

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

Aotearoa New Zealand - Australia - Bahrain - Cambodia - China - Guam - Hawaii
India - Indonesia - Iran - Japan - Kuwait - Malaysia - Maldives - Nepal - NERF - Pakistan
Philippines - Saudi Arabia - Singapore - South Korea - Thailand - Viet Nam



Asia Pacific Forum Newsletter

34th Edition May 2009

APF Statement of Purpose

The Asia Pacific Forum is made up of the NA Communities from the Asia Pacific Zone. These guidelines are devised to facilitate the agreed purposes of this service body. The following is the stated purpose of the Asia Pacific Forum, which these guidelines honor:

- 1) We the NA Regions and communities of Asia Pacific, have joined to discuss issues of mutual concern, address our common needs, exchange ideas and share experiences to further our primary purpose.
- 2) This forum is intended to complement the existing service structure of NA. Goals to Encourage develop and support NA in this part of the world:
 - a) To encourage and support translations of NA literature into our languages.
 - b) Encourage and support Outreach, H&I and Public Information efforts within Asia Pacific.
 - c) Encourage, maintain and support communication among NA members, communities and Regions within this part of the world.
 - d) To continue working with NA World Services in our efforts.

APF Vision Statement:

Our Vision is that one day:

- a) Every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life;
- b) NA communities worldwide, NA world services and the APF work together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to carry our message of recovery;
- c) Narcotics Anonymous has universal recognition and respect as a viable program of recovery.

"CARRYING THE MESSAGE"

Dear Readers,

This is our small humble Asia Pacific Forum newsletter. We invite all communities to take part in making this successful. Just as the group is responsible to carry the message to the addict who still suffers, so are we responsible as a forum. I hope these few articles will awaken something in you, and cause you to put pen to paper about an experience, an event, or a new understanding of a principle in recovery. "This program is a set of spiritual principles".

At our APF meeting in Manila in February we practiced becoming a delegate driven APF, as opposed to admin driven. Through workshops on Strategic Planning facilitated by Mark H, we held discussions on how to carry our message and discussed the obstacles that were blocking our communities from carrying out our primary purpose. The APF will sponsor its first two fellowship development trips, to Maldives and Bhutan, and an APF presentation video was made and distributed to the communities. Of course more was shared, talked about, discussed with vigor and excitement, but the reports and the minutes are available on the official APF website and hopefully within your community. Please go to www.apfna.org.

H&I Presentation by Bablu

Yesterday as I drove to work, Xoba (RD) phoned me from the Maldives. He wanted to know how to go about a H&I presentation to a big group inside rehab near there. I spoke briefly to him and learnt that they were 2 guys and 2 women members who were going for the H&I presentation. During the course of the conversation it occurred to me what if only Xoba and Mayan (ASC Chair) were available for H&I in the Maldives. Would that mean that until such time another woman member came along to their tiny fellowship they could not do any H&I ? The H&I guidelines are clear about same sexes going to same sex rehab facilities we know but in the Maldives the scene might have demanded a compromise, what. However, it didn't come to that thankfully as Mayan had another female member with her just as Xoba had another NA bloke to boot.

By now I had pulled up my car and spoke a bit more about the "do's & dont's" and the dress code we all adhere to when going for a H&I presentation anywhere. There was so much information and experience I needed to share with him that we would need to speak at length and at ease. Also I soon realized that I would need to repeat all this information to the rest of their panel again so we fixed a time when he'd call me back a couple of hours later. And I requested that all 4 of them be present and I'd talk over speaker phone to their H&I panel.

I was going to give them a mock H&I presentation from over 2000 miles away. On schedule Xoba called me back and I was on speaker phone. I said "Hi" to Mayan, Situ and Ali the other panel members and we were all ready to H&I.

I told them that after the serenity prayer and the preamble reading were done, the panel leader would be required to give a brief introduction of H&I presentations. Then he/she should ask all inmates present to introduce themselves as "addicts" and the others would say Hi to him/her. It's one way to lighten the dense atmosphere inside. And that H&I speakers usually restrict their sharing to 10 minutes each, no more. After the panel had shared they should take questions from their audience and make clear no questions about that institution or treatment facility were not allowed but any other questions about NA program, the meetings & recovery were welcome.

They were going in for a 2-hour meeting and had only 2 members in each (of the sexes) panel so the 1-hour H&I meeting format too would require some modifications. I suggested that they do only 30 minutes of H&I and then convert it into a NA sharing meeting for the inmates, thereafter.

Now I did something something which I had never tried in my life before. I shared the H&I way over long distance international phone call for 8 minutes flat. There was not a second when I paused or slowed down, it just came

pouring out. Once done, I asked Xoba and Mayan if they could get what I was trying to get across and they said yes. The credit goes to the small and relatively new NA fellowship of Male for being open-minded and willing to try something which I am sure nobody has tried before in the APF region and it worked.

Today, Mayan phoned me to say that they had just stepped outside the rehab and were calling me to say the H&I went off smoothly. Xoba on his part said the same. They were talking to me from the boat they'd taken to the island where the rehab was located. On my part i could only imagine images of the addicts inside getting uplifted by the wonderful message of hope (in paradise.)

I cannot wait to visit the Maldives in May to do H&I + PI workshops, face-to-face. I can feel that both Mayan and Xoba are enthusiastic NA members who love H&I and that they will definitely make a difference to their local fellowship in the days ahead. I will be speaking with them again when I return from the New Delhi area convention after a fortnight.

I would like to say thank you to the fellowship of NA Male for allowing me to be of service to them. This was a brand new H&I experience guys!!

In loving service,
Bablu B.
APF H&I Resource Person

News from China by Sam

NA China Region now has two official Areas in the Region.

Hong Kong Area of NA China (HKANA).

There are 4 groups and 6 meetings. Literature is in Chinese, English and Hindi. HKANA is holding its first Mini Convention on April 19th. They have their own website and hotline. Shankar G. is the ASR for HKANA.

Shanghai Area of NA China.

There are 3 groups and 4 meetings. Literature is in Chinese and English. Attendance varies depending on venue from 2 or 3 and up to 20 members. Shanghai Area has been growing and at present there is a call for more meetings. Some members have opened up their homes and are conducting meetings. In the first week of April 2009 there were meetings every night of the week in Shanghai. That is a first for us. Stein H. is the ASR for Shanghai Area.

NA China Region has what we refer to as Locals where there are meetings of NA but no Area formed as of yet. They report to the Region and get support directly from NA China.

Beijing Local of NA China.

There are 2 groups and 2 meetings. There is 1 meeting in a public venue. There is 1 meeting in a members' home. Literature is in Chinese and English. Currently there are no figures on attendance. For the most part native Chinese attend the meeting in the public venue and the membership is mixed in the meeting at the members' home. Xue Li L. and David H. are the GSRs.

Kunming Local of NA China.

There is 1 group and 1 meeting. Literature is in Chinese and English. Attendance on average is 10 members. The group operates with native Chinese. There is one member who is Spanish and speaks English as well. Diego K. is the GSR.

Wu Han

There is 1 group and 1 meeting. Literature is in Chinese and English. Attendance averages 25 members. All are native Chinese except for 1 member who is Indian (Indian) and speaks Chinese. This meeting is conducted inside a treatment facility. Geoff T. is our contact person.

From our first meeting in 2004 in the current structure of NA in China we feel that growth of the program is progressing very well. We are aware that there are obstacles to overcome in that there are cultural differences between the members who are trained "Carry the Message" of NA in China and the native Chinese. We have improved our relationship with native Chinese by learning to speak in the local native language. We now have some native Chinese that "Carry the Message" and certainly more will be revealed.

A problem occurred in the cultural differences department in our Region last year when we were invited to visit a labor camp for addicts that were incarcerated. We prepared to go and were ready when we were told that we could not visit. Why? Due to the fact that we were not native Chinese.

Literature is the key to our willingness to put forth our best efforts to start meetings. We serve to bring the NA vision to reality. We are grateful to the APF and NAWS for their support in helping NA China Region to develop in a structure that is cooperative in the spirit of fellowship. We have 4 IP's translated into Chinese and the Information about NA pamphlet. Several other pieces of literature are being used to communicate the spiritual principles of our Program of Recovery the NA Way. We sent NAWS Translations Department a Chinese 5th Edition of the Basic Text and soon we will have this valuable book to aid NA in China. We have Chinese key tags and want to give them to addicts as they celebrate clean time.

Our Regional Delegate, Kristian P. and Alternate Delegate, Suzanne W. attended the 2009 APF and returned to China with more knowledge than ever before to help in the service we hope to provide to the addict that still suffers in China.

We bid for the APF to be hosted by the Shanghai Area of NA China Region for 2010. The bid was granted to Kolkata India. We congratulate and support the India Region. Perhaps we will bid again and have the privilege to host the APF sometime in the future.

There's great need in China with over one million registered addicts to start meetings of NA and give the addict that still suffers a chance to never have to use again and not die alone. There are several thousand rehabilitation facilities in this country for addicts. We are aware of the need to develop the local fellowship to the point that native Chinese can carry the message to the facilities. That is not to say that non Chinese can't do the service but with cultural differences and administrative paperwork is sometimes proves impossible.

Love and Peace in SERVICE:
Sam B. Comm. Comm. Chairperson
NA China

Erik from Hawaii

What follows is an expansion of a communication I had with an APF member who posed the problem of getting members to serve the area or regional committee in his community. It is not about PR but about being of service to a higher goal.

Aloha,

Your plea for ES&H (experience, strength, and hope) on getting members to serve is one that has perplexed the

fellowship and me for many, many years. I remember in the 1990's that this was one of those topics for the Fellowship to comment on. Got lots of opinions and experience on this, I wish I had an electronic copy of those shares.

In my opinion, we will always have this problem because of the nature of who we are (self-centered, selfish addicts). What follows is just my personal ES&H on the subject.

This lack of willingness to serve in NA communities that are young and small is common. Larger NA communities suffer from this problem but it is less noticeable. It can be frustrating as a committed member of a smaller, younger NA community to see the poor participation in carrying the message, the indifference to keeping the doors open for the addict that still suffers.

I get quite angry and sad when I see the same thing here in Hawaii - although we are well established here, it seems we have the same people serving again and again while others take little responsibility or don't lift a finger to help.

Trusted servant burn out is a real problem for some NA communities. I have to admit that I too get burnt out on service. I can tell I am getting the burnt out blues when I become resentful towards my co-workers and I don't do the best that I can. It's a real problem and some members don't come back after taking a break.

Amazingly, I have been in service since I had 35 days clean. I have not been out of service since (I have 22 years clean time). I've been given a lot of responsibility in that time span. I don't know how I did it, how I become such a committed trusted servant. At times it was prideful and ego driven motives for my participation in service. I paid a heavy price for it but my HP and the Program allowed me to grow through it all to have a better awareness of what this is all for.

I learned over time that the most important thing was to do the job, to focus on the work and not on the personalities involved. I learned that self-esteem and self-worth were strengthened when I participated in self-less service to NA. I let others be themselves and learned to uphold principles learned instead of my opinion of others.

I've led many a committee, and saw from that perspective that the most important thing I could do was to have vision of the horizonand beyond. I thought of what we were going to be doing 3 months, 6 months, or a year from now. I worked to share that vision with others so that we were heading forward. It seemed that every position I took had different degrees on how far forward to look. I got confused sometimes but I always came back to the vision that there is an addict beyond that horizon, someone that needed me to be there when they arrived on our doorsteps.

Normally I am not the visionary type of person. I found this out by having this outlook on service, I was able to overcome (within me) the obstacles of reaching the goal of the job at hand, as small or as large as the job is. Others just don't seem to be ready, if ever, to see the far country from their trusted servant position. They can't or won't accept the portion of spiritual work given to them by their HP. That's ok. It is my path that I have to be concerned about, not theirs.

What can I do about this lack of concern towards service? I've shared about it from time to time or paid special attention to one member or another (like a sponsee or one that has that spark that tells me that they are willing to serve). I have faith that this lesson will be passed on, that I've been conscious of it and gave it away.

We, as a Fellowship, have shared about how to make service attractive. I always thought the question was backwards, how is that we make service unattractive? My answer is that we as individuals place personalities before principles. The problem is that we need to learn and practice new principles but we don't know how. Service is a learning experience where we make mistakes and some forget this or get too caught up in the negative and that makes service unattractive. I can't change that but I can be a part of changing myself.

I learned to stay detached and focus on principles when in service - it has taken a long time to develop this skill and I am by no means perfect in practicing it every day, but I reach it more often than I have before.

My suggestion to you is to immerse yourself in humility of service and speak openly and honestly to others about their lack of participation in service. Don't put your ego into it; just feel a surrender to the 12 Tradition. Let the power of the principles do HP's work, think of yourself as a conduit for that message and power.

I've chosen to speak to directly about you rather than recount all the different styles of coercing or manipulating addicts into service. I've seen a lot of them and have been the victim or instigator of a few. These are short-term solutions and lack the principles we are taught to uphold and practice as NA members. My message is for you. You have the conscience and the desire to serve. I want you to be in NA 22 years from now. When you learn and grow, practicing the principles of recovery and service, others will follow. Because this is the attraction to service; a trusted servant that practices principles and has a vision to prepare for what is yet to come - a newcomer over the horizon.

May the blessings be,
Erik R, APF PR Resource Person

Bob W. from Hawaii

Aloha APF,

Just thought I would drop a few words as I didn't really feel I was able to say good bye in Manila. I can remember when we got the APF pitch from the Hawaii Region at the Oahu Area Service Committee Meeting many years ago. In 1996 or there about, I went to the First Thailand Convention and then on to India with my sponsor. That was the year APF was held in India and it all looked very much out of my world. As the years went by and I continued getting very involved with local Area H&I and I was hearing many wonderful stories about the APF. About 9 years ago I was asked if I would like to be an H&I recourse person for APF. I actually put on my first APF H&I workshop at the first Bali Convention and I was hooked. Of all the service work I have been involved with from World Convention Host Committee to H&I Subcommittee Chair to Regional Committee Member for Oahu to speaker getter at my home group...none has filled my heart as much as being a part of the APF. Of course I have never felt that I have done as good a job as I could have and I always felt I was given way more than I could ever have given. I want to thank you all for allowing this addict to be of service and to open me up to a worldwide fellowship. Being involved with APF has taught me there is only one race, the human race.

At the last APF I knew in my heart, when Bablu was interested in H&I resource person, that it was my time to step down. Because you see, my friends, my dream was that one day one of the developed communities other than Hawaii, New Zealand or Australia would take on H&I resource position; someone closer to those communities that need help and closer in culture and geography. Bablu is the perfect match with his huge enthusiasm and his vast H&I experience in the India fellowship. That was a very happy moment to see my brother step up to the plate and from what I see in the recent emails he is already doing an awesome job.

I love you all and HP willing I will attend APF in the future. Every time I came in contact with you my life, my recovery and my soul became so much richer. I can remember in KL when I headed to the bathroom at the same time my friend Irfan went. We stood at the door saying you first, no you first, no you first until finally Irfan said you go first, brother. My eyes filled with tears as this man from another part of the world so far from mine called me his brother. I will never forget that. APF will always be a part of me. Thank you my brothers and sisters. And if you ever need me I am only an email away.

In Loving Service
Aloha, BobW

Outcomes of Australian Regional Service Committee of NA Discussion

Promoting an Atmosphere of Recovery:

Protecting Vulnerable Members and Ensuring NA Meetings are a Safe Place

The February 2009 Australian Regional Service Committee (RSC) of Narcotics Anonymous held a special session to discuss the issue of predatory behaviour at NA meetings. This is when an NA member takes advantage of other members in various ways, such as:

- Sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Threats and acts of violence
- Drug dealing

Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. For a group to carry the message, an atmosphere of recovery is essential and it is the responsibility of members to maintain that atmosphere. Predatory behaviour can make NA meetings unsafe for vulnerable members and therefore the group's primary purpose is not fulfilled.

The first tradition – our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon NA unity – and the third tradition – the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using – need to be kept in mind.

The results of the discussion held at the RSC came up with some ideas for dealing with predatory behaviour quickly at the group level. Several simple ideas which groups might like to consider are:

- Talk to other group members and raise the matter at a group conscience meeting. Take care that you have facts and are not just passing on rumours.
- Two or more group members raise the concern with the member suspected of this behaviour. Listen to their side of the matter. Let them know the group conscience will not tolerate predatory behavior, in keeping with the first tradition.
- If this is not effective, group members may wish to raise the concern with the member's sponsor, if known.
- Make sure other members stay with the member suspected of predatory behaviour whenever he or she is talking to vulnerable new members.
- Group members could raise their concerns with any members they think may be at risk from the member suspected of predatory behaviour.
- If members are targeted or threatened, they need to know they can speak to the group secretary or other group members.
- Under no circumstances should members resort to vigilante action and use threats or violence to try to solve the problem. This would be against the spirit of the Fellowship and could result in a worse problem.
- In certain situations groups may need to notify the police. The rules of society do not stop at the door of an NA meeting – behavior that is unacceptable or illegal outside an NA meeting is unacceptable or illegal inside an NA meeting.

Groups may also wish to read a statement if the atmosphere of recovery at the meeting is suffering due to predatory behavior by a member or members. Some groups are reading out various adaptations of the statement on page 11 of the Basic Text below, and some have added “weapons, violence and threats of violence, and that no dealing or recruitment for the purposes of dealing occur at any meeting”, or variations. Groups may also wish to suggest that any members affected by these issues at the meeting may speak to a group member or that any members with drugs or paraphernalia leave the meeting to dispose of them and then return:

We want our place of recovery to be a safe place, free from outside influences. For the protection of the Fellowship, we insist that no drugs or drug paraphernalia be brought to any meeting. (BT, p 11)

Older cleaner members and trusted servants such as secretaries and area committee members, as well as members in general, have a responsibility to help protect vulnerable members. We need to do everything we can within the traditions to ensure newcomers and older cleaner members alike know an NA meeting is a safe place.

For more information, see:

“Disruptive and Violent Behaviour” Service Pamphlet No. 2204

The Group Booklet”, Revised; http://www.na.org/pdf/litfiles/us_english/Booklet/Group%20Booklet.pdf

Events:

PAACNA-III

Pokhara, Nepal July 8, 9, 10, 2009

Chair: Mohan D (++9779846030328)

Information: Bijay L (++9779804107103)

Information: Sushil P (++9779856025016)

WCNA Barcelona

August 20-23, 2009

www.na.org

9th Annual Bali Convention

June 19-21, 2009

www.na-bali.org

Visayas Unity Weekend (Philippines)

June 12-14, 2009

vicentealdenese@yahoo.com

OACNA2 (Okinawa)

July 10-12, 2009

Hawaii Regional Convention

October 29-November 1, 2009

Kauai, Hawaii

www.na-hawaii.org

KACNA-5 (Kathmandu, Nepal)

October 9-11, 2009

Please go to events page at <http://www.apfna.org/pages/events.htm>

for more info and links to these events and more.