



SANITY

NAWS

H&I
Bulletines

H&I Service Bulletin # 2

WHO IS BEST SUITED TO CARRY THE MESSAGE IN AN H&I SETTING?

Anyone with a clear and consistent Narcotics Anonymous message who is willing to share is well suited for H&I work. An H&I meeting provides the first exposure to Narcotics Anonymous for many addicts, so it is imperative that we project a positive image because our fellowship as a whole may be judged on how we conduct ourselves. In our experience it is best for members to have three months clean before attending an H&I meeting, and six months clean before speaking at one.

Some facilities house only men or only women; others house both men and women, but keep them separate. In these facilities where your meetings will consist of only men or only women, we feel strongly that only same sex NA members should participate. Problems that arise in this area have the potential to seriously damage the credibility of our fellowship. Experience has taught us that we can avoid these problems if we follow this simple guideline.

A large majority of the facilities where our H&I subcommittees provide an H&I presentation have other Twelve Step fellowships providing meetings as well. Clients and/or inmates will hear a variety of recovery messages. Other Twelve Step fellowships do not need our assistance in carrying their message. References to other fellowships and their literature may lead one to believe that the only way an addict can recover is to attend all Twelve Step fellowships. As a fellowship, we need to allow the addicts we may come in contact with the opportunity to choose for themselves which fellowship is best suited for them.

Any fellowship utilizing twelve step recovery has a set of traditions. The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, as directed by our Fifth Tradition, has but one primary purpose. Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Unity is one of our greatest strengths in carrying the message. Unity of purpose keeps our focus in carrying the message. What is the message that we are asked to carry? **That an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, find a new way to live,** and that the freedom of recovery (today) can be theirs also.

For My Father: An Unexpected Awakening

I was sleepwalking - and somehow didn't know it.
I was harming myself - and somehow didn't care.
I was harming my son -
and somehow even that wasn't enough.
My heart, my soul, my body
All strangers to me -
and somehow it didn't matter.

In detox - I was bored.
In detox - I just wanted out.
In detox - I walked into an NA meeting.
I saw three faces shining out toward me.
I saw kindness and caring in their eyes.

My heart, that stranger, was somehow touched.
My soul, that stranger, was somehow re-opened.
My body, that stranger, somehow felt stirred.
A new life somehow on its way to me.
Excitement and peace,
somehow at that same time.

NA shook me out of my slumber.
My comfortable, familiar, unnatural slumber.
I made my first choice in years.
A choice so simple, I was stunned.
Life or Death - I chose Life

Those three shining faces reached me.
I have much to learn in this new life.
I will try to be unafraid as I travel this path.
I've been given this gift.
I will not give it back.

Susie D. - Long Branch



In gratitude to the people of H & I Service,
who by carrying such a gentle, loving message,
awakened me.

H&I Service Bulletin # 5

Men working with Men, Women working with Women

Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve step program which is based on suggestions, one of which is "men work with men, women work with women." This suggestion is the result of countless members experience in both service work and personal recovery. This suggestion is highly recommended in H&I service work, where our contact with future members of our fellowship is forged.

Some facilities house only men or only women. Other facilities house both men and women, but keep them separate. In these facilities, where your meetings will consist of only men or only women, we feel strongly that only same sex Narcotics Anonymous members should participate.

Remember our primary purpose is to carry a clear and consistent message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. Our purpose is not to make our meetings more popular with the addicts we are trying to help. Problems that arise in this area have the potential to seriously damage the credibility of Narcotics Anonymous. Experience has taught us that we can avoid these problems, if we follow this simple guideline.

H&I service brings us into contact with future members in the initial stage of their recovery. At times members of an H&I committee may act in ways that detract from our primary purpose. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, we are not only risking the reputation of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, addicts who need to hear our life saving message may not do so and may die as a result. This may seem dramatic, but past experience has proven it true.

Lack of the same sex addicts to carry the message into facilities is a common problem, however, it cannot be used as a justification for not following this guideline. Some members have taken matters into their own hands and have reported doing so without repercussions, but for others the repercussions have been traumatic. If we lose one addict or facility because of this practice, it is one too many. The reputation of Narcotics Anonymous, our members, and the people we serve depend on honoring this principle.

Just as we ask in our regular recovery meetings that men work with men and women work with women, we emphasize this in H&I work for many of the same reasons which range from explicit sexual behaviors or harassment to our perception of the opposite sex clouding our ability to hear the message being shared. People new to our fellowship often find it difficult to focus on recovery. We need not give them more reasons to lose their focus. Just as importantly we, as H&I members, should not place ourselves in situations that may become awkward for us. Even with the best of intentions we are only human and, therefore, fallible. By following this suggestion, we avoid the pitfalls associated with this issue.

H&I Service Bulletin # 6

Carrying the Message Into Adolescent Facilities

Any addict on any H&I panel is qualified to speak at adolescent facilities. Whatever type of facility we are in, regardless of age, race or sexual identity the message is always the same. We carry a message of recovery from the disease of addiction through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. We focus on our similarities, not our differences which are insignificant compared to our purpose. Just as addiction does not discriminate, our members learn to practice the spiritual principle of anonymity. All addicted persons seeking recovery are welcome in NA.

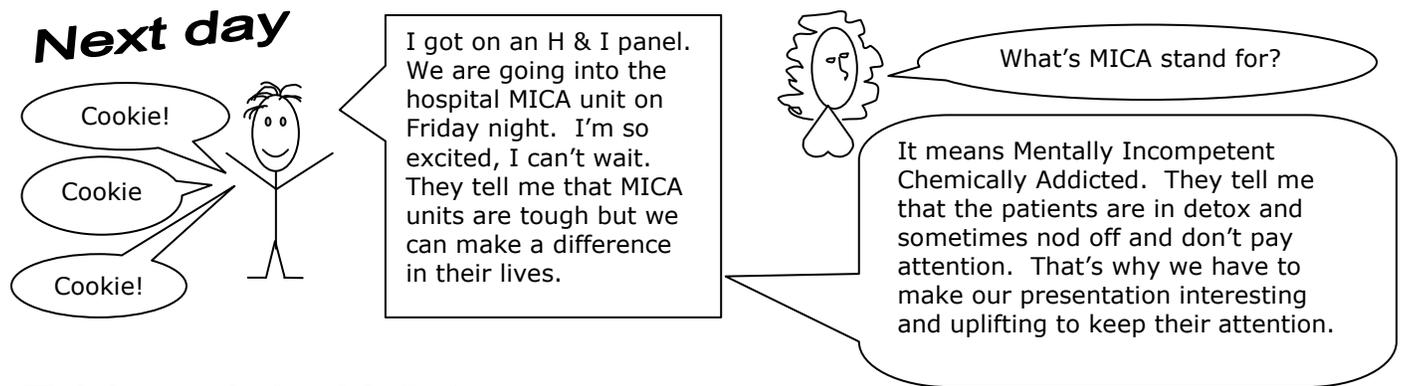
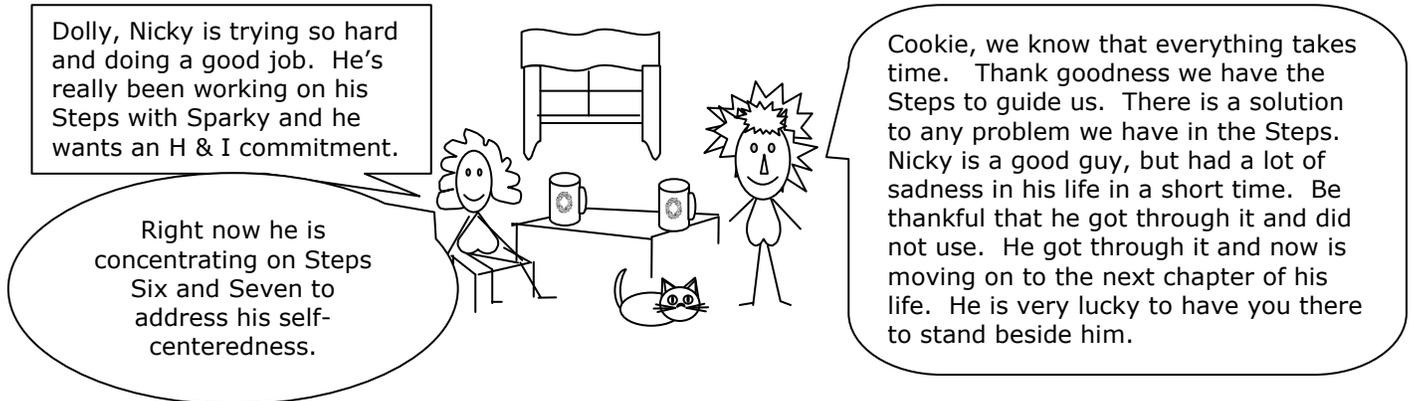
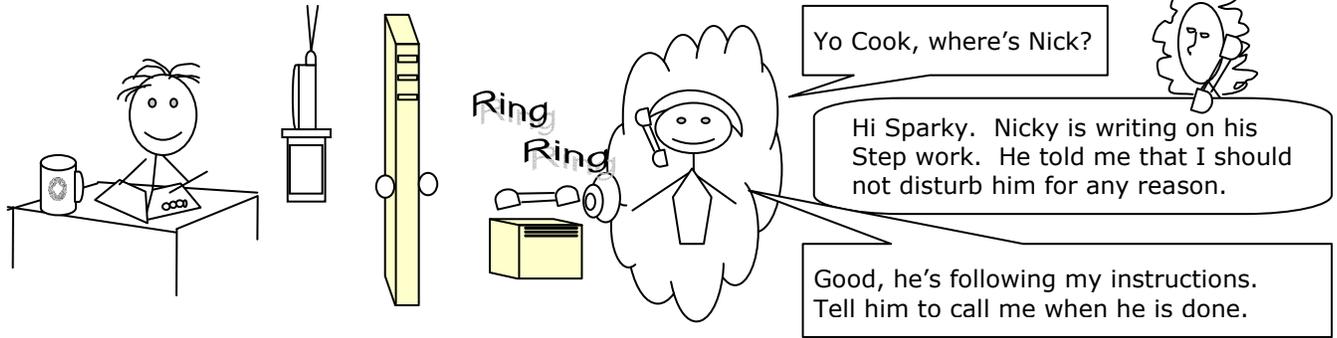
When we refer to adolescents, we are referring to anyone under the legal age of majority in your state or country. We need to remember that these adolescents are prospective members and should be treated with respect. Don't preach to or patronize them. Avoid saying things like "I feel like I am talking to my children." Validate their feelings and emotions. Situations created by peer pressure and conflicts with parents or teachers are just as stressful to adolescents as relationships or loss of a job is to an addict who may be older. We practice empathy and patience as we share the hope of recovery we have found. We believe that no addict anywhere need die without a chance to learn a better way of life. We should acknowledge their clean time and let them know there is fun in recovery. Share about activities and other positive experiences such as friendships you have formed in the fellowship.

Don't compare your bottom to theirs or use profanity. They may not have been exposed to many behaviors common to our illness, and we do not want to expose them unnecessarily. Familiarizing yourself with the do's and don'ts in our handbook will help in this area.

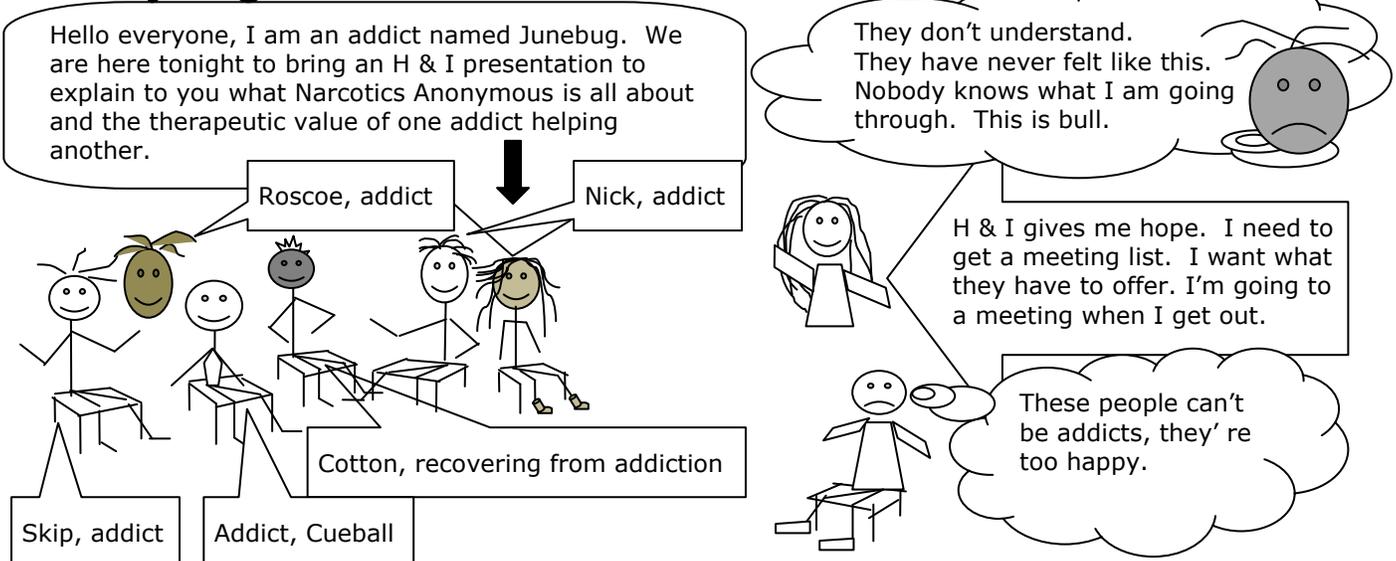
Regarding our relationship with adolescent facilities, we need to be especially aware of their rules and regulations as they relate to our interaction with their residents. For example, some facilities may require a staff member to be present during meetings. We have also found that if attendance at our meetings is voluntary it will reduce distractions and increase the opportunity for recovery. All meetings should be structured toward recovery.

When you share your experience, strength and hope with adolescents you are speaking to potential NA members. In our experience, just as you don't need an ex-offender to carry the message into a prison, it is not necessary to be an adolescent to carry the message into an adolescent unit.

The Adventures of Nicky Newcomer



Friday night H & I



H & I was really cool and different than I expected. You were right Sparky, the patients in the MICA unit were not too receptive, but they did seem to be listening some of the time. There were only a few people and we treated them like the most important people in the world. They really need love at this point in their recovery. One lady was very enthusiastic about coming to NA.



Nicky, you've been doing a great job working on your recovery lately. We've got to get together to do your Step Seven. Joining H & I is a great way to work Step Twelve. Giving back what was so freely given to you is so important in our ongoing recovery.

Keep up the good work Nick.

MD

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Registration forms should be available through your Homegroup or you can go to www.njrcna.org and find the registration form. Cookie and I will be looking for you at the convention.

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Please put 'Sanity' in the subject line.
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Opinions expressed here are those of individual addicts, not NA as a whole.

Issues of SANITY can be downloaded from the NJ Statewide Website at www.nanj.org

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**Words of Wisdom:** Don't use and go to meetings.

*Thank you for letting me serve, Margaret D.*