

Home Group Qualities – Ideals

Principles demonstrated by the group and its members		
Ideals	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistency and Commitment	<input type="checkbox"/> Principles in Action
	<input type="checkbox"/> Spirit of Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Perspective
	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefits of Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimacy and a Sense of Home

A group's ideals are the principles that the group and its members demonstrate in their week-to-week affairs. These ideals express themselves in countless ways. Some groups reach these ideals smoothly and naturally; other groups work hard to meet their potential.

Consistency and Commitment refers to home group members who regularly attend and support the group. Members become accountable to the group and for the group when they participate in both the meeting and group service. Participating consistently sends a clear message to newcomers. They get to see the same people time and time again in their early recovery. If actions speak louder than words, our ongoing participation can do more to carry the message than what we share in the meeting.

Spirit of Service means that members serve out of gratitude and a personal desire to see the group succeed, not because they feel obligated or guilty. The spirit of loving service is best spread at the home group level. Those who are not yet involved in service will be best attracted by what they see and learn from those who are.

Benefits of Service refers to personal growth that comes from service to the group. The group offers one of the most direct opportunities to give what we have in order to keep it. The group puts us in touch with newcomers and with other members with whom we might not normally spend time. This connects us to our community and it sends a message to the newcomer of how to stay involved.

Principles in Action includes accountability, responsibility, humility, patience, tolerance, sincerity, unity, and perseverance, among others. Members who practice these principles grow and change as individuals as they help to strengthen their home group. Strong home groups demonstrate these principles in business and recovery meetings.

A Positive Perspective is when the group helps members gain a hopeful outlook on the world. A strong home group encourages members to dream big, but to stay in touch with reality. As the group challenges itself to improve efforts to fulfill the primary purpose, group members get to see progress in action. The group can work together to identify realistic goals and look for ways to reach them. Members will begin to learn how to do the same thing for themselves. The group's goal of carrying a message to still-suffering addicts is humble, but the results—addicts staying clean—are miraculous. Strong home groups teach us to work toward simple goals and reach amazing heights, instead of dreaming outlandish dreams and going nowhere.

Intimacy and a Sense of Home comes as members work together to try to accomplish group goals and find ways to better carry the message. Members also get to know each other and help each other to grow, change, and reach our own personal goals.

Home Group Qualities – Practices

Practices	How strong home groups operate	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe, Positive Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Good Public Relations
	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Principles	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage Diversity
	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Nurture All Members

A group's practices are its deliberate, specific efforts to enhance the atmosphere of recovery and move toward the ideals of a strong home group.

A Safe, Positive Environment helps to bring our Third Tradition to life. A group must create an atmosphere of acceptance and respect for all members. A simple way to start could be to ask people who attend to turn off cell phones and refrain from cross talk. People feel safe when they are welcomed into meetings, when home group members remember their names, when they know the meeting will be there every week no matter what, and when they see the same people show up regularly. Groups might not have control over who shows up and who engages in disruptive behavior, but they can choose how to react. Strong home groups can show appreciation to members who attend regularly. They can also stand up firmly to disruptive behavior so members feel safe. We make sure that disruptive members know that they are welcome, even if their behavior is not.

Groups can **Teach Principles** to members. The principles of recovery in the steps, traditions, concepts, and all of our literature are great material for group discussion. Groups can raise awareness of principles through topic discussion or literature study meetings, or with group workshops. They could even discuss a spiritual principle at the monthly group business meeting. There are countless ways to study recovery principles at the group level. Try some new ideas in your group, and see what works best for you.

Self-Support is one of the many principles that groups can explore in this manner. The IP *Self-Support: Principle and Practice* can provide ideas for discussion. Members can explore how they, as a group and as individuals, can contribute to the common welfare of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

Good Public Relations deals with the way the group's actions reflect on NA as a whole. The group can explore whether or not their meetings provide an attractive example of NA (especially in open meetings), or whether or not they have a good relationship with the provider of meeting space.

To **Encourage Diversity**, groups can make an effort to welcome and meet the needs of addicts of any background. They can also work to make sure that they do not tolerate any behavior that might alienate other members.

Nurture All Members doesn't just mean all home group members; it means all NA members, especially newcomers. Groups help members find recovery, not just abstinence. The group must encourage members to grow and change in their recovery. Groups and members can help each other in a lot of ways: showing up on time and staying for the entire meeting; working the steps and sharing our experience, strength, and hope in the meeting; and showing positive care and concern for other members, new and old. The actions of the group and its members form the basis of the group's character, which will affect the group's roles in and out of NA.

Home Group Qualities – Roles

How a group interacts with NA and the community		
Roles	<input type="checkbox"/> Evolves with Members	<input type="checkbox"/> Model of Service
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establishes a Network	<input type="checkbox"/> Unity and Credibility
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gateway to Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Message

A group's roles are the ways it interacts in and out of NA. This includes the role the group plays in members' lives, the role it plays in the NA service community, and the role it plays in the community at large.

A strong home group **Evolves with Members**. The personality of the group will grow and change as its members do. Consistent and reliable home group members give the group a sense of character, and new members help keep the group fresh and dynamic.

Establishes a Network refers to how the group connects newcomers to members who provide guidance in recovery and service. Newer members look to older members for experience and support with their personal recovery, and also for their understanding of service. Older members also demonstrate the fact that recovery and service are ongoing processes that only stop when we do.

Model of Service means that the group helps new members understand how our service system operates, how to be of service, and what different positions mean. The group should encourage newer members to learn these things by working with one another.

The group should also provide a **Gateway to Service**. The principles of advancement and continuity put members in touch with service to the group and to other levels of the service system. Strong home groups expose their members to the service community by encouraging them to attend service meetings and to keep up with what's happening at area/region/world.

Unity and Credibility refers to the unity groups establish in the service structure and the credibility they create in the community. Groups that actively contribute time and resources to their area service committee help to establish and maintain unity in the local NA community. That unity, which must start with the groups, enhances NA's credibility as service efforts become more efficient and responsive to local needs.

The **Positive Message** we send to the community is that NA members are not only gaining freedom from active addiction and finding new ways to live, but are also learning to take on responsible and productive roles in society. That message will enhance the credibility of NA and help us reach more addicts.

Building Strong Home Groups Worksheet

Groups can use the new group worksheet (see next page) to find out what issues they can look at and improve. Beyond the group level, talking about the worksheet in your service bodies can give you some ideas about the issues in your communities.



Building Strong Home Groups Worksheet



This worksheet is meant to help NA members strengthen their home groups. Use it in your group business meetings to find ways to grow and improve. The idea of longer business meetings isn't always appealing. If needed, the group can schedule an extra business meeting or have a get-together on a separate day. In a spirit of giving, a little extra time goes a long way to strengthen the group so it can better carry the message. To make the process quick and smooth, hand out copies of this sheet in advance and try to get as many group members as possible involved. The worksheet includes a list of home group qualities in three categories on the back of this page.

1 Identify Areas for Group Improvement

For each category (*see list on the back of this page*), members can choose one or two items the group can improve, before or during the business meeting. Compare lists or vote. Address the top issues, one at a time.

2 State the Issues

The group should briefly discuss what needs to be improved in each area they chose, one at a time. Remember, keep it simple! Don't get too wrapped in the problem; move into the solution.

3 Brainstorm Solutions

As a group, discuss solution ideas. Remember, there are no bad ideas and there is no need to debate. One idea that won't work might lead to another that will. Focus on ways to make progress; don't worry about being perfect. Small improvements are better than no improvements.

4 Choose the Solutions

Choose the ideas that most members agree on. If needed, this can be done by a simple vote.

5 Make Decision(s)

From the brainstorming, look for simple, practical actions the group can take to implement the solutions. Be specific about *who* will carry out the action, and *how* it should be done.

Example

Area for improvement: Practices – Public Relations

The issue: meeting facility complains about noise and mess after our meetings, and they never know who to talk to about the problem.

Brainstorming/choosing the solutions (votes):

- let people know about noise (2)
- announce in meeting format (5)
- also mention trash/cig butts (3)
- have someone stay to clean up (5)
- give the facility phone numbers (4)
- have someone check in monthly (5)

Decisions:

- Add statement to meeting format about keeping noise and mess down.
- Group secretary will give facility our contact info and check in monthly.
- Get a “clean-up” person each month to make sure we don't leave a mess.

Ideals	Principles demonstrated by the group and its members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consistency and Commitment – People can count on our meeting and trusted servants. <input type="checkbox"/> Spirit of Service – Members serve willingly with gratitude for NA. <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits of Service – Trusted servants demonstrate growth that comes with service. <input type="checkbox"/> Principles in Action – Members live NA principles and share about them in our meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Perspective – The group and members dream big and share our successes. <input type="checkbox"/> Intimacy and a Sense of Home – We help all members feel like a part of the fellowship. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	How strong home groups operate
Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Safe and Positive Environment – Our format keeps us focused on recovery. <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Principles – The group discusses the steps, traditions, and literature. <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Support – Members give time and resources freely to support the message. <input type="checkbox"/> Good Public Relations – Our group reflects well on NA as a whole. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage Diversity – The meeting reaches all newcomers and welcomes them home. <input type="checkbox"/> Nurture All Members – Group members are supportive and challenge each other to grow. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	How a group interacts with NA and the community
Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evolves with Members – Members' personal growth strengthens the group. <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes a Network – Our group puts newcomers in touch with experienced members. <input type="checkbox"/> Gateway to Service – Members introduce newcomers into group service, then beyond. <input type="checkbox"/> Model of Service – Our group prepares trusted servants to work well at other levels. <input type="checkbox"/> Unity and Credibility – We work with other groups and ASC in a spirit of cooperation. <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Message – Group members are an example of NA changing lives for the better. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Group Notes (use extra paper if necessary)

- 1 Area for improvement** _____
- 2 The issue** _____

- 3 Brainstorming** _____

- 4 Choosing the solutions** _____

- 5 Decisions** _____

