

Treasure Coast Area  
Of  
Narcotics Anonymous

March 2016

HELPLINE  
GUIDELINES

## 1. Definition and Purpose of the Subcommittee:

We are dedicated to the proposition that no addict seeking recovery need die without having a chance to find a better way of life.

The Treasure Coast Area Helpline purpose is to establish, maintain and coordinate an effective twenty-four hour, seven day a week Helpline. We will carry the message of recovery to those who call our Helpline. We will attempt to make NA available to any addict seeking recovery, by informing those who reach out to us where they can find an NA meeting, or to put them in contact with another recovering addict through a Twelve-Step List

This Subcommittee's responsibility is to be a resource to the Treasure Coast Area and its members in their efforts, by providing information and appropriate referrals necessary to better carry the Narcotics Anonymous message.

# WE ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THE GROUPS WE SERVE

## 2. Functions of the Subcommittee:

- 1) To hold regularly scheduled meetings every 2 months or as determined by the committee.
- 2) To communicate and disburse all information to and from Helpline volunteers.
- 3) To provide representation and participation in the CASC.
- 4) To coordinate, recruit and develop the training of Helpline volunteers.
- 5) To update the Helpline information when required.
- 6) To elect and/or appoint members to fulfill the needs of the Subcommittee.

## 3. Structure of Elected Positions:

The elected positions of the Subcommittee shall consist of a Chairperson, ViceChairperson, Secretary, and Phone Volunteer Coordinator. All positions, with the exception of the Chairperson, who is elected by the TCASC, are elected by the Subcommittee

All terms of office are one (1) year with eligibility for a second term of one (1) year for any elected position.

If an elected committee member becomes unable to fulfill the duties of that position, a successor shall be suggested and approved by the Subcommittee at the next Subcommittee meeting. Should the Chairperson be unable to fulfill the duties of that

position, the Vice-Chairperson will automatically assume the position of the Chairperson until the next TCASC meeting where a new Chairperson will be elected.

#### 4. Qualifications and Duties of Elected Committee Members:

Chairperson: Elected by the TCASC.

Requirements for the position include:

- 1) A willingness and desire to serve in that capacity.
- 2) Has the time and resources necessary to complete these duties.
- 3) Active for at least one year in, and with knowledge of, the service structure of NA.
- 4) Has demonstrated a working knowledge of the structure the Helpline Subcommittee.
- 5) Knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of NA.
- 6) A minimum of 2 years abstinence from all drugs.
- 7) Be an active member on the subcommittee for at least 6 months.

Responsibilities of the position include:

- 1) Presides at Subcommittee meetings.
- 2) Prepares an agenda for each meeting.
- 3) Maintains order at the meeting.
- 4) Attends volunteer training when applicable to observe and assist in carrying the message and training of volunteers.
- 5) Coordinates the rotation of the cell phone with other Subcommittee members.
- 6) Provides representation of the Subcommittee at the monthly TCASC meeting and submits a monthly report to the TCASC.

Vice-Chairperson: Elected by the Subcommittee.

Requirements for the position include:

- 1) A willingness and desire to serve in that capacity.
- 2) Completion of Helpline training.
- 3) Knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of NA.
- 4) A minimum of one year's abstinence from all drugs.
- 5) Be an active member of the subcommittee for at least six months.

Responsibilities of the position include:

- 1) Assumes the duties of Chairperson in the case of Chairperson's absence.
- 2) If the office of Chairperson should become vacant, the Vice Chairperson assumes the duties until a Chairperson is elected by the TCASC.

- 3) Works closely with the Chairperson to become familiar with all aspects of the Chairperson's responsibilities.
- 4) Phone volunteer coordinator.
- 5) Keep an accurate log of all calls.

Secretary: Elected by the Subcommittee

Requirements for the position include:

- 1) A willingness and desire to serve in that capacity.
- 2) Completion of Helpline training.
- 3) Knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of NA.
- 4) A minimum of 6 MTHS abstinence from all drugs.
- 5) Be an active member of the committee for at least two months.

Responsibilities of the position include:

- 1) Records minutes of all meetings of the Subcommittee and maintains archives of prior meeting minutes and related materials.
- 2) Copies and distributes minutes from Subcommittee meetings.
- 3) Keep current records of all Subcommittee members and Helpline volunteers including addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
- 4) Receives phone-line logs from volunteers for archives.

Phone Volunteer: Elected by the Subcommittee

Qualifications:

- 1) 6 MTHS abstinence from all drugs.
- 2) Willingness and desire to fulfill our purpose.
- 3) Willingness and resources to give of personal time.
- 4) Knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of NA.
- 5) Become a member of the Helpline subcommittee by attending their first subcommittee meeting.
- 6) Access to personal phone.
- 7) Attend at least 1 Helpline orientation or workshop.

Duties:

1. Answer all calls promptly and courteously.
2. Be prepared to fulfill all assigned shifts on time.
3. Immediately inform chairperson or designated coordinator if you are unable to fulfill or complete your shift.
4. Adhere to the dos and don'ts as described in the guide to phone line service.

5. Report all problems to the chairperson or designated coordinator ASAP.
6. Never give out the number to the phone you are using.

#### 5. Helpline Subcommittee meeting format

- 1) Open with Serenity Prayer
- 2) Reading of the 12 Traditions
- 3) Reading of the 12 Concepts
- 4) Roll Call
- 5) Secretary's Report
- 6) Feed Back/ Open Forum
- 7) Old Business
- 8) Elections
- 9) New Business
- 10) Announcements
- 11) Close with 3 Step Prayer

## Narcotics Anonymous Helpline Do's and Don'ts

### Do's:

- Do always identify yourself that you are a recovering addict.  
Helpline volunteers are not counselors, crisis workers or medical professionals.
- Do carry a clear and consistent Narcotics Anonymous message.
- Do be able to listen to the caller.
- Do remember to be calm, polite, kind, courteous and helpful to the caller.
- Do encourage the addict to attend a meeting by giving them the day, time, location and directions (if needed).
- Do present an accurate and positive image of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.
- Do respond to all calls as soon as possible.
- Do always have the necessary materials (Basic Text, White Booklet, Meeting List, N.A. pamphlets, etc) in addition to pen and paper close to the telephone, in order to avoid delay and confusion.
- Do find out what the caller needs. Ask questions.
- Do be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as a recovering addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous.
- Do clarify that Narcotics Anonymous is separate from treatment centers or other 12 step programs.
- Do respect anonymity. Follow the Narcotics Anonymous Twelve Traditions. - Do follow up on all calls that were referred to other committees in the Fellowship. - Do contact the Helpline chairperson if problems arise.

### Don'ts:

- Don't provide opinions of any other 12 step programs - do not endorse any facility or outside enterprise.
- Don't try to handle calls that you are not qualified to answer.
- Don't give medical advice. We are not doctors, therapists or counselors, leave this to the professionals!
- Don't give out other people's names or telephone numbers.
- Don't answer questions about who was at a NA meeting to anyone (including police officers, probation officers, or significant others). However, general information may be given about NA's make-up.  
For example: variance in size of meetings, explain meeting formats (open-discussion, speaker, etc), NA is open to all age groups, etc.
- Don't glorify active addiction by telling war stories.
- Don't give referrals to one specific treatment center or detoxification unit, instead inform callers of any and all local treatment centers or give them the generic treatment referral number, the National Treatment Referral Line in the United States. 1-800-662-HELP (4357) <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/> - Don't use foul language.
- Don't argue with people whose views of addiction differ from yours or NA's. If the caller does not want to stop using, do not try to persuade to stop. Only he/she can make the decision to stop.
- Don't make commitments on behalf of the area, region, or NA fellowship.
- Don't refuse to refer callers in crises, such as someone who wants to commit suicide, to outside crisis agencies.
- Don't use the phone line as a dating service. Never engage in any type of sexual behavior with any caller! - Don't give rides to meetings, refer to The Twelve Step List of volunteers (if available).

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS TO GET THE PROSPECTIVE NEWCOMER TO AN N.A. MEETING. Continually bring the conversation back to how the caller can get to an NA meeting and end a problem call before the situation escalates. Stay calm under pressure. You are often the first contact someone has with NA, so make sure you use sound judgment and integrity. Remember you are representing Narcotics Anonymous. You are a vital link to Narcotics Anonymous public image.

## Community Referral List

The following is a sample community referral list, to be used when the caller is asking for help that does not fall within our primary purpose and our traditions. We offer information in the spirit of cooperation. We can provide a list of numbers rather than any one specific number. We do not recommend one referral over another. We simply provide contact information as a courtesy. (In many parts of the United States and Canada, a community services helpline can be reached by dialing 211. (If 211 service is available in your area, it may be the easiest and most complete referral that you can make.)

Child Abuse Hotline: National - 800.4ACHILD (800.422.4453) Florida - 800.962.2873 County/City/State

Emergency Services: 911

Domestic Violence Services: National - 800.799.SAFE (800.799.7233) Florida - 800.500.1119

Drug Crisis Hotline: National - 800.662.HELP (800.662.4357) 211 can help find local detox, IP, OP facilities

Families Anonymous: 800.736.9805

Local Homeless Shelter: TC Homeless Service - 772.567.7790

Mental Health Helpline: National - 800.950.NAMI (800.950.6264) 211 can help find local services

Nar-Anon: 800.477.6291

Poison Control: 800.222.1222

Rape Crisis Center: National - 800.656.HOPE (800.656.4673)

Treasure Coast - 866.828.7273 Services for Runaways: 800.RUNAWAY (800.786.2929)

Suicide Prevention: 800.273.TALK (800.273.8255)