

Reaching Out

October 2026



H&I T-shirt, El Paso

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*“The message is freedom,
and the ties that bind
are pure love.”*

— Living Clean: The Journey Continues

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

My name is BL, and I am a recovering addict. I am writing this letter from my top bunk. I am in an open dorm with about 80 others. As I sit and look at each individual and their circumstances, I am thankful. This is my first prison sentence; however, it isn't my first time in NA. I have suffered from drug addiction all the way to people addiction. I decided this second time of finding NA that I would try this program out and work the Steps. I don't know why I was just too stubborn to give it a try 25 years ago. But today I have been much braver than my younger self. Working the Steps has taught me things about myself I would have never seen before. I love how the Steps are always useful and never grow old. Today I'm able to come to grips with a lot of shame and grief I have held on to because of the choices I made. It feels great to finally find freedom through the discipline of stepwork.

When H&I comes and visits us at the prison, I get a nostalgic feeling that this is where I belong. So, as I finish out this sentence and transition back into the free world, I will always be serious about Narcotics Anonymous. Thank you, fellow addicts, for giving yourselves so that others may also find their way to freedom in recovery.

BL, Georgia

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is SM, and I'm an addict. Thank you for your support these last eight years of my incarceration. As I prepare to be released back into the wild in the next few years, it is easy to look back on my journey and be grateful for all the good and bad that brought me to this point. And with over ten years of cleantime, it is easy for me to understand that it is only through the grace

of God, along with the love of the Fellowship, that I've made it this far. During the worst and hardest periods of my life, whether on pretrial, in the SHU, or in general pop, NA and my Higher Power have always been there. So, if you are going through the worst period of your life, take it from me: It does get better, and no matter what, you never have to use again.

As we continue growing, one day at a time, in peace, love, and light.

SM, New York

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is BH, and I am a grateful recovering addict. I have been clean since 31 May 2012. I am serving a seven-year sentence for a crime I committed while using drugs. I worked in law enforcement for most of my life. I am proof that addiction has no boundaries and does not discriminate. I went to meetings on the outside but was afraid to share or to get known by other addicts. My fears blocked me from hearing the wonderful message of recovery.

After taking an intense drug treatment program, I was able to learn more about Narcotics Anonymous. I continued to go to meetings weekly, and I have been coming back to them for over two years. NA has taught me how to live again. Prison life is a struggle, but I know I don't have to do it alone. I always thought NA was simply about using drugs. It is much more than I could ever imagine or dream of. With NA and my Higher Power, I can achieve anything. I am truly grateful to Narcotics Anonymous.

BH, Ohio

Dear Reaching Out,

My name is AA, and I am an addict in recovery. I am currently serving a four-year sentence as an inmate wildland firefighter and am finally giving back to the world that I have taken so

much from during my addiction. Not only have I been clean for nearly a year now, but I have really begun to work on me and see the changes.

I grew up in a small town in Northern California and was raised in an environment full of drugs, gangs, and violence. Although I always excelled in school, eventually I was strongly influenced by the street life. One day it finally took over and pulled me into the darkness. For several years I used and sold drugs, doing nothing but living the fast life. Eventually my using and lifestyle choices caught up to me, and I was facing 14 years in prison. I was given a second chance and received four months in county jail and five years of felony probation.

At the time, I decided to get clean and then had kids, got married, and went to college. Time passed and I had almost eight years clean, but I was not involved with Narcotics Anonymous, nor did I have a support group. I did not even have a higher power. My husband separated from me, and I soon relapsed.

For the past few years now, I have struggled with staying clean. As a result, I am now sitting here in prison, away from my kids and those I love the most. As I reflect on my life, I realize there are so many changes going on within me, and day by day I am becoming a better person.

I am getting serious about my recovery and have been attending NA meetings since my arrival here at fire camp. I am rebuilding my relationships with my loved ones and, most importantly, building a relationship with my higher power. Instead of being that angry, violent, destructive person I once was, I am becoming a caring and passionate woman. My ways of thinking and of viewing the world have also changed for the better. Narcotics Anonymous has truly helped me and changed my life. As each day passes, I am growing up to be the woman my higher power has intended me to be. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my story, and I will keep coming back, one day at a time.

AA, California

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...



You're not alone!!!



NA's got your back!

Unknown Artist



Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

I grew up in a community where many of my friends and influences were different from me. My life was not easy. As a teenager, I was searching for acceptance, belonging, and identity. I found that sense of connection in the streets.

By the age of 15, I had become involved in gang life. I began living fast, caught up in drugs, violence, and criminal activity. What started as a search for belonging led me into addiction, repeated arrests, county jail, and prison. Over time, I became separated from my family and from the person I was meant to be.

Throughout the years, I tried many times to change. Each time I wanted something different, I found myself returning to what was familiar. Addiction, gang life, and the people I surrounded myself with had become my comfort zone. Even though that life was destructive, it was what I knew, and it felt easier than facing the unknown.

Eventually, I reached a point where I could no longer continue living that way. I surrendered to a Higher Power and began to accept that I could not overcome addiction on my own.

Today, my life is very different. I am living clean. I am actively working the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. I am learning to trust my Higher Power and to live with humility, honesty, and purpose. I no longer identify with the gang lifestyle or with the destructive behaviors that once controlled my life.

Instead, I am striving to become a productive, responsible, and spiritually grounded man. Recovery has given me the opportunity to rebuild my life, strengthen my relationships, and discover who I truly am.

My journey has taught me that change is possible. No matter how far someone has fallen, there is always hope. Through surrender, faith, and a willingness to do the work, it is possible to break free from addiction and create a new life.

Today, I choose recovery. I choose peace. I choose purpose.
And for the first time in my life, I am truly free.

BM, California



The Hole in the Wall Group, Oregon State Penitentiary

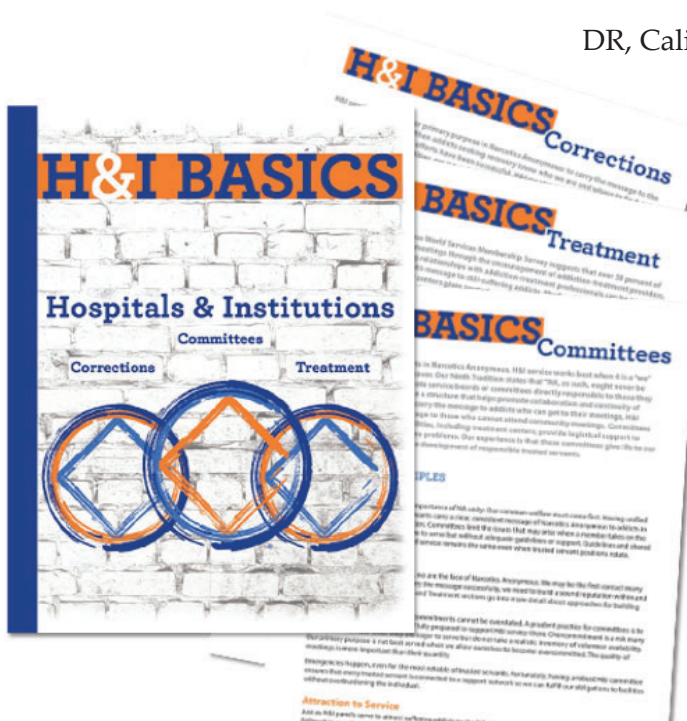
From the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

I am an addict, and my name is DR. I am finally out. I was released 14 days ago. A friend took me out to lunch, and I asked her to sponsor me for now. I was in a meeting that night within hours and have been to one every day since. Readjusting to the free world was difficult for a few days, and I had my fair share of panic attacks, but I got through them.

I was locked up with a woman who had gotten out a couple of days after me. We ran into each other at the parole office. I was privileged to take her to her first meeting. The message was carried out one more time. Thank you for the hope you brought me while incarcerated. Keep doing the good work.

DR, California



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, USA
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.

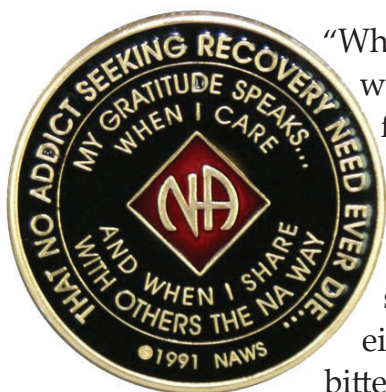
We are offering questions to help stimulate your thinking so that you may want to share your experience with us; we will publish your article in *Reaching Out* to help others.

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*.