

Helpline Guidelines

REQUIREMENTS TO BE A VOLUNTEER:

1. One year continuous clean time, NA sponsor, minimum of at least ONE (1) N.A. meetings attended per week.
2. Recovery through the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions of N.A.
3. A working cell phone or home phone to have the Helpline forwarded to.
4. Willingness to refrain from using vulgar language. Keep language consistent with Basic Test.
5. Absolutely no personal solicitations through the Helpline.

Helping members and potential members get to an N.A. meeting is our objective. Our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to the suffering addict.

Most calls will be simple requests from N.A. members about meeting times and locations.

You may also receive calls from potential newcomers, relatives and friends of addicts, health care professionals, students, members of the media, etc.

POTENTIAL NEWCOMERS may ask questions that can be concisely answered by referring to excerpts from the White Book, such as Who Is An Addict? What Is The Narcotics Anonymous Program? How It Works? NEVER give out the name, address or phone number of a 12 Step volunteer or N.A. member.

In your role as a helpline volunteer, it is imperative to remember that you are not a crisis counselor, doctor, lawyer or psychologist. The N.A. helpline is strictly for dispensing information about the N.A. fellowship, meetings and recovery. Calls that are not within this scope should be quickly and politely diverted. IF THE CALL IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, TELL THE CALLER TO DIAL 911. IF THE CALLER IS SUICIDAL, QUICKLY REFER THE CALLER TO A SUICIDE HELPLINE NUMBER 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS often want someone to talk to an addict or to call an addict. We cannot do this. The addict must call the Helpline to speak with an addict. You may offer the phone numbers to groups such as Nar-Anon, or Families Anonymous after explaining that Narcotics Anonymous does not endorse or recommend any other organizations and is in no way affiliated with them, but simply offers alternative numbers for those callers who need services other than N.A. (We term these "non-endorsed referrals"). Please incorporate this disclaimer into your conversation.

Sometimes people call asking what this or that drug is like, what it does or how long it stays in their system. Tell the caller that N.A. is concerned with recovery and that you're not qualified to give information about drugs.

Calls from healthcare professionals, students, and members of the media or community are usually requests for general information about N.A. or requests for our participation at a function. Answer any questions to the best of your ability. Make sure to get name, address and phone number of people making requests for information or directories and email our Public Relations Chair. It is important that we work within our service structure and that ALL requests for speaker, interviews, etc. be passed on the appropriate subcommittee.

YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE HELPLINE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE BACK WHAT HAS BEEN SO FREELY GIVEN TO YOU.

Most information (meetings, events, etc.) will be found on our website: centralillinoisna.org Go to this website, and become familiar with it. If you are unsure, please call the Helpline Chair who will be more than happy to walk you through it. Note that the website usually has the most accurate and current information regarding meetings, and events. If a caller mentions that they went to a particular meeting, and it's no longer there, or they were told by the facility that N.A. is no longer there; Call the Helpline Chair with this information so we can get it corrected ASAP.

A Quick Overview:

- DO carry the message to the addict that still suffers.
 - DO answer the phone "Helpline, this is ___, or how may I help you?"

 - DO get familiar with our website. This is the quickest way to get the information that is required.
 - Do make appropriate non-endorsed referrals
 - DO contact the Helpline Chairperson if you have any problems.
 - DO offer the Nar-Anon number to family members.
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- DON'T try to persuade the caller to stop using. Rather go to a meeting.
 - DON'T try and handle calls you are not qualified to handle.
 - Don't turn your phone off or hit ignore during your shift. This will automatically send the caller to your voicemail, eliminating the chance for all other volunteers To answer the call!!!

GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE / POSSIBLE DISMISSAL FROM THE HELPLINE

- Lack of fulfillment to Helpline Requirements, IE: Change fellowships, Sponsor in another fellowship.
 - Using any form of verbal aggression on the phone
 - Using excessive vulgarity on the phone. I don't necessarily mean a few swear words, I mean vulgarity. You should know the difference. Try to stick to language consistent with the Basic Text. Excessive use of vulgarity will constitute a warning. The second offence will be grounds for immediate dismissal.
 - Flirting with a caller, giving them your phone number, offering to give a ride to a newcomer (of the opposite sex).
 - Letting others answer the Helpline during your shift, without approval of Helpline Committee.
 - Relapse
 - IF A Helpline volunteer is revealed to be using the Helpline number and/or sources for personal use; (I.E. Work references, secondary personal phone line, etc.) that volunteer will be issued a warning. Any repeated violations will result in immediate dismissal.
- Any trusted servant who has violated any of the terms of this policy will be temporarily suspended from their responsibilities until the matter is reviewed by The Helpline Committee to determine if dismissal is warranted.
- After one year of dismissal date, you are welcome petition to get back on the Helpline Volunteer List after review by the Helpline Committee at the Regional PR meeting.