

## **GSR ORIENTATION BOOKLET**

### **What is a GSR?**

A GSR is a trusted servant to their group. The voice of their group at area service. The voice of area at their group. The financial link between their group and the area. The group's main source of information about service. An important source of information for the group about the traditions.

### **How do they do it?**

Attend a group meeting regularly. Attend the ASC meeting monthly. Report to the ASC on group status, contributions, problems and concerns. Buy the literature at the monthly ASC meeting. Report to the group on ASC matters and events. Bring issues from ASC to the group for a group conscious and report back to ASC. Learn about the subcommittees of the ASC – what do the subcommittees do, when do they meet, who may attend, which committees need support? Learn the service structure.

### **Suggested qualifications for a GSR**

The GSR is an addict. The GSR attends the group they represent. Willingness to serve. One year clean time. Knowledge of the steps and traditions or willingness to study them. Knowledge of the NA service structure or willingness to study it. An understanding of the responsibilities of the GSR to the group and the area.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BEING A GSR**

1. The GSR and Alternate GSR are crucial focal points in the service structure of NA. We, as members, must be responsible in every aspect of electing, supporting, helping and monitoring these trusted servants.
2. Elections for the GSR and Alternate GSR must be taken very seriously. Asking the nominees to qualify is always in order. Elect someone you can trust and then support and monitor them as they learn their jobs. This position is not to be dumped on people, because the atmosphere of recovery and the common welfare of the group are at stake.
3. The GSR has a job with two facets, one at the ASC and one at the group. They need some amount of delegated authority from the group members in order to perform their duties. As time goes on, this delegated authority to represent the needs of the group will increase.
4. The Alternate GSR is important and must not be forgotten. They act for the GSR when appropriate and spend a year learning the service commitment. This training requires extra time and effort from both of these individuals.

5. A GSR report is an important aspect of the meeting. This allows the group members to be informed, allows the GSR to do their job and reinforces the responsibilities of the GSR. It keeps the GSR in close contact with the group at all times and also lets the newcomers see the example of service at each meeting.
6. When the GSR is not doing their job right, we can state from experience the usual reasons. The person elected does not have enough clean time. They got the job because someone with more clean time nominated them to get off the hook. They have become overwhelmed and don't have enough experience with working the steps. Usually this person is dangerously close to using, but doesn't know it! The other members need to be aware of this and fulfill their responsibility in supporting and helping the trusted servant to confront this situation.
7. **REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**-Before the biennial meeting of the World Service Conference, the regional committee usually organizes an assembly of group service representatives. Regional assemblies bring representatives of NA groups together with RCMs and the regional delegate for the purpose of developing a collective conscience concerning issues affecting Narcotics Anonymous worldwide. That direct contact between the groups and the conference helps keep our world services attuned to the needs of our fellowship. Without the kind of primary foundation provided by the regional assemblies, it would be much more difficult for the World Service Conference to effectively address the concerns of the NA groups. Regional assemblies are a key ingredient in the maintenance of the NA groups' final responsibility and authority for our fellowship's services, spoken of in our Second Concept.

Most regional assemblies start with all participants—GSRs, RCMs, and the regional delegate—gathered together for an opening address. Then the assembly usually divides into smaller groups of between seven and fifteen people each so that everyone can take a meaningful part in discussions. These discussion groups, led by RCMs, consider a variety of issues related to world service. Some of these are issues covered in pre-conference mailings from world services, including the approval of new NA literature and other proposals that would affect NA as a whole; some are subjects the RSC has raised for discussion; others come from individual GSRs in each group. When panel discussions conclude, all the GSRs and RCMs gather in a large group to hear reports from spokespersons selected by each panel. A sharing session, in which all participants are encouraged to speak their mind, follows the reports. These discussions give the delegate clear indications of the region's collective conscience concerning world issues, indications that will guide the delegate when participating in the world conference. If the assembly wishes, it can formalize its conscience regarding world service affairs by passing resolutions on issues of particular concern.

## **Answers to some GSR questions**

### **How does a group take care of its business?**

They take care of business by a group conscience. Elections for trusted servants are held as needed with prior notice if possible. Monthly business, to take care of area contributions, funds for literature and so on should be held at the last meeting before ASC meets. A group may create a steering committee as needed.

### **Should a GSR hold more than one group office?**

It is suggested that members hold only one service position in a group. As many members as possible need to be involved in service; it is an important part of recovery.

### **What if the positions are at two different meetings?**

In order to provide more service opportunities to more members, it is suggested that meetings elect addicts who do not serve in other service positions.

### **Can a person be a GSR for more than one group?**

In order to give each group a separate voice at area level, a GSR may not vote for more than one group at area level. It is suggested that one person not be a GSR for more than one group.

### **How does the group communicate concerns to the GSR?**

The group or any member of that group may bring concerns to the GSR at any time.

### **How do you let the group know who the GSR is?**

The secretary can introduce the GSR and the other trusted servants at the beginning or the end of the meeting.

### **What about GSR reports, how often do they give them?**

Most groups do not like to spend a lot of time with reports. 5 minutes seems about right for a GSR report.

### **How much meeting time should be taken for group business?**

The monthly business meeting may be very brief. If there is some special business that the group needs to form a conscience about, it is suggested that the topic and the time should be announced well in advance.

### **What is a GSR's responsibility for literature?**

The GSR works with the other group officers to determine the need for literature. After the groups funds have been allocated, the GSR purchases' the literature at the monthly ASC meeting.

### **How many meetings of the group can a GSR miss and remain in office?**

A GSR should attend as many group meetings as possible. It is up to the group to decide if the GSR is neglecting their responsibilities and what action, if any, should be taken.

### **How many ASC meetings can a GSR miss and remain in office?**

If the group is not represented at the ASC for two consecutive months, then the group is not being properly represented and needs a new GSR.

### **Should GSR's attend subcommittee meetings?**

It is strongly suggested that GSR's attend subcommittee meetings

### **What about umbrella groups?**

Umbrella groups are considered as one group at area level. Each group may have a GSR, but all the GSR's should form a group conscience and decide on voting issues (usually at a steering committee meeting). All GSR's may attend area, but only one GSR from the umbrella group can carry a vote.

### **What determines an umbrella group?**

Each group should be fully self supporting. If groups share a treasury, rent, etc... then they should be considered an umbrella group (all the same group but with different meeting times).

### **What is a group conscience?**

An informed vote taken by the group as a whole. An expression of a higher power's will. Best for the group as a whole. The practice of placing principals before personalities.

### **When may a group conscience be initiated?**

A group conscience may be initiated at any time, during a group meeting or when a member feels it necessary.

### **When may a group conscience be taken?**

A group conscience may be taken any time the group as a whole wishes to take one.

### **How much notice should there be before a new GSR or an Alternate GSR is elected?**

At least a couple weeks notice should be given before an election.

### **How does the group's area contribution get to area?**

The group decides at their regular business meeting if and how much of a contribution they can make to the ASC. The contribution is then sent to the regular ASC meeting with the GSR.

# Group Service Representative (GSR)

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Each group elects one group service representative; even those groups hosting more than one recovery meeting elect just one GSR. These GSRs form the foundation of our service structure. GSRs provide constant, active influence over the discussions being carried on within the service structure. They do this by participating in area service committee meetings, attending forums and assemblies at both the area and regional levels, and sometimes joining in the work of an ASC subcommittee. If we are vigilant in choosing stable, qualified leaders at this level of service, the remainder of the structure will almost certainly be sound. From this strong foundation, a service structure can be built that will nourish, inform, and support the groups in the same way that the groups nourish and support the structure.

Group service representatives bear great responsibility. While GSRs are elected by and accountable to the group, they are not mere group messengers. They are selected by their groups to serve as active members of the area service committee. As such, they are responsible to act in the best interests of NA as a whole, not solely as advocates of their own groups' priorities.

As participants in the area committee, GSRs need to be as well informed as they can be concerning the affairs of the committee. They study the reports of the committee's officers and subcommittee chairpersons. They read the various handbooks published by the World Service Office on each area of service. After carefully considering their own conscience and what they know about how their group members feel, they take active, critical parts in the discussions, which form the group conscience of the entire committee.

Group service representatives link their groups with the rest of the NA service structure, particularly through the information conveyed in their reports to and from the area committee. At group business meetings, the GSR report provides a summary of area committee activities, often sparking discussions among group members that provide the GSR with a feel for how the area can better serve the group's needs. In group recovery meetings, GSRs make available fliers announcing area and regional activities.

At area committee meetings, GSR reports provide perspectives on group growth vital to the committee's work. If a group is having problems, its GSR can share those problems with the committee in his or her reports. And if the group hasn't found solutions to those problems, the area chairperson will open a slot on the committee's "sharing session" agenda so that the GSR can gather the experience others have had in similar situations. If any helpful solutions arise from the sharing session, the GSR can report those back to the group.