

Reaching Out

October 2023



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*“Yes, we are a vision of hope.
 We are examples of the program working.
 The joy that we have in living clean
 is an attraction to the addict
 who still suffers.”*

Basic Text, “How It Works”

From the Editor

We would like to welcome all of you to the NA World Services newsletter, *Reaching Out*. We hope that the contents of this newsletter will assist you in your recovery or H&I efforts. There are three sections to *Reaching Out*. The first section, "From the Inside," is filled with letters from incarcerated addicts, sharing their experience, strength, and hope as they find and maintain recovery from addiction through NA.

The second section, "From the Outside," is an opportunity for Hospitals & Institutions subcommittees to offer their experiences obtained through carrying the NA message of recovery to addicts who are unable to attend regular meetings. You may also find personal experience from those members who heard the NA message on the inside and are now living and enjoying life on the outside.

The third and newest section, "Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside," features members sharing about successfully transitioning from treatment, a hospital, or an institution to living on the outside. We encourage submissions for *Reaching Out* from members and H&I subcommittees. Please consider that we are more likely to publish articles that focus on how NA has helped an individual to recover while incarcerated rather than those that concentrate on the horrors of drug use. Send all submissions to *Reaching Out*; NAWS, PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999; USA, or to fsmail@na.org.

GET INVOLVED AND HELP US CARRY OUT OUR FELLOWSHIP'S PRIMARY PURPOSE!!

Our planned publication deadlines are as follows:

Issue	Deadline
January 2024	15 October 2023
April 2024	15 January 2024
July 2024	15 April 2024

And finally, did you know that electronic subscriptions to *Reaching Out* are free? New issues will be emailed to you four times a year.

To sign up, visit www.na.org/reachingout.



From the Inside

Dear Reaching Out,

I'm writing from the inside. My first NA meeting was back in the 1980s. I was homeless and met a man who asked if he could help me and took me to an NA meeting. Inside the building there were rows of chairs. Outside, there were people playing music, laughing, and grilling. They offered me a hot dog. They didn't care that I'd been on the streets for months.

Of course, I wasn't ready. For many years I went in and out of jails, rehabs, and treatment centers. Finally, I landed in prison. It's been the biggest challenge in my life.

Now, we are starting NA meetings on the inside. Remember, WE may be the only "book" anyone reads. So, I care and share the NA way.

SW, Indiana

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is EP and I'm an addict. Prior to recovery, I could not stop using, as much as I wanted to. I got so far away from my real self and wore so many masks that I didn't even know who I was. I stayed out there in my disease of denial, and that denial led me to the depths of despair.

It was not until I started to do the work in NA that my life began to change. I went to meetings, got a sponsor, worked the Steps, and took some helpful suggestions. My sponsor helped me until he was paroled. Then, a group of men from the outside began to attend meetings here on the inside. These guys give us hope. I learned more about myself, and finally knew other people cared.

NA has taught me how to manage my disease and get out of denial. The Twelve Steps, a sponsor, and other members of NA have helped me get back on course in recovery. NA has taught

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me about living amends to those I have harmed. The reward is internal freedom.

EP, California

ART FROM THE ZSIDE



Folsom State Prison, California

From the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is PD and I'm an addict. My clean date is 8/11/94.

Before I got clean, the state of California gave me two numbers.

I like to explain to people that when I got to Narcotics Anonymous, I was a yhomeboy; today, I'm a homeowner and business owner.

I was a "hope to die" dope fiend. Today I'm a "hope fiend" because of Narcotics Anonymous. I continue to go to meetings on a regular basis. I work with many newcomers, and I apply the principles of the Twelve Steps to my life.

I haven't had to stand for count, and I've never been hungry, homeless, or broke. In my using days, I was willing to give up everything for one thing, Today, I've given up one thing and have everything!

PD, California



Georgia T-shirt



Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is RB, an addict in recovery. I was told when I got to prison that I would never have a minimum custody. Well, that has come and passed. I did get minimum custody placement and can say it is my Higher Power that was working in my life.

I went to prison after that and found recovery again. I used three times in prison, and for that I got 17 write-ups in six months and landed in supermax. There I started reading Narcotics Anonymous literature after sending for a Basic Text. I started working the Steps with a sponsor.

I got the privilege to share my Fifth Step with him, to go over my character defects and make my amends list. We also prayed together before he went home. These are the gifts from working the Steps.

Today I am thankful for the life I have without the use of drugs that was given to me by NA. Thank you for giving me a new life; although I can't undo the past, I can work for a better future.

Free on the outside.

RB, Kansas

Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Whether you left from a treatment center, jail, prison, hospital, or institution, you are moved from the "inside" to the "outside" to be drug-free, productive members of society. We think your experience may be invaluable to others as they embark upon their transition.

We are offering questions to help stimulate your thinking so that you may want to share your experience with us; we will publish your article in Reaching Out to help others.

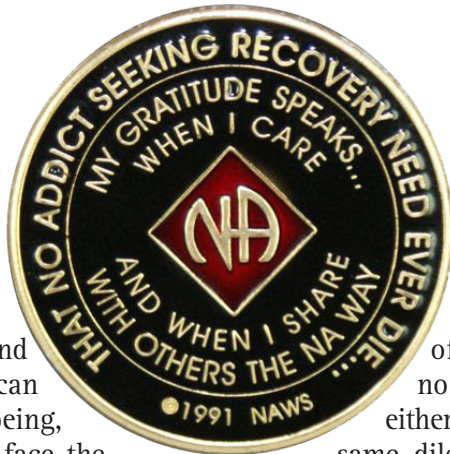
1. What did you do on the first day of your release/discharge?
2. What steps did you take to help your recovery in the community? Do you think the transition steps are the same for addicts who are being released after 30 days or ten years?
3. What are some of the challenges you encountered when you reentered the community?
4. How did NA help you with information so that you were able to attend a meeting upon release/discharge?
5. How do you think NA may have been better able to help you in your transition, and do you have any suggestions to offer so NA may be better able to help others as they transition?

We look forward to reading your experience and providing this information to others. Thank you for helping us assist others in their transition.

CALLING ALL H&I MEMBERS!

Please submit your story to the quarterly NA newsletter, *Reaching Out*. We are looking for recovering addicts, like you, to share their experience of finding recovery behind the walls and maintaining it on the outside. Your story carries a powerful message of hope for the incarcerated addict! Thank you.

Please send your story to:
Narcotics Anonymous World Services;
PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409,
or to HandI@na.org.



“When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be this alternative: either go on as best we can to the bitter ends—jails, institutions, or death—or find a new way to live. In years gone by, very few addicts ever had this last choice. Those who are addicted today are more fortunate. For the first time in man’s entire history, a simple way has been proving itself in the lives of many addicts. It is available to us all. This is a simple spiritual—not religious—program, known as Narcotics Anonymous.”

Narcotics Anonymous, “We Do Recover”

Order Form

Reaching Out is a quarterly, recovery-oriented newsletter made available free of charge to incarcerated addicts through Narcotics Anonymous World Services. If you will be incarcerated for at least six more months and would like a free subscription to *Reaching Out*, complete and return the following form.

Reaching Out is also available in a printer-ready format, for free download at www.na.org/reachingout

Reaching Out is also available by a 20-copy bulk subscription at a cost of \$38.05 annually. If you are interested in purchasing a bulk subscription, please complete the following form and return it along with a check or money order.

- I am an incarcerated addict (and will be for at least six more months) and want a free subscription to *Reaching Out*.
- I want to purchase _____ 20-copy bulk subscriptions of *Reaching Out* @ \$38.05 each, total \$ _____.

Name _____

Identification Number _____

Facility Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Reaching Out

c/o NA World Services, Inc. Ⓞ PO Box 9999 Ⓞ Van Nuys, CA 91409 Ⓞ USA
www.na.org/reachingout

ATTENTION INMATES

If you are relocating and your mailing address changes while you are incarcerated, please update your new address with us so that we can maintain your subscription to *Reaching Out*.