

Reaching Out

July 2026



Coastal Bend Area, South Texas

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“We don’t recover alone.”

— It Works: How and Why

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
October 2026	15 July 2026
January 2027	15 October 2026
April 2027	15 January 2027

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,

Hi everybody. My name is BR, and I'm an addict. Finding freedom was not something I was looking for, but I found it in prison. It didn't happen until I went to prison for the second time for the same behavior. My first week in prison I was still using. I failed a drug test, and that caused me to change. I looked at the man in the mirror and realized I could either accept this as my life or choose to do something different.

I asked for help and was fortunate to be in a facility that had lots of NA meetings. I started by going to meetings and listening to suggestions like getting a sponsor, working the Steps, and being of service. The Fellowship supported me until I could learn to love myself enough to not use. I continued my path of recovery even while being transferred between facilities.

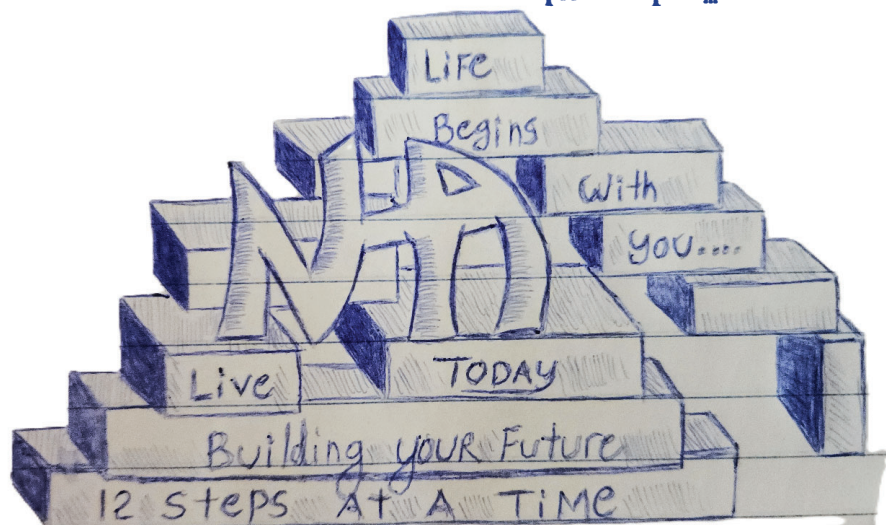
This program works for me because I've learned to work it. This is an action program, and I must put in the effort. No one is going to work for my recovery more than I will. I participate in virtual meetings on Tuesday nights. I receive support, knowledge, and care from the Fellowship on the outside. Hope is found here, and freedom from active addiction is promised. Give yourself a break, get to a meeting, grab a chair, and accept the love of recovery we have to offer. You're not alone anymore. It works. I've been clean since 25 January 2017.

BR, Ohio

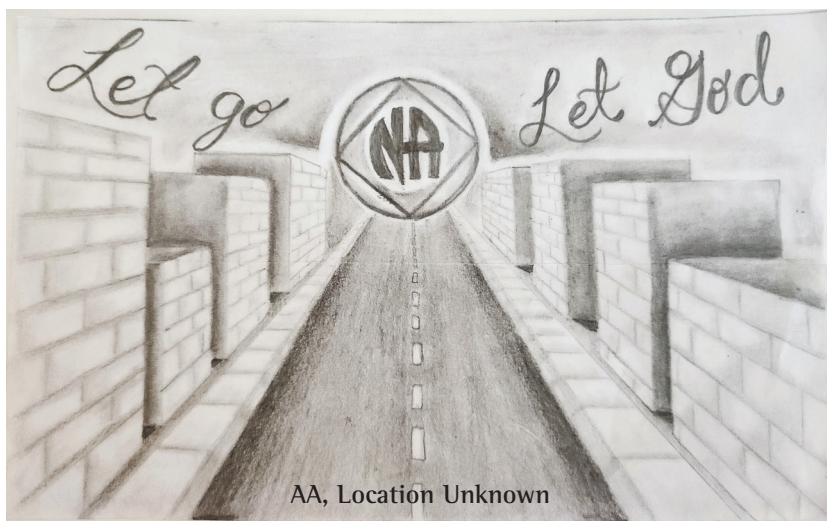
ART FROM THE ZSIDE

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...



JJ, Oregon



AA, Location Unknown

Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is JJ, and I'm an addict. I grew up in the state of Arizona's foster care system, and although I never had a stable home, I did have a family that I spent all my holidays and special events with. I considered them my own family.

I was a straight-A student throughout school. I discovered women and drugs at the same time, at the age of 17, and got involved with the law by 18. My life and the decisions I made from the first point of my discovery of drugs were dumb, at best, for a person with an above-average IQ. I always thought I could learn how to effectively control my use and that this time it would be different if I used only on the weekends. The thought never entered my mind that I had a disease that did not allow me to control my using.

I went to prison for the first time, during which I did not use at all. My first time around, I thought to myself, "I did it. I beat it." Then, after three prison sentences and a million different substance abuse courses later, I realized there was no controlling my using. The question became: How do I control my life so it does not lead me back to using?

I found NA and started reading the stories. I sought out more information and attended a meeting any time one was available. I even started my own meetings just to provide a haven for guys with no other options to "vent." We were all sponsoring each other in many ways.

After I realized I was on the right path, I understood I was involved in group-minded thinking. I had to correct more than just the using. I came to understand that abusing substances was just the physical manifestation of something deeper.

I got a sponsor from a Behind the Walls committee. I began working the Steps with a sponsor on the outside and eventually got released. I was advised that I should find a meeting the day

I was released, and I did all my homework on where meetings would be happening in relation to my location.

Life is amazing, but everything that could go wrong on my carefully planned first day did go wrong. It took me a whole week to attend my first NA meeting after release, but as soon as I did, I spoke up and shared that I was building a positive network of fellows in recovery. I got lots of numbers, found my sponsor, and restarted the Steps while sharing my journey of reentry and recovery.

People must know that getting clean is only half the story. Living clean is where the Steps come in, and having a consistent sponsor makes it all worth it.

Can I say today that I am a success? I still have a journey ahead of me, and life is life, but using is death. To keep myself in check, I choose life, and I am doing it through the NA way.

That's all I know. Whatever comes tomorrow, whether it's challenges or obstacles, I will tackle them as required and push forward. I know that whatever the problem is, the solution is never using.

Not once has any problem I tried to solve by using turned out anywhere near as well as the problems that I have handled clean.

It is through my work, my understanding, the love of my Fellowship and my fellows in NA, and the grace of my Higher Power that I am clean today and truly living in recovery. I can say thank you, and I do daily. Hate is not present in the rooms or Fellowship of NA. You feel love, and love conquers everything.

JJ, Arizona



From the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is AS, and I'm an addict. I never imagined I would grow up to battle addiction. Yet a series of poor decisions led me into a repeated cycle of using and incarceration. I didn't get arrested every time I used, but I had been using every time I was arrested. I felt trapped and had no idea how to break free.

During my last incarceration, I heard about a twelve-step meeting being held inside the facility and decided to attend. In that meeting, a woman shared that she had stopped using, and since getting clean she hadn't been in any legal trouble. That message hit me straight in the heart. I knew it was meant for me, and at that moment I was finally ready to surrender.

As soon as I was released, I did something different. I started attending NA meetings. I began working the Steps with my sponsor, became active in my home group, and couldn't wait to get involved in Hospitals and Institutions service. I wanted to carry the same message of hope that had been given to me.

I still remember the first time I walked into a facility as an H&I panel member. Our panel was led into the pod, and we sat at the metal tables. The sounds, the smells, and the emotions came rushing back. But I connected instantly with the women there, and from that moment on I caught the H&I bug.

Since getting clean on 6 June 2002, I have stayed involved in H&I service, whether as a panel member or in leadership roles. My favorite role will always be panel member. Every time I walk into a facility, I'm reminded of what can happen if I don't continue working my program. I know for certain that I would not have the life I enjoy today without Narcotics Anonymous.

I have had the honor of serving as the H&I subcommittee chairperson for several years, but that's not why I'm writing to *Reaching Out*. I'm writing because working the Steps has helped

me forgive myself and others, rebuild my life, and discover who I truly am.

Through H&I service, I get to share hope. I get to tell others that I don't have to get high when life doesn't go my way. I get to share that I haven't had a single legal issue since I stopped using, an incredible miracle. I get to show today that I have self-respect, that I'm a productive member of society, and that I give back to my community.

Because of how profoundly Narcotics Anonymous has changed my life, I applied for and was granted a pardon by the state. I found freedom in Narcotics Anonymous. And you can, too.

AS, Georgia

Dear Reaching Out,

Hi, my name is R, and I'm an addict. I'm 40 years old, and I spent 16 of those years in correctional institutions. For 20 years I used injection drugs, with all the consequences that came with it, both in prison and on the outside.

During my last seven-year sentence I was sent to a facility where I had already served time twice before, so everything there was familiar to me. I tried very hard to use every day.

About a month later, I met a friend I had used drugs with for many years. That was the first time I heard these strange words: program, meetings, Steps, and sponsor. Recently, we celebrated his nine-year anniversary. He showed me a place in the facility where members from the H&I committee came on weekends to share their experience.

One day, he told me he wanted to make a Ninth Step amends to me. He said that years earlier he had done something dishonest involving my drugs, but I had never known about it. At the time I didn't understand why he was telling me this now, and I thought, "More of those Steps again."

My friend was released, and I continued using drugs and going to meetings at the same time. When the H&I members came in,

I liked hearing that there was hope and that they were learning how to live differently. Around that time, another friend and I started writing the Steps together. He has been out for a long time now and has been clean for three and a half years, and I recently baptized his second son.

I stayed clean for a while, and six months before my release I started writing the Steps again and completed Step One before I got out. My NA friends met me when I was released and took me to a meeting that same day. After my release, I did nothing for my recovery and relapsed after four months. But now I knew where to go, and I knew I wasn't alone.

I quickly returned to the tools that had helped me stay clean: I started attending meetings regularly, got a sponsor, began working the Steps, and took service commitments in H&I and my home group. Over time, I started going back to the same institution where I had served my sentence. Thanks to the efforts of H&I and the initiative of group members, the facility now has a regular NA meeting, and I served as the Group Service Representative for that group.

Several of the guys who chaired meetings there were later released and became involved in outside meetings and H&I service as well. Unfortunately, one of them died by suicide while under the influence of drugs. Another believes alcohol is not a problem for him, and he is simply grateful to still be alive.

Today, thanks to a Higher Power, all of you, and this program, I serve as chair of the "Zona" (prison) H&I panel, which is part of the Kyiv Area H&I Subcommittee. I have a sponsee, and I have one year and ten months clean. I'm learning how to live a new way of life and give back what was once freely given to me in Narcotics Anonymous.

R, Ukraine

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.

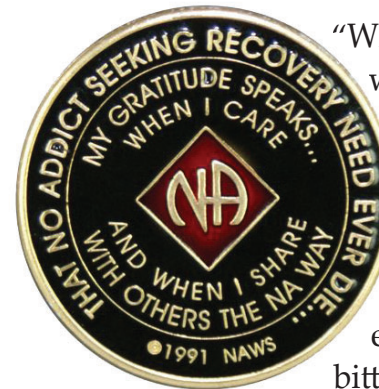
We are offering questions to help stimulate your thinking so that you may want to share your experience with us; we will publish your article in *Reaching Out* to help others.

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.

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!



“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*.