



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



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.

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.



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 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 is available on our website?

- Meeting locations and times
- Calendar events
- Information about NA
- Covid 19 and its effects on meetings
- 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 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, "[Welcome to NA](#)". Please come to our meetings and "Keep Coming Back!"



Narcotics Anonymous of the Mid-Hudson Area News

Covid-19 had a devastating effect on the world. Narcotics Anonymous, it's membership.....our area is still feeling the effects as is everyone else.

Not only has our fellowship suffered financially, our membership was hit hard. We as addicts enter into recovery from a world of isolation. To be thrust back into that world has had deadly results. Many addicts died that had found NA and were living a new life in recovery. Our fellowship thrives by means of one addict helping another. Through identification, we are able to develop trust and faith in someone we know who has been where we were and has found a new way to live through the understanding and application of the twelve steps of Narcotics Anonymous. When the doors were closed at the places we regularly met at, that connection or bond was weakened and many addicts found themselves in jeopardy.

Fortunately, a characteristic of addiction and its lifestyle became extremely useful, we adapted! We are very familiar with adaptation or becoming chameleons. Through the Zoom platform, we were capable of re-establishing that bond of one addict helping another. Albeit, it was not the same for many but it was something until the dust settled.

Zoom has been a blessing to some and a curse to others. Most were satisfied. Many addicts found Narcotics Anonymous through Zoom. It was a safe way to put ones foot in the water some would say. What we also found was - the very same way H & I brings a presentation/meeting into a facility and hopefully exposes the individual seeking recovery to NA, the very same effect was happening through Zoom. Addicts were being exposed to what happens in an NA meeting. They were also interacting with recovering addicts. They saw that we could stop using drugs, loose the desire to use and find a new way to live.

Restrictions! They were eventually lifted and locations started allowing meetings back in. It was and still is, a careful, responsible and methodical process. Social distancing, limited room occupation and lots of sanitizing. Many meetings are opened back up. Many will never return. Some groups chose to remain a virtual group via Zoom. Established groups are re-opening along with many new groups. The reopening of the area meetings is sort of synonymous with entering recovering for the first time, we are experiencing a re-birth.

So, as of this writing, we are NA strong! At the world level, not so much. They still are on restrictions that have the main offices of operation closed. The world offices are located in California. That is where much of our literature is stored and shipped from. Things are progressing along and we always are filled with hope. Better days are on the horizon.

Public Relations as well as Hospitals and Institutions is in full swing within our area. We always like to make ourselves available to anyone seeking our service. If you would like to learn more about Narcotics Anonymous or have specific questions, please send PR an email.

If you would like to speak with someone in the H & I committee to set up a presentation, please send them an email.

UPDATE: MOST MEETING LOCATIONS REQUIRE FACE MASKS AGAIN. WE CONTINUE TO SOCIAL DISTANCE

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.

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 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 NA Way Magazine - October 2019 Recovering addict

My name is Jay P, and I am a recovering addict. Yes, folks, a recovering addict. I choose to state it this way because repetition reinforces my thoughts and behaviors. Personally, I associate being an addict with helplessness, hopelessness, and unhappiness. While in active addiction, I thought like an addict, I behaved like an addict, and I was an addict. I could not lose the compulsive obsession to use drugs at all costs, even if there were crazy consequences—sleeping outside, or going to sleep hungry, or even having to beg or fly a sign for money to get drugs. Regardless of any unpleasant situation or consequence, the single most important thing in my life was drugs—ingesting, injecting, or inhaling my way to what I thought was peace of mind but was really just total numbed indifference.

To me, the man who was doing those things was an addict. I am not that man anymore. That is why I am retraining my brain and changing my view of myself. Something as simple as recognizing the fact that I am recovering, the fact that I am not using, I am growing, and I am getting better has drastically improved my self-esteem. By adding that one word—recovering—I have begun to break my identification with hopelessness.

As a recovering addict, I am constantly gaining insight into what I can do to remain abstinent and treat my addiction. So many years of programming, both by society and myself, have not been easy to undo. I have to be consciously aware and remind myself to identify as a recovering addict.

However, as time passes and I develop this new healthy habit, it is becoming easier and more subconscious to see myself as a recovering addict, and my life is so much better for it.

Jay P, Pennsylvania, USA

My second second chance

So, today is my second fourth "NAversary," or NA anniversary. I have an odd mix of feelings within me at present. My disease capitalizes on the fact that I chose to interrupt my process after 13 years clean, and it wants me to feel like a failure, but my spirit senses the true value of my experience and sees that my relapse can be used to serve others if I share about it honestly and often.

My disease focuses on those who are not here—alive or dead—and tells me that I failed them and everyone, especially myself. My spirit recognizes how deluded and grandiose such thoughts are, and tells me that to honor those we've lost or harmed, we stay in position and continue to change.

My disease sits alone, hostile and resentful, self-obsessed and paranoid, closed off to love, empathy, and goodwill. My spirit rests securely in fellowship, happy and serene,

selfless and open, safely vulnerable, loving, compassionate, and driven to serve. My disease is the clattering, confusing noise in my head. My spirit is the clear conscience of my heart.

Reconciliation of these manifestations lies in bridging the gap between them, not surgical separation of one from the other—and that is what recovery is for me today. Said bridge is built of honest sharing, involvement in the Fellowship, and use of our Steps. How it culminates is this: My disease and my spirit are not two separate entities, nor is either of them separate from me. They are equal parts of me, and each one needs acceptance in order to be housed proportionately. If I do not accept my disease, it will fester and grow. If I don't accept my spirit, it will stagnate and diminish.

Acceptance—true self-acceptance—is required, and that is the greatest gift I have ever received. I'm so deeply grateful for this and feel so, so fortunate to have had a second second chance at this new way of life. "ThNAk you."

After I shared about my NA anniversary the other day, and how I've been fortunate enough to have returned after a relapse, a number of friends reached out to me to share that they, too, had gone through or are going through similar experiences. They shared their pains and they shared their hopes. And today, one of them shared this picture. If all I've been through helps just one other to find their way back, then the juice has been well worth the squeeze.

Jaime V, Massachusetts, USA

More and more . . . and more and more

When I was six years old, my favorite story was about a caterpillar who cannot get enough food. I loved that story because I loved food: cookies, candy, sweets, potato chips, everything. And the food that he ate was just so appetizing. I remember in first grade trying to check the book out from my elementary school library, but it was always out to someone else, and I could never get to it in time. Finally, the librarian came to my teacher's classroom just to tell me the book had been returned. Somehow, I earned her sympathy—maybe through my crying and manipulation. Having heard it read, I just needed to feed that food-related fantasy for myself.

It was not until later in life (at the age of 32) that I began to realize this obsessive behavior was a pattern that emerged throughout my entire life. It was food at first. Then it was video games. At the age of nine, I distracted myself in class by listing all the video games I could remember. At the age of eleven, I replaced video games with baseball players, baseball teams, and statistics. I had this baseball encyclopedia that I memorized. My intellectual energies having been spent in those areas, my grades and social life suffered markedly.

When college came around in 1996, I had a roommate my freshman year who introduced me to what would become my drug of choice. When I tried it, it was like going to a different world. I was less inhibited, more social. I could talk to girls. I could socialize like a normal person! From there, I would graduate college, get a master's degree, get a girlfriend,

and establish a career. But when I was not playing the role of a productive member of society, I was trying to get my next drink or drug.

Fifteen years later, on 15 January 2011, I got sick and tired of being sick and tired. I was in the process of earning a PhD, so I was doing well on the social acceptability front. But I had moved from New York to El Paso, Texas, which was a different world. I did not know anybody, so I felt isolated; and the more isolated I felt, the more I used. It continued like this until I had to be pulled out of a potential bar fight that could have ruined my life.

So I took a step out of my comfort zone and went to my first Narcotics Anonymous meeting. At first, I was afraid to talk to anyone. If a meeting started at 8:00, I got there promptly at 8:00 so I would not have to talk to anyone beforehand. When it ended at 9:30, I was out the door, because I was not going to let them get to know me under any circumstances. After white-knuckling it for about nine months, I began to have anxiety attacks. I had no idea what anxiety was when I was using, but when I got clean, the floodgates began to open. At this time, I finally decided to humble myself and ask someone if he would be my sponsor. I even joked, "I'll be a low-maintenance sponsee." As I began to embrace the program, I came to realize I was a lot like that hungry caterpillar in the book from my childhood who kept eating more and more. No matter what it was, I always wanted more.

More food. More sex. More prestige. And even with seven years clean, even in an era of digital media, I am addicted to buying books, DVDs, CDs. That is an addiction I am learning to manage through the principles of Narcotics Anonymous.

I loved the images of the food in the caterpillar book, but I may have missed the message as a child. When I looked up the story online as an adult, I realized that the caterpillar gets sick to his stomach from all the food he eats over the course of six days. The next day, he eats a single green leaf and is no longer hungry. He spins a cocoon where he stays for two weeks, and then emerges as a beautiful butterfly. At more than seven years clean, I do not know if I am turning into a butterfly, but I like to think I get a little bit better at life each day that I don't use drugs and I try to work a recovery program. I am no longer in a relationship, and I have the same career I did when I was using. I am a lot wiser and a lot more serene, but my learning is never done. The moment I stop working a program is when the likelihood grows that I could turn back into a caterpillar, always seeking something to fill me up—and I have seen too much from the butterfly's point of view to want to do that again.

Craig W, Virginia, USA

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- NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:
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- ABCD REGION OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS (CAPITAL REGION):
WWW.ABCDRNA.ORG

- BERKSHIRE COUNTY AREA OR NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:
WWW.BERKSHIRENA.COM



- GREATER NY REGION OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS (DOWNSTATE):
WWW.NEWYORKNA.ORG

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

- FREE NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS LITERATURE:
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