

# SERVICE STRUCTURE OVERVIEW – A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

*WSLD XXXI*  
*October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017*  
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# WELCOME TO NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create SERVICE boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve

**Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern**

Go to meetings, get a sponsor, be of SERVICE

AREA CIRCUS

GROUP CONSCIENCE

... SERVICE commitments



Remember back to when you were a newcomer in Narcotics Anonymous. You just want to stop hurting and to get clean, and you feel like you are finally someplace that you fit in. But through the haze, you start hearing people talk about service. It's in the readings, they make announcements about it, they share about it ... but they don't tell you what it is!

What is Service?  
Who does service?  
Who is in charge here?  
How do they pay for everything?  
What is a group conscience?  
Why do we need business meetings?



These are some of the questions a newcomer starts to ask.

## Service Structure Overview

### Part 1 (today)

- General overview of services and the service structure
- The local service perspective (groups and areas)

### Part 2 (tomorrow)

- The global perspective



The service structure overview track is intended to answer some of these questions. Part 1, which you are attending today, will give you an overview of NA services and the Service Structure and then focus on service at the local level.

Part 2, which will be held tomorrow, will provide more details on the global perspective of service in NA.

# Breakout 1

## NA Services



Each table has a question about NA service that we would like you to discuss and answer. For those of you who have been involved in service, try to remember what it was like when you first got here. If you are new to NA, please participate. There are no wrong answers. We will take about 10 minutes for you to brainstorm as a group and then we will go around the room to hear your question and answers.

Questions –

What are NA services?

Why are services necessary in NA?

Who provides NA services?

Who pays for NA services?

Who is in charge of NA?

How are decisions made in Narcotics Anonymous?

## In The Beginning ...

### There was the group

- Two or more addicts who come together to help each other stay clean and to work the 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous
- 12<sup>th</sup> Step – 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.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Tradition – Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

### How do we do this?



Back in 1953, and wherever NA is new, the first building block in the service structure is the group. These addicts get together to help each other stay clean and work through the steps.

Our 12<sup>th</sup> step tells us that we are to carry the message to other addicts, and our 5<sup>th</sup> tradition tells us that the primary purpose of the group is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

How do we do this?

## Narcotics Anonymous Services

- **Literature** – NA books and pamphlets to provide members and others information on the program of Narcotics Anonymous
- **Public Information / Public Relations** – Informing the general public and addiction professionals that NA exists and is available to help the suffering addict
- **Phonelines** – A local NA phone number that make it easier for addicts seeking recovery to find us and for non-addicts to get more information on the NA program
- **Schedules** – Printed schedules available for addicts and the public listing the times and locations for local NA meetings
- **Hospitals and Institutions** – Member panels that carry our message of recovery directly to addicts housed in medical, psychiatric or correctional facilities
- **Outreach**– Member and group support provided by the service body
- **Activities**– Develop social activities for member to encourage participation in the fellowship and to demonstrate how to have fun and be social without having to use.



We spread the word through our NA services. Some of the most common are –  
Distributing our literature to our members and to the public to provide information on the program of Narcotics Anonymous  
Public Information / Public Relations – We are an anonymous program, not a secret one. How do we let the public know that we are here to help other addicts?  
Phonelines – providing a voice for addicts and others to speak to about the program  
Schedules – providing addicts a directory of where and when our meetings are held.  
Hospitals and Institutions – Carrying the message to addicts who are unable to make it our meetings  
Outreach – Reaching out to struggling members and groups.  
Activities – Showing addicts how to have fun after they get clean

*As NA began to grow, it was impractical to have every group provide these services for themselves*

*Problems with duplication of services, inconsistent messages and limited financial and human resources*

*We needed a service structure*

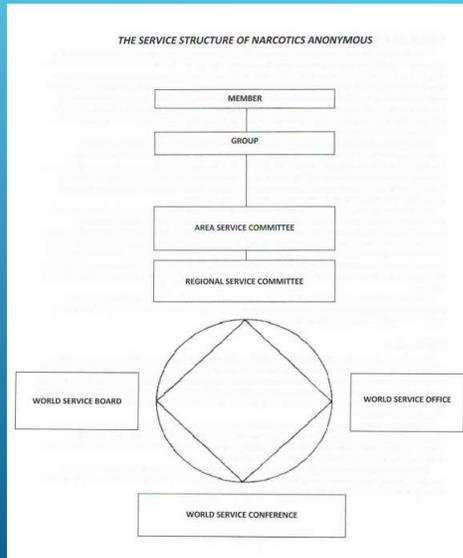
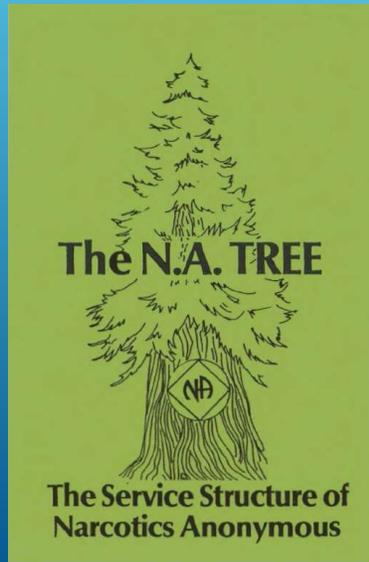


All of these services are the responsibility of the NA Group, but as we grow it is impractical for every group to perform all of these services.

This would lead to duplication of services, inconsistent and mixed messages about the program and strain the limited financial and human resources of the group.

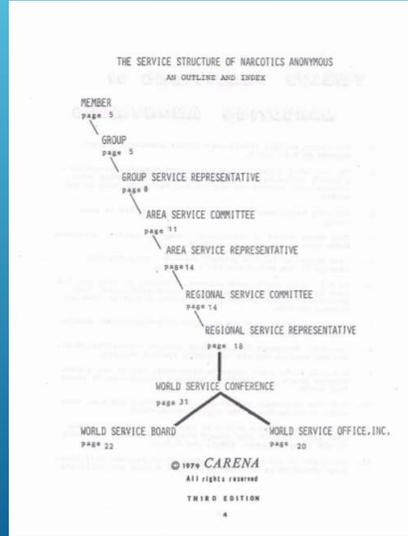
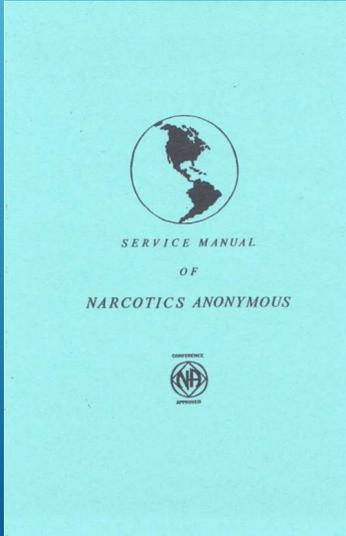
The solution was to form a service structure that would provide these services for the groups.

# The History of the NA Service Structure 1975



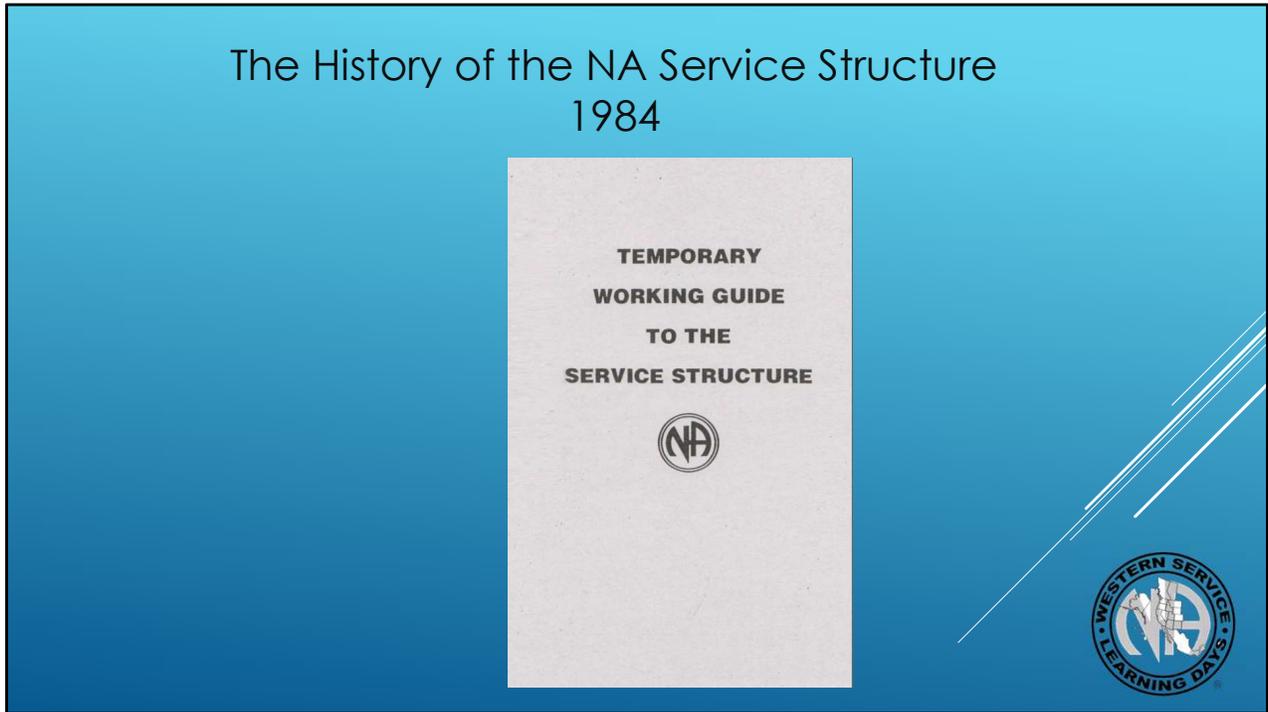
The first formal document on NA service came out in 1975. The NA Tree defined a service structure for Narcotics Anonymous and suggestions on the structure and membership of these service bodies.

# The History of the NA Service Structure 1979



In 1979, the third edition of The Tree, the name was changed to the Service Manual of Narcotics Anonymous.

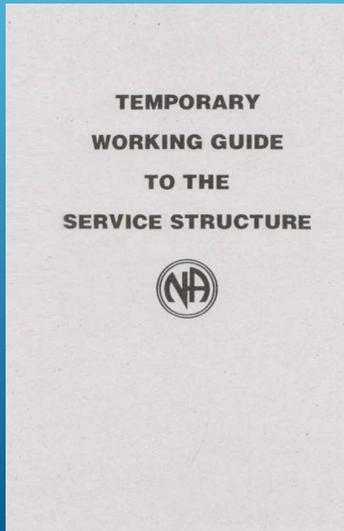
## The History of the NA Service Structure 1984



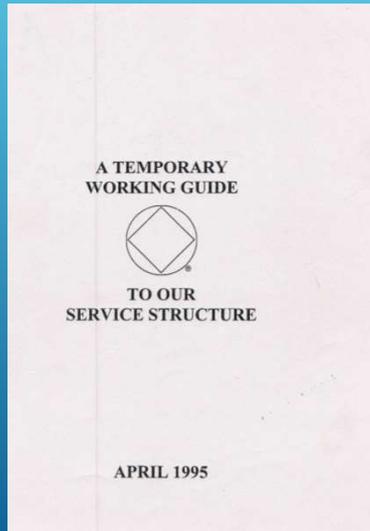
At the 1982 WSC a motion passed to direct the administrative committee to compile all previous documents and decisions on the service structure of NA into one document. This was a lengthy process over many years. In the interim, it was decided to publish a Temporary Working Guide to the Service Structure.

## The History of the NA Service Structure

1987



1995



The Temporary Working Guide was around for many years, with the last approved edition published in 1995. The guide was expanded over the years to include the guidelines for all of the service structure as NA grew. The 1995 edition included the guidelines of the World Service Board of Trustees, the World Service Conference, The NA Way Magazine, audio tape reviews, service material approval, translations policies, the World Convention guidelines and many other committees in addition to the groups, areas and regions from the previous editions.

## The 12 Concepts for NA Service 1992

**STEPS:** The Twelve Steps guide us as individuals in our personal recovery.

**TRADITIONS:** The Twelve Traditions guide our groups in meeting their primary purpose.

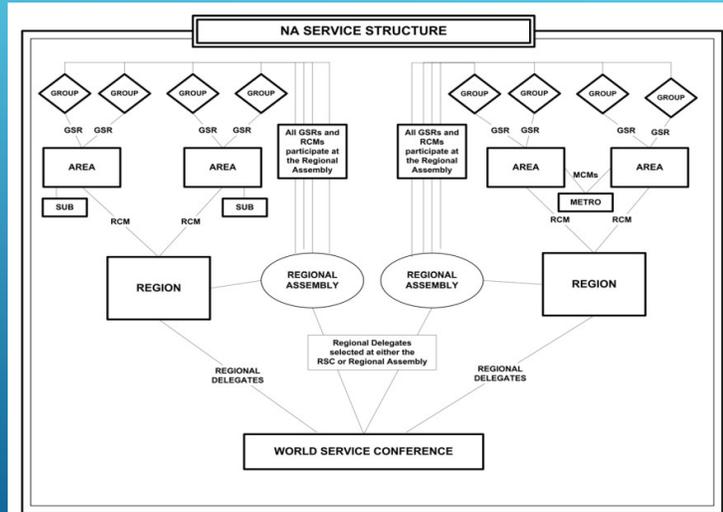
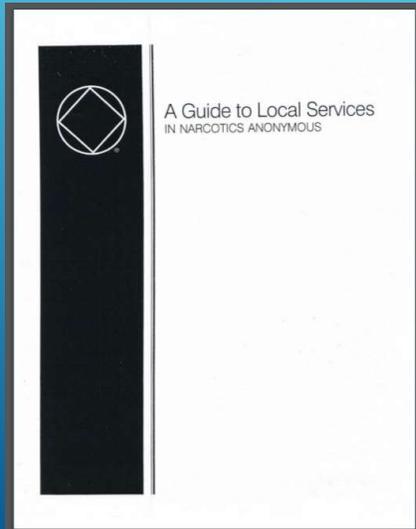
**CONCEPTS:** The Twelve Concepts guide the NA service structure in supporting NA groups.



One of the outcomes of the Service System project was the development of the 12 Concepts of Service. These were approved by the WSC in 1991 and published in 1992. The steps guide us as individuals in our personal recovery, the traditions guide our groups in meeting their primary purpose and the concepts guide the NA service group in supporting NA groups.

1. To fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf of NA as a whole.
2. The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.
3. The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.
4. Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.
5. For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.
6. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.
7. All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes.
8. Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.
9. All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.
10. Any member of a service body can petition that body for the redress of a personal grievance, without fear of reprisal.
11. NA funds are to be used to further our primary purpose, and must be managed responsibly.
12. In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government.

## The History of the NA Service Structure 1998



In 1997 the Guide to Local Service in Narcotics Anonymous was approved,, and was published in 1998. This new guide covered only local services, with the World Service guidelines moved to its own document.

## The History of the NA Service Structure – 2014 Service System Project – Local Services

### Group Support Forum (GSF)

- Discuss group problems and successes
- Service equivalent of one addict helping another
- Share introductory or basic information about NA
- A place to learn how the NA service system works

### Local Service Conference (LSC)

- Quarterly, plan driven meetings
- Attended by GSR's, LSC trusted servants and all interested members
- Share introductory or basic information about NA
- Annual assembly identifies local needs, develops and prioritizes projects to meet those needs with quarterly reports.

### Local Service Board (LSB)

- Does the day-to-day work to accomplish the goals and realize the vision of the LSC.
- Administers the work prioritized by the LSC Planning Assembly



A new Service System Project was approved in 2008 to look at ways to improve the service structure to reflect the dramatic growth of Narcotics Anonymous world wide. The 2016 WSC passed proposals addressing possible changes to the Area Service Committee structure and operations. Remember, that these are just suggestions on alternative ways to provide services, not a directive that all Areas are to follow.

The project proposed that the service committees be split into three bodies.

Group issues handled at group support forum

Strategic decisions & general oversight handled at local service conference

Day-to-day administration handled by local service board

2016 proposal only addressed local services. Future proposals to address the rest of the service structure.

## NA Service Structure Basics

- All Service bodies in NA exist to serve the NA group and to aid them in achieving our Primary Purpose.
- Decision making in NA service is done by group conscience. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.
- Our structure is one of service and not of governance or management.
- Our leaders are trusted servants who follow and implement the will of the groups rather than their personal beliefs or feelings.
- Sometimes it will feel like the inmates are running the asylum, but as long as we keep it spiritual and focused on our primary purpose, it all seems to work out in the end!



Groups are free to develop the service structure that works best for them, as long as it does not detract from our primary purpose or adversely impact other groups or NA as a whole (4<sup>th</sup> Tradition).

There are some basic principles that are common to any service structure in NA – The groups are the source of all authority and responsibility. All service bodies exist to serve the groups.

Our decision making is based on spiritual principles, decisions are made based on group conscience.

Our structure is one of service and not of governance or management.

Our leaders are but trusted servants of the groups, they do not govern.

As long as we stay with our principles, all will be well.

Time for a 10 minute break!



## The NA Group

- Local, informal associations of recovering addicts
- The foundation of the NA service structure.
- Conducting Narcotics Anonymous Meetings is the primary activity of an NA Group.
- The group conducts its business in the way that seems fit to its members, provided that their actions are consistent with the Twelve Traditions and do not adversely affect other groups or the entire NA fellowship.
- The groups delegate to the rest of the service structure the responsibility for fulfillment of NA services.



What is an NA Group –

Local association of recovering addicts

Foundation of the NA Service Structure

Primary activity is to conduct Narcotics Anonymous Meetings

Conducts business as it sees fit as long as they follow the traditions and do not adversely affect other groups or NA as a whole

Delegate to the service structure the responsibility for fulfillment of NA services

## What Is An NA Group?

There are six points based on our traditions that describe an NA Group -

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



These six points describe an NA group

1. All member are addicts and all addicts are eligible for membership
2. They are self-support
3. Their goal is to help addicts recover through the 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous
4. They have no affiliation outside of NA
5. They express no opinion on outside issues.
6. Their public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion

## What Is An NA Group?

NA Groups – not NA meetings – are the foundation of the NA service structure.

The NA Groups are responsible for making service decisions that directly affect them and what they do in their meetings, as well as those that fundamentally affect the identity of Narcotics Anonymous.

Groups maintain contact with the rest of Narcotics Anonymous through representatives selected to represent the conscience of the group in the NA service structure.

NA Meetings are events at which addicts share with one another their experience in recovery.

The NA Group is an Entity  
The NA Meeting is an Event  
NA meetings may be held without the sponsorship of an NA Group  
However, they are not a part of the NA service structure



NA groups, not meetings, are the foundation of the service structure.

Groups are responsible for making service decision that affect the group and their meetings as well as those that fundamentally affect the identify of NA

Groups select representatives to represent the conscience of the group in the NA service structure

NA meetings are events at which addicts share their experience in recovery

The NA group is an entity

The NA meeting is an event

NA meetings may be held with group sponsorship, however they are not a part of the NA service structure

## What Is A Home Group?

In some NA communities, members make a personal commitment to support one particular group – their 'Home Group'.

For the individual member a Home Group provides –

- A stable recovery base
- A place to call 'home'
- A place to know, and to be known by, other recovering addicts

For the Group a Home Group provides –

- Assurance of the support of a core of regular, committed members
- A spirit of camaraderie among its members that makes the group more attractive and supportive of newcomers



In some communities, members commit to supporting one group, which they call their home group

A home group gives members a stable recovery base, a place to call home and a place to know, and to be known by, other addicts.

Members give a home group assurance of support from a core of regular, committed members and a spirit of camaraderie that make the group more attractive and supportive of newcomers

## What Is A Home Group?

The home group provides opportunities to involve ourselves in the NA Fellowship, making it a great place for us to start giving back what NA has so freely given us.

In committing to our home group, we make a personal commitment to NA unity. That commitment enhances our own recovery as well as ensures that recovery is available for others.

Our home group also gives us a place in which to participate in NA's decision making processes, our entry to the service structure.



A home group provides opportunities to involve ourselves in the NA Fellowship  
Committing to a home group is a commitment to NA unity. That commitment enhance our recover and helps to ensure that recovery is available for others.  
A home group provides its members a place to participate in the NA decision making process and is our entry to the service structure

## Group Business Meetings

Some groups hold business meetings on a regular basis; others only call them when something specific comes up that needs the group's attention. Some of the questions a typical group business meeting addresses are:

- Is the group effective in carrying the NA message?
- Are newcomers and visitors being made welcome?
- Is the meeting format appropriate for the meeting?
- Are the group's funds being used wisely?
- Is enough money being collected at the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition to meet the group's needs and also provide for contributions to the rest of the service structure?
- Are any supplies needed?
- Is there a service vacancy?
- Does the group require support from, or have direction for, the Area, Region or World Services?
- Has the Area, Region or World Services asked the group for advice, support or direction?



Groups hold business meetings to address group needs or concerns that arise. These are some of the questions a typical business meeting addresses

## Group Trusted Servants

The Group selects trusted servants to serve the group in meeting its obligations. These may vary from group to group, and may go by different names, but the most common positions and their responsibilities are -

### Secretary (or Chairperson) –

- Responsible for setting up and opening the meeting
- Selects meeting leaders or speakers
- Keeps a list of home group members and recovery anniversaries

### Treasurer –

- Collect and manage the money contributed to support the group
- Pay the expenses for the group
- Provide financial reports to the group on a regular basis

### Group Service Representative (GSR) –

- Connects the group to the rest of the NA service structure
- Represents the conscience of the group in the decision making process at the Area level (ASC, GSF or LSC)
- Communicates back to the group the activities at the Area Service level



The group select trusted servants to serve the group in meeting its obligations. These can vary from group to group, but some of the most common are –

Secretary

Treasurer

GSR

## Group Trusted Servants

Alternates – Each service position may have alternate trusted servants identified. The alternates are able to be trained on the position and to step in should the primary servant be unavailable.

Group service provides an opportunity for newcomers to participate in and contribute to a group. While the key positions are best filled by someone with experience, there are many positions that groups can create to help the newcomer learn responsibility, accountability and being of service. Some positions groups have created include –

- Greeter – someone who meets and welcomes attendees as they arrive at the meeting
- Coffee Maker – responsible for setting up coffee or other drinks or refreshments provided by the meeting.
- Setup / Cleanup – assist the Secretary in setting up and cleaning the meeting room.

### Rotation and Continuity

- Rotation is the practice of electing new people to service positions at set interval rather than having one person stay in a position indefinitely. It emphasizes the NA emphasis on service rather than the servant.
- Continuity is the presence and participation of past group servants who continue an active role in the group, providing continuity and maturity to group discussions. These members can be the group 'memory' of what has and hasn't worked in the past and can assist the trusted servants of the group as necessary.



Selecting alternates for the service positions provides opportunities for others to learn the position before assuming the full responsibility and provides backup if the primary servant is unavailable.

Groups often create additional service positions to provide newcomers with an introduction to responsibility and accountability. These can include greeters, coffee makers and setup or clean up assistants.

Rotation and continuity are important in NA service. Trusted servant positions should be rotated among group members rather than have one person hold on to a position indefinitely. **Continuity is the presence and participation of past group servants who continue an active role in the group, providing continuity and maturity to group discussions.**

## The Area Service Body

The groups within a geographical area join together to create a local service body responsible to the groups for providing the services needed to support Narcotics Anonymous in that area. The most common form of this body in NA is the Area Service Committee, or ASC, though it is up to each Area to decide what form works best for them. No matter the form, the purpose of the Area Service Body is the same; to provide the most direct service to the groups and the local community.

The Area Service Body provides -

- The organization and skills to perform services for the groups of the area, allowing the groups to focus on their primary purpose of providing Narcotics Anonymous meetings to the community.
- A forum for group representatives to meet and discuss issues affecting their groups and to receive advice and support from the other groups in the area.
- A means to consolidate financial and human resources from all of the groups in the Area to more effectively provide services and to share the cost of providing these services across all of the groups.



Groups within a geographical area often join together to create a local service body responsible to the group for the providing NA services within that area.

The groups decide what form that body takes to best serve them, but the most common form in is the Area Service Committee, or ASC

The ASC provides

- The organization and skills to perform services for the groups of the area
- A forum for GSRs to meet and discuss issues affecting their groups and to share with one another the experiences of their groups
- A means to consolidate financial and human resource from all of the groups to more effectively provide NA services

## Area Service Participants

Group Service Representatives (GSRs) – Since the Area exists to serve the groups, the GSRs from those groups are the key participants at the Area service level. The GSRs provide the direction from the groups on what services the groups require the Area to perform for them, and in return advise the groups of the resources needed to perform these services.

Administrative Officers– These individuals are responsible for administering the general affairs of the service body. Typical positions include the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Regional Committee Member (RCM) – The RCM is the Area's equivalent of the GSR. Just as the groups form Areas to provide the services that they cannot provide on their own, the Areas form Regions to provide services needed at a larger geographical area. The RCM represents the conscience of the Area, and all of its member groups, at the Region level and communicates back to the Area the activities of the region.

Subcommittees – Subcommittees are working groups that do the actual work necessary to provide the services that the groups have requested. The subcommittees are accountable to the Area, which is accountable to the groups. Typical Area subcommittees include H&I, PR, Literature, Activities, etc.



Participants in the ASC include GSRs, administrative officers, RCMs and subcommittees.

## Area Inventory

Some Area Service Committees set aside time each year to conduct an Area Service Inventory. This was also a key component of the Service System Project, with the Environmental Scan. Just as addicts in recovery do a personal inventory to stop, consider their actions and attitudes and to rededicate themselves to their recovery, it is important that our service bodies do the same.

There are three general topics that are covered by the inventory process –

1. How well is the service body serving the groups, and how can it better serve them in the coming year?
2. How well has the service body served the community, and how can it better serve them in the future?
3. How well has the service body participated in Narcotics Anonymous as whole, through the Region and World service bodies?

*It is not enough to know where you need to improve, there needs to be a plan developed to make those improvements to remain accountable.*



Some areas set aside time for an annual area inventory.  
Area inventories cover three general topics

*It is not enough to know where you need to improve, there needs to be a plan developed to make those improvements to remain accountable.*

## Breakout 2

# Service Body Decisions



Each table will represent a service body that has been presented with the situation on your break out sheet. Keeping in mind the spiritual nature of service in NA and the Service Structure Basics, discuss your topic and report to the group how you addressed this issue.

Table 1 – Group Business Meeting – A female newcomer member has come to the meeting and announced that she and her friends will no longer be coming to your meeting because a certain member is always trying to get her to go out with him, no matter how many times she says no.

Table 2 – Group Business Meeting – A member proposes that the group use 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition Funds to hold a bar-b-q for the group members to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the group.

Table 3 – Group Business Meeting – The Group Service Representative announces that the Area did not support the idea for an Activity that the group proposed and suggests that the group withhold funds to the Area and hold the Activity on their own.

Table 4 – Area Service Meeting – A member announces that he owns a local car wash, and to pay back to NA for the life that he has gained through recovery, he would like to offer the proceeds for one afternoon as a donation for NA. PR will be allowed to set up a booth and he will post on his sign board that people can get their car washed to support recovery in their community.

Table 5 – Area Service Meeting – A meeting in the area at a treatment center announces that it is struggling for financial support and trusted servants. One person has taken on

responsibility to make sure that the meeting keeps open, and they are paying for the supplies out of their own pocket and filling all service positions.

Table 6 – Area Service Meeting - The Area has received a letter from the State Attorney General stating that a check of the Area web site found a flyer for a group activity that included Bingo. They advised that Bingo was illegal in the state and that the Area was subject to fines and possible jail time for the Area officers if the event proceeded as scheduled.

## In Conclusion

We have provided you with a lot of information in a short amount of time, and it definitely does not cover all that there is to know about local service in NA. Our hope is that we have given you enough information to encourage you to go out and learn more about how you can be of service in NA.

Thank you for allowing us to be of service.

