



Newsletter of the New Jersey Region

# SANITY

January 2009



WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
BULLETIN #29

## Regarding Methadone and Other Drug Replacement Programs

*This bulletin was written by the World Service Board of Trustees in 1996. It represents the views of the board at the time of writing.*

Not all of us come to our first NA meeting drug free. Some of us were uncertain about whether recovery was possible for us and initially came to meetings while still using.

Others came to their first meetings on drug replacement programs such as methadone and found it frightening to consider becoming abstinent.

One of the first things we heard was that NA is a program of complete abstinence and "The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using." Some of us, upon hearing these statements, may have felt that we were not welcome at NA meetings until we were clean. But NA members reassured us that this was not the case and we were encouraged to "keep coming back." We were told that through listening to the experience, strength, and hope of other recovering addicts that we too could find freedom from active addiction if we did what they did.

Many of our members, however, have expressed concern about individuals on drug replacement programs. Questions come up regarding such individuals' membership status, ability to share at meetings, lead meetings, or become trusted servants on any level. "Are these members clean?" they ask. "Can one really be a 'member' and still be using?"

Perhaps by answering the most important question first—the issue of membership—we can establish a context by which to approach this issue. Tradition Three says that the only requirement for NA membership is a desire to stop using. There are no exceptions to this. Desire itself establishes membership; nothing else matters, not even abstinence. It is up to the individual, no one else, to determine membership. Therefore, someone who is using and who has a desire to stop using, can be a member of NA.

Members on drug replacement programs such as methadone are encouraged to attend NA meetings. But, this raises the question: "Does NA have the right to limit members participation in meetings?" We believe so. While some groups choose to allow such members to share, it is

also a common practice for NA groups to encourage these members (or any other addict who is still using), to participate only by listening and by talking with members after the meeting or during the break. This is not meant to alienate or embarrass; this is meant only to preserve an atmosphere of recovery in our meetings.

Our Fifth Tradition defines our groups' purpose: to carry the message that any addict can stop using and find a new way to live. We carry that message at our recovery meetings, where those who have some experience with NA recovery can share about it, and those who need to hear about NA recovery can listen. When an individual under the influence of a drug attempts to speak on recovery in Narcotics Anonymous, it is our experience that a mixed, or confused message may be given to a newcomer (or any member, for that matter) For this reason, many groups believe it is inappropriate for these members to share at meetings of Narcotics Anonymous.

It may be argued that a group's autonomy, as described in our Fourth Tradition, allows them to decide who may share at their meetings. However, while this is true, we believe that group autonomy does not justify allowing someone who is using to lead a meeting, be a speaker, or serve as a trusted servant. Group autonomy stands only until it affects other groups or NA as a whole. We believe it affects other groups and NA as a whole when we allow members who are not clean to be a speaker, chair a meeting, or be a trusted servant for NA.

Many groups have developed guidelines to ensure that an atmosphere of recovery is maintained in their meetings. The following points are usually included:

- Suggesting that those who have used any drug within the last twenty-four hours refrain from sharing, but encouraging them to get together with members during the break or after the meeting.
- Abiding by our fellowship's suggested clean time requirements for service positions.
- Seeking meeting leaders, chairpersons, or speakers who help further our primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers.

We make a distinction between drugs used by drug replacement programs and other prescribed drugs because such drugs are prescribed specifically as addiction treatment. Our program approaches recovery from addiction through abstinence, cautioning against the substitution of one drug for another. That's our program; it's what we offer the addict who still suffers. However, we

have absolutely no opinion on methadone maintenance or any other program aimed at treating addiction. Our only purpose in addressing drug replacement and its use by our members is to define abstinence for ourselves. Our fellowship must be mindful of what kind of message we are carrying if a still-using addict leads a meeting, or becomes a trusted servant. We believe that under these circumstances we would not be carrying the Narcotics Anonymous message of recovery. Permissiveness in this area is not consistent with our traditions. We believe our position on this issue reinforces our recovery, protects our meetings, and supports addicts in striving for total abstinence.

*Note: This bulletin addresses the use of methadone maintenance as a drug replacement strategy. It is not addressing the medicinal use of methadone as a pain killer. We encourage those who have concerns about the use of methadone in pain management to refer to Narcotics Anonymous pamphlet, In Times of Illness.*



RECOVERY and PROSE  
My Addiction

Author: Jaime U.

There was a day  
When I lived in tears  
I was blinded by my addiction  
And smothered by my fears  
But a long time has passed  
Since those oppressive twelve years  
There was a day  
When I let you hold me down  
I was desperately trying to make it work  
Under your control I was beginning to drown  
It got to the point where I couldn't live without you  
I was a broken up princess in a torn ball gown  
Then came the scares  
I never thought this addiction would end  
and then one day it did  
My heart slowed, beat as loud as a drum  
I couldn't keep it using, what about my future?  
I fell silent and ashamed of what I had become  
But you don't take into account  
I have been talked about and shunned  
But I felt ironically free of my ironclad cell  
Now you're gone  
I turned to the only thing I could  
Suicide seemed better than what was true  
But alas I was discovered  
and saved by my loving mother  
With her help my future has taken on a brighter hue  
I have learned  
I have spread my wings  
And learned not to dwell on unchangeable things  
I am strong and ready for what the future brings  
I'm ready to stay clean...

## What's that distant light I see?

Author: Joe

What's that distant light I see?  
There are many lights, but this one's for me  
Darkness and fear is what I've known  
But now I know I'm not alone

Others care and guide my way  
Share their thoughts and help me pray  
With their help I finally hope  
I'll learn to find a way to cope

I never thought I'd see a time  
There would be a light I could call mine  
These lights are fragile and must be tended  
As the lives I've damaged must be mended

I can't get back the years I've lost  
The love, respect and trust it's cost  
I can only move ahead from here  
And try to bring that faint light near

## Let Me Hold You

(Empathy)

Author: Irwin

Eyes wide open to the darkness of knowledge.  
Education and degrees from the finest college.

Ears deafened to words of reason.  
Living your life, always in the wrong season.

Only hearing your own logic of confusion.  
Unaware you're living in a world of delusion.

Your face shows what your ears don't hear.  
Going through this world based on your fear.

Your view of reality isn't real.  
Long ago, you forgot how to feel.

Living the lie has robbed you of you.  
There is nowhere to go, and nothing to do!

Surrender today and stop the fight.  
Let me hold you, and give up your fright.

It's okay; I understand your fear and pain.  
You've suffered enough, come out of the rain.

Soon, the sun will shine, and light your way.  
Everyone, even you, deserves a new day.



NA Author: Glenn S.

This poem is about a group known as NA  
Whose philosophy is "Just For Today"  
The members of this group regularly attend meetings  
and exchange friendly hugs as their greetings.

People get their turns to open up and share  
While the rest sit back and show that they care.  
Attentively, they listen to each other;  
the members can even be a teenager or a mother.

One person may share a true horror story  
while another may celebrate in all of their glory.  
One thing is known about these meetings  
that certainly is true  
If recovery is wanted, than NA is for you.

As I finish up this poem, let me end with a tip:  
Support and help is always there within this  
fellowship.



## Dear Sanity:

### Dear Sanity:

I have a new job and will be traveling around the  
State. How do I find meetings in all areas of New  
Jersey?  
Traveling Tom

Dear T T:

Go to our website at [www.nanj.org](http://www.nanj.org) Click on NA Meetings on the left side of the page. On the next page, click on: To search the database of NJ NA meetings. This will take you to a page where you can look up NA meetings in New Jersey by County and Town.

Happy Recovery, Sally Sanity

### Dear Sanity:

I have six months clean and want to get involved  
with service work, but don't know how to start.  
Interested Ian

Dear I I:

Service work can start with a coffee commitment. If  
your group needs a GSR, offer to take that position.  
Area Service is an excellent place to start service work.  
You can stay involved and take other open positions at  
Area Service or become involved with Hospitals and  
Institutions. H & I always needs people to go into  
facilities and jails to help the still sick and suffering  
addicts and give them hope that they too can stay clean.  
There are many service commitments available at all  
levels of the Fellowship. Region always needs people to  
fill positions. We look forward to seeing you in a service  
position.

Happy Recovery, Sally Sanity



# Jersey Unity

## UPCOMING CONVENTIONS:

### CAPITAL AREA CONVENTION of NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS XII

#### "A NEW HORIZON"

MARCH 13, 14, 15, 2009

Clarion of Cherry Hill, NJ

## NJRCNA XXIV

July 3, 4, 5, 2009

Doubletree Hotel  
& Executive Meeting Center  
Somerset, New Jersey

## 33rd World Convention of NA

### WCNA-33

20, 21, 22, 23 August 2009

Centre Convencions Internacional (CCIB)  
Barcelona, Spain

Visit our website at [www.nanj.org](http://www.nanj.org) for all  
convention information

Send input and articles to:

#### Sanity

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Please put 'Sanity' in the subject line.

Editor: MD

Sanity is published every two months as a service of the New  
Jersey Region for its Groups and Members. Input and articles  
are welcome on all recovery related topics.

**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](http://www.nanj.org)

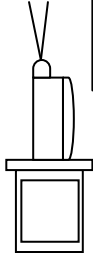
#### Words of Wisdom:

Don't use and go to meetings.

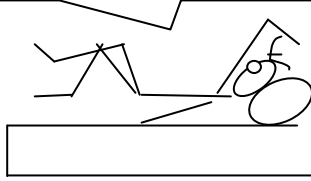


# The Adventures of Nicky Newcomer (Gratitude)

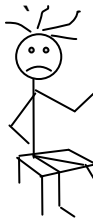
What's wrong Nicky? Why are you home from work at this hour? You look so upset, did something bad happen?



I'm SO DEPRESSED, Cookie. I got laid off from work this morning. I don't know what I am going to do.



It'll be okay Nicky. WE will get through this. You have to remember Step One in the regard that you are powerless over your employer's situation. Tomorrow you can go to unemployment and also look through the want ads. Turn it over to your Higher Power. Have you called your Sponsor?



No, I have not called Sparky. I know I should, but I just can't tell him I got laid off.

Nicky, your Sponsor is there for you through thick and thin. There is nothing you can't share with your Sponsor. You should call him, please.



Yo! Sparkman, this is Nicky, what's shakin' man? How's it going?

Silence



Sparky, are you there? What's wrong Spark? Talk to me Sparkman!

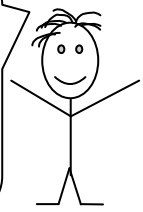


Oh, Sparky, I am so sorry to hear that. Wow, you really have to work Step Three and turn it over to your Higher Power. Life on life's terms is sometimes difficult. Maybe you should write a gratitude list. I'll be right over to pick you up for the meeting.

I'm sorry Nick; I've had a bad day. I'm glad you called. I really need to talk. I got fired from my job today. You'd think that is bad enough, but then I totaled my car on the way home when a deer ran out in front of me. Now I have no job, no car, and a broken arm! I don't know what to do. I feel so depressed. My rent is due and I need groceries.



Cookie, get your coat; we have to pick up Sparky and go to the meeting. I need to share my gratitude.



Gratitude? You were crying and depressed ten minutes ago. Your Sponsor must have given you good advice! What's wrong with Sparky's car; is it broken?

No Cook, I gave HIM good advice. My bad day is nothing compared to Sparky's bad day. C'mon, we need to pick up Sparky.



Sparky  
I should have stayed home!

I think I will hide in the corner. I'm in pain. I hate everything. I want to isolate.

Grant me the serenity...



My name is Nicky and I am an addict. I lost my job today, but yet I am filled with gratitude for the things I have in my life. I know that my Higher Power will guide me to help me do the required footwork to find a new job when the time is right.