



Narcotics Anonymous
World Services

Narcotics

Anonymous

is an international, community-based association of recovering drug addicts with more than 58,000 weekly meetings in 131 countries worldwide.

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Development

NA sprang from the Alcoholics Anonymous Program of the late 1940s, with NA meetings first emerging in the Los Angeles area of California, USA, in the early 1950s. The NA program started as a small US organization that has grown into one of the world's oldest and largest international organizations of its type. For many years, NA grew very slowly, spreading from Los Angeles to other major North American cities and Australia in the early 1970s. Within a few

years, groups had formed in Brazil, Colombia, Germany, India, the Irish Republic, Japan, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. In 1983, NA published its self-titled Basic Text book, which contributed to its tremendous growth; by year's end, NA had grown to more than a dozen countries and had 2,966 meetings.

Today, NA is well established throughout much of North and South America, Western Europe, Australia, the Middle East, New Zealand and Eastern Europe. Newly formed groups and NA communities can be found scattered throughout the Indian subcontinent, Africa, and East Asia. Today the organization is truly a worldwide multilingual multicultural fellowship with more than 58,000 weekly meetings in 131 countries*. NA books and information pamphlets are currently available in 39 languages, with translations in process for 16 languages.

Program

NA's earliest self-titled pamphlet, known among members as "the White Booklet," describes Narcotics Anonymous this way:

"NA is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We ... meet regularly to help each other stay clean. ... We are not interested in what or how much you used ... but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help."

Membership is open to all drug addicts, regardless of the particular drug or combination of drugs used. When adapting AA's First Step, the word "addiction" was substituted for "alcohol," thus removing drug-specific language and reflecting the "disease concept" of addiction. Narcotics Anonymous provides a recovery process and peer support network that are linked together. One of the keys to NA's success is the therapeutic value of addicts working with other addicts. Members share their successes and challenges in overcoming active addiction and living drug-free, productive lives through the application of the principles contained within the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of NA. These principles are the core of the Narcotics Anonymous recovery program. Narcotics Anonymous itself is a non-religious program of recovery; each member is encouraged to cultivate an individual understanding—religious or not—of the spiritual principles and apply these principles to everyday life.

There are no social, religious, economic, racial, ethnic, national, gender, or class-status membership restrictions. There are no dues or fees for membership; most members regularly contribute in meetings to help cover the expenses incurred for the rent of facility space.

Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with other organizations, including other twelve step programs, treatment centers, or correctional facilities. As an organization, NA does not employ professional counselors or therapists nor does it provide residential facilities or clinics. Additionally, the fellowship does not offer vocational, legal, financial, psychiatric, or medical services. NA has only one mission: to provide an environment in which addicts can help one another stop using drugs and find a new way to live.

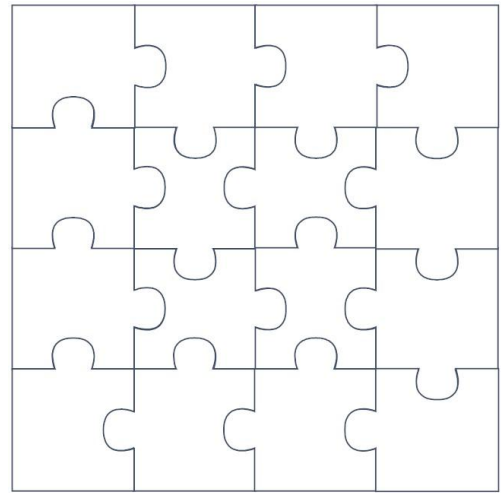
In Narcotics Anonymous, members are encouraged to comply with complete abstinence from all drugs including alcohol. It has been the experience of NA members that complete and continuous abstinence provides the best foundation for recovery and personal growth. NA as a whole has no opinion on outside issues, including prescribed medications. Use of psychiatric medication and other medically indicated drugs prescribed by a physician and taken under medical supervision is not seen as compromising a person's recovery in NA.

Service Organization

The primary service provided by Narcotics Anonymous is the NA group meeting. Each group runs itself based on principles common to the entire organization, which is expressed in NA's literature.

Most groups rent space for their meetings in buildings run by public, religious, or civic organizations. Individual members lead the NA meetings while other members participate by sharing about their experiences in recovering from drug addiction. Group members also work together to perform the activities associated with running a meeting.

In a country where NA is a relatively new and emerging fellowship, the NA group is the only level of organization. In places where a number of NA groups have had the chance to develop and stabilize, groups elect representatives to form a local service committee. These local committees usually offer a number of services.



Organizational Philosophy

In order to maintain its focus, Narcotics Anonymous has established a tradition of non-endorsement and does not take positions on anything outside its own specific sphere of activity. NA does not express opinions— either pro or con—on civil, social, medical, legal, or religious issues. Additionally, it does not take stands on addiction-related issues such as criminality, law enforcement, drug legalization or penalties, prostitution, HIV/HCV infection, or syringe programs.

NA strives to be entirely self-supporting through member contributions and does not accept financial contributions from non-members. Based on the same principle, groups and service committees are administered by NA members, for members.

NA neither endorses nor opposes any other organization's philosophy or methodology. NA's primary focus is in providing a recovery environment whereby drug addicts can share their recovery experiences with one another. By remaining free from the distraction of controversy, NA is able to focus all of its energy on its particular area of purpose.

