

RESOURCES FOR

chapter four




PREPARATION AND TRAINING FOR INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC

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SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE PR LETTERS


When your committee decides to send information to professionals within your community (treatment directors, physicians, employment assistance directors, etc.), a sample letter from this handbook may be useful. In the event that a committee doesn't find one of these sample letters relevant, we have highlighted the following suggestions to consider when composing your own letter:

-  Prior to initiating contact, inform your ASC and RSC, as well as any subcommittees or NA groups that might be affected by an influx of telephone calls or potential members. This kind of communication is important to making these service efforts more successful.
-  Use the individual's full name and title; for example, Mr. Joseph Green, Executive Director.
-  Use first-class postage.

Creating the letter

-  Be brief and to the point. Professionals receive large quantities of correspondence and are more apt to read a short letter.
-  One model for letter writing is for the first paragraph to introduce the material you plan to outline in the letter; the body of the letter is to provide all relevant information; and the concluding paragraph is to recap the information provided in the body of the letter.
-  Opening of the letter: For example, an introductory paragraph might read: *We are writing to inform you about NA in your community. This letter will provide you with _____. We hope you find the following information and enclosed materials helpful.*
-  Body of the letter: When considering what information to include in the body of the letter, the following questions may be helpful:
 - ❶ What information will be most valuable to the reader?
 - ❷ What do you want the reader to know about NA? For example, if the reader already knows about NA and refers addicts to NA meetings, then contact numbers and information about upcoming events might be a good way to maintain an ongoing relationship. If the reader is unfamiliar with NA, then local meeting information, a brief history of NA in that community or as a worldwide organization, and member demographics can be useful. Enclosing a *Membership Survey* and the *Information about NA* pamphlet can support the information provided in the letter.
 - ❸ If the area wants the professional to consider scheduling an NA presentation at their facility or attending an NA event, the letter can explain the benefits of the interaction and ask them how, when, and where this would best work for them.

Following up

-  If the area does not receive a response within a month, a follow-up telephone call, email, or letter may be appropriate. Professionals are often very busy, so follow-up is usually necessary for initiating a relationship.

Clearly written letters that provide helpful information about NA can help build strong, ongoing relationships with those in the community who interact with addicts. These relationships are an important part of our efforts to reach addicts.

INFORMATION ABOUT NA FORM LETTER

Date

Individual Contact Name
Organization
Address
City, State Zip code

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear ____:

We are writing in an effort to increase your awareness of Narcotics Anonymous. Since your organization may interact with people with drug dependence, we believe it is important for you to be aware of Narcotics Anonymous as a community resource. Please feel free to refer people with drug problems to our meetings or pass information about our program to those who may benefit from it. We hope you find the following information and enclosed materials helpful.

NA is a member-driven, international organization in which no dues or fees are charged for membership. All we ask is for a potential member to have a desire to stop using drugs. Members recover from the disease of addiction by application of the principles contained in the Twelve Steps. Our program is based on a set of spiritual principles, and we have no affiliation with any organized religion.

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step approach to recovery with the primary purpose of helping any individual stop using drugs. NA's program focuses on an addict's recovery from the disease of addiction, rather than any specific drug. Through our group meetings and the therapeutic value of one addict helping another, addicts learn how to live drug-free and productive lives.

Enclosed you will find Narcotics Anonymous literature, a meeting schedule, a product catalog, and local contact information. We are willing to provide your organization with a presentation to help better acquaint you with NA. Please contact us if you would like a presentation, or have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Contact Name
Area/Regional Information



Print this sample letter on your service body's letterhead or include your complete return address and contact information.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PRESENTATION

The content and order of this session may vary depending on the event. We encourage service committees to consider any individual circumstances that would require modification. This is simply an outline and should be used for ideas. You will need to adapt this presentation to the needs of your local community and the audience of your presentation.

Goals of presentation

- ▶ Introduce NA and explain the nature of the NA program.
- ▶ Raise professional awareness of NA as a viable community recovery and ongoing peer support resource for relief from drug addiction.
- ▶ Provide NA contact information and gather contact information from all present.

On tables are PR resource packets, which include Membership Survey, Information about NA, local meeting list, business cards, etc., session evaluation surveys, and hard copies (note sheets) of any PowerPoint slides to be shown.

Before the session begins

Prior to the event

- ▶ As a committee, you will want to discuss and determine who is best suited to facilitate and/or present at the event.
 - 🌐 Match talent to task, and/or presenters with the audience. Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse! (We encourage you to read Chapter Four of the *Public Relations Handbook*.)
 - 🌐 Consider any issues that may arise with the need to maintain personal anonymity.
- ▶ In your planning, make sure you have the materials that will be needed such as recovery literature and IPs, name tags, sign-in sheets, etc.

Once onsite

- ▶ Consider the setup of the room
 - 🌐 Are there any sight barriers or hearing or lighting challenges to consider?
 - 🌐 Are there any other distractions that might need to be addressed?
- ▶ Set up a literature table for handouts, IPs, or resource materials. Inform the audience where these materials are located.
- ▶ Provide a box/basket for attendees to leave their business cards.
- ▶ Be sure to be fully prepared to start the session **on time**.

**Leader
provides
presentation
setup**

10 minutes

Begin the presentation covering the following points:

Introductions

- ▶▶ The lead presenter introduces all of the presenters for the session.
- ▶▶ Introduce audience members or allow them to introduce themselves. Be sure to acknowledge any participants who helped to make the event possible, anyone representing the venue, and any dignitaries who are in the audience.

Logistical issues

- ▶▶ Ask the audience to turn off the ringers on their cell phones.
- ▶▶ Explain where the bathrooms are, when the breaks will occur, what refreshments are available, etc.
- ▶▶ Inquire as to any special needs of any of the participants.

Setup

- ▶▶ Offer a brief outline of the agenda, why the presentation is taking place, and what to expect from it. Let the audience know that there will be time for audience participation and questions at the end.
- ▶▶ It is typical to ask at the beginning of the presentation: “How many are familiar with NA?” and “How many have had no exposure to or knowledge of NA?” This response may require you to adapt your presentation somewhat.

**Leader
begins the
presentation**

**20 minutes
maximum**

Begin the presentation with an explanation of our name.

◆ **Origin of our name – Why “narcotics?”**

- ☞ Terminology commonly used for all illegal substances at the time of our inception in 1953.
- ☞ NA is not a drug-specific program, but has universal appeal to all who have the disease of addiction.

◆ **Historical background**

- ☞ Adapted from AA; regular NA meetings started in Los Angeles, CA, in 1953.
- ☞ Explosive growth coincided with publishing of the book *Narcotics Anonymous* in 1983.
- ☞ In 2016, nearly 67,000 weekly meetings in over 139 countries, speaking 81 languages.

◆ **What is NA? – A vital resource**

- ☞ Therapeutic value of one addict helping another – peer support network.
- ☞ Process for change through the Twelve Steps.

- ☞ The NA meeting – primary vehicle for delivering the NA message of recovery; peer support system and an environment within which people can help one another stop using drugs and learn to live drug-free.
- ☞ Meetings promote atmosphere of recovery from drug dependence.
- ☞ Members share personal experiences with addiction and recovery.
- ☞ Experienced older members support newer members.
- ☞ NA meetings and services are self-supporting by members' contributions (no fees or membership dues).
- ☞ Guidelines on how to conduct an NA meeting are available.
- ☞ A range of NA literature available in many languages on display here – (name)

◆ **Is NA culturally adaptable?**

- ☞ Long-term NA communities: Indian subcontinent, Japan, Western Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Iran.
- ☞ New growth: Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Africa.
- ☞ NA literature published in over 52 languages.
- ☞ If you know that your audience has ideas or opinions about challenges to adaptability and growth in your community, address your response to those ideas here.

◆ **NA Membership Survey**

- ☞ Survey handout – provide background on how/where survey is conducted.
- ☞ This survey has been carried out biennially since 1996.
- ☞ Gender: male 59%, female 41%.
- ☞ 68% rated “Importance of first NA meeting” very important or important.
- ☞ Influence to attend first NA meeting: Highest four were (1) treatment facility/counseling agency, (2) NA member, (3) family, (4) NA service effort. This shows the importance of our working with these organizations and families.
- ☞ Meeting attendance: members surveyed averaged 3.23 meetings per week.

◆ **Cooperating with professionals**

- ☞ NA can assist with welcoming your clients to meetings.
- ☞ Presentations to professionals and clients.
- ☞ Printed material, audiovisual, helplines, websites.
- ☞ Subscription to NA publications (*The NA Way Magazine*), and literature useful for clients' introduction to NA.
- ☞ No charge or fee for your clients to attend NA recovery meetings or for NA presentations.

◆ **Benefits to the client** (*specific for treatment, healthcare, and correctional audiences*)

- ☞ NA assists with transition back into the community. Members can meet clients at meetings or provide rides to meetings. Often members will invite newer members to social gatherings such as dances or invite them out for refreshments following a meeting.
- ☞ NA can support clients while they are still in treatment. If clients have phone privileges, they can contact NA members and begin building their peer support network.
- ☞ NA provides a (peer based) support network and social community. Members maintain their support network through sponsorship, meeting attendance, and using a telephone network of recovering friends. This extends to the social community as members join together for movies, theatre, sports events, etc.
- ☞ NA provides drug-free role model reinforcement. Often clients have had minimal exposure to drug-free living. Members of NA provide that role model in their work and home environment.
- ☞ NA provides offers drug-free social environment through conventions, dances, picnics.

◆ **Benefits to the professional** (*specific for treatment and healthcare audiences*)

- ☞ Research states: improves retention of clients in treatment (*Each community will need to decide which researchers to identify for the audience. NAWS suggests studies conducted by J. F. Kelly, R. Stout, W. Zywaik [2006] and K. Humphries [2005] as two possible choices for you.*)
- ☞ Immediate access for clients.
- ☞ Valuable adjunct to treatment.

◆ **How to contact NA**

- ☞ Local contact information including phone numbers, websites, or any other relevant information.
- ☞ NA World Services, PO Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409; website: www.na.org; phone: 818.773.9999; FAX: 818.700.0700.

Wrap up

15 minutes

- » Ask if there are any questions or comments.
- » If this is an audience that is familiar with NA and one that interacts with addicts in a professional capacity, you will want to make this portion as interactive as possible. The more you can derive from this type of audience and create a genuine exchange, the more effective the interaction will be.

At the end of the presentation

- » Point out the literature table, encourage the participants to take what they need, and to leave their business card.

- ▶▶ Thank the audience for their attention, thank the dignitaries and the venue representatives again, and thank the other presenters.
- ▶▶ Let the audience know that you will be available for additional questions after the presentation is over, and where you will be. (Prearrange this with the venue, and find out where the venue representatives want you to be, if it is different from the hall where the presentation takes place.)
- ▶▶ Ask the audience to fill out the session evaluation survey if you have decided it is valuable, to determine the effectiveness of the presentation and any further questions that could be covered in subsequent presentations.

After the presentation

Onsite

- ▶▶ Collect the surveys, sign-in sheet, and business cards.
- ▶▶ Be sure the room is left in order; collect any unused or discarded session material.

After the event

- ▶▶ Write thank-you notes to all who attended.
- ▶▶ At regularly scheduled intervals, follow up with all who attended.

PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

This is a sample evaluation form to be used following a presentation. You may even consider using this evaluation tool during rehearsals. Many professionals are asked to evaluate and critique presentations regularly. Your committee may consider this form on a presentation-by-presentation basis. We suggest that this form only be used when it is important for you to receive comments from the presentation. Using this evaluation form at all presentations can become counterproductive.

PRESENTATION EVALUATION SURVEY

To help us with future sessions, please take a few minutes to complete this survey and return it to the presenters who participated in the session. Circle a number on the scale for each question and offer any comments. Thank you.

1. How useful did you find this presentation?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding				Inadequate

Comments _____

2. How effective was the presentation with helping to increase your knowledge about Narcotics Anonymous?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding				Inadequate

Comments _____

3. How effective were the facilitators at presenting the material?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding				Inadequate

Comments _____

4. How effective was the resource material you received during the session?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding				Inadequate

Comments _____

5. What aspect of the session did you enjoy the most?

Comments _____

6. What aspect of the session needed the most improvement?

Comments _____

7. Were there any other topics that you would have liked this presentation to cover?

Comments _____

8. Do you know of another professional who would benefit from receiving this information?

Name _____

Contact information _____

Email address _____

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL PUBLIC

This resource can be used when interacting with the general public in the local community (such as at a community meeting, local event, or local conference). These frequently asked questions are meant to help trusted servants provide clear, consistent, and informative responses. In an effort to gain an understanding of the information here, trusted servants can discuss and rehearse the questions and answers below.

Trusted servants can consider the following points when preparing for interactions with the public:

- ◆ Responding to questions in your own words often works best – the responses listed below can be used as a guide.
- ◆ Short, simple, direct responses work best. Audience members or those who stop by an exhibit booth usually have limited time and will appreciate a brief response.
- ◆ When we use NA specific language such as “home group”, please explain the meaning for the audience.
- ◆ Try to keep responses focused on the questions asked. Remember, the goal is to inform members of the public about Narcotics Anonymous – personal disclosure is usually not appropriate or helpful. (For example, sharing about the step you are working, how many members you sponsor, and your service commitments is not necessarily relevant.)

What follows are possible answers to questions frequently asked by the public:

Q&A
1

What is the difference between AA and NA?

AA helped start NA in 1953 by giving NA's founding members permission to adapt their traditions and steps. The primary difference between the two programs is that AA's focus is alcohol and alcoholism, whereas NA's focus is recovery from addiction. In NA we believe that use of drugs, including alcohol, is but a symptom of the disease of addiction.

Q&A
2

How can I find NA meetings in my neighborhood or in various countries around the world?

The easiest way to find NA meetings is by visiting NA World Services website, www.na.org. Since our members provide the data for the meeting locator, we cannot guarantee the information is completely accurate (some meetings may have changed locations, for example). Contacting local area and regional helplines or websites (also listed at www.na.org) will often provide more accurate meeting information. (Have a local meeting directory with you during the presentation.)

Q&A 3

Are most of your members heroin addicts?

When NA first started, it is possible that the majority of our members used heroin. Today, as indicated in our 2015 *Membership Survey*, our members use a variety of drugs, including alcohol. Interestingly, 79% of those surveyed list alcohol as one of the drugs used on a regular basis. This survey also provides information about employment status, occupation, gender, and age. Our basic tenet about addiction is that it is a disease and not related to a specific substance.

Q&A 4

What support does NA have for adolescents?

Adolescents are welcome at all NA meetings. If there are meetings in a local NA community specifically designated for young people, the meeting schedule will identify those meetings as such. Although any NA member is welcome at any NA meeting, specially designated youth meetings can help younger addicts find their peers.

Q&A 5

It was briefly mentioned that NA has a variety of recovery literature. What kinds of literature and recovery materials do you have, and how can I obtain these?

NA has seven book-length pieces:

- ▶▶ *Narcotics Anonymous, Basic Text*
- ▶▶ *Just for Today: Daily Meditations for Recovering Addicts*
- ▶▶ *Living Clean: The Journey Continues*
- ▶▶ *It Works: How and Why*, which contains essays about the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
- ▶▶ *Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions*, a collection of tools and questions meant to facilitate discussions
- ▶▶ *The NA Step Working Guides*, a companion piece to *It Works: How and Why*.
- ▶▶ *Sponsorship*

We also have a host of informational pamphlets, booklets, and a quarterly journal called *The NA Way Magazine*. All of our literature and recovery materials can be obtained directly from www.na.org or by contacting the local NA area or region.

Q&A 6

How can we schedule an NA presentation?

At the end of this presentation, please provide us with your contact information and we will arrange for a presentation with you.

Q&A 7

Is someone who is still using drugs welcome to attend NA meetings?

Yes, they are more than welcome to attend meetings. Many of our members actually came to meetings while still using drugs and are now drug-free and recovering today. Often, if a member is still using, he or she will be asked to refrain from speaking during a meeting. Instead, these addicts are encouraged to speak with members during break or before or after the meeting.

Q&A**8****What resources do you have for single parents?
Are children welcome at meetings?**

Most groups welcome children who are behaved and under the supervision of a parent. Sometimes a group will offer babysitting services for its members. Contact the local NA helpline for additional information or look for meetings in the local NA meeting directory that indicate childcare or that the group is children-friendly.

Q&A**9****I referred someone to NA who was taking medication, and NA members said they were not clean. Would you explain what you mean?**

NA is a program of complete abstinence, and members refer to time (days, weeks, months, years) without using drugs as “cleantime.”

Since Narcotics Anonymous is an abstinence-based recovery program, persons who are taking drug replacement medication are not considered drug-free. These persons are encouraged and welcome to attend NA meetings; however, they are asked to listen rather than speak at meetings, and it is suggested they talk to members on a break, or before or after a meeting. Meetings that follow this format do so to preserve the atmosphere of recovery.

For members who have a need to take prescribed medication for medical or mental health issues, we suggest reading the booklet *In Times of Illness*. This piece provides helpful, experience-based information regarding medication and illness, and outlines the idea that the decision to take medication is left to the member, physician, and sponsor. This pamphlet was written to help members who have achieved total abstinence from drugs and are faced with a need to take medication.

Unfortunately, our members often voice their own opinions about the use of medication even though NA has no opinion. Although this may be a disconcerting issue for professionals, it can be equally as confusing to many members. Typically, members of NA make a distinction between drug replacement medication and medication that a person needs to take once they are completely abstinent from drugs.

Q&A**10****What happens at an NA meeting?**

An NA meeting is where two or more addicts gather for the purpose of recovery from the disease of addiction. Members offer each other peer support by sharing experiences about how they manage life situations without returning to using drugs. Some meetings have speakers who share their experience with getting and staying clean, while others have structured formats that focus on NA literature (our Basic Text, informational pamphlets, or our *Just for Today* daily meditation book). All meetings focus on recovery and supporting each other in recovery.

Here are some other things that can occur at an NA meeting:

- ▶ During the course of a meeting, a basket is passed for our members to contribute money to support the cost of the meeting facility and other NA

services. One of our traditions speaks to our self-support through our own contributions.

- » Meetings often open and close with the Serenity Prayer or some quote from NA literature. [In some communities this may require some explanation. The word “prayer” could be troublesome.]
- » Some meetings also provide keytags to recognize days, months, and years of continuous abstinence from drugs.

Q&A 11

Is NA connected with any religious organizations?

No. The NA program is based on a set of spiritual principles that are not associated with a particular religion. Although our steps call for finding and believing in a “power greater than oneself,” this is a personal decision for each and every member to make. Members choose their own “power greater than themselves.” Members’ beliefs range from nature to organized religion, from no belief that a power exists, to belief in the power of inanimate objects such as rocks. Members are free to choose a belief that works for them personally, and there is no opposition to anyone’s choice within the fellowship. We perceive this to be a strength of our program – the unconditional freedom members have with choosing their own personal belief – and in NA meetings one can hear members state that this was an attractive and safe aspect of the fellowship. NA doesn’t oppose or endorse any religion. Experience of our members has shown that the spiritual principles work for all members, from the devoutly religious to the atheist and agnostic.

AREA/REGION ROUNDTABLE PACKET

This packet contains resources for holding an area or regional roundtable. A roundtable simply means an interactive session where all participants engage in a dialogue. Below is a list of suggested audiences to invite to a roundtable meeting, with ideas as to why each audience may be relevant to an area or region's service efforts. Also included here are suggestions for how to plan a roundtable, as well as a sample roundtable format and invitation letter that can be modified as your community sees fit.

In your planning for a roundtable, it is suggested that Chapter Four of the *Public Relations Handbook* be read. In that chapter are helpful planning tips including choosing a day and time that are convenient for the audience, informing the invited professionals that their peers will also be in attendance along with any dignitaries, etc.

Whom to invite to an area roundtable

The following list outlines various audiences an area or region may want to invite to a local roundtable meeting. These professionals have probably had experience with Narcotics Anonymous and could offer trusted servants input and ideas about their interactions with NA. The purpose of a roundtable is to exchange ideas about building cooperative relationships rather than to simply present information. Areas or regions may choose to hold this kind of roundtable discussion in an effort to make NA more attractive, strengthen relationships with those who work with addicts, and ultimately increase the number of addicts referred to NA.

- ❶ **Treatment center professionals:** These professionals can work in residential as well as outpatient treatment settings. The service body will need to discuss and decide which professionals are most relevant to their service efforts. For instance, does it make more sense to invite the treatment center's executive director or the counselors and case managers? Does the service body want a mix of executives, clinical directors, and counselors?
- ❷ **Clergy:** Many NA meetings are held in churches, synagogues, or mosques. Since we already have relationships with these professionals, it makes sense to proactively strengthen these relationships. A service body may decide that this group of professionals should make up the first roundtable discussion. A discussion with the clergy has the potential to strengthen the stability of NA meetings.
- ❸ **Healthcare professionals:** This group may include professionals from local hospitals or medical clinics, as well as local physicians. Additionally, healthcare professionals such as nurses, paramedics, physician's assistants, or social workers who work in a clinical or hospital setting may be audiences for separate roundtables.
- ❹ **Education professionals:** Secondary school guidance counselors and healthcare professionals and university or college healthcare professionals can be invited to a roundtable meeting to help make NA a more visible and reliable resource.
- ❺ **Service professionals:** This group may include police, fire, and emergency medical technicians often interact with addicts in crisis situations.

- ⑥ **Government service professionals:** Those who work in the public assistance field and child and family services, can be invited to a roundtable meeting.
- ⑦ **Criminal justice:** This may include local police, parole and probation officers, and personnel of the judicial system such as social workers and substance abuse counselors.

The above list is not exhaustive. As the service body plans its roundtable, trusted servants may identify additional professional groups that are relevant to its area's goals. In smaller NA communities, trusted servants may host a roundtable with professionals from several of the audiences listed above. Asking for and receiving information from professionals in the local community can help us to reach more addicts.

How to plan for an area roundtable

Once an area has decided it wants to host a roundtable and has agreed on the audience, there are additional tasks that need to be accomplished. Preparation and practice are key components of a successful and meaningful roundtable.

Planning tasks

1. Identify trusted servants who are willing to participate in the planning of the roundtable and the roundtable itself.
2. Planning group tasks:
 - a. First, identify an ideal date and the facility in which the roundtable will be held. The service body will want to give itself about ninety days to plan the roundtable. Consider the most convenient day and time for the professionals who will be invited as well as for the trusted servants involved.
 - b. Identify key professionals and invite those professionals to participate in the roundtable. See the sample invitation letter included in this packet as a possible model.
 - c. A roundtable meeting usually consists of eight-to-twelve invited participants. It's best to invite three to five additional participants to the roundtable. For example, if the area hopes to host a roundtable meeting of eight professionals, the planning group should invite at least twelve. Professionals may decline an invitation because of a conflict with the date, an unexpected illness or pressing need, or simply an unwillingness to participate.
 - d. The planning group may choose a coordinator to be responsible for reporting updates about the progress of the roundtable to the committee. The coordinator can also help the planning group maintain its focus and reach identified objectives during the planning process.
 - e. The planning group identifies a facilitator for the roundtable and develops questions to ask (see the questions contained in the sample format as a possible model). The planning coordinator would also report this information to the area.
 - f. The planning group can prepare for the event by holding rehearsals in which trusted servants involved in the roundtable have a chance to discuss the expected issues and prepare a common understanding of a response to those issues. It might be helpful to run through a mock roundtable.

Sample roundtable format

Participants and facilitator

A roundtable meeting will be conducted with invited professionals and a varied mix of trusted servants. If possible, the area should choose a facilitator who is comfortable interacting with both NA members and members of the professional community. This might be a member who is also a professional, or a professional who is not a member but is knowledgeable about Narcotics Anonymous. Because having frank discussions about NA is one of the goals of a roundtable, the area will want to avoid creating a situation where the facilitator seems to be biased or contentious.

Clarify purpose and process

The facilitator will begin the discussion by clarifying the purpose of the roundtable. Often the general purpose will be to build cooperative relationships between Narcotics Anonymous and the professional community. A roundtable will help achieve this purpose through discussing and identifying what professionals need from NA, in order to facilitate this improved cooperative relationship.

The area may want to record the discussion or take typed or written notes of the discussion. If recording the discussion, be sure to ask permission from all participants.

The roundtable discussion

The area can work with the facilitator to decide how the discussion will be structured. Listed below are three roundtable format options; in your community a chosen format may be a combination of approaches. A format is created to maximize the opportunity with professionals in a roundtable setting.

- One approach is to allow the facilitator to ask members of the professional community to discuss questions while NA participants listen. NA members can then enter into a dialogue after the professional participants have discussed the given questions.
- Another option is to have the entire roundtable discussion structured as a fluid dialogue between professional participants and NA members. The danger of this format is that the participation of NA members will limit the input given by professional participants.
- One of the more common formats is to have a general presentation and to frame a small-group discussion around how to build better cooperative relationships. The small groups are a mix of invited professionals and trusted servants. The questions for the roundtable and the focus are geared to the audience that has been invited.

Regardless of the format, trusted servants need to remember that listening to the input provided will most benefit the discussion. A defensive or aggressive attitude will usually defeat the purpose of a roundtable discussion. It may be advantageous to clarify any misperceptions or misunderstandings about NA held by the professionals. This action will help us to achieve a more productive discussion. It is only through listening to the audience's perspective of dealing with NA that we can come up with ideas on how to work better together.

The following questions are examples of the kinds of topics that can instigate a meaningful dialogue in a roundtable discussion. The area can use or modify these questions in any way it sees fit. Again, remember to adapt the questions to suit the audience. You will need to have a specific focus and not try to cover too many questions in one session.

NA's image

1. How is Narcotics Anonymous perceived in your particular field?
2. Do you know about any misconceptions regarding the NA program and/or its name?
3. How can NA improve the way it is perceived in your field?

Awareness of NA

1. What can NA do to become a better-known resource for addicts who desire recovery?
2. What materials have you seen or read regarding NA?
3. What types of materials would give you and your clients a better understanding of NA?

NA as a resource

1. What are we doing that is helpful?
2. What do you perceive as the shortcomings of the local NA community?
3. How do you think we can improve?
4. How can we build better cooperative relationships with you?

Ongoing relationships

1. What is the most effective tool to continue our communication with you?
2. What specific information could NA provide to make us more accessible?

Following up

Following up with those who attended the roundtable discussion will be crucial to making the roundtable a success. Be sure to send formal thank-you letters to all participants, and follow up with whatever commitments or promises were made during the course of the roundtable discussion.

SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER FOR ROUNDTABLE

Date

Invitee's Name and Title
Organization's Name
Address
City, State Zip

**Feel free
to modify
this sample
letter
as needed.**

Dear Mr. Jones:

Narcotics Anonymous is a member-driven, international, multilingual, multi-cultural organization with a twelve-step approach to recovery from drug addiction. No dues or fees are charged for membership. NA's program focuses on an addict's recovery from the disease of addiction rather than any specific drug. In 2016, there were nearly 67,000 Narcotics Anonymous meetings in 139 countries worldwide. *(Note to local committees: Please add a sentence that informs the reader about the size of the local fellowship and the number of NA meetings.)*

We are cordially inviting you to attend a public relations roundtable discussion hosted by the XYZ Area of Narcotics Anonymous. We anticipate that this meeting will bring together various professionals from the community. We want to engage with professionals in a facilitated discussion to help us build cooperative relationships with your organization, and we hope that you will be able to participate.

We are inviting professionals to this event in a desire to build cooperative relationships, to inform professionals about NA in the local community, and to learn from you how we can better work together. This discussion will be a mutual exchange of experiences and information. Our desire is that NA becomes a viable and credible community resource for you. We would like your help in achieving our goal. Attached is information that provides an overview of the Narcotics Anonymous program and a tentative agenda for the roundtable discussion. The session will take place *[day and date]* from *[provide time]* until *[provide time]*, at *[place, street, and city address]*. Directions to the facility are enclosed.

Please contact us regarding your availability to participate in the roundtable, and with any questions you may have. I can best be reached at *[provide a contact phone number and email address that is answered by one person throughout the roundtable planning process]*. Or, you may contact *[provide name and email address]*.

Thank you for your interest in Narcotics Anonymous.

Susan Smith
Public Information Chairperson
XYZ Area of NA

Enclosure



When a committee is sending this letter, additional pertinent information, such as refreshments, lunch, and other attendees, may be mentioned. Print this sample letter on your service body's letterhead or include your complete return address.