

General Guidelines For Answering Helpline Calls

The NA helpline for Sunset Coast Area of Narcotics Anonymous is using “Grass Hopper” telephone service to route incoming calls from 239-451-3275. This phone service is used by the entire state of Florida however our local number is unique to our Area and if the system is working properly, only calls from Collier and South Lee County will be routed to our volunteers.

The following guidelines are a road map for trusted servants to follow to effectively share how individuals and organizations can find our meetings, website and literature, to assist addicts find help, while protecting our members’ anonymity and safety. Having made many mistakes in the past, we have learned, to rely on the experiences of others, to better carry our message of recovery. This is merely a map and could never cover the territory, or the variety of situations, you will face while answering Helpline calls. It is merely a guide.

“A Call”

Answer a call by saying “Hi I am _____ I am a recovering addict volunteer, how may I help you?”

Inquire if the caller is in immediate danger i.e.: overdose, suicide threat, physical abuse or a homicide. If you have reason to believe these situations exist, attempt to get their name and address and get someone to call 911 immediately. Then call helpline chairperson to debrief.

If there are not any apparent risk factors; **proceed** to giving them the information they request.

Ask if they are an addict; or perhaps wondering if they have a problem with addiction? Are they looking for a meeting, some literature or just information about NA?

If an outside referral needs to be made; to other support groups, detox, hospital or a residential care facility, we must inform them that **we are not affiliated with any outside organizations and do not endorse or recommend any groups or facilities on our community resource list.** We will gladly offer a couple names and phone numbers but have no opinion on their services. We may suggest the web for a wide variety of resources, including www.sunsetcoastna.com. The non-affiliation disclaimer protects our 6th and 10th traditions, (*read them.*)

If a family member or friend calls, refer them to an open NA meeting. Or possibly Naranon (only one in Cape Coral) or Alanon (which are both outside organizations.)

Never give out your personal phone number, another member’s number or call them back due to caller ID. We cannot assume everyone making a call for help is legitimate. There are plenty of tragic stories related to just trying to help someone out.

We’re not a message center and do not discuss NA members, treatment centers or sober houses. Avoid war stories to attempt to get caller to identify. Our only message is one of Hope.

If organizations want speakers, H&I meetings or literature, direct them to our website or **NA.org.**