



# **PUBLIC INFORMATION STARTER KIT**

**Celebrating D.A.'s 43<sup>rd</sup>**

**Anniversary!**

**April 2019**

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

Thank you for your interest in carrying the message about our lifesaving fellowship. In D.A., our purpose is threefold: to stop incurring unsecured debt, to share our experience with the newcomer, and to reach out to other debtors.

The purpose of this kit is to demystify Public Information (PI) service and to provide simple tools that help members take action in carrying the message of D.A. Many of us who have done PI service find that our own recovery is strengthened by taking the simple actions suggested in this kit and in "The Public Information Manual for Debtors Anonymous," which can be accessed at <https://debtorsanonymous.org/download/public-information-manual/?wpdmdl=820>

In this kit you will find the following:

- World Service Conference PI Committee Statement of Purpose
- Five Simple Ways to Carry the Message of Debtors Anonymous
- A suggested advertisement for local papers
- Information for Helping Professionals
- D.A. Contact Information Cards
- Frequently Asked Questions about PI service
- Public Information Representative (PIR) Guidelines

We hope you will be inspired when you realize how easy PI service can be and will begin to (or continue to) practice carrying the message as a regular part of your recovery.

Sincerely,

The D.A. World Service Conference PI Committee



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**World Service Conference Public  
Information (PI) Committee  
Statement of Purpose**

**World Service Conference Public Information (PI) Committee Statement of Purpose:**

The Public Information Committee works to carry the message of D.A. to the still suffering debtor by interfacing with the media, helping professionals, the general public, and the D.A. Fellowship at large, in person, on the telephone, and through written information. The Public Information Committee:

- Utilizes the Public Information Manual for Debtors Anonymous and other D.A. service literature available to the entire Fellowship as a tool for outreach efforts
- Supports and trains PI Representatives
- Is guided by the 12 Traditions of Debtors Anonymous



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## **Five Simple Ways to Carry the Message of Debtors Anonymous**

Here are some simple actions that any D.A. member may take to participate in D.A. Public Information efforts:

1. Leave a piece of D.A. literature on public transportation or at a supermarket, library, or place of worship. Permission may be required.
2. Post a flyer on a bulletin board at work, school, a community center, etc. Permission may be required.
3. Listen with compassion to someone who has confided in you about their suffering from compulsive debting. Share your own experience, strength, and hope, and invite them to a D.A. meeting.
4. Give the “Information for Helping Professionals” pamphlet to or request an appointment to speak with a therapist, bankruptcy counselor, or judge, banker, minister, rabbi, priest, or other helping professional.
5. Let everyone in your D.A. meeting know about One Member, One Action Day every year on April 15. Share the actions in this starter kit and the importance of carrying the message in helping our members stay solvent.

Free downloadable resources are available at:

<https://debtorsanonymous.org/getting-started/free-literature/>

and in the Public Information Manual for Debtors Anonymous:

<https://debtorsanonymous.org/download/public-information-manual/?wpdmdl=820>

PI events and news are available at:

<https://debtorsanonymous.org/fellowship-services/events-and-news/>



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**A Suggested Advertisement  
for Local Papers**

Suitable for newspapers, community events calendars, and other free ad space,  
either in print or online:

Hope and Recovery for Debtors  
Debtors Anonymous  
Meeting Day and Time  
Facility  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
Contact Person and Contact Information (*optional*)

Additional information is optional, according to group conscience  
and/or space considerations.



# **PUBLIC INFORMATION STARTER KIT**

## **Information for Helping Professionals—Part I**

**To our friends in the helping professions—Do you know someone who is having problems with debt and might be a compulsive debtor?**

There is hope for people whose use of unsecured debt has caused a variety of problems and suffering in their lives and the lives of others. Debting is more than just sensationalized shopping. It can cripple and ruin someone's life. For the compulsive debtor, debt is like alcohol for the alcoholic, food for the compulsive eater, and gambling for the compulsive gambler.

For many, it is a false crutch that feeds fantasy and magnifies obsession. Many follow this illusion to the brink of mental instability, lawlessness, or even suicide. Many debtors are thousands of dollars in debt to credit card companies, student lending organizations, or family members. Compulsive debtors often engage in compulsive shopping and underearning or alternate between overspending and deprivation. Eventually, a person with a compulsive debting problem finds that life has become unmanageable.

Debtors Anonymous (D.A.) is a twelve-step program in the tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous and is a nonprofit organization. D.A. is in a position to serve as a resource to you through its policy of cooperation, but not affiliation, with the professional community.

For people whose use of unsecured debt has caused a variety of problems and has made their lives unmanageable, D.A. offers a program that works. In D.A. meetings, members share their experience, strength, and hope and help each other to not incur new unsecured debt one day at a time.



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## Information for Helping Professionals—Part 2

**15 Questions**—Most compulsive debtors will answer “yes” to at least eight of the following 15 questions:

1. Are your debts making your home life unhappy?
2. Does the pressure of your debts distract you from your daily work?
3. Are your debts affecting your reputation?
4. Do your debts cause you to think less of yourself?
5. Have you ever given false information in order to obtain credit?
6. Have you ever made unrealistic promises to your creditors?
7. Does the pressure of your debts make you careless with the welfare of your family?
8. Do you ever fear that your employer, family or friends will learn the extent of your total indebtedness?
9. When faced with a difficult financial situation, does the prospect of borrowing give you an inordinate feeling of relief?
10. Does the pressure of your debts cause you to have difficulty sleeping?
11. Has the pressure of your debts ever caused you to consider getting drunk?
12. Have you ever borrowed money without giving adequate consideration to the rate of interest you are required to pay?
13. Do you usually expect a negative response when subject to a credit investigation?
14. Have you developed a strict regimen of paying off your debts, only to break it under pressure?
15. Do you justify your debts by telling yourself that you are superior to “other” people, and when you get your “break” you’ll be out of debt overnight?

If your client or patient answered “yes” to eight or more of these questions, the chances are that there is a problem with compulsive debt or he or she is well on the way to having one. **A formal referral is not necessary.** For meeting information, you or your client or patient can call the D.A. General Service Office (800-421-2383) or visit our website: <https://www.debtorsanonymous.org/>.



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## **Information for Helping Professionals—Part 3**

### **The Twelve Signs of Compulsive Debting: corrections below from I/C 17-37 Jill W.**

1. Being unclear about your financial situation. Not knowing account balances, monthly expenses, loan interest rates, fees, fines, or contractual obligations.
2. Frequently “borrowing” items such as books, pens, or small amounts of money from friends or others and failing to return them.
3. Poor saving habits. Not planning for taxes, retirement, or other not-recurring but predictable items and feeling surprised when they come due; a “live for today, don’t worry about tomorrow” attitude.
4. Compulsive shopping: Being unable to pass up a “good deal”; making impulsive purchases; leaving price tags on clothes so they can be returned; not using items you’ve purchased.
5. Difficulty in meeting basic financial or personal obligations and/or an inordinate sense of accomplishment when such obligations are met.
6. A different feeling when buying things on credit than when paying cash, a feeling of being in the club, of being accepted, of being grown up.
7. Living in chaos and drama around money. Using one credit card to pay another; bouncing checks; always having a financial crisis to contend with.
8. A tendency to live on the edge. Living paycheck to paycheck; taking risks with health and car insurance coverage; writing checks hoping money will appear to cover them.
9. Unwarranted inhibition and embarrassment in what should be a normal discussion of money.
10. Overworking or underearning. Working extra hours to earn money to pay your creditors; using time inefficiently; taking jobs below your skill and education level.
11. An unwillingness to care for and value yourself. Living in self-imposed deprivation; denying your own basic needs in order to pay your creditors.
12. A feeling or hope that someone will take care of you if necessary, so that you won’t really get into trouble, that there will always be someone you can turn to.



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## **D.A. Contact Information Cards**

### **D.A. Contact Information Cards**

The D.A. Contact Information Card is a useful tool when interfacing with the media, helping professionals, and the general public in person and through written communication. The card can be given out at PI booths and health fairs and can be included in PI outreach letters. This card can also be used by members of D.A. on all levels: local meeting, area Intergroup, World Service Committees, the GSO, and the GSB.

These cards are referred to as “Contact Information Cards” rather than business cards to avoid any violation of D.A.’s Eighth Tradition: Debtors Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers. The bearer of these cards is not an official D.A. representative, but solely a bearer of D.A.’s contact information, both locally and on a world level.

These cards are available for purchase through the GSO. A sample of the card is shown below.

  
DEBTORS ANONYMOUS

For Newcomers  
and General Inquiries:  
office@debtorsanonymous.org

For Media and  
Helping Professionals:  
publicinfo@debtorsanonymous.org

[www.debtorsanonymous.org](http://www.debtorsanonymous.org)

Problems with money and debt? D.A. can help.

Toll Free: 800-421-2383 (U.S. only)  
Or: 781-453-2743

D.A. offers recovery from compulsive debting for a healthier, happier, and more prosperous life. We suggest that you attend at least six meetings to find out if D.A. is right for you.

Information about local, phone, and online meetings can be found at:

  
DEBTORS ANONYMOUS





# **PUBLIC INFORMATION STARTER KIT**

## **Frequently Asked Questions About PI Service—Part I**

**Are you new to D.A. Public Information service?** If so, we have prepared this quick FAQ information sheet to help you get started.

### **What is the difference between “Attraction” versus “Promotion” for D.A. Meetings?**

Our Fifth Tradition states: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the debtor who still suffers. Our Eleventh Tradition states: Our public information policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. The difference between “attraction” and “promotion” may be somewhat subtle and could be seen as a matter of degree. We offer information about the Fellowship: what it offers/how it works. We invite people to see what they could gain, if anything, by attending our meetings and joining our fellowship. We share only our experience, strength, and hope.

### **What is the first thing I can do in Public Information service?**

The first thing you can do in Public Information service is to let others know you are planning to carry out D.A.’s Twelfth Step in the form of PI service. The WSC PI Committee suggests that you look at your meeting as the center of a bull’s-eye and consider the area in close proximity to the bull’s-eye as your target. Place a flyer about your meeting or a meeting schedule in the building in which your meeting takes place. Next, consider the places near your meeting with a community bulletin board or high traffic, such as a supermarket, library, or church. Ask fellow members to join you in PI service and/or form a committee to brainstorm ideas on where to place fliers.



# **PUBLIC INFORMATION STARTER KIT**

## **Frequently Asked Questions About PI Service—Part 2**

### **More quick FAQ information to help you get started:**

#### **How can I best carry the message in our community?**

First and foremost, familiarize yourself and your group with the suggested processes in the Public Information Manual for Debtors Anonymous. It includes most of the details about how to organize your PI media activities. D.A. experience shows that it's best to start small: post fliers or meeting schedules with basic D.A. meeting information and local contacts on bulletin boards in recovery centers, A.A. centers, recovery bookstores, religious institutions, and the like.

Then, you might have a "Contact Professionals Mailing Party" during which you and your group prepare, address, and mail fliers and basic D.A. pamphlets to the addiction recovery professionals, marriage counselors, therapists, psychologists, employee relations professionals, etc. in your area. As you feel more comfortable, consider contacting (after you have completed D.A. Media Contact Training) by mail, phone, or email, local media as well as debt-related organizations in your area, such as consumer credit counseling services, bankruptcy judges/lawyers, doctors, CPAs, accountants, tax accountants, employee assistance programs, senior citizen organizations, 24-Hour crisis hotlines, hospitals, recovery treatment centers, and free clinics.

Lastly, the best way to carry the message is for you and your fellow members carry the message through the quality of your own recovery.

#### **What other support is available?**

The WSC PI Committee of Debtors Anonymous — [Publicinfo@debtorsanonymous.org](mailto:Publicinfo@debtorsanonymous.org) - is available to the Fellowship for help, support, and encouragement.



# **PUBLIC INFORMATION STARTER KIT**

## **Public Information Representative (PIR) Guidelines—Part I**

### **The primary purpose of the Public Information Representative is ...**

... to carry the message of recovery to the still suffering debtor and to other people and groups who come in contact with debtors. PIRs ought to be a credible community resource by providing information on D.A. websites and via other communications to the general public, the media, and helping professionals. PIRs also provide information to institutions when there is no local Hospital, Institution, and Prison (HIP) Committee. PIRs report to their home group or Intergroup.

### **Suggested qualifications for a PIR:**

- Is an active member of D.A., attending meetings regularly with at least three months of not incurring unsecured debt; \*requirement is one year of not incurring unsecured debt when responding to requests from the media
- Has read the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Debtors Anonymous and has a strong understanding of-anonymity as discussed in Traditions Eleven and Twelve
- Has worked the Steps or is currently engaged in step work in the D.A. program
- Has a sponsor in D.A.

### **Responsibilities of a PIR:**

- Report to his or her home group or Intergroup about PI activities
- Commit to a minimum of one hour per month of service work
- Attend D.A. Media Contact Training within the first year of service
- Be a point person for requests from the media



# **PUBLIC INFORMATION STARTER KIT**

## **Public Information Representative (PIR) Guidelines—Part 2**

### **Suggested activities of the Public Information Representative:**

#### **Public Outreach:**

In keeping with Tradition Eleven, PIRs spread the word about D.A. to local media (TV, radio, newspapers, Internet sites, etc.). In cooperation with the World Service Conference (WSC) PI Committee, PIRs also reach out to professionals and institutions. In addition, PI Reps spread the word about D.A., including specific meeting information, to local churches, libraries, self-help clearing houses, teen centers, crisis hotlines, and other twelve-step fellowships. The Public Information Manual for Debtors Anonymous has excellent examples of specific letters, announcements, and meeting listings for these purposes.

#### **In-Reach to the D.A. Fellowship:**

We inform local, regional, and the greater D.A. fellowships about our D.A. activities and events. These include retreats, workshops, meeting anniversary celebrations, days of sharing, etc. We accomplish this by distributing fliers and notices to other local meetings and Intergroup(s) and by sending them to the GSO for posting on D.A.'s website as well as for inclusion in D.A.'s eNews. (You can sign up for eNews by using the "Subscribe to eNews" button at the top of every page of our website at <https://www.debtorsanonymous.org>).

#### **What other support is available?**

The WSC PI Committee of Debtors Anonymous — [Publicinfo@debtorsanonymous.org](mailto:Publicinfo@debtorsanonymous.org) — is available to the membership for help, support, and encouragement.