



THE NA TIMES

Phoenix – West Valley – East Valley

January, 2024

Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on NA unity.

I love Narcotics Anonymous. When I was lost in the darkness it found me. I was not looking for freedom but Narcotics Anonymous snatched me up from the street and brought me to freedom. I belong here; I have no doubt.

From the beginning, I came to believe that an addict really only has two choices: Either go on to the bitter ends, jails, institutions and death *or* find a new way to live. In order to dor the latter, I had to internalize what "our common welfare" meant. This tradition tells me that NA is not a "selfish program" as I sometimes hear members share in meetings. '

NA is a *selfless* program. It is only through service to this fellowship that I could even begin to see that principle of selflessness. Sometimes I think I am so right and so entitled. When I act on those defects I come away feeling empty and alone. Then the cycle starts to try and fill that void or change that feeling.

We all know that spiral. In order to keep from going down that path I have practiced the principles of compassion, identification, understanding and anonymity. Don't get me wrong, this does not always come naturally to me. But the more I practice those principles the easier it gets. This practice helps me to locate my place in the world and in my home. I can then make a choice to be a part *of*.

The first tradition tells me that my personal recovery **depends** on NA unity. That is a very definite statement. There is no maybe about this. It is clear. My personal recovery depends on NA unity. I cannot afford to let my ego, or self-righteous attitudes compromise my recovery.

I can say honestly today I never want to use again. If that is the truth in my life then I need to work in harmony with my fellow members to carry this message and to preserve the clarity of our message. I need to stay in service and stay open to our diversity. It is our strength. The Guiding Principles tell us that "Unity is not just a feeling, it is an action that shapes our actions and attitudes." I want that change in my spirit. I owe a debt I cannot pay. What I can do is focus on our common welfare. I think I will do that today.

Patte T.

Concept 1: *“To fulfill our fellowship’s primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf of NA as a whole.”*

Our literature, *Twelve Concepts for NA Service*, states this about the 1st Concept: “Our fellowship’s primary purpose is to carry the message that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. One of the primary means by which that message is carried, addict to addict, is in our meetings...the most important service offered by our fellowship.”

As a public relations person, I recently communicated with a needle exchange program to see if we could provide a public relations presentation and they could offer our

“Drug Problem? We Can Help? cards to the addicts they encounter. Here is their response.

“Hello, and thanks for reaching out. We are a harm-reduction coalition who supports people who use drugs. We aren’t a good resource to hand out literature for abstinence-only programs, *particularly those who do not support people on medication-assisted treatment (MAT)* [emphasis mine]. We are science and evidence-based, not abstinence only.”

This particular entity is not the only one telling NA that we do not welcome people on MAT. We heard clearly from our treatment center doctors and directors at WSLD in a few years ago that they don’t refer their clients to NA because of our attitude toward MAT. Clearly, we have a lot of public relations work to do.

Step 1: *We admitted we were powerless over our addiction that our lives had become unmanageable.*

Relapse Gave Me a Better Understanding of Step 1

The first eight months on the Program clean, and I relapsed without a pause or a second thought. It was on a prescription medication not followed as directed with the purpose of getting high. Today, here I am my *second* 8 months clean, and **finally** understanding what the powerlessness and unmanageability really is.

What caused my relapse?

Powerlessness – *devoid of strength, resources, no energy, helpless.*

- At the time, I felt I had no or little strength to resist using. If I had drugs in my possession at that time, I would use them and wash them down with alcohol for enhancement.
- I felt weak, defenseless, scared, confused.
 - I felt like a failure and needed to hide or shut down inside so I can escape from my thoughts or escape from people finding out.
- I behaved compulsively like shopping online.
- Powerless over my thoughts like reacting to challenges or what others would say or do as a personal insult to me.
- I wanted things my own way, so I felt I had some power.

- I would lie to not lose my power.

2

Unmanageability – *difficult to control, restrain, manipulate, unacceptable.*

- I had no control over my life, so I had become a very controlling person about everything and everyone.
- Thinking about if I had any chemicals in my house that I could get to. If not, where could I score some?
- I have all these other jobs, responsibilities, things to do which take me away from what I really wanted to do. It made me feel out of control. My life was not my own.
- I didn't feel I could manage anything except what I put in my mouth (i.e., food) or on my body (i.e., clothing jewelry, hair style).

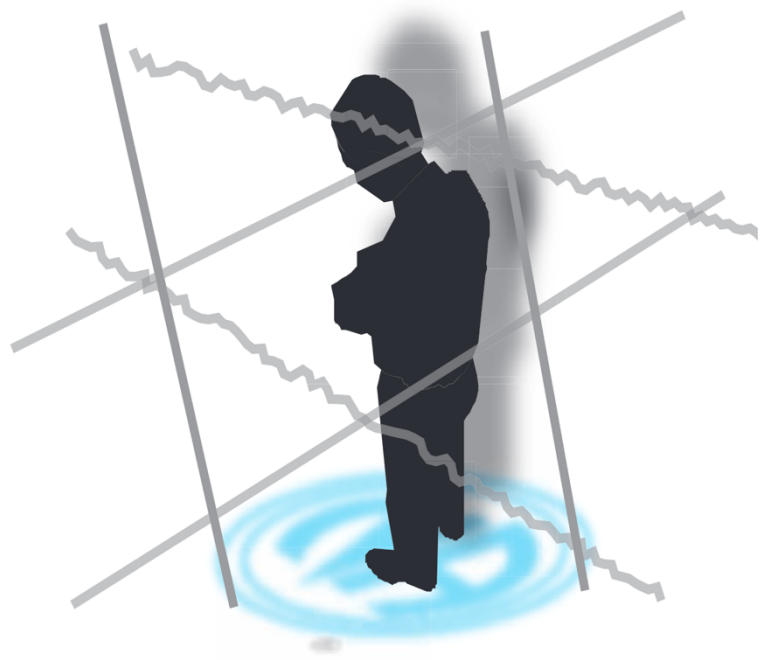
After taking this inventory of what was going on in my life, there were plenty of reasons I relapsed. Now I work my steps every day by contemplating what I cannot manage or what I am powerless over so I can hand it over to my Higher Power of my understanding. I love going to meetings and taking all the suggestions from my sponsor. I couldn't be happier and feel freer – manageable and in control, but not on my own but with the NA way. Huge and opposite difference.

Kathy M.

The inside message

It's Wednesday evening. The chairs are in a wide circle. It is 7:27 pm and I'm watching the clock as it moves toward 7:30. That is when our meeting starts. I have never before felt this kind of excitement about being at a meeting, and I've been coming around, off and on, since 1993.

The day will come when I am released from this place.



How we treat the newcomer, whether they are on MAT or trying to get clean by immediately stopping to use, is critical to unity. Our information pamphlet, *Narcotics Anonymous and Persons Receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment*, tells addiction professionals that, “The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.” It goes on to say, “While maintaining an emphasis on the importance of total abstinence, still-using addicts are welcomed into our meetings with special encouragement to keep coming back.” (*It Works*, “Tradition Three”).

As NA public relations volunteers, we are running into roadblocks like this when we try to carry our message to the exact population that may need to hear our message.

Needle exchange programs are part of the theory of “harm reduction” According to literature at harmreduction.org, “Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use.” Needle exchange is an important part of harm reduction. You can’t convince me that every addict they meet wants to continue to use. If they do not, then NA is an appropriate referral source.

Part of our structure includes NA’s public relations efforts. When a member mishandles his or her approach to a person at a meeting who is on MAT, it makes our public relations efforts harder.

Talking about our approach to those on MAT with our sponsors and in our home groups can help. We know this topic can generate controversy. That is not our intent. We simply recommend that we set time aside in our home groups’ business meetings to ensure we are welcoming the newcomer, whether he or she is on MAT or not.

If our fellowship is about unconditional love, then we must meet all newcomers where they are – not where we want them to be.

Let’s talk about how we treat and incorporate into the group and into our fellowship people who come to NA on MAT. While it may not be an easy discussion topic, it is essential to our ability to carry the message to precisely the people who need us – the still suffering addict.

We recommend your group read the pamphlet mentioned earlier for discussion purposes.

- Reprinted from the *West Valley NA Messenger*, January 2019

The NA Way – January 2006 – Volume 24, number

Each of us found freedom from addiction because NA was there when we could no longer survive the nightmare of our disease. Funding NA services is our collective responsibility. Every one of us—not just the other addicts at our meetings—is personally responsible for funding services that allow us to pursue our primary purpose—to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.



Donate to NA World Services

A

Just go to www.na.org and click on the “Donate to NA World Services” link at the bottom of the home page. Once there, you can check out the video depicting fellowship growth, review financial reports and information and, of course, make your donation by clicking on the “Donate Now” link. Your contribution is processed on a secure site and you will receive a receipt by mail.

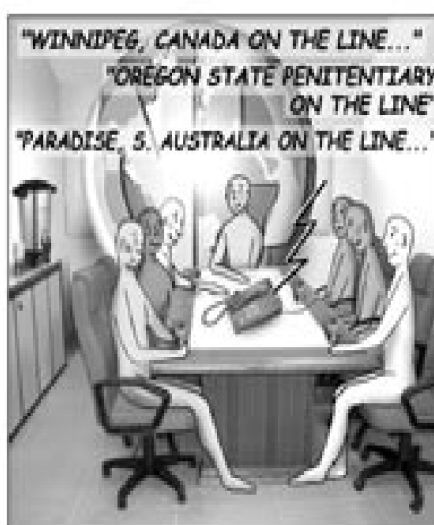
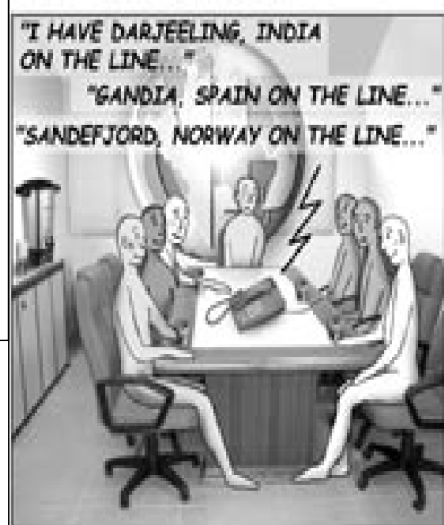
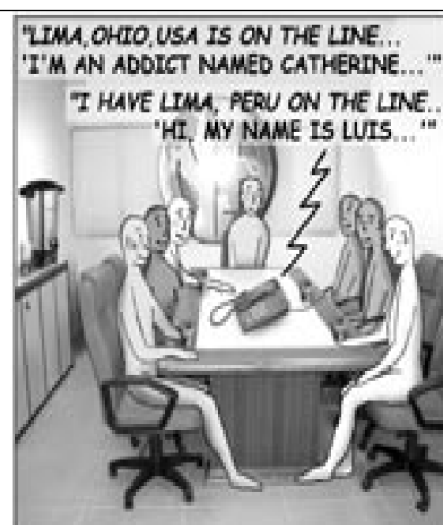
In addition to donating online, you may send checks or money orders to: NAWS; PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out *Arizona-NA.ORG* for more Details

BBQ Cookout Shindig – ARCNA Fundraiser	Saturday, January 20 th 3:00
EV Skyline Serenity Hike	Saturday, January 27 th 9:45
Day of the Dinosaur	Saturday, January 27 th 12:00

The NA Way – January 2006
(Volume 23 Number 1)



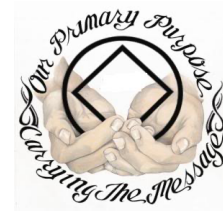
Sponsorship Behind the Walls

Sponsorship in Arizona for inmates is 100% voluntary and can begin with just a letter of willingness to participate. Once your message of interest has been received, your initial projects to be completed will be sent to you. After completion, a sponsor is then assigned to work with you as long as the communication remains open. Your Sponsor will send you an initial welcome letter letting you know who they are and how to further reach them with "Step Work" and other correspondence. This method of sponsorship is useful for those who are serving six months or longer than six months from their release date.

Where to mail your letter:

Arizona Region of Narcotics Anonymous – H&I
PO Box 1351
Phoenix, AZ 85001

While you wait to hear from us, search out your unit for existing NA meetings and begin attending. In the meantime, let us welcome you to Narcotics Anonymous, **Arizona Sponsorship behind the walls.**



A. Write to us about:

1. What did using cause you to lose or give up/away?
2. Where did you first hear about Narcotics Anonymous?
3. What have you gained from working a program of recovery?
4. If you are working with a sponsor:
 - a. Is he an inmate?
 - b. Someone from before?
 - c. Or from writing to "Sponsorship behind the walls"?
5. What keeps your interest in NA alive?
6. How long will you remain incarcerated before release and your concerns for that eventful day.

B. Guidelines for writing:

1. Keep your story concise and fit it on one page or less.
2. No need to over emphasize with cussing.
3. Please don't write with excessive details about the drugs or drug class which you used.

C. Once completed send your story to:

East Valley Prison Coordinator
PO Box 5264
Mesa, AZ, 85221



Inmates! *Show your creativity*

We would like to publish your artwork. **The NA Times** - Phoenix, West Valley, East Valley – is looking to involve the members of the fellowship **Behind the Walls**. Send your artwork and a piece of your recovery story to us for publication (Keep the artwork clean and recovery related).

Send to:

Narcotics Anonymous Prison Coordinator
PO Box 5264
Mesa, AZ 85221



PRESENTS
**2024's
BBQ COOKOUT SHINDIG**

**COME ENJOY HAMBURGERS, HOTDOGS
AND ALL THE FIXINS \$15**

- A Great Speaker Meeting-
- Fellowshipping-
- NA Merchandise Raffle & Auction-

South Central Area Monthly Campfire Meeting to follow

WHEN: January 20th, 2024 3-6pm

WHERE: 12999 N. Cox rd. Casa Grande, AZ 85194
North Mountain Park Ramada (Follow signs)

Contact/Volunteer Info:
John W (602)-475-4434
Arcna_fundraising@arizona-na.org