



THE SERENITY CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

News from the B.O.T.



The pandemic gave us an opportunity to be visually shown. Nar-Anon is a worldwide fellowship, with virtual meetings, workshops, and conventions. The groups, areas, regions, and NSO's stepped up and found a way to fulfill our mission statement. With some groups going back to in-person meetings, we are facing some new challenges such as the use of hybrid meetings.

Our fellowship is growing with the addition of virtual meetings.

On the other hand, our unity seems to be threatened because of Board Bulletin #3, Virtual Meetings and the Use of Conference Approved Literature. This bulletin is based on policy from the GWS regarding copyrights and

trademarks. In our personal recovery we learn to agree to disagree. As stated in Tradition One: *Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity.* Instead, the bulletin seems to bring back the "them" against "us", disunity. The BOT hopes our roundtable will bring the Unity back and we will all work together on fulfilling our vision statement, *"we will carry the message of hope to those affected by the addiction of someone near to them."*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ROUNDTABLE

Executive Director Cathy K.—CA
Chair Marie T.—GA
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Secretary Sheryl L.—FL
Treasurer Mary Ellen J.—GA

Board Member Lois R.—TN
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Board Member John Mc—OH
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The Board of Trustees has scheduled a Roundtable for September 26, 2021, at 12:00 – 2:00 pm EDT. The Board will discuss their current goals for the 2021-2023 conference cycle and staffing of WSO.

This is an opportunity for members of the fellowship to meet all the Trustees, the Executive Director and to become aware of their duties and those of the WSO. A question-and-answer session is scheduled.

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>> BOT ROUNDTABLE



Date: September 26, 2021

Time: 12:00 pm EDT
 11:00 am CDT, 10:00 am MDT, 9:00 am PDT

Meeting ID: 8939 436 605

Passcode: 928154

Limit: 300, no registration required



SAY THE WORDS

Our seventh tradition tells us each group is to be fully self-supporting.

A priceless component of recovery is that we all have the ability to contribute at every meeting. The cost is high, but it has nothing to do with money. The most important service we can ever contribute is sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others - the struggles and the beauty, the torment of holding on, and the release of letting go and letting God.

Vulnerable is a word that describes my learning to share from the heart: my emotions, my experiences, my struggles.

I simply need to choose to speak my truth and share what recovery is doing to change me. How am I learning to trust my Higher Power with all that is not mine? This is a process. My story is simply my reality; it is just the unfolding of my life and circumstances. Everything is useful, nothing is wasted. When I share, I am being generous. I have made mistakes, I have said or done things I regret. But have I learned to do things differently or be different as a result? This is recovery. Sharing these lessons is a gift we give when we say the words. Have I seen miracles? Have I experienced my own touches by God? Share the hope and don't be

afraid - it happened, it is real. Tell the truth, plant some seeds of hope.

Am I still waiting for a miracle to happen? Am I learning a new perspective with others who care and truly understand? Is my focus shifting, my obsession lifting? Have I stopped "helping" over and over to no avail? Have I walked through the valley of the deep shadows of "not knowing"? How did I do that? What do I do in that "not knowing" place to learn to live, to smile at birdsongs, and wonder at sunsets?

This is recovery. I am no longer alone.

**Tell the truth,
plant some seeds
of hope.**

Perhaps this is my miracle now: being generous with my life and my words, and trusting in God's care. We simply say the words even when it feels scary, because it may be just what someone else needs to hear to take that next step into recovery. I am slowly and steadily recovering, one day, one moment, one choice at a

time. Sometimes I need to hear my own words. I also need to hear others' truths, even today after having been in recovery for quite a while. That is how we share the courage to be ourselves, to change, to recover, to practice these principles in all our affairs. Our stories are a gift to be freely shared. My story is neither right nor wrong. It is what has happened spoken aloud. It is true and as honest as I can be. "That happened to me too" is often our shared truth. We are not alone; we remember and change together. Together is always better. We hear one another's words and the healing happens. Our Higher Power happens. We learn to trust, going with the flow of our lives with others who are being real, with God, and with ourselves. Our lives do lighten up as we lighten inside. Today I let the light in and out; I choose to say the words and leave them in God's care.

PRIMARY SPIRITUAL AIM

I am in recovery from this insidious family disease of addiction; over helping, over doing, caretaking, controlling, and pleasing. The practice of the Twelve Steps spoken of in Tradition Five is a source of hope, help, and encouragement to me first, then flowing outward to others.

I need this program to be my primary spiritual aim if I am going to be of any use to others. Recovery is inside work that results in my inner healing and becoming myself. The steps and traditions guide me to be wholly, gratefully myself in my relationships with others. I learn my part in all aspects of my life by continually seeking the guidance of the God

>> Just For Today



- > Just for today, I will not worry or take on other's responsibilities.
- > Just for today, I will accept that it is ok for me to be at peace even if others are not.

of my understanding and my program. As a recovering person, my doing needs to flow from my being.

>> [CONTINUE ON PAGE 3](#)



PRIMARY SPIRITUAL AIM

>> [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2](#)

Connection with God thru prayer, meditation, and working the steps for guidance is my primary spiritual aim. This takes time. I need to continue to take first things first in all my affairs.

My serenity and peace in this program, my usefulness to others, and the attraction of others to recovery depends on my spiritual connection. Diversion from my program is so easy when faced with so many needs around me where I could help. I need to remember that my Higher Power will guide me to his will for me and

provide all I need to carry that out, if sought.

Early in my recovery I learned that not everything I **can do** is God's will for me **to do**. I have come to believe that there is a part for me in all areas of my life. In Nar-Anon, my part is to be a recovering person who carries the message and shares that experience, strength and hope with others within God's will for me. Recovery in our meetings is a beautiful gift to be shared. Through this process and the connections formed in my recovery, I find

a way to step into the rest of my life. It is enough. As I have learned by experience, too much can be overwhelming and it is so very easy to lose myself again and pick up my will. God's will is for me to be me, lovingly connected and cared for.

>> [Newsletter Submissions](#)



Please share your experience, strength, and hope with the fellowship. Submit articles to newsletters@nar-anon.org. Each submission must be accompanied by a signed Copyright Release Form.

Next Deadline October 22, 2021

LIFE BOAT

Before I came to Nar-Anon, I was floundering in a sea of anger, fear, shame, and guilt. When I walked into that first meeting, I started listening to the shares. For the first time since we found out our son was an addict, I felt I was in the right place. I had been picked up by a life boat.

When we first come to Nar-Anon, we may feel as though we have been given a gift. We get hauled up into that lifeboat and lie there. We need help, and there is someone to look after us; give us a blanket, something hot to drink, a piece of literature, a phone number to call, a share we can relate to. If we take a moment to look around the lifeboat, we might notice some people rowing. There is someone handing out food. Some people are planning where to steer this re-

covery lifeboat. Someone is organizing the literature, and looking after the seventh tradition donations, and setting up the chairs, and there is a Group Service Representative (GSR) who connects our lifeboat to a fleet of life boats.

Our Nar-Anon lifeboat is a precious thing. But like any boat being tossed about on the sea of pain and fear and despair, it can capsize at any time. I hope you have found refuge from that sea in your lifeboat. But take a moment to look around it. Are you ready to take a turn at the oars of Nar-Anon service? You can help keep the boat moving forward, picking up other souls that desperately need a place to feel safe and understood. Just like rowing a real lifeboat will strengthen your arms, I can promise you that being of

service will strengthen you in your own recovery. Give it some thought, and when you're ready, ask how you can be of service to your group, area, region, or world service. Let's all keep this precious Nar-Anon lifeboat afloat.





THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER

SESH, June 12 — Today is a new day because I found Nar-Anon. In this program, I found the way to turn the focus from the addict to myself. I have chosen to step off the curb and participate in making my life a joyous one.

Thought for Today: I will choose to have love, laughter, serenity, peace, and joy in my life.

SESH, April 17 — Thought for Today: Thanks to unfailing support from my Nar-Anon friends and my sponsor, my life is filled with beauty and more joy than I thought possible. I have been given back a wonderful gift, the gift of laughter. As long as I can lighten up and laugh, I will be able to enjoy life without being afraid of what I cannot see.

SESH, September 19 — I heard members share their stories about the horrors of addiction, and yet they were able to laugh about simple things. They were able to sit there with a measure of contentment that comes from working the Twelve Steps.

When I was new in Nar-Anon, one of my sons commented to me, “Mom, I can’t remember the last time you smiled or laughed.” So, I tried to smile. I’m not kidding— the muscles wouldn’t form into a recognizable smile. It was more of a strange grimace. So, I had to work up to it, and exercise those smiling muscles. Dealing with the repeated trauma of addiction will do that to us. Living with the messiness of our character defects will do that to us. We can bury our spark and joy and humor under all the chaos in our minds, until we lose the ability to smile, and the ability to laugh out loud. We have cut off an important part of ourselves.

The first time I wanted what someone else in Nar-Anon had was when I saw

people laugh in meetings, and laugh at themselves with a sort of kindness. They found humor and acceptance when faced with their own imperfections. They didn’t belittle themselves, or over apologize, or resort to self-hate after making a mistake. They recognized their error, learned from it, made amends, and moved on. They viewed the situation from a healthy perspective and often had a warm laugh at themselves as part of the process. I wanted to be like them.

I think it’s OK to act the way I want to be for myself and those around me, not faking or fooling myself, but with an eye towards what I want to be. It’s great to strive for the ability to smile, the ability to laugh. In my mind, healthy laughter is in alignment with what my Higher Power wants for me, as I strengthen that relationship, and in the process become my true self. In Nar-Anon, the ability to laugh at one’s self is key, and can be a measure of how we are working our program. Ap-

Healthy laughter is in alignment with what my Higher Power wants for me

propriate laughter shows health and shows we are healing from the experience of addiction and the character defects we have developed. It shows a lightness of spirit that comes when we work this Twelve Step program.

I recently heard a speaker share an analogy comparing his relationship with his addicted loved one to a slot machine. He got sick of waiting for a payoff after years of putting in all those quarters! That analogy was dead on; it brought knowing

laughter from a lot of us.

Research tells us that laughter releases feel good chemicals in our bodies, and has a positive effect on our physical and emotional health. There is a concept of knowing laughter. It says I’m with you, I know what you mean, I get it, I get you. There’s kindness and recognition in it. Laughing helps us to relax, to see things in a new light, and to connect with others. My sponsor told me that playfulness and laughter are key to her serenity. Thankfully, we laugh a lot in our hours together. This level of ease and perspective doesn’t usually come our first day of the program. It is part of the process. It takes time, and is one of the great benefits of working our program. We CAN recapture that lighter part of ourselves we thought we had lost.

Here are a few questions to ponder about laughter:

- What are some of the times you have appreciated laughter in the Nar-Anon rooms? How has it helped your program?
- How can you open up more to the possibility of laughter in your life?
- How can you share your lightness of being, your sense of humor and laughter, with others?



THE STORY OF JOHN

This is just a snippet of the story of John. For about two years he's been a grateful member of Nar-Anon.

His shame and sadness became too much to handle, so he turned to anger and rage and thought, "I can win this battle."

Eager and anxious and full of determination and self-will, he went out by himself only to be defeated on that hill.

After almost 10 years of struggling with this problem of addiction and feeling so alone, he found a solution and was no longer on his own.

Who would have thunk it, so many others looking for hope? It's time to just do it, sit back, relax, and maybe take off your coat.

"Keep coming back, you're worth it," they said. One day at a time, the slogans were starting to fill his head.

Unconditional love was so freely given, he started thinking to himself, "Now this is livin'."

So he grabbed his computer, click, click, click. Headed to another Zoom meeting,

so he won't feel so sick.

Blue book, SESH book, Nar-Anon 36, which one for now? Ask a power greater than myself he thought, wait for it, here comes the answer, WOW!

Yellow road, red road, which path shall he take? The one that leads to serenity, make no mistake.

Focus on yourself and get yourself a sponsor, start working the steps and you'll get even farther.

The traditions and concepts are important too, just for now take baby steps, don't bite off more than you can chew.

"Work the program like your hair is on fire," he heard members share. This could be tough you see, there isn't much there.

But being able to laugh and joke in spite of the madness, helped lift his spirits and lessen the sadness.

God speaks through other members so he keeps an open mind, the gift of serenity and peace he too soon will find.

Little by little an attitude of gratitude

started to appear. He exclaimed, "The miracle has happened," and it started right here.

Anonymity and trust made it easier to share with others who understand and who really do care.

Keep moving forward, do better than yesterday. With his Higher Power by his side, he's headed the right way.

A shout out to all you newcomers, John's been where you are. His story might be slightly different, but not all that far.

From feelings of anger and rage that have now shifted to love and caring, John thanks you all for being here and listening to his sharing.

He works it cuz he's worth it, he learned this in Nar-Anon He keeps coming back and carrying the message so the pleasant feelings go on and on.

Thanks for letting me share, I'm John .

P.S. He loves you all, especially those of you who are struggling to love yourself.

I AM NOT ALONE

I have struggled with my daughter's addiction for years. In spite of a few good friends and family who patiently listened to me and provided well intentioned advice, I felt so alone until connecting with Nar-Anon.

For me, the "alone" I felt in this battle for my daughter's life and my own emotional and mental sanity, was deeper and darker than any other I had ever felt...

The Nar-Anon program has changed that for me. I feel safe to speak about what sometimes feels unspeakable, without judgement.

My nightly meetings bring me hope that one day I can put this battle behind me by following Nar-Anon's 12-Step Pro-

gram, a program that stands out like no other.

I have always loved my supportive friends and family, but my Nar-Anon group has given me partners—I am not alone.

I am so grateful for Nar-Anon and the guidance, perspective, and insights from the other members of my group. Out of this I have renewed strength, hope, and faith to move forward with my own growth.





WHAT IS CROSSTALK & WHY DO WE CARE?

TRADITION ONE: *Our common welfare should come first: Personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity.*

Many of our principles, suggestions for meetings, Steps, Traditions, and Concepts support the nurturing of our Nar-Anon unity. **SO...**

WHAT IS UNITY? Unity can be defined in many ways: the state of being joined as a whole. A condition of harmony and accord. Togetherness, oneness. Crosstalk goes against these principle of unity.

WHY DO WE NEED IT? Unity fosters connection so we know we are not alone. It makes it safe for us to open our hearts in a meeting. It makes healthy communication possible for all who attend. It helps us see when we are functioning out of our ego. It helps us to play nice in a group. It teaches us social skills. It gives us a safe place for a reality test.

WHAT DOES IT ALLOW? Unity allows us

to access our Higher Power in a meeting, as individuals and as a group. It allows us to connect fully and meaningfully with one another. It allows members who have had severe safety issues in the past to feel safe in our meetings. It creates that special aliveness and magic of a healthy Nar-Anon meeting.

Heard during a meeting: "I have been excluded from so many conversations in my life. Crosstalk would exclude me from the meeting and is counter to what we are here for."

"Giving advice takes away the dignity of the person who needs to make their own decision. And that person can begin to rely on you too much. Giving advice is crosstalk and hurts our meeting, and each other."

Tradition One is helping me to more fully realize how Nar-Anon provides principles for living my entire life. Now I am working on how I can help my groups achieve more unity. To me, unity

is strengthened every time we take a meeting inventory and honestly discuss everyone's input, respecting all voices, and listening carefully to those who we do not initially agree with. Every time we limit our sharing so everyone has a chance to speak. Every time we use Nar-Anon literature in our meetings. Every time we go to a regional or national convention. Every time we practice Nar-Anon principles. Every time we practice humility and patience with self and others. Every time we pause and let our Higher Power guide us. Every time we ... (you fill in the blank), we promote unity.

What else? Well, I am still on my journey to more fully understanding Tradition One. How are you doing?

Purchase or View Service Literature:
www.nar-anon.org/service-literature

AMENDS LETTER TO MYSELF

Dear Self,

Today, I would like to apologize to you for the many times I have set impossibly high standards of perfection for you. For the many times I have been harsh with you and berated you for not meeting those standards of perfection.

I want to apologize for not loving you unconditionally, the way you deserve to be loved. The way your Higher Power loves you. I am sorry for not celebrating your successes with you more, like I celebrate other people's successes with them. In fact, I want to apologize for not treating you the same way I would treat my best friend. Because you are! For all the times I've done you harm by ob-

sessing over the mistakes of the past, I am truly sorry.

Whenever I have looked at you and called you stupid, ugly, or not good enough, I was wrong, and I am sorry! I have done you harm by lying to you. My deception, denial, and self-justification have been unhealthy for you.

I have done you harm by neglecting your health and well-being. I have led you to believe that it is commendable to put yourself last. I have insisted that you take on other people's responsibilities, and I have pushed you to help others even when it meant neglecting your own needs. I apologize for this lack of

care and respect.

This is my pledge to you: I will strive to treat you like my best friend. I will love and respect you. I will try to see you as your Higher Power sees you. I will praise your accomplishments and celebrate your successes with you. I will treat you with loving kindness and with gentleness. I will be honest with you, but I will not be harsh or cruel. I will be patient with you, and I will remind you that it is progress, not perfection. I will forgive your shortcomings. I will remind you that you are exactly where you are supposed to be today.

Love, Self



FROM THE LITERATURE COMMITTEE

>>WHY A RECOVERY LITERATURE PRIORITY LIST?

The Approval Process for Recovery Literature was created by the fellowship. It was approved at the 2014 World Service Conference to give groups input on the order of the World Service Literature Committee's work on recovery literature. Any member, group, area, region, National Service Organization (NSO), world service committee, or the Board of Trustees can submit writings and topic suggestions for future literature.

The Literature Committee compiles those submissions that meet the criteria set forth in the Recovery Literature/Approval Process for Recovery Literature section of the Guide to World Services (GWS), and presents them as the Recovery Literature

Priority List biennially at the World Service Conference (WSC) for prioritization. Submissions received after the Conference Agenda Report (CAR) has been distributed will be included in the subsequent CAR.

Diverse experiences are essential if our literature is to carry the message of hope to those affected by the addition of someone near to them. The Literature Committee encourages all members to submit writings for future literature to litcom@nar-anon.org.

“Submitting written shares also helps convey my thoughts to a larger audience of all Nar-Anon readers.”

- *SESH, April 6*

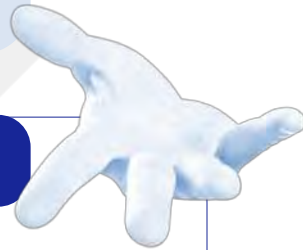
WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE 2021

Following is a list of literature that was new, updated/ revised and approved at the WSC-2021.

- Guide to Local Service
- Guide to World Service
- Blue Booklet
- Copyright Release Form
- Reading Cards
- Prayer for the Growth of Our Fellowship
- **New Literature**
- Seventh Tradition Pamphlet
- Grandparents' Stories
- Our Traditions: Principles for Groups and Beyond

Check the WS website for dates of release or contact your Delegate.

>>OUTREACH ROLL CALL!



Does your Area or Region have an Outreach Committee Chair? How about an Outreach Coordinator? Does your chair or coordinator know about and participate in our quarterly Outreach Roundtables? We need your ideas, your challenges, your successes! We need your input so our committee can better serve the fellowship. Send your committee chair or coordinator contact information to the World Services Outreach Committee so we can stay in touch.

The World Service Outreach Committee is also looking for members to help with outreach and fellowship growth at the world level. Why not consider joining our efforts? Worldwide outreach efforts can grow with worldwide participation.

Send your contact information to outreach@nar-anon.org. We can't wait to see how far our committee can go – join us!

Upcoming Events & Activities



CLICK ON EVENT LINKS FOR DETAILS OR GO TO THE [EVENTS PAGE](#) ON THE WSO WEBSITE.

IN THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION:

NAR-ANON & NA *Web-Based*

NY Region—Sept 7, Oct 5, Nov 1, 2021

8pm EDT, 7pm CDT, 6pm MDT, 5pm PDT

[Zoom Link](#) - nynfgsec@gmail.com

CARRY THE MESSAGE: NAR-ANON & NA

Rocky Mtn Region

Sept 25, Oct 23, Nov 27, 2021 *Web-Based*

12:30pm EDT, 11:30am CDT, 10:30am MDT, 9:30am PDT

[Zoom Link](#) - carrythemessageNFG@gmail.com

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ROUNDTABLE

September 26, 2021 *Web-Based*

12pm EDT, 11am CDT, 10am MDT, 9am PDT

[Zoom Link](#) - BOT@nar-anon.org

STEP BY STEP 12-STEP WORKSHOP

Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday *Web-Based*

5pm PDT, 8pm EDT, 12am GMT

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

Mtcake15@gmail.com or loischez@gmail.com

STEP BY STEP 12-STEP WORKSHOP

Simi Valley NFG

Every Saturday *Web-Based*

6:30pm PDT, 9:30 EDT, 8:30 CDT, 7:30 MDT

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

IT STARTS WITH US SPEAKER MEETING

Rocky Mtn Region—Every Saturday

Web Based

9pm EDT, 8 CDT, 7pm MDT, 6pm PDT

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

THE NUTS & BOLTS OF SPONSORSHIP

Rocky Mtn Region

Every Tuesday *Web Based*

7pm EDT, 6pm CDT, 5pm MDT, 4pm PDT

[Zoom Link](#) - [More Info](#)

MID-ATLANTIC REGION CONVENTION

Dulles, VA

4th Annual Nar-Anon Mid-Atlantic Region

November 5-7, 2021

[More info](#)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

CONVENTION *Loveland, CO*

Friends, Family & Fellowship Finally Face-to-Face

November 12-14, 2021

[More info](#)

WHAT WILL A DOLLAR BUY IN NAR-ANON?

For many years, when the seventh tradition basket was passed around, everyone got out the obligatory dollar. A dollar doesn't buy what it did years ago. What does the dollar in the basket buy today?

- 2 pamphlets
- 2 book markers
- 1 copy of Personal Stories
- 1 Guide for the Family of the Addict
- 1 laminated book marker
- 2 copies of various other pieces of service or outreach materials not in pamphlet form
- 100 e-newsletter subscription (current subscriber's >5,000)

A dollar doesn't go a long way in Nar-Anon anymore. It takes at least two dollars to buy a new comer packet or a Blue Booklet.

Our groups must still pay rent and make donations to other service levels that need funding to provide the services the groups have requested.

These include websites, phone lines, outreach materials for events, rent for the World Services Office, staff wages, taxes, distribution and printing machines, and materials. How far does a dollar go in Nar-Anon today? Not very far.



>> Share Your Events and Activities

Did you know there is a page on the Nar-Anon website where you can share information about upcoming events and activities? Go to www.nar-anon.org/events to see a list of upcoming events and activities. Or send a PDF to events@nar-anon.org if you have a flyer you would like to share.



NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

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