

Adolescents

When adolescents are referred to in this handbook, we are referring to anyone under the legal age of majority in your state or country. We need to remember that adolescents are prospective members, and should be treated with respect. When sharing in an H&I meeting/presentation, we need to remember that to an adolescent, the stress experienced due to peer pressure, or the relationship with their parents and/or teacher may be just as much a crisis to them as losing a job, marriage, or house may be to others. In NA, we learn to deal with our feelings and emotions and share with others how we have been able to work through them by utilizing the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. Due to the governmental statutes regarding adolescents, we need to be especially aware of facilities' rules and regulations as they relate to our interaction with these prospective members. For example, some facilities may require a staff member to be present during meetings. One suggestion we may make to administrators of facilities for adolescents is that they make attendance at the H&I meeting voluntary. We have found this reduces distraction, increasing the opportunity for recovery in the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship. While some people maintain that adolescents respond better to people closer to their own age, the bulk of our experience suggests that the age of the person sharing at an adolescent H&I meeting is secondary to their ability to share a strong, clear message of recovery. Adolescents seem to respond more to the message than to the messenger. All H&I meetings/presentations are highly structured and should be geared towards recovery through the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. Our experience has shown that we do not need to use a special format when carrying the message to adolescents. In addition to the do's and don'ts found on pages 28 and 40-41 we feel that the following should be included.

DO'S

Do Remember that this is a "we" program.

No addict should feel that he/she is being preached to.

Do Remember that an addict is an addict, regardless of age.

Do Tell them that there is fun in recovery, i.e., social events, fellowship, etc.

Do Acknowledge and validate their feelings and emotions.

Do Acknowledge and validate their clean time.

DON'TS

Don't Glorify your past.

Don't Say, "I feel like I'm talking to my kids."

Don't Compare your bottom to theirs.

Don't Patronize adolescents.

Don't Use profanity.