

C.A.N Area

Group Service Representative (GSR)

Orientation Packet

Created 7/3/11

This packet was created as an informational resource to help GSRs to more effectively serve their groups. It is not meant to be the final word or complete description of their duties but merely a suggested guide and should not override any group autonomy. We hope that this will be an inspiration to more effectively serve in the GSR position.

Group Service Representatives (GSR)

Each group elects one group service representative; even those groups hosting more than one recovery meeting elect just one GSR. These GSRs form the foundation of our service structure. GSRs provide constant, active influence over the discussions being carried on within the service structure. They do this by participating in area service committee meetings, attending forums and assemblies at both the area and regional levels, and sometimes joining in the work of an ASC sub-committee. If we are vigilant in choosing stable, qualified leaders at this level of service, the remainder of the structure will almost certainly be sound. From this strong foundation, a service structure can be built that will nourish, inform, and support the groups in the same way that that groups nourish and support the structure.

Group Service Representatives bear great responsibility. While GSRs are elected by and accountable to the group, they are not mere group messengers. They are selected by their groups to serve as active members of the area service committee. As such, they are responsible to act in the best interest of NA as a whole, not solely as advocates of their groups' priorities. As participants in the area committee GSRs need to be as well informed as they can be concerning the affairs of the committee. They study the reports of the committee's officers and sub-committee chairpersons. They read the various handbooks published by the world service office on each area of service. After carefully considering their own conscience and what they know about how their group members feel, they take active, critical parts in the discussions which form the group conscience of the entire committee.

Group Service Representatives link their groups with the rest of the NA service structure, particularly through the information conveyed in their reports to and from the area committee. At group business meetings, the GSR report provides a summary of area committee activities, often sparking discussions among group members that provide the GSR with a feel for how the area can better serve the groups need. In group recovery meetings, GSRs make available flyers announcing area and regional activities.

At area committee meetings, GSR reports provide perspectives on group growth vital to the committee's work. If a group is having problems, its GSR can share those problems with the committee in his or her report. And if the group hasn't found solutions to those problems, the area chairperson will open a slot on the committee's 'sharing session' agenda so that the GSR can gather the experience others have had in similar situations. If any helpful solutions arise from the sharing session, the GSR can report those back to the group.

TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NA

WE KEEP WHAT WE HAVE ONLY WITH VIGILANCE, AND JUST AS FREEDOM FOR THE INDIVIDUAL COMES FROM THE TWELVE STEPS, FREEDOM FOR THE GROUPS SPRINGS FROM OUR TRADITIONS. AS LONG AS THE TIES THAT BIND US TOGETHER ARE STRONGER THAN THOSE THAT WILL TEAR US APART, ALL WILL BE WELL.

- 1. OUR COMMON WELFARE SHOULD COME FIRST; PERSONAL RECOVERY DEPENDS ON NA UNITY.**
- 2. FOR OUR GROUP PURPOSE THERE IS BUT ONE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY-- A LOVING GOD AS HE MAY EXPRESS HIMSELF IN OUR GROUP CONSCIENCE. OUR LEADERS ARE BUT TRUSTED SERVANTS, THEY DO NOT GOVERN.**
- 3. THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP USING.**
- 4. EACH GROUP SHOULD REMAIN AUTONOMOUS, EXCEPT IN MATTERS AFFECTING OTHER GROUPS OR NA AS A WHOLE.**
- 5. EACH GROUP HAS BUT ONE PRIMARY PURPOSE--TO CARRY THE MESSAGE TO THE ADDICT WHO STILL SUFFERS.**
- 6. AN NA GROUP OUGHT NEVER ENDORSE, FINANCE OR LEND THE NA NAME TO ANY RELATED FACILITY OR OUTSIDE ENTERPRISE, LEST PROBLEMS OF MONEY, PROPERTY OR PRESTIGE DIVERT US FROM OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE.**
- 7. EVERY NA GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.**
- 8. NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS SHOULD REMAIN FOREVER NON-PROFESSIONAL, BUT OUR SERVICE CENTERS MAY EMPLOY SPECIAL WORKERS.**
- 9. NA, AS SUCH OUGHT NEVER BE ORGANIZED, BUT WE MAY CREATE SERVICE BOARDS OR COMMITTEES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE.**
- 10. NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS HAS NO OPINION ON OUTSIDE ISSUES, HENCE THE NA NAME OUGHT NEVER TO BE DRAWN INTO PUBLIC CONTROVERSY.**
- 11. OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY IS BASED ON ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION; WE NEED ALWAYS MAINTAIN PERSONAL ANONYMITY AT THE LEVEL OF PRESS, RADIO AND FILM.**
- 12. ANONYMITY IS THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF ALL OUR TRADITIONS, EVER REMINDING US TO PLACE PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES.**

TWELVE CONCEPTS OF NA SERVICE

- 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 REST 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 PROCESS.**
- 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 NA 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.**

GSR Orientation Sheet

What is a GSR?

- A trusted servant of their group.
- The voice of their group at the Area Service Committee. (ASC)
- The voice of area at their group.
- The financial link between their group and the Area Service Committee.
- The group's main source of information about service, activities, and events.
- The group's source of information on how to get involved in service work.
- An important source of information for the group about the traditions.
- The trusted servant who attends to the specific needs of the group including questions regarding Traditions, Policy, and the 12 Concepts.

How do they do it?

- Attend the group meeting regularly.
- Attend the ASC meeting monthly.
- Report to the ASC the group status, donation, problems, concerns, change of meeting time/place to update phone and meeting lists
- Bring issues from the ASC to the group for a group conscience and report back to the ASC.
- Learn about the subcommittees of the ASC.
- What do the subcommittees do?
- When do they meet?
- Who may attend?
- Which subcommittees need support?
- Attend subcommittee meetings.
- Learn the service structure.
- Learn what the ASC, RSC, WSC, WSO, etc are.
- Study the Guide to Local Service and the ASC Policy guidelines.

Qualifications for a GSR

- Is an addict.
- Attends the group they represent.
- Has a willingness to serve.
- Has one year clean time. (suggested only)
- Has knowledge of the service structure of NA or the willingness to study it.
- Has an understanding of or the willingness to learn the duties of a GSR.

GSR Orientation Sheet

How does a group take care of its business?

- At the monthly business meeting, where the recommendations are voted on for literature purchases, Area donations, rent, etc. (it is suggested that your business meeting be held the week before the Area meeting)
- By group conscience. (please see page 4)
- By holding elections of trusted servant positions as needed with prior notice if possible.
- By sending their GSR or group representative to the ASC monthly.
- By creating an ad-hoc committee when needed.
- By holding special business meetings when important issue surface, like literature review, a group conscience, etc.

Should a GSR hold more than one group office?

- It is suggested that members hold only one service position in the group. As many members as possible need to be involved in service, it is an important part of recovery!

What if the positions are at two different meetings?

- In order to provide service opportunities to more members, it is suggested that groups elect addicts who do not serve in other groups service positions.

How does a group communicate concerns to the GSR?

- The group or any member may bring concerns to the GSR's attention at that group meeting.

How do you let the group know who the GSR is?

- The secretary can introduce the GSR along with other group servants either at the beginning of the meeting or at the end when trusted servants are usually acknowledged.

What about GSR reports? How often?

- Usually GSRs make one report to the group at the monthly business meeting. Most groups do not like to spend meeting time with reports.

What about ad-hoc committees?

- Sometimes ad-hoc committees are formed to take care of groups or subcommittees special business. They meet outside of the regular meeting time, usually just before or after.

GSR Orientation Sheet

What is a group conscience?

- An informed vote taken by the group as a whole.
- An expression of God's will.
- Is best for the group as a whole.
- Is the practice of placing principles before personalities. (Tradition 12)

When may a group conscience be initiated?

- A group conscience may be initiated anytime during a group business meeting if a member feels it's necessary.

How much notice should there be before a new GSR or Alternate GSR is elected?

- At least one month notice should be given before the planned election.

How does the Area donation get from the group to the Area?

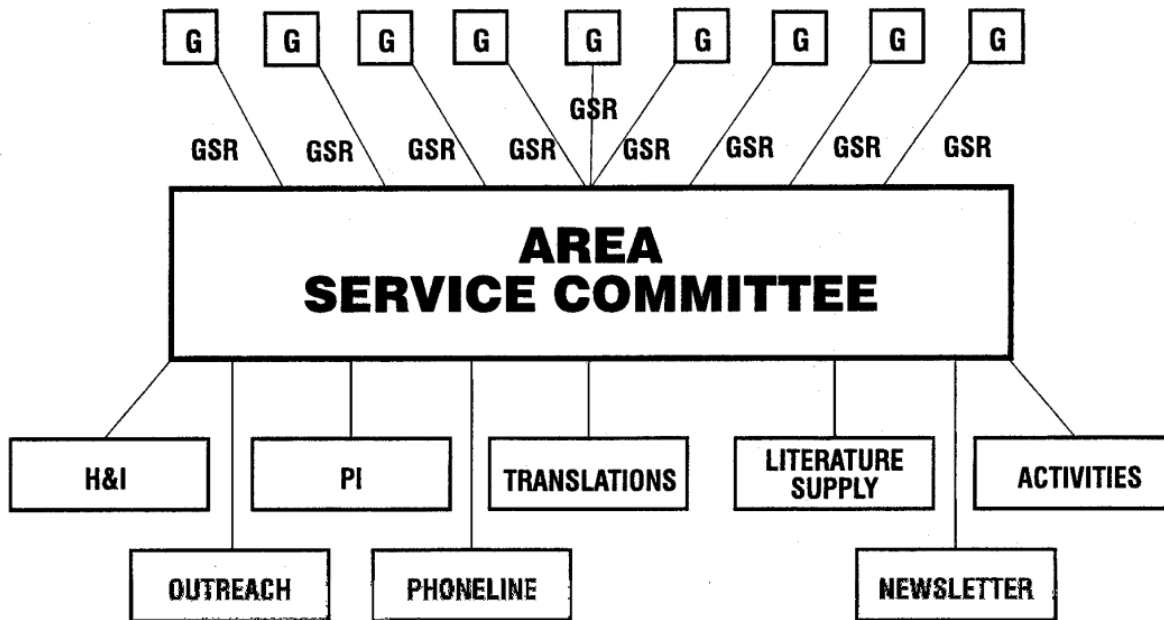
- The group decides at their regular monthly business meeting if and how much of a donation they can make to the ASC. A check or money is prepared and sent with the GSR or group representative to the regular monthly ASC meeting.

GSR report: Group level-may include -

- Attendance of groups and Elected trusted servants of the ASC.
- Open positions at Area and Region.
- Motions carried back to the group.
- Points of discussions made during the ASC.
- Open positions within the sub-committees.
- Passing over the Area announcements to the group secretary.
- Announce Area/Regional Activities during the regular meeting.

Points the GSR should be mindful of at the ASC -

- The GSR orientation is designed to help GSR's better understand the on goings at the ASC. Ie. The agenda, how to make a motion, who to go to for certain questions etc.
- Does the GSR feel comfortable at the ASC.
- Are the trusted servants fulfilling their obligations to the Area. For example: Did the sub-committee chairpersons attend their respective committee meeting at the RSC?
If not, did the Vice Chair of the Area go in their place and submit a report?



The ASC is responsible not only to develop and maintain subcommittees in each field of service but to coordinate the work of each of those subcommittees with the work of the others. For these reasons, all area committee participants need to become as informed as they can possibly be about subcommittee activities. Area committees devote significant portions of their meetings to reports from subcommittee chairpersons and discussions of subcommittee activities. Handbooks are available from the World Service Office for most of the subcommittees listed below. Specific directions for subcommittees in your area can be found in your log of policy actions and (if applicable) your area guidelines.

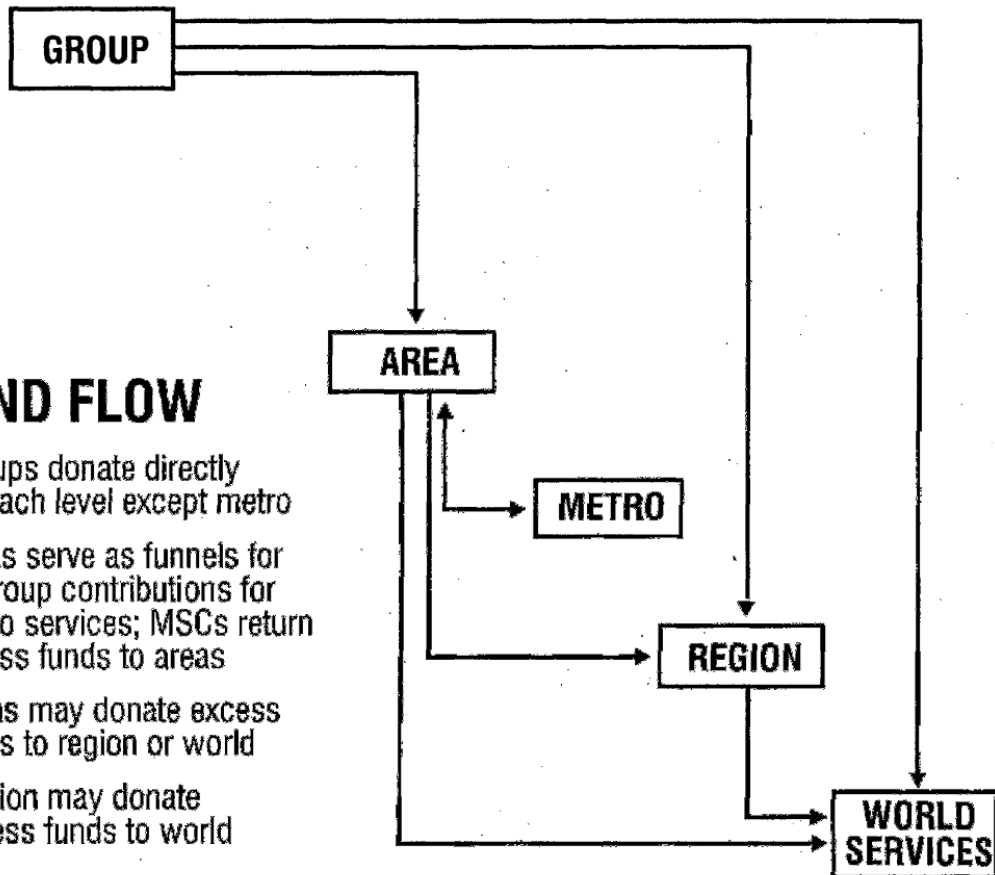
Most newly formed area service committees will probably not be able to support the same wide range of subcommittee services as a longer-established committee. Rather than attempt to set up all their subcommittees at once, it's recommended that new area committees take their time. Make sure the responsibilities of new subcommittees are well coordinated with those of existing ones. Bring subcommittees on line one at a time and give a great deal of attention to developing each subcommittee before bringing on another.

At least once a year, the group service representative attends the regional assembly. Each group is encouraged, if at all possible, to take the necessary steps to cover the expenses associated with its GSR's attendance at the regional assembly. Some groups will choose to set aside money each month toward this expense.

After paying expenses and setting aside a small emergency reserve, most groups contribute their surplus funds directly to the area committee, the regional committee, and Narcotics Anonymous World Services. For more discussion of the principles underlying group contributions to the rest of the service structure, see the essay on our fellowship's Eleventh Concept for Service elsewhere in this guide. For assistance in managing the details of direct contributions, see the *Group Treasurer's Handbook*, available from your area committee or by writing our World Service Office.

FUND FLOW

- 1) Groups donate directly to each level except metro
- 2) Areas serve as funnels for all group contributions for metro services; MSCs return excess funds to areas
- 3) Areas may donate excess funds to region or world
- 4) Region may donate excess funds to world



Good Questions to Discuss With Others

- 1.) Why do we have suggested clean time with positions?
- 2.) If you were asked to express your feeling of what group conscience means to you, what would you say?
- 3.) What are your priorities at a meeting of the CAN Area Service Committee?
- 4.) What is the group open forum for? And is it just for GSR's?
- 5.) Do you understand what discussion on a motion is for? If yes, write it out.
- 6.) How do your principles influence your voting?
- 7.) What are the reasons for abstentions? List them.
- 8.) What are my expectations before, during, and after an ASC meeting? List them.
- 9.) Is policy important? Why?
- 10.) Do I get confused at an area meeting? If so, how can we change that?
- 11.) What is the purpose of having an Area Service Committee?
- 12.) What is the C.A.R. and how are you involved as a member of N.A.?
- 13.) What is the role of the 7th tradition in the area and N.A. as a whole?
- 14.) What are the responsibilities of your position? List them.
- 15.) Where do spiritual principles play a part in service?