

Vancouver Area Service Committee Orientation Packet

Welcome to the Vancouver Area Service Committee (VASC) of Narcotics Anonymous. It can be overwhelming and confusing the first time you come to Area so if you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to your Facilitator, Co-facilitator or Regional Committee Member (RCM). Their role will be assisting you in the transition to your very important role between the groups and Area Service.

"Everything that occurs in the course of NA service must be motivated by the desire to more successfully carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers." Basic Text, p. Xvi

As a newly elected Group Service Representative, or GSR Alternate, you form the foundation of the NA service structure. You serve as a link between your group and the rest of Narcotics Anonymous. You help to communicate the wishes of your group to the NA service structure and, in turn, bring back to your group information about what is happening in Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

As a decision-making participant at the Area Service Committee (ASC) meetings, you will take an active part in making the decisions affecting the kinds of services provided to the groups that are part of our Area. You will be asked to carry your group's conscience on matters involving the Area's finances, policies, events, and elections, and also on matters affecting NA services at the regional and world level. Your group will also expect you to make certain decisions on its behalf. You may take part in discussion and debate on the Area floor and even make proposals for the committee to consider and decide on.

It will take some time and effort to digest the information in this packet. NA service is a growing and learning experience for all who perform it. No one learned how to be an effective GSR all at once. So, easy does it!

At first you may find it helpful to sit with a more experienced GSR so that, as the meeting progresses, you can get immediate answers to your questions. You may also raise your hand and ask questions of the ASC Facilitator. Remember that the ASC exists to serve your group. Without active participation, this cannot happen.

Enclosed you will find:

1. G.S.R. Orientation Packet-created to assist in you knowing what your role is as a GSR and the function of the ASC and its meetings.
2. A rough guide to the ASC meeting.
3. The Area Service Agenda-designed to help you follow the order of our ASC meetings.
4. Who's who at the ASC.
5. Do's and Don'ts, Why's and How's of an Area Service Committee Meeting.
6. Home Group Business Meeting Responsibilities.
7. Responsibilities to the Area Service Committee.
8. Good questions to ponder and perhaps discuss with others.
9. List of suggested tools for Area Service work.
10. Narcotic Anonymous websites.
11. An example of and blank copy of the GSR report form, as well as directions to the "live" report form available on our website.
12. How to build a stronger home group.
13. A basic understanding of the Consensus Based Decision Making process.
14. Glossary-"What does that mean?"
15. The short version of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and the 12 Concepts.
16. Contact information form-please fill out and give to the ASC Secretary before you leave your first ASC meeting so that you will ensure you are included in the mailing list for ASC meetings.

What is a GSR ?

- An elected trusted servant of their home 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 ASC.
- 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 Tradition, Policy, and the 12 Concepts.

How do they do it?

- Attend the group business meeting regularly.
- Attend the ASC meeting monthly.
- Report to the ASC, the group status, donations, 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 sub-committees of the ASC.
 - I. What do the sub-committees do?
 - II. When do they meet?
 - III. Who may attend?
 - IV. Which sub-committees need support?
- Attend sub-committee meetings.
- Learn the service structure.
- Learn what the ASC, RSC, WSC, WSO, etc are.
- Review 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 willingness to learn the duties of a GSR.

How does a group take care of its business?

- At the monthly service meeting, where decisions are made for the literature purchases, Area donations, rent, etc. (it is suggested that your group service meeting be held the week before Area Meeting)
- By group conscience.
- 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 service meetings when important issues surface, like a literature review, a group conscience, etc.

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.

What about GSR reports? How often?

-Usually GSR's make one report to the group at the monthly service 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 sub-committees special business. They meet outside of the regular meeting time, usually just before or just after.

What is a group conscience?

- An informed decision taken by the group as a whole.
- An expression of our Higher Power'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 service meeting if a member feels it is necessary.

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

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

GSR report: Group level-may include

- Attendance of groups and elected trusted servants of the ASC.
- Open positions at Area and Region.
- Proposals or proposals 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 goings-on at the ASC. I.e. the agenda, how to make a proposal, 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 Facilitators attend their respective committee meetings at the RSC?

A Rough Guide to the Area Service Committee (ASC) Meeting

If you are at the ASC for the first time...Welcome!
If you've been before you still might find this useful.

Why do we need an ASC?

- It is the vital link in the chain between the individual recovering addict in the group and the rest of the worldwide fellowship. Without it the groups would be isolated.
- It provides a forum of information to help co-ordinate groups and subcommittees.
- The area receives donations from groups, in accordance with Tradition 7, to maintain our services and further our primary purpose- to carry the message of recovery.

Who's who at the ASC?

Facilitator-Facilitates the ASC and ensures that the ASC keeps to the agenda of business.

Co-Facilitator-Supports the Facilitator, liaises with the area sub-committees and stands in if the Facilitator is absent.

Secretary-Records what happens at the ASC in the form of minutes, which are sent to each group via the Group Service Representative (GSR).

Treasurer-reconciles monthly bank statements, receives group donations, pays the bills, continually reconcile monies paid/due from other for phonline and newsletter (Tri-cities, RSDC, SOFA, WC, UFV) and ensures that the subcommittees have their funds they need and keeps a record of all transactions.

Regional Committee Member 1 (RCM)-The link between the Area and the BC Region of NA and makes sure that the GSR's understand what is going on at the ASC.

RCM 2 (Alternate)-Supports the RCM1.

Area Sub-committees-Includes Hospitals and Institutions (H&I), Public Information (PI), Literature, Activities, Phonline, News Letter, Spring Clean, Women's Retreat, and Policy and Procedure.

Regular ASC Meeting Agenda

- Call to order
- Moment of silence for the still-suffering addict, followed by the service prayer
- Twelve Concepts for NA Service
- Welcoming of any new groups or GSR's to the VASC
- Roll call (Round robin of introductions)
- Approval of the minutes
- GSR Reports
- Administrative officers reports (Executive)
- Sub-committee reports
- Sharing session (GSR and open sharing)
- Treasurer's ending balance
- Old Business (including elections of open positions)
- New Business
- Confirmation of next meeting
- Adjourn meeting with the "We" version of the Serenity Prayer

Do's and Don'ts, Why's and How's of an ASC Meeting

Do's:

- Do attend every area from start to finish.
- Do bring a working pen and paper that can be written on.
- Do sit next to someone that can help you or whom you can help at the table.
- Do ask questions when you don't understand something.
- Do bring water and a quiet snack.
- Do bring appropriate literature (A guide to Local Services, 12 Concepts, and Area policy and Procedure).
- Do read the minutes from the last meeting prior to attending the ASC (will be distributed via email).
- Do participate in a sub-committee meeting.
- Do mentor an Alt.GSR to take your place before your commitment is done.

Don'ts:

- Don't show up late.
- Don't be disrespectful.
- Don't leave early without having a backup for the information.
- Don't vote without understanding.
- Don't forget to ask your RCM's for help (this is part of their job, to help the GSR's).

Why are we here?

- To bring information from the groups to Area.
- To bring information from Area to the groups.
- To further our recovery.
- To build our self-esteem.
- To give back to the fellowship.
- To strengthen our connection with others.
- To help others.
- To have fun.

How to be a better GSR:

- Practice the spiritual principles, especially; open-mindedness, acceptance, willingness, integrity, humility, and honesty.
- Work the NA steps.
- Share what you learn.
- Help others.
- Participate.
- Always be teachable.

Home Group Business Meeting Responsibilities

- Hold a group conscience or business meeting at least once a month
- The group's donations and literature stock are usually discussed along with any other issues affecting the group and/or ASC.
- Attend the ASC and bring the group's conscience.
- Provide the group with fliers, announcements, meeting lists and newsletters from the ASC.
- Announce at group meetings, area events, sub-committees and groups needing support.
- Relay information from the ASC back to the group. (The best way to do this is usually with the ASC minutes or the announcements on the website, which should ensure accurate information.)
- Keep the Newsletter Liaison informed of meeting changes to avoid addicts being misdirected.
- Attend sub-committees.

Responsibilities to the Area Service Committee

- Bring group reports to the ASC.
- Participate in discussion and bring group conscience.
- Bring forth, discuss and participate in decision making regarding proposals before the ASC.
- Carry proposals, fliers, announcements, reports and forms back to the groups.
- Bring the group's donation to the ASC and give a report on the current status of the group.
- The GSR buys the group's literature at the ASC and returns with it at the group's next meeting.
- Keep in mind Tradition Twelve, particularly during any decision making, and carry the group's conscience.

Good Questions to Ponder and Perhaps Discuss with Others

1. Why do we have suggested clean time with positions?
2. If you were asked to express your feelings of what group conscience means to you, what would you say?
3. What are the priorities at a meeting of the Vancouver 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 proposal is for?
6. How do your principles influence your voting?
7. What are my expectations before, during and after an ASC meeting?
8. Is policy important? Why?
9. Do I get confused at an Area meeting? If so, how can we change that?
10. What is the purpose of having an Area Service Committee?
12. What is the role of the 7TH tradition in the Area and NA as a whole?
13. What are the responsibilities of your position?
14. Where do spiritual principles play a part in service?

List of Suggested Tools for Area Service Work

Suggested Reading Material:

- A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous
- Twelve Concepts for NA Service
- Item # 1600 The Group Booklet (Revised)
- Item #2202 Group Business Meetings
- Item #2203 Group Trusted Servants: Roles and Responsibility
- Item # 2206 Principles & Leadership in NA Service
- IP # 2 The Group
- It Works: How and Why (The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous)
- Vancouver Area Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous Policy and Procedures

Narcotics Anonymous Websites

- www.vascna.ca (Vancouver Area Narcotics Anonymous)
- www.bcrna.ca (British Columbia Region Narcotics Anonymous)
- www.na.org (Narcotics Anonymous World Services)

Other Suggested Tools

- Step work
- Prayer
- Calling a sponsor
- A dictionary
- Area minutes
- Learning Days
- Networking in the Fellowship
- Phone calls
- Unity version of the Serenity Prayer
- Any other spiritual, creative action you can think of

Vancouver Area Service Committee

GSR Home-Group Inventory Form

Group Name: _____ Month: _____

GSR: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Average Attendance: _____ Newcomers: _____ Visitors: _____

FINANCIALS:

INCOME EXPENSES

Beginning Balance: \$ _____ Rent: \$ _____

7TH Tradition: \$ _____ Supplies: \$ _____

Literature: \$ _____ Literature: \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____ TOTAL: \$ _____

ASC DONATION: \$ _____ ENDING BALANCE \$ _____

CAKES

Name Date Years Clean

*The Home-Group Inventory Form does not have to be read out at the Vancouver Area Meeting.
 The Home-Group Inventory Form should only become a topic of discussion at the area table when a Home-Group needs to discuss issues of accountability.*

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GSR Topics of Discussion Form for the GSR Sharing Session

Mentoring

- (1) Have Home-Group members coordinated events for people holding service positions to encourage mentoring? (GSR Orientations, Guest Speakers from Area, Attendance of Subcommittee Meetings)
- (2) GSR Report Forms: Have GSR's and Alternate GSR's been taught how to fill out the required forms?

Home-Group Business Meeting

- How was the last Home-Group Business Meeting Conducted?
- Were proposals from Regional and Area Discussed?
- Was information shared between the GSR and the Regional Committee Member (RCM)?

VOTING PROCEDURES - Consensus Based Decision Making

Concept 6 says that “Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.” However, group conscience is not *itself* a decision-making mechanism. NA service bodies make decisions using whatever decision-making mechanism they have decided to use, such as Robert’s Rules or Consensus Decision Making.

VASC decided in 2013 to switch to a Consensus decision-making process. This means that when proposals are put forward for group decision, you will not be asked to vote on them. Instead, the Facilitator will assist the group in working toward a consensus. You will be asked to provide your thoughts (if any) on the proposal being considered. If you have any questions or concerns, it is your right and responsibility to speak up and ensure that your questions are answered and your concerns are addressed.

The Facilitator shall ensure that GSR’s are prepared to work towards consensus.

Step 1: Test for Consensus

“Do we have consensus?”

If consensus is achieved then action points for implementation are discussed

Step 2: Stand Aside

If GSR’s could not reach consensus because someone has concerns, but will allow the proposal to move forward, the secretary will note the concerns, then the proposal will continue to be passed.

The VASC Facilitator will ask the GSR(s) “are you willing to stand aside, and let this proposal pass?”

If there are significant reservations about a proposal, the body may choose to modify the proposal

Step 3: Block

A block is a rare and extreme form of dissent taken only if you honestly believe that one of the 12 Traditions, 12 Concepts, or spiritual principle is directly violated by a proposal, or that some very fundamental moral position would be violated.

A participant who blocks must be able to articulate which Tradition, Concept, or spiritual principle fundamental to NA is violated by the proposal.

If consensus is blocked because no reasonable consensus can be reached, the group stays with existing policy, does nothing, or asks the creators of the proposal to do more work it.

Glossary

“What does that mean??”

TERM DEFINITION

VASC – Vancouver Area Service Committee

GSR Group Service Representative

GSR Alt. Group Service Representative Alternate

IP Informational pamphlet

NA Narcotics Anonymous

NAWS Narcotics Anonymous World Services

PI Public Information

PR Public Relations

P&P Policy and Procedure

RCM Regional Committee Member

RD Regional Delegate

RDA Regional Delegate Alternate

RSC Regional Service Committee
RSO Regional Service Office
WB World Board
WSC World Service Conference
WSO World Service Office

The Twelve Concepts for 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 rests 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 processes.
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 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.