

For the Newcomer

NA is a non-profit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other to stay clean. There are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.

You don't have to be clean when you get here, but after your first meeting we suggest that you keep coming back and come clean. You don't have to wait for an overdose or jail sentence to get help from NA, nor is addiction a hopeless condition from which there is no recovery. It is possible to overcome the desire to use drugs with the help of the Twelve Steps Programme of Narcotics Anonymous and the fellowship of recovering addicts.

Addiction is a disease that can happen to anyone. Some of us used drugs because we enjoyed them, while others used to suppress the feelings we already had. Still others suffered from physical or mental ailments and became addicted to the medication prescribed during our illnesses. Some of us joined the crowd using drugs a few times just to be cool and later found that we could not stop.

Many of us tried to overcome addiction and sometimes temporary relief was possible, but it was usually followed by an even deeper involvement than before.

Whatever the circumstances, it really doesn't matter. Addiction is a progressive disease such as diabetes. We are allergic to drugs. Our ends are always the same: jails, institutions, or death. If life has become unmanageable and you want to live without it being necessary to use drugs, we have found a way. Here are the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous that we use on a daily basis to help us overcome our disease.

1. We admitted that we were powerless over addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn Our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Recovery doesn't stop with just being clean. As we abstain from all drugs (and yes, this means alcohol and marijuana too) we come face to face with feelings that we have never coped with successfully. We even

experience feelings we were not capable of having in the past. We must become willing to meet old and new feelings as they come.

We learn to experience feelings and realise they can do us no harm unless we act on them. Rather than acting on them, we call an NA member if we have a feeling we cannot handle. By sharing, we learn to work through it. Chances are they've had a similar experience and can relate what worked for them. Remember, an addict alone is in bad company.

The Twelve Steps, new friends, and sponsors all help us deal with these feelings. In NA our joys are multiplied by sharing good days; our sorrows are lessened by sharing the bad. For the first time in our lives we don't have to experience anything alone. Now that we have a group, we are able to develop a relationship with a Higher Power that can always be with us.

We suggest that you look for a sponsor as soon as you become acquainted with the members in your area. Being asked to sponsor a new member is a privilege so don't hesitate to ask someone. Sponsorship is a rewarding experience for both; we are all here to help and be helped. We who are recovering must share with you what we have learned in order to maintain our growth in the NA Programme and our ability to function without drugs.

This programme offers hope. All you have to bring with you is the desire to stop using and the willingness to try this new way of life.

Come to meetings, listen with an open mind, ask questions, get phone numbers and use them. Stay clean just for today.

May we also remind you that this is an *anonymous* programme and your anonymity will be held in the strictest of confidence. "We are not interested in what or how much

you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help.”

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**UK Service Office
Derby House
12 Winckley Square
Preston PR1 3JJ
Tel. 020-7251 4007
UK National Helpline
Tel. 0300 999 1212**

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World Service Office
PO Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409 USA
T 818.773.9999
F 818.700.0700
Website: www.na.org

World Service Office—CANADA
Mississauga, Ontario

World Service Office—EUROPE
Brussels, Belgium
T +32/2/646 6012

World Service Office—IRAN
Tehran, Iran
www.na-iran.org



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