

Starting an NA Group

The formation of a group

When starting a group* the first priority is to secure a regular meeting location. Try to find a facility that is conducive to an atmosphere of recovery and will allow room for the meeting to grow. It is important to find a location that will allow the group to practice the Sixth Tradition, which states, "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." This principle of nonaffiliation allows the group to develop its own autonomy. After securing a location, establish the time and day of the week, make arrangements for opening and closing the meeting space, and any other preparations necessary.

Tradition Seven tells us, "Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, establish a means of paying rent for the facility; NA groups must always be self-supporting. The group responsibilities (opening doors, making coffee, providing literature, cleaning up, etc.) are best shared by two or more addicts.

Some groups have lost their meeting space because they failed to properly care for the meeting facility. But if we try to leave the room better than we found it, we protect the atmosphere of recovery and the reputation of Narcotics Anonymous.

If the meeting is slow in getting started, be patient. Experience proves it will grow. Support can be generated by contacting the nearest area or regional committee, making announcements at other meetings, and by distributing flyers.

(From IP#2 'The Group')

We strongly suggest you read IP #2 in its entirety when considering starting a new group. This publication is available online at <http://www.na.org/ips/>

Our regional service office, Fellowship Service Office (FSO), offers a free group starter kit to new groups in Australia, Visit their web site at <http://www.fso.com.au> and click on the 'Group Registration' tab for instructions on how to apply for the free kit.

The publication "A Guide to Local Services in Narcotics Anonymous" fully describes our service structure from the group level to the regional service committee. It is an excellent guide to group formation; responsibilities of trusted servants etc and can be purchased from the Fellowship Service Office.

Checklist

Following is a checklist of the things most groups feel are important to address before opening their first meeting.

- Get in touch with the nearest service committee. An area committee meeting is the ideal place for announcing your intention to start a new group. There, you can gather experience from representatives of other groups in the area, and learn of the services available to your group when you need them. If you're in an isolated area or don't know how to contact your nearest service committee contact the regional Outreach committee at outreach@na.org.au instead.

- Obtain a meeting place. Determine the following points
 - ✓ Where? _____
 - ✓ When? Day, time and duration of the meeting. _____
 - ✓ How much? What is the facility charging for rent? _____
 - ✓ Is this realistic, keeping in mind the number of people you expect to attend the meeting? _____
 - ✓ When is the rent due? _____

- What does the facility require? E.g. No smoking? Fire regulations limiting the number of people in the room? Cleaning up after meeting? Removal of all rubbish? Vacuuming carpet?

- Many facilities now require groups to provide proof that they are covered by a current liability insurance policy. If your facility requests such proof a copy of the Certificate of Currency can be obtained from the Fellowship Service Office. _____

- Can your group's mail be sent to the facility? Will they set up a box where you can pick up newsletters and announcements sent to your group? _____

- Can they provide secure lockers or cupboards to keep the group's literature and supplies between meetings? _____
- Name your group. A few things you may want to consider are: Is the name recovery oriented? Does the name create the impression that the group is affiliated with the facility in which it holds its meetings? _____
- What group trusted servants are needed? What does the group expect these people to do?

- What kind of meeting format will you use? _____
- Will this be a "closed" NA meeting or an "open" meeting? _____
- What kinds of NA literature does your group want to stock?

- What kinds of refreshments should be purchased?

- Have you registered your group with your Area Service Committee or Regional Outreach Committee? Doing this ensures your meeting will be placed on the Regional meetings lists (online, printed and 1300 toll free recording). _____
- Have you obtained your free group starter kit from FSO? _____