

SF H&I COMMITTEE NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION ver. 2015-04

SECTION 1

Hello, everyone, welcome to the monthly H&I Orientation of the _____ Hospitals and Institution Committee. I am an alcoholic, my name is _____ and I serve as your Area Chair. Let's open the meeting with a moment of silence in gratitude for service followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Today we will:

- give you a brief history of our Committee
- describe the various service positions available
- review some guidelines for H&I service,
- answer any questions you might have AND
- GET YOU SET UP WITH A COMMITMENT

First, _____ will read the Statement of Purpose of H&I from page 1, Section One of the *H&I Policy and Procedures Manual*.

The *Policy Manual* (sections One and Two) is the operating manual for H&I and outlines H&I as an organized service committee of AA, charged with the responsibility of carrying the message to those who are confined in prisons, hospitals, and other facilities, and who have no other way of attending AA meetings.

SIGN-IN: In H&I, as with other service committees, we use both first and last names at Committee level in order to avoid confusion (we do not, however, use our last names when carrying the message into facilities). We are now passing a sign-in sheet - please write as clearly as possible so we have the correct information to contact you. While we're passing the sign-in sheet, let's go around the room and introduce ourselves by our first and last names.

HISTORY

The Hospital and Institution Committee of Northern California, is a service committee of Alcoholics Anonymous, governed by our 9th Tradition, which states:

"AA may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

H&I is governed by the 12 Traditions and operates in accordance with the 12 Concepts for World Service. We are directly responsible to the Fellowship of Northern California which funds us and answer to no authority other than God as expressed by those group consciences.

The spark of hospital work was set in motion in 1935 when Bill and Dr. Bob first found a way to help others, but it wasn't until 1942 when the warden of San Quentin Prison, seeing that many inmates were there for reasons involving alcoholism, first invited AA into a prison, and the first correctional institution meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous was established. NorCal H&I is one of the oldest service committees in AA, predating even our General Service structure, and it was started right here in Northern California.

TYPES OF SERVICE COMMITMENTS AVAILABLE

Now please refer to your Policy Manual, which contains the position descriptions we're reviewing.

1. The first commitment, on p.10, is the position most of you are probably interested in: the **Meeting Secretary/Volunteer**.

Two regular volunteers go into a meeting as a team once a month. They go on the same day of the same week every month; for example, the first Wednesday of every month, or the third Thursday of every month. The person serving as Secretary leads the meeting & the person serving as the Meeting Volunteer does the main 'share' (this person should have completed all 12 steps of the AA program with a sponsor) ... often the team will take turns alternating these functions if both are qualified. Some meetings are set up to bring in a Guest Speaker, but you can discuss this with the Meeting Coordinator if the commitment you choose is structured that way. For your first H&I position, you will be paired with a more experienced volunteer.

SOBRIETY REQUIREMENTS ~

The sobriety requirement for hospitals, rehabs & community facilities is at least SIX months of continuous sobriety. Meetings in correctional facilities require TWO YEARS of continuous sobriety, previous H&I experience, and the ability to obtain a security clearance.

LITERATURE ~

You are responsible for ensuring AAWS literature is available at the meeting. In some cases you will bring in a supply of Literature yourself every month, and in some cases the Literature is kept at the facility. If you are to bring in Literature each month, it will be provided to you by the Meeting Coordinator; if the Literature is kept at the facility, you're responsible for informing the Meeting Coordinator when supplies get low. By the way, this is where the money from the Pink Cans goes – *we purchase literature to bring to the members who attend our meetings, we don't simply give literature to a facility.*

SCHEDULING ~

You will receive a roster of all the Monthly Volunteers for your particular meeting from the Meeting Coordinator. If you cannot make your commitment on a certain date, you can switch days with someone else from the meeting roster or get a substitute from the alternates list. Alternates are volunteers who don't have a permanent monthly commitment, but rather act as substitutes when a regular meeting volunteer can't attend.

THE MEETING FORMAT ~

Each facility should have a binder, which is kept with the literature, with a meeting format for that facility. Most H&I Meetings are Speaker Discussion format with a couple of readings such as How It Works and the Promises; one or two speakers who share for 15 minutes each; then Q&A or general sharing.

Toward the end of the meeting, we'll go over the list of meetings with openings, so you can sign up for a meeting commitment today.

STOP & ASK FOR QUESTIONS.

2: The second commitment, also on p.10, is as a **Facility/Meeting Coordinator**. While the coordinator's duties are largely administrative, this position is essentially the glue that holds the meetings together. Since the purpose of this meeting is to orient new meeting volunteers, we'll skip further discussion, except to say we hope that you'll consider becoming a Coordinator once you've gotten your feet wet, as we almost always need Meeting Coordinators.

3: The last commitment is as an **H&I Group Representative**.

As we mentioned before, you can hold this position in addition to your regular meeting volunteer position – in fact, we encourage it. The basic concept is for the position to function in much the same way as the General Service or InterGroup Rep. The sobriety requirement is one year, and the responsibilities include:

- a) Attending our H&I bi-Monthly Business meeting to bring your group conscience and questions to the Committee.
- b) Attending your group's monthly business meeting as the H&I Representative, reporting on H&I activities and issues, presenting the H&I financial statements and gathering questions and concerns to bring back to this Committee at our regular meetings.
- c) Making brief weekly announcements to your group regarding the vital need for H&I volunteers, announcing any upcoming H&I activities and generally being available as an H&I resource point for your group members.

As with General Service, the recommended term of service (not the sobriety requirement) for this position is two years. The sign-up sheet that's going around has a box for you to check if you're interested.

STOP & ASK FOR QUESTIONS.

SOME GENERAL INFORMATION FOR TAKING MEETINGS INTO THESE FACILITIES (from the General Guidelines on pp.5 & 6). Please note that these are not merely personal opinions, they are guidelines approved by this Committee and based on "that which experience has taught us".

- In keeping with AA's primary purpose, and to avoid confusion with other 12-step programs that might go into the same facilities, we refer to ourselves only as alcoholics (for example, not as "alcoholic/addicts") and discuss our problems in terms related only to alcoholism, both at our Committee meetings and at the facilities we serve.
- We dress appropriately – clean, neat, and casual, no holes in our clothes, no revealing or sexy clothes, no logos. Remember, you are representing AA.
- We avoid the usage of profanity and offensive language; our purpose is to carry the spiritual message of A.A.: no-one has ever been offended by *not swearing*.
- We do not take messages for inmates into or out of the facilities, as this can result in getting the meeting banned.
- To protect the safety and anonymity of our volunteers, we do not offer to sponsor attendees, or give them our phone number or contact information. If they want to meet with you after their release, you may refer them to the printed meeting schedule to note the meetings you regularly attend.
- If you're feeling unsafe, IMMEDIATELY contact the staff of the hosting facility; rather than leaving one volunteer in the meeting, both volunteers should leave until the situation is resolved. Our First Tradition reminds us that our common welfare comes first – if someone is disruptive or creating an unsafe

environment, we owe it to the members who want recovery, as well as to our volunteers, to have that person temporarily removed.

- Remember that visiting these facilities is a privilege extended to us. We are there at the invitation of the facility. If anyone, at any time, violates the rules or regulations set by the facility administration, our privileges can be, and have been, revoked. This applies especially in serving as a go-between for someone who is on the inside and someone who is on the outside.
- If you are to bring a guest speaker into the meeting, please note that ALL guest speakers must have either attended an H&I Orientation or been THOROUGHLY briefed on the H&I guidelines covered at this meeting.
- And, finally, since the message we carry is recovery from alcoholism as achieved through the 12 Steps of the AA program, we request that main speakers at an H&I meeting have completed all of AA's Steps with their sponsors.

QUESTIONS?

Remember, if for any reason you aren't able to make it to your commitment:

1. **It is your responsibility to try and find your own replacement.** You should contact the people on your meetings roster, including the alternates, and see if they can fill in for you. If you can't find someone to go in your place, call your **Meeting Coordinator**, since we do this work in pairs.
2. If you don't show up, your partner can't go in alone, and there will be no meeting. In most of these facilities, this is the only AA meeting the attendees will get during the week. If you don't show, they get no meeting, which not only creates a hardship for them, but also reflects unfavorably on AA as a whole.
3. **No matter what, call the facility if the meeting is NOT going to take place.**

We're hoping you will commit to take one hour-long meeting a month into the facility of your choice. Of course, if you're so inclined, you can take more than one commitment, or add another later.

Wrap-Up

- Read the Policy Manual before going to your H&I commitment and ask questions.
- Do not use profanity and dress appropriately
- ALWAYS introduce yourself as an alcoholic to avoid confusion with other service programs that do institutional work (e.g., NA)
- Keep your shares to a reasonable length, focusing on the solution, not the problem; prolonged drunkologues, and glamorizing our drinking experiences are discouraged.
- Familiarize Guest speakers with all H&I guidelines reviewed at this meeting.
- Get a substitute to replace you if you cannot attend a meeting.
- Notify your Meeting Coordinator at once if there are any problems in your facility.
- And finally, HAVE FUN! Many people report this to be one of the most rewarding and satisfying forms of service they have done.