

# STARTING A MEETING AND NEVER BEEN TO A TWELVE STEP MEETING

Welcome to the Nar-Anon Family Groups. We are excited to have a new meeting offering support to those affected by someone else's addiction. Twelve Step meetings are helpful to members who choose to apply the principles in their own lives, the only place where we have control. Well-meaning individuals want to start Nar-Anon meetings and we want your meeting to get off to a good start. It would be beneficial to attend a few Twelve Step meetings for families to decide if Nar-Anon is right for you. It could be confusing to other Nar-Anon members who attend your meeting if it is not carrying the Nar-Anon message. What would a meeting look like that does not carry the Nar-Anon message?

## WHAT WE DON'T DO IN NAR-ANON MEETINGS

- Use literature or other materials not conference approved (CAL).
- Change the steps, traditions, concepts, or literature to suit our liking.
- Invite treatment center speakers.
- Use videos of professionals speaking about addiction.
- Give advice on treatment centers, programs, or interventions.
- Distribute or arrange for professionals to discuss and/or distribute overdose drugs.
- Promote any religion or read religious prayers during our meetings.
- Share excessively about the addict.
- Dominate or coerce participation.
- Conduct ourselves as if we are group therapy.

You might look at the list of what we don't do in Nar-Anon meetings and think some of these are helpful topics. They may be, just not in a Nar-Anon meeting. Our Fifth Tradition is clear on how we help families and friends of addicts. We practice the Twelve Steps of Nar-Anon, give comfort to families of addicts and encourage our addicted relatives. We learn that recommending treatment centers to someone who is not ready is not encouragement, but a form of manipulation. While many of us find comfort in our religious beliefs, Nar-Anon is a spiritual program, not a religious one.

So, what does a meeting look like that carries the Nar-Anon message?

## WHAT WE DO IN NAR-ANON MEETINGS

- Learn to accept addiction is a disease.
- Read topics on how to deal with the effects of addiction in our lives.
- Share our experience, strength, and hope on what has helped us.
- Share how we are affected by the addict.
- Learn how to change the only thing we can, ourselves.
- Learn to set healthy boundaries for ourselves when dealing with the addict and others.
- Love the addict while not taking their disease personally.
- Practice anonymity, respecting the anonymity of those who attend our meeting as well as our addicted loved ones.
- Read from Nar-Anon conference approved literature (CAL) written by our members.
- Make new friends we can talk to between meetings (use the phone list).
- Encourage members to find a sponsor and work the steps for their own recovery.

Starting a new meeting includes some responsibilities. To name our meeting a Nar-Anon meeting, we must be sure we are acting as Nar-Anon (see page 2-1 of the Nar-Anon Family Groups' Guide to Local Services).

## SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS BEFORE STARTING A NAR-ANON MEETING

- Attend six meetings. If there is no Nar-Anon group in your area, there may be other Twelve Step meetings for families you can attend.
- Ask the Nar-Anon World Service Office (WSO) for the contact information of a Nar-Anon member near you as a resource.
- Read all the literature provided to you in your new group packet.
- If you have questions after reading the literature, make a list and ask a Nar-Anon service member.
- Obtain a copy of the Nar-Anon Family Groups' Guide to Local Services. Read and keep a copy available at meetings for resource material.
- Find out from WSO if you are in an area or region with a service structure for support.
- Ask yourself what your motivation is for starting a Nar-Anon meeting.
- After learning what a Nar-Anon meeting is all about, do you feel Nar-Anon is right for you?

We want the meeting to be successful. Experience has taught us not everyone who starts a Nar-Anon meeting has a comprehension of what Nar-Anon is about, they simply want to help others. There are many ways, but Nar-Anon's help is specific. No one wants to see a meeting close. Sometimes those who start a Nar-Anon meeting without understanding the purpose, decide to close the meeting because they wanted it to be something other than Nar-Anon. We wish you much success and offer the resources to help you get off to a good start. Meetings often grow slowly and sometimes newcomers don't come back. Though newcomers may not come back to your meeting, they may come back to Nar-Anon. We plant the seed of personal recovery with those who pass through our meetings with no expectations of the outcome.

## OTHER REMINDERS:

- Register your group
- Continue to update WSO on any meeting changes, including location or time changes, etc.

SHOULD YOUR MEETING CLOSE, PLEASE INFORM WSO. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NO ONE BE DIRECTED TO A MEETING THAT IS NO LONGER OPEN.

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