

12th Step Guidelines

Qualities

The 12th step volunteer is the person who will talk at length to the potential newcomer about NA, either on the telephone or in person. Experience has shown that the most successful 12th step volunteers possess certain assets, which are beneficial in the accomplishment of their responsibilities. These qualities include:

- A suggested minimum of one-year clean time (however this changes from place to place)
- A knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous
- (e.g. The only requirement, our primary purpose..., never endorse related facilities..., nonprofessional..., no opinion on outside issues..., attractions rather than promotions..., anonymity..., etc.);
- The willingness to serve;
- The willingness to give of personal time.

After the 12th step volunteer receives some general information from the helpline volunteer, the 12th step volunteer calls the addict as soon as possible.

The 12th step volunteer spends time talking to the caller about recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. It may be beneficial to share one's own personal experience, strength and hope. The volunteer will then offer information about meetings, their location and time. If the caller is willing, the volunteer offers to meet the caller or arranges to have another 12th step volunteer meet the caller at a meeting.

Considerations

Going personally to meet the caller may have the potential for significant safety problems. The following points should be considered before making a 12th step call in person:

- Has the caller used today?
- Does it sound safe to meet the caller? Whenever possible, encourage the caller to meet you at an NA meeting.
- Before meeting with the caller, let them know you have to find another volunteer to accompany you. **Never go alone!**
- Make sure at least one 12th step volunteer is the same gender as the caller.
- Try to meet in a neutral, public location (e.g. coffee shop). Meeting a newcomer in your home or in their home is an unnecessary risk. Inform the caller as to the specific time you will arrive and meet them out front. If meeting or picking up the addict at their home is unavoidable, consider the circumstances and take precautions, remembering personal safety.
- Ensure that all arrangements for meeting the caller are accurate and understood by both parties.
- Upon arranging to meet the caller, it is suggested that the Volunteer bring a current meeting list, some NA pamphlets, and a white booklet.
- Tell someone where you are going and call them when you get there.
- Don't stop anywhere on the way to the meeting, especially at the suggestion of the newcomer.
- The NA program has one 'must' that applies to everyone: no drugs or paraphernalia in our possession. It is important that the 12th step volunteer tries to ensure that the newcomer follows this requirement. This is for the protection of the 12th step volunteer, the fellowship, and its groups.
- Once the addict has been taken to a meeting, the 12th step volunteer may help the addict obtain telephone numbers and transportation to other meetings.
- If the addict begins recovery in a hospital or a treatment centre, 12th step volunteers can call regularly to let the addict know that members of NA care. When the 12th step volunteer visits, it is a good idea to bring along some NA literature to leave for the addict, such as "An Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous".

Do's & Don'ts for 12th Step Work

DO...

- Keep a supply of the necessary materials at home/with you (e.g. white booklets, where to find, NA pamphlets, 12th step list and numbers) in order to avoid delay and confusion, and to maximise safety.
- Always identify yourself with your first name only and state that you are an 'addict'
- Find out what the caller needs by asking questions and listening to the answers;
- When returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as an addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous;
- Direct and refer calls promptly when necessary;
- Keep a log of all the calls you answer, directly or refer on to others;
- Always follow up on all calls you direct or refer to another part of the committee
- Communicate all your activities to the UK helpline, and your regional 12th step coordinator or committee chairperson;
- Remember to use the 12th step list;
- Know and apply the traditions in all your interactions with callers;
- Always give accurate information about our fellowship;
- Respond to all calls promptly;
- Execute good sense and judgement in all your interactions with callers;
- Remember, we are not counsellors or therapists;
- Remember to encourage others to become volunteers;
- Maintain the signup sheets, posters, and other forms of flyers that propagate our efforts;
- Perform orientations regularly and keep the Fellowship informed of such events;
- Always get permission to distribute, hang or post flyers from the group(s) where the distribution is taking place;
- Practice creativity in all aspects of providing and supporting a helpline or 12th step service;
- Keep the lines of communication open at all times within the 12th Step and helpline committee;
- When performing 12th step calls, let someone outside the execution of the call know what, where and when it is happening;
- Exercise safety in performing 12th step work.

DO NOT...

- In any way argue with the caller... (especially if you are going to meet them);
- Don't try to respond to questions that you may not be qualified to answer. Use the emergency referral list if necessary;
- At no time should you ever give out the name, address, or phone number of any NA member;
- Never give out information about who was at a NA meeting (e.g. to police officers, probation officers, or significant others). However, general information may be given about NA's make-up (variance of size of meeting, NA open to all age groups, etc.).
- Don't glorify your active addiction or your recovery; this is not about you, it's about we;
- NEVER MEET ANYONE ALONE!!!!
- Although our tolerance may be tested, try to avoid being rude, short, disrespectful, or use foul language or profanity;
- Don't try to guess the answer to questions. There is no shame in not knowing, and you can tell the caller you don't know;
- Avoid committing to providing literature, presentations, or any other services. This needs to be consulted with the committee or the appropriate committee member.
- Some of our fellow recovering addicts do not wish to serve in helpline or 12th step service. We are all quick to judge at the best of times but remember these people may provide essential service in other areas.
- Avoid performing a 12th step call without at least one member of the same gender as the 12th step recipient. We understand that this is not always possible but safest - try to implement programmes that ensure you are covered;
- Avoid saying you will do something and then not do it. If we can't do something, pass on the responsibility to someone who can - people are relying on us;
- Avoid stopping anywhere at the request of the 12th step recipients;
- At no time allow someone with drugs or paraphernalia into your car. You are entitled to keep yourself safe before anyone else.