and to make it easier for the
8 groups to pool their efforts in reaching out to the community. Groups considering
9 the formation of a new area committee can tap the experience of their regional
10 service committee, or, if no regional service committee exists, their national service
11 office. New area committees forming in countries without a national service office
12 may wish to contact N.A. World Services for assistance.

13 Some new area committees will try to start up all at once with a full complement
14 of general officers and subcommittees, monthly dances, a convention, and a local
15 service center. Area committees which try to do this may sorely disappoint
16 themselves. Remember: *first things first*.

17 Area committees are formed, first, to strengthen the groups that create them.
18 Before an area committee can start serving the community, the groups which make
19 up that area must be on solid footing. An area committee just beginning its service
20 journey may exist primarily as an environment in which groups can share their
21 strengths and solutions with one another.

22 The new area committee might also consider focusing a considerable amount of its
23 attention on the study of N.A.'s Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts for Service.
24 An area committee that takes care to establish a firm foundation *before* attempting
25 to erect even a simple service structure will not be likely to regret the time taken in
26 doing so.

27 Once the new area committee has established a pattern of facilitating
28 communication among the groups, and of nurturing an understanding among its
29 members of the principles behind N.A. service, it will be ready to begin providing
30 simple direct services to the groups and to the community. Fellowship gatherings--
31 learning forums, cooperative speaker meetings, dances, picnics, and the like--require
32 a minimum of organization, yet can go a long way toward increasing unity among
33 the groups in the area. Area meeting lists made available through the groups, and
34 simple N.A. posters distributed in the community, can help direct more addicts
35 seeking recovery to more of an area's meetings. Direct services don't have to be
36 grand, complicated, expensive enterprises in order to be effective in promoting unity
37 and carrying the recovery message. New area committees will do well to start with
38 simple projects.

39 There are a few more things a new area committee will want to keep in mind, both
40 in its initial formation and in its first few years of operation. First is the need to
41 share the workload--the need to make sure that no one person is burdened with

1 most of the area committee's work. Not all N.A. members in the area will be
2 interested in serving on the area committee; most, in fact, will be satisfied to fulfill
3 their primary commitment to their groups, leaving the area service committee to
4 others. But those who *are* involved in the area committee should see to it that
5 committee work is divided evenly among them. A committee supported primarily
6 by one member is too vulnerable to collapse should that lone individual begin to
7 suffer from "trusted servant burnout" or become unavailable for some other reason.
8 If only a few members are involved in an area committee, they should consider
9 keeping their workload light rather than overreaching their capacity.

10 A second consideration for new area committees is the idea of making a
11 commitment right from the start to meet regularly--once a month, if possible. Most
12 new committees will be occupying themselves primarily with developing means of
13 supporting member-groups and the study of N.A. traditions and concepts of service.
14 Those agenda items require regular, concentrated attention as the area committee
15 establishes its foundation. A commitment to meeting regularly, right from the start,
16 helps keep that need in the foreground.

17 Finally, the new area committee will greatly benefit from continued contact with
18 its regional service committee, with neighboring area committees, and in some cases
19 with groups and service committees in neighboring countries. Just as individual
20 addicts don't often make it on their own, area committees can greatly benefit from
21 the shared experience, strength, and hope of those who've gone before them. None
22 of us has to do it alone--not any more.

- 1 **Group services bulletins**
- 2 **(available in the U.S. from the National Service Office)**
- 3 *N.A.: Serving the Community*
- 4 *N.A. Groups in Small Communities*

- 5 **Other publications of interest to area committees**
- 6 **(available in the U.S. from the National Service Office)**
- 7 *Treasurer's Handbook*
- 8 *Hospitals and Institutions Handbook*
- 9 *A Guide to Public Information*
- 10 *A Guide to Phonenumber Service*
- 11 *Area Literature Workbook*
- 12 *Handbook for N.A. Newsletters*
- 13 *It Works: How and Why*

The regional service committee

1 Introduction

2 The regional committee serves as a kind of pivot point in Narcotics Anonymous
3 service. It is the junction between N.A.'s national and local services.

4 The regional committee is a service *resource* group rather than a service *delivery*
5 organization. It is composed primarily of trusted servants elected by the areas which
6 have joined to form the region. Those trusted servants are called *regional committee*
7 *members* (or RCMs), and they represent the region's most important resource: its
8 collective experience.

9 RCMs are elected on the basis of their knowledge and background in area service,
10 their familiarity with the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for N.A.
11 Service, and their personal maturity. The regional committee pools that experience,
12 insight, and character to create a service resource for all the areas to tap. Through
13 discussion of current area affairs and consideration of our principles, the RCMs
14 develop the kind of understanding among themselves necessary to conduct service
15 seminars for the groups and areas in the region. Those seminars enhance the entire
16 region's ability to carry the recovery message.

17 Reports on national service affairs given at regional committee meetings provide
18 information that keeps areas and groups current on issues affecting the fellowship
19 nationwide. Discussion between the RCMs and the conference delegate of those
20 reports provide the national service board with feedback from the fellowship it
21 serves.

22 Although the regional committee is made up primarily of RCMs, the region's
23 national service conference delegate and alternate delegate are also seated on the
24 committee as full participants. Some committees seat other members from time to
25 time as well, usually selected on the basis of special skills or background especially
26 relevant to the committee's work. Such members are sometimes seated for a year or
27 two at a time, with full rights of participation, but more often are asked on board
28 specifically to help with a particular project.

29 How the regional committee works

30 Since the regional service committee is primarily a service resource group rather
31 than a service delivery organization, it usually has no need for standing
32 subcommittees. The kind of work it does is best performed by the whole committee,
33 or by ad hoc committees set up to conduct special projects. Direct N.A. services--
34 phonelines, hospital and institution panels, public information work, and such--are
35 more effectively administered at the area level rather than by regional committees.

1 Area subcommittees are closer both to the groups and to the community, and thus
2 are in a better position to assess local needs and determine the most efficient means
3 of meeting those needs.

4 Though regional committees generally do not establish standing subcommittees,
5 there are no absolute rules preventing them from doing so. In some regions it will
6 be impractical, for a variety of reasons, for individual area committees to administer
7 some kinds of direct service operations. Under such circumstances, a region may
8 want to consider establishing a subcommittee to meet the specific need in question.

9 Regional committees try not to create unnecessary distinctions among their
10 members. The regional committee does not elect a separate body of officers.
11 Instead, each year it selects from among current RCMs individuals who act as
12 committee chairperson, recording secretary, and treasurer. Those individuals
13 continue to serve primarily as RCMs. To further emphasize the secondary nature of
14 an RCM's service as a committee officer, some regions allow RCMs to serve only
15 one term as officers.

16 **Regional committee members**

17 Regional committee members are part of a service resource team. The local
18 Narcotics Anonymous community depends on them to be well-versed in N.A.
19 service practices and principles. RCMs should be closely acquainted with the
20 Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, the fundamentals of service in our
21 fellowship. Familiarity with all published service manuals and bulletins puts the
22 resources of the whole fellowship at the RCM's fingertips.

23 The RCM's primary responsibility lies in his service as a participant in the regional
24 committee, rather than as a member of the area committee which elects him. Yet in
25 order for him to effectively fulfill his role on the regional committee, a good portion
26 of his service time must be spent at area committee meetings and with other area
27 committee members. The RCM should carefully study the reports from his own
28 area's groups, officers, and subcommittee chairs, so that he can pass on his area's
29 experience to others at the regional meeting. He will also serve as a more effective
30 contact between his area and the regional committee if he takes time to talk
31 personally with other area participants. That way, he can get a better idea of what
32 kinds of needs and concerns the regional committee should address.

33 The regional committee member also plays a critical role in the N.A. national
34 service model. He serves as the communication link between the groups and the
35 national service board. His report to the regional committee on the welfare of the
36 groups and the area committee he serves gives the national service conference
37 delegate a better idea of where national service energies could best be concentrated.
38 The RCM's participation in discussions of national service affairs at regional
39 committee meetings lends perspective to the delegate's interaction with the trustees
40 (as members of the national service board are known in some countries). The

1 RCM's active participation also helps keep group service representatives in his area
2 fully informed of national service board activities. And without an informed body of
3 GSRs, the national service structure could easily find itself crippled.

4 Regional resource assignments

5 The regional committee pools the service experience of the groups and areas it
6 serves, making it possible for all of them to tap the region's collective resources.
7 Rather than establishing separate subcommittees to pool particular kinds of area
8 experience, regional committees make *resource assignments* to RCMs who are not
9 already serving as committee officers. Under such an arrangement, one regional
10 committee member takes on the responsibility of being the best informed person he
11 can be regarding public information work, or hospitals and institutions service, or
12 phonelines organization.

13 The regional resource person makes it his job to know the manuals and bulletins
14 on his resource subject, available from the national service office, backwards and
15 forwards. Though by no means an "authority" or "director," he does take the time to
16 keep in regular touch with the chairpersons of corresponding area subcommittees,
17 familiarizing himself with their projects, making them aware of available resources,
18 and trying to help them untangle problems their subcommittees have not been able
19 to effectively address.

20 In turn, if an area subcommittee has a particular need, it can contact the regional
21 resource person for help, or raise the issue at an informal sharing session with the
22 regional resource person and trusted servants from other areas. Many regional
23 resource persons conduct such sharing sessions from time to time, bringing together
24 the members of the various area subcommittees to discuss subjects related to their
25 particular branch of service.

26 Conference delegate

27 The national service conference delegate serves as the primary contact between
28 N.A.'s national services and the local N.A. community. On the one hand, the
29 delegate provides information on current national and international projects in his
30 report to the regional committee. On the other, based on his discussions with
31 regional committee members, he offers a "grass roots" perspective to the work of the
32 national service board, and particularly to the efforts of the trustee committee to
33 which he is assigned as a delegate review panel member. Each year during his two-
34 year term, he attends the national service conference--as an active participant in his
35 own right, and not solely as the region's advocate.

36 What the Sixth Concept of Service says about our leaders in general applies
37 especially to the conference delegate: "Leadership qualities are highly valued, and
38 should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants." The national
39 service conference operates with the understanding that conference delegates are
40 among the most experienced and knowledgeable people each region has to offer,

1 and the regional committee relies upon them to exhibit these same qualities at
2 home. Delegates need to have a thorough understanding of the Twelve Concepts,
3 the Twelve Traditions, and the service structure, as well as detailed knowledge of
4 activities and issues in the groups and areas which make up their region. They are
5 called upon for vigorous service from all directions; they must be fit to answer the
6 call.

7 From time to time, the national service board asks conference delegates for their
8 advice. At such times, the delegate *may* respond to the trustees' request himself. In
9 matters of wide concern, however, he may feel he needs to hear broader discussion
10 before he can responsibly reply. Then he may ask the regional committee to discuss
11 the subject with him in its sharing session. With that foundation in the region's
12 group conscience, he may feel more confident that the response he offers to the
13 trustees is a well-considered one.

14 The conference delegate works closely with the *alternate delegate* from the region.
15 Like the conference delegate, the alternate is a full participant in the regional
16 service committee. These two trusted servants make up a team of those within the
17 regional committee who are most knowledgeable of national service affairs. The
18 delegate often consults with the alternate, asking for different perspectives and
19 seeking to involve the alternate in helping carry the workload. The alternate
20 delegate is a full participant in the national service conference only in the event of
21 the primary delegate's absence at the conference annual meeting. However, he may
22 be asked to participate as a member of one of the delegate review panels attached
23 to a trustee committee. He attends regional committee meetings, the regional
24 assembly, and the annual conference meeting, offering support where he can and
25 learning his way while he's at it. At the end of his two-year term, he will very likely
26 be the region's most promising candidate for full delegate service.

27 The sharing session

28 The regional service committee meets to form a consensus among its members
29 concerning the service needs of the groups and areas composing the region, as well
30 as the needs of the fellowship nationwide. Following reports from the RCMs and
31 the conference delegate, much of the region's meeting time is spent in a sharing
32 session.

33 The regional committee's sharing session begins with discussion of challenges and
34 innovations disclosed in the RCMs' area reports. If a subcommittee of one of the
35 areas has taken a new tack in approaching a particular job, the RCMs may want to
36 spend time discussing it so that they can share that experience with their own area
37 committees. And if one of the areas has had a problem it's not been able to solve by
38 itself, its RCM can ask other regional committee members to talk with him about
39 the experience of their areas.

1 Sometimes solutions can be found in one of the N.A. service handbooks. At other
2 times, the question is not of *procedure* but of *principle*. Then the sharing session
3 focuses specifically on the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for N.A.
4 Service, trying to see how the simplicity of those principles might clarify an
5 otherwise confusing situation.

6 The sharing session can also be a time for discussion of national service issues
7 raised in the conference delegate's report. This opportunity for the conference
8 delegate to consult with the RCMs on questions relating to the work of the national
9 service board is crucial to his effectiveness. This portion of the sharing session also
10 helps prepare RCMs for the annual regional assembly, an event sponsored by the
11 regional committee which brings the region's group service representatives together
12 to review topics of importance in national service. Maintaining the fluency of
13 regional committee members in national service issues is doubly important,
14 considering that new conference delegates and alternate delegates are drawn from
15 among them.

16 **Service seminars**

17 In the sharing session, the regional committee has focused most of its attention on
18 group and area needs. With that perspective, the committee is in a good position to
19 consider its agenda of service seminars--what kinds of seminars are needed, and
20 where. A pattern may have emerged in the sharing session, showing the need to
21 further develop a general understanding of public information work among all N.A.
22 members in the region. An area forming a brand new hospitals and institutions
23 subcommittee might have asked the regional committee to conduct a seminar for
24 prospective members of the subcommittee. Special support may be needed for an
25 area committee in transition, either a large committee considering division or a
26 brand new committee serving a new area. Or perhaps it's time for another group
27 services seminar. Topics for service seminars can range all the way from taxes and
28 liability insurance for service committees to sponsorship and Twelfth Step work--
29 anything useful to the areas and groups served by the region. Whatever the needs,
30 the regional committee takes a look at its calendar, considers its resources, and goes
31 over plans for upcoming seminars.

32 Regional service seminars are usually organized by the entire regional committee,
33 although sometimes a small ad hoc committee of RCMs and others will be formed
34 to conduct one specific seminar. When planning a seminar, the regional committee
35 should consult with the area service committee responsible for the territory in which
36 the event is to be held. This is especially important in regions where area
37 committees assume the responsibility of making arrangements for seminar facilities,
38 leaving the regional committee free to focus its attention on developing an agenda
39 for the seminar. If the seminar is being organized primarily to serve one particular

1 area, the regional committee should involve some members of that area committee
2 in developing plans for the seminar.

3 The regional committee can draw upon a number of resources in developing
4 service seminars. Committee members may know of a similar seminar that has been
5 conducted in a neighboring region. A phone call to a member of that regional
6 committee, and perhaps an invitation to attend, can make additional experience
7 available to the seminar. Some support for regional seminars is available from the
8 national service office. A wide range of bulletins and handbooks covering specific
9 topics and fields of service are available. The office may also be able to provide
10 descriptions of seminars other regions have conducted on similar subjects, or other
11 useful materials. For further information, contact the national service office.

12 **Conventions**

13 Annual fellowship conventions are conducted in many regions. Conventions are
14 celebrations of recovery and unity, a time when all N.A. members in the region can
15 gather to share their experience, strength, and hope with one another. The task of
16 organizing a regional convention, however, is a major undertaking. Some regional
17 committees create separate convention committees to handle the job. Such a
18 committee is responsible to the region establishing it, and gives a thorough report of
19 its activity at each regional committee meeting. However, once a "seed fund"
20 sufficient for starting the convention committee off on its work is set up, it's
21 recommended that regional committee money and convention committee money be
22 accounted for separately. Regional *conventions* are then made self-supporting from
23 their own income; and, by depending solely on group and area contributions,
24 regional *committees* preserve the financial bond between themselves and the areas
25 and groups they serve.

26 Some regional committees create service corporations especially for the purpose
27 of handling the oftentimes complex financial and legal obligations of regional
28 conventions. In regions which have established regional service centers,
29 responsibility for convention organizing is sometimes assigned to the board of
30 directors of the service center corporation. Some information on local service
31 center operations is given in the next chapter in this book. For further information
32 on regional convention corporations, contact the national service office.

33 More detailed information on regional conventions can be found in the
34 *Convention Handbook*, available from the national service office. The NSO also
35 conducts convention workshops several times a year, bringing local convention
36 volunteers together with members of the national convention team to review the
37 latest information on N.A. convention planning. Additional consultation is
38 sometimes available, for new convention committees and corporations as well as for
39 those experiencing difficulties. For further information, contact the national service
40 office.

1 **Activities**

2 Some regions conduct activities in addition to service seminars and the regional
3 convention--dances, special speaker meetings, campouts, retreats, and the like.
4 Regionwide activities can foster a broader sense of unity among members of all the
5 groups and areas served by the regional committee. Some of the same topics that
6 came up for discussion under area activities apply to regional activities as well; see
7 the chapter on area service committees earlier in this book for more detail.

8 **Regional finances**

9 Money is handled at the regional level in pretty much the same way as it's
10 managed by area treasurers. The regional committee as a whole considers the cost
11 for each of its functions--space rental for committee meetings, service seminars,
12 activities, and mailings--and authorizes expenditures to cover those costs. Some
13 regional committees offer assistance in covering their members' travel expenses
14 related to attending committee meetings. (Conference delegate and alternate
15 delegate expenses related to attending the NSC are considered *conference* expenses,
16 not regional expenses, and are covered from the national service board general
17 fund.) After setting aside a small portion of any surplus funds they may have (to
18 cover the expenses of the annual regional assembly), most regions contribute
19 whatever money may be left over to the national service board. Two-signature
20 checks and a single general fund help the regional treasurer manage contributions
21 and the reimbursement of expenses in a responsible way. Additional suggestions for
22 handling the regional treasury can be found in the *Treasurer's Handbook*, available
23 from the national service office.

24 **The regional assembly**

25 One weekend a year--usually two or three months prior to the annual meeting of
26 the national service conference--the regional committee organizes an assembly of
27 group service representatives. At the assembly they discuss a variety of national
28 service matters, including those likely to come before the national service
29 conference. The annual regional assembly puts representatives of N.A. groups
30 together with their conference delegate for the purpose of developing a collective
31 conscience concerning those issues affecting Narcotics Anonymous nationwide.
32 That direct contact between the groups and the conference helps keep our national
33 services attuned to the needs of our fellowship. Without the kind of primary
34 foundation provided by the regional assemblies, it would be much more difficult for
35 the national service conference to effectively address the concerns of the N.A.
36 groups. Regional assemblies are a key ingredient in the maintenance of N.A.'s First
37 Concept for Service.

38 Members of the regional committee conduct a number of individual discussion
39 panels throughout the course of the weekend. Each panel considers a specific field
40 of national service, paying special attention to those subjects scheduled to be

1 addressed at the annual conference. When the panels have finished their work, all
2 the GSRs and RCMs gather in a large group to hear reports from spokespersons
3 selected by each panel. A sharing session follows the reports, in which all
4 participants are encouraged to speak their mind.

5 **Electing conference delegates**

6 *An additional expression of the First Concept occurs at the regional assembly when*
7 *group service representatives take part in electing the region's conference delegate and*
8 *alternate delegate. Since the delegate and the alternate serve concurrent two-year terms,*
9 *elections usually take place every other year, except when a delegate or alternate resigns*
10 *in mid-term.*

11 *Because the alternate has spent two years becoming familiar with the national service*
12 *conference, she is usually affirmed to replace the outgoing delegate, and the assembly*
13 *only has to elect a new alternate delegate to replace her. If she's not affirmed as*
14 *conference delegate, however, the assembly elects a new delegate and a new alternate at*
15 *the same time. Under such circumstances, special care should be taken to select a*
16 *conference delegate who is already fairly familiar with current national service affairs.*

17 *The delegate and alternate are chosen from among the current regional committee*
18 *members. Group service representatives and regional committee members are all*
19 *eligible to take part in the selection process. If both conference delegate and alternate*
20 *delegate are to be selected at the same assembly, separate balloting rounds are used to*
21 *select each of them.*¹

22 **Rotation of delegates**

23 Just as area committees generally do not select the same individual to serve more
24 than two consecutive terms as RCM, so do most regional assemblies observe the
25 practice of trusted servant rotation when selecting conference delegates, for many of
26 the same reasons. The freshness of perspective ensured by rotation serves both the
27 region and the conference well. By periodically replacing delegates, the region is
28 assured of being provided with varying views of national service affairs. And a
29 conference that constantly sees new faces, hears new voices, and is encountered with
30 new outlooks on national service work will be better able to meet the challenges of
31 each new year. Once their terms are done, past conference delegates are often
32 asked to serve both the region and the national service board in various capacities.
33 Their experience lends stability to the services of both bodies.

34 **Dividing regions**

35 Regions are formed to facilitate communication among member-areas and
36 between the local N.A. community and national services, to pool local service

1 The different possible means for selecting conference delegates is a subject the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service is quite concerned about, for a number of reasons. For a discussion of the subject, see page xxii in the report from the committee at the front of this book.

1 experience, and to provide learning opportunities for areas and groups. If
2 developments within an existing region occur which make it impossible for the
3 regional committee to continue providing those services effectively, then it's time for
4 the entire committee--and the groups and areas belonging to the region--to consider
5 making changes in the way the region is organized.

6 The process used for considering those changes needs to be a thorough and
7 thoughtful one. The idea of dividing the region may come initially from any of a
8 number of sources, for any of a number of particular reasons. The possible reasons
9 for dividing regions are as diverse as the regions themselves, and their comparative
10 merits can only be decided by the groups and areas belonging to each individual
11 region considering a division.

12 Wherever it comes from, whatever the reason, the idea should be discussed first by
13 the entire regional committee. In evaluating the possibility of a regional split, many
14 regions consult with the NSO Group Services Department to find out how other
15 regions have handled this question. If a division appears to the RCMs to be
16 warranted, the next step should be a discussion including all the region's group
17 service representatives at the regional assembly. If, following that discussion, a
18 broad consensus for division appears, the assembly can appoint an ad hoc
19 committee to develop a specific plan. Once the plan is reviewed by the regional
20 committee, it should be presented to each area service committee in the region for
21 full discussion. Ratification of the plan then takes place at the next regional
22 assembly. By using this method, a region can be assured that a division plan truly
23 meets the needs of all the groups and areas it serves.

Local service centers

1 Local service centers--also called central offices, area service offices, or regional
2 service offices--are established for a variety of reasons. Some serve merely as
3 storage locations for the area committee's stockpile of N.A. books and pamphlets.
4 Others fill local literature orders by mail, as well as making materials available for
5 sale over the counter during business hours. Some area and regional service offices
6 facilitate the operation of local N.A. phonedines. A few local service centers are
7 large enough that they can make space available for service committee meetings
8 and storage of committee records. Some even have special workers available to
9 assist service committees with their projects. Regardless of what else they do, local
10 service centers provide the N.A. community with a physical presence and a public
11 identity, a specific point at which Narcotics Anonymous and the larger community
12 can interact with one another.

13 Local service centers become incorporated in order to meet requirements of local
14 and national law regarding business licenses, taxes, insurance, and employment.
15 The local N.A. office corporation is managed by a board of directors. That board is
16 *separate* from, but *responsible* to, the service committee which created the office,
17 whether that be an area or regional service committee.

18 An N.A. community considering the possibility of opening a local service center
19 will encounter a number of challenges. Local service centers require substantial
20 business expertise in order to operate effectively. Legal problems often arise, most
21 often associated with incorporation procedures, taxes, and personal liability. Offices
22 are expensive, and usually do not generate enough net income from literature sales
23 to support themselves. Offices also require a great deal of attention from the N.A.
24 community's most knowledgeable and experienced trusted servants, who are usually
25 called upon to serve on the office board.

26 Despite the numerous challenges to be overcome, some N.A. communities have
27 managed to effectively integrate the local office into their overall service delivery
28 program without serious disruption. Those who have done so have moved
29 cautiously and carefully through the maze of questions about local community
30 strength, personnel and financial resources, business organization, inter-service
31 relations, and legal restrictions that must be answered before an office can be
32 opened. They have also given consistent attention to the maintenance of office
33 affairs once the service center has opened its doors for business.

34 Because the needs of each community and each local service center vary so
35 greatly, it's not been possible to create a uniform handbook providing clear direction
36 on how to operate all local service centers. The national service office, however, has
37 substantial experience in advising local offices in many phases of their work, and will

1 be happy to lend assistance to area or regional committees who may be considering
2 the creation of a local service center. In addition, the NSO regularly conducts
3 workshops around the country on local service center operations, bringing board
4 members and special workers from a number of area and regional offices together
5 with national service office staff for the purpose of sharing information and
6 brainstorming problem topics. For information, contact the national service office.

National services

1 Introduction

2 The basic purpose of national services is the same in every country: they provide
3 the national N.A. community with means of carrying out tasks which benefit the
4 entire national community, and of maintaining an active voice and effective
5 conscience concerning issues affecting the fellowship nationwide. The needs and
6 abilities of national communities vary, as do the forms and specific activities of
7 national service systems, but the purpose remains constant worldwide. Our steps,
8 traditions, and concepts lay a foundation of solid principle for N.A. service at all
9 levels; but they do not dictate precisely what the service structure must do, nor how
10 it must organize itself. Those matters are left to the best judgment of each N.A.
11 community, based on the needs and ability of the community itself.

12 Each national community is encouraged to develop its own services to meet its
13 own needs, in accordance with its own national laws, and cognizant of its own
14 cultural background, provided that the structure which is developed does not
15 conflict with N.A.'s essential principles. This chapter will look at the basics of
16 national services, describing some of the kinds of structures and activities almost
17 certain to be a part of any national service structure. For a look at the details of a
18 fully developed model for national services in one country, see the addendum,
19 "National Services in the United States," at the end of this book.

20 Basic organization--national conferences or assemblies

21 The primary element of any national service system is the national service
22 conference or assembly, composed of delegates and other national-level trusted
23 servants. In some countries, delegates are elected at state or regional assemblies; in
24 countries not large enough to require the intermediate regional level of service, area
25 assemblies of GSRs elect conference delegates.

26 National conferences and their service arms fulfill a wide range of tasks: the
27 translation of existing N.A. literature, the development of new recovery material
28 and service aids, and their publication; coordination of the fellowship's contacts with
29 the national government, with nationally-organized civic, professional, media, and
30 religious organizations, and with other twelve-step fellowships in the country; and
31 communication between the national community, other national N.A. communities,
32 and N.A. World Services.

33 National service board

34 Some national service assemblies or conferences meet only once a year; some
35 meet quarterly, or even monthly, depending on the amount of business facing the
36 entire conference. But the conference itself is usually capable only of establishing

1 priorities for national services. The responsibility of fulfilling national services
2 between conference meetings, in ways consistent with conference-established
3 priorities, is usually delegated to a smaller body of national-level trusted servants,
4 elected by the conference--a national service board.

5 The form of this smaller national executive body will differ from country to
6 country, depending on a number of factors. A national service system not
7 administering an office or publishing N.A. literature indigenously may well be able
8 to establish an unincorporated administrative body, composed of conference officers
9 and the chairpersons of the various national conference committees. National
10 communities which administer a national service office, distribute significant
11 quantities of literature, or publish N.A. literature in their own country may well be
12 required by their national law to incorporate their national board, or establish some
13 other kind of legal identity for their services. If you are unsure of what kind of legal
14 organization your national services require, consult with a local attorney, your
15 national government, or N.A. World Services.

16 Regardless of the legal form taken by your national service board, there are a
17 couple of things to consider concerning the extent and limitations of the board's
18 authority. In order for the board to fulfill the kinds of responsibilities any national
19 service system calls for, the board will have to be delegated substantial authority.
20 To balance that authority, careful checks ought to be built into the working
21 relationship between the conference and the national service board. A close
22 examination of the needs of your national community, of the Twelve Concepts for
23 N.A. Service, and of the group conscience of your conference should provide you
24 with the guidance you need in crafting such an arrangement.

25 **National service office**

26 National offices in different countries provide a wide range of different services.
27 Some national offices serve primarily as a central contact point for the national
28 Narcotics Anonymous community, also storing literature purchased from N.A.
29 World Services for distribution to area committees and groups. Others publish and
30 distribute their own N.A. literature and service aids, coordinate the logistics of the
31 national convention, produce the national fellowship journal, and employ special
32 workers assigned to assist the national board. The need for a national office, and
33 the kinds of services to be provided by that office, will be determined by the needs
34 of the national community, the national service board's level of activity, and the
35 community's ability to support the venture. For more information on operating a
36 national service office, contact N.A. World Services.

37 **N.A. literature**

38 The availability of Narcotics Anonymous literature has been found to be of great
39 importance in the development of any national N.A. community. In many countries,
40 the first service work conducted on behalf of the entire national community, in

1 cooperation with N.A. World Services, is the translation of basic N.A. literature into
2 the local language. Once such translations are available, it may be a while before
3 the country's national services are developed enough to support their own publishing
4 operations; in some countries, indigenous publishing will never be feasible. N.A.
5 World Services is prepared to publish literature in translation for national
6 communities not able to publish it themselves...

7 *The committee has yet to make the decisions that would determine what kind of*
8 *discussion would appear here about indigenous publication of N.A. World Services*
9 *literary properties and of indigenously developed new literature. For more information*
10 *about the questions currently at issue, see page xviii in the report at the front of this*
11 *book.*

12 **Relations with N.A. worldwide**

13 *Again, discussions continue in the committee on what should be said here. See the*
14 *report for more detail.*

15 **Nonaddict trusted servants**

16 It often takes many, many years for a national N.A. community to develop leaders
17 with significant educational, business, and professional backgrounds. Yet much
18 needs to be done at the national level that requires just such backgrounds,
19 particularly in countries administering a national office and publishing their own
20 N.A. literature. Our nonaddict friends in government, business, the clergy,
21 community organizations, and the helping professions can provide our national
22 services with access to the kind of expertise we require, but are not yet able to
23 provide from among our own ranks. Nonaddict trusted servants, familiar with our
24 program and supportive of our aims, but not dependent on the Narcotics
25 Anonymous program for freedom from active drug addiction, can also offer a
26 degree of objectivity to our service discussions. For these reasons, most national
27 communities--and especially their national service boards--actively seek out
28 qualified nonaddict assistance in their service efforts. Once found, nonaddict
29 trusted servants are not asked to run our services for us; that would run counter to
30 the spirit of our tradition of self-support. Nonetheless, the value of their assistance,
31 carefully applied, cannot be denied.

32 **More will be revealed**

33 Each national community is unique. The number of years the community has been
34 in existence, the number of groups, the form of government serving the country, the
35 nation's economic circumstances, the religious, cultural, linguistic, and historic
36 background of the people, the geographic setting, all combine to make the needs
37 addressed by N.A. national services in each country unique, and all shape the
38 specific form taken by the national service system. The brief discussions in this
39 chapter may help your national community focus on the general areas that must be

1 addressed in crafting a system capable of meeting the needs of recovering addicts in
2 your homeland--but only you and your fellow members can actually answer all the
3 questions involved. More specific guidance may come from consultation with
4 national service bodies in neighboring countries, or with N.A. World Services, but,
5 ultimately, the choice will be yours.

6 Our words of advice are few: Focus on needs, not formulas. Remain flexible, able
7 to adapt your services to the circumstances. Be prepared to make changes as your
8 national community grows and your service abilities expand. And, through it all,
9 remain grounded in the guiding principles of our fellowship--the Twelve Steps, the
10 Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts for Service.

Addendum 1: Sample meeting format

1 *This sample meeting format is just that: a sample. It's designed so that, if your group*
2 *chooses, you can use it exactly as it is. However, you're encouraged to change it and*
3 *rearrange it according to the needs of your group.*

4
5 **Leader:** *Welcome members to the meeting and introduce yourself.* Hello, my name is
6 _____, and I'm an addict. Welcome to this meeting of the _____ Group of
7 Narcotics Anonymous. I'd like to open this meeting with a moment of silence
8 (15 to 20 seconds) for the addict who still suffers, followed by the Serenity
9 Prayer.

10 We'd like to extend a special welcome to newcomers. Is there anyone attending
11 their first N.A. meeting? Would you like to introduce yourselves? Is there
12 anyone attending this meeting for the first time?

13 *If this is a closed meeting:* This is a "closed" Narcotics Anonymous meeting. "Closed"
14 N.A. meetings are only for drug addicts or those who think they might have a
15 drug problem. Closed meetings provide an atmosphere in which drug addicts
16 can feel more certain that those attending will be able to identify with them. If
17 there are any nonaddicts visiting, we'd like to thank you for your interest in
18 Narcotics Anonymous. Our local N.A. meeting list on the literature table will
19 direct you to an N.A. meeting in our community that is open to nonaddicts.

20 *If this is an open meeting:* This is an "open" Narcotics Anonymous meeting, which
21 means that nonaddict friends, relatives, and community members are welcome
22 to attend. Other N.A. meetings may be closed to nonaddicts. We'd like to
23 welcome our visitors, and thank you for your interest in Narcotics Anonymous.
24 We ask that you respect the primary purpose of this meeting, which is to provide
25 a place where drug addicts can share their recovery with one another.

26 **Leader:** *You may want to read an anonymity statement at the beginning of an*
27 *open meeting. A sample anonymity statement appears immediately following this*
28 *sample meeting format.*

29 For the protection of our group as well as the meeting facility, we ask that no drugs
30 or drug paraphernalia be on your person at the meeting.

31 It costs nothing to belong to Narcotics Anonymous. You are a member when you
32 say you are.

33 **Leader:** *Recognize those with various periods of clean time. Keytags, chips, or*
34 *medallions may be given out.*

1 *Select people before the meeting to read one or more of the following short pieces.*

2 *These readings can be found either in our Little White Booklet or the group reading*
3 *cards.*

- 4 a) Who is an addict?
- 5 b) What is the N.A. program?
- 6 c) Why are we here?
- 7 d) How it works.
- 8 e) The Twelve Traditions.

9 **Leader:** *Ask for topic or step for discussion, and call on people to share, or introduce*
10 *the speaker.*

11 **Leader:** *About ten minutes before the meeting is scheduled to close, announce:* That's
12 *all the time we have tonight. I'd like to thank you for attending.*

13 **Leader:** *Begin passing the basket around, announcing:* The *basket* being passed
14 *around is one way of practicing our Seventh Tradition, which says, "Every N.A.*
15 *group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." The*
16 *money we collect pays for rent, literature, and refreshments. Through*
17 *contributions from this group to various N.A. service committees, it also helps*
18 *carry the N.A. message of recovery in our area and around the world.*

19 *If this is an "open" meeting:* I'd like once again to thank our nonaddict guests for
20 *the interest they've shown in Narcotics Anonymous. Because of N.A.'s tradition*
21 *of self-support, this group asks that you not contribute any money when the*
22 *basket passes your way.*

23 *Does the group service representative have any announcements? (The GSR will*
24 *make announcements of upcoming group activities and N.A. events in the area.)*

25 *After the basket has come back around:* Again, thanks for coming tonight. Would all
26 *those who care to, join in a circle to close? Various groups close in different ways:*
27 *with prayers, brief recitations from N.A. literature, etc.*

28 *Keep coming back--it works!*

35 **Sample anonymity statement**

36 N.A.'s Eleventh Tradition reads, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction
37 rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of
38 press, radio, and films." We ask everyone attending to respect our members'
39 anonymity by not using full-face photographs, last names, or personal details when
40 describing this meeting to others.

Addendum 2: Starting a new N.A. group—a checklist

So, you're starting a new group. Most of what you need to know about N.A. groups and Narcotics Anonymous meetings can be found in the booklet, *The N.A. Group*. We suggest that you and your fellow group members read through the booklet together, so that you're all thoroughly familiar with the issues other N.A. groups have faced in trying to carry the message. This bulletin is a checklist of the things most groups feel are important to line up before opening their first meeting.

— **Get in touch with the nearest service committee.** An area committee meeting is the ideal place for announcing your intention to start a new group. There, you can gather experience from representatives of other groups in the area, and learn of the services available to your group when you need them.

— **Obtain a meeting place.** *The N.A. Group* booklet already discusses many of the things to be considered about obtaining meeting space. Here are some of the things to be nailed down when opening a new meeting:

* **Where?** _____

* **When?** Day, time, and duration of the meeting. _____

* **How much?** What is the facility charging for rent? _____

Is that realistic, keeping in mind the number of people you can expect to attend the meeting? _____

When is the rent due? _____

* **What does the facility require?** No smoking? *Absolutely* no litter? Sweep, mop after the meeting? Close windows, lock doors? _____

* **Can your group's mail be sent to the facility address?** Will they set up a box where you can pick up newsletters and announcements mailed to your group? _____

— **Name your group.** A few things you may want to consider are: Is the name recovery oriented? Does the name create the impression that the group is affiliated with the facility in which it holds its meetings? _____

— **What group trusted servants are needed? What does the group expect those people to do?** The booklet on *The N.A. Group* gives descriptions of a number of group officers. Make sure all group members agree on what they want *their* officers to do.

— **What kind of meeting format will you use?** *The N.A. Group* describes a number of format variations commonly used in our fellowship. Which format—or combination of formats—does your group want to use? _____

— **Will this be a "closed" N.A. meeting? Or an "open" meeting?** For explanation of these two different types of meetings, see *The N.A. Group*. _____

— **What kinds of N.A. literature does your group want to stock?** _____

— **What kinds of refreshments should be purchased?** _____

— **Have you registered your group with the National Service Office? The secretary of your area service committee?** On the reverse, you'll find an NSO group registration form. By filling it out and mailing it in, you'll be insuring that your group is kept in touch with N.A. as a whole in this country through the quarterly *Fellowship Report* and all other regular NSO group mailings.

Also available from NSO:
Group Treasurers Workbook
N.A. Literature Sample Kit
Local service contact information

For more information, write or call:
Group Services Department
National Service Office
P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999
(818) 780-3951

**Addendum 3:
Sample area committee agenda**

1 The typical agenda for an area committee meeting often looks something like this.
2 The committee fills it in each month with more specific topics under each heading.

3 **Call to order**

- 4 * reading of the serenity prayer
- 5 * roll call
- 6 * recognition of new groups
- 7 * reading of last month's minutes (additions or corrections are made)

8 **Reports**

- 9 * general officers' reports
- 10 * group reports
- 11 * special (ad hoc) committee reports
- 12 * standing subcommittee reports
 - 13 1. H&I
 - 14 2. P.I.
 - 15 3. phonelines
 - 16 4. activities
 - 17 5. literature supply
 - 18 6. outreach

19 **Sharing session**

20 General discussion of group concerns and issues raised by reports.

21 **Old business**

22 Motions are in order regarding business left over from previous meetings. (Some
23 areas also conduct their elections of trusted servants during this portion of the
24 agenda.)

25 **New business**

26 Motions are in order regarding business that is new to this committee.

27 **Adjournment**

Addendum 4: Sample rules of order

1 *On the following pages you'll find a simple set of rules of order. They have been*
2 *adapted from Robert's Rules of Order, which in turn are based on the Rules of the U.S.*
3 *House of Representatives. These sample rules differ in some details from Robert's*
4 *Rules; to cover such differences, your committee may wish to make a blanket decision*
5 *to accept these rules as authoritative. In countries where Robert's Rules of Order are*
6 *not in common use, and where some other body of parliamentary rules is more*
7 *commonly used by deliberative assemblies, service committees may want to consider*
8 *adapting these rules so that they conform to those commonly in use in their countries.*

9 **Decorum statement**

10 Meetings will be conducted according to these rules of order, adapted from
11 Robert's Rules of Order. This time-honored system for conducting business is the
12 clearest way yet devised for getting a maximum amount of business done in a
13 minimum of time, and to get it done regardless of the degree of disagreement
14 among the participants. By following these rules of order, we strive to be sure that
15 we are making decisions on the basis of principle, rather than personality. In
16 keeping with that spirit, we encourage all participants to become familiar with these
17 rules of order, and to conduct themselves accordingly. Once the meeting is under
18 way, only one matter will be before the committee at any one time, and no other
19 discussion is in order. Please respect the chairperson's right to be in control of the
20 *process* of this meeting, so that you can have maximum benefit of its content.

21 **Debate, limits**

22 *Debate is the formal exchange of views on an idea. Unless otherwise specified, debate*
23 *on both main motions and parliamentary motions is usually limited to two or three pro's*
24 *and two or three con's (speakers for and against the motion). Speakers addressing a*
25 *motion in debate usually have two or three minutes in which to speak their minds.*

26 **Motions**

27 There are two basic types of motions. It is important to understand the difference
28 between them. The two kinds of motions are *main motions* and *parliamentary*
29 *motions.*

30 **Main motions**

31 A *motion* is a statement of an idea a committee member wants the committee to
32 put into practice. After being recognized by the chairperson, the member says, "I
33 move that such-and-such be done by (this committee, one of its subcommittees, or a

1 particular individual) under these terms." The person making the motion then
2 speaks briefly about why he feels the idea is important--this is called speaking to the
3 intent of a motion. Because the exact wording of all motions must be recorded in
4 the minutes, the maker of the motion should write it out whenever possible. This is
5 especially important for complicated or long motions.

6 Every motion requires a *second*--the backing of another person who also wants the
7 idea put into practice, or who simply wants to see further discussion of the idea take
8 place. The chairperson will ask, after one person makes a motion, whether the
9 motion has a second. The seconder simply raises his hand and, when recognized by
10 the chair, says, "I second that." If nobody seconds a motion, the chair will say, "The
11 motion dies for lack of a second." This means that the idea will not be discussed any
12 further because there is not enough interest in it. The committee then moves on to
13 other business.

14 Once a motion has been made, the chairperson may rule it *out of order*. A motion
15 may be ruled out of order for any one of a number of reasons: the motion goes
16 against the committee's standing policy, clearly contradicts one of the Twelve
17 Concepts for N.A. Service or Twelve Traditions, or is inappropriate at the particular
18 point in the meeting at which it is made. *Robert's Rules of Order* can be consulted
19 for more specific examples of motions which are out of order at any given time.

20 Any member of the committee who wishes to challenge a ruling made by the
21 chairperson may *appeal* that ruling, as described below. If no appeal is made, or if
22 the decision of the chair is upheld, the committee moves on to other business.

23 Parliamentary motions

24 *Parliamentary motions* can be best understood as "sub-motions" that are made
25 during debate on a main motion, which affect in some way the main motion. There
26 are many more of these than space and practicality permits us to include here, but a
27 few that seem to be the most practical are discussed here.

28 1. **Motion to AMEND.** 29 **SIMPLE majority required.** 30 **Is DEBATABLE.**

31 This is perhaps the most commonly used parliamentary motion. During debate on
32 a motion, if a member feels that the motion would benefit from a change in its
33 language, she can say, "*I move to amend* the motion..." and suggest specific language
34 changes in the motion. If an amendment has been moved and seconded, debate
35 then turns to the merits of the amendment. When debate on the amendment is
36 exhausted, the body votes on the amendment. Then, debate resumes on the merits
37 of the main motion (as amended, if the amendment carried). When debate is
38 exhausted on the merits of the main motion itself, a vote is taken and the body
39 moves on to the next item of business.

1 **2. Motion to call the PREVIOUS QUESTION.**
2 **TWO-THIRDS majority required.**
3 **Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

4 For our purposes, this may be the most important parliamentary motion. Use it
5 often. This motion is made by a member saying, "*I call for the question,*" or "*I move*
6 *the previous question.*" It is another way of saying, "I move that debate stops right
7 now and that we vote immediately." This is one of many that can be used to prevent
8 needless, lengthy debate once an issue is clearly understood. This motion is in order
9 after any speaker is finished. You need not be called on. The chair must recognize
10 you when you make this motion, and a vote must be taken with no debate. If two-
11 thirds of the body feels that no more debate is necessary, then it is time to vote and
12 move on.

13 One point worth making about this motion is that you must be careful not to
14 squelch debate before an issue has been thoroughly aired. Be sure to vote "no" to
15 this motion if you are still confused about the issue, or if you are unsure of how to
16 vote. By allowing debate to continue, we avoid half-baked decisions about half-
17 understood questions. On the other hand, the liberal use of this motion makes it
18 unnecessary for the chair to be heavy-handed in stopping discussion, because he
19 knows you will stop it soon enough.

20 **3. Motion to TABLE.**
21 **SIMPLE majority required.**
22 **Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

23 One way of disposing of a motion that is not ready for a vote is to *table* it. This is
24 done by saying, "*I move we table this motion until such-and-such a date/meeting.*"
25 This motion is not debatable; if it is made and seconded, it is voted on immediately.
26 If it fails, debate continues on the motion itself. If it passes, the committee moves
27 on to its next item of business. The tabled motion will be included in the committee
28 agenda on the date specified.

29 **4. Motion to REMOVE FROM THE TABLE.**
30 **SIMPLE majority required.**
31 **Is DEBATABLE.**

32 A motion that has been tabled can be taken up before the time originally set in the
33 motion to table. This is done by saying, "I move to remove from the table the
34 motion to such-and-such." If this motion passes, the motion that had been tabled
35 becomes the main motion, and debate on it begins again. If the motion to remove
36 from the table fails, the body moves on to the next item of business.

1 **5. Motion to REFER.**
2 **SIMPLE majority required.**
3 **Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

4 Sometimes the committee does not have enough information to make an
5 immediate decision on a motion. Such motions can be removed from debate and
6 sent to one of the subcommittees for further study; or, it can be sent to a special ad
7 hoc committee.* This can be done by a member saying, "I move to refer the motion
8 to the such-and-such subcommittee." If the motion to refer passes, the committee
9 moves on to its next item of business. The subcommittee to which the motion is
10 assigned will take it up at its next meeting. The subcommittee will report back on
11 what it has come up with at the next meeting of the full committee.

12 **6. Motions to RECONSIDER or RESCIND.**
13 **TWO-THIRDS majority required.**
14 **Is DEBATABLE.**

15 Sometimes a member feels that a motion the committee has passed will prove
16 harmful. He can move to either *reconsider* (reopen for debate and voting) or *rescind*
17 (void the effect of) the original motion.

18 There are a few conditions on motions to reconsider or rescind:

- 19 * The motion must have been passed in either the last month's or the current
20 meeting.
21 * The member making the motion must have information on the issue that was
22 not available in the original debate on the motion.
23 * The member must have been with the winning side in the original vote.

24 These limits are placed to protect the committee from having to reconsider again
25 and again the motions it passes, while still allowing it to examine potentially harmful
26 situations it has created inadvertently. If any of these requirements are not met, the
27 chairperson will declare the motion out of order.

28 **7. Request to WITHDRAW A MOTION.**
29 **UNANIMOUS CONSENT required.**
30 **Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

31 Once a motion is made and the debate begins, the maker of the motion may move
32 to withdraw it. The chair asks if there are any objections. If there is even one
33 objection, the motion stays on the floor, and debate resumes. If there are no
34 objections, the motion is withdrawn and the body moves on.

* See below, the section on ad hoc committees under the title, "Committees," for further information.

1 **8. Offering a SUBSTITUTE MOTION.**

2 **SIMPLE majority required.**

3 **Is DEBATABLE.**

4 *A substitute motion* is the same thing as an amendment to a main motion. The
5 only difference is that it is offered to entirely replace the original idea, instead of
6 merely revising a portion of it. It is handled in the same way an amendment is
7 handled.

8 **9. Motion to ADJOURN.**

9 **TWO-THIRDS majority required.**

10 **Is NOT DEBATABLE.**

11 Any voting member may move to adjourn at any time. This motion is always in
12 order, is not debatable, and requires two-thirds to pass. Obviously frivolous motions
13 to adjourn may be ruled out of order. After all business is finished, the chair may
14 declare the meeting adjourned without a motion.

15 **Other procedures**

16 In addition to parliamentary motions, there are other ways in which members may
17 alter or clarify the proceedings. Here are a few of the most common.

18 **Order of the day.** If a committee member feels that business is going too far
19 astray from the original agenda, he can help get things back on track. He says, "*I*
20 *call for the order of the day.*" This means, "I move that the chair bring us back on
21 track and conduct the meeting according to procedure, adhering to the agenda."
22 This does not require a second, and is not debatable. Regardless of what else is
23 going on at the time, it requires an immediate vote.

24 **Point of order.** If a committee member feels that something that is happening is
25 in violation of the rules of order, and if the chairperson does not appear likely to do
26 anything about it, the member can raise a point of order. She need not raise her
27 hand, but may simply say out loud, "*Point of order.*" The chairperson then says,
28 "What is your point of order?" The member then states how she feels the rules of
29 order are being violated. If the chair agrees with her judgement, he says "Your
30 point is well taken," and the situation is cleared up. If he does not agree, he says,
31 "Overruled." This decision, as all others, can be appealed.

32 **Point of appeal.** Any time the chair makes a decision, that decision may be
33 appealed. Any voting member who wishes to appeal a decision may do so by saying,
34 "*I appeal the decision of the chair.*" The chair then says, "On what grounds?" The
35 member states his reasons. The chairperson then speaks briefly to the intent of his
36 ruling. A vote is taken, requiring a two-thirds majority to overrule the decision of
37 the chair.

1 **Parliamentary inquiry.** If a committee member wants to do something, but
2 doesn't know how it fits in with the rules of order, all he has to do is ask. Without
3 raising his hand, he simply says out loud, "*Point of parliamentary inquiry.*" The
4 chairperson must immediately recognize him, so that he may ask how to do such-
5 and-such. The chair will answer the question, possibly by referring to a specific
6 passage in this document in his explanation.

7 **Point of personal privilege.** If the smoke is getting too heavy for you, the air
8 conditioner or heater is on too high, or if there is too much noise in the room, you
9 can ask that something be done about it. You may interrupt the proceedings by
10 saying, "*Point of personal privilege*" The chair must recognize you immediately. State
11 the situation, and ask that it be corrected. The chair will request that whatever
12 needs to be done, and is reasonable, be done to help make you comfortable.

13 Voting procedures

14 There are several ways that votes can be taken. Two of them are described here.

15 **Show of hands.** This is the most commonly used method. With rare exceptions,
16 votes will be taken by a request from the chair to see the hands of all in favor, then
17 all opposed, then all abstaining on each issue. The chair should ask for all three
18 categories every time, just to be thorough, even when the majority is overwhelming.

19 **Roll call vote.** Sometimes when a vote is taken on a controversial issue, or a very
20 important one, members may call for a roll call vote. This request must be honored,
21 whether or not it is made after a show-of-hands vote was already taken. The
22 secretary calls out the group or position titles of all the voting members and asks for
23 their voice vote, yes or no. Each person's vote is then recorded in the minutes by
24 position title or group.

25 Committees

26 There are two kinds of subcommittees: standing subcommittees and ad hoc
27 committees.

28 **Standing subcommittees.** These are the regular subcommittees of the area,
29 such as H&I and P.I. The basic descriptions of these, and how they relate to the
30 committee as a whole, are detailed elsewhere under the descriptions of each level of
31 service.

32 **Special (ad hoc) committees.** Sometimes a question or special project needs to
33 be referred to a subcommittee, but the question does not fit in with the focus of any
34 existing subcommittee. In such cases, the motion can be made to *refer to a special*
35 *committee.* These special committees are set up for specific purposes, and they have
36 limited lives--when they have finished their jobs and have reported back, they are
37 disbanded. A motion to refer to a special committee should specify what the
38 committee's purpose will be. The chair may then appoint an ad hoc committee in its

1 entirety, or he may appoint just the ad hoc committee chairperson, who will put the
2 committee together himself later.

3
4
5

6 These are only brief notes on rules of order for business meetings. For further
7 information, see *Robert's Rules of Order--Newly Revised*.

Addendum 5: National services in the United States

1 This addendum describes how the general concepts, purpose, and structure
2 examined earlier in the *Guide to Service* chapter on N.A. national services are
3 specifically applied by the N.A. Fellowship in the United States. The American
4 national community is the world's oldest, and, as of this writing, also the largest.
5 Because of that, many of the arrangements described in this addendum will be of
6 use only in the U.S. However, with appropriate adaptation, many of the specifically
7 American elements shown here can be used by any national community in
8 developing and fine-tuning the kind of service structure that will help the country's
9 groups, areas, and (where they exist) regions more effectively carry the N.A.
10 message to the addict seeking recovery.

American national services--conference and board

11 The purpose of N.A.'s national services is the same in the United States as in any
12 country: to provide the national community with a collective voice on issues
13 affecting all its local elements, and to coordinate those services administered on
14 behalf of the entire national community. The National Service Conference of the
15 United States, composed of trustees (as National Service Board members are
16 known) and delegates, meets annually to review the work of the U.S. National
17 Service Board, elect new board members, and establish NSB priorities for the
18 coming year. Between conferences, the board is responsible to carry out the actual
19 work involved in administering national services in a way consistent with
20 conference-established priorities.
21

NSB, Inc.--accountable to those it serves

22 Earlier, we talked in general terms about the need to establish a service
23 corporation or some other kind of legal identity when certain kinds of activities are
24 being conducted--handling large sums of money, for instance, publishing literature,
25 or conducting national conventions. A corporation provides continuity for the body
26 engaging in such activities, stability not afforded by the comings and goings of
27 individual trusted servants. It provides a clearly recognizable, legally binding
28 structure of accountability. And it provides protection for the fellowship at large;
29 liability related to actions of the service body is limited to the service body itself, and
30 cannot spread outward to the entire fellowship. For these reasons, the U.S.
31 National Service Board has been registered as a California public benefit
32 corporation.
33

34 The level of national services required in the United States is tremendous.
35 Consequently, the U.S. National Service Board is an active, hands-on service body,

1 administering substantial responsibilities and granted substantial delegated
2 authority by the national community. Because of the nature of corporations, the
3 conference should not make a regular habit of directing the day-to-day details of the
4 board's operations; if it does, the conference will be held responsible for those
5 operations, and not the board. But the National Service Conference does have a
6 number of means of tempering the authority delegated to the National Service
7 Board without itself assuming the board's responsibilities. Conference delegate
8 panels review all trustee activities on a regular basis. Delegates and trustees
9 together establish the board's priorities each year at the conference meeting. The
10 conference itself elects trustees to the National Service Board, and has the ability to
11 either remove individual trustees or replace the entire board. These abilities serve
12 as the American national service system's checks and balances.

13 Conference advisory actions--setting priorities for national services

14 "Policy cannot be created on the conference floor," one former delegate has said,
15 "but priorities can." In the American national service system, the trustees are
16 charged with actively fulfilling services affecting the fellowship nationwide; the
17 conference develops the priorities underlying the board's policy decisions
18 concerning the fulfillment of those services. The conference defines those priorities
19 in motions called *conference advisory actions*. These actions describe the kinds of
20 things the conference wants the board to do, but they do not dictate how the board
21 is to do them. A conference advisory action might say, we want the board to have a
22 book on N.A.'s steps and traditions developed; the action would then leave the
23 details of how to produce such a book to the board and its literature committee.
24 Proposed advisory actions can come from any of a number of sources: a trustee
25 committee or subsidiary corporation, a delegate review panel, the National Service
26 Board itself, or an individual trustee or delegate. However, they generally come
27 either from NSB committees and sub-corporations or the delegate review panels
28 attached to them.

29 The National Service Board and its committees and subsidiary corporations have
30 substantial authority in their defined areas of service, but not unlimited authority.
31 The Seventh Concept states, "Our service boards and committees ought to be given
32 the ability to determine which decisions fall within their own defined authority and
33 which will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation." In their
34 regular reports, trustee committees and subsidiary corporations consult with the full
35 National Service Board on questions they may have concerning their "defined
36 authority." Depending on the nature of the question, the board may itself be able to
37 offer the necessary direction. In matters of policy, finance, or N.A. tradition likely
38 to seriously affect the national fellowship community, however, the board will seek
39 the advice of the National Service Conference. Sometimes, that advice will be
40 sought by proposing a conference advisory action.

1 Before being submitted to the full conference, the proposal will be reviewed by the
2 delegate review panel attached to the trustee committee or sub-corporation
3 involved. The panel may simply agree with the proposal, sending it on verbatim for
4 the conference's concurrence. It may disagree, sharing its reasons with the
5 conference. Or the delegate review panel may modify the trustees' proposed
6 conference advisory action, explaining its reasons for doing so when the modified
7 proposal is presented to the full body. If the panel suggests either rejection or
8 modification, their recommendation will be presented to the conference side-by-side
9 with the trustees' original proposal, leaving the choice between the two to the full
10 conference.

11 Delegate review panels often propose conference advisory actions on their own.
12 As we'll see later in this addendum, panel members are kept completely up-to-date
13 on the affairs of their related trustee committee or subsidiary board. Being familiar
14 with, yet distant from, the responsibilities associated with their particular service
15 areas, delegate panels often see some of the priorities for those areas more clearly
16 than their related committees do. Panel-proposed conference advisory actions,
17 independently establishing new priorities for the National Service Board, help
18 remedy the shortsightedness which sometimes occurs when a trustee committee gets
19 too close to its work to be able to see the larger service picture. When problems
20 arise which the trustee committees and sub-corporations seem unable to correct for
21 themselves, panel-proposed actions can help the National Service Conference
22 correct those problems for them.

23 The National Service Conference seeks to establish a substantial consensus among
24 its members when considering whether to approve a proposed conference advisory
25 action. In order to pass such actions, two-thirds of the conference must approve
26 them.

27 Approval of literature

28 The primary purpose of an N.A. group, according to our traditions, is "to carry the
29 message to the addict who still suffers." Both the identity of Narcotics Anonymous
30 and the nature of the N.A. message are fundamentally dependent on our literature.
31 For this reason, it seems appropriate to offer a few words about how new N.A.
32 literature may be approved for use by our fellowship.

33 Once a new, revised, or translated literary item is completed by the NSB
34 Literature Committee, it is submitted for the acceptance of the National Service
35 Board. At that point, the board must consider whether to ask for a direct ballot of
36 the nation's N.A. groups, to consult with the National Service Conference, or to
37 publish the piece on its own authority. Book-length pieces are always submitted for
38 the groups' approval, while booklets and pamphlets are usually submitted to the
39 conference for its consent prior to publication; only rarely does the board decide to
40 publish an item on its own authority.

1 **Recall and reorganization of the board by the conference**

2 Earlier, we described the checks and balances built into the American national
3 service system, devices designed to insure that the National Service Board's
4 delegated authority is adequately tempered by the conference. In electing trustees,
5 the conference should choose candidates it feels are worthy of its trust. Regular
6 review of board activities by delegate panels is meant to assure both the trustees and
7 the fellowship at large that board projects cannot go awry unnoticed. Should the
8 trustees not make suitable adjustments on their own, the conference has the ability
9 to redirect trustee priorities by means of advisory actions. And, should all else fail,
10 the National Service Conference has the ability to recall individual trustees from
11 service on the National Service Board, or, in the most extreme circumstance, to
12 replace the entire board with new members.

13 Proposed recall actions must be approved by two-thirds of all eligible participants
14 attending that year's National Service Conference meeting. In the United States,
15 the National Service Board has half the number of members in any given year as the
16 number of delegates at the conference, up to a maximum of thirty trustees. Since
17 delegates and trustees together compose the voting body of the conference, the
18 delegate block must be in virtually unanimous agreement on a proposal to replace
19 the entire board in order for such a proposal to pass, as is appropriate for such
20 radical action. It is possible for the conference to enforce drastic corrective
21 measures should the National Service Board go completely haywire; but it is
22 extremely unlikely that simple dissatisfaction can severely disrupt the board's
23 administration of its substantial responsibilities.

24 **The "single board" model in American services**

25 The Fourth Concept for N.A. Service says, "For each responsibility, a single point
26 of decision and accountability should be clearly defined." While the annual
27 conference meeting establishes priorities for national services, the day-to-day
28 responsibilities of actually administering American national services are delegated
29 to the National Service Board. But the board, per se, cannot itself manage all the
30 details of all the projects necessary for responsible administration of those services.
31 To do that, the board has created five committees and three wholly-owned
32 subsidiary corporations, each with its own sphere of responsibility, each with its own
33 Seventh Concept rights of decision, but all coordinated by and ultimately
34 accountable to the full membership of the National Service Board.

35 The board coordinates the activities of its committees and subsidiary corporations
36 with one another, insuring that the board's total resources can be made available for
37 high-priority services. Just as checks and balances are built into the relationship
38 between the conference and the board, so are they built into the single board model.
39 One of these checks allows the board to maintain responsibility for the composition
40 of its committees and sub-corporations. Each year, the board elects some of its

1 members to serve as general officers (chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and
2 treasurer), others to serve as directors of its subsidiary corporations; two-thirds of
3 the members of each subsidiary corporation's board of directors must be trustees.
4 Following the annual election, the National Service Board chair and vice
5 chairperson together appoint each remaining trustee to a committee; the remainder
6 of each committee's members are then selected by the trustees appointed to that
7 committee. Remaining members of sub-corporate boards of directors, on the other
8 hand, are elected by the full National Service Board. In the course of the year, the
9 board maintains the ability to replace committee members and subsidiary
10 corporation directors.

11 Non-trustee committee members and subsidiary corporation directors are chosen
12 on the basis of relevant talents, experience, and interest. They may be drawn from
13 anywhere: delegates, former delegates, non-delegate N.A. members, former
14 trustees, former review panel members, even an occasional nonaddict friend of
15 Narcotics Anonymous. The conference nominations panel, described later, is often
16 consulted for additional candidates; they'll know of a number of people with a
17 variety of qualifications. Regional committees are also asked for recommendations.
18 Non-trustee members of NSB committees and subsidiary corporation boards are
19 selected according to the needs of the particular committee or sub-corporation, so
20 that the committee or subsidiary corporation can be of the greatest possible service
21 to the fellowship.

22 **Trustee committees**

23 Trustee committees handle a large portion of the actual work delegated to the
24 National Service Board by the conference: conducting workshops and creating
25 service aids, developing new N.A. literature, interacting with professionals
26 interested in Narcotics Anonymous, keeping the media and the general public
27 informed about N.A., and serving as the fellowship's contact with federal
28 government agencies interested in our program.

29 **Committee on the conference and forums.** This committee is responsible for
30 the conference program and agenda. It develops a program of opening addresses,
31 presentation sessions, and mid-week discussion session topics for the annual
32 meeting of the National Service Conference. The committee also considers
33 questions relating to conference policies and procedures, prepares the final report
34 of the annual conference meeting, and reviews conference advisory actions passed at
35 the annual meeting, developing appropriate revisions to all relevant national service
36 documents on the basis of those actions.

37 Several times a year, *regional forums* bring members of trustee committees
38 together with members of local service committees and other N.A. members for a
39 weekend of presentations, service workshops, question-and-answer exchanges, and
40 open sharing sessions addressing national and local service topics. The NSB

1 Committee on the Conference and Forums is responsible for developing the
2 programs for these events.

3 **Literature committee.** The NSB Literature Committee takes a careful look at
4 the needs of the N.A. community in the United States for new recovery literature,
5 and goes about developing that literature for publication. The committee uses any
6 of a variety of practical and appropriate means in developing its drafts, depending
7 on the nature of each project.

8 **Public information committee (P.I.).** This committee is charged with the broad
9 responsibility of informing the national media, federal government agencies, and the
10 general public of the existence and purpose of Narcotics Anonymous. By doing so,
11 the P.I. committee helps prevent misunderstandings of our fellowship, and
12 encourages the kind of broad-based awareness of N.A. recovery that leads more and
13 more addicts to our meetings nationwide.

14 **Hospitals and institutions committee (H&I).** This committee focuses its
15 attention on how better to carry the N.A. message into treatment and correctional
16 facilities. The committee serves as the national N.A. community's representative to
17 federal correctional and judicial authorities, national societies of treatment
18 professionals, national correctional and judicial associations, and treatment industry
19 organizations.

20 **Budget and finance committee.** Budgets for all trustee operations are
21 coordinated through this committee. Chaired by the NSB treasurer, the committee
22 reviews income forecasts, activity plans, and anticipated expenses for each trustee
23 committee and subsidiary corporation, developing recommendations for approval by
24 the whole National Service Board.

25 The budget and finance committee is also responsible for maintaining
26 communications with local N.A. service committees and with the fellowship at large
27 concerning the needs of the National Service Board. The NSB Budget and Finance
28 Committee regularly provides information on national service finances in the
29 national newsletter, and in mailings to groups, area committees, and regional
30 committees.

31 **NSB subsidiary corporations**

32 The U.S. National Service Board organizes subsidiary corporations to handle some
33 of its responsibilities, particularly those requiring specialized business expertise and
34 separate financial accounting.

35 **National Convention Corporation.** This subsidiary corporation is responsible
36 for all the work involved in organizing our annual national convention. Among its
37 tasks are the selection of sites and speakers for upcoming conventions. The
38 National Convention Corporation also provides logistical support for regional

1 forums, local convention and office workshops, and the annual meeting of the
2 National Service Conference.

3 **National Service Office Corporation.** The National Service Office serves as
4 home base for all National Service Board operations. The board of directors of the
5 NSO Corporation provides oversight for the business affairs and day-to-day
6 activities of the office, including personnel management and the publication and
7 distribution of Narcotics Anonymous literature in the United States.

8 The National Service Office also manages four staff departments responsible to
9 assist trustee committees, correspond with local service committees, and produce
10 service aids and periodicals at the direction of their related committees. NSO
11 service departments include:

12 **Group services.** This department tracks and responds to new group
13 registrations and requests for general information, produces and updates the
14 various group services bulletins, provides liaison and support for local N.A.
15 service centers, coordinates the N.A. Loner Group service, and publishes a
16 newsletter for isolated addicts. The group services department assists the NSB
17 Committee on the Conference and Forums.

18 **Literature,** assisting the trustee literature committee.

19 **Public information,** aiding the trustee P.I. committee.

20 **Hospitals and institutions,** which works with the trustee H&I committee.

21 **National Magazine Corporation.** This subsidiary corporation produces the
22 American N.A. community's fellowship journal, *The N.A. Way Magazine*. The
23 magazine provides a forum in which N.A. members nationwide can share their
24 experience and ideas concerning recovery, unity, and service in Narcotics
25 Anonymous. *For more on why the National Magazine Corporation has been*
26 *designated as one of NSB, Inc.'s three wholly-owned subsidiaries, see page xxiv in the*
27 *committee report at the front of this book.*

28 **Delegate review panels**

29 The conference empowers the National Service Board to perform certain
30 necessary tasks, and provides for sensible review, through the delegate review
31 panels, of how those tasks are administered. Each trustee committee and each of
32 the NSB's subsidiary corporation boards has a corresponding delegate review panel.

33 To insure that each delegate review panel has enough members to perform its
34 duties, and to assure balance in the membership of each panel, panel composition is
35 determined by appointment of the NSB Committee on the Conference and Forums.
36 Shortly after a conference delegate's election at his regional assembly, he should
37 send a service resume to the trustee committee on the conference, describing the
38 kinds of N.A. service activities he's taken part in. The trustee conference committee
39 selects some delegates for review panel membership on the basis of experience in

1 particular fields of service, others for broad service exposure, seeking a balance
2 between the two in the overall membership of each panel. Once assigned to a
3 particular panel, a conference delegate will serve his entire delegate term on the
4 same review panel.

5 The relationship between a trustee committee or sub-corporation board and its
6 related delegate review panel is a relatively straightforward one. The committee or
7 sub-board is charged with the responsibility for administering certain services; the
8 review panel is responsible to carefully review the committee or subsidiary
9 corporation's work, and to report and comment on it for the benefit of other
10 conference participants. This does not mean that their relationship is an adversarial
11 one. Delegate review panel members are often asked for their advice, particularly
12 when questions arise requiring broader perspective than that offered by committee
13 or board members alone. At critical stages in the development of committee or
14 subsidiary corporation projects, panel members may be asked for their
15 recommendations on how the committee or board should proceed. Delegate
16 panels, while providing the conference with independent, objective oversight of NSB
17 operations, also provide the National Service Board year-round contact with a cross-
18 section of Narcotics Anonymous members, each well-informed of trustee activities,
19 yet sufficiently detached to be able to provide a fresh outlook on things.

20 In the course of the year, delegate review panel members receive comprehensive
21 reports of the activities of their corresponding trustee committee or subsidiary
22 corporation. Between conferences, each delegate review panel meets at least once
23 with its related committee or sub-corporate board to review the group's work.
24 Reports on these meetings, prepared by each delegate panel chair, are mailed to
25 conference participants. And at the annual conference meeting, the panels process
26 the conference advisory actions which ultimately will guide the National Service
27 Board in the coming year.

28 At the first delegate panel meeting during the conference, panel members select
29 one delegate who will serve as panel chairperson that year. The panel chair will
30 moderate the review panel meetings, and present a report of the panel's conclusions
31 to the full conference.

32 In the first panel session, delegates meet face to face with committee or sub-
33 corporation board members and related staff. Each panel reviews the details of the
34 annual report of its respective committee or subsidiary corporation. Special
35 attention is given to significant matters which the committee or board felt it could
36 not act upon without clear direction from the conference. Other matters relevant to
37 the subsidiary corporation or committee's work are raised by delegates themselves
38 in the course of the first panel session, while the committee or board members are
39 present to answer questions and share their thoughts.

40 During the second delegate review panel session, only delegates attend (with the
41 exception of the staff member assigned to assist the panel). The delegate panel

1 members discuss among themselves the affairs of the committee or subsidiary
2 corporation their panel is attached to. The session concludes when the panel has
3 reached a substantial consensus on the issues at hand.

4 At the third panel session during the conference, review panel members,
5 committee members or subsidiary corporation directors, and staff come together
6 again to consider the panel's recommendations. If, during its delegates-only session,
7 the panel found itself at odds with either the report or the proposals of its related
8 trustee body, all parties have a chance to discuss those differences before the panel
9 chair makes his report to the full conference.

10 **The annual conference meeting**

11 In the United States, conference delegates and trustees meet annually to review
12 the state of national services and to chart a course for the coming year. Early in the
13 conference, annual reports are presented to the entire conference body by the
14 trustee committees. These reports cover every aspect of national service work over
15 the previous year: projects completed and problems encountered, with full facts and
16 figures. The complete written reports are mailed to all conference participants
17 before the annual meeting, giving them time to study the reports thoroughly.
18 Summaries of each report are given orally to the conference, pointing up the year's
19 highlights as well as raising subjects for which the board is seeking additional
20 direction.

21 Following each report, the microphone is made available so that participants can
22 ask questions and offer general comments. The conference dialogue following
23 opening reports gives the entire body a chance to begin forming a consensus on
24 national service issues at the heart of conference deliberations. Thorough
25 discussion of the trustee committee and subsidiary corporation reports follows, when
26 the delegate review panels meet.

27 The annual meeting of the National Service Conference spends much, but not all,
28 of its time in reports, delegate review panel meetings, elections, and the
29 consideration of conference advisory actions. The conference also gives its time to a
30 variety of sharing sessions, activities designed to help shape the group conscience of
31 the conference. And while "group conscience is not a decision-making mechanism,"
32 as the essay on our Fifth Concept for Service reminds us, it "is the spiritual means by
33 which a loving God influences our decisions." Even though these discussions may
34 not always appear to have much of anything to do with the reports and motions that
35 may be on the agenda, the conference values them as much as the specific
36 conference advisory actions approved at the meeting's end. The conference meeting
37 serves, to a great extent, as a channel through which a loving God influences the
38 formation of a direction, a tone, a *conscience* for N.A.'s national services, and the
39 conference sharing sessions do much to facilitate the development of that
40 conscience.

1 One of the final items on the annual National Service Conference agenda is the
2 election of a current conference participant to serve as the presiding officer for the
3 next year's meeting. The conference presiding officer has a limited, but critical,
4 role. The presiding officer's responsibility is to moderate the plenary sessions of the
5 annual conference meeting, helping the conference proceed through its business in
6 an orderly fashion. A good presiding officer can make all the difference in the
7 world to the quality of discussions and decisions made at the annual meeting. For
8 this reason, the conference considers carefully when selecting the next year's
9 presiding officer.

10 In the weeks following the annual meeting, a full report on the proceedings is
11 developed by the NSB Committee on the Conference and Forums. The full report
12 is supplied to all conference members. A condensed report--a special issue of the
13 national service newsletter--is sent to all N.A. groups in the country registered with
14 the National Service Office.

15 Conference election of trustees

16 As noted earlier, the U.S. National Service Board has half the number of members
17 at any one time as there are registered national conference delegates, up to a
18 maximum of thirty trustees. Two of those NSB members are nonaddict trustees
19 elected by the National Service Board itself for two-year terms. The presence of
20 these two NSB-elected nonaddict trustees on the board does not preclude the
21 conference from electing additional nonaddict trustees; it only insures that the
22 board has at least two nonaddicts, familiar with our principles, supportive of our
23 aims, bringing a certain objectivity to the deliberations of the National Service
24 Board. These two trustees may serve no more than two terms consecutively. Once
25 elected by the board, the conference may disapprove them. Following their
26 presentation to the National Service Conference, the remaining vacancies on the
27 board are filled by direct election of the conference.

28 Because of the hefty responsibilities assigned to the National Service Board, and
29 the degree of delegated authority vested in the trustees, N.A.'s Sixth Concept is
30 considered more seriously in their election, perhaps, than in elections held at any
31 other level of service. The conference selects trustees on the basis of some
32 combination of the following qualifications: understanding of N.A. service and
33 principles; personal maturity; in the case of addict-trustees, at least ten years clean;
34 good judgment, objectivity, and the courage of their convictions; sound business or
35 professional background; and availability for vigorous service involvement. To
36 better assure the conference that trustee candidates meet these qualifications, it has
37 created a nominations panel to search out and screen potential candidates.

38 The *conference nominations panel* is composed of five former trustees, drawn
39 annually by lot from among all former members of the National Service Board who
40 have expressed their willingness to serve on the panel. The nominations panel

1 consults with the National Service Board to determine what kinds of individuals,
2 with what sorts of backgrounds, talents, and training might be especially needed on
3 the board. During the year, the panel actively seeks the very best potential trustees,
4 not those who simply meet the basic qualifications. The panel accepts individual
5 recommendations of potential trustees from anyone at all--the more possibilities
6 they have, the more likely they are to find the kinds of people worthy of the
7 conference's trust. Especially sought are recommendations from regional
8 committees. Using resumes and personal interviews to assess the background and
9 abilities of those under consideration, the panel is able to nominate trustee
10 candidates it can wholly vouch for. The nominations panel includes its
11 recommendations on trustee candidates with the national service reports mailed to
12 conference participants prior to the annual meeting.

13 Trustee nominees must be approved by two-thirds of all eligible participants
14 attending the year's conference meeting. Should more candidates gain two-thirds
15 approval than there are trustee vacancies, the top vote-getters will be placed on the
16 National Service Board. Trustees elected by the conference serve four-year terms,
17 and may serve no more than two terms consecutively.

18 National service board meetings

19 The trustees meet regularly to coordinate an overall strategy for the national
20 service responsibilities delegated to them by the conference. First, the trustee
21 committees and the directors of the NSB's subsidiary corporations meet to consider
22 their particular fields of responsibilities. After the committees and sub-boards have
23 met, the full National Service Board comes together. First, they hear reports on the
24 activities of each committee and sub-board. Then, it's on to business discussions,
25 sometimes dealing with matters referred to the NSB for broader discussion by a
26 committee or subsidiary corporation, and sometimes offering guidance, support, or
27 redirection to a committee or sub-board.

28 Input to national services

29 Suggestions for new national service projects, or comments on current projects,
30 can come from individual N.A. members, local service boards or committees,
31 conference delegates, members of the National Service Office staff--anyone,
32 anywhere. They are received at the NSO year 'round.

33 Once received at the office, each suggestion is forwarded to the staff member
34 assigned to assist the trustee committee or subsidiary corporation which is
35 responsible for the question being asked, and to that board or committee's
36 chairperson. The staff member consults with the chairperson on how to address the
37 suggestion. At the chairperson's request, the staff member may perform additional
38 background research before including the suggestion on the subsidiary corporation
39 or committee's agenda. If, after considering available information, the group feels

1 prepared to act on the suggestion, they do so, including a report of the action they've
2 taken in the national service newsletter or in their next report to the conference.

3 Sometimes, the committee or subsidiary corporation feels it needs to seek the
4 advice of others before it can decide what to do with a suggestion. It may ask the
5 entire National Service Board to discuss the suggestion during the board's next
6 sharing session. Or it may consult its delegate review panel. Depending on the
7 review panel's response, the suggestion may end up on the agenda of the National
8 Service Conference. *All* suggestions received by a committee or subsidiary
9 corporation, whether acted upon during the year, rejected, or forwarded for further
10 consideration, are reported to the sub-corporation or committee's delegate review
11 panel. The final disposition of each suggestion is reported to the person or persons
12 who initially took the time to offer it.

Sample conference agenda listing

SUNDAY

Evening: Orientation for new participants.

MONDAY

Morning:

- 1) Opening roll call.
- 2) Opening address.
- 3) First sharing session.

Afternoon:

- 1) Presentation session--2 or 3 short prepared topical talks, followed by open mike time.
- 2) National service reports, discussion.

Evening: National service reports, discussion, continued.

TUESDAY

Morning: National service reports, discussion, concluded.

Afternoon:

- 1) Presentation session.
- 2) Delegate review panel meetings.

Evening: Delegate review panel meetings, continued.

WEDNESDAY

Morning: Delegate review panel meetings, continued.

Afternoon:

- 1) Presentation session.
- 2) Delegate review panel meetings, concluded.

Evening: Mid-week discussion sessions on current group-related topics.

THURSDAY

Morning:

- 1) Second sharing session.
- 2) Trustee elections.

Afternoon:

- 1) Presentation session.
- 2) Delegate review panel reports, conference advisory action proposals.

Evening: Panel reports, proposals continued.

FRIDAY

Morning: Panel reports, proposals continued.

Afternoon:

- 1) Presentation session.
- 2) Panel reports, proposals concluded.
- 3) Selection of next year's conference presiding officer.
- 4) Conference closing addresses.

The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. 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.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR N.A. SERVICE

1. The responsibility and authority for N.A. services rests ultimately with the N.A. groups.
2. The N.A. groups delegate to the service structure the responsibility to develop and maintain services on behalf of N.A. as a whole.
3. Each service responsibility must be matched by a carefully defined service authority.
4. For each responsibility, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.
5. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which a loving God influences our decisions.
6. Leadership qualities are highly valued, and should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.
7. Our service boards and committees ought to be given the ability to determine which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation.
8. All those entrusted with substantial responsibility for our services should take part in the decision-making processes affecting those services.
9. Our service boards and committees have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.
10. Any member of our service structure may, without fear of reprisal, make petition for the redress of a personal grievance.
11. At all levels, the N.A. service structure should take care never to accumulate funds beyond those sufficient to operate.
12. Our structure at all levels is one of service, never of government. No one element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over any other.