

# **Panel member orientation package**

## **Orientation**

H&I orientation is a period that allows NA members to become familiar with H&I work so they aren't rushed into it without any preparation for this service. many people are quite apprehensive about getting into an HI for a variety of reasons. Don't be put off, everyone has something to offer.

This packet has been compiled by the main area H&I subcommittee to give a brief outline of some of the specifics that will be important for you as a panel member. The H&I handbook gives a much more in depth look at the H&I work in narcotics anonymous if you decide you want to learn more about this rewarding type of service.

Many areas as a part of orientation brings those that are new to H&I to their first H&I meeting slash presentation or two as an observer. this will give you a chance to just listen at first and see how an H&I orientation/presentation really works. Also, this helps many feels more comfortable when they come to join the panel.

## **The Meeting/Presentation Format**

There are a variety of formats that we use when carrying the message into facilities, but there are some key points to keep in mind about all of them.

The format of any H&I meeting/presentation may vary from meeting to meeting depending on the type of facility. In short term facilities, the format will be more focused on the panel members carrying the message into the residence, while at a long-term facility we may encourage more participation from the residents. In ancient eye we are carrying the message into the facility. At an H&I meeting we are not there to dump our problems, but rather to help the addicts become aware of what NA is and how it works in our lives. In effect, and H&I meeting is an introduction to our fellowship for addicts.

The panel leader should let you know what the format is before the meeting and should be able to answer any questions you may have about it. If you would like to see samples of a variety of formats, there is an explanation of several of them in the H&I handbook.

Whatever format is chosen, we normally get the residents involved with the question-and-answer session at some point in the meeting. Also, you may be asked to stay after the meeting if that is allowed.

## **Personal Commitments**

Please do not volunteer for an H&I meeting if:

1. you are not sure you want to attend OR
2. you are not sure that you'll be able to attend the meeting. If something comes up and you will not be able to make it, try to give the panel leader at least 48 hours' notice so that he or she can invite someone to fill your spot. **DO NOT** ask someone to take your place or even to come along with you to the meeting the panel leader is the only one that is allowed to invite people to the meeting.

## **Questions and Answers**

This is a good idea to encourage questions concerning what was presented at the meeting or general questions about NA, but there are a few things that one should keep in mind. Please remember that narcotics anonymous has no opinion on outside issues. Occasionally during the question-and-answer period or when talking after the meeting, the residents will ask us to give an opinion on an outside issue such as:

1. other recovery programs or fellowships
2. the facility I. E. 'do I need to stay in treatment?'
3. Many other issues that do not pertain to recovery from addiction in the narcotics anonymous fellowship.

It is important to remember that we are not drawn into these types of discussions! Always remember to only share experience, strength, and hope about your recovery and narcotics anonymous.

## **Working with Others: Men with Men, Women with Women**

Some facilities house only men or only women. Other facilities house both men and women but keep them separate. In these facilities, where your meetings will consist of only men or of only

women, we feel strongly that only same-sex narcotics anonymous members should participate. Remember, our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery, not to make our meetings more popular with the addicts we are trying to help. Problems that arise in this area have the potential to seriously damage the credibility of narcotics anonymous. Experience has taught us that we can avoid these problems if we follow this simple guideline.

## **Adolescents**

When adolescents are referred to in this handbook/orientation, we are referring to anyone under the legal age of majority in your state or country. We need to remember that adolescents are prospective members and should be treated with respect. When sharing in an H&I meeting, we need to remember that, to an adolescent, the stress experienced due to peer pressure or the relationship with their parents and/or teachers may be just as much a crisis to them as losing a job, marriage, or house maybe to others. In NA, we learned to deal with our feelings and emotions Cuba and share with others how we've been able to work through them by utilizing the 12 steps of narcotics anonymous.

Due to the government statutes regarding adolescence, we need to be especially aware of the facilities rules and regulations as they relate to our interaction with these prospective members. For example, some facilities may require a staff member to be present during meetings. One suggestion you make to the administration of facilities for adolescents is that they make attendance at the H&I meeting voluntarily. We have found this reduces distraction, increasing the opportunity for recovery in the narcotics anonymous fellowship.

While some people maintain that adolescents respond better to people closer to their own age, the bulk of our experience suggests that the age of the person sharing at an adolescent H&I meeting is secondary to their ability to share a strong, clear message of recovery period adolescents seem to respond more to the message than to the messenger. All H&I members are highly structured and should be geared towards the recovery through the 12 steps of narcotics anonymous. Our experience has shown that we do not need to use a special format when carrying the message to adolescents.

## **H&I Requirements**

You have been invited to carry the message of recovery through H&I meetings because:

1. You have six months of abstinence from all drugs.
2. You have a strong and a message of recovery from addiction.
3. You seem willing to comply with all the H&I subcommittees and facilities requirements.
4. You are willing to carry the message in a responsible way.

## **Dos and Don'ts for H&I Participation**

### **Do's**

- Do** Make directories of outside meetings available to your residents.
- Do** Clarify the facilities rules with anyone you bring in.
- Do** Start and end on time!
- Do** Briefly explained what H&I is.
- Do** Make it clear that NA is separate and distinct from the facility as well as other fellowships.
- Do** Try to get residents involved, especially those in long term facilities (i.e., literature person, coffee maker, readings, etc.)
- Do** Obey all dress codes. Exercise common sense and dress appropriately.
- Do** Keep staff aware of your whereabouts at all times.
- Do** Stamp all literature you bring into a facility with the local helpline number.
- Do** Screen all panel members carefully, especially regarding the clean time and other requirements.

### **Don'ts**

- Don't** Break another person's anonymity or tell their story.
- Don't** Debate any issues involving facility rules or regulations.
- Don't** Get involved in discussions on outside issues; remember why we are there.
- Don't** While sharing, put too much focus on what it was like. They already know.
- Don't** Debate which drugs are acceptable. NA is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs.
- Don't** Discuss conditions within the facility, or opinions about staff members.
- Don't** Carry excessive cash or wear expensive or flashy jewelry.
- Don't** Show favoritism to any of the residents.
- Don't** Give out any person's address or phone numbers.
- Don't** Carry in any contraband items, such as cigarettes or weapons.

Always remember, that you have a responsibility to the facility, to the residents, and to NA. If you observe the above suggestions and follow the Twelve Traditions, you will uphold your responsibilities to all three.