

# Chesapeake Potomac Region



## Phone Line Volunteer Information Booklet

### **A Service Prayer**

*God, grant us the knowledge that we may act  
according to your divine precepts<sup>1</sup>  
Instil in us a sense of your purpose,  
make us servants of your will and  
grant us a bond of selflessness that this  
may truly be your work, not ours,  
so that no addict, anywhere,  
need die from the horrors of addiction.*

*As adapted from the Introduction  
section in our Basic Text, Fifth Edition*

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<sup>1</sup> Precept – a rule, instruction, or principle that guides somebody's actions, especially one that guides moral behaviour.

*This Phone line guide will be accompanied by a  
Pocket Reference Guide, a12 Step List Volunteer List,  
and internet Google documents resource access.*

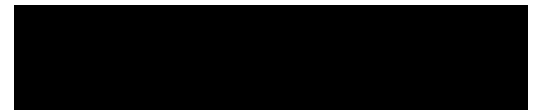
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*Big in Value*



*...Little in Cost*



## **PUBLIC RELATIONS STATEMENT**

The Narcotics Anonymous message is “that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live.” Our relations with the public enable us to share this message broadly so that those who might benefit from our program of recovery can find us. We perform public relations service to increase the awareness and credibility of the NA program. We share our message openly with the public at large, with prospective members, and with professionals. Maintaining an open, attractive attitude in these efforts helps us to create and improve relationships with those outside the fellowship. Establishing and maintaining a commitment to these relationships, can help us to further our primary purpose.

The spiritual principles of our steps, traditions, and concepts guide us in pursuing our public relations aims and our efforts to enhance NA’s public image and reputation. These principles apply to our community and service efforts as well as to the personal behavior and attitude of individual NA members.

### **Core Public Relations Principles**

#### ***Cooperation, not affiliation***

One of our public relations goals is to build long-lasting relationships that further our primary purpose through the pursuit of those mutual goals we may share with other organizations. Compromising any of our traditions in an effort to build these relationships is never beneficial to individual members or NA as a whole. We maintain a consistent focus on our primary purpose with the public. By creating positive relationships with those outside of NA and with our own members, we foster unity and harmony with each other and the community around us. We put the common welfare of NA first, and we remember that we are only autonomous as long as our actions do not affect NA as a whole.

## ***Attraction...***

What is likely to be attractive to the public and to professionals who interact with addicts is reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery. We can demonstrate the reliability of NA by showing up and fulfilling the obligations we make, whether it is to return a telephone call for information about NA or supplying meeting directories at a public library. We can learn to draw on the experiences of NA members to fulfill the commitments we make to professionals.






## **GENERAL PHONELINE VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

**A phonline volunteer** is an NA member whose primary objective is to direct the potential newcomer to an NA meeting or direct questions about the fellowship to the appropriate subcommittee.

The first NA member the caller will come in contact with is often the phone line volunteer. The response and attitude of a volunteer can have a lasting impression on the caller. This is a service position of great responsibility.

Experience has shown that the most successful phone line volunteers possess certain assets which are beneficial in the accomplishment of their responsibilities.

### ***These qualifications include:***

-  A minimum of one year clean-time
-  Appropriate training (e.g., group orientation session, personal orientation, etc.)
-  A knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics  
*Anonymous (e.g., the only requirement..., our primary purpose..., never endorse related facilities..., non-professional..., no opinion on outside issues..., attraction rather than promotion..., anonymity..., etc.)*
-  The willingness to serve
-  The willingness to give of personal time

Phone Line volunteers may receive calls from NA members, potential newcomers, family and friends of addicts, and other people interested in NA, (including professionals, students, and members of the media).

Upon receiving a call, the first thing to determine is whether the caller is an addict seeking help. Calls from potential newcomers are, of course, the most important calls received by a phone line volunteer. The volunteer provides a brief introduction of the NA program and explains, in general what the caller can expect at a meeting.

### ***Making Recommendations***

NA is frequently contacted by potential members and professionals looking for meetings they believe will allow for identification. Many volunteers have been faced with the question: Do you know a meeting that would help this person? We know that our traditions encourage a spirit of anonymity, and that anonymity allows us to meet equally as addicts. Yet, we also know that first impressions count and that the principle of attraction is important to an addict's ability to hear the NA message.

Trusted servants can respect callers' requests and recommend a meeting where they are likely to find addicts with whom they may identify. We do not, however, automatically assume that because someone is of a certain age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual identity, they will want a meeting recommendation.

### ***Other Referrals***

Many phonenumber calls are from potential members or even non-addicts looking for services other than what NA provides. There may be liability issues, which vary between states and countries, that make it important for us to offer emergency numbers at a minimum. We don't give referrals to one specific treatment center or detoxification unit. That would cross the boundary of cooperation into endorsement. Instead, we can inform members of generic treatment referral numbers, such as the National Treatment Referral Line in the United States. We also provide callers with the number of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Family members and loved ones of addicts frequently call NA phonelines. In the CRPNA Region, we make numbers to Nar-Anon and Al-Anon for such callers. We don't recommend one program over another or offer our opinions about any of these programs; we simply provide contact information. We run the risk of prolonging or spoiling a chance for an addict to find NA. We provide contact information for other organizations in a spirit of cooperation.

## ***Conclusion***

Our ability to effectively carry the NA message greatly depends on strong local phonenumber services and strong local phonenumber help us help addicts. Our phonenumber service is an opportunity to form cooperative relationships that may benefit potential NA members. Our ability to respond to callers in a sensitive, caring, and helpful way can make a real difference in whether or not an addict gets clean and finds recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

## **Types of Calls**

Calls from NA members are usually simple requests for meeting information. These should be answered quickly. Most members readily understand the need to keep the phone line open for other callers. You can always suggest our regions website, ([www.cprna.org](http://www.cprna.org)) or the NAWS website, ([www.NA.org](http://www.NA.org)) and briefly explain where they can find what information they are looking for.











If the caller would like to talk to someone at length or is seeking a ride to their first meeting, you may connect them with a Twelfth Step volunteer. You can explain that this member may be better able to help them and that that person will have to call them back. Obtain their first name and the number where they can be reached. You can assure the caller that the Twelfth Step volunteer will only ask for them by name when they call and will not discuss the call with anyone else.

Calls from non-NA members, such as students, professionals, or community members, are usually requests for general information about NA. These also should be handled quickly. The caller can be advised that an informational packet is available. Then, the volunteer takes the name and address of the caller and refers this information to the appropriate committee. Interested non-addicts can also be referred to open meetings.






If you are a volunteer, give callers requesting presentations, special meetings, literature, activities, etc., a brief description of NA, explaining that these requests will be referred to the NA member designated to handle such calls. Never make these types of commitments on your own. The phone line volunteer takes the name, number, etc., of the caller, and passes it along accordingly. You can email this information to the phonenumber coordinator at [phonenumber@cprna.org](mailto:phonenumber@cprna.org).

## **DO'S & DON'TS FOR PHONE LINE VOLUNTEERS**

### ***DO'S...***

-  Always identify yourself by first name only and state that you are an addict.
-  Have the necessary materials (e.g., THIS BOOK, NA White booklet, Meeting list, Pocket resource guide, NA pamphlets, Twelve Step list, etc..) close to the telephone in order to avoid delay and confusion.
-  Do find out what the caller needs. Ask questions.
-  Do, if you are returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as an addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous
-  Do keep the calls short (3-5 min.) for callers who aren't in immediate need. You may get the caller's phone number and call them back, if you choose to.
-  Do remember to be helpful and polite to all callers.
-  Do make appropriate referrals when necessary.
-  Do use the Twelfth-Step list.
-  Do keep a log of all the calls you answer.
-  Contact the phone line coordinator if problems arise.

### ***DON'TS***

-  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 him/her to stop.
-  Don't try to handle calls that you are not qualified to answer. **Don't give medical advice.** Don't dump your problems on callers who are calling you to seek help.
-  Don't give ANY names or personal telephone numbers.
-  Don't answer questions about who was at an NA meeting (e.g., to police officers, probation officers, or significant others). However, general information may be given (variance in size of meeting, NA open to all age groups, etc.).
-  Don't glorify active addiction by telling war stories.

## Twelfth Step Calls

If the caller would like to talk to someone at length, phonline volunteers may connect them with an NA member who is a Twelfth Step volunteer. Twelfth Step volunteers may also arrange rides for those who are new to NA and who request our help in getting to a meeting.

The phone line volunteer explains in general to the caller that all information is confidential, but some information is needed in order to help him/her. The phone line volunteer also makes a note of any other pertinent information received from the caller in as short a time as possible. After hanging up, the volunteer should relay this information directly to a Twelfth-Step volunteer in the same geographical area as the call as soon as possible.

***A phone line volunteer will need to use good judgment regarding these calls.***

***Never*** give out the name, address, or telephone number of any member of the NA Fellowship. Do not use last names, places of employment, etc.




***NOTE:*** *The addict seeking help expects a return call. If a Twelfth Step volunteer is able to respond, the volunteer must call the caller back and inform him or her that this is not available at this time. You should use the resource guide phone numbers, and if any questions arise, feel free to contact the phone line coordinator.*

### ***Twelfth Step Volunteers***

The Twelfth-Step volunteer is the person who will talk at length to the potential newcomer about NA, either on the telephone or in person.

Experience has shown that the most successful Twelfth-Step volunteers possess certain assets which are beneficial to the accomplishment of their responsibilities. In addition to the qualities of a phonline volunteer

#### **These qualities include:**

-  Appropriate training and experience as an NA phonline volunteer, plus:
-  A minimum of three (3) years clean-time
-  Valid driver's license, vehicle registration and insurance

After the Twelfth-Step volunteer receives some information from the phonline volunteer, the Twelfth-Step volunteer calls the addict as soon as possible.



The Twelfth-Step volunteer may spend time talking to the caller about recovery in Narcotics Anonymous and share personal experience, strength, and hope. They may also offer information about meetings, their location and time. If the caller is willing, the Twelfth-Step volunteer may offer to meet the caller.

### ***Things to Consider Before Meeting***

Going personally to meet the caller may have the potential for significant safety problems. Some points to consider before making a Twelfth-Step call in person:

1. Has the caller used today? Does it sound safe to meet the caller?
2. Before meeting with the caller, let them know you have to find another volunteer to accompany you. ***Never go alone.***
3. Make sure at least one of the volunteers is the same gender as the caller.
4. Try to meet in a neutral, public location (restaurant, etc). Meeting a newcomer in your home or in their home is an unnecessary risk. Inform the caller as to the specific time you will arrive, and meet them out front. If meeting or picking up the addict at their home is unavoidable, consider the circumstances and take precautions, remembering personal safety.
5. Ensure that all arrangements for meeting the caller are accurate and understood by both parties.
6. Upon arranging to meet the caller, it is suggested that the volunteer bring a current meeting list, some NA pamphlets, and a *White Booklet*.
7. Tell someone where you are going, and call them when you get there.
8. Don't stop anywhere on the way to a meeting, especially at the suggestion of the newcomer.
9. The NA program has one must that applies to everyone: no drugs or paraphernalia in our possession. It is important that the volunteer tries to ensure that the newcomer follows this requirement. This is for the protection of the volunteer, the fellowship, and our NA groups.
10. Once an addict has been taken to a meeting, the Twelfth-Step volunteer may help the addict obtain telephone numbers and transportation to other meetings.

\*\*\*\*\* ***SPECIAL CALLS*** \*\*\*\*\*

## **How to Handle Special Calls**

The NA Phone Line is **strictly for dispensing information about the NA fellowship, meetings, and recovery**. The volunteer must always remember that he or she is only a recovering addict sharing his experience, strength, and hope. The volunteer is not a professional crisis counselor, doctor or psychologist, etc., and does not have the right to give professional advice. Calls which, in the volunteer's opinion, are beyond the boundaries of Narcotics Anonymous should be quickly and politely diverted to the appropriate services available.

### ***Suicide Calls***

One of the most difficult situations is a call from someone who says they plan to kill themselves, whether or not they sound like they mean it. This can often bring a feeling of helplessness. First, say a quick prayer to yourself, ask for guidance, and remember, if they have chosen to call a helpline, they are looking for a solution. We need to take ALL callers who mention suicide seriously, no matter how casually they put it. Once suicide has been mentioned, our focus can no longer be on simply getting them to a meeting.

Once they mention that they have thought of suicide, the first thing we let them know is that our first priority is their safety and that we are concerned about them. We can listen and empathize. However, with the first concern being their safety, we want to ask the caller if they will agree to take one of three actions.

1. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
2. Call their mental health care provider, if they are under the care of a mental health professional who they can reach
3. Go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department

Suicide prevention experts agree that people who will agree to take one of these steps are at a greatly reduced risk for actually making an attempt.







If the caller is unwilling to agree to take one of these actions, we say to the caller "At this point I feel obligated to call 911 on your behalf.", call 911 immediately and report the caller's phone number and other details of the call. You can conclude the call by reminding the caller that they can call us back for information about an NA meeting after they are safe and have dealt with their thoughts of ending their life.

### ***Detox and Treatment Centers***

Our purpose is not to suggest either treatment or detox. If you are asked for a referral, read our sixth tradition which states, ***“an NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lets problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”***

After reading the sixth tradition, you can give the caller the National Treatment Referral phone number. Suggest that if they decide to seek treatment, to call the Phone line for an NA meeting before they are released.

### **Policy regarding referrals to treatment centers, detoxes, recovery houses, and rehabs**

-  When a caller requests referral information, explain that we, as Narcotics Anonymous, are not affiliated with any treatment center/detox/recovery house/rehab/etc.
-  Assist the caller with locating a meeting nearby
-  Suggest that the caller speak with people at the meeting if looking for suggestions as to where to seek treatment
-  Inform caller that, while we can offer no recommendations as to referrals, we can provide a National Treatment Referral phone, and the caller is free to do what she/he wishes with that information.
-  You may suggest they can try their local hospitals or the yellow pages.
-  Strongly urge caller to attend a Narcotics Anonymous meeting immediately upon release from whatever facility he/she may choose

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***National Treatment Referral: 1-888-762-3750***

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The information that we provide is done so in the spirit of cooperation. The NA World Services Office Public Relations Handbook states:

*“When the caller is asking for help that does not fall within our primary purpose and our traditions, we can 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.**”*

*p. 15 in Public Relations Handbook Resource Material for Chapter 9*

Our region’s policy is based on the NAWS Public Relations Handbook, which states:

*“We don’t give referrals to one specific treatment center or detoxification unit. That would cross the boundary of cooperation into endorsement. Instead, we can inform members of generic treatment referral numbers, such as the National Treatment Referral Line in the United States. If a caller has a phone directory, we can direct them to the services listed there.”*

*p. 86 in Chapter 9, Phonelines*

# Freedom Voice System

## *Incoming Call Procedures*

1. Addict calls our Phone Line
2. Addict selects option 1, *(speak to a live addict or get meeting info)*
3. Call forwards into a database which sends out the call to the first volunteer in that time slot rotation. *(Will ring 4 times)* if that addict is unavailable it forwards to the next person in the time rotation.
4. When you're the volunteer that is in the time rotation slot, your phone will show the following.
  - a. **(RING)** Caller Id will show 1-800-543-4670, *(our 800 #)*  
*(We suggest you program that phone number into your phone)*
5. As you answer you will hear the following voice prompt.
  - a. ***"This is freedom voice systems, a call from (###) 555-1212"***.  
*(That is the number the addict is calling from)*
6. FVS will then prompt you to select from 6 options.
  - a. **\*\*\* Please only use 1 or 3.**
  - a. **Press 1 to accept**
  - b. Press 2 to place call on hold
  - c. **Press 3 to forward to next person on forwarding list**
  - d. Press 4 to send to voicemail
  - e. Press 5 to hang-up
  - f. Press 6 to re identify the incoming number
7. If no one is available during the incoming call, then the call gets sent to voicemail, where they can leave a message. That voice mail then gets converted to an email and sent to selected phone line committee members.

