



The Serenity Connection

Did you know...

...that from July through September 2015, the World Service Office staff:

- Handled close to 1,500 phone calls
- Filled nearly 1,000 literature orders totaling over 25,000 pieces of literature

...and that:

- 85% of literature orders were made online at the Nar-Anon webstore
- eBook sales now total over \$20,000 (2013-2015)
- Nar-Anon literature racks are now available online

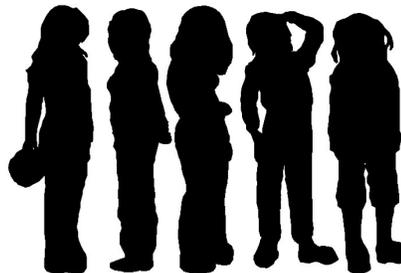
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A Narateen Member Shares: I Can Breathe!

I used to feel so much fear and anxiety when my Mom would come home from work each night. It was like living with someone with a split personality! I would hold my breath and watch her to see what I should do. If she was frowning and slamming things around, I knew to stay quiet, follow the directions she yelled out, and then hide in my room the rest of the night. If she came in with groceries, ready to cook dinner and asking me about my day, I could breathe! At least for the time she stayed in this mood, which could be 5 minutes or 5 hours. I was a really good kid compared to my friends because I had to be. If I brought home a bad report from school on the wrong day, it could have meant a night of hearing my mom screaming

four letter words in my face, slamming doors, and sobbing to her friends on the phone about how lazy and ungrateful I was. I would lie in bed every night, listening for the familiar sounds of ice cubes in the glass for the next drink, then later the pills from the medicine cabinet to help sleep come.



Today, because of going to Narateen meetings and talking with members in between meetings, I don't hold my breath anymore. I have learned that addiction is a disease, not a

choice. With some compassion for her, and boundaries I have learned to apply, I can have a good day whether she is in a good mood or not. Getting an after school job meant I wasn't home when she walked in the door, so the waiting and anxiety were replaced with time spent working and receiving a paycheck. I write in a journal when I feel the fear and anxiety, and those feelings are released through the pen as I write. At meetings, I hear others share how they cope with the effects of addiction in their families, and I feel so much better, not so alone. It's awesome to walk into a meeting and get hugs from smiling friends! Do I believe in a Higher Power? I do now; He brought me here!

Are you a **Narateen** member? Do you have a story of recovery to share? You can let others know they are no longer alone. Share your experience, strength, and hope with the fellowship at newsletters@nar-anon.org

The Spirit of Giving

DONATE NOW!

At this special time of year, our thoughts turn to sharing with others who are less fortunate. By contributing to your Nar-anon group or to World Service, you will be helping to spread the Nar-anon message throughout the world so others affected by addiction can find serenity and peace of mind in their troubled lives. This season, think of what Nar-anon has given you and give back.

Our Members Share

“As we reach out for help, we become ready to reach out a helping hand and heart to those in need of Nar-Anon.”

Nar-Anon Blue Booklet, p. 5



Healing through Fellowship

This was not the life I had envisioned, being married to an addict, caught on the roller coaster of highs and lows. So many times I questioned if what I was doing was right. Should I stay or leave? Why was I staying? Was it out of fear? I doubted myself and my decisions. Was I enabling? Was I prolonging the consequences? I was always trying to control, anticipate, and be prepared. I worried constantly, afraid that he would die, and then there were times I wondered if it would be better if he did. I was ashamed and embarrassed. I felt guilty, sad, glad, relieved, hurt, anxious, overwhelmed, and devastated. This is what brought me to the rooms of Nar-Anon, where I found peace, serenity, understanding, and love from a group of strangers I would come to call my friends, friends who understood me and my life as no others could, and who would support me through this devastation.

Yes, like many of you, I too suffered many losses in my life, loss of dreams, sanity, money, hopes, sleep, even the loss of a stillborn child. All the worry

couldn't have prepared me for the loss of my soulmate, my husband. My story is a story of hope, a love that would never give up. We had just celebrated his 53rd birthday and our 34 year anniversary. Yes, he still suffered from addiction, fighting those demons. He worked his program and I worked mine, neither of us as much as we should have. However, the program gave me peace. He had been incarcerated, hospitalized, in and out of rehabilitation, and now he would pay the ultimate price - death from an overdose.



As I write my story, it has been two years to the day that my husband died from addiction. I never anticipated coming home that day and finding his cold, lifeless body in our home. My first thought was an overdose even though there was no evidence to support that assumption. I was overwhelmed but my nursing instincts kicked in. I called 911 and started CPR. I did everything possible to revive him with no success. I always realized this was a possibility. Somehow I thought that all the

years of anticipating and worrying about him dying from addiction would have prepared me, but I was devastated. It would be several months before the autopsy report confirmed my suspicions that he had died from an overdose.

Of course my family was there to support me through this difficult time, but it was my Nar-Anon family that helped me to heal. They understood what it was like to live with addiction. They made me feel welcome even though my life had changed. They encouraged me to continue attending meetings, sharing, and working my program. I am so extremely grateful that through addiction I was able to find myself in the rooms of Nar-Anon. This was where I was able to find the God of my understanding, the God I thought had deserted me. This is where I was able to put the pieces of my life back together. I am so grateful for the tools I learned in my years of Nar-Anon that got me through the most difficult time in my life.

Although my life has changed drastically, I have learned to live again. I know there is hope and serenity for all of us who have been devastated by addiction.

“..recovery does not return one to the time before addiction. Recovery does not automatically bring an end to the pain of the past or the fear of the future. Recovery is a new opportunity for a new peaceful way to live.”

Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope, Nar-Anon Family Groups Daily Reader, July 26

The Nar-Anon Traditions

Tradition Two

For our group purposes there is but one authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants - they do not govern.

A loving God is the Higher Power I seek for help in my recovery. I experienced the concept of a Higher Power at my first meeting. Love, understanding, compassion, and concern was expressed by the group. Experience, strength, and hope were honestly shared without crosstalk, criticism, shame, or blame. The unconditional love and acceptance were all evidence of a Higher Power at work.

A loving God gives me hope and courage to begin to change my negative thinking to positive; my fear begins to shift to faith, and my desperate helping shifts to learning to trust my Higher Power. I am no longer alone. I experience the care of my Higher Power as I reach out for help from those travelling the same path.

In my recovery, I am developing a spiritual consciousness and growing a trusting relationship with the God of my understanding. This trust is the result of the baby steps of faith I take when I practice my program and keep the focus on myself and God's will for me. This consciousness growing in me is characterized by a new self-awareness and recognition of my motivation and boundaries. I am becoming aware of the part I play in my relationships with others. My Higher Power keeps me moving forward in my recovery. I experience a new clarity as I begin to see my choices and to make decisions. I am learning to be present in the moment and to make choices based on God's will for me.

My newfound consciousness is preparing me to play an important role in the conscience of my group. A group conscience is when we listen and share with one another as equals, seeking our Higher

Power's will for the group. We respectfully focus on one another's thoughts and perspectives. We seek to make decisions based on spiritual principles and our concern for the common welfare of the group. This binds us together in unity of purpose. It is important that all ideas are heard and respectfully considered before decisions are made. We may not all agree but we accept the decision of the group. We seek not our will but our Higher Power's will for the group.

Questions:

- How do you see your Higher Power at work in your group?
- Has your group taken a group conscience? Was everyone given the opportunity to speak?
- Do you rotate leadership in your group? Why or why not?
- What has your group done to encourage participation in group service or other Nar-Anon service?
- Was there adequate time for members to consider their choices and contributions?
- How did your group handle conflict if it arose?

Our Members Share

"My responsibility is to serve the members ... the only authority in Nar-Anon is a loving Higher Power."

SESH, September 15

Just for Today... renewing our Bookmark



How do you live your life "just for today"? What are your little tricks for staying focused on today and making it the very best it can be? How do you live in the moment and keep from being sidetracked by others needs and wants? What do you do for YOU, "just for today"?

We're updating our "Just for Today" bookmark and need your help. If you have an original "just for today" that you would like to share, please drop us a line at newsletters@nar-anon.org and include a completed Copyright Release Form. Please keep your contributions simple and short so they'll fit on the bookmark. Remember, these must be your own writings. They can't be taken from any other source.

Just for today, I will share my experience, strength, and hope in one small "just for today."

Our Members Share

“It can be very empowering to take responsibility for my own choices. I will act in my own best interests today.”

SESH, June 6

Boundaries

I found it hard to set boundaries with my daughter. It didn't matter what I said, she still did what she wanted to do. I thought that meant I just had to accept whatever she did and there were no consequences for her behavior. My self-esteem went downhill as she verbally abused me. I isolated myself and only felt safe when I was alone. I felt powerless to say no because I thought I was the only one who could save her. When she ended up stranded somewhere, whether it was in the same city as me or in another state, I ran to the rescue. This took a toll on me, not only physically, but financially.

Going to meetings, working the steps, and talking with my sponsor helped me learn to take care of myself. I started setting boundaries. If my

daughter was not going to stop using drugs, then she could no longer live with me. If she verbally abused me over the telephone, I told her I would not keep talking with her. I said good bye and hung up the phone. I stopped spending money to get her out of jams and even stopped finding and paying for her recovery treatment.

The miracle was that my daughter then started to respect me. She accepted that I was no longer going to give her money or get her out of trouble. This gave her more respect for herself too. Over the years, when she had found some recovery, we could really talk. She wrote me a beautiful

letter a year before she died. It said:

I am very proud of the life you have built for yourself. You used to be so shy and depressed. Now I see a beautiful, wise, survivor who is not just surviving, but rather, living a life to be honored and respected. The work you have done on yourself is amazing. Never let your brain or other people tell you otherwise. I thank you for all the love and support you have given me over the years. And I celebrate your existence.

I will treasure this letter forever, knowing what I learned in Nar-Anon about taking care of myself and setting my own boundaries helped me become a woman my daughter and I finally respected.



Our Own Nar-Anon Prayer!

The World Service Conferences of 2008, 2010, and 2014 had motions with prayers from other fellowships submitted for approval. Our Seventh Tradition states *Every group ought to be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions.* Wouldn't writing our own prayer be self-supporting?

This request is for our members' support and contributions to the development of a truly Nar-Anon prayer, a prayer created by our members for our members. For those interested, please click www.nar-anon.org/prayer-submission or go to www.nar-anon.org to submit your suggestion along with a release form found at [Copyright Release Form](#). Remember, all submissions must be original. Any use of non-original literature, in part or in full, even with wording changes, constitutes plagiarism and

can result in public controversy for Nar-Anon. Submissions will be accepted through **April 15, 2016**.

During the 2016 World Service Conference, **Strength through Service**, a workshop will be held to take all submissions and develop a prayer for Nar-Anon. Once the prayer is developed, it will be submitted to the floor as a motion to go out to the fellowship for approval at the 2018 World Service Conference.

Keep these thoughts in mind for submission:

- All work must be original
- Submissions should be three or four sentences, something members can easily memorize
- Submissions can be spiritual but should not reflect any religious beliefs
- Submissions should reflect a worldwide spirit of unity
- It is preferred that submissions are gender neutral

My Path

I found my way through the brambles of addiction, learning more than I ever wanted to know about it. I wandered this way and that, not aimlessly but with purpose. Too scared, too hurried, and too hassled, I rushed headlong into this unknown forest. I pricked my finger on thorns, snagged my shirt on bushes, scraped my shoulder on a broken branch, and even tore my cornea by rubbing out a gnat, not waiting for gentle tears to wash it away.

In that condition, I stumbled across this twelve step program. Nar-Anon helped me to slow down and quiet my spirit. The Serenity Prayer kept me walking straight ahead, instead of turning my head to look behind. When I did that, I stubbed my toe. As I tried to walk in two directions at once, I stumbled. However, as I began to work the steps, I realized my life had become unmanageable, I was powerless over the addict, and a Power greater than myself



could restore me to sanity. This allowed me to move forward.

I'm still in the forest. The path is ahead. I can't always see what's over the ridge, around the corner, or down at the bottom of the hill. I may jump at a screeching owl, but I'm not hiding behind a tree. I hesitate, but I don't stop or sit upon a rock thinking "Should I even continue this journey?" A couple of times I have daw-

Our Members Share

dled or turned back a few steps, but, in the rooms among my new friends, I find my path forward again. When the wind kicks up, howling through the leaves, I can hear these words, "I am with you." The anxiety of what's ahead is decreased by relying on my Higher Power. Thanks to Nar-Anon, I speak with friends, I pray, I continue on my path.

What if...

Why is it that members do not want to serve beyond the group level? Why is it that members do not even want to serve at the group level? I often hear members say they just want to attend meetings and let others do the service work. There is a song that says, "Who's gonna fill their shoes...." This song makes me wonder what would happen if there was no one to fill those shoes. What if no one wanted to start a meeting? What if no one wanted to host that meeting at the NA convention where I first found Nar-Anon? What if no one wanted to write and share their experience dealing with the drug issues of a loved one? What if no one wanted to edit the area/region sched-

ule to add the new meetings? What if no one ever did outreach? Where would I be today if.....

Nar-Anon encourages us to give back what was so freely given to us, to be there for those who have yet to find the relief we found with the Nar-Anon program. But it's so much more than that. Service has given me more gifts than just those I receive at my weekly meetings.

Is service in a twelve step program less appealing because it's done without recognition? We don't have banquets to recognize those that go beyond. We don't have certificates and trophies. We won't be in the paper shaking hands with the mayor or on the news

giving an interview. I do service because it's the right thing to do to "fill their shoes." Those that came before me helped me learn and accept that addiction is a disease. Those people loved me when I didn't think the addict ever did or when the addict wasn't able to show it. Those people showed me the literature so I could learn to set boundaries and live a better life than I had before Nar-Anon. Service for me is a humbling experience and one I believe the God of my understanding wants me to do. My higher power wants me to serve with no recognition, and to me that is wonderful.

Why do I do service? What have I received from service? I have learned how to work

better with others. I have learned to work with people I might not otherwise have had an opportunity to work with. I have developed more meaningful friendships. Working with others who are also working on themselves has brought me healthier relationships. I have learned how to listen. My communication skills have grown. I can truly say that Nar-Anon has penetrated all areas of my life. Doing service has led me to some of my closest friends. Without service, I wouldn't have these blessings in my life. So service makes me think.... What if no one opened the door to the meeting this week? What if no one came to share for the newcomer? What if no one answered the phones at world service? What if no one "filled their shoes"?

What's Worked for You?

Last Issue's Question

In my region, I've seen a number of new groups start and close for lack of attendance. What have you done to support new groups in your area or region? Is there a critical number of members needed to keep a group going? Does a new group need "old" members to succeed?

Answer 1

Our region has a solid support system for new groups. Several of our RSC (Regional Service Committee) members reach out to the GSRs of the new groups to offer assistance and support. We offer new group packets to support them financially in the beginning and offer to assist in any way we are able. A commitment of two or three members attending the meeting regularly for a minimum of 6 months has been shown to help groups remain open and growing. It also helps to have seasoned mem-

bers attend to share their experience, strength, and hope. Encouraging open communication between new group GSRs and the region helps as well.

Answer 2

In our region, we have what is called a GSR Liaison who contacts new groups that are started in the region. The region helps the new groups by providing new group packets, directories, and support. If a new group is struggling, the region asks for volunteers to attend the meeting. At regional meetings, GSRs share ideas with the assembly. If a GSR

comes to a regional meeting with concerns about their group, they can bring up the subject for discussion and suggestions.

In my experience, new groups work best if they are started with at least three members. Longtime members can be extremely helpful and important by sharing their experience, strength, and hope.

Staying connected with a region is important. The Nar-Anon Guide to Local Services (GLS, p. 2-1) states that the founding of a group and its functions are the responsibility of those qual-

ified for membership. Groups are registered with Nar-Anon with the understanding they will abide by the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. The region, area, and group are important parts of that understanding and responsibility. Regions and groups are only as strong as those who serve and support them. In turn, this supports and serves new and continuing groups.

Being connected to an area or region is a useful way for new groups to find the help and support they need to succeed.

This Issue's Question

What should we do when a newcomer brings their small child to a meeting and the child is so disruptive that another member has to leave the meeting to entertain the child so the newcomer can participate in the meeting?



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<http://nar-anon-webstore.myshopify.com/pages/ebooks>

Committee Corner



Did you know you can serve on a world service committee in your pajamas?

No need to dress up or even get dressed at all. You don't have to brush your teeth or comb your hair. You don't have to drive across town or across the state to sit in a face-to-face meeting. It's come as you are! All you need is access to a smart phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer with internet access to the meeting platform the committee uses. Committee calls do not use video so no one can see you! If you have skills the committees need, the willingness to serve, and you meet the minimum requirements [check the GWS (Guide to World Services)], world service committees desperately need your involvement. Every committee needs additional service members to execute the wishes of the Nar-Anon Family Groups. WE NEED YOU! So, come as you are; how you look and dress is between you and your dog.

and hope through their writings, we ask that they please keep the focus on the Nar-Anon program.

A reminder: If you haven't already done so, please consider going to the WSO website and subscribing to the [online version of The Serenity Connection](#) so that you receive the newsletter in your email inbox when each edition becomes available.

Topics you may consider writing about could be:

- A slogan you find meaningful
- How being of service helps you in your recovery journey
- Never alone
- Sponsorship experiences
- The helpfulness of contact lists within your group
- The importance of sharing in a meeting
- How listening helps you
- Connecting to your Higher Power
- How you stay focused in your recovery

Outreach Committee

News from the Far Side...

It's been a crazy quarter and the WS Outreach Committee members are . . . well . . . feeling a little wacky!



AND we've been doing good work:

- Developed and submitted eight motions for the CAR
- Creating new posters for outreach
- Developing outreach guidelines
- Revising the Outreach Folder
- AND looking for service members to join the Outreach team



We enjoy our service time together and are always looking for members with new ideas. Requirements include a willingness to serve and a commitment to program principles.

Interested??? Let us hear from you!

Email: outreach@nar-anon.org



Newsletter Committee

The WSO Newsletter Committee is asking for recovery articles for the next newsletter (The Serenity Connection). Please share this information with your regions, areas, and group members. As members share their recovery articles of experience, strength,

When submitting articles for the newsletter, please remember to fill out the [Nar-Anon Copyright Release Form](#).

Please send your articles to newsletters@nar-anon.org

Thanks from the Newsletter Committee.

Literature Committee

We need your help!

THE WORLD SERVICE LITERATURE COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP to produce new Nar-Anon literature. We are asking members of the fellowship to review, edit, and write literature.

The Twelve Traditions will be our next big project and we expect it to take a minimum of six years to produce. Each tradition will need a story based on the tradition and short personal shares from our members. We also need text and questions for each tradition. An example is Tradition One: Text and questions regarding our common welfare, why should it come first and why unity is important for our personal progress together as a fellowship.

continued on page 8...

The Back Page

Upcoming Events

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

[Georgia Region Nar-Anon Convention \(with GRCNA 35\)](#)

Feb 5-6, 2016

"Seeking Serenity"

Renaissance Concourse Atlanta Airport Hotel

Atlanta, GA 30352

Joanna 706-207-4112

[Eastern Pennsylvania Region's 11th Nar-Anon Convention](#)

March 11-13, 2016

"Peace Amid The Storm"

Trevoze, NY

Watch for details at www.naranonepa.org

[Staten Island Nar-Anon 2nd Spirituality Breakfast](#)

March 19, 2016

"Sharing Our Experience, Strength & Hope"

Hilton Garden Inn,

Staten Island, NY

Save the date!

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

June 10-12, 2016

"NCRNFG XXVIII"

Visalia Convention Center

Visalia, CA 93291

Ruth B. 559-364-6309



Literature Committee ...continued from page 7

Does your area or region have a literature committee? Would you like to form one and be part of the literature process: reviewing, editing, and/or writing literature? Does your area or region have events where you can hold a writing workshop? Remember, our literature comes from the writings of our Nar-Anon members.

A recovery literature priority list has been distributed with the CAR so regions can discuss and decide the order of work for the WS Literature Committee. This is part of the recovery literature review and approval process as stated in the GWS. An important factor is that the literature the fellowship wants to see produced must come from writings the WS Literature Committee receives from the fellowship.

PLEASE LEND US A HAND so we can continue to produce the literature most needed by our fellowship. Together we can!

Contact the World Service Literature Committee at LitCom@nar-anon.org. A pamphlet on literature writing guidelines can be found on the [Literature Submissions](#) page on the WSO website.

Countdown to Conference!

"Strength Through Service," April 29 to May 2, 2016

Has your region selected a delegate and alternate delegate?

Has your group scheduled its CAR workshops?

Is your region on track to meet the following deadlines:

Dec. 31-15 Inform WSC Committee of region's intention to participate in WSC 2016. Submission by regional treasurer of equalized expense sum.

BOT members and world service committee chairs inform the WSC Committee of their intention to attend the conference.

Jan. 29-16 Conference Approval Track (CAT) material available and distributed to regions.

Feb. 28-16 Deadline for regional reports and minutes showing election or continued endorsement of delegate or alternate delegate.



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 [release form](#) before it can be published.

**** Next Issue Submission Deadline: January 20, 2016 ****

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