

OFF THE WALL AREA

PHONELINE GUIDE

TO BE A PHONE LINE VOLUNTEER, YOU MUST HAVE:

1. A minimum of 1 year clean.
2. Knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.
3. A Narcotics Anonymous sponsor.
4. The willingness to serve and give of personal time.
5. Be oriented by the phonenumber coordinator, or an approved volunteer.
6. Maintain a working knowledge of the phonenumber guidelines.
7. Be willing to use your own phone (smartphone not required).
8. Use Narcotics Anonymous language and refer to NA literature.

Responsiveness is a key principle for phone line service. This means that trusted servants should engage with callers in a sensitive, appropriate, and helpful manner. Leadership qualities such as integrity, the ability to listen, and sound judgment are essential in providing phone line service.

Avoid using NA jargon (such as “it works when you work it,” “home group,” “get a sponsor,” etc.).

“Who calls our phone lines?”

Addicts (both potential members and current NA members). Non-addicts. Family members and loved ones. Professionals. Clergy.

Crisis calls:

Volunteers should be noticeably clear about where their responsibility ends. Phone line volunteers are not counselors or crisis workers. Threats to commit suicide, a drug overdose, or talk about being a victim of violence are all examples of crisis calls. Refusing to refer such callers to qualified outside crisis agencies could have legal implications, depending on local laws.

Meeting recommendations:

Volunteers can respect callers’ requests and recommend a meeting where they are likely to find addicts with whom they may identify. We do not, however, automatically assume that because someone is of a certain age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual identity, they will want a meeting recommendation. If there are no common needs meetings in an area but there are meetings where, for example, a larger population of young people regularly attends, then phonenumber volunteers can suggest these meetings to a caller who is asking for a recommendation.

Twelfth step calls:

A twelfth step call is usually a request for assistance to get to a meeting. We carry NA’s message through twelfth step calls. A twelfth step call can mean that two or more addicts provide a ride to an NA meeting or that volunteers simply talk with the caller, helping the potential member get to a meeting on their own. When possible, members meet those requesting a ride to a meeting in a public place.

Referrals:

We do not give referrals to one specific treatment center or detoxification unit. Instead, we can provide a list of any and all local treatment centers and not align or affiliate ourselves with one in particular, or we can inform members of

generic treatment referral numbers, such as the National Treatment Referral Line in the United States. If a caller has a local telephone directory, we can direct them to the services listed there. The same principle is true for suicide prevention numbers and other community service numbers. Family members and loved ones of addicts frequently call our phone lines. Volunteers can provide numbers for Nar-Anon and Families Anonymous or other similar information. But remember that we do not recommend one program over another or offer our opinions about any of these programs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PHONELINE VOLUNTEERS' EXPERIENCE WITH CALLS

I have been using (smoking pot) for three years and I am not sure if I am an addict. Can NA help? We suggest attending an NA meeting and speaking with some of the members there. Because NA meetings are a safe place, newcomers are encouraged to ask questions. Also, read some of our literature, which is available at most NA meetings, and decide for yourself. The informational pamphlet, "Am I an Addict?" may help you in your decision making.

I am getting drug-tested by my parole officer; how long does cocaine stay in your system? Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship for those who think they may have a problem with drugs. We are a self-help, recovery-oriented organization and employ no medical professionals. We do not give any medical advice or opinions, but we do help addicts find recovery through the NA program.

What should I expect when I go to my first NA meeting? Do I have to talk? Typically, a leader or chairperson will conduct the meeting. There is usually time for participation in which members share about their experience, strength, and hope with staying clean. You do not have to speak during the meeting if you do not want to. We encourage you to get there a little early so that you can speak with some of the members and pick up some literature before the meeting starts.

How much does NA cost? Are you counselors? There are no fees or dues to be a member of NA. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. We are not professional counselors; we are recovering addicts who share our experience to help each other stay clean.

I am a nurse by profession, and I want to get clean. Where can I find a nurses' meeting? Some areas have common needs meetings while others do not. This area does/does not have a nurses' NA meeting. We can tell you, however, that recovering addicts from all types of professions attend our meetings.

I would like to go to an NA meeting, but I do not have a car. Can you help? Yes, we can try. Where do you live? Let me take your number down and see if I can find a ride for you. (Refer to area Twelfth-Step list)

I am suicidal and I do not want to live anymore. What should I do? We strongly suggest contacting the suicide prevention number, which is _____, or 911 to get immediate assistance.

My boyfriend is using drugs, stealing, and cheating. What can I do to help him? Will you call him? Because Narcotics Anonymous is a self-help program, addicts must have the desire to stop using. Once he is ready to stop using drugs, please have him call us so we can direct him to an NA meeting in his area. In the meantime, you may want to call Nar-Anon or Families Anonymous. Although we are not affiliated with these organizations, we are happy to provide their telephone numbers.

My son/daughter is using drugs and wants to stop taking drugs. Can I go with him/her to their first meeting? You may attend an "open" NA meeting with your son/daughter. Open meetings welcome family members and the community at large. Closed meetings are for addicts only. Let me check our meeting list, so I can give you several choices of open meetings...

Will you call me if my son/daughter does not show up to meetings regularly? No, we are not able to do this. Because this is a self-help program, it is not our position to monitor an addict's willingness to attend meetings.

I heard that my old friend, Jane Smith, is in NA. Can I have her phone number? We are not at liberty to give out contact information for individuals who may or may not be members.

Drugs are being sold in my apartment complex. Can you come and arrest them? Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship for those who think they may have a problem with drugs. We are a self-help, recovery-oriented organization and employ no law enforcement professionals.

Google Voice Instructions

1. When answering a call Google Voice will ask you first if you accept the call. Press one to do so.
2. If no one answers the call it will go to voice mail.
3. The caller's phone number will show on your phone.
4. If you call back a number from your phone, your phone number will show up on the phone you are calling. If you do not want this to happen due to anonymity concerns, enter *67 before calling the number back.
5. There are other features on Google Voice that you may be interested in like setting times for when your phone rings during the day. This will have to be done by the phone line coordinator.

YOUR PARTICPATION:

1. Your cooperation in helping to keep a voice on the phone line is greatly appreciated.
2. PLEASE KEEP YOUR COMMITMENT. The phone line needs to be covered to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, notify the coordinator promptly if you wish to be removed.
3. It is the phonline volunteer's responsibility to learn and follow all policies that have been set forth in this training document.
4. All Off the Wall Area phonline guidelines have been approved by the PI subcommittee and must be upheld.
5. We strongly suggest that you read all PI subcommittee reports to be aware of changes and current issues. Phonline volunteers are encouraged to contact the Phonline coordinator, or PI Chair (in that order) if there are questions regarding phone service or these responsibilities.
6. It is not required, but is suggested, that volunteers attend the PI Subcommittee meetings each month.

Phoneline Flowchart

