

GROUP TRUSTED SERVANTS: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Service is an essential part of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Most of us would never have found recovery if not for the work of members who came before us. Now free from active addiction, we too can serve the fellowship. NA service begins in the groups, which carry the message directly to still-suffering addicts. This piece describes a few basic group service positions. The *Group Booklet* is another helpful resource for NA groups.

The main function of NA groups is to hold meetings where addicts can share the message of recovery with each other. The strength of each group depends on its trusted servants and regular members. The trusted servants lay the groundwork for a strong atmosphere of recovery. Members who attend regularly and share a strong message of recovery build on that foundation. The work necessary to make our meetings happen varies from one group to another, but the trusted servant positions are similar in many places.

FUNCTION, NOT FORM

These descriptions are suggestions based on common practice and existing service materials. Groups often do things differently. Every group is free to create other positions to share the workload or to accomplish tasks that aren't covered in this piece. Groups often choose members for specific duties, such as setup or cleanup person, speaker coordinator, literature person, coffee person, or greeter. These depend on the size and needs of the group. Some positions are ideal ways for newcomers to get involved. Each group can look for creative ways to establish a warm and attractive atmosphere. When we focus on our primary purpose, group service has profound effects on the lives of many addicts.

GROUP SECRETARY

The group secretary plays a key role in making meetings happen. The secretary is usually the liaison between the group and the meeting facility. That means ensuring that the facility is opened and closed at the proper times before and after each meeting, and working with the group treasurer to make sure that rent is paid in a timely manner. The secretary usually also ensures that the group has any necessary literature and supplies. This might involve working with the group service representative (GSR) or treasurer to buy literature from the area service committee (ASC) or an NA service office.

The atmosphere of recovery in a meeting often depends on the meeting format and on the members chosen to lead, chair, or speak. In some places, the secretary arranges for a leader, speaker, or chairperson for the group's meetings. In addition, the secretary and GSR often work together to plan or conduct group business meetings. The secretary can either take notes or lead group discussion in these cases.

GROUP TREASURER

The group treasurer handles the money that members contribute to the group. This involves keeping records, paying for group expenses (literature, rent, etc.), reporting group financial activity at group business meetings, and sending or delivering group contributions to other levels of service. The treasurer can play an important role in raising group awareness about the importance of self-support. When selecting a treasurer, the group should look for members who are trustworthy, are financially responsible, and have good basic math skills. The group may also want to consider a treasurer who is willing and able to help members understand our shared responsibility for funding NA services.

The treasurer provides accurate information to the group in business meetings to help members make good financial decisions. This trusted servant ensures that all group funds are used in line with our traditions and concepts, and ac-

ording to the group conscience. The *Group Treasurer's Workbook* can help simplify record-keeping. Some groups have lost funds as a result of carelessness, misuse, and theft. This can often be avoided by selecting members with good organizational skills and a strong program of recovery.

LEADER/CHAIRPERSON

The leader (or chairperson) is the NA member who guides the recovery meeting according to the meeting format. The leader, often a different person each week or each month, often sets the tone for the rest of the meeting. Some groups invite members from other groups to lead their meetings. The leader's tone helps establish a positive atmosphere of recovery. This might include keeping order in the meeting. Kindness and calmness go a long way in preserving the atmosphere of recovery. A leader who can be both loving and firm can keep the meeting focused on carrying the message of recovery.

GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR)

The GSR represents the group in area service committee (ASC) meetings. This trusted servant should attend the ASC regularly to report on the status of the group, including challenges the group faces or successes they experience. This helps the group develop a relationship of mutual support with other NA groups in the area. The GSR is the group liaison to the rest of the service community, carrying ideas and concerns from the group to local service bodies and helping keep the group informed about business at the area, region, and world services levels. The GSR carries the voice of the group to NA as a whole.

MENTORSHIP AND CONTINUITY, ALTERNATE POSITIONS

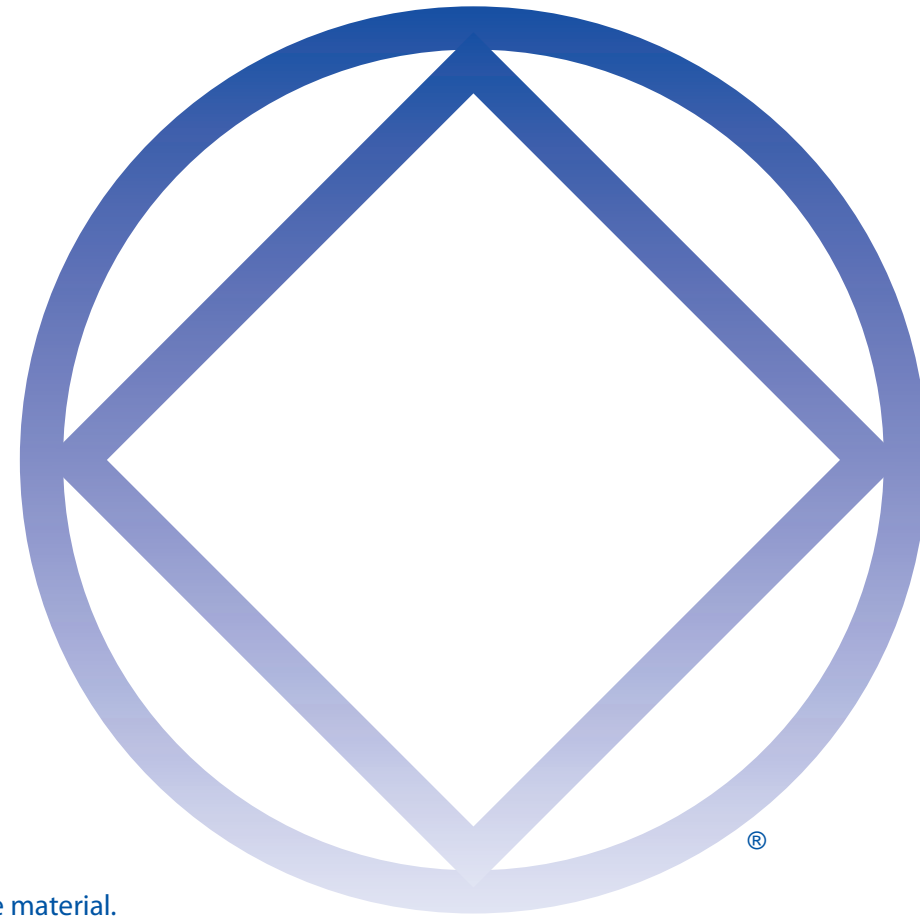
To remain fresh and vibrant, groups typically rotate trusted servant positions on a regular basis. Trusted servants generally move on to different roles or other levels of service when their terms end. Alternate positions for these

service positions help members learn the roles before they take on responsibilities. Alternates work with their counterparts to better understand the position. They also fill in for their counterparts in the event of absence. This helps the group cultivate leadership skills in members who might otherwise not have service positions, and it allows members to learn their positions in advance.

AS OUR MEMBERS GROW, SO GROWS THE GROUP

The NA group is responsible for sustaining one of the front lines in our effort to carry the message to the addict who still suffers: the NA meeting. Being a member and serving a group are important roles in the growth and stability of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. When we make a commitment to our group, we take personal responsibility for the primary purpose of NA. The newcomer we welcome to NA today could go on to help countless other addicts. We carry a message and help addicts find a home in NA, and our service reaches much further than we can imagine. As we serve and grow together, we begin to make our groups feel like home. That feeling can be the attraction that brings newcomers back.

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