

Session Materials:

- Note sheets with discussion questions
- Ground Rules/Brainstorming Guidelines
- Facilitators Instructions/Vision for NA Service
- Basic Text

Session Goals:

- To consider how to carry our message of hope and freedom in a changing environment
- To begin thinking about how people come to identify as members and what helps them stay
- To help people “take root” and establish themselves as members of NA

Session Introduction

10 minutes

Slide: We've been having...

We've been having conversations around drug replacement therapy or medication assisted treatment (DRT/MAT) for decades. We've written about the issues in [In Times of Illness](#), [NA Groups and Medication](#), and the PR pamphlet [NA Persons Receiving Medication Assisted Treatment](#). The Fellowship has been surveyed on what to say in a piece of recovery literature about the topic, and that survey made it clear that we don't have a unified Fellowship position on this issue. Three previous Issue Discussion Topics have been at least partially devoted to the topic.

Many groups still struggle with how to respond to addicts who arrive at our doors on medication assisted treatment. And so the discussion continues.

Slide: It's important...

It's important that we have these conversations because:

- It's not going away.
- Medication is part of treatment in and out of corrections, more and more of the time.
- Many people who come in on some kind of DRT/MAT are mandated by treatment or corrections that may require medication as part of their compliance.
- Whatever our individual feelings are about this subject, we exist in a larger world and its approach to addiction has changed. We need to consider how we carry the message in the world we live in, not the world we might wish for.

Slide: It is our job...

How do we build a common bond when almost every door to NA has medication built into its frame? For many people outside NA, the lie is not dead: there is a prevailing belief that the only hope for the addict is long term treatment with medication. As an organization we don't endorse or oppose other approaches to recovery – even when it's tempting. That means we set aside any feelings we may have about the treatment industry when welcoming the newcomer.

This workshop isn't about focusing on entities outside of NA; it's about actively encouraging a dialogue about how we can further our primary purpose. It is our job to make sure that recovery is available to anyone who wants it, and that it is attractive to those who need it.

The reality is NA's reputation affects our ability to carry the message. Most of our members first find NA through treatment or drug courts. If professionals are unwilling to refer people to NA, some addicts may never find us. No matter how people find NA, what makes them stay seems clear. Our most recent membership survey said that 82% stayed in NA because of identification with other members, and 68% said their first meeting was important or very important. This session is about building on those strengths and helping people to find a sense of belonging and take root in NA.

Slide: Where we have...

Where we have consensus as a Fellowship:

- Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. We are a program of complete abstinence.
- It doesn't matter what or how much you used.
- What we care about is what you want to do about your problem and how we can help.
- The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
- We want people to be able to choose NA membership no matter how they get here.
- We want NA to be a safe place to recover.

Slide: Is there anyone...

Is there anyone here who has experience coming into NA on medication to treat addiction and now living drug free? Would you be willing to share a few thoughts on your experience – 5 minutes or less? [Facilitators may want to identify someone who can share their experience before beginning the workshop]

(If not, we can read the story "The Only Requirement" pp 184-187 in the Basic Text)

Thank you so much for your share. As we move into discussion, we want to remember the many stories like {name}; we are talking about real people struggling to get clean.

Small Group Discussion

30 minutes

Slide: Small Group Discussion

As we move into small groups, we are going to talk about how each of us finds a sense of belonging in NA and how we help to cultivate that for each other. Each group should select a facilitator who can ensure that everyone gets a chance to share.

We want to consider our own experience of moving from observers to members, and to consider what it took for us to take root in Narcotics Anonymous. The literature tells us that "there is no model of the recovering addict," and yet most of us have been challenged in one way or another as we made NA our home. To help focus that discussion, here are some questions to consider.

- What were some of the ways you felt your membership was challenged early in your recovery, and what made you "stick and stay"?
- How do we help people feel rooted and secure in NA?

Large Group Discussion

30 minutes

Slide: Large Group Discussion

Let's take 10 minutes and share about what we've heard:

- What is one thing that was shared that stood out for you in the small group discussion?

Facilitator: call on members randomly for about 10 minutes.

Slide: Third Tradition

Our Third Tradition offers relief from reservations we might have about membership and about each other. - GP p 59

Slide: We need to go deeper

We are accustomed to thinking about how we make people feel welcome at their first meetings. But we need to go deeper and consider what it means to move from “someone who goes to some meetings sometimes” to being a member of NA – we’ve talked about what helped us make that transition. How do we help other addicts take root here? We’re going to take 20 minutes or so to discuss a couple of questions:

- As a program of complete abstinence, how do we help people feel included enough to be able to choose whether to be an NA member?
- How do we help each other understand membership and take root in NA?

Wrap Up

20 minutes

Slide: IWHW quotes

In the Third Tradition, *IWHW* reminds us that “the group is not the jury of desire.... No addict should be denied an opportunity to stay long enough to develop that desire. We can nurture that desire with loving acceptance.” It also tells us that “...we are encouraged to open wide the doors of our meetings to any addict who wishes to join. We are asked to extend to others the care and concern that helped each of us find a sense of belonging.” We close this discussion with a couple of questions—if we don’t have time to consider them together, maybe think about them later today, or at your home group.

- How do we make space for a newcomer to surrender – even if it takes a long time?
- How can we set aside some of our own fear and judgment about members who come in on DRT/MAT to focus on helping addicts find a home in NA?

In closing

Slide: Share your ideas...

Please, please share your ideas about the topic and resources to address it by filling out the form on na.org/survey.

This is one of four IDTs this cycle. The other three are:

- Dealing with disruptive and predatory behavior
- Reimagining and revitalizing service committees (to further the reach of the NA message, improve communication, provide mentorship and training, and make service more attractive and accessible, learning from our experience the past few years)
- Gender Neutral and Inclusive Language in NA Literature

As workshop material is available, it will be posted to na.org/idt