

Newsletter of the Nar-Anon Family Groups'



THE SERENITY CONNECTION

Taking Time for Myself

Sometimes I like to take a "daycation" by spending time exploring and partaking of the amenities at a local high-end hotel. Experiencing something out of the ordinary allows me to "escape my reality."

The grounds have lovely floral-lined pathways leading through gazebos decorated by vine-filled trellises, under stone archways surrounded by palms, and onto terraces set on the edge of an ocean bluff. The views are magnificent.

My soul is touched and I feel okay again. My Higher Power makes his presence known and fills me with strength and courage as only he can do.

I will need another dose of my Higher Power as I don't know what's in store for me on my journey. But I am eternally grateful that I have a Higher Power to connect with during the stormy high tides along my way. It's comforting to know the low tide will come again.

Greetings from Iran

Hello dear members,

We are happy to announce that a second region in Iran has started. The name of the new region is "Jonob Iran" ("The region of Southern Iran").

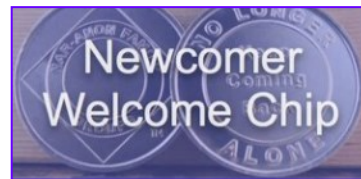


We have been confronted with many challenges and problems to overcome, but with the help of our Higher Power, the unity between all members, and support from WSO, we can overcome all our challenges.

We are thankful for the wonderful family of Nar-Anon, and we pray for a day when all people suffering from addiction and their families are in recovery.

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Newcomer Welcome Chips now available on the web store!

On behalf of the World Service Board of Trustees and the World Service Office (WSO), we are pleased to have Newcomer Welcome Chips available for purchase in the [Webstore](#). Please visit the web site for quantity and pricing information. If you have questions on this item, please contact WSO at wso@nar-anon.org or call (310) 534-8188 or (800) 477-6291.





Food for Thought

You Wrote Back!

In the last issue of *The Serenity Connection*, September 2017, we published an article in which the author expressed an opinion on the question of inviting NA members to speak at Nar-Anon meetings. "I live with an addict; I don't need to hear an addict speak in my safe place. I need to hear the clear message of Nar-Anon."

We asked for your feedback and received a number of interesting replies. Where the responses were long, we chose to excerpt a representative quote.

The replies to "Food for Thought" published below are responses from individual members. They do not represent the opinion of the World Service Newsletter Committee or Nar-Anon as a whole. They are published to stimulate thought and discussion.

Response 1

I appreciate NA speakers in Nar-Anon meetings when they emphasize the steps, sponsors, and service. This is the message we share. Perhaps, someday, there will be more Nar-Anon speakers who will carry that same message. Until then, I welcome the NA speakers invited to Nar-Anon meetings to remind us that the Twelve Steps contain the solution to practically any problem.

Response 2

I understand there can be hope in an NA member's story. However, does that belong in a Nar-Anon meeting? How does that help me focus on my recovery and not the addict's? Would NA ask Nar-Anon members to speak at their meetings?

What is the purpose of having an NA speaker at a Nar-Anon meeting? Am I looking for answers in order to talk



my addict into recovery? I hear Nar-Anon members asking at the end of an NA share, "What was your bottom? Do you think enabling was the answer? Do you think I should...?" The same questions looking for the same answers: what can I do to hurry up their recovery?

Are we carrying the message we heard from the addict this week, hoping that our situation will be the same and we can somehow use what we heard? Are we using what we heard to manipulate? I find myself angry and frustrated when the addict in my life doesn't seem to care.

What message does it give a newcomer to enter a Nar-Anon meeting and hear an NA member share? Do they have the answers for us? Are we attracting members with NA speakers or with the Nar-Anon message? According to Tradition Five, we help families of addicts by "practicing the Twelve Steps, by encouraging and understanding our addicted relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of addicts."

When I have a crisis or a chaotic situation, I am reminded of the experience, strength and hope I heard in my Nar-Anon meeting to help me through it.

Response 3

Although we discuss the addict's perspective in our meetings, we are primarily dealing with our Nar-Anon perspectives of detaching with love, helping vs enabling, and other concepts for saving our own lives... For those of us who suffer from terminal enabling, the NA guest speaker can bring clarity as to why enabling can harm the addicts we love so much.

It is now necessary for my survival that my recovery program is my first priority. The addict has his own path to recovery and his own program. If he is going to win against his deadly disease, he has to fight his own battles. I cannot fight, let alone win, for him.

SESH, December 20

Our
Members
Share



Things I CAN Change

I am so grateful for the Nar-Anon program because today I live my life in a different way. I used to think that being in charge of my addict was helping, when it was just doing the opposite. I was sure I had all the answers and my way was the best. I took control over my addicts' lives but never my own. It never crossed my mind that I didn't have control over my own life. It never occurred to me my life was not supposed to be filled with stress, anxiety, lack of sleep, and worry. Isn't that what

being a parent is all about?

I now know differently and feel much gratitude that I have changed course. I can live my own life and allow my addicts the dignity to live their own. I can release them with love and allow them their own experiences with what-

ever consequences await. I have my journey and they have theirs. I have learned it's never too late to change. I am so grateful today I have the gift of living my life, the gift of a spiritual program that provides healing, growth, and the freedom of detaching with love and being able to live in the present. I know worry doesn't change anything and enabling only causes more damage. I have been blessed with the best gift of all: taking back my own life and reaping the benefits.



Letting Go with Love

Not long ago, I was working one of the steps and came across the concept of detaching with love. Even though I have been attending Nar-Anon for many years, I still sometimes struggle with truly letting go of the addict in my life, my adult daughter.

As I was pondering the step, a vivid image came into my mind. I pictured my daughter as a nine month old child struggling desperately to take her first steps. Up she got and down she went over and over, never giving up. She was very determined indeed.

One day, just before she was ten months old, I was sitting on the floor with her when she stood up. I steadied her briefly and let go. Without any

assistance, she stepped forward. Instead of falling down, she took another step and another until she had crossed the room. She was ecstatic and so was I!

I'll never forget that day. The smile on my daughter's face said it all; she was so proud of what she had done all by herself.

As I reflect on that day, I realize I had let go of her with all the love in my

heart; let go and believed in her ability to "do it herself." And she proved she could do it on her own.

Now it's time to let go of her again. I can do it with the same love I had for her as a child and "not do" what she can do for herself. I can believe in her and celebrate the small steps she takes on her own. I don't have to hold onto her for fear she will fall because I believe that one day she will turn back to me with that big grin on her face and we will laugh together once more.

I still love my addict and, while that day might be a long way off, I will always hold onto her smile and carry hope in my heart.



Beyond the Steps...



How do we treat each other in Nar-Anon? I once read that if you like everyone in Nar-Anon you obviously haven't done service. I thought, "Wow, how offensive is that!" Then, as I started paying attention to how people treated me and how I treat others in service, I realized it was a true statement. I have seen new service members thrown into service positions they really were not prepared for because "we will forfeit no willingness." We do a disservice to our new service members when we don't help them understand the roles they are taking on. Some members "wing it" and don't use the tools available at their disposal. What I have discovered is:

- Personalities get in the way when we don't work the steps (we don't know when we are wrong)
- Personalities get in the way when we don't use the traditions
- Personalities get in the way when we don't study the concepts of service
- Personalities get in the way when we don't look to the *Guide to Local Services* or the *Guide to World Services*
- Personalities get in the way when our controlling behavior gets in the way (the control we finally stopped trying to inflict on the addict we may turn to our service endeavors)
- Personalities get in the way when we have to have our way
- Personalities get in the way when we don't understand group conscience
- Personalities get in the way when we don't recognize our own character defects but can certainly point them out in others
- Personalities get in the way when we let our self-will get in the way of our Higher Power's will for us

Reflecting on our service bodies and the very real issues of people not stepping up or quitting, we need to look at ourselves.

- Are our service bodies struggling to grow?
- Do people quit before their terms are up?
- Do we watch as others attack a member and do nothing?
- Are we cliquish?
- Are we so desperate to fill service positions that we don't seek qualified individuals?

What are some positive ways to encourage our trusted servants?

- Work the steps so we can improve ourselves rather than trying to control others
- Encourage the use of the service guides
- Encourage the service bodies to look at the traditions (study these principles not just interpret or twist them for our liking)
- Encourage the service bodies to refer to the concepts of service (study these principles not just interpret or twist them for our liking)
- Practice our listening skills
- Be willing to look for solutions
- Be willing to use the word "we" instead of the word "I"

Just for today

Just for today, I can be happy. I can start my day with love and forgiveness for myself and others.

Just for today, I will work hard, not blame others, and be responsible for my own actions.

Just for today, I can call a friend and thank them for their friendship and love.

Just for today, I will make time for myself to enjoy a walk along the beach.

Just for today, I will call a friend and go out to dinner and a movie.

Just for today, I will not worry or take on other people's responsibilities.

Just for today, I am not worrying about the "what ifs."

Just for today, I will live in the present and not worry about the past or the future.

Just for today, I will rely on the slogans that keep me grounded.

Just for today, I will have an attitude of gratitude.

Just for today, I will be content and not worry about tomorrow.



The Fellowship



Uncomfortable meeting situations

What kind of uncomfortable situations do we encounter in our group meetings? There may be reading of outside literature, dominance by a single member, or take-over by a newcomer. In some situations, a group member may be willing to speak up about their discomfort during the meeting. Other times, members just want the uncomfortable behavior to stop, but don't want to be perceived as "Nar-Anon police" so they are not willing to speak up.

There are always solutions if we choose to talk them through, but how do we best handle a difficult situation? Do we really want to call someone out during a meeting by saying, "You can't read that; it's not conference approved." Perhaps the chair or a longtime member could gently remind the member that outside literature can be read after the closing of the meeting if the group wants to stay.

When a newcomer is desperate, we may feel the need to put them first and let them share the entire meeting; after all, we know they will eventually understand the program. If we have newcomers every week, how do other group members get what they need? As the First Tradition reminds us, "Our common welfare should come

first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity." A member could tell the newcomer that their questions are important and volunteer to stay after the meeting to help address them.

What about having NA speakers during our Nar-Anon anniversaries? How does this help us celebrate our recovery



and support the Fifth Tradition, "Each Nar-Anon Family Group has but one purpose; to help families of addicts"? Instead, we could encourage our members to share the Nar-Anon message at anniversary meetings.

If I am the member who read outside literature, am I open-minded enough to listen when someone bravely approaches me about it? Or do I stand my ground and try to justify what I did? The group could consider holding a business meeting to look for solutions for the newcomer while balancing the needs of the entire group. If we

continue to stand our ground and don't treat everyone equally, we may find our group losing members.

Do I realize I might be the dominant sharer in the room? How can I tell? I might be sharing several times during the meeting, or I might get antsy and feel a need to reply to everything others share. When I chair a meeting, do I do most of the talking or do I open the meeting and let others share on the topic? How do I feel when I am in a meeting and someone else talks all the time? Again, our group could hold a business meeting to discuss time sharing and find solutions that allow everyone the opportunity to share.

When we find Nar-Anon, we have already been through a lot; we are not healthy people. It takes time and effort for us to change. Similarly, because we want the best for our group, we need to acknowledge that it takes a group effort to develop a healthy meeting. We must try not to attack the lone member who steps up to defend our principles. It takes courage to be the member who points out that we have crossed healthy Nar-Anon boundaries, and it takes courage to ask the group to take a group inventory. Supporting and listening to each other are keys to growing a healthy group.

Nar-Anon meetings are conducted according to the wishes of the group, and decisions are made through discussions and the agreement of the members. This is called a group conscience... the only authority in Nar-Anon is a loving Higher Power as expressed through our group conscience.

SESH, September 15



Outreach Committee



Public Outreach and Personal Anonymity

Tradition Twelve says “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions...” and Tradition Eleven tells us “...we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, internet, and other forms of mass media.” These traditions underscore the importance of anonymity in the Nar-Anon fellowship.

But how do we maintain personal anonymity when doing public outreach? We can . . .

- Use first name only or a pseudonym
- Ask that no pictures be taken of members
- In press, internet, and other forms of mass media, use first names or pseudonyms, no pictures of members
- For film and video, ask that the face be blurred, put in shadow, or filmed with their back to the camera; use first names or pseudonyms

When we can carry the message in public and protect anonymity for ourselves and others, we demonstrate to those seeking hope and help that we honor the call to anonymity.

Have a question? Need help with an outreach effort?
Email outreach@nar-anon.org

Convention Committee



Save the Date!

The 2018 World Convention, **Worldwide Passport – Recovering Together** is only eight months away. The convention will be held August 30-September 2, 2018 in Orlando, FL, USA. Have you registered yet? Booked your hotel room? Visit the website at <http://www.nar-anon.org/2018-naranon-world-convention/> for details and to view the online registration. We hope to see you there!

Policy & Guidelines Committee



Group Conscience

Nar-Anon Concept Six states: “**Group Conscience** is the spiritual means by which we invite a loving Higher Power to influence our decisions.” We do this by listening to each other’s words and being mindful of the spirit behind those words. In service, discussions we are guided by our Higher Power to make decisions for all members not our individual selves.

The Nar-Anon Family Groups’ Guide to Local Services (GLS) pages 4-4 to 4-6 covers group conscience and using it in Nar-Anon business meetings. There is additional information in the *Group Conscience and Business Meetings Pamphlet (S-305)*.

Group conscience is also a valuable tool in assisting groups with problem solving. The use of it can be found on page 4-5 of the GLS and there is more information in our *Appropriate Sharing and Crosstalk Pamphlet (S-308)* and *Nar-Anon Family Groups Guidelines for Healthy Meetings Pamphlet (S-303)*. Groups are encouraged to use the *Nar-Anon Group Inventory Form (S-316)* regularly to assist in keeping their meetings healthy. All of this literature is downloadable free from the [Service Literature](#) page on the [Nar-Anon Family Groups website](#).

At the home page www.nar-anon.org:

- Click on “Members”, then click on “Service Literature”, then click on “Guide to Local Services,” then download.
- Repeat this process to also download the pamphlets and the Nar-Anon Groups Inventory form.

We hope you find this article useful in keeping your meetings healthy.

Nar-Anon Policy and Guidelines Committee
pandgcommittee@nar-anon.org

Committee Corner

Literature Committee



The World Service Literature Committee presented two pieces of recovery literature for fellowship review, *We've Been There* and *Men Sharing Their Experience, Strength, and Hope*. We have several contact lists and each document was distributed to everyone we have email addresses for. The purpose of sending these documents out is for those receiving them to share the pieces with their groups, areas, and regions. If you, your regional delegate, region chair, or secretary did not receive them, we would like to

hear from you. Although the deadline for fellowship review for these two documents has passed, other pieces will be presented in the future. We hope to have as many eyes as possible reviewing our literature.

When reviewing literature, some things to consider:

- Does the title match the content?
- Are all the key points of the subject covered?
- Is the content laid out in an appropriate order?

We are not asking for help with punctuation, grammar, or formatting.

If you would like to receive future literature pieces for fellowship review, please send us an email at Litcom@nar-anon.org to be added to our email distribution list. We look forward to hearing from you. Together we can.

Appeal

Tradition Seven: Every group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Concept Eleven: Nar-Anon funds are used to further our primary purpose to carry the message and must be managed responsibly.

What does self-supporting mean? We, the members, are accountable and responsible for all aspects of Nar-Anon services, both the services that cost money and the services that require time and effort from the members. We don't take monies from outside sources and we rely on members to serve at our outreach tables and write our literature. Only our members can carry our experience, strength, and hope to those looking for what Nar-Anon has to offer.

How are Nar-Anon funds used to further our primary purpose and carry our message? Paying our staff a fair market salary to answer the phones, print/package literature orders, and maintain our Nar-Anon.org website is just one of the important ways we carry the message.

How much thought do we give to the basket and how far the dollar must go? Do we look at the basket as funds for our group to spend as we see fit on non-Nar-Anon priorities? Do we ask for things that require money and service members' time but expect those things to be done with funds from the region or the world? What about expecting

others to step up and serve our wishes, wants, and priorities? How far can a dollar go? Are we willing to ensure the rent is paid in our group, and our area or region has the funds to support the workshops and services provided at the region level?

Did you know our service board and committees are not self-supporting? They rely completely on donations from the groups. Additionally, the service board and committees are reliant upon service members volunteering their time to further the primary purpose and carry the message. Without the commitment of our members we cannot carry out Nar-Anon services.

Did you know our World Service office is not self-supporting? It relies completely on the donations from the service structure and the sale of literature. When we read the seventh tradition statement at our meetings, we need to take that to heart. The very survival of our fellowship relies on us paying our rent, buying literature, and donating to the other levels of the service structure. So take five...donate five minutes of your time to write about and share your experience, strength, and hope, or put five dollars in the basket.



Coming Events

Click on event titles for details or go to the [Events page](#) on the WSO website.

[VI Convencion Nacional](#)

2-4 De Marzo 2018

Solo por hoy... Que empiece por mi...

Hotel Sede

Agamarina Beach Resort

Cancun, Mexico

477-475-8389

[Staten Island Nar-Anon's 4th Spirituality Breakfast](#)

April 8, 2018

Sharing Our Experience Strength and Hope

Hope

The Hilton Garden Inn

Staten Island, NY

Save the date!

[The Northern California Region Nar-Anon Family Groups Bi-National Convention](#)

June 8-10, 2018

University Plaza Waterfront Hotel

110 West Freement St., Stockton, CA

Ruth B. ken.ruth.barnett@sbcglobal.net

[Nar-Anon World Convention](#)

August 30 to September 2, 2018

Worldwide Passport - Recovering Together

Orlando, FL

[Pre-Register Now for a \\$20 discount!](#)

Share Your Events

Go to <http://www.nar-anon.org/events> to see a list of upcoming events. Or send a PDF to events@nar-anon.org if you have a flyer you would like to share.

New Service and Outreach Literature for Fellowship Review



- ◆ *Thinking About Attending a Nar-Anon Meeting (S-322FR)*
- ◆ *Social Media (S-321FR)*
- ◆ *So you have been asked to speak (S-325FR)*
- ◆ *Outreach Flyer (O-415FR)*

These pieces are available on the [Fellowship Review](#) page of the Nar-Anon Website.

Newsletter eSubscriptions

Click here for your **FREE** e-subscription to [The Serenity Connection](#).
Subscriptions to date: **5000!**

Newsletter Submissions

Articles are welcomed from all Nar-Anon members. Please focus on the Nar-Anon program and share your experience, strength, and hope from the perspective of a Nar-Anon member. Submit articles to newsletters@nar-anon.org. Each submission must be accompanied by a signed [Copyright Release Form](#) before it can be published.

**** Next Issue Submission
Deadline: January 20, 2018 ****



Nar-Anon Family Groups

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