

BAY AREA HELPLINE SUBCOMMITTEE GUIDELINES

Revised November 6th, 2016

Purpose:

To establish, maintain and coordinate an effective 24 hours / 7 days per week phone line system for the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in the area of Pinellas County and adjacent cities. Through this service, we form a link between the community and Narcotics Anonymous in order to provide information to addicts seeking recovery, and in the spirit of cooperation to inform the general public on how we can help.

Membership:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Shift Carriers
- Shift Orientation Coordinator
- General Support Volunteers

Policy:

Our service is a fully automated system maintained and coordinated by “Trusted Servants” willing to be of service to the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

- Only qualified Shift Carriers will be allowed to answer calls
- Shift Carriers are responsible for their assigned shift unless previous arrangements are made
- Chair assumes the responsibility of ensuring that all calls are being answered promptly and in an efficient manner
- Our greatest asset is communication. Do not be afraid to follow up on any situations that may arise during and after your shift.
- Any subcommittee member holding a position who misses two consecutive subcommittee meetings may be removed from that position. After the 2nd consecutive subcommittee meeting absence, the Chair or Vice-Chair will contact that member for their shift to be released.
- Qualifications for trusted servant positions may be waived by the subcommittee with a simple majority, but responsibilities are not to be waived; they must be delegated
- In the event that the subcommittee needs to vote on any issue or guideline change, a voting member will be required to attend the previous two Helpline Subcommittee meetings

Chairperson

- Minimum suggested clean time one (1) year
- Six (6) months minimum involvement in the Helpline Subcommittee
- Six (6) months minimum involvement with Bay Area Service Committee
- Ability to make motions based on the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service of Narcotics Anonymous

- Required to attend monthly Helpline Subcommittee meetings
- Willingness to serve

The Chair acts as a liaison between the subcommittee and BASCNA. The Chair attends all ASC administrative meetings. The Chair must follow up on all helpline related matters, which may include the attendance of Regional Meetings. The Chair is responsible for all the money transactions that might transpire by Helpline services. The chair must be acquainted with the ASC policy.

Vice Chairperson

- Minimum suggested one (1) year clean time
- Six (6) month minimum involvement with Bay Area Service Committee
- Six (6) month prior involvement with Helpline subcommittee
- Knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service of Narcotics Anonymous
- Required to attend monthly Helpline Subcommittee meetings
- Willingness to serve

The Vice Chair must be capable of filling in for the Chair in his/her absence or when the need arises. The Vice Chair will ensure that individuals assigned as Shift Carriers meet all qualifications. The Vice Chair will be responsible for all Shift Orientation Coordinator responsibilities in the absence of Shift Coordinator. The Vice Chair must be willing to become acquainted with ASC Policy.

Secretary

- Minimum suggested six (6) months clean time
- Secretarial and organizational skills helpful
- Takes attendance and notes at monthly meetings
- Willingness to serve
- Required to attend monthly Helpline Subcommittee meetings
- Sends reminders to members of upcoming Helpline Subcommittee meetings

Shift Carriers

- Minimum suggested six (6) months clean time
- Two months consecutive attendance at Helpline Subcommittee meetings
- Knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service of Narcotics Anonymous
- Willingness to serve
- Required to attend monthly Helpline Subcommittee meetings
- Attend training with Shift Orientation Coordinator
- In the event that a Shift Carrier misses two consecutive Helpline Subcommittee meetings, their shift (or shifts) may be given to another member

All Shift Carriers must become familiar with the Helpline Guidelines in reference to answering calls from the community at large. All Shift Carriers are to become familiar with the BASCNA admin members in order to follow established protocol.

Shift Orientation Coordinator

- Minimum suggested one (1) year clean time
- Oriented by either Chair or Vice Chair
- Attendance at two consecutive Helpline Subcommittee meetings
- Previous involvement with Helpline Subcommittee
- Willingness to assist Vice Chair in making sure all Shift Carriers are fulfilling our Primary Purpose (5th Tradition of Narcotics Anonymous)
- Required to attend all Helpline Subcommittee meetings
- Facilitates orientation of new shift carriers

General Support Volunteers

- Willingness to serve
- Suggested thirty (30) days clean time

The General Support Volunteers will help the subcommittee accomplish its' mission. The General Support Volunteers should be available to help with various duties as they arise. These duties may include: making research phone calls, helping with the annual Helpline Learning Day, etc.

Common Helpline Calls

Addict wants help

Listen carefully and respond politely. Ask if the caller wishes to attend a meeting. If so, then direct them to the nearest meeting. If they are not sure, share your experience, strength & hope with them. If an addict needs a detox, treatment center or other services, you may refer them to the internet or other referral sources. Remember we do not refer to treatment centers, detoxes or any other agencies. Please see note under Referral Numbers section.

Crisis Calls

Always take them seriously! If you are not sure what to do, call the Chair and ask for help. Determine if the individual is alone. Once the type of crisis is established, you may refer them to the numbers listed under the Referral Numbers section for information/referral services or suicide prevention. Remember to state that NA is not associated with these agencies or any others. You may also need to refer them to the local emergency room.

Inform the caller that once the crisis passes, they are welcome to call the Helpline to hear about recovery from addiction. If the caller is suicidal or you hear evidence of domestic violence or abuse, you need to make an individual decision of what to do. You can ask the caller for permission to hook up a (3) way call. Use your best judgment. If the person is alone and it appears they are having a seizure, passing out, or you hear gunshots, you, as an individual may decide to call 911.

Outside groups interested in our fellowship

Give a description of the Narcotics Anonymous program. It is highly recommended to become familiar with Chapter 2 of the Basic Text “What is the Narcotics Anonymous Program.” If they want to know more about our activities, presentations, special meetings, and/or literature, and you don’t have that information, refer them to the appropriate subcommittee chair or our website www.bascna.org

Personal Calls

We do not accept personal calls. Politely let the caller know that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions. Keep in mind we cannot betray any member’s anonymity. We never acknowledge anyone’s membership directly or indirectly.

Caller asks for a ride to a meeting

Often, a caller may ask for a ride to a meeting. This is not the purpose of the Narcotics Anonymous Helpline Subcommittee. Our purpose and goal is to direct someone to a meeting. If you feel inclined to offer a ride or set up a ride for a caller, you should contact that person directly – outside of the Helpline. The call is now considered a 12 step call and please remember your NA guidelines when handling a 12 step call.

Do’s

- Respect anonymity at all costs
- Be courteous and listen carefully
- Identify yourself by your first name only
- If a school or professional calls, take their contact information and pass on to the proper subcommittee chair
- Become familiar with guidelines

Don’ts

- Identify yourself as a member of Narcotics Anonymous until you know you are speaking to the person who called
- Challenge the caller
- Give out the phone number of any helpline subcommittee member or any other member of Narcotics Anonymous
- Assume too much responsibility
- Pretend to be a professional crisis counselor, doctor, or psychologist
- Express opinion on outside issues
- Violate the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous

Referral Numbers

Before providing any telephone numbers, briefly explain our 6th tradition, stating that, “Narcotics Anonymous does not endorse, finance or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise.” We provide these telephone numbers in the spirit of cooperation.

“Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with nor recommends any other organizations, institutions, emergency agency or program; however, in the spirit of cooperation, we provide information and referral numbers upon request.”

National Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration 800-662-4357

Pinellas Care information 211 or 727-210-4211

Nar-Anon (727) 321-8507

Emergency 911

Internal Helpline Resources

Facebook’s Bay Area Helpline Group Page

If you’d like to be added to the group, ask a Helpline subcommittee member (Chair, Vice Chair, or Secretary)