



# Tar-Roanoke Area Phone-line Guidelines

Dec 2017 Rev

## ***Our Vision:***

That any addict seeking recovery can find freedom through Narcotics Anonymous.

## ***Our Goal:***

The following points are goals that we can strive to fulfill in making NA a visible and attractive choice for addicts:

1. We clarify what services NA can and cannot provide to the community.
2. We make NA members more aware of their role in NA's public image.
3. We aim for the public to recognize NA as a positive and reliable organization.
4. We develop valuable relationships with professionals and the general public

### **Purpose:**

The primary purpose of the Phonenumber Subcommittee is to get the prospective newcomer to a NA meeting, To provide information for the public who want to reach Narcotics Anonymous.

A call to an NA phonenumber may be someone's first interaction with Narcotics Anonymous. These calls are vital; a phonenumber call can make a major difference in whether or not an addict makes it to an NA meeting. We need to respond to callers in a way that makes them feel like they matter. We can encourage volunteers to bring all their experience and all their public relations awareness to this important service opportunity.

### **Cooperation, not affiliation**

*One of our public relations goals is to build long-lasting relationships that further our primary purpose through the pursuit of those mutual goals we may share with other organizations. Compromising any of our traditions in an effort to build these relationships is never beneficial to individual members or NA as a whole. We maintain a consistent focus on our primary purpose with the public. By creating positive relationships with those outside of NA and with our own members, we foster unity and harmony with each other and the community around us. We put the common welfare of NA first, and we remember that we are only autonomous as long as our actions do not affect NA as a whole.*

The area is more likely to maintain positive relationships with the public if the phonenumber service is consistent and reliable.

## **Who Calls the Helpline?**

Phoneline volunteers may receive calls from NA members, potential newcomers, family and friends of addicts, and other people interested in NA (professionals, students, clergy etc).

Calls from potential newcomers are, of course, the most important calls received by a phoneline volunteer. Our primary function is to direct the addict to a meeting. The volunteer may also provide a brief introduction of the NA program and explains, in general, what the caller can expect at a meeting.

Calls from NA members are usually simple requests for meeting information.

Calls from non-NA members, such as students, professionals or community members are usually requests for general information about NA.

Use the Community Referral List to direct the caller to the appropriate resource needed such as Nar-anon, Recovery Resource Council, etc.

## **Qualifications and Duties of Committee Members:**

*What is likely to be attractive to the public and to professionals who interact with addicts is reliable communication, responsibility, commitment, and behavior that reflects recovery. We can demonstrate the reliability of NA by showing up and fulfilling the obligations we make, whether it is to return a telephone call for information about NA or supplying meeting directories at a public library. We can learn to draw on the experiences of NA members to fulfill the commitments we make to professionals.*

“What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. When all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give.”

1. Our primary objective is to get the addict to a meeting
2. The program works
3. We were once suffering ourselves
4. We care and are willing to help

Our tone of voice is just as important as the words we use. We acknowledge what the caller is saying and feeling. Do not use judgmental words or preach to the caller. It is important to keep in mind that calls may not follow exactly the dialogue detailed in this section. However, familiarity with this information will make it easier to respond appropriately and to serve within the spirit of the Twelve Traditions of NA.

Experience has shown that the most successful phoneline volunteers possess certain assets which are beneficial in the accomplishment of their responsibilities.

### **Value assets of the position include:**

- 1 year clean time
- As a minimum a basic knowledge of the NA twelve steps and the twelve traditions
  - The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. Tradition 3
  - Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Tradition 5
  - An NA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose. Tradition 6
  - Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers. Tradition 8
  - Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy. Tradition 10
  - Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. Tradition 11
- Leadership qualities such as integrity, the ability to listen, and sound judgment (see the Concept Four essay in *Twelve Concepts for NA Service* for more details) are essential in providing phonline service.
- Understanding of the importance of public relations.
- The ability to relate well to other people
- The abilities to communicate and to stay calm under pressure.
- Perform in higher-pressure situations, because they are likely to be the first contact that people have with NA.
  - Follows the Phone-Line Flow Chart as outlined in the WSO Guide to Phone-Line Service, located in this guide
  - Requires completion of this Phone-Line training guide

**Note:** It is important to remember that while we are answering the NA helpline, we are not counselors, medical professionals, or mental health workers. We should refrain from giving advice or suggestions on issues of this nature as it could have potential legal repercussions. Our primary function on the helpline is to direct the caller to an NA meeting.

## Do's and Don'ts

### DO:

- Always have the necessary materials (Meeting schedule, area website address). <http://www.tarroanokeareana.org>
- Find out what the caller needs. Ask questions.
- If you are returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before, identifying yourself as an addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous.
- Remember that callers (even those with some clean time) are addicts just like yourself and may be in a fragile state.
- Make appropriate referrals when necessary.
- Use NA literature to present an accurate and positive message of recovery and to clarify that the NA program is separate from treatment centers or other twelve step programs.

### DON'T:

- Don't argue with people whose views of addiction differ from your or NA's. If the caller does not want to stop using, do not try to persuade him/her to stop.
- Don't try to handle calls that you are not qualified to answer.
- Don't give medical advice.
- Don't give out other people's names or telephone numbers.
- Don't answer questions about who was at an NA meeting (e.g., to police officers, probation officers, or significant others).
- Don't glorify active addiction by telling war stories.
- We do not provide rides to callers. Suggest that if they are able to find a ride, they can ask someone at the meeting to give them a ride home.
- Don't ever, ever put yourself at risk by picking up or meeting a newcomer alone. Always bring another recovering addict with you.
- Don't accept collect calls for any reason
- Avoid using NA jargon (such as "it works when you work it," "home group," "get a sponsor," etc.).
- Do not make commitments on behalf of the area, region, or NA Fellowship. If a professional or member of the public contacts an NA phoneline, volunteers should provide as much information about NA as they can, solicit information from the public contact log (see R E F E R R A L FORM page) and follow up with the appropriate trusted servant such as a committee chairperson or the area's media contact person (PR Chair).

## What types of calls does the phonenumber receive?

The following section illustrates several types of calls commonly received by phonenumber volunteers. These outlines are not meant to be a script for phonenumber calls. Instead, they are offered as examples of appropriate responses in various situations.

### **Specific types of calls**

- Requests for meeting information.
- Requests for general information about NA.
- Requests for public relations efforts (PI presentations, H&I meetings, etc.)
  - Give a brief description of NA to callers requesting presentations; the volunteer also explains that these requests are most effectively handled by our Public Information and Hospitals & Institutions.
  - Take their phone number and contact the chair from the appropriate subcommittee to return the call.
  - Never make these types of commitments on your own.
- Difficult calls from addicts who are:
  - Under the influence of drugs.
  - Prank calls.
  - Calls from those who suffer from mental illness.

**Note:** *One strategy is to continually bring the conversation back to how the caller can get to an NA meeting and end a problem call before the situation escalates.*

- Calls made by the public, including simple requests for information or calls made about problems created by the behavior of NA members.
- Crisis calls:
  - Volunteers should be very clear about where their responsibility ends.
  - Phonenumber volunteers are not counselors or crisis workers.
  - Threats to commit suicide, a drug overdose, or talk about being a victim of violence are all examples of crisis calls.

**Note:** Refusing to refer such callers to qualified outside crisis agencies, could have legal implications, depending on local laws. See Community referral page.

- Meeting recommendations:
  - Volunteers can respect callers' requests and recommend a meeting where they are likely to find addicts with whom they may identify. We do not, however, automatically assume that because someone is of a certain age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual identity, they will want a meeting recommendation.
  - If there are no common needs meetings in an area but there are meetings where, for example, a larger population of young people regularly attends, then phonenumber volunteers can suggest these meetings to a caller who is asking for a recommendation.

## **What types of calls does the phonenumber receive? (con't)**

- Twelfth step calls:
  - A twelfth step call is usually a request for assistance to get to a meeting. We carry NA's message through twelfth step calls.
  - A twelfth step call can mean that two or more addicts provide a ride to an NA meeting or that volunteers simply talk with the caller, helping the potential member get to a meeting on their own.
  - When possible, members meet those requesting a ride to a meeting in a public place.

**Note:** We do not provide rides to callers. Suggest that if they are able to find a ride, they can ask someone at the meeting to give them a ride home.

- Referrals: See Community Referral List
  - We don't give referrals to one specific treatment center or detoxification unit.
    - Instead, we can provide a list of any and all local treatment centers and not align or affiliate ourselves with one in particular, or we can inform members of generic treatment referral numbers, such as the National Treatment Referral Line in the United States, or 211.
  - If a caller has a local telephone directory, we can direct them to the services listed there. The same principle is true for suicide prevention numbers and other community service numbers.
  - Volunteers can provide numbers for Nar-Anon and Families Anonymous or other similar information. But remember that we don't recommend one program over another or offer our opinions about any of these programs.
  - Review Phonenumber Flowchart considering the above examples.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PHONELINE VOLUNTEERS' EXPERIENCE WITH CALLS

This resource can be used by volunteers answering phonenumber calls when interacting with addicts, loved ones, professionals, and the community at large. These frequently asked questions are meant to help trusted servants provide clear, consistent, and informative responses. When responding to a question using NA terminology, such as "leader", please explain to the listener what we mean by that language. In an effort to gain an understanding of the information here, trusted servants can discuss and rehearse the questions and answers below. What follows are possible answers to questions frequently asked by phonenumber callers.

## Questions asked by potential members

### **I've been using (smoking pot) for three years and I'm not sure if I am an addict. Can NA help?**

We suggest attending an NA meeting and speaking with some of the members there. Because NA meetings are a safe place, newcomers are encouraged to ask questions. Also, read some of our literature, which is available at most NA meetings, and decide for yourself. The informational pamphlet *Am I an Addict?* May help you in your decision making. This Pamphlet is available free at NA.org.

### **I am getting drug-tested by my parole officer; how long does cocaine stay in your system?**

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship for those who think they may have a problem with drugs. We are a self-help, recovery-oriented organization and employ no medical professionals. We do not give any medical advice or opinions, but we do help addicts find recovery through the NA program.

### **What should I expect when I go to my first NA meeting? Do I have to talk?**

Typically a leader or chairperson will conduct the meeting. There is usually time for participation in which members share about their experience, strength, and hope with staying clean. You do not have to speak during the meeting if you don't want to. We encourage you to get there a little early so that you can speak with some of the members and pick up some literature before the meeting starts.

### **How much does NA cost? Are you counselors?**

There are no fees or dues to be a member of NA. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. We are not professional counselors; we are recovering addicts who share our experience to help each other stay clean.

**I am a nurse by profession and I want to get clean. Where can I find a nurses' meeting?**

Some areas have common needs meetings while others do not. This area does not have a nurses' NA meeting. We can tell you, however, that recovering addicts from all types of professions attend our meetings.

**I'd like to go to an NA meeting but I don't have a car. Can you help?**

Our Area does not have a 12-Step Volunteer program set up. We do not provide rides to callers. We suggest that if they are able to find a ride, they can ask someone at the meeting to give them a ride home.

**I'm suicidal and I don't want to live anymore. What should I do?**

We strongly suggest contacting the suicide prevention number, which is 1-800-273-8255, or 911 to get immediate assistance.

**Questions asked by loved ones**

**My boyfriend is using drugs, stealing, and cheating. What can I do to help him? Will you call him?**

Because Narcotics Anonymous is a self-help program, addicts must have the desire to stop using. Once he is ready to stop using drugs, please have him call us so we can direct him to an NA meeting in his area. In the meantime, you may want to call Nar-Anon or Families Anonymous. Although we are not affiliated with these organizations, we are happy to provide their telephone numbers.

**My son/daughter is using drugs and wants to stop taking drugs. Can I go with him/her to their first meeting?**

You may attend an "open" NA meeting with your son/daughter. Open meetings welcome family members and the community at large. Closed meetings are for addicts only. All meetings are open except our 2:30pm Sunday meeting in Roanoke Rapids.

**Will you call me if my son/daughter does not show up to meetings regularly?**

No, we are not able to do this. Because this is a self-help program, it is not our position to monitor an addict's willingness to attend meetings.

## **Questions asked by community members**

**I heard that my old friend, Jane Smith, is in NA. Can I have her phone number?**

We are not at liberty to give out contact information for individuals who may or may not be members.

**Drugs are being sold in my apartment complex. Can you come and arrest them?**

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship for those who think they may have a problem with drugs. We are a self-help, recovery-oriented organization and employ no law enforcement professionals.

# REFERRAL FORM

## For referring calls to the area or region

There are times when trusted servants within the area or at the regional service committee may be more experienced with answering certain phonline requests. This is a sample referral form for the tracking of such calls. This form will allow us to follow the referral to ensure that the request is answered and the callers' needs are met.

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_ Time of call \_\_\_\_\_  
Phonline Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caller's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of agency or organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caller's telephone number \_\_\_\_\_ ext \_\_\_\_\_  
Alternate telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Time & date when caller is available to be called back

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caller or agency's email address

### Reason(s) for calling

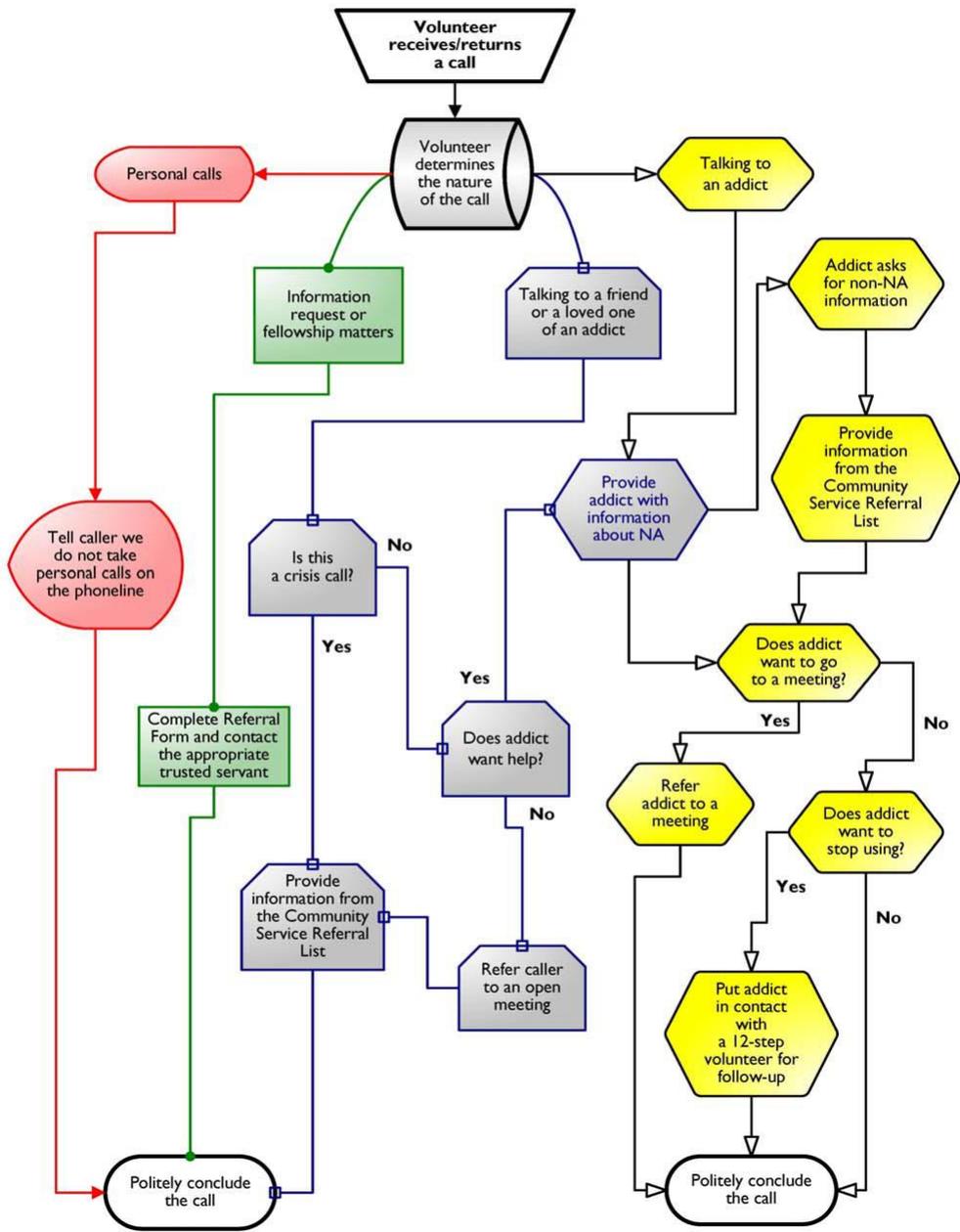
- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ____ Atmosphere of recovery issue         | ____ Leadership issue                 |
| ____ Predator issue                       | ____ Public image issue               |
| ____ Request from media                   | ____ Problem with meeting at facility |
| ____ Request for NA literature            | ____ Request for NA presentation      |
| ____ Twelfth-Step call request            | ____ Request for meeting directories  |
| ____ Request for meeting at facility      | ____ Request for activities schedule  |
| ____ Request for NA booth                 |                                       |
| ____ Other ( <i>describe in detail</i> ): |                                       |

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Referred request to:**  Area  Region

Committee member's name and position:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Phoneline Flowchart



Note: Our Area does not have a 12-Step Volunteer program set up. We do not provide rides to callers. Suggest that if they are able to find a ride, they can ask someone at the meeting to give them a ride home.

# COMMUNITY REFERRAL LIST

The following is a sample community referral list, to be used when the caller is asking for help that does not fall within our primary purpose and our traditions. We offer information in the spirit of cooperation. We can provide a list of numbers rather than any one specific number. We do not recommend one referral over another. We simply provide contact information as a courtesy. (In many parts of the United States and Canada, a community services helpline can be reached by dialing 211. If 211 service is available in your area, it may be the easiest and most complete referral that you can make. 211 is available in N.C by United Way.

- Child Abuse Hotline (800) 422-4453
- County/City/State Emergency Services 911
- Domestic Violence Services 211
- Drug Crisis Hotline 211
- Families Anonymous 211
- Intervention Services 211
- Local Homeless Shelter 211
- Mental Health Helpline 211
- Nar-Anon (800) 477-6291
- Poison Control 1-800-222-1222
- Probation Department 211
- Rape Crisis Center Halifax- 252-541-2064 Nash/Edgecombe- 252 459-3094  
or 211
- Services for Runaways 211
- Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255 or 911
- United Way Tar River Region-252-937-2213

## Phone Line Service

- **Provider: Grasshopper.**
  - Tar-Roanoke Area phonenumber is 888-379-0228.
  - Online service. <http://grasshopper.com>
  - APP - only forward numbers can be added- need to go online to make changes
  - We make out going calls through Grasshopper APP
  - Our extension (ext) is 707 for our phone number (888-379-0228).
- **System**
  - Extension Name directory- Area phone numbers listed: Tar-Roanoke is ext 707.
  - Administrator sets volunteer up in system by phone # and the time available (online to edit defaults to 24/7), as well as Description: use First name as a minimum.
  - Provide time schedule to administrator, if desired none 24/7 schedule.
  - The System is designed to be sequential by phone the active members next in line to receive calls, then the system will roll to the next addict in system.

**NOTE: If you receive a call and do not want to receive it, let it ring through, after 20 seconds it will pass to the next volunteer, DO NOT HIT DECLINE, because it will take the caller, into your personal voicemail.**

- If no one answers the caller will be directed to voice mail. That message will be emailed to those who wish to receive those emails to respond to callers voice messages
- Review Messages and respond. (emails need to be added)
- Messages: Administrators to update: login in protected
  - Greetings: (What the caller hears when they hear a beep). Default: "please hold while we connect you to extension 707...then music plays).
  - Voice mail: "Hello you reached the voicemail of Tar-Roanoke Area of Narcotics Anonymous. If this is an emergency please hang up and call 911. If interested in Narcotics Anonymous please leave a message with your name and number and we will get in contact with you. We will only return messages to the original caller so please leave your name and phone number- first name only is ok.
  - Call forward greeting: System Default
  - Call Ring time: Grasshopper recommends 25-40 seconds. Current ring set is set for 20 seconds. It can be reduced or extended, if extended too long it could go into volunteer's personal voice mail, (not desired), when setting beyond their recommended range, ignore Grasshoppers message to keep between 20-40 seconds..
  - Away Greeting: this greeting is for when we are closed or away- (hopefully we will never use this greeting)
- Add Numbers (add a forward Number)
  - Administrator logs into Online or APP and can add phone number- will only post number, not name.
  - Edit to change defaults of 24/7 schedule and announce calls option- change to accept and update schedule to volunteers requested schedule (can be changed anytime).
- Add emails
  - Administrator only
  - Edit online only to add email to receive missed calls or voice mails. Ask Volunteers if they want this added.

- **System Options**

- **Make Calls Showing Your Grasshopper Caller ID**
  - We love this feature! When you want to call a client, use the Grasshopper mobile app to make calls showing your Grasshopper caller ID (instead of your Smart Phone's). Callers will never know you're calling from your mobile phone. (Ensure our extension 707 associated with tar Roanoke is showing correct phone number). Area Administrator will help to get you set up.
- **No Expensive Hardware to Purchase or Install**
  - Grasshopper works with your existing mobile and home/office phones so you never have to purchase, install, or maintain expensive phone hardware. It's all virtual.
- **Know Who's Calling Before Accepting the Call**
  - When you get a call, press 1 to accept the call, 2 to put them into voicemail, or 3 to hear the caller's phone number. The choice is yours. (Default set to accept once you choose to answer).
- **Get Voicemails and Faxes Delivered via Email**
  - No more calling in to check messages: just open the MP3 or PDF attachment while checking emails. It's as easy as that!
- **Read Your Voicemails**
  - With the Read Your Voicemail feature, a transcription of each voicemail is included with email notifications so you can quickly know the purpose of the voicemail. You can even choose to have voicemails transcribed by a human on-demand. **This is an extra personal charge.**

## Document History

Rev	Change	Date
A	Released- Update note to add "see referral list" Align pages. Extensively Revise the phonline service page to match our current provider Grasshopper Created our voice mail message	16 Dec 2017
Draft	Create sent to fellowship for approval	9 Nov 2017