

WEST VALLEY NA MESSENGER

The “No Matter What” Edition

April 2020

A General Announcement About Meetings

Our regional public relations committee and our webmaster, Marc R., have done a tremendous job of obtaining our Zoom account and transitioning many of our meetings online.

While there are still a few groups meeting, there is an issue that we face when we continue to meet, despite taking precautions like spacing, hand sanitizer, etc. That is one of insurance.

Many of us believe that NA is only a spiritual program. No doubt, it is a spiritual program. However, whether we agree or not on that point, we also are a business entity that must manage the legal and business end of NA, such as purchasing insurance.

With insurance, we can hold meetings and events without worrying that, if someone gets injured, we have no insurance to back us up. Without proof of insurance, most of our meeting facilities would not allow us to use their rooms for our meetings.

Our NA region handles this and other important business matters on behalf of our areas.

We received an important email from our insurance broker about meetings *and for those group's leaders still meeting in person, please read this.*

First, if you are not meeting at the address listed on the current NA meeting list (at the time of that event/meeting), there is a strong possibility you will not have insurance coverage for your meeting. If you've moved your meeting to a park, for example, not listed on the current NA meeting list, insurance coverage may be problematic. Additionally, if you are meeting with more than 10 people as per the State of Arizona's guidelines, coverage may be problematic.

Next, the broker cites exclusionary language for incidents that arise that could be “expected.” If you continue to meet in violation of the emergency order, the insurer could interpret that you could “expect” COVID-19 issues, and this could “void the insurance contract.” *This is not me telling you this, it the words of our insurance broker.*

I don't write this to generate controversy; rather to warn you that if you don't have coverage under the NA liability policy, you open yourself up to personal liability. No one wants that.

Yes, each group is autonomous. Your group conscience may be that you continue to meet taking proper precautions. However, if we end up in litigation over our decision, it could impact NA “as a whole.” No one wants that, either.

Your group must balance “NA as a whole” with your group's conscience, as we should do in all our group decisions.

Nancy G.
The Editor and West Valley Public Relations Chair



Important General Announcement

With the COVID-19 issue and the state of emergency in the US, we do not at this time know when normal activities including meetings will go forward. The responsible thing to do is act responsibly. Never forget that while we are a spiritual program, NA is also a business entity and our region purchases insurance to protect our groups, activities and the actions and decisions of our trusted servants. We don't want to be in a situation where we have no insurance coverage for our meeting or meetings.

Watch the NA Arizona Narcotics Anonymous Facebook page and the regional website for updates about committee meetings and other events. Online meetings are available, and each home group will decide what to do moving forward. The regional PR committee has obtained a Zoom account so we can facilitate online meetings. Stay tuned to the regional website for updated info.

We are a tough, resilient bunch, as is our country. We will all be fine if we strive for unity in the differences of opinions that are now flooding the country. "As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart, all will be well."

The Twelve Steps of NA

Step Four: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

When I first got here and heard everyone talking about the 4th step. I thought, "No way am I sharing this with anyone I know. I'll find a preacher to share it with; he won't tell anyone what a mess I am. Of course, this was before I had worked any step of any kind.

When I got serious about working the steps, I got serious about the first step first. I found a sponsor who I knew had been around and could help me. To get the help I needed, I knew I was going to have to be honest with this man. This would be a whole 'nother level of honesty with which I was unfamiliar.

Working the first three steps allowed me the time to develop trust in my sponsor, in the program and in the process. I became committed. When it was time to do my 4th step, I was willing to be as thorough as I could, just like the literature told me I needed to be. Not that it wasn't hard to put that stuff down on paper; it was torture. Seeing some of the stuff I had done and had done to me was not my idea of a good time. But if I wanted to get the benefits of the program, I had to do that step.

My sponsor reminded me that, "It's not like you're doing this stuff now – it's the past." Once that sunk into my thick skull, it became easier to write it down. And there was no doubt in my mind I was going to share it with my sponsor, even though I was not looking forward to that day.

"Put it down on the paper like that's all you're going to do with it," kept running through my head, so that is what I did. I prayed before I started writing, asking God to help me be honest and thorough in what I was writing.

Did this help? I really don't know but I think I was honest and thorough so it must have. Every morning I would answer a few questions, sometimes two, sometimes three or four, but I was consistent and persevered.

I did not look ahead to see what the next questions were going to be, either. I think this allowed me to concentrate on the matter at hand and not develop any uneasiness about the upcoming questions.

Finally, I got to the last question. When I read that question, I knew what my answer was, and it was so liberating. I was proud of myself for the honesty, commitment and perseverance I had shown in my writing and looked forward, with only minor trepidation to sharing it with my sponsor.

Tom T.

Fellowship Events

At this time, our areas and our region have cancelled most face-to-face meetings and events, including ARCNA's onsite event.

Watch the regional website for more information going forward.

Guiding Principles The Spirit of Our Traditions

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.

I was in a meeting in Prescott last year and my spousal unit happened to mention my home group, which decided not to give out key tags in our format.

“How can you let the newcomer surrender?” a visitor from another state asked, clearly upset at our group’s decision.

“We ask if there are any newcomers. If so, we welcome them and talk to them after the meeting,” I responded.

While this visitor remained unconvinced, the beautiful thing about NA’s Fourth Tradition is that each group can choose how it can best carry the message. If we use NA literature, abide by our Traditions, and call ourselves NA, we are usually on solid ground.

I traveled widely for work and I loved walking into an NA meeting in another part of the country (or world) to see how other groups did things. One of the coolest things I ever saw was at a group somewhere in the Midwest. The secretary of the meeting took a few notes as people spoke. At the end of the meeting, the secretary recapped some of the highlights of the meeting as spoken by its attendees. I found that particularly helpful. Traveling gets very lonely and sitting in hotel rooms can be dangerous for my recovery. His little recap of the meeting “gems” helped me head back to my hotel (complete with very noisy cocktail lounge) in a much better space.

Each group runs things a little differently. Some spend up to fifteen minutes reading many of our readings; other groups pick what they read, limiting the readings to a few so that members have more time to share. Neither way is “right” if it doesn’t affect other groups.

According to an archived article at narchive.com, “Sometimes it’s hard to know what affects NA as a

whole. The Fourth Tradition offers a way to balance the freedom of autonomy with our responsibility to preserve NA unity. Autonomy encourages groups to become strong and lively but also reminds them they are a vital part of a greater whole: The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.” We consider our common welfare when we make decisions in our groups.”

If we wonder why a group does things a certain way, we can ask politely. We are proud of our home groups and we can get defensive about them. We sometimes feel “challenged” when others approach us about why we run the meeting the way we do. Politely asking why the groups do things a certain way, or if you do not agree with how that group runs its meeting *and* you believe it affects NA as a whole, try a civil discussion. Home group members will often meet an angry or indignant confrontation when you are emotional with equal emotion. It’s only human nature to “defend our turf.”

I have my own personal two-pronged rule of thumb. If it does not affect NA as a whole and it is not my home group, I usually find it better to say nothing.

What are your thoughts on this important tradition?

Committee Announcements

Activities Subcommittee

Needs a Treasurer and your support. Only one day clean to get involved in the Activities Subcommittee. If your home group or committee would like to sponsor the monthly speaker meeting and dance, please contact the Activities chair. Contact Alva, Activities Chair.

H&I Subcommittee

Have a few new facilities that *need volunteers*, six months clean requirement. If interested attend H&I meeting the 3rd Saturday of the month at 8:30am before Area meeting. For information, attend the meeting or contact Mary Lou, H&I Chair.

Outreach Subcommittee – The Outreach Subcommittee attends meetings that need support. It serves as the “outstretched hand of an established NA community to isolated groups and addicts....” (From A Guide to Local Services in NA.) We currently have no chair for this position. Interested?

Attend the ASC meeting. It's a great way to get out to groups you don't normally attend.

Public Relations Subcommittee

We are always looking for members who can help with phone outreach to facilities, give presentations to various organizations and help us carry the message to the professional community. We especially need people available during the day for an occasional speaking engagement with a social service or other community organization. We'll train you! Contact Nancy G., WV PR Chair

The Concepts for NA Service

Fourth Concept: Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.

I don't have an article for this month's Fourth Concept. However, I think after all our trusted servants have done to implement Zoom meetings and support all the sudden changes we've undergone, we should reach out to our trusted servants to thank them for their leadership in this difficult time.

We see the leadership of our area and our region shine in adversity. Take a moment to thank a trusted servant, whether it's in your home group or area or at the region. They appreciate, occasionally, hearing, "Job well done."

**Want to be of service? In this difficult time, the Helpline is a simple yet effective way of one addict helping another.
Call the Helpline and join today!**

602.325.4702

Clean-Time Chronicles

This month, we have a Clean Time Chronicles article from the East Valley.

Hi, I'm Jacki and addict. How many times in our recovery have we said, "Wow, I've never been here before"? And here we are at another one of those times. I know for me these are the times when I rely the most on my higher power and the knowledge that I'm never given more than I can handle.

I was taught that my higher power would always have my back, even when I thought I was all alone. This has proven to be true throughout my recovery, but many times I've only recognized it after I made it through the storm.

This week will be one of those times for me, I celebrate 44 years in recovery, I was 22 years old when I came in, I never expected to live past 30 years old! I have grown up in the program. I learned how to be a productive member of society, not just a taker; how to be a friend, partner, family member and home group member. All of this was possible because I got a sponsor, worked steps and participated in my recovery. I continue to do those things today.

I am so grateful that I got out of my own way, that today I practice honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. Our literature is so rich in spiritual principles and the directions that help me stay out of my own way. I was taught and continue to practice that when I'm in a tough spot open on of our books and read where it lands...that's my higher power giving me direction.

One of my favorite quotes from a woman in recovery is "I may not be perfect but parts of me are excellent."

Today I have learned to accept my imperfection and go with the flow, one day at a time, but never perfectly!

Today I'm putting extra focus on my 10th and 11th step to put my attitude in acceptance and serenity. I have found that being in isolation puts me a little on edge with others & myself.

So, every hour I'm practicing prayer & meditation for five minutes. I'm learning to connect with Zoom meetings and love that we have people from all around the world present. Together we will make it through this.

Sending a hug to all of you!