



NA: A Resource in Your Community, 2005 Version

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Narcotics Anonymous is a nonprofit, international, community-based organization for recovering addicts active in over 116 countries. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) members learn from one another how to live drug-free and recover from the effects of addiction in their lives.

If you have considered recommending Narcotics Anonymous to someone who has a drug problem, you may have a few questions about our organization. This pamphlet is designed to answer those questions.

Who are members of NA?

Anyone who wants to stop using drugs may become a member of Narcotics Anonymous. Membership is not limited to addicts using any particular drug. Those who feel they may have a problem with drugs, legal or illegal, including alcohol, are welcome in NA. Recovery in NA focuses on the problem of addiction, not on any particular drug.

Anonymity

The basic premise of anonymity allows addicts to attend meetings without fear of legal or social repercussions. This is an important consideration for an addict thinking about going to a meeting for the first time. Anonymity also supports an atmosphere of equality in meetings. It helps insure that no individual's personality or circumstance will be considered more important than the message of recovery shared in NA.

NA meetings

NA's primary approach to recovery is its belief in the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. Members take part in NA meetings by talking about their experiences and recovery from drug addiction. NA meetings are informally structured, held in space rented by the group, and are led by members who take turns opening and closing the meeting. NA meetings and other services are funded entirely from donations by addict members and the sale of recovery literature. Financial contributions from non-members are not accepted.

Most NA meetings are held regularly at the same time and place each week, usually in a public facility. There are two basic types of meetings those that are open to the general public and those closed to the public (for addicts only). Meetings vary widely in format. Some formats are: participation, speaker, question and answer, topic discussion, and some have a combination of these formats. The function of any meeting is always the same: to provide a suitable and reliable environment for personal recovery.

How does NA work?

Addicts helping each other recover are the foundation of NA. Members meet regularly to talk about their experiences in recovery. More experienced members (known as *sponsors*) work individually with newer members.

The core of the NA program is the Twelve Steps. These “steps” are a set of guidelines outlining a practical approach to recovery. By following these guidelines and working closely with other members, addicts learn to stop using drugs and face the challenges of daily living.

Narcotics Anonymous is not a religious organization and does not mandate any particular belief system. It does teach basic spiritual principles such as honesty, open-mindedness, faith, willingness, and humility that may be applied in everyday life. The specific practical application of spiritual principles is determined by each individual. Recovery in NA is not a miracle cure that happens within a given period of time. It is a process, ongoing and personal. Members make an individual decision to join and recover at their own pace.

Rate of growth

Since no attendance records are kept, it is difficult to estimate what percentages of those who come to Narcotics Anonymous ultimately achieve long-term abstinence. The only sure indicator of our success is the rapid growth in the number of Narcotics Anonymous groups over the last several years and the rapid spread of Narcotics Anonymous outside North America.

In 1978, we had fewer than two-hundred registered groups in three countries; in 1982, eleven countries had twelve-hundred groups; in 1993, 60 countries had over 13,000 groups holding over 19,000 meetings; as of January 2005, it is estimated that there are over 21,500 registered groups holding over 33,500 weekly meetings in 116 countries.

NA survey results

The following demographic information was revealed in a survey of almost half of the 13,500 attendees at the 2003 NA World Convention in San Diego, California:

Age

- 3% of the respondents were under 20
- 12% were between 21 and 30 years old
- 31% were between 31 and 40 years old
- 40% were between 41 and 50 years
- 13% were between 51 and 60 years
- 1% were over 60 years old

Men/Women

- 55% of the respondents were male
- 45% of the respondents were female

How survey respondents found Narcotics Anonymous

(Respondents could check more than one answer)

- 54% introduced through treatment/counseling centers
- 45% introduced through another NA member
- 22% introduced through a family member
- 34% introduced through the judicial system
(courts, corrections, probation/parole, in-custody NA meetings, etc.)

Ethnic Diversity

The ethnic diversity of our membership seems to be representative of the geographic location of our survey. When we conducted this survey in 2003 in San Diego, California, 70% of respondents were white, 11% were black, 11% were Hispanic, and 8% were other. In 2002 in Atlanta, Georgia, 49% of respondents were white, 39% were black, 4% were Hispanic, and 8% were other.

NA in the community

Volunteer committees of NA members are formed to coordinate many services within the community. NA accepts no financial contributions from non-members, has no professional counselors and maintains no clinics or residential facilities. Below is a list of services that NA may offer.

Community Awareness Meetings may be conducted by NA members to inform the community of the existence of Narcotics Anonymous and its available services.

Health Fairs and Conferences are events conducted by professional organizations at which NA may have a display booth and/or presents information at a workshop.

Presentations are often provided to churches, parole officers, judges, counselors, nurses, doctors, and schools, among others, for information purposes.

Public Service Announcements can provide information about NA distributed to the public via the media (press, radio, television, billboards, bus signs, and posters).

Phoneline Services may provide local meeting information and general information about NA.

Meeting Lists, which are locally produced schedules that contain times of and locations for meetings in the community are generally available.

Services to Hospitals & Institutions are provided by local committees through meetings/presentations to introduce those people attending to some of the basics of the Narcotics Anonymous program. They carry the NA message of recovery to addicts who do not have full access to regular NA meetings. Meetings or presentations are provided to hospitals, jails, addiction treatment facilities, detox centers, and other institutions.

Literature Services include a variety of books, pamphlets and audiotapes, some in Braille or large-type editions. Narcotics Anonymous literature is published in English and several other languages.

How to contact Narcotics Anonymous

In many communities, Narcotics Anonymous is listed in the white pages of the telephone directory. Many phonenumber numbers and meeting locations can be found on our website at *www.na.org*. Phonelines are staffed by recovering addicts, or by a service that can contact recovering members. Phone services are primarily designed to help addicts find meetings close by. Other information may be available through the phonenumber, as well. A phonenumber call is a good place to start if you have further questions about NA.

If there is no phonenumber in your community, or if you have questions about Narcotics Anonymous, contact NA's World Service Office at the address shown below. The World Service Office can provide information about meetings or other services, as well as a catalog listing all of NA's recovery literature.

World Service Office
Post Office Box 9999
Van Nuys, California 91409 USA
Tel: (818) 773-9999 Fax: (818) 700-0700
Website: www.na.org