



Greater Scranton Steamtown Area Service Committee

GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (G.S.R.) ORIENTATION PACKET

This packet was created as an informational resource to help GSRs to more effectively serve their Groups. It is not meant to be the final word or complete description of their duties but merely a suggested guide and should not override any Group autonomy. We hope that this will be an inspiration to more effectively serve in the GSR position.

*This packet was approved for distribution to the Groups in the GSSANA in February, 2014. It should not be considered APPROVED NA Literature, yet it was compiled from APPROVED NA Literature. Distribution and Use by your Group is NOT Mandatory.

Welcome to the Greater Scranton Steamtown Area Service Committee!

Welcome to the regular monthly meeting of the Greater Scranton Steamtown Area of Narcotics Anonymous Service Committee (GSSASC) meeting. If you have never attended an area service committee meeting before, you may be feeling a bit confused. You may be asking yourself questions like: "What is going on here?" and "What am I supposed to do?" At this point, we suggest you sit back, relax and take a deep breath. An area service committee meeting is nothing more than a business meeting. Once you become familiar with the meeting format and operating guidelines, what is happening here should soon start to make sense.

You are holding in your hands a GSR orientation packet designed to answer many of your questions. It contains the basic tools you will need to be an effective Group Service Representative. You have a very important role serving as the link between your Group and the Narcotics Anonymous Service Structure!

Things that you should have:

A notebook, a pen and an open mind. Take notes, so you will be better able to report back to your Group. It is up to you to keep them accurately informed of what is happening at Area.

A copy of the minutes of the last GSSASC meeting from your Group's previous GSR or the GSSASC Secretary.

Copies of A Guide To Local Services In Narcotics Anonymous and the booklet: Twelve Concepts for NA Service.

As a Group Service Representative, or GSR Alternate, you form the foundation of the NA service structure. You serve as the 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 voting participant at GSSASC 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 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 motions for the committee to consider and vote on.

It may take you some time and effort to digest this information. 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 GSSASC Chairperson. There are experienced, caring members serving with you here today, but they won't know that you need help if you don't say so.

Remember that GSSASC exists to serve your Group. Without your active participation, this cannot happen.

The ASC is held on the 3rd Sunday of each month, from 10am until 1pm. There will be breaks called periodically by the Area Chair.

You should prepare for Area by attending your Group's business meeting, and preparing a written Group report. You will be asked to read your report and give it to the Area Secretary. The current Area Secretary is _____.

If your Group has asked you to bring a donation to Area, and/or to purchase literature, have the money separated.

The donation is given to the Area Treasurer, who will give you a receipt. The current Area treasurer is _____.

For Literature, fill out a literature order form and give it with the correct amount of money to the Literature chair, who will gather your literature for you. The current Literature Chair is _____.

You should have a current copy of Area Policy, and you should be familiar with it. The current Policy Chair is _____.

An essential tool in your service as a GSR is A Guide to Local Services in NA, which is available through the Literature Committee.

(Reproduced from A Guide to Local Services in NA Page 36)

Group Service Representatives (GSR)

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 sub-committee. 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 the groups in the same way that that groups nourish and support the structure.

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 area service committee. As such, they are responsible to act in the best interest of NA as a whole, not solely as advocates of their 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 sub-committee chairpersons. They read 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 active, critical parts in the discussions which form the group conscience of the entire committee.

Group Service Representatives 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 service 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 groups need. In group recovery meetings, GSRs make available flyers 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 report. And if the group hasn't found solutions to those problems, the area 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.

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GSR Orientation Sheet Q&A

What is a GSR ?

- A Trusted Servant of their 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 Area Service Committee.
- 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 Traditions, Policy, and the 12 Concepts.

How do they do it?

- Attend the Group meeting regularly.
- Attend the ASC meeting monthly.
- Report to the ASC the Group status, donation, 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 subcommittees of the ASC.
- What do the subcommittees do?
- When do they meet?
- Who may attend?
- Which subcommittees need support?
- Attend subcommittee 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 the clean time required by their Group.
- Has knowledge of the service structure of NA or the willingness to study it.
- Has an understanding of, or the willingness to learn the duties of a GSR.

GSR Orientation Sheet Q&A continued

How does a Group take care of its business?

- At the monthly service meeting, where the recommendations are voted on for literature purchases, Area donations, rent, etc. (it is suggested that your service meeting be held the week before the 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 issue surface, like 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 GSRs 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 special business. They meet outside of the regular meeting time, usually just before or after.

What is a Group Conscience?

- An informed vote 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's necessary.

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

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

Below are some commonly used terms you will hear at the ASC (Area Service Committee).

ALPHABET SOUP

"What does that mean??" TERM	ALTERNATIVE TERM USED	DEFINITION
ASC		Area Service Committee
ASR	RCM	Area Service Representative
BOD		Board of Directors
CAR		Conference Agenda Report
CAT		Conference Approval Track
GSR		Group Service Representative
GSR Alt.		Group Service Representative Alternate
H&I		Hospitals and Institutions
IP		Informational Pamphlet
NA		Narcotics Anonymous
NAWS		Narcotics Anonymous World Services
PI		Public Information
RCM	ASR	Regional Committee Member
RD	RSR	Regional Delegate
RDA		Regional Delegate Alternate
RSC		Regional Service Committee
RSO		Regional Service Office
RSR	RD	Regional Service Representative
GSSANA		Greater Scranton Steamtown Area of Narcotics Anonymous
MARNA		Mid-Atlantic Region of Narcotics Anonymous
WB		World Board
WSC		World Service Conference
WSO		World Service Office

Helpful internet links:

www.na.org NA's official web presence. The amount of information available there is staggering.

www.marscna.org The Mid-Atlantic Region's web page. Regional events, contact information and meeting lists for every Area in the Region can be found there.

www.gssana.org Our Area's web page. Committee schedules, events, meeting lists and more.