



HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, & PRISONS (HIP) STARTER KIT

Dear Fellow Debtors Anonymous (D.A.) Member:

Thank you for your interest in carrying the lifesaving message of D.A. into areas of your community where it is most needed. Many members like you have added great joy and depth to their own program by working with debtors who do not have the opportunity to attend regular meetings because they are confined within hospital, institution, and prison systems.

The D.A. World Service Conference (WSC) Committee for Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons (HIP) operates in service to our fellowship as a whole according to our guiding spiritual principle: that in or out of an institution, every debtor is a person of worth and dignity, deserving of recovery should he or she desire it. In these pages you will find simple tools and suggestions from those who have experience in HIP service.

In this kit you will find the following:

- Why HIP Service for today's recovering debtor? (p. 2)
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- Who does HIP work with and how do we reach them? (p. 4-5)
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- Other available resources and contacts for HIP Service (p. 12)

We hope you are inspired to action and are able to realize for yourself how fulfilling HIP service can be. Please share your HIP experiences, questions, and thoughts with us so we can grow D.A. together: hip@debtorsanonymous.org.

Sincerely,

The D.A. World Service Conference HIP Committee



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Why HIP Service for today's recovering debtor?

We Draw From the Experience of Members

It is not uncommon for compulsive debtors to find themselves in medical and/or legal situations which cause them to require institutional help. Chronic or unexpected illness—whether it be addiction, physical, or mental illness—has saddled many with crippling debt. Compulsive debting has led some to face criminal problems. A large number of us, but for the grace of God, have narrowly escaped being caught, convicted, sentenced to prison, or placed in a mental health facility, although our actions may have warranted it. Many others have not been so fortunate.

Holding D.A. meetings, sharing information, and sponsoring other debtors—where they are—is one of the most important and satisfying ways of keeping ourselves free from new unsecured debt. In order to best serve the specific population of debtors who may only be reachable within institutional systems, we draw from members who have done HIP service before us and cooperate with other D.A. World Service Conference (WSC) Committees and Caucuses like the Public Information (PI) Committee; Diversity, Intergroup, and International Caucuses.

Traditionally, HIP service has been focused on the debtor confined to a locked facility, but in 2015 the WSC HIP Committee amended its mission to reflect the wider purpose of reaching debtors before, during, and after institutional confinement. Our new WSC HIP mission statement reads:

“The Hospitals, Institutions, and Prisons (HIP) Committee carries the message of D.A. to the debtor who still suffers within hospital, institution, and prison systems.”

Opportunities for HIP service include reaching out to professionals and administrative staff, forming local committees, organizing volunteers from regional D.A. groups to speak on panels, holding meetings, and conducting workshops for debtors in institutional systems. The WSC HIP Committee works together to develop these opportunities and to document and share best practices with the D.A. Fellowship.



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HIP Service—Past, present, and a vision for our future

D.A. members and trusted servants interested in HIP service have carried the message by organizing regional groups in the USA for example, workshops, presentations, and/or panels in Los Angeles (L.A. Sheriff's Department; Men's Central Jail and detention centers; social services and mental health agencies), Seattle (Public Defenders Office; work release programs for inmates exiting the prison system; homeless shelters), Chicago (social services agencies), and beyond.

The work of the WSC HIP Committee in recent years has included developing a protocol for outreach and follow up, conducting HIP training calls for the D.A. fellowship, organizing meetings in halfway houses, and distributing program literature such as *A Currency of Hope* to several inmate libraries in the United States.

However, the need for D.A. recovery in hospital, institution, and prison systems still far outweighs the number of programs in place. By increasing the awareness of HIP within the fellowship and encouraging members to organize at the regional level, especially in underserved areas, the WSC HIP Committee looks forward to fostering wide-scale growth of HIP service in D.A.

It is our vision that the message of D.A. be readily accessible to debtors in hospitals, public institutions, correctional facilities, and youth offenders institutions all over the world. We look forward to D.A. recovery becoming as widely known and practiced as other Fellowships within these systems. To that end, the WSC HIP Committee would like to assist every Intergroup in creating their own HIP Committees and HIP Chairperson positions.



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Who does HIP work with?

The D.A. Fellowship — In order to reach debtors in HIP systems, we educate, empower, and support D.A. members around performing HIP service.

Service work in HIP is a specialized type of Public Information (PI) work. The difference between HIP service and general PI work is that HIP carries the message of D.A. into systems that often require special access. Hospital, institution, and prison environments have additional considerations that most often require special clearances or permissions. Who, then, are we looking for to gain that entry? To answer this question, the WSC HIP Committee focuses on three recipients of service:

Helping Professionals — We encourage D.A. members to reach out to professionals who work within HIP systems, providing information, and inviting them to collaborate with us in making D.A. available to their clients. Often we have found that the helping professionals themselves take interest and benefit from the message of D.A. Potential advocates for D.A. within HIP systems include:

Healthcare workers

Program directors

Doctors

Case managers

Program staff

Counselors

Social workers

*Chaplaina and
ministers*

*Student Financial
Aid offices*

Healthcare centers

Administrators

Bankruptcy judges

Parole officers

Criminal attorneys

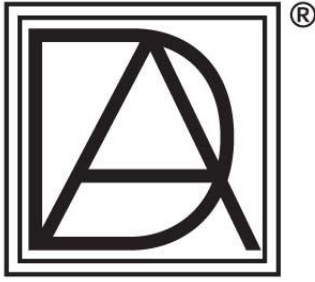
*Medical billing
advocates*

*U.S. Federal and state
public defenders*

*Student Federal Aid
offices*

Debtors — *Ultimately, we seek face-to-face interaction with the still-suffering debtor in hospital, institution, and prison systems. Below are some of the places that fall under the service oversight of D.A.'s HIP Committee; these lists are meant as neither comprehensive nor limiting.*

Hospital systems include: *treatment centers, long-term care hospitals, in-patient mental health facilities, assisted living facilities, Veteran's Administration healthcare centers, and advocacy programs.*



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Who does HIP work with?—continued

Institution systems include: homeless shelters, bankruptcy courts, legal aid societies, financial aid offices, housing authorities, welfare offices, women’s shelters, and recovery houses. In the UK, Job Centres, Citizen’s Advice Beareax, and Law Centres.

Prison systems include: correctional facilities, detention centers, criminal courts, halfway houses, work-release, and transitional programs.



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How does HIP find helping professionals to work with?

The list of search terms below have been prepared to simplify and support local, regional, national, and international outreach by D.A. HIP participants and trusted servants:

Bankruptcy attorneys	Hospital systems
Bankruptcy courts	Prisons, federal
Bankruptcy judges	Prisons, state
Criminal attorneys	Substance abuse and mental health services

In the USA for example, these terms have been productive in finding relevant organizations and professionals for D.A. HIP Service. Simply go to your favorite search engine, type in one of the listed search terms, followed by the name of your city or the city in which you want to participate in HIP activities, and press enter. Alternately, you may search by zip code, or city and neighborhood, or by telephone area code. The search opportunities are nearly unlimited.

When reviewing search results, look for organizations which might welcome the carrying of the D.A. message—as a speaker presentation, via workshops or panels, or cooperative work with professionals—to their constituents. Although you may have to make many phone calls before you find a receptive person, share your frustrations with your fellows but don't give up.. There are countless relevant organizations and professionals who would welcome D.A.'s assistance in breaking their charges' or clients' compulsion to debt.

If you stumble upon a national organization which appears open to the D.A. message and service, please be sure to let us know via hip@debtorsanonymous.org.



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How to reach out to HIP systems

Experience has shown that the best way to reach a still suffering debtor in a hospital, institution, or prison is through an existing contact. A background check may be required for some facilities. If you do not have a person or people already in mind to reach out to, you can become familiar with the institutions in your area by using the online search resources provided on the previous page of this starter kit.

Because hospitals, institutions, and prisons do not allow unauthorized visitors to enter facilities, the first step is to establish contact with administrators. Begin by identifying the person in charge of facility programs and activities. You can use the sample telephone presentations—“Getting Past the Gatekeeper” and “Getting 10 Minutes with the Professional”—on the next page.

Do not be discouraged if it takes one or many follow up calls to reach the right person. Once a HIP-related professional has expressed some interest, you can send or drop off some D.A. literature.

Free downloadable resources are available at:
<http://debtorsanonymous.org/getting-started/free-literature/>.

If you are sending an email, you may choose to link to the D.A. website directly. The page for helping professionals may be particularly useful:
<http://debtorsanonymous.org/about-da/for-helping-professionals/>.

If possible, you can arrange an informational presentation to the facility’s staff for the purpose of explaining what D.A. is and is not. Suggestions for leading a presentation, meeting, and/or panel are available on later pages in this kit.



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How to reach out to HIP systems—continued

Below you will find a simple approach to get you started on phone calls to HIP-related professionals. Use these details as guidelines and adapt them to your own style as you gain experience. Be sure to share your successes and failures with the WSC HIP Committee via hip@debtorsanonymous.org, so we can keep our documentation and other interested D.A. members updated.

GETTING PAST THE GATEKEEPER:

Hi, my name is _____. I volunteer with Debtors Anonymous, calling to provide free information to professionals at Hospitals, Institutions, and / or Prisons (depends on which one) who may encounter patients / clients / prisoners (pick one) with a compulsive debting problem. I would like to provide some free literature. Can you transfer me to the correct person to speak with about this?

GETTING 10 MINUTES WITH THE PROFESSIONAL:

Hi, my name is _____. I volunteer with Debtors Anonymous, calling to provide free literature and information to professionals at Hospitals, Institutions, and / or Prisons (depends on which one) who may encounter patients / clients / prisoners (pick one) with a compulsive debting problem. If those patients / clients / prisoners want to improve their life by not incurring new unsecured debt, we want you to feel confident in referring them to D.A.

IF YES — Do you have any immediate questions about Debtors Anonymous? Or about what I've described so far? (For best results, let the helping professional's questions lead the call.)

IF NO, AND THEY'RE LOCAL — Is there a convenient time I can stop by to drop off some literature and have a 10-minute chat to answer any questions you may have?

IF NO, AND THEY'RE LONG DISTANCE — Is there a convenient time I can call back to have a 10-minute chat to answer any questions you may have? If yes, when? If not, may I send you some literature by mail or email?



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How to reach out to HIP systems—continued

So you've made it past the gatekeeper and gotten some interest from a hospital, institution, or prison. Now's the time to drop off, mail, or email D.A. literature. The D.A. website has many pieces of literature you can download for free here: <http://debtorsanonymous.org/getting-started/free-literature/>.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR CALL OR MEETING:

To prepare yourself, we recommend you read through the PI Starter Kit and / or the PI Handbook, both available here: <http://debtorsanonymous.org/fellowship-services/public-information/>.

The most current outreach information can be found at the link above. Check back often.

It is suggested that you practice your planned outreach approach with someone else, dress professionally, have your materials with or in front of you (don't try to wing it), pray and meditate, and smile. Most importantly, trust that your Higher Power is guiding you.

MAIN TALKING POINTS FOR YOUR 10-MINUTE CALL OR MEETING:

Talk briefly about your own story, and what D.A. can do to help. You'll want to be able to answer questions like those found here:

<http://debtorsanonymous.org/getting-started/faq-frequently-asked-questions/>.

Offer to give a presentation to any division of their staff or to the entire organization. A typical presentation takes 60-90 minutes and includes a panel of 2-4 D.A. members. Guest members introduce the fellowship and talk about what the Twelve Steps of D.A. have done for them. They explain what D.A. meetings are like, share from their own personal recovery stories, and answer questions.

If appropriate, mention the options for future work with the organization such as conducting quarterly workshops or regular D.A. meetings in their facility (suggest monthly to start). If there is interest, ask about clearances and what information would be required of each guest in order to enter.

Thank them for their time and agree to follow up with them in the near future.



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How to carry the message in HIP settings

The following suggestions are based on the experience, strength, and hope of HIP service members who have gone before you. You will grow more confident as you go.

Note that sharing in non-D.A. meetings is not the same as sharing in D.A. meetings. You may need to start with brief explanations of both anonymity and service; explain the confidentiality of what you will share and what may be shared with you, as well as why you want to help—that your only compensation for sharing and serving is your own recovery and freedom from new unsecured debt.

Here are some talking points and other ideas for engagement you may find helpful:

- Bring readings, including the D.A. signposts and 15 diagnostic questions. Invite questions and promote curiosity. In other words, don't "fill in all the blanks." Leave information to be discovered by your audience through interaction with you.
- Keep it brief and simple—each member shares of D.A. experience, strength, and hope from two to four panelists usually work best. We have found this works,

especially in large groups.

- Don't be afraid to show them your scars, your vulnerability, how far down you've gone, and how far back you've come. Be sure to emphasize not your successes (ego) but the successes of the D.A. program, through the Tools and Steps (spirit), in your life.
- Keep your emphasis on broad spiritual principles, avoiding discussion of religion. If you struggled with spiritual concepts in the beginning but don't now, feel free to mention that and how you progressed to spiritual acceptance and surrender.
- While you will share plenty, do not orate, speechify, or pontificate. Keep it engaging, service-oriented.
- Dress as you would for any professional appointment. You're there to carry the message that D.A. works. Don't be afraid to let your audience both see and hear the message.



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How to carry the message in HIP settings—continued

- Bring D.A. literature to share and be flexible with your timing. Expect the unexpected. Let Higher Power be in charge of your service.
- Follow up with a thank you note, phone call or e-mail.

The following workshop agenda can be used in any organization that fits the HIP Service focus. This workshop is a reasonable alternative to the 4-member panel described in the HIP outreach guidelines on previous pages. You will want to be flexible and to adapt the workshop to your service opportunities. You are encouraged to share your successes and failures with the WSC HIP Committee via hip@debtorsanonymous.org.

Introduction: 15 minutes

- Ask an audience member to read: What Is Compulsive Debting?
- D.A. Members introduce themselves.
- Ask an audience member to read: Signs of Compulsive Debting.

D.A. Guests share 10-15 min each: 50 – 60 minutes

Experience, strength, and hope about D.A. recovery. Please note: minimize mention of outside programs / issues / D.A. sub-identifications; no profanity or off-color remarks or topics.

D.A. Tool or Pamphlet Presentation: 25 – 30 minutes

- Ask an audience member to read: 12 Tools of D.A.
- Organizers give interactive presentation of D.A. tool or pamphlet, that is with participation.

Bathroom Break

Organizers give instructions on moving furniture; tables moved to group configuration for second half of class; everyone takes a much-deserved break.



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How to carry the message in HIP settings—continued

Small Group Breakout and Audience Shares: 30 – 40 minutes

Return from break to small groups; D.A. members lead sharing and Q&A at small group tables; D.A. organizers can lead tables if there aren't enough D.A. guests; D.A. member leaders will be assigned topics and provided with necessary materials.

Closing: 20 minutes

- Member leaders wrap-up discussion; tables and chairs are replaced in the original configuration.
- Ask an audience member to read: Promises of Debtors Anonymous.
- Thanks to all — organizers, members and most of all the audience.
- Announce that members will be at the door for questions regarding D.A. Meetings for audience members or friends.
- Distribute literature on topic and newcomer packets.

D.A. Hosts and Guests Debrief Outside

How did it go? What went well? What needs improvement?



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What else can I do?—How to “Adopt a Loner” in DA.

If you are excited by HIP service in D.A. but want to start slow, consider the “Adopt A Loner” program offered by the General Service Office (GSO). Talk to your sponsor about Adopting a Loner. Send in the following form, including a note that you have special interest in helping a newcomer in a hospital, institution

ADOPT A LONER

“I need help, but there aren’t any D.A. groups within a hundred miles of me... HELP!!”

Every week, newcomers call the D.A. General Service Office looking for help. Usually, we can refer them to meetings in their area. But for the one debtor a phone call, email, or written correspondence may be their only contact with D.A.

I want to help!

I am willing to be a long distance contact for a “lone” debtor. When someone calls the DA General Service Office looking for help, I am willing to:

- Return a phone call to a newcomer
- Receive a phone call from a newcomer
- Exchange email with a newcomer
- Write to a newcomer by regular mail
- Coordinate other volunteers in my area

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

To ADOPT A LONER, it is recommended that the individual have 3 months of abstinence from debting and that all work be done in the spirit of the 12 steps and 12 traditions.

Please return this form via regular mail (just fold, tape and stamp, using the next page) to:

DA/GSO
PO Box 920888
Needham, MA 02492 – 0009

You may also email the information to: da-gso@mindspring.com

Or call (781) 453-2743

*Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the debtor who still suffers
D.A.’s Fifth Tradition*



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Other available resources and contacts for HIP Service

Although a separate Committee within D.A.'s World Service Conference structure, HIP should always seek to cooperate with the WSC Public Information (PI) Committee. There is more than occasional overlap in coverage, and sharing of information between the two Committees is helpful and much appreciated.

WSC PI has several resources that are useful to HIP service members including:

The PI Starter Kit, which can be downloaded here — <http://debtorsanonymous.org/fellowship-services/resources-for-groups/>

The Public Information Handbook, which can be downloaded here — <http://debtorsanonymous.org/fellowship-services/public-information/>

Keep checking back, too. There are new PI materials currently in the approval process with the D.A. General Service Board (GSB). When ready, those materials will also be available at

<http://debtorsanonymous.org/fellowship-services/public-information/>

There is always a multitude of information available on the D.A. website. Visit often to keep up on all the latest news and opportunities for D.A. members to be of service! The best way to stay in the loop is to sign up for eNews by using the “Subscribe to eNews” button at the top of every page of <http://debtorsanonymous.org/>.

In the meantime, reach out to the WSC HIP Committee hip@debtorsanonymous.org and WSC PI Committee pi@debtorsanonymous.org anytime with questions and feedback on outreach efforts in your region.

Thank you for your service.

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