

Reaching Out

January 2026



From the Mid-Willamette Valley Area Seaside Convention

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*“When I feel that I’m beyond hope,
it’s difficult to reach out to others.
But I’m continually reminded
that I don’t have to
walk this walk alone.”*

— Basic Text

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 handi@na.org

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

Our planned publication deadlines are as follows:

Issue	Deadline
April 2026	15 January 2026
July 2026	15 April 2026
October 2026	15 July 2026

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 my cell with close to eleven years completed on this bid, with a possible eleven more years to go. Unfortunately, this is my fourth prison number, and I have accumulated close to 29 years of incarceration.

My first introduction to a program of recovery was in 1987. I remember how the meeting was set up, where it was, and the two "friends" that I attended with. I remember feeling moved and felt that the leader was speaking directly to me, because he was telling my story. On the way home, I was so touched by his message that I dumped out the rest of my drugs. It's too bad I didn't continue on that road of recovery; it sure would have saved me from a lot of heartache, trials, and tribulations that I have suffered instead. Not only did I suffer, but I caused my family, friends, and loved ones to suffer as well.

My mom passed away over ten years ago; may she rest in peace. It hurt, so I did what an addict does best: I got high to numb the pain and tried to run from it. I soon found out that none of that worked. It never does. This was a classic example of insanity.

I currently have two years and six months clean, which is the longest stretch of recovery I have ever put together. It is recovery that I am proud of. My father has now also passed away, and the loss has been devastating. He was not only my dad, but he was also my mentor. He taught me right from wrong and instilled morals and values in me. Prior to my addiction, I lived and followed them. Once my using took root, the only thing I cared about was my next high and how I was going to afford it. I paid with four prison stays and 29 years incarcerated.

I'm grieving my dad's death. It hurts every day, especially because I can't call him anymore and hear his voice. He was a retired police officer who never judged me or gave up on me despite my struggle with drugs for so many years. The night he

passed away he got to hear my voice and, more importantly, he saw me clean. I'm aware that I cannot get clean for anyone but myself, but I can honor his legacy by continuing my recovery. With prayer, meetings, and my Higher Power, this can and has happened. God bless!

MG, Ohio, USA

Dear Reaching Out,

I'm currently awaiting my revocation outcome from last week. I celebrated nine years clean while in here. I've started meetings and have held service positions as high as the regional level. Bringing the knowledge of NA into my pod has helped me start a meeting inside the pod. Thank you for having the literature and speaker tapes available to us.

Our table fills up with willing addicts each week, with many more interested. The obstacles to hearing the message have been eased. Inmates here want to open up in a safe environment. NA provides that. Thank you.

Just for today.

MS, Wisconsin, USA

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is EG, and I am a recovering addict. Through practicing recovery daily for the last eleven years, I have been given awareness of how unmanageable my life has been. Drugs controlled my every thought, feeling, and action and landed me in prison for the last 24 years.

I began my substance abuse at the age of 13 and soon after was addicted. I used drugs to suppress harmful emotions, but soon liked the way it changed my thoughts. My progressive addiction produced a crime wave and led to a selfish life that left a trail of victims. My bottom came when I lost my job, broke off a relationship, had no home and no money, and became a parolee at large on my way back to prison. I contemplated suicide, thinking it was the only solution for my insanity.

Soon after I was incarcerated, I had a spiritual awakening. A Higher Power had restored my sanity and slowly produced spiritual principles in my life. For Narcotics Anonymous to work, I need to work the program and fellowship with addicts who are willing to listen to my message. My recovery depends on me sharing my experience, strength, and hope. Through NA service I will surrender my self-will, one day at a time.

EG, California, USA

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is EN and I am a recovering addict. I am writing this letter from my prison cell in hopes that I may be able to reach another addict who still suffers from their addiction.

I am a chronic relapser, which has resulted in me returning to prison for the seventh time, only this time with a life sentence. But this time around, here in prison is where I found the solution to my drug addiction. I found it in Narcotics Anonymous meetings with the help of a sponsor and other recovering addicts. I heard their testimonies of how they stay clean by working the Twelve Steps of NA, and that inspired me to follow in their tracks—if it works for them, it must work for me. For me to recover, I first had to fully surrender any reservations. I had to be honest, open-minded, and willing. I have 16 years clean today. For me, the most important spiritual principle of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous is being open-minded, which led me to ask for help and become willing to try the Steps.

Sixteen years is enough proof for me to see that this works. If you stay connected to the NA way and believe that recovery is possible, it will work for you too.

EN, California, USA

ART FROM THE ZSIDE

Please note! Thank you for your new art submissions! They keep us from having to reuse older images from previous Reaching Out issues. We are always in need of new artwork. It is a great way to be of service from the inside. If you like to draw, please consider creating something for future issues! Thank you.

Thank You...

For this issue, all images are photos taken from H&I member T-shirts!



**We Are Released
From Our Chains**



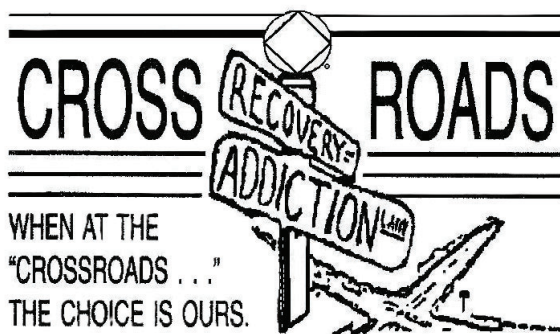
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Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is WN, and I am a recovering addict. I wrote you my story, which you put in the July 2015 issue. I can proudly say I was released on January 16, 2018. I had some struggles when I was released. I went to a town where I knew no one and had no transportation. I could not find a meeting directory or even a single meeting.

I take my recovery seriously because after all, I was a “full-blown” addict who takes his recovery “full-blown.” I got ahold of my area help line, obtained a bus pass, and got to a meeting the third day after I was released. I got a sponsor and the Basic Text two days later. Soon after, my phone had numerous numbers from other addicts. I now have a home group and a coffee commitment.



I have been to over 150 meetings in 85 days. I have really gotten into my stepwork and work on carrying the message to the still-suffering. Many great things have happened to me since my release due to

my ongoing recovery. I have been to a men’s retreat within the Fellowship. One way to help is to have meeting schedules when you are released. I would like to say thank you to NA and those who attend the meetings inside and out. You are a big reason I am here today. I have been successfully transformed to the outside.

WN, Washington, USA
Reprint from 2018



INCARCERATED MEMBERS

Does your facility allow the use of tablets?
Did you know that NA has been adding free NA literature
to many tablets across the prison system?
Check and see if it is available where you are located,
and if not, ask your warden/social director to make
a request to get it added!

From the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is GJ, and I am an addict. My story is like those of countless souls before me. I just got released from being incarcerated by a federal corrections facility in Oklahoma. I served 87 months and was very involved in preparing for my release and continued recovery. I have been working the Steps and attending meetings at the facilities. I attended every Saturday morning.

The poor choices I made throughout my adult life are the reasons for my addiction. If I hadn't been arrested and imprisoned for my crimes, I would have killed myself or someone else eventually. My life was a constant cycle of poisonous adventures.

After turning my life over to my Higher Power, I have come to realize all the wrongs I have done. I am so fortunate to have a family who waited for my release. Upon my release my mom helped me to find a meeting that was close to my house, and I have been going ever since. It really does work, as I am ready to accept the help I desperately needed. Thank you, NA.

GJ, Oklahoma, USA



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.



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.



“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 \$44.00 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* @ \$44 each, total \$ _____.

Name _____

Identification Number _____

Facility Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Reaching Out

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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*.