

MID-HUDSON AREA OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS NEWS & INFORMATION

NEW MID-HUDSON AREA WEBSITE

We are now able to more effectively carry the message of HOPE in our local communities. Help us with our efforts by sharing our webpage with anyone that may find it helpful.

www.mha-na.org

NEW MID-HUDSON AREA HELPLINE NUMBER

Our Public Relations
Committee, in an effort to help
the still sick and suffering
addict that may not know that
we do recover in NA, decided
to change our Area Helpline
Phone Number. We did this,
keeping in mind our very own
experience, that when we were
still actively using drugs - our
memory function was
impaired. We decided on a
vanity number that may be
easier to recall if needed. Our
new number is:

855-99-4HOPE



About Our Newsletter

Greetings from Narcotics Anonymous. This newsletter is being generated and maintained by the Public Relations committee of the Mid-Hudson Area. If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to be added to our monthly email list - please email us at mhanapublicinformation@yahoo.com and let us know.

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H & I Committee

About Hospitals and Institutions

H & I, as it is known within the fellowship, is another committee comprised of recovering addicts. This committee ensures that people seeking recovery through Narcotics Anonymous, that do not have full access to regular NA meetings, can here our lifesaving message.

Typical H & I presentation/ meeting locations are:

- Prisons and Jails
- Rehab treatment facilities and Detox
- Adolescent institutions

Intent: to simply introduce those attending to some of the basics of the NA program. Hopes are that the individual, upon leaving the facility, will get to an NA meeting and find themselves comfortable and somewhat familiar with the NA program and the fellowship.



Typical Public Relations setup used at community gatherings & events

What does Public Relations do?

The role of the PR committee is to ensure that clear and accurate information about NA is available to the public. The demand for information about our fellowship is greater than ever.

The Narcotics Anonymous message is "that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live." Our relations with the public enable us to share this message broadly so that those who might benefit from our program of recovery can find us. We perform public relations service to increase the awareness and credibility of the NA program. We share our message openly with the public at large, with prospective members, and with professionals.



What is available on our website?

- Meeting locations and times
- Calendar events
- Information about NA
- Virtual meeting information
- Links to the NA World website
- Links to various committee contacts

www.mha-na.org

Narcotics Anonymous World Services

- Find the answers to any question you may have about NA on the world website.
- Purchase NA literature
- Find membership statistics
- Read about NA history
- Find resources for professionals
- Learn how to start a meeting
- Event calendar
- Contact information

WWW.NA.ORG

What is the Narcotics Anonymous program?

Narcotics Anonymous is a global, community-based organization with a multilingual and multicultural membership. NA was founded in 1953, and members hold nearly 76,000 meetings weekly in 143 countries today.

NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that they work.

There are no strings attached to NA. We are not affiliated with any other organizations. We have no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious, or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

What happens at an NA Meeting?

"If you're new to NA or planning to go to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting for the first time, it might be nice to know a little bit about what happens in our meetings.

The information here is meant to give you an understanding of what we do when we come together to share recovery. The words we use and the way we act might be unfamiliar to you at first, but hopefully this information can help you get the most out of your first NA meeting or help you feel more comfortable as you keep coming back.

Showing up early, staying late, and asking lots of questions before and after meetings will help you get the most out of every meeting you attend......People have all sorts of reasons for attending NA meetings, but the purpose of each meeting is to give NA members a place to share recovery with other addicts.

If you are not an addict, look for an open meeting, which welcomes non-addicts. If you're an addict or think you might have a drug problem, we suggest a meeting every day for at least 90 days to get to know NA members and our program"

(excerpts from IP #29, "An Introduction to NA Meetings")

NA literature is also a great source of information about our program.

Our Basic Text, Narcotics Anonymous, or our information pamphlets (IPs) are a good place to start. Most meetings offer IPs for free, while books are generally sold at the group's cost. Most of our literature is also available to read on this website.

To begin, we invite you to read IP #22, <u>"Welcome to NA"</u>. Please come to our meetings and "Keep Coming Back!

The News in Narcotics Anonymous of the Mid-Hudson Area - UPDATED

Narcotics Anonymous continues to create an atmosphere where addicts can come together and share with one another how we stay clean one day at a time. That we don't have to die. We can live a life free from the horrors of addiction. We can clear the wreckage of our past and live a life full of hope.



The NA fellowship is growing back after two years of uncertainty brought on by Covid-19. Just as an addict in recovery learns to overcome obstacles in life, so the fellowship has done the same. Together we can accomplish what alone we never could.

Meetings that survived throughout the shutdowns continue to grow. New meetings are opening throughout the region and NA members are excited. NA events are being planned and are currently happening.

Covid-19 has been a horrible experience but a blessing as well. It has given many recovering addicts the ability to learn new ways to work the NA program. It has created opportunities for members to develop IT skills, graphic skills, networking skills, communication skills etc. These are all valuable assets to a fellowship that relies on connections, communication, unity and so forth.

Facilities, treatment centers, government agencies, schools etc. are opened back up which affords our Public Relations and Hospitals & Institutions committees the opportunity to deliver the message of hope out into the community.

Narcotics Anonymous is not a secret society. Our members are anonymous but our fellowship is not. We meet regularly to help each other stay clean. We are a spiritual and not a religious program. We learn to live by applying spiritual principles in our lives. It is an individual program that a member can create for themselves. We have no rules. However, many find that a path has been created by our predecessors that has proven to be the path of least resistance. They have shown that through the understanding and application of the 12 steps, peace, serenity and harmony can be attained through humility. This newfound humility creates an existence where we no longer wish to be served but to serve. We longer wish to be understood - we understand. We no longer point the finger and live in a world of blame- we now own our part. Where we were a seeker of forgiveness - we forgive.

These are some examples of the miraculous things that happen to some in Narcotics Anonymous. We come from a dark, ominous, isolated chamber filled with death and despair. We find that our lives can be filled with love, support, compassion, empathy, success, family and friends.

None of this is possible until we put down the drug. NA is a program of complete abstinence. However, "complete abstinence" is a goal. Any addict is welcome in Narcotics Anonymous whether you are still using, withdrawing, drinking alcohol, smoking weed or on replacement therapy. It doesn't matter......you are a member if you say you are. You will be welcomed with a hug, loved and supported

EXTRA! EXTRA!

READ ALL ABOUT IT

because many of us have been right where you are. We only encourage you to keep coming back. Keep coming to our meetings. It cost you nothing yet the rewards are great.

Finally, the Hospitals & Institutions as well as Public Relations committees would like to make themselves available to any professionals, institutions, facilities, public officials, schools and departments.

Public Relations can meet with anyone interested in learning more about Narcotics Anonymous. Let's discuss bringing a meeting into your treatment center through our H & I efforts. Do you need NA literature to display for your clients? How about a NA presentation for your staff. We are always happy to share what NA is and isn't, how we can help or how it works.

Again, we are by no means a secret society. We are a life-saving, 12 step fellowship in the community. Many do not know that we do recover in NA. Our goal, through this newsletter, is too inform as many people as possible, that have direct contact with individuals struggling with drug addiction, that "THERE IS HOPE".

NA meetings are open in Dutchess, Ulster, Greene and Columbia counties. Please visit our Website or direct your clients there to find one close by.

Your First NA Meeting

Some suggestions and things for a newcomer to expect when attending their first NA meeting:

- Try to get there early. Don't be surprised if you are greeted with a warm welcome hug (It's okay to decline but know that it is customary to hug in NA as opposed to shaking hands).
- NA meetings are loaded with NA literature (it is the road map by which we find our way out of the darkness of addiction).
- Pick up a meeting list (or a few)
- You will hear many things quoted from one of our books called the Basic Text. It is strongly suggested to purchase one. If you cannot afford one, most groups give them out to a newcomer or a longterm member may buy you one.
- Listen to the readings that are read at the beginning of the meeting. Again.... Listen to the readings
- You will find that many meetings open the meeting with the Serenity Prayer. If the word "prayer" makes you feel a certain kinda way..... please keep coming back! You will soon pick up on the fact that NA is NOT a religious program. The NA program is a spiritual program. Let it develop in a way that feels right for you.
- NA is a "12 Step Fellowship". You will hear talk about the 12 steps and how people learn to live differently through the understanding and application of the 12 steps. Again....let it unfold for you.
- You will hear the word God or Higher Power mentioned in meetings. We are taught early on that we must rely on a power greater than ourselves to get and stay clean. Left to our own devices, we constantly failed. When we turn our will and lives over to a power greater than ourselves (many use the group or NA or the

literature) we find that we learn coping skills and alternative ways of handling things that we could not in the past.

- Listen intently to the topic of surrender. Perhaps introduce yourself and ask to hear about it. We have found that without complete surrender with no reservations, we will surely use again.
- Many meetings recognize various amounts of clean time and they do it with key tags, medallions and hugs. They are powerful tokens of accomplishment that we receive to not only feel joy in for ourselves but to also show the newcomer that we can get through a day without using and those days add up.
- We have a daily meditation book as well as a free download on your phone device. It is called "Just For Today". Many of us look at this opportunity every morning to read a positive message, educate and remind ourselves that we are an addict in recovery.
- NA is self-supporting through our own contributions. You may see a basket passed around and members are throwing a buck or two in it. If you don't have a donation don't sweat it. We have all been there and there is no need to feel uncomfortable. Self support comes in many different forms. Picking up a chair is supporting the fellowship.
- You will hear mention of sponsorship. It is an important part of recovery. Keep your eyes and ears open and seek out someone you feel comfortable with or identify with. Say..."Hey will you sponsor me?" It may feel awkward but its an important part of recovery.
- Don't be afraid to introduce yourself when asked, "are there any newcomers?" It's a humble gesture that allows people to get to know you.
- Last but not least..... GET PHONE NUMBERS! We need a lifeline during tough periods and calling another recovering addict is just that.

GOOD LUCK AND REMEMBER.... WE JUST HAVE TO NOT USE DRUGS TODAY! THAT IS MANAGEABLE!

Personal Stories taken from:

The West Tennessee Area of Narcotics Anonymous - www.na-wt.org

Life's Ups and Downs - Anonymous

When I first came to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous, I was a complete mess. I had just gotten out of treatment and was on medication for depression. It helped me stay sane enough to get through working a few steps. By the time I was done with my first round of steps, I found that life had become a lot less painful, and I was able to get off that medication. Once I realized that I was the source of most of my problems and that I was able to work toward solutions to those problems, I felt a lot less helpless and hopeless. In my first few years, I even proclaimed, "the solution to all of my problems can be found in the steps" and later found that to be inaccurate. While they did solve a lot of my issues in early recovery, things got different. As I have matured and continued on in my recovery and the reality of life set in, I have started encountering new, more complex problems that can't be solved by surrendering and asking my HP for help.

My journey with my mental health has certainly not been a straight line. My mental health can vary from day to day. On days when things are going well, I try to get that one extra thing done that I may not be able to do on a rougher day. I am learning to be gentle with myself on the tough days and be OK with not being as productive as I would like to be. My mental health changes with the seasons as well. As the time change approaches and the weather gets colder and the days get shorter, I tend to sink into some seasonal depression. I know it will be hard for me to get things done in the winter and then as spring comes, it gets better.

Last winter, I did talk to my doctor because my anxiety and depression had gotten pretty unbearable and was interfering with my ability to live a normal life. My doctor knows I am in recovery, and we talked about some different options I talked to my sponsor about it as well and we came up with a plan to get my mental health back to a better place. At my physical this year, we talked some more, and I am planning to start therapy soon to work on some outside issues.

I went to therapy as a teenager and hated every single second of it. I'm sure I was a horrible patient because I was forced to go and I was an angry, bratty teen. I wish I had taken advantage of it back then, but I wasn't in a place where I was ready to work on any of my stuff. I'm in a place today where I am ready to dig a little deeper into some of these things and see what other layers of this onion I can peel back. It is scary but I have seen it work wonders for a lot of other addicts.

I wouldn't be where I am today without working the steps. That was certainly the foundation that I needed. It has brought a ton of relief to my life. I'm so grateful for other addicts who shared their experience, strength, and hope with me and showed me how they were able to not only recover, but to live full, healthy lives, both physically and mentally.

9 Lives - Anonymous

I am a recovering addict that also happens to have mental illness that I deal with on a daily basis. I can remember as a small child of about five years old having to go se a psychiatrist and I was diagnosed with with PTSD at a very young age. I was not put on medications due to my age. Just like with addiction there is a stigma towards people with mental health issues. I learned pretty quick about the stigma and as such learned to keep my feelings and issues with my illness to myself. I also learned at about eight years old that I could drown those feelings and issues with alcohol. By the time I hit high school I discovered other drugs helped even better. During my early adult years the doctors diagnosed and told me I was also Bipolar. Today i suffer more from the depressive state than the manic state. Drugs helped me control my bipolar.

Then came Narcotics Anonymous and I wondered if I could stop using the drugs and control my illnesses. It was not an easy road and every step I worked I had to to work on both my addiction and my illnesses. I had to find other ways to keep my illnesses under control. I turned to my cats. I discovered that when I let them they can be very calming and relaxing. They can also be little clowns at times. Just the other day I had one of my cats jump into a five gallon bucket of water my husband had paint brushes and rollers soaking in and now I have white paw prints all over my kitchen floor. I also discovered I could use music to change how I feel. If I am heading for mania I can listen to slow, sad music to being me down and if I am getting depressed I can listen to upbeat music.

Now that I am getting into my later years in life I have found that I can do craft work to help keep my mind busy, to keep me from getting depressed. I have also learned that there are people who understand what having a mental illness like that I can talk to, kind of like a sponsor except or mental illness. I still see a doctor for my mental illness. She knows that I am in recovery and she is very cautious with what medication she gives me making sure can't and don't abuse it. I have a support group for my illness also. All this helps me stay healthy mentally.

For information on Mental Health in Recovery - <u>Informational Pamphlet #30</u> or visit NA.org

Step and Tradition of the Month

Step Five

"We admitted to God to ourselves and do another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

The Fifth Step is the key to freedom. It allows us to live clean in the present. Sharing the exact nature of our wrongs sets us free to live. After taking a thorough Fourth Step, we deal with the contents of our inventory. We are told that if we keep these defects inside us, they will lead us back to using. Holding on to our past would eventually sicken us and keep us from taking part in our new way of life. If we are not honest when we take a Fifth Step, we will have the same negative results that dishonesty brought us in the past.

Step Five suggests that we admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. We looked at our wrongs, examined our behavior patterns, and started to see the deeper aspects of our disease. Now we sit with another person and share our inventory out loud.

Our Higher Power will be with us during our Fifth Step. We will receive help and be free to face ourselves and another human being. It seemed unnecessary to admit the exact nature of our wrongs to our Higher Power. "God already knows that stuff," we rationalized. Although He already knows, the admission must come from our own lips to be truly effective. Step Five is not simply a reading of Step Four.

For years, we avoided seeing ourselves as we really were. We were ashamed of ourselves and felt isolated from the rest of the world. Now that we have the shameful part of our past trapped, we can sweep it out of our lives if we face and admit it. It would be tragic to write it all down and then shove it in a drawer. These defects grow in the dark, and die in the light of exposure.

Before coming to Narcotics Anonymous, we felt that no one could understand the things that we had done. We feared that if we ever revealed ourselves as we were, we would surely be rejected. Most addicts are uncomfortable about this. We recognize that we have been unrealistic in feeling this way. Our fellow members do understand us.

We must carefully choose the person who is to hear our Fifth Step. We must make sure that they know what we are doing and why we are doing it. Although there is no hard rule about the person of our choice, it is important that we trust the person. Only complete confidence in the person's integrity and discretion can make us willing to be thorough in this step. Some of us take our Fifth Step with a total stranger, although some of us feel more comfortable choosing a member of Narcotics Anonymous. We know that another addict would be less likely to judge us with malice or misunderstanding.

Once we make a choice and are actually alone with that person, we proceed with their encouragement. We want to be definite, honest and thorough, realizing that this is a life and death matter.

Some of us tried to hide part of our past in an attempt to find an easier way of dealing with our inner feelings. We may think that we have done enough by writing about our past. We can- not afford this mistake. This step will expose our motives and our actions. We cannot expect these things to reveal themselves. Our embarrassment is eventually overcome, and we can avoid future guilt.

We do not procrastinate. We must be exact. We want to tell the simple truth, cut and dried, as quickly as possible. There is always a danger that we will exaggerate our wrongs. It is equally dangerous to minimize or rationalize our part in past situations. After all, we still want to sound good.

Addicts tend to live secret lives. For many years, we covered low self-esteem by hiding behind phony images that we hoped would fool people. Unfortunately, we fooled ourselves more than anyone. Although we often appeared attractive and confident on the outside, we were really hiding a shaky, insecure person on the inside. The masks have to go. We share our inventory as it is written, skipping nothing. We continue to approach this step with honesty and thoroughness until we finish. It is a great relief to get rid of all our secrets and to share the burden of our past.

Usually, as we share this step, the listener will share some of his or her story too. We find that we are not unique. We see, by the acceptance of our confidant, that we can be accepted just the way we are.

We may never be able to remember all of our past mistakes. We do, however, give it our best and most complete effort. We begin to experience real personal feelings of a spiritual nature. Where once we had spiritual theories, we now begin to awaken to spiritual reality. This initial examination of ourselves usually reveals some behavior patterns that we don't particularly like. However, facing these patterns and bringing them out in the open makes it possible for us to deal with them constructively. We cannot make these changes alone. We will need the help of God, as we understand Him, and the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

Tradition Five

"Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers."

"You mean to say that our primary purpose is to carry the message? I thought we were here to get clean. I thought that our primary purpose was to recover from drug addiction." For the individual, this is certainly true; our members are here to find freedom from addiction and a new way of life. However, groups aren't addicted and don't recover. All our groups can do is plant the seed for recovery and bring addicts together so that the magic of empathy, honesty, caring, sharing, and service can do their work. The purpose of this tradition is to ensure that this atmosphere of recovery is maintained. This can only be achieved by keeping our groups recovery-oriented. The fact that we, each and every group, focus on carrying the message

provides consistency; addicts can count on us. Unity of action and purpose makes possible what seemed impossible for us—recovery.

The Twelfth Step of our personal program also says that we carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Working with others is a powerful tool. "The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel." For the newcomers, this is how they found Narcotics Anonymous and learned to stay clean. For the members, this reaffirms their commitment to recovery. The group is the most powerful vehicle we have for carrying the message. When a member carries the message, he is somewhat bound by interpretation and personality. The problem with literature is language. The feelings, the intensity, and the strengths are sometimes lost. In our group, with many different personalities, the message of recovery is a recurring theme.

What would happen if our groups had another primary purpose? We feel our message would be diluted and then lost. If we concentrated on making money, many might get rich. If we were a social club, we could find many friends and lovers. If we specialized in education, we'd end up with many smart addicts. If our specialty was medical help, many would get healthy. If our group purpose were anything other than to carry the message, many would die and few would find recovery.

What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. When all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give.

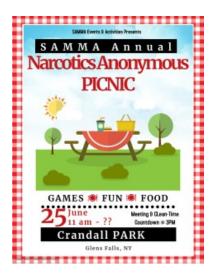
Local and Regional Events: Geographical Areas include but are not limited to - Ulster, Dutchess, Greene, Columbia counties. The Capital District. Southern

Adirondacks. Berkshires. Green Mountain of Vermont







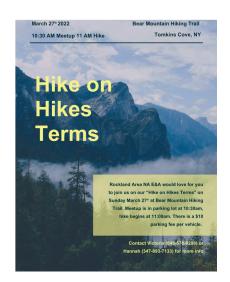




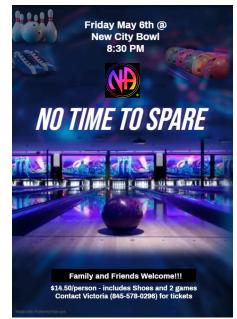














CONTACT INFORMATION:

• MID-HUDSON AREA OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS WEBSITE:

WWW.MHA-NA.ORG

• NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:

WWW.NA.ORG

• ABCD REGION OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS (CAPITAL REGION):

WWW.ABCDRNA.ORG

Events: https://abcdrna.org/events-calender

• BERKSHIRE COUNTY AREA OR NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:

WWW.BERKSHIRENA.COM

Berkshire Area Events https://berkshirena.com/coming-events



• GREATER NY REGION OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS (DOWNSTATE):

WWW.NEWYORKNA.ORG

Events: https://newyorkna.org/calendar

- NA RECOVERY LITERATURE (TO PURCHASE BOOKS AND MISC.): www.na.org/webstore
- FREE NA LITERATURE:

www.na.org/?ID=ips-index

- MID-HUDSON AREA PUBLIC RELATIONS: MHANAPUBLICINFORMATION@YAHOO.COM
- MID-HUDSON AREA HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS: MHANAHANDI@YAHOO.COM
- MID-HUDSON AREA HELPLINE (SPEAK TO AN ADDICT): 855-99-4HOPE

