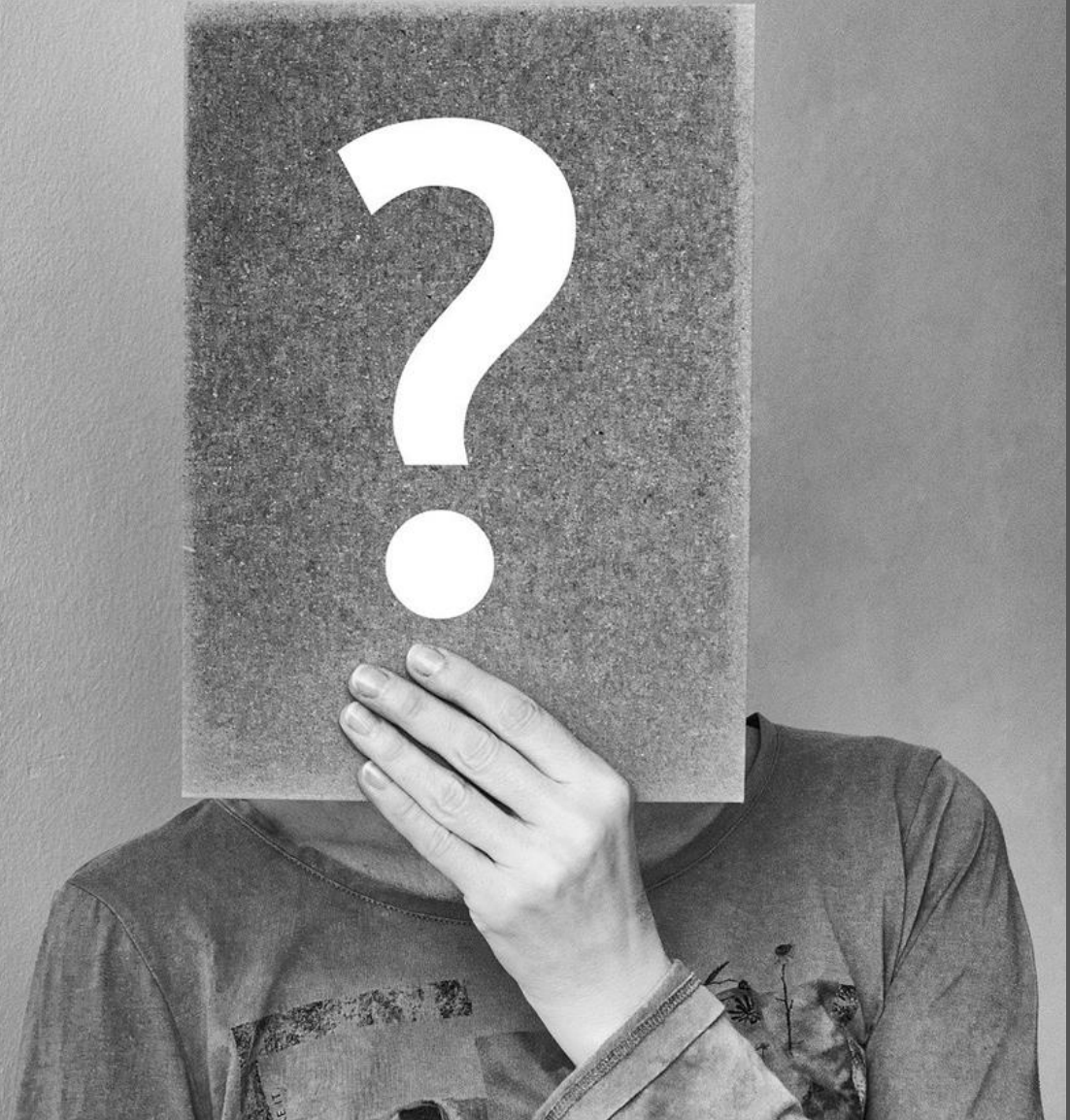




Presentation on sexually disturbing behaviors

Workshop

First reflexions



What is an
atmosphere of
recovery?

SAFETY

NO JUDGEMENT

SHARING

RESPECT

LISTENING

ANONYMITY



“The groups focus on carrying the message is so important to the survival of NA that it is called our primary purpose. That means it is the most important thing we do. Nothing ought to take precedence over it. This is the most basic guideline by which groups may examine their motives and their actions. There are many ways in which groups can further our primary purpose. Generally speaking, group members start by creating an atmosphere of recovery in their meetings. This includes extending a welcome to every addict who attends.”

It Works How and Why; Tradition Five (4th & 5th paragraph) p.118



Do I contribute to
the atmosphere of
recovery?



What can
deteriorate an
atmosphere of
recovery?



Disturbing behavior

Disturbing behavior is behavior that interferes with the peace, security and integrity of a meeting and its members.

Sexually disturbing behavior

- It is a disturbing behavior that has a sexual connotation or targets sexuality.
- It is misconduct manifested by unwanted gestures, words, attitudes or behaviors, including by technological means.
- This applies regardless of age, gender, culture and sexual orientation.



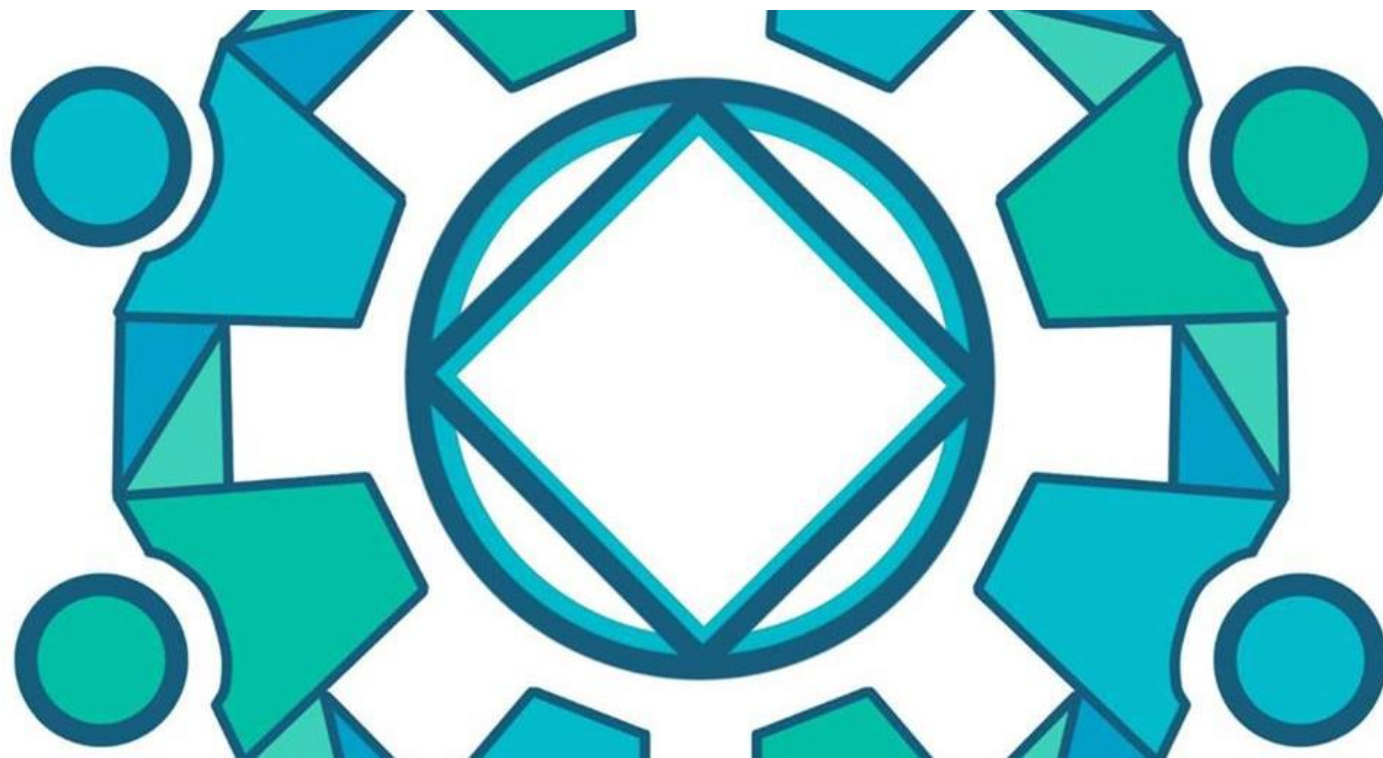
What has been
done by other
regions in the
world

France

- Pamphlet on predatory sexual behavior
- Definition: "It is the act of **exploiting someone's vulnerability** in order to create a situation of control, harassment and / or intimidation in order to obtain through the manipulation of sexual relations."
- "Predation is made possible when there is an **imbalance of power in a relationship**, that is, when one person takes advantage of the influence they have over another."

Other regions

- Florida Regional Conference Workgroup on Predatory Behaviors
- Bergen Area – Predatory behaviors
- United Kingdom – Guidelines for Inappropriate Behaviors



First section: Identification

All definitions of sexually disturbing behavior (or sexual predation) converge on the idea of a member knowingly or unknowingly taking advantage of another member's vulnerability for sexual purposes.

Although we associate vulnerability with newcomers, all members are susceptible to these behaviors, which become possible when there is an imbalance of power in the relationship.

All members are equally likely to engage in these behaviors when in a position of authority or power over another member.



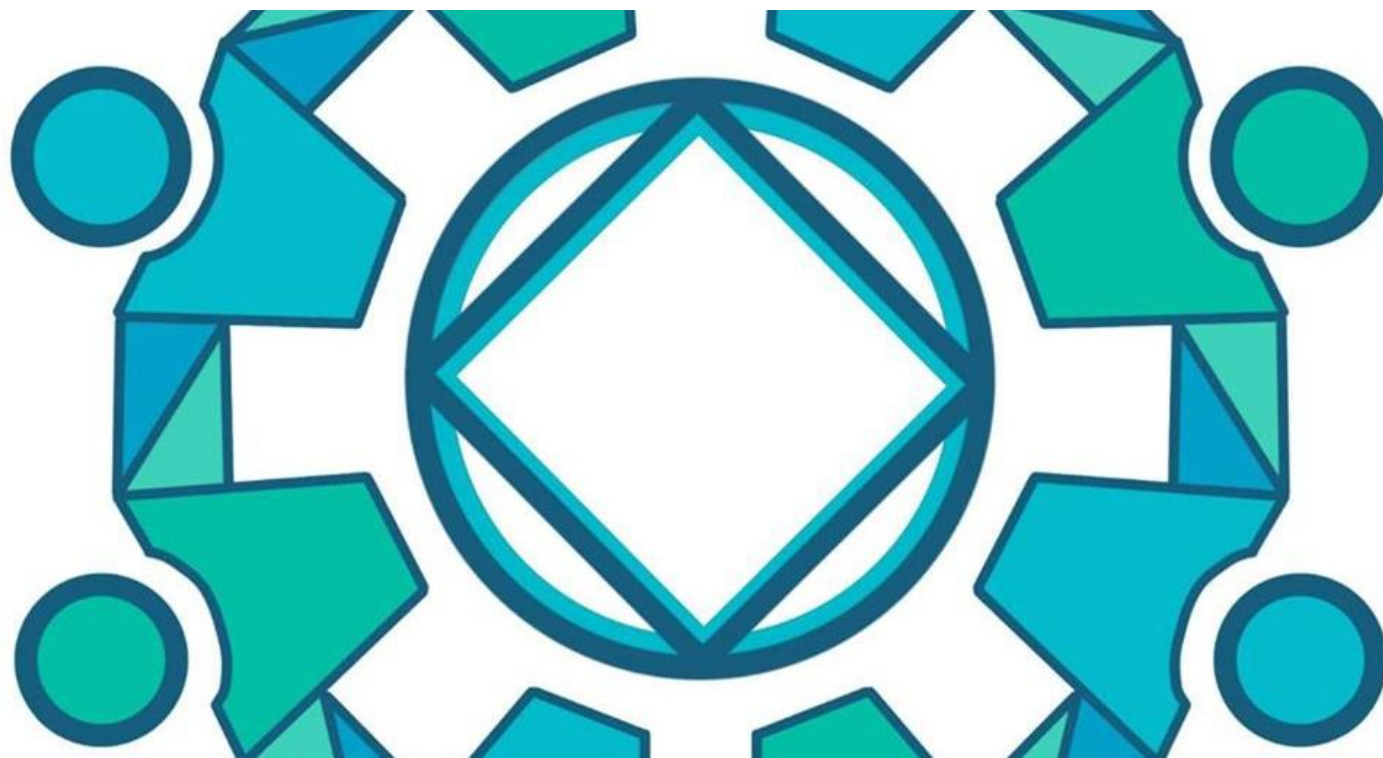
"If we do not stay aware of our defects, they can drive us into a corner that we can't get out of clean."

Basic text p. 52

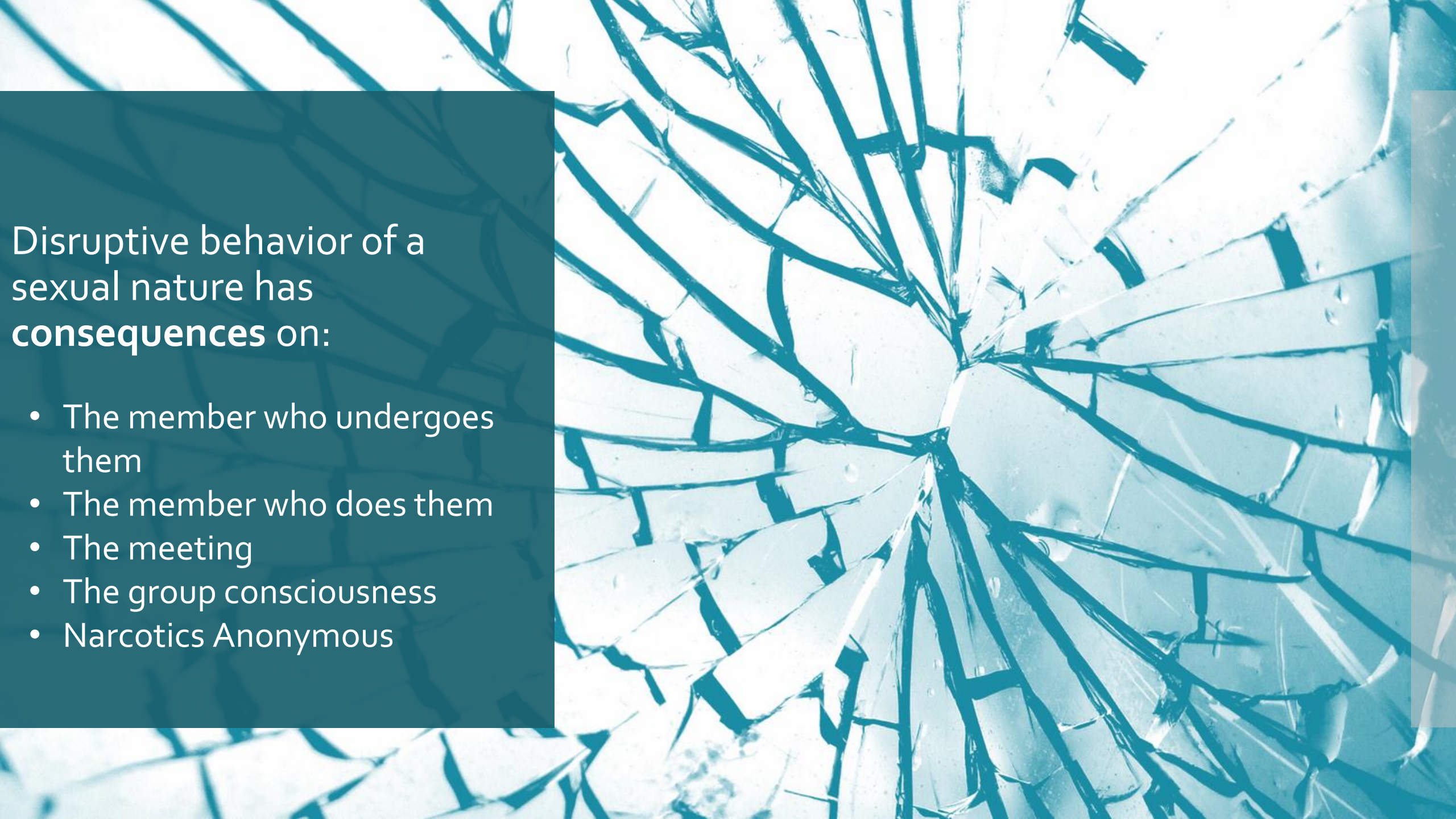
"Continuing to take a personal inventory means that we form a habit of looking at ourselves, our actions, attitudes and relationships on a regular basis."

*Extract from the 10th step,
Basic text p.42 6th edition*





Second section: Awareness



Disruptive behavior of a sexual nature has **consequences** on:

- The member who undergoes them
- The member who does them
- The meeting
- The group consciousness
- Narcotics Anonymous

The member
who
undergoes
them could...

- Exclude themselves from meetings
- Lose faith in the fellowship
- Lose faith in the process of recovery
- Lose trust in other members
- Isolate themselves
- Relapse
- Experience psychological after-effects

The member who does them could...

- Exclude themselves from meetings
- Put their recovery at risk
- Lose trust in the fellowship
- Disrupt the atmosphere of recovery
- Lose the trust of members
- Divert from their spirituality
- Isolate themselves
- Relapse
- Face legal consequences

The meeting could...

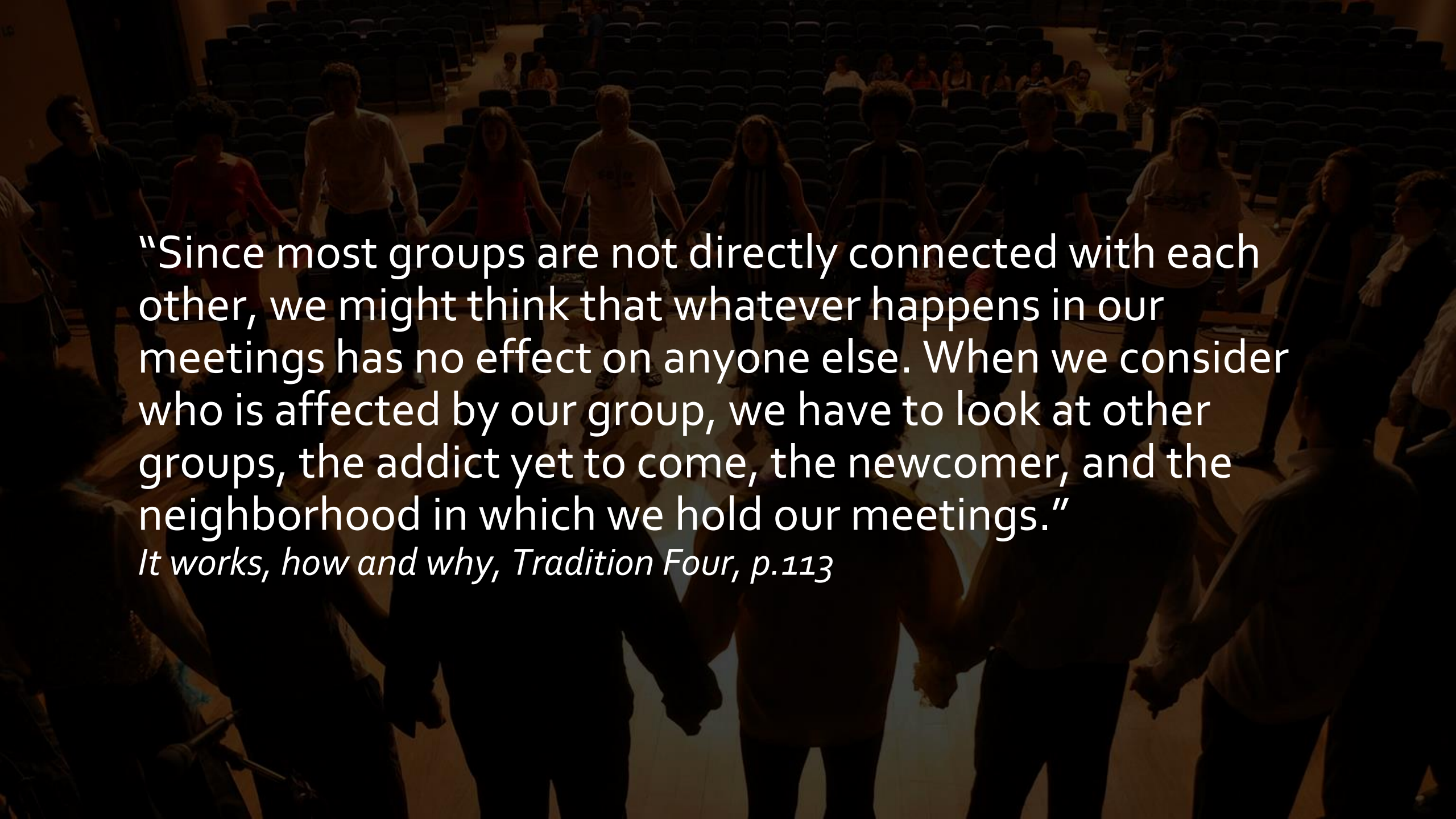
- Lose the atmosphere of recovery
- Lose unity
- Divert from spiritual principles
- Lose the feeling of security
- Turn away from the message of Narcotics Anonymous
- Close

The group conscience could...

- Lose trusted members
- Move away from their primary purpose
- Lose unity
- Lose the atmosphere of recovery and security

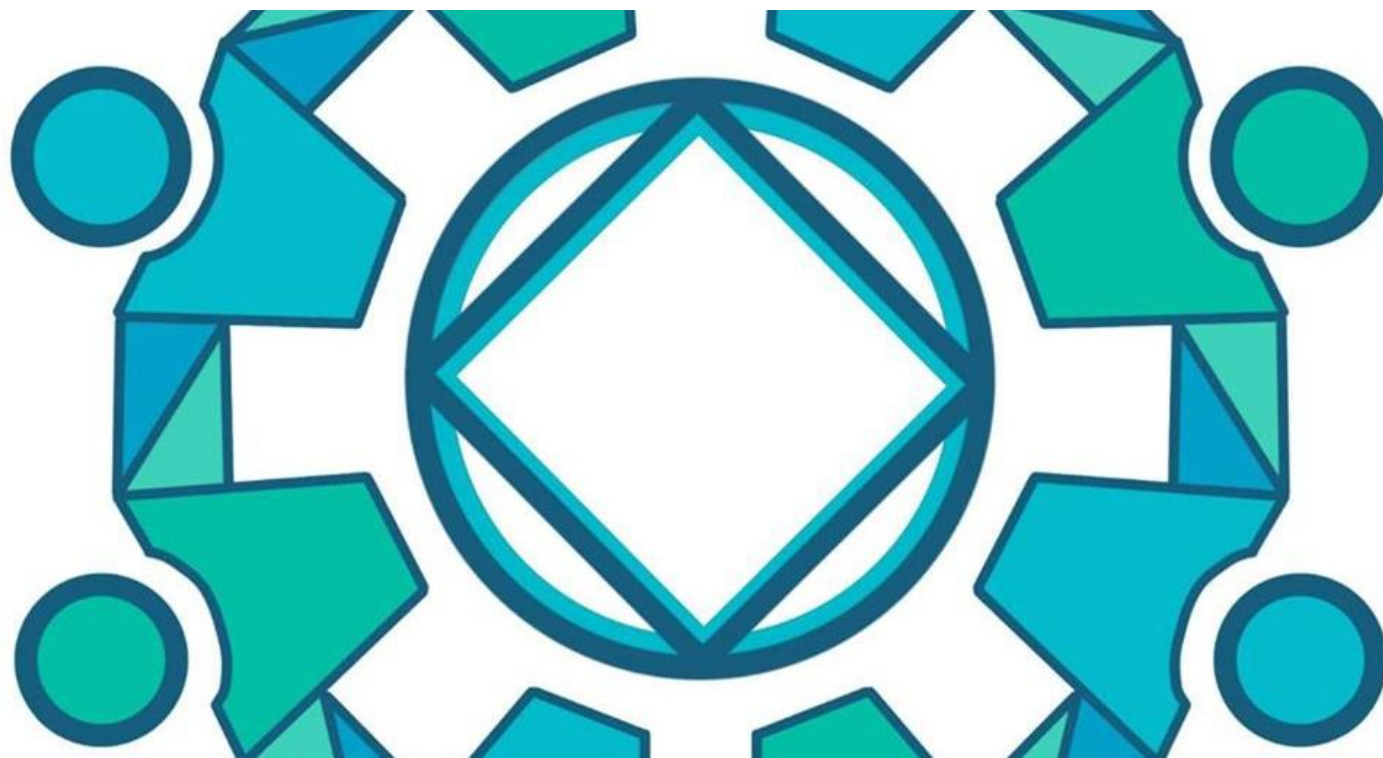
Narcotics Anonymous could...

- Tarnish their reputation
- "If the public reputation of Narcotics Anonymous is somehow impaired, addicts may die " *How it works and why (forth tradition) p.119*

A group of people, mostly young adults, are standing in a large, dimly lit hall with rows of blue seats. They are holding hands, forming a large circle. The lighting is warm and low, creating a sense of community and connection. The text is overlaid on the image, centered and in white.

“Since most groups are not directly connected with each other, we might think that whatever happens in our meetings has no effect on anyone else. When we consider who is affected by our group, we have to look at other groups, the addict yet to come, the newcomer, and the neighborhood in which we hold our meetings.”

It works, how and why, Tradition Four, p.113



Third section: Intervention

"The Fifth Tradition gives our groups a great responsibility: to maintain our fellowship's primary purpose. Each group is responsible to become as effective a vehicle for carrying the NA message as it can be. Allowing our groups to lose sight of our primary purpose may deprive an addict of a chance to hear our message of hope. Each member is responsible to help the group keep our primary purpose in focus. "

It Works How and Why, Tradition Five, Applying Spiritual Principles p.121



What can I do
as a member?



Each member
has the
responsibility of
maintaining an
atmosphere of
recovery during
a meeting

- A member who witnesses sexually disturbing behavior should never intervene alone.
- These disturbing behaviors should quickly be brought to the group conscience of the meeting, who can decide on the best way to intervene.
- Remember that we are not qualified to judge who deserves or not to recover. Our responsibility is to make sure we carry out the message.

What can we
do as a group
conscience?



Members of a group conscience should always be on the lookout for behaviors that could hinder the atmosphere of recovery

- A group conscience decides together the best way to intervene.
- Sometimes the group conscience has no choice but to initiate a dialogue with the member whose behavior is problematic. To do this, it is strongly suggested that 2-3 experienced members talk with that member. We want to help them become aware of the consequences of their behavior and find solutions to allow everyone to feel safe in their recovery.
- We recommend that the group conscience keeps a written record of these interventions.
- Group conscience should always protect the newcomers from anything that might affect their recovery.
- Members of a group conscience should listen sympathetically to the reporting member. The goal is not to judge the reality of the threat but to help them regain a sense of safety.



Reflections for trusted servants in hospitals and institutions

Am I aware that as a trusted servant, I may be perceived as being in a position of authority/superiority by the more vulnerable new members?

Do I understand that no matter what the members of these institutions feel or desire, they are **VULNERABLE** at all times?

Do I understand that it is my duty to protect these members and not to take advantage of this imbalance and my influence to develop emotional and/or sexual relationships?

Suggestions to the meetings

- Include a mention in the secretary's speech (see "Safety Statement" in the next slide).
- Add to their guidelines the behaviors that are not tolerated at meetings and describe how to intervene.
- Keep a written record of the interventions and share them to their Area.
- Create a poster or flyer for meetings.

Suggestions to the Area

- Maintain a written record of interventions, including what could be improved, in order to benefit the fellowship as a whole.
- Add to the guidelines the behaviors that are not tolerated during meetings and describe a way to intervene.
- Area H&I Subcommittee: Add questions from the H&I slide to the election process or during training.
- Create a poster or flyer for meetings.

Suggestions to the Region

- Maintain a written record of interventions, including what could be improved, in order to benefit the fellowship as a whole.
- Add to the guidelines the behaviors that are not tolerated during meetings and describe a way to intervene.
- Regional H&I Subcommittee: Add questions from the H&I slide to the election process or during training.
- Create a poster or flyer for meetings.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ALL MEMBERS:

TALKING openly about this topic is the best tool. This allows as many members as possible to become aware of this issue.

Safety Statement
adapted from
IP#29: An
introduction to NA
Meetings

Bergen Area Service
Committee
Fellowship
Development

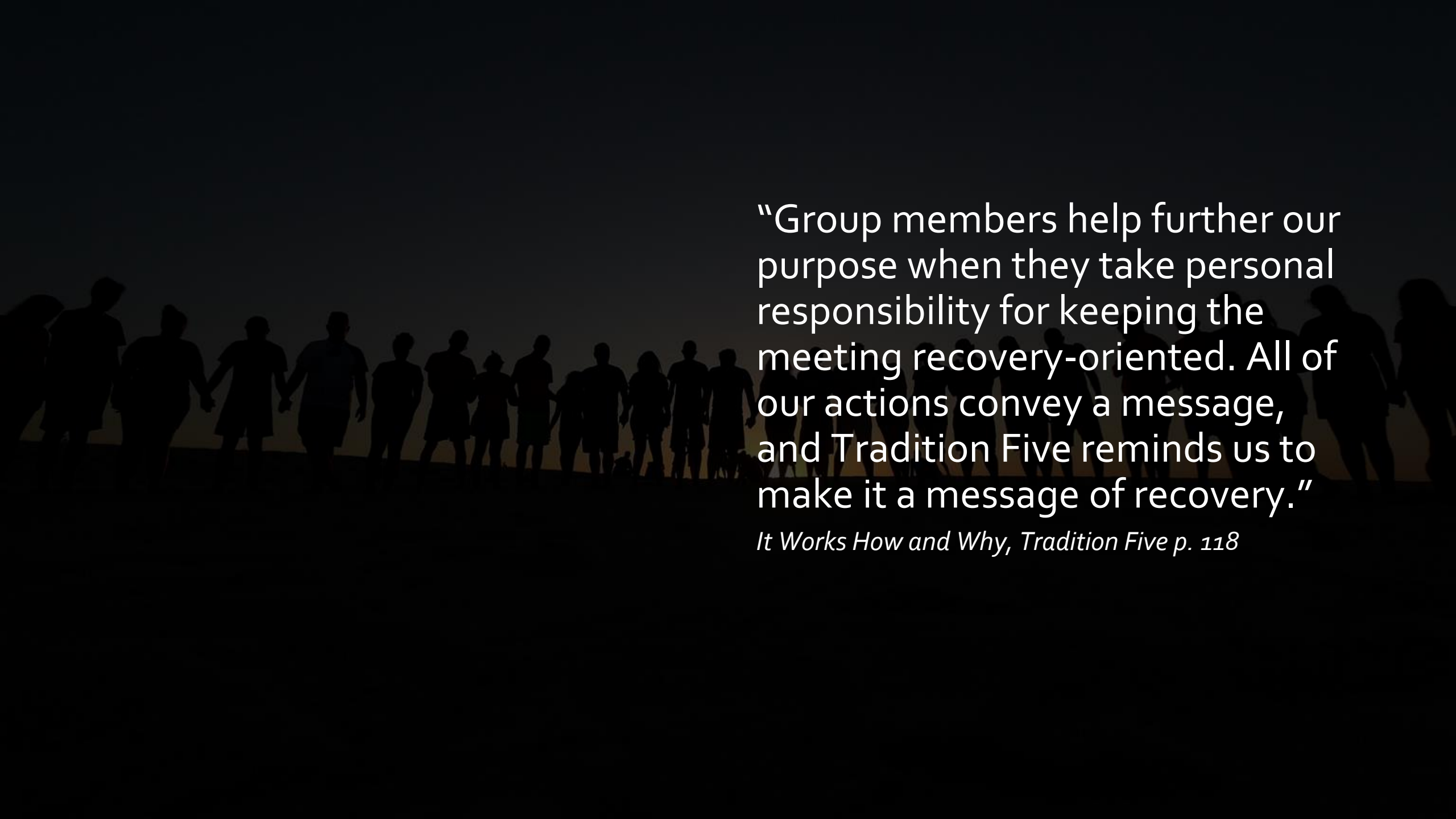
We strongly discourage any harassment, threats, or disturbing behavior before, during, and after our meetings. This includes unwelcome sexual and romantic advances towards members, especially newcomers. Our meetings are for sharing NA recovery. It is the responsibility of all group members to help maintain an atmosphere in which every addict is safe to recover. If you feel harassed or threatened, share your concerns with the meeting leader or a trusted servant.

Remember, Narcotics Anonymous and its members are not above the law.

The pamphlet *Disruptive and Violent Behavior* reminds us that: “While we want to respect each member’s anonymity, a violent individual sacrifices his or her right to personal anonymity by their behavior. Calling law-enforcement is appropriate when personal safety is at stake.”

It is important for members who are victims of crime to refer to appropriate outside resources. E.g.: legal system



A dark background featuring a horizontal line of silhouettes of people of various ages and builds, holding hands in a circle. The silhouettes are positioned behind the text on the right side of the image.

“Group members help further our purpose when they take personal responsibility for keeping the meeting recovery-oriented. All of our actions convey a message, and Tradition Five reminds us to make it a message of recovery.”

It Works How and Why, Tradition Five p. 118

Questions / comments?

