

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS MEDIA

This resource can be used when interacting with the media in general. These frequently asked questions are meant to help trusted servants provide clear, consistent, and informative responses. In an effort to gain an understanding of the information here, trusted servants can discuss and rehearse the questions and answers below.

When responding to questions, it is often best to paraphrase our literature, using your own words and referring to the appropriate piece of literature to provide support for your response. We illustrate specific literature to help persons better understand our program of recovery. In that same light, when we use NA-specific terminology such as “home group,” it may be helpful to explain the meaning for the audience.

What follows are possible answers to questions frequently asked by the media, which includes print, television, and radio reporters:

Q&A 1

What was your drug using like?

My using was similar to what’s described in our Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous*. In essence, I used drugs every day and only thought about getting more drugs and the money to pay for the drugs. What we have found most important in recovery is that we identify with each other in meetings, focus on recovery from addiction, and do not compare our use of drugs. Many addicts had the same feelings while using drugs, and this is a source of identification for members.

Q&A 2

Are all addicts alike? Do you all do the same things when using drugs? Do you all live in poor, run-down housing when using drugs?

Our fellowship is made up of people from a variety of backgrounds and who have had different experiences in their using. What we all share is a feeling of degradation and isolation when using drugs. Some addicts come court-referred, while others come voluntarily; some addicts are homeless, while others come earning large salaries. NA is for anyone with a desire to stop using drugs.

Q&A 3

What is an NA meeting like?

An NA meeting is where two or more addicts gather for the purpose of recovery from the disease of addiction. Members offer each other peer support by sharing experiences about how they manage life situations without returning to using drugs. Some meetings have speakers who share their experience with getting and staying clean, while others have structured formats that focus on NA literature (our Basic Text, informational pamphlets, or our *Just for Today* daily meditation book). All meetings focus on recovery and supporting each other in recovery.

Here are some other things that can occur at an NA meeting:

- ☞ During the course of a meeting, a basket is passed for our members to contribute money to support the cost of the meeting facility and other NA services such as literature distribution. One of our traditions speaks to our self-support through our own contributions.
- ☞ Meetings often open and close with the Serenity Prayer or some other NA prayer.
- ☞ Some meetings also provide keytags to recognize days, months, and years of continuous abstinence from drugs.

Q&A 4

Are most of your members heroin addicts?

It is possible that when NA first started, the majority of our members used heroin. Today, as indicated in our *Membership Survey*, our members use a variety of drugs, including alcohol. Interestingly, 89% of those surveyed list alcohol as one of the drugs used on a regular basis. This survey also provides information about employment status, occupation, gender, and age. Our basic tenet about addiction is that it is a disease, and not related to a particular substance.

Q&A 5

What is the “amend step”?

Recovering addicts are encouraged to work the Twelve Steps with a sponsor. The Twelve Steps help addicts learn how to incorporate spiritual principles into their daily lives. One of these steps, frequently referred to as the “amend step,” asks members to correct the harm they’ve caused and work to change their behavior.

Q&A 6

How does a sponsor work?

As explained in our book and informational pamphlet, *Sponsorship*, this is a relationship between two members of NA—a more experienced member helping a newer member learn how to live life without the use of drugs and how to incorporate the principles of the Twelve Steps.

Q&A 7

What do you mean by “clean and not sober”?

By referring to our recovery time as “cleantime” and identifying ourselves as “addicts,” we are able to keep NA’s message focused on recovery from addiction and not the drugs we used.

Q&A 8

How many NA members have been incarcerated? How many NA members have been convicted of sex-related crimes?

We do not collect that type of data.

Q&A
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What's your opinion on the current administration's drug policy?

Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on the current administration's drug policy as this is outside our scope. We offer no opinion on any outside issues, including drug policy, so as not to divert us from our primary focus – one addict helping another to recover from the disease of addiction.

Q&A
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What's your opinion on methadone?

It may be useful to have Bulletin # 29 available, or provide NAWS website link at www.na.org. In general, we cannot assess anyone's desire to abstain from drugs, and NA has no opinion on drug replacement therapies used by professionals in the management of addiction.

NA is a program of total abstinence. This provides the foundation for recovery from drug use and for further personal growth. Narcotics Anonymous has only one membership requirement: a desire to stop using drugs. Drug addicts who are participating in drug replacement therapies are welcome in NA meetings.

Most meetings ask that people under the influence of any mind- or mood-altering substances listen (rather than speak) during the meeting, and speak to members on an individual basis before and after the meeting. Meetings that follow this practice do so to preserve an atmosphere of recovery in the meeting. Additional information may be found in the *Public Relations Handbook*, page 67.

Q&A
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Can we come to your convention and take photographs?

Typically, no. We're an anonymous fellowship and we do not permit photographs of NA members. However, you may contact the convention information committee to make arrangements to photograph our event or to cover this event for an article with a photo in a way that maintains personal anonymity. We ask that you attend our event escorted by a designated member of the convention committee. Our desire is to allow members to feel comfortable while attending this celebration of recovery without fear or distraction of outside photographers.

Q&A
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Has a certain celebrity been attending meetings?

In the spirit of anonymity, we are not at liberty to confirm whether someone has been attending meetings or if they are a member of Narcotics Anonymous.

Q&A
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Are there NA meetings around the world?

As of 2007, Narcotics Anonymous exists in 127 countries, speaks 65 languages, and has over 43,900 weekly meetings worldwide.

Q&A
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What treatment centers do you work with?

Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with any outside enterprises. We do not operate any treatment centers, sober living homes, rehabilitation, or detox facilities. We do, however, work cooperatively with these establishments to let them know that Narcotics Anonymous is a community resource for their clients.

Q&A
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Where do you get your funds? Are you federally or state-funded?

Narcotics Anonymous is self-supporting through its own member voluntary contributions.

Q&A
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Is there a spokesperson I can contact?

Narcotics Anonymous does not have a spokesperson. However, if you have any further questions you may contact NA World Services to speak with the public relations manager. Phone: 818.773.9999; or visit our website: www.na.org. Locally, you can contact NA at _____.

Q&A
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Can we come to your meeting and film a documentary on NA meetings?

No, this would not be in harmony with our traditions. You may attend an “open” meeting (meaning open to the public) to gain an understanding of an NA meeting. However, filming is prohibited.

Q&A
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Can I take a picture of you for our article?

In the spirit of anonymity, I would not be comfortable having a full-face photograph taken.