

Santa Cruz Area GSR Orientation Training Guide

Welcome everyone to the Area Service Committee (ASC) Group Service Representative (GSR) and Alternate GSR orientation. You hold a very important service commitment at the ASC because you serve as the voice of your group. It is important to understand the 12 Concepts of Service as well as the 12 Traditions. The business we conduct here will serve our groups, our fellowship, and the suffering addict. Good Luck and thank you for your service.

Group Service Representative (GSR) Description

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 subcommittee. 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 our meetings.

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 ASC. As such, they are responsible to act in the best interests of NA as a whole, not solely as advocates of their own 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 subcommittee chairpersons. They pay attention to 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 an active, critical role in discussions, which form the group conscience of the entire committee.

GSR's 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 group's needs. In group recovery meetings, GSRs make available fliers 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 reports. And if the group hasn't found solutions to those problems, the ASC 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. ^{xii}

Important things to keep in mind:

The Area Service Meeting's purpose is to conduct the business of Narcotics Anonymous in Santa Cruz. Members may not have more than one GSR commitment at a time. Each member may only have one vote at the ASC. This is to preserve our group conscious, avoid power struggles, maintain effective representation, and to ensure there is a single point of accountability for each group.

The ASC Meeting is also an opportunity for groups to voice any concerns, ask for feedback when problems can't be resolved at the group level, and get guidance from the fellowship when requested. Every group benefits from your questions and it also ensures our groups follow the traditions and better serves our members.

We ask that you always be mindful that personal recovery depends on NA unity. Sometimes that means voting your Group Conscious, even when you disagree, and acting on behalf of NA as a whole. Only by doing this can we carry the message to addict who still suffers. If you don't understand a motion or need feedback from your group you can abstain from the vote. We encourage you to ask your peers and use them as a resource. GSR's attendance and participation in the ASC Meeting helps unite our fellowship and ensure addicts who need us, will find us. Please read the description of GSR that is attached.

Member's that facilitate the meeting are trusted servants elected annually by the ASC. They are able to vote on motions and are responsible to ensure that the subcommittees follow the Traditions, adhere to the Concepts, that funds are used to carry our message, and maintain open communication between Groups, Regional Service, and World Service. Each group is individual and autonomous. The Administrative Committee's (Admin) ultimate role is to serve our meetings. There is a map of the Service structure attached.

Tips for the Santa Cruz ASC:

- 1) Before the meeting begins pick up flyers, new meeting schedules, and a copy of the Agenda. Submit your GSR report form to the Secretary and Literature Order to the Literature Committee.
- 2) Take an extra literature order form and meeting report sheet back to your group. These are usually easier to fill out in business meetings with your group.
- 3) When giving reports make sure they are what is important to your meeting. Reports should be quick, focused, and GSR's need to be available to answer any questions.
- 4) Be prepared to take notes and bring your own supplies. Use the Agenda and Schedule as a reporting tool for your group.
- 5) Remain focused and quiet during the meeting. Don't get involved in conversations with others. It is very easy to miss important information.

Elections for Administrative Positions

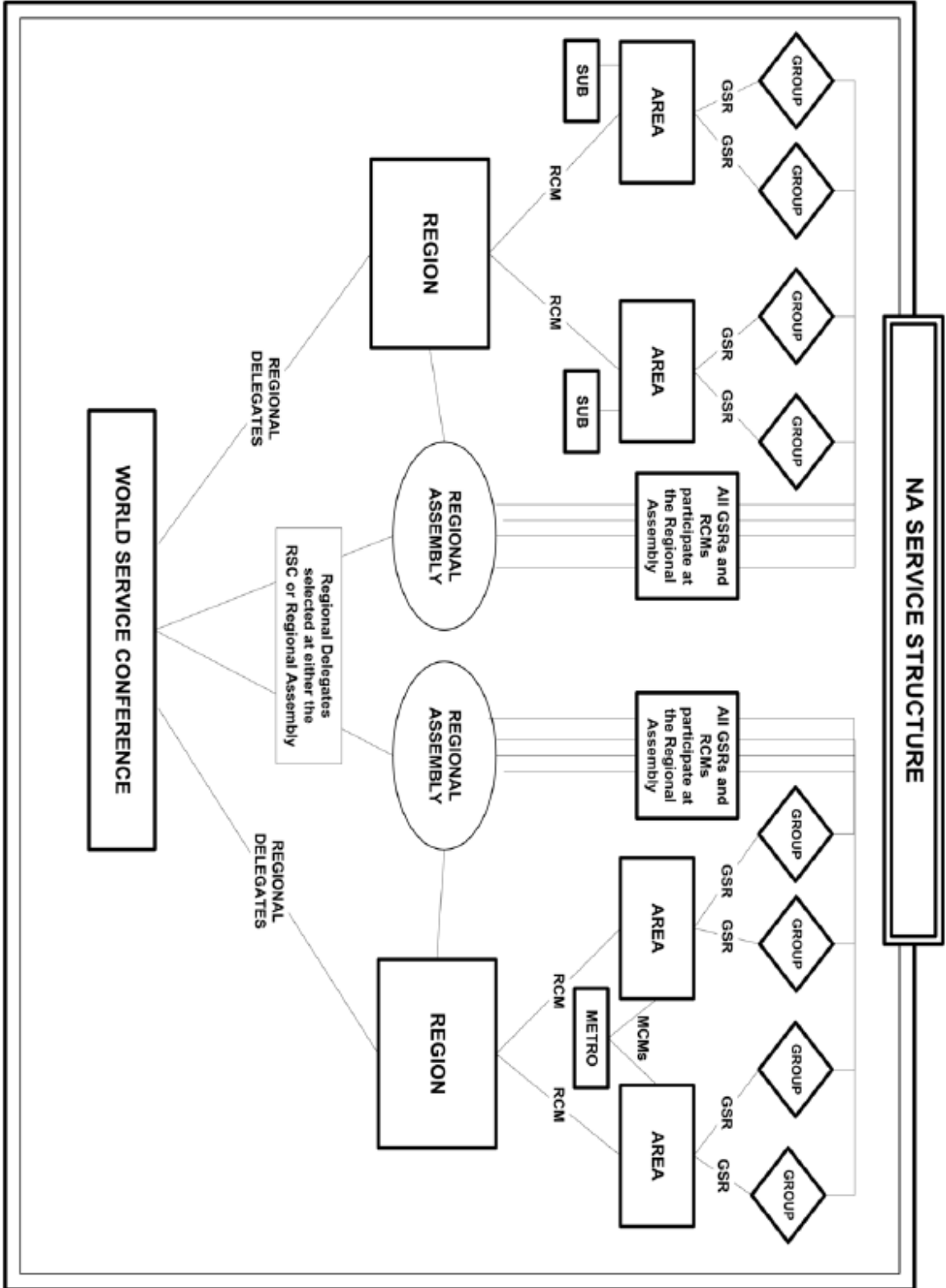
We must abide by our 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts to ensure that our trusted servants meet the requirements and have the ability to fulfill the position. Remember that they are setting an example for the group and Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. While volunteers are asked for, typically members are nominated for all positions. Each volunteer and nominee must complete a service resume and qualify. In the event there is more than one member being considered, an election will take place. It is very similar to how most of our groups conduct elections at meeting level or in business meetings. The ASC's suggestion's for service commitments in area is included in this packet. Additional information can be found in 'A Guide to Local Service,' the Treasurer's Handbook, IP #2 'The Group' & 'It Works: How & Why.'

Excerpts of the Fourth Concept of Narcotics Anonymous

“Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants. The trust necessary to confidently delegate service authority is founded on the careful selection of trusted servants...one of the first things we look for when selecting trusted servants is humility. Being asked to lead, to serve, to accept responsibility, is a humbling experience for a recovering addict. Through continuing to work the Twelve Steps, our trusted servants have come to know not only their assets but their defects and their limitations...Good NA leaders do not think they have to do everything themselves; they ask for help, advice, and direction on a regular basis. Our fellowship's leaders ought not be dictators or order-givers; they are our servants. Able leadership in the spirit of service ...leads by example, inviting respect.”

“We depend on those who serve us to report on their activities completely and truthfully. Our leaders must have the integrity needed to hear others well, yet still be able to stand fast on sound principle; to compromise, and to disagree without being disagreeable; to demonstrate the courage of their convictions, and to surrender. We seek trusted servants who are willing to expend their time and energy in the diligent service of others, studying available resource materials, consulting those with greater experience in their field of responsibility, and carefully fulfilling the tasks we've given them as completely as possible. Honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness, indispensable in recovery, are also essential to leadership...”

“Certain educational, business, personal, and service experiences may suit a recovering addict more to one type of service commitment than another. We do ourselves, our fellowship, and our trusted servants a disservice when we ask our members to perform tasks they are incapable of fulfilling...our leaders are but trusted servants, not governors...we should remember that the fulfillment of many service responsibilities requires nothing more than the willingness to serve. Other responsibilities, while requiring certain specific skills, depend for their fulfillment far more heavily on the trusted servant's spiritual maturity and personal integrity. Willingness, spiritual depth, and trustworthiness are strong demonstrations of the kind of leadership valued most highly in Narcotics Anonymous.”^{xiii}



DISRUPTIVE & VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

personal anonymity by their behavior. Calling law enforcement is appropriate when personal safety is at stake. These suggestions are meant to help groups establish and maintain an atmosphere of recovery. This information is not meant to give groups authorization to attempt to control other NA members. Keeping our unity and primary purpose as our focus will better allow us to resolve any potential problems or challenges.

Whenever we come together, we seek the presence and guidance of [a] loving Higher Power. This direction then guides us through all our actions.

*It Works: How and Why,
Tradition Two*

We should be cautious not to put any individual at risk in the attempt to address the problem. In other situations it may be better for two or three of the group's mature, stable members to meet the disruptive individual on his or her way into the meeting each time. These members can help the individual understand what is being asked of him or her, and that violent behavior is not acceptable. Another solution is to keep the meeting going while several group members lead the individual outside. The goal of this approach is not to intimidate or imply authority over someone, but rather to keep the person from disrupting the meeting. Group members can let the disruptive member know that he or she can stay if the disruption stops, but will be asked to go outside if the disruption continues. Again, tempering honesty with compassion and understanding will help here. Great caution must be exercised in order to keep members safe and avoid escalating the situation. Groups can expect that this intervention may need to occur more than once or twice. However, if a group continues to lovingly and firmly address the situation, there is a better chance that the disruptive person will respect the needs of those attending the meeting.

● Temporarily suspending a meeting

In some cases, the violent or disruptive behavior may be serious enough for the group to temporarily suspend the meeting. This may mean temporarily stopping the meeting or adjourning until the next regularly scheduled meeting. The objective of this approach is to address the problem and ensure that the meeting is a safe and welcoming place for members.

● Protecting the welfare of the group

Finally, if a member is violent or threatening violence at an NA meeting and no other approaches have been successful, then the group may decide to call the police. The safety of all addicts who attend the meeting is the primary consideration. While we want to respect each member's anonymity, a violent individual sacrifices his or her right to



This is Board-approved service material.

Service pamphlets should be used by members, groups, and service committees as a resource rather than being read in an NA meeting.

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6/12

SERVICE-RELATED MATERIAL
NOT INTENDED TO BE READ DURING RECOVERY MEETINGS

DISRUPTIVE AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

Groups occasionally experience challenges in maintaining an atmosphere in which recovery can be shared among addicts. This pamphlet addresses one of those challenges: disruptive or violent behavior in NA groups. The information here is meant to help groups fulfill the responsibility of welcoming members without allowing an individual to threaten the safety of those attending a meeting. Below are some examples of the kinds of disruptions that can compromise a group's atmosphere of recovery. What follows are practical solutions for groups in their efforts to address these challenges.

Examples

One of our members who recently relapsed after two years clean has been creating a disturbing situation at several meetings, and the disturbance has recently escalated into a very bad situation. Most recently she has gotten more violent and has been verbally attacking several people and making threats of physical violence.

Lately, many members have come to me concerning the problem of some disruptive children in our meetings. I sympathize with parents who need to bring their children to meetings, but it's really disturbing the group and no one wants to speak up about it.

An addict in our group keeps interrupting the speaker or person sharing. He gets up a lot and shares until the end of the meeting. I know his sponsor has tried to talk to him, but he seems uninterested. Our group feels like he holds the meeting hostage. What can we do?

The following strategies are some of the fellowship's best practices for addressing disruptive or violent behavior. There are varying degrees of disruptive behavior, and many of the challenges groups experience are not as

severe as the ones outlined above. In most cases, a minor disruption can be effectively handled by a well-prepared group secretary, leader, or chairperson. This pamphlet is geared toward those disruptions that occur during an actual meeting. Behaviors that occur outside of a meeting, such as harassment or behavior that exploits members' vulnerabilities, can also affect a meeting's atmosphere of recovery. Although these topics are not directly addressed in this pamphlet, a group's ability to have meaningful discussions will allow a group to better address and resolve any challenges it may face.

Sometimes, NA members who attempt to address a disruptive situation cause just as much of a disturbance as the initial disruption. These suggestions are offered so that members of a group can work together to preserve a meeting's atmosphere of recovery; they are not meant to give members license to exert authority over other members.

Common sense, open minds, calm discussion, accurate information, mutual respect, and healthy personal recovery enable a group to deal effectively with almost anything that comes its way.

The Group Booklet

● Group discussion

The first thing a group can do is discuss the situation in a group business meeting. These discussions can help a group develop a plan for dealing with disruptive behavior and identify who in the group will be responsible for handling specific disruptions. An open and frank group discussion may also highlight some other important solutions and can help group members feel safer and more unified. Groups often experience minor disruptions such as members talking during meetings or unmonitored children. A discussion may not necessarily fix these disruptions, but it can help the group to feel more resolved about the situation.

● Meeting leader's role

A chairperson, leader, or group secretary can help refocus a meeting by interrupting a disruptive share or outburst. It is entirely appropriate for a group leader to help refocus a meeting's atmosphere of recovery by announcing a five-minute break or asking the group to join in a prayer or moment of silence. In an effort to respect members' individual rights, we sometimes forget to respect the group. In our respect for other members, we must not allow any individual to prevent a group from creating an atmosphere of recovery.

● Meeting topic

Another option is for the group to consider having the recovery meeting focused on a discussion about a group's atmosphere of recovery. This discussion would attempt to raise the group's awareness of the spiritual principles that apply to an atmosphere of recovery (such as unity or carrying the NA message). Groups that try this approach would want to be sure to avoid discussing a specific individual's behavior, instead focusing on principles and the group's atmosphere of recovery.

● ASC discussion

The group may consider taking the problem to the area service committee meeting in the hope that discussion there may lead to an increased awareness of the problem and possible examples of resolutions from other groups in the area.

● Approaching the member

If the group decides to approach the disruptive person, the circumstances of each situation will dictate the best way to do this. In some situations it may make sense for one member to discuss the situation with the disruptive individual. This will need to be done in a loving, caring way—tempering honesty with compassion and understanding.



Narcotics Anonymous Group Service Member Suggested Guidelines

Each of the following statements is a direct quote taken from Narcotics Anonymous literature. Our goal is to provide the trusted servants in our groups with the training they requested in the 2012-2013 Santa Cruz Area Inventory.

Secretary:

- “Arranging a table with NA books and pamphlets, local meeting` lists, NA activity fliers, service bulletins, The NA Way Magazine, and NA newsletters.”ⁱ
- “Selecting meeting speakers.”ⁱ
- “Opening and closing the meeting facility regularly—no matter what.”ⁱⁱ
- “Keeping the meeting’s records.”ⁱⁱ
- “Arranging for the group’s business meetings.”ⁱⁱ
- “Refocus a meeting by interrupting a disruptive share or outburst...by announcing a five-minute break or asking the group to join in a prayer or moment of silence...we must not allow any individual to prevent a group from creating an atmosphere of recovery.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Treasurer:

- “Financially secure and are good at managing their personal finances.”^{iv}
- “Serve for a full year.”^{iv}
- “Always asking another member to confirm their count.”^{iv}
- “Pay expenses, keep good, simple records, and regularly provide financial reports to their groups.”^{iv}
- “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 NA World Services.”^v
- “Carrying out group conscience decisions for the flow of funds.”^{vi}

GSR:

- “Attending the area service committee (ASC) meeting regularly; Serving as a liaison between the group and the area.”^{vi}
- “Serving as a member on ASC subcommittees.”^{vi}

- “Sharing responsibilities with the GSR-Alternate.”^{vi}
- This duty requires the representative to provide information to the group about developments in the worldwide NA Fellowship and to share with the area any activities, strengths, or problems of the group.”^{vi}
- “We do not want our trusted servants to constantly inundate us with every fact and figure possible, though we do expect them to provide us with complete information on all their activities and discussions if we ask for it.”^{vii}

Alternate GSR:

- “Attend all the area service committee meetings (as nonvoting participants) with their GSRs.”
- “If a GSR cannot attend an area committee meeting, that group’s alternate GSR participates in the GSR’s place.”^{viii}
- “Alternate GSRs, along with other members, may also serve on area subcommittees.”^{viii}
- “Alternates work with their counter- parts to better understand the position.”^{ix}

Speakers:

- “The NA member chosen to speak at a meeting needs to be someone who is working and living the NA program of recovery, which is the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions... The speaker helps fulfill the group’s primary purpose, carrying the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. When speaking at an NA meeting, we should be careful to deliver a clear message of recovery by identifying ourselves as addicts recovering from the disease of addiction. It is not necessary to dwell excessively on our active addiction or “war stories,” because we all know what it was like to use. We came to Narcotics Anonymous to stop using and we are here to share our experience, strength, and hope of recovery.”^x

Group Members:

- “If someone shares a message that seems to compromise the atmosphere of recovery, group members can attempt to gently re-establish the meeting’s focus after that person has shared. This doesn’t mean group members should correct or clean up what has been said, but they can freely share their own experience, strength, and hope, offering an additional perspective.”^{xi}

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i The Group Booklet, Revised (page 15)
 ii IP No. 2 The Group (page 5)
 iii Disruptive & Violent Behavior (page 1)
 iv The Group Booklet, Revised (page 15)
 v The Group Booklet, Revised (page 16)
 vi IP No. 2 The Group (page 7)
 vii The 12 Concepts of NA Service (page 18)
 viii The Group Booklet, Revised (page 18)
 ix Group Trusted Servants Roles & Responsibilities (page 1)
 x IP No. 2 The Group (page 9)
 xi NA Groups & Medication (page 3)
 xii A Guide to Local Service, 2002 Edition (Page 35)
 xiii A Guide to Local Service, 2002 Edition (Page 6,7)
 xiv A Guide to Local Service, 2002 Edition (Page V)