

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

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A Network of  Communities

No # 22 APF Newsletter **NOV 2004**

Hi Everyone and welcome to the latest APF Newsletter.

A lot has happened in the last few months in our Regions. Many breakthroughs have occurred in H&I - Malaysia, Japan, Tehran and Bali!.

As you know I have been traveling around India these last four months. It has been an experience that has reminded me over and over again how amazing this fellowship is. I recently went to Calcutta where there are 23 meetings a week. Only a small minority of women attend, but it has started and more will come if the women have any say in the matter, they are a very friendly and hospitable group and strong. The meetings are full and welcoming. I was shown a lot of NA warmth. Thank you Calcutta for making me feel I belonged.

I am back in Pune where I am very comfortable thanks to the strong small Fellowship here. I loved Bombay meetings and was given a lot of contacts which has made my stay in India very easy. I can only say that the message is the same everywhere! I felt immediately at home and safe. After traveling with no meetings for some time the voices in the head had started arguing again! And I really needed to talk and share with other members! Bombay was an oasis in the land of my mind!

I have stayed with members and their families, especially our Webservant's, Vik, and his beautiful wife and sweet daughter. Went to the Bollywood films and admired the latest heart throb. (Tom Cruise eat your heart out!) The Indian sense of humour has saved me from myself! Thank God! I have really immersed myself in India. Thanks to the meetings I am able to fit in and join the rest of society. The Indian people are extremely helpful and warm - very down to earth. And there are spiritual messages everywhere, in shops, in net cafes on the billboards, on walls! It seems India still embraces the spiritual.

I am almost coming to the end of my stay and feeling sad to leave. I have made some good friends here from Chennai to Bombay to Calcutta! It has been awesome to have come to a place of belonging. So thanks India and your fellowship for helping me through Just for Today. Where would we be without each other!

There is a Convention coming up in February in Goa and from the good hearted, warm and fun Bombay fellowship, I am sure it will be great - not to mention it is in paradise! If you've ever thought of coming to India now is the time to check it out!

Yours in Service,
Cathy

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

Good News From Singapore

Hi everybody,

After initially meeting the Director of Rehabilitation Services Changi Prisons at the 1st Asia Pacific Institute of Addictions in June, N.A. Singapore has, after several discussions been invited to present on a regular basis in an H&I format within Changi.

This is obviously an exciting opportunity to carry the message in an environment where previously the need for maintenance of any sort after release had never been acknowledged.

N.A. Singapore would like to thank World Service for affording us the booth at the APIA convention, where the initial contact was made.

God help us to get this right, I know that he will forgive us if we make the odd mistake. We will be commencing end of September after red tape and individuals' security clearances are ratified, please keep us in your prayers.

In Fellowship
Steve.G.

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

Planting the Seed – more from Singapore

Hello My Frenzs,

Trust you are all well. I was invited by the Hospital Permai as a Speaker for the 6th Johor Mental Health Convention on the 20th - 22nd May 2004. I was surprised by the invitation. There are about 350 delegates. It was held at the Hotel Hyatt Regency. I am honoured and the pleasure is mine.

I left Singapore with nine pages of materials that by chance I received via email for the APF which was sent by Erik from Hawaii. On the day of presentation I briefly talked about NA and the 12 Steps, Traditions and Concepts. I read the 12 Steps only. Due to the time constraint I decided to share my experiences in using and in recovering instead of reading from the written materials. Before me, those speakers used PowerPoint and read messages from papers.

I shared briefly about pain, shame and hopelessness during using. I also shared the magical wands that miraculously changed my life and behavior when I bumped into the NA Fellowship. I emphasized the importance of working the 12 Steps with a Sponsor.

Reciting the Serenity Prayer in Bahasa and in English and expressing the powerful lines that helped me to attain the serenity within. Transforming a meaningful life to its fullest, hence breaking the taboo of, once an addict always an addict. My message was I believe the message of recovery and that I believe addicts can change. I closed the curtain on my speech with the Convention slogan "Bridging The Gap". This is how I expressed it, "Your presence is the manifestation that speaks volumes in helping to shape the human spirit and saving lives in the process, thus Bridging The Gap (As I pointed to the slogan) and thank you",

I was overwhelmed at the response. Some people cried. I still feel the same now when I think of that amazing day when we were given the opportunity to carry the message and hopefully a seed is planted... well as per normal I take a grip. Recovery is Beautiful. Thank You - Higher Power and NAWS.

Pay-Back-Time

NOR

NB: The Power Point referred to was put together by the Malaysian Fellowship for this event and has proved to be a great tool for anyone in H&I or PI as a simple comprehensive tool to explain Who, What and How - well done! There was a great response from the APF forum members. It is include later in this newsletter - please pass it on.

A P F N E W S L E T T E R

Cambodia Update

Dear all,

As a new member to APF I thought it would be appropriate to fill you in on how we are doing in our community. NA in Cambodia has experienced a period of growth, although we have encountered some hic-ups on the way. We now have a service structure, a good supply of literature (thanks to World Service) and regular attendance at our 3 weekly meetings. In order to fulfil our primary purpose we were keen to carry the message into the local community. We have contacted the only local Rehab Centre in Cambodia but after countless meetings with the Facilitator we still haven't found a way into the Centre to give a presentation. Drug abuse/HIV is 'big business' in Cambodia - there are many NGO's here looking for new ways to receive funding and it seems drug abuse is the new 'in' thing. Consequently it has proved hard to attract people (either organisations or addicts) as we are not offering funding or structured rehabilitation to addicts. It seems that NA is still thought of as a little mysterious and incomprehensible to many here.

But, we did print and advertise a poster in Khmer which brought a few newcomers to our meetings!

At that time we had an American who also spoke Khmer who had just celebrated 30 days clean. However, when he relapsed and decided NA was not for him, he took the newcomers with him. Now we have employed a translator to help in meetings when Khmers attend who don't speak English. At present we have 2 newcomers, 1 Khmer and 1 Foreign. We also have a NA phone which is manned 24hrs by a member.

Two of the members who got clean in Cambodia have just both celebrated one year clean which was cause for much celebration and our founder member a few weeks ago celebrated 9 years!

Our meetings are now listed on the NA world web page and we have had a steady flow of visitors passing through.

So just to let you all know that we are still here, appreciate the love that it is to be a part of NA / APF and we'll keep coming back.

Look forward to meeting with new and old friends in the Philipines next year.

in service,

Simon O
RD Cambodia

A P P N E W S L E T T E R

An Update from Uschi@NAWS

Dear APF friends,

I'd like to forward a few comments to you today.
Cambodia - Simon, what a great update!

NA History and Art

You probably all know already that I am always on the lookout for great archive stuff, and things to frame that show our accomplishments and growth in the world. Those of you who have visited the NA World Service Office know that we have a pretty cool NA Art Gallery now. So, we're always really happy to get copies of certificates, photos, press coverage of NA, convention and service event posters, and flyers from you. Please send electronic files to me, or let me know if you have things on paper and need help with postage. One example: I got e-files of three very nice Arabic NA posters (from Dhahran/Saudi Arabia) a few weeks ago, and we will exhibit them here. I'll attach them for you, just in case there is space in the newsletter for pictures.

Iran

Following the above, I want to share with you that we just got photos from NA Iran of a trophy and award they received a few months ago: NA Iran was named the most successful NGO of the year 2004 in Iran. Their NA Convention happened last month in Tehran, and they hosted the opening meeting in a Tehran sports stadium with an attendance of over 12000 people (open meeting, addicts about 8000). The next NA Way Magazine will show a picture of the trophy and the translation of the inscription.

At the NA Iran convention the members read a greeting from the Iranian Vice-President before the official 'kick-off'. Five speakers shared - three recovery shares, one on the Traditions and one on PI. Some members from Bahrain went to Tehran for support, one of them was a main speaker. The convention committee met every day in the last weeks. The second and third day had over 100 service workshops and meetings going on concurrently for several thousand people. Please read the Iran section in the January NA Way. Currently, we are finishing work on the Farsi Basic Text. Iran already has a number of IP's published.

PI Basics

We have an updated PI resource package that is available from Fellowship Services at NAWS. Right now we are translating the section called PI Basics (just a few pages long, but with a lot of helpful information), into Japanese and Farsi. The Japanese wanted to use it at their PI workshop during the Japan convention in September.

Japan

The Japanese key tag set is now completed. We are also making good progress with the translation of the Japanese Basic Text, which is ready for proofreading now. NAWS members held a service workshop at the Japan Convention, September 17-20.

Arabic

The Arabic IP#1 is posted on the NA.org website, along with translations in over two dozen other languages. The LTC just completed their translation of the key tags.

Vietnam

We are working with two translators to create a usable draft in Vietnamese of IP #1.

Thailand - Indonesia

There is no news on the Thai and Bahasa Indonesia IP #1. We hope communications will start up again soon. The Thai IP #1 is ready for printing, if we get the approval from the Thai fellowship.

Philippines

The community formed a new LTC. They are working on revisions of the current IP #1 and glossary. They expressed that much work needs to be done to create literature translations at a much more basic reading level to reach the vast majority of addicts who are suffering and who can't use the existing Tagalog translation. This issue can be encountered around the world. Other NA communities have realized that the reading level needs to reflect the reading abilities of the majority of addicts in their community, which can be very limited. In the US we set the standard at the 8th grade level (which is for 13 to 14 year olds).

Until soon, with love and in fellowship

Uschi

A P P N E W S L E T T E R

Two New Groups for Malaysia – your help is needed?

Dear APF

NA Malaysia is happy to inform you all of a new NA group in KL! ---- The Just For Today Group - they have recently registered with WSO - for further info, you can contact their trusted servant - Zach at najust442day@yahoo.com

We also would like to inform members that we have another 2 new NA groups! One is located in another part of Kuala Lumpur - in the Chow Kit district: - meeting on Mondays 8-9:30pm at a rented room in Ikhlas Drop In, in Chow Kit. As the Chow Kit area is a known "drug hotspot", this group receives up to 7 newcomers per meeting.

The other is located down south in the city of Johor Baru, the state of Johor [400kms from KL]. Meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays 8pm at a rented room at the Detox Ward in Permai Hospital in Johor Baru.

As these two groups are very new and thus in infancy, they have yet to register with NAWS.

However, NA Chow Kit is receiving solid support from NAKL in terms of attendance at meetings, IP's etc; and NA Johor Baru has at least two or three committed members who are keeping the fires burning; and also receiving regular attendance support from NA Spore [a big thank-you to them!].

If there is any way APF member communities can help out [literature, keytag donations etc] or just to drop a note of encouragement, you may contact email: na_kl@hotmail.com

David K
Sec/GSR
NAKL

A P P N E W S L E T T E R

NAKL PI PRESENTATION AT ADDICTION MEDICINE CONFERENCE [1-3 OCT 04]

Narcotics Anonymous Kuala Lumpur [NAKL] was invited to attend and deliver a PI presentation at the 1st National Conference on Addiction Medicine, organised by the Federation of Private Medical Practitioners Malaysia [FPPMP] from 1 – 3 Oct 2004, at an international hotel in Kuala Lumpur.

The Conference's aim was to explore various treatment and after care options for recovering addicts in Malaysia. Among the participants were officials from the World Health Organisation, Ministry of Health, doctors, treatment professionals and members of the public. The NAKL H&I/PI sub-committee comprising Omar A, David K, Sunny L, Baldev S and Lenny N were in attendance for all three days – manning a PI booth, distributing IPs, conducting NA book sales and dealing with enquiries regarding the NA programme. NAKL was also requested to conduct a PI Presentation entitled:

“After Care: An Introduction to Narcotics Anonymous”.

The presentation, aimed at government health officials, doctors and treatment professionals was conducted by Omar A, and featured a Power Point display based on NAWS IP: “NA, A Resource in Your Community”

There were also treatment professionals both from Malaysia and overseas who, during their own presentations, also spoke positively of NA as a viable after-care option and as such, the NA booth received overwhelming response from delegates and members of the public wishing to learn more about “the NA Way”.

Omar A, was also a member of the panel during the final wrap-up and question-and-answer session at the close of the Conference. In all NA’s participation in the Conference was an unqualified success.

Note to NA communities worldwide: We would like to offer our Power Point presentation: “After Care: An Introduction to NA” to all NA communities worldwide. Please feel free to suggest amendments/corrections and use it during your PI presentations. Please find as follows: – **Pass it on...**

AFTER CARE:

AN INTRODUCTION TO NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS (NA)

CONTENTS

- **WHAT IS NA?**
- **HISTORY OF NA**
- **HOW NA WORKS**
- **MEMBERSHIP IN NA**
- **WHAT IS A “NA MEETING”?**
- **CHALLENGES/BARRIERS FOR NA IN MALAYSIA**
- **NA’s VISION**

WHAT IS NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS?

- **NA – an international, community-based association of recovering addicts – provides peer support to other addicts who desire to stop using.**
- **The NA approach to recovery from drug addiction is completely non-professional, relying on one recovering addict helping another.**
- **NA members hold recovery meetings regularly at a fixed time and place. During meetings – members take turns to share their experience, strength and hope on coping with life drug-free.**
- **NA – an ideal AFTER CARE SUPPORT NETWORK for your clients to pursue and maintain a life free of drugs.**
- **NA strives to cooperate with professionals such as Therapeutic Communities and Doctors specialising in addiction therapy.**
- **NA adheres to the concept that addiction is a DISEASE – incurable, progressive and fatal. It can however be arrested and treated, making recovery possible.**

HISTORY OF NA

- **The first NA meeting – Los Angeles, June 1953.**
- **Experienced slow growth initially – mainly in USA.**
- **1978 – 200 groups in 3 countries.**
- **1982 – 1200 groups in 11 countries.**
- **1993 – 13,000 groups in 60 countries including Malaysia [estd 1988].**
- **2002 – 20,000 groups in 108 countries.**
- **2003 – Over 20,000 groups in 113 countries worldwide.**

HOW NA WORKS

- **The NA programme offers members a way to live clean [drug free] – become responsible, productive members of society.**
- **The NA programme: the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.**
- **Twelve Steps – detail a simple programme of personal recovery. By following these steps, addicts can learn to stop using drugs and face challenges of daily living.**

- Twelve Traditions – to help NA groups maintain unity.
- Twelve Concepts – guidelines for NA organisational structure.
- Narcotics Anonymous is not a religious organisation.
- NA programme – applies basic spiritual principles such as honesty, open-mindedness, faith, willingness, and humility that may be applied in everyday life.
- NA is not related or affiliated with any other organisations, treatment or correctional facilities.
- NA is a self-supporting, autonomous, non-profit organisation.
- However, NA is willing to cooperate with Doctors and Rehab Centres in helping addicts – AFTER CARE SUPPORT GROUP.

MEMBERSHIP IN NA

- Membership is free – the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.
- Members identify themselves as recovering addicts [as opposed to “ex-addicts”].
- Anyone may join – regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion.
- NA has no dues or fees – each recovering addict has paid the price of membership through the pain of active drug addiction.
- NA message: ANY addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use drugs, and find a new way of life. Message of hope – freedom from active addiction.

WHAT IS A “NA MEETING”?

- NA meeting – two or more recovering addicts meeting together to share experience of recovery from the disease of addiction.
- In KL, meetings are held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at two locations.
- NA meetings – bound by 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts.
- NA meetings – conducted by recovering addicts for addicts – one addict helping another.
- NA meetings – PRIMARY PURPOSE: provide experience, strength and hope for members, and carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

CHALLENGES/BARRIERS FOR NA IN MALAYSIA

- NA was perceived as a “Western concept”. Some mistook it for a Christian religious programme.
- NA must emphasise that it is SPIRITUAL in nature – universal spiritual principles – but NA is not a religion-based programme.
- There is also fear of social stigma – addicts are afraid to come forward.
- NA in Malaysia is presently concentrated in KL, with a new group formed recently in Johor Bahru.
- NAKL members – presently a small and dedicated group of members.
- NA in Malaysia needs the support of local treatment services in terms of referral of clients to attend NA meetings.

NA’s VISION

Our vision is that one day – every addict has the chance to experience our message and find the opportunity for a new way of life.

Please note the fonts and size have been changed from Power Point to Word for this newsletter, all else remains the same. Anyone wishing to get a copy please email NAKL as stated above.

Thanks NAKL - Such an excellent resource for all of us in carrying the message!

A P P N E W S L E T T E R

The Execution of Thai Justice

By Chris Jones

Director/producer of The Real Bangkok Hilton

For the first time ever, television cameras have been given access to Thailand's notorious Bangkok prison, also known in the West as the "Bangkok Hilton". Of its 7,000 inmates - mostly drug offenders - 883 have been sentenced to death. Bangkok is Bangkok's maximum-security jail; designed for lifers and death row prisoners. The Thai people call Bangkok the "Big Tiger" because it is a man-eater. Scores of prisoners have been put to death in its notorious execution chamber.

After two years of delicate negotiations, the Thai prison system finally agreed to give us access inside Bangkok. We spent a tough two weeks inside, discovering harrowing stories from the prisoners battling to remain sane, and also the guards who are struggling to cope with the ever-increasing number of inmates.

There is a small sign on the outside wall that says 883... the number of men waiting to be killed. And perhaps the most moving encounter we had was with Amporn Birtling, a Thai prisoner on death row.

Imprisoned for drug smuggling, his voice shook as he explained how he will only find out when he is to be executed two hours beforehand. "I have no clue when I will die," Amporn said, "they could inject me today or tomorrow. All my life I hated drugs more than anything, I never thought that I would be arrested because of them.

"I told my kids don't touch them, don't get close to them, I hate them. I admitted I was guilty, why has society punished me so harshly? Why don't they give me another chance? I never committed a crime before."

Epidemic

Harsh sentences for drug smugglers are popular in Thailand. The country has long been a major through-route for drugs, but now the Thais themselves are becoming drug addicts as new, cheap methamphetamine pills have flooded the local market. Thousands of school children became addicts in the last few years prompting a public outcry. The result has been a government crackdown leading to the mysterious killing of more than 2,200 people in the streets in 2003.

Officials insist this was gang on gang warfare, but watchdogs suggest it could have been extra-judicial killings by police. Ten thousand more drug dealers were arrested, many of them simple couriers, or "mules". Now the jails are cracking under the strain.

Until the 1930s, the Thais beheaded criminals, unless the condemned was royal, in which case they were beaten to death with a piece of sweet-smelling wood

Amnesty International says there are now more prisoners on death row in Bangkok than at any other time in Thailand's history. They also say capital punishment is not a deterrent and innocent men always end up being killed.

But the Thai Government says drug dealers like Amporn destroyed the lives of many young Thai people, and deserve to die.

Vengeance

Bangkok's head executioner fits the profile: a burly build and large, menacing black sunglasses. He would not let us film his face for security reasons, but he agreed to take us through his routine on a real execution day. He showed us how, before he kills, he prays at the prison earth shrine and sprinkles dirt on his head; a Thai version of ashes to ashes, dust to dust. "I pray for the spirits of the dead not to take vengeance on me," he says. "I pray for this to be the end of it."

The executioner is proud of his job. At the execution chamber, he showed us a bulletin board detailing the history of execution in Thailand - a gruesome collection of photos both old and new.

Until the 1930s, the Thais beheaded criminals, unless the victim was royal, in which case they were beaten to death with a piece of sweet-smelling wood. 1932, they switched to firing squad, a system that lasted until 2003. The execution room is still splattered with the blood of those killed by a bullet.

The superstitious executioners shot them in the heart from behind so the dead person's departing spirit could not see the face of the executioner and come back to haunt him. "We have to train our minds to become empty," explained the executioner. "free of fear, totally free of fear."

In 2004, new methods of execution have been implemented. The new boss of Thailand's prisons is a reformer who sent officials to Texas to witness an execution by lethal injection and to learn the process. "It is more humane than when we used the firing squad," said Director General of Prisons, Nathee Chitsawang. "With the old method, sometimes they were crying and shouting... and sometimes they did not die immediately, so we had to take them and shoot again."

The executioner showed us the method of putting a man to death by pumping lethal chemicals into his veins, which he says must be done "slowly, slowly, or the vein might break." He also demonstrated how they take a fingerprint of the condemned both before and after execution to confirm they have killed the right man.

Karma

Afterwards the bodies are taken through a tiny red door called the "ghost gate" to a Buddhist temple on the other side of the wall.

"I tell the prisoner he is lucky that he knows his destiny and able to clear his conscience", Prison Abbott If relatives are waiting, they claim the body. If not the body is left in the temple cemetery. When there is no space left, the monk will cremate the bodies. The monk guards the urns of the unclaimed. He explained how he tells the condemned it is better to die by execution than randomly, because they can prepare their minds for death. Thai Buddhism holds that the state of mind at the time of death determines your incarnation in the next life.

The monk told us: "Giving last rites to a prisoner is not easy but I have become used to it. I tell him that he is lucky that he knows his destiny and able to clear his conscience, unlike myself. "If a car hits me right after this, I might not have a chance die with a pure mind. It's a blessing in disguise." The monk has grown tired of giving last rites to prisoners, but believes his work is important.

He thinks execution is like the king slaying enemies in wars past. Both, he says, are sinful, but done to protect the country and therefore allowed. He offered us a final warning as he put away the urns. "I have always believed that people will face the consequences of their actions. Even if you do not get caught, eventually your karma will catch up with you."

The Real Bangkok Hilton was broadcast on Thursday, 22 July, 2004, at 2100 BST on BBC Two in the UK.

Story from BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/programmes/this_world/3916395.stm

Published: 2004/07/22 14:13:17 GMT

A P P N E W S L E T T E R

A GREAT RESOURCE

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS IN YOUR COMMUNITY GETTING IT STARTED, KEEPING IT GOING

Prepared by: World Services for Narcotics Anonymous

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in Narcotics Anonymous. This presentation has been designed to introduce you to some of the aspects of the NA program and Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as well as provide an aid to beginning and maintaining a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in a treatment setting, in particular within the Asian Pacific Region. In brief, I will be covering the following in this presentation paper:

- Who and what is Narcotics Anonymous
- Membership in NA
- What is a NA meeting
- Conducting NA meetings within a treatment facility
- Setting up a NA meeting
- NA meeting guidelines
- Demonstration of a NA meeting in action (role play)
- Various formats/types of NA meetings
- Resources for Disabled/physically challenged NA members
- Barriers/challenges in establishing and maintaining NA meetings as experienced by some Asian Pacific NA communities/meetings over the past decade.

Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. By following the program of recovery offered in Narcotics Anonymous, our members have found a way to live clean (i.e. our terminology for drug free), as responsible, productive members of society. The program of Narcotics Anonymous consists of 36 core principles, namely the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts. Please refer to our NA literature to get a more detailed perspective of our core principles. Spiritual in nature, they are written so simply that our NA members and potential members can follow them in their daily lives. Our Twelve Steps detail our program of personal recovery. Our Twelve Traditions relate experience that can help NA meetings maintain their unity. And our Twelve Concepts are guiding principles for our organizational structure. Narcotics Anonymous is a program of recovery for anyone who has desire to stop

using drugs. NA is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. NA is not related or affiliated to other organizations, including other Twelve Step Fellowships programs (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous, Alanon, Naranon etc.), treatment or correctional facilities. We do not employ professional counselors or therapists. NA is a non-profit fellowship (i.e. organization) and our membership is free. The only requirement for NA membership is the desire to stop using drugs. You are a member when you say you are, and membership in Narcotics Anonymous is unconditional. It is our hope that this presentation paper will prove to be a simple, easy guide to your efforts in establishing an NA meeting in your facility/community. It is our experience that NA is culturally adaptable. We are millions of recovering addicts who have found a vision of hope and a promise of freedom from active drug addiction.

MEMBERSHIP IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Membership in Narcotics Anonymous is a personal decision reached by each individual. It is hoped that every drug addict will be allowed to decide if Narcotics Anonymous is the answer for him or herself. The only requirement is the desire to stop using drugs. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion. You are a member when you say you are. Narcotics

Anonymous has no dues or fees. Each recovering addict (as opposed to an ex-addict) has paid the price of membership through the pain of active drug addiction. Our message is that any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way of life. Our message is one of hope and the promise of freedom from active addiction. Most of us had no idea what to expect living without the use of drugs. It is in NA meetings that many of us first heard the message of recovery, found acceptance and support from other NA members and learned practical information to help each other stay clean (i.e. our terminology for not using drugs today).

WHAT IS AN NA MEETING?

A Narcotics Anonymous meeting is any two or more recovering addicts who meet together for the purpose of recovery from the disease of addiction. All Narcotics Anonymous meetings are bound by the principles of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of NA. NA meetings are conducted by recovering addicts for addicts. It is important that the addicts, (who may be your clients) be empowered to conduct their own meetings. Guidance in how to do that e.g. helping them with the format of a NA meetings, supplying them with a room or safe setting to hold their meeting, guidance with the supply of NA literature to use (until such time they can acquire/purchase their own) and helping with procedures is very useful. NA is a personal and spiritual program, therefore, our personal recovery experiences, NA principles, and NA general information are the topics of our meetings. The primary purpose of a NA meeting is to provide experience, strength and hope for its members and carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. The meeting provides each NA member with the opportunity to share and to hear the experience of other addicts who are learning to live a better way without the use of drugs. The NA meeting, in essence, is a vehicle by which our message is carried. It provides a setting in which a newcomer (your client or a new NA member with little drug free life experience) can identify with recovering addicts and find an atmosphere of recovery. It is worth mentioning here that "recovery" is not just being drug free. Recovery is being drug free and working the basic NA principles that eventuates in a contentment in maintaining this new way of life.

GUIDELINES WE HAVE FOUND USEFUL WHEN CONDUCTING NA MEETINGS IN TREATMENT FACILITIES

The meeting place should be accessible to the most number of people as possible. Keep in mind that providing an atmosphere of recovery is desired, such as room size and as few distractions as possible. Note: It is recommended that NA group meetings not be held in an individual's living quarters/house. Ramps, wide doors, elevators and bathroom facilities may be required for some members who are physically challenged. (e.g. Wheelchairs etc.) Generally, NA meetings are held at a time when the most people can attend, e.g. after dinner.

SETTING UP FOR AN NA MEETING

Once the meeting space and time have been approved by the facility, early arrival by NA members will allow time to set up chairs in a circle for a small group or theater style for a large meeting. NA members may like to make tea, coffee or refreshments, to enhance a friendly atmosphere, if the facility allows it, and set out NA literature. Depending on the economic situation at hand, literature may be purchased, borrowed on a loan basis or given away. Setting up chairs, supplying refreshments, setting out literature, and cleaning up after the meeting—these are simple things that NA members do to host their meetings. But if one person had to do them all, these simple things would quickly become overwhelming. By sharing the work, it ensures that the NA meeting as a whole is self-supporting and that the meeting's responsibilities don't settle unevenly on the shoulders of just one or two individuals.

FORMAT FOR AN NA MEETING

Narcotics Anonymous meetings follow a consistent format and often center around a topic of recovery called open discussion meetings. Other NA meetings might include a literature discussion, speaker meeting, or the Twelve Step/Twelve Tradition study. Only Narcotics Anonymous conference-approved literature (includes translated literature) and tapes are used in NA meetings. This is to ensure a clear, consistent and focused message of recovery. Meetings usually last about one hour (1 hour) to one and a half hours (1 ½ hours), and it is important to start and end them on time.

DEMONSTRATION OF A NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING IN ACTION

(role play)

With the support of other NA members here with me today, we will demonstrate how to conduct an NA meeting. We have included the basics guidelines in this paper should you wish to pursue a NA meeting with your clients upon returning to your facility.

MEETING FORMAT/PROCEDURE

Chairperson: Welcome members to the meeting and introduce yourself. Hello, my name is (FIRST NAME not FAMILY NAME), and I am an addict/or recovering addict. Welcome to this meeting of the (e.g. Jakarta Group) of Narcotics Anonymous. I'd like to open this meeting with a moment of silence (15 to 20 seconds) for the addict who still suffers from this disease of drug addiction, followed by the Just For Today Reading (a short reading from the NA book titled Narcotics Anonymous) "We like to extend a special welcome to newcomers. Is there anyone attending their first NA meeting? Would you like to introduce yourself? Is there anyone attending this meeting for the first time? For the protection of the NA members of this group/meeting, who you see here and what you hear in this meeting, stays in this meeting. (This is our Confidentiality Request) For the protection of our NA meeting being held in this facility/treatment facility, we ask that no drugs, weapons or paraphernalia be on your person at the meeting. It costs you nothing to belong to Narcotics Anonymous. "You are a member when you say you are." Chairperson: At the beginning of the meeting select people to read one or more of the routine readings, to help get the meeting centered. These readings can be found in our Little White Booklet, the book Narcotics Anonymous, IP #1 (Informational Pamphlet No. 1), or the group reading cards, all available from your nearest NA Service office (See last page for details). The usual readings are listed below. These can be read out at the beginning or at various stages of the meeting.

- Who is an addict?
- What is the NA Program?
- Why are we here?
- How it works.
- The Twelve Traditions.

Meetings use a variety of formats to enhance the atmosphere of recovery in their meetings. Some examples are speaker meetings, open discussion, literature and step study. Chairperson: About five minutes before the meeting is scheduled to close, announce: "That's all the time we have. I'd like to thank you for attending." Begin passing the basket around for collection of money contributions, (note: only applicable outside treatment facilities), announcing: The basket being passed around is one way of practicing our Seventh Tradition, which says, "Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." The money our NA members contribute goes to purchase NA literature, refreshments (usually tea/coffee) and helps to fulfill our primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers. This is an empowering exercise, so NA members can take some responsibility for their own recovery, rather than depending on some external entity to take responsibility for them. Note:

Open meetings: Open to anyone, regardless if they are recovering addicts or observers.

Closed meetings: For recovering addicts only or people who feel they may have a drug/drug addiction problem.

If this is an "open" meeting: "I'd like, once again, to thank our non-addict guests for the interest they've shown in Narcotics Anonymous. Because of NA's tradition of self-support, this group asks that you not contribute any money when the basket passes your way." Chairperson: Will make any NA related announcements such as the next meeting, up and coming NA activities (e.g. Fellowship events, such as outings, picnics, conventions), and any other issues pertaining to the NA meeting.

Chairperson makes the following announcement: "NA's Eleventh Tradition reads, our public relation policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. We ask everyone attending to respect our members anonymity by not using anyone's name, or personal details when describing this meeting to others. The spiritual principle of anonymity makes us all equal as members of the group/meeting. NA's Twelfth Tradition reads, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Chairperson: "Again, thank you all for coming. I would like to close this meeting with the following reading/and or third step prayer."

Third Step Prayer: "Take my will and my life. Guide me in my recovery. Show me how to live." Note: Some groups also read "Just for Today" again prior to the closing prayer.

Chairpersons usually request from NA members that we share responsibilities such as cleaning up the meeting room afterwards. We try to leave the room better than we found it. This helps protect the atmosphere of recovery and reputation of Narcotics Anonymous.

DIFFERENT FORMATS FOR NA MEETINGS

Speaker Meeting: A speaker meeting usually includes the personal sharing of recovery experience, strength, and hope by one or two NA members who relate how the NA program brought about recovery by sharing feelings, self-image, turning points, new awareness and gratitude for a new way of life. The speaker may share for approximately 20-30 minutes. The time left is usually open for the rest of the NA members to share briefly.

Open Discussion Meeting: Topics should be chosen carefully with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in mind. There is a multitude of topics that relate our personal recovery in NA. It is important to remember that recovery from drug addiction is our purpose for attending meetings and choose topics accordingly. Because NA is not a treatment program, it is also important we do not select Treatment

Topics. The following list is only a beginning point. Many other recovery-based topics come to mind as the group develops and meets the needs of its members.

- Any IP (Informational Pamphlet) or selection from the NA book Narcotics Anonymous
- H.O.W. (honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness)
- Surrender (i.e. breaking through the denial that there is a drug problem)
- Acceptance
- The basics (don't use drugs today, go to meetings, communicating with other NA members, NA literature, sponsor, and the Steps)
- H.A.L.T.S. (don't get too hungry, angry, lonely, tired, or serious)
- Responsible for our own recovery
- Freedom from active addiction
- Identify with the similarities of the NA program rather than comparing the differences
- NA, a spiritual not religious program
- Going to any productive lengths to find recovery
- Transition from the facility to the local fellowship/community (if applicable)
- Tools/guidelines suggested by NA
- Letting go of the old unproductive ways of doing things
- Feelings
- Anonymity, and its importance

Literature Discussion:

For a literature discussion meeting, parts of the NA book Narcotics Anonymous or other NA conference-approved literature are read and discussed. This format may include study of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Passing the literature around and allowing everyone a chance to read can be an easy way for everyone to get involved. If you follow that format, be sure to include a statement such as, "Feel free to pass the literature along if you'd rather not read." Not everyone is willing or able to read aloud. Additional needs for disabled/physically challenged members: Please find out what NA materials are available through the World Service Office of NA to assist addicts with additional needs. Update your current stockpile of Narcotics Anonymous materials to include the items for addicts with additional needs, e.g. sight and hearing impaired (English speaking and ASL only at present).

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES IN ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING NA MEETINGS (as experienced by some Asian Pacific NA communities/meetings over the past decade)

Over the past decade I have witnessed various reasons why NA has not grown in the Asia Pacific Region. Once upon a time NA was perceived as a Western concept. NA is a universal program which does not belong to any one or group of cultures. It is maintained by recovering addicts world wide. Cultures may vary, but addiction is addiction. Spiritual principles transcend cultural differences. In the past, NA literature was only available in English. As NA's growth expands all over the world, local translation committees are proceeding to translate the principles and concepts of NA into their respective languages and culture. Government policy makers were not aware of the vast network of NA world-wide and its adaptability to local cultures. They were also not aware it was a self-supporting organization of recovering addicts. They were not aware of its effectiveness, even in the Asia Pacific Region. Some professionals thought NA was a Western treatment program, rather than a self help group of recovering addicts, which could enhance their local treatment strategies. Because NA Traditions do not allow funding from outside its own NA membership, it was never drawn into the political arena where funding issues are discussed. While this is good for NA's long-term survival, it never received any real serious attention in government referral networks due to its low profile. Legal registration of NA in some countries was difficult due to small NA community members lacking the knowledge of how to deal with local laws and restrictions of addicts being in the company of other addicts. In some countries this is forbidden, thus making NA meetings difficult to hold outside registered institutions. There was and in some cases still is a certain amount of fear around breaking their anonymity that they were once a drug user. This problem is gradually disappearing as NA gains more credibility in the Asian Pacific. It appears where NA has not got the support of local treatment services, and referral to NA is minimal, NA remains small. In these situations NA usually

carries on with a small dedicated group of members who can only do so much, as they also have to work, look after families etc. More members make the network stronger and as a result provide a more reliable service to addicts who are still trying to stop using drugs. The NA steps and Traditions have proven extremely adaptable to local Religious values such as Muslim, Christian and Buddhists cultures. Recovering addicts, as well as new NA members have been reluctant to voluntarily come forward and join NA meetings outside registered treatment facilities, due to the fear and stigma that has stemmed from mass media campaigns towards drug addicts in general. Some of our members believe this has contributed to the slow growth in some NA communities.

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A P P N E W S L E T T E R

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