

This group of concerned members started with the section on
THE GROUP:

An N.A. Group is any meeting which meets regularly at a specified place and time, provided that it follows the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions (having no outside affiliations and receiving no outside financial support). To facilitate communications and unity and to better serve N.A. as a whole, Groups should register with the World Service Office of Narcotics Anonymous. The Group is the second level of the N.A. Service Structure.

The primary purpose of an N.A. Group is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. However it also provides to each member the chance to express themselves and to hear the experiences of other members who are learning how to live a better life. There are two basic types of groups: those which are open to the general public, and those closed to the public (For addicts only). Meetings vary widely in format from group to group. Some are participation meeting, some speaker, some question and answer, some special problems discussion, some topic discussion, and some have a combination of these formats. Despite the type of format a group uses for its meeting the function of a group is always the same to provide a suitable and reliable environment for personal recovery, and to promote such recovery. The group has proven to be the most successful vehicle for 12 Step Work. After sharing ones personal experience, strength and hope the most valuable thing a member can do is to bring prospective new members (addicts) to a group meeting. In this way the group meeting becomes a place where the newcover knows he or she can come for help. Often the first thing that can open the doors of recovery for the addict is the recognition of themselves in others. The group provides a setting in which the newcover can find this identification by hearing a number of recovering addicts rather than just one or two.

The group is the level at which we first find some of the day to day business of N.A. being taken care of. There is rent to pay, literature to buy and distribute, refreshments to be provided, a meeting hall to be kept clean, a time schedule to follow, announcements to be made and other things to be done for the maintenance of the Group. The group should stay in contact with other Groups in their local area and with the rest of N.A. (This can better be accomplished by a number of Groups in an area creating an area service committee. This will be discussed further in the structure), so they can find out about activities: learn of new groups opening up, get new literature, and find out what's happening in N.A. as a whole.

This is also the first level at which fellowship funds are handled, and the correct use of this money is essential for the preservation of the Group. It is at the group level that the principle of the Trusted Servants comes into being. "Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern". The officers of "The Group" are elected by a majority vote of the group conscience. They are (a) The Group Secretary, (b) The Group Treasurer, (c) GSR-General Service Representative, and (d) GSR-Alt. - General Service Representative Alternate. These trusted servants make up an informal steering committee.

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THE GROUP SECRETARY is responsible for the day to day functions of the group. It is his/her responsibility to assure that the group meeting takes place when and where it is supposed to. He/She selects a leader for each meeting, makes sure the coffee or refreshments get made, arranges for group business meetings, arranges for the celebration of "birthdays", makes sure that the meeting hall is left in proper order, and answers all correspondence. This job is important because without a good secretary a group has little chance of surviving and providing an atmosphere of recovery.

The TREASURER of N.A. group is responsible for the funds which come into the group from the collection and for the distribution of these funds. The money collected in our meetings must be carefully budgeted. There are numerous expenses necessary for running a group.

The Treasurer keeps an accurate record of all the groups financial transactions, meeting records, maintains the group bank account. Distributes the money to pay the rent, purchase literature, provide refreshments, buy supplies, and cover the cost of any miscellaneous expenses the group incurs. In order to maintain our fellowship and freedom, money which comes from the group collections and member contributions must always be used to further our primary purpose. A group must first support itself. After paying its bills any remaining funds should be used to further our primary purpose. A group must first support itself. After paying its bills any remaining funds should be placed in a group bank account and a reserve adequate to run the group for 2 or 3 months built up. After this "prudent reserve" has been established excess funds should be diverted to help N.A. as a whole. A group can do this by contributing to the "Area Service Committee" or "Regional Committee" which serves the group or through contributions directly to the World Service Office of Narcotics Anonymous. One of the biggest problems we have faced has been the misuse of the groups money. This abuse severely limits what N.A. can do for the recovering addicts. The Treasurer has a grave responsibility and much thought should be taken in selecting a member to perform this function.

As a general guide, we have found that the group Secretary and the group Treasurer are most successful if they certain assets necessary for the performance of their responsibilities. These qualifications include:

1. The willingness or desire to serve.
2. A history of sobriety (we suggest a minimum of 6 months freedom from drugs, including alcohol).
3. A good working knowledge of the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions.
4. An active participation in the group they are to serve.

The two remaining trusted servants of an N.A. group are the GSR and the GSR Alternate. (General Service Representative and an GSR Alternate.) Because the role of the GSR and GSR Alternate is so important to the success of N.A. these two servants will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of this manual.

The Group Secretary and Treasurer and GSR serve for a period of one year at which time they are succeeded by another member who have been elected by the Group. (The use of drugs including alcohol while serving as a group servant constitutes an automatic resignation for that officer.) One of the responsibilities of group officers not often talked about is to train group members to replace them. A group can be strengthened by new officers who are prepared to take over the responsibilities of those they replace. Continuity of service can be aided by staggering the election of servants and overlapping terms of service. (Example: A group Secretary might be elected in November to begin serving in January and the Treasurer elected in March to begin in May.) This would always allow a group to have representation from experienced officers. Remember choose your trusted servants well, it is you whom they will be serving.