

Newsletter of the Nar-Anon Family Groups'



Re-energizing Myself

Today my life is not what I envisioned it would be at this stage. My son is still homeless yet he is getting tired of things going on around him he can't control. My husband's health is weak but he is improving. For this I am grateful.

Today, I have the option of staying home and stressing over what I can't control, or creating a day of happy summer memories. I have chosen the latter. I am going to the beach for lunch. I will take a long walk along the seashore and maybe extend my day to watch the sunset from one of the coastal balconies or hilltops.

This is how I re-energize my peace and serenity. Something about the landscape of the beach-side communities stirs my spirit. I am awed by the sim-

plicity of sea and sand as well as the vastness of the ocean. Sometimes I walk on a brightly colored floral path amongst scattering butterflies, scented shrubbery, bunnies, and squirrels. There I am reminded of a power greater than me.

And Just for Today, I will be okay.

Service and Relapse – his, mine, ours

I have a friend who is an addict in recovery. Recently he relapsed. He let a relationship get in front of his personal recovery. After years of sharing our recovery programs and friendships, my husband and I have learned that whenever we let a relationship or anything else become more significant than our own personal recovery, we risk relapse.

We have also learned that service work can get in the way of our personal recovery. My husband used to say, when he was given pats on the back for all the service he had performed, "Sometimes my service is more a measure of my illness, than my recovery." I believe that's true for me as well in my service in Nar-Anon.

If the addict's nature is to put something, anything, between them and reality, what is my nature? I have a tendency to judge people on my reaction to them,

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THE SERENITY CONNECTION





Nar-Anon Service

Service is challenging... ...the challenge can be rewarding!

Not all Nar-Anon service endeavors are easy. Some members are eager to serve before they understand Nar-Anon's purpose, "to help families of addicts" (Tradition Five). Some members have never heard of *The Nar-Anon Family Groups' Guide to Local Services* (GLS) or any other service-related literature. Are you one of these members? Do you have a burning desire to serve? Or are you serving and feel at times it's a struggle?

Service can be challenging but it can also be very rewarding. How then do we move through the challenges so we can reap the rewards?

This new section of the newsletter will be dedicated to suggestions that might help you in your service. Give the suggestions a try and see what the payoff can be. If you have never read the GLS, give it a try! It's easy to turn to a section you need for immediate information, but how about a start-to-finish read through. You may not retain all the information, but you may remember reading it and know where to search for answers in the future.

What does the GLS help with?

- Understanding how to start a group (page 2-1)
- What a group must do to call itself a Nar-Anon meeting (page 2-1)
- How to run a free community ad in a local newspaper (page 10-1)
- Starting a new Area (page 5-1)
- Understanding the Region Structure (page 6-1)
- What does CAL mean? (page 9-1)



Take a little time each week to read a section. See if it helps answer questions you, your group, area, or region are struggling with.

Keep an eye open for the **Nar-Anon SERVICE** section in future issues of *The Serenity Connection!*

"No musts" in Nar-Anon?

"There are no musts in Nar-Anon; take what you like and leave the rest." For some, these are familiar sayings. Often these quotes are used when discussions get heated around the traditions or policies. In the reading, *Keeping Our Meetings Healthy*, such sentiments refer to personal recovery. Our personal recovery is a choice. We can choose to stay miserable or, when the pain gets great enough, we can decide to really dig into the program. When we work it a little harder, we eventually embrace our self-worth and value.

"No musts," however, does not apply to the traditions, service, organizational structure, or policy. For example, copying literature, changing the words, and submitting it for Nar-Anon use would be against Nar-Anon policy. We should not use "no musts" to justify breaking with Nar-Anon principles. "Take what you like and leave the rest" does not mean our services can use some traditions and avoid others. The integrity of our services is only as valid as the principles members choose to apply.

When we skirt principles such as anonymity, believing it's okay to break our anonymity because it is ours, we are avoiding the fact that our Eleventh Tradition is clear; "need always" leaves no room for negotiation.

When we grow to the level of accepting the principles as they are intended, we learn to accept there are conditional musts that go beyond our personal choice to work a program or not. Then, and only then, do we gain all of the spiritual gifts Nar-Anon has to offer.

In the *Guide to Local Services* page 2-1, Registration of Groups, in the first paragraph, the following is stated, "WSO will register any group designating itself a Nar-Anon Family Group (NFG) or Narateen group with the understanding that it will abide by the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service and meetings will be open to any Nar-Anon or Narateen member." This is the "must."



Our Members Share



Whose problem is it?

Am I a quitter? Do I quit when I don't get my way? Do I pick up my toys and go home? If this is how I am acting, the problem might not be other people; the problem might be me.

Do I have a sponsor? Have I worked the steps? Do I study and apply the traditions? Am I doing service? If so, do I strive to get my way or can I work well with others even when they have different ideas? Do I listen to others when we disagree, or do I insist I am right? Can the concepts help me grow past this need? Why do I quit?

The old saying "winners never quit and

quitters never win" makes me wonder why I equate getting my way with winning and losing. If I don't get my way, am I a loser?

Nar-Anon has taught me it's not about winning and losing arguments, ideas, or votes. Nar-Anon has taught me how to come to the table and make something that's good even better with the help of others. Nar-Anon has taught me I don't want to take my toys and go home. I want to share my toys, ideas, and opportunities so I can continue to grow.

So, next time I want to quit, I will pick

up the phone, call my sponsor, and work through my struggles. Next time I want to give up because it's so hard, I will step back and read some literature. I will ask myself, "Am I doing the right thing for the right reason or am I trying to win the fight?"

Nar-Anon has taught me to let go when it's time and stand my ground when necessary. Nar-Anon has also taught me when others treat me poorly, I can set boundaries, even with those in recovery. Nar-Anon has taught me that the problem might not be other people, it might be me.

Words Hurt

The compulsion to judge, deride, or chastise those I am fearfully attached to is very strong. My biting words reflect the anguish in my soul as I ride the roller coaster of the disease of addiction. I feel powerless and out of control and I desperately want it to stop.

Nar-Anon has taught me that I don't need to punctuate other peoples' lives with my hurtful words. Stopping and staying stopped from destructive relationship patterns is what recovery offers.

Next time an event unfolds that has me desiring to heap salt on an open wound

with my words, I will instead stop and consider offering whispered words of release and gratitude to my Higher Power in private. This frees me from the roller coaster of addiction and releases me to work on my own recovery.

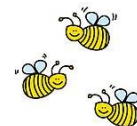
Worker Bees

Are you an idea person? Do you know an idea person? Do others tell you what would be a good idea? Ideas are great; they are the inspiration for some really good things. However, great ideas do not go far without worker bees. Behind every good idea there has to be a team of people to carry the idea from a theory to a tangible process, plan, action, or

product. It is not enough to have just an idea.

In Nar-Anon, there is a team of service members executing the ideas and needs of the fellowship. Sometimes we have more ideas than we do worker bees. Are you a worker bee or an idea person? Take flight and become more

than just an idea person! Use your wings to become a worker bee. Before telling others how to serve you better, become part of the service structure and see just how few worker bees there actually are. Our ideas are exceeding one of our most important resources, trusted servants.





Welcoming and giving comfort

Each Nar-Anon Family Group has but one purpose.....welcoming and giving comfort to families of addicts.

Tradition Five.

How do we welcome and give comfort to families of addicts? There are many kinds of families. There are traditional families with blood relationships, and there are those who consider their recovery network to be their fellowship families. And there are blended families. There are parents, spouses, siblings, grandparents, sponsors from other fellowships, friends, and those who have lost loved ones. Anyone who has ever been affected by someone else's addiction qualifies. We should not gauge the importance of anyone's qualifications. The tradition states only that we welcome and give comfort.

Gossip about the addict can certainly

[....continued from page 1.](#)

Service and Relapse

not on their own merits. I have a tendency to over-complicate matters; editing a document, for example, and trying to "make it better," and in the process, making it so complicated the train of thought is lost. I have a tendency to overdo just about everything. When doing service and that happens, it creates an attitude of "well, they just don't know how to do it. I'll have to do it."

My biggest character defects are right between my ears. What I'm talking about is working my personal recovery - having and using a sponsor, working the steps, and remembering those are the things that will keep me from over-

make a recovering addict, who also qualifies for our rooms, uncomfortable or feel less than welcome. What message does this send about the recovery we have to offer? There is a big difference between the actions of the addict and how we are affected.

How about the member in the room who has lost a loved one? Constant addict updates do not help such a member feel this is a program that can help them, as described in the booklet *Continuing Our Journey*. We might be sending the message that those who have lost someone no longer belong. Once affected, always affected; these members qualify.

Many spouses have shared that they have been told, "At least it's not your child; it's worse when it's your child." Again, this is not very welcoming. Just as the NA program has been helpful

extending, both in my personal life and in fellowship service. It's when I neglect my personal recovery that I usually act out, but it may come out in trying to over-compensate in everything, including service.

I try to stay in contact with my sponsor. I try to work the steps to the best of my ability. When I do that, I learn to let go of my ego and let go of the results. That's when I am truly able to practice the traditions and concepts in my service, whether it be speaking to a group, or being part of a committee. It gets me out of my own way. That can lead to effective communication, following the guidance of group con-

for the addict, so Nar-Anon is for all those who qualify, no matter what the relationship. We can be more welcoming if we don't focus on our relationship to the addict. We can focus on the effects the addiction of another has had on our lives. Keeping it this simple may help more people feel welcome.

A member shares

At a recent meeting, a member shared "I believe we could focus completely on ourselves and never talk about the addict and still have a good meeting." I wanted to ring the imaginary bell as if we had a winner amongst us. This is exactly what we are here for. It takes time and willingness to get to the point that we no longer come to a meeting to share entirely about the addict. I have learned I have value that is not directly tied to the actions of the addict in my life.

science, and a feeling of being part of the whole, rather than isolated.

I spoke before a community group of teenagers recently. They didn't care about whether I had time in the program and lots of Nar-Anon service, they just wanted to hear my story. So that's what I shared - my personal story. The message I shared was one of hope; that if my life is better, maybe theirs could be too.

I'm grateful to be part of this fellowship. I'm grateful to be of service. And I hope I always remember that my limitations will keep me both honest and useful.

The Fellowship



Who do you call?

Nar-Anon World Service Committees often receive emails that don't fall under the responsibility of the committee receiving the inquiry. Who to contact about specific topics can be confusing. Maybe we can help. The following is a list of Nar-Anon World Service contacts you can send your inquiries to:

Donations:

- International Donations: WSO wso@nar-anon.org
- Other Donations: WSO wso@nar-anon.org

Literature:

- Submitting recovery literature: Literature Committee LitCom@nar-anon.org
- Fellowship input on recovery literature: Literature Committee LitCom@nar-anon.org
- Conference Approved Literature (CAL) that has been translated: WSO wso@nar-anon.org
- Service or Outreach Literature or ideas for literature: Board of Trustees bot@nar-anon.org

Concerns about unhealthy meetings in your region:

- Always start within your local service structure: Contact your GSR and then your Area and/or Region, if needed.
- The Policy and Guidelines Committee pandgcommittee@nar-anon.org can help you find guidance within the guides to local and world services

Websites:

- Local, area, or regional websites: the site's webmaster
- Nar-Anon World Service website: Website Committee webcommittee@nar-anon.org

Service and Outreach:

- Fellowship input on service and outreach: Board of Trustees bot@nar-anon.org
- Informing the public about Nar-Anon: Outreach Committee outreach@nar-anon.org
- Starting a Narateen meeting: Narateen Committee narateen@nar-anon.org



Newsletter eSubscriptions

Click here for your **FREE** e-subscription to [The Serenity Connection](#).
Subscriptions to date: **>5000!**

Newsletter Submissions

Articles are welcomed from all Nar-Anon members. Please focus on the Nar-Anon program and share your experience, strength, and hope from the perspective of a Nar-Anon member. Submit articles to newsletters@nar-anon.org. Each submission must be accompanied by a signed [Copyright Release Form](#) before it can be published.

**** Next Issue Submission Deadline: April 20, 2018 ****



Narateen Committee



Greetings from the World Service Narateen Committee! We are working with the Convention Committee to include Narateen participation at the Nar-Anon World Convention in Orlando, Florida, August 30 to September 2, 2018. We are tentatively planning two events: a panel discussion made up of Narateen Facilitators and teens in the program, and a Narateen meeting (closed) coordinated by World Service Organization (WSO) registered Narateen Facilitators. We welcome your participation if you are a teen, a WSO registered facilitator, or an interested Nar-Anon member planning to attend the convention. More information will be forthcoming as plans are finalized.

We are excited to be starting work on developing a Narateen Handbook. It is expected to be a comprehensive document to assist regions in developing their Narateen Programs. Any member interested in working on this project, please contact us at narateen@nar-anon.org. Our goal is to complete a draft this year and submit it to the process for service and outreach.

World Pool Committee

Urgent!

Did you know the World Pool Committee continues to accept and process applications year-round from members interested in joining the Board of Trustees or serving in the role of Conference Facilitator? You can visit the World Pool webpage at www.nar-anon.org/world-pool-committee or refer to the Guide to World Services for information on the requirements for these positions and the application processes. We are also accepting applications at any time from members interested in the position of Conference Secretary. Please direct your questions to the committee at worldpool@nar-anon.org.



Outreach Committee



Carry the Message of Hope

Nar-Anon's Vision Statement calls on us to carry the message of hope and outlines ways to help make it happen. Focus on outreach is one way.

Individuals, groups, areas, and regions can all play a part in achieving the vision through outreach. Work to empower your group. Take the issue of outreach to a business meeting and develop a plan. Contact your Area Service Representative (ASR) or region chair to learn about outreach efforts underway and step up to support the efforts.

No outreach efforts underway? Work with other trusted servants to make a change and help set outreach as a priority in your area or region. Together we can move ahead to achieve our vision.

Check the WS website Outreach landing page for information and free downloadable outreach tools <http://www.nar-anon.org/outreach/>. Have questions or need help with outreach efforts? Email outreach@nar-anon.org

Convention Committee



Register Now!

The 2018 World Convention, **Worldwide Passport – Recovering Together** is only five months away. The convention will be held August 30 to September 2, 2018 in Orlando, FL, USA. Have you registered yet? Booked your hotel room? Visit the website at <http://www.nar-anon.org/2018-naranon-world-convention/> for details and to register online. We hope to see you there!

The Fellowship

What Nar-Anon IS What Nar-Anon is NOT

Two traditions help us understand what Nar-Anon is and what Nar-Anon is not. Tradition Five states the purpose of Nar-Anon very clearly:

*Each Nar-Anon Family Group has but **one purpose; to help families of addicts.** We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of Nar-Anon, by encouraging and understanding our addicted relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of addicts.*

It goes on to tell us how to help families of addicts:

- Practice the Twelve Steps of Nar-Anon
- Encourage and understand our additive relatives
- Welcome and give comfort to families of addicts

What this tradition does not suggest is that Nar-Anon can be all things to all people. In fact, it is very clear in stating the purpose and then defining how to do this in our weekly meetings.

The Sixth Tradition helps us understand what Nar-Anon is NOT:

Our Family Groups ought never to endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim; but although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Narcotics Anonymous.

There are other organizations that can:

- Recommend treatment centers
- Get involved in legislation on addiction
- Recommend or distribute anti-overdose drugs
- Provide grief counseling for those who have lost loved ones.

These organizations have their own purposes, but they are not Nar-Anon. They are not bound by our traditions and we should not tie ourselves to them.

“Our Nar-Anon experience helps us understand we are powerless over another person’s drug addiction. This makes us aware at meetings of the danger of being diverted from our recovery by techniques which are focused on the

recovery of the drug addict, such as confrontation and intervention. The Sixth Tradition suggests there be no promotion or endorsement of any outside therapies (e.g., encounter groups, prayer groups, meditation groups, group dynamics) at Nar-Anon/Narateen meetings and our groups do not announce or discuss activities of other anonymous groups which follow the Twelve Step program. Nar-Anon newsletters and bulletin boards should not be used to publicize activities of other organizations...”

Guide to Local Services, p. 12-3

Members who are trying to carry the message can sometimes be exuberant and overzealous in their efforts, forgetting to look to the traditions and concepts for guidance.

As individual members we should not*:

- Start social media sites, web pages, etc. using the Nar-Anon name
- Post Nar-Anon’s conference approved, draft, or fellowship review literature on any website (posting a daily reading is a violation of Nar-Anon’s copyright*)
- Use the Nar-Anon logo on social media sites

Why is it so important to honor the principles? New members may not understand the principles or policies well enough to foresee the consequences of disregarding them. The identity of Nar-Anon can be lost when members go beyond our primary purpose. For example, a newer member could blame the group if their addicted relative relapsed after a treatment recommendation. If an outside organization became embroiled in public controversy, Nar-Anon would then be entwined as well. We offer a false sense of hope when we share anything more than the experience, strength, and hope we have gained from practicing the twelve steps.

Member experience

Once, in our region, the chair started a social media page for use as our website. There was no group conscience nor any discussion. The member thought it was a good idea because it was free. While looking at the page, a few members noticed ads for recovery bibles on the side. Advertising that might be of interest to readers of a site is sold on free pages and the platform had automatically aligned our page with recovery bibles. It seemed natural to some members that “free” comes with a price to pay.

The chair stood her ground, reasoning that others would understand we were not affiliated with the ads. However, the service board did not feel the same way and a group conscience decision was made to be self-supporting and to pay for a website.

**The Nar-Anon Family Groups’ Guide to World Services, p. 27-28*

Coming Events

Click on event titles for details or go to the [Events page](#) on the WSO website.

[VI Convencion Nacional](#)

2-4 De Marzo 2018

Solo por hoy... Que empiece por mi...

Hotel Sede
Aguamarina Beach Resort
Cancun, Mexico
477-475-8389

[Eastern Pennsylvania Region's 13th Annual Nar-Anon Convention](#)

March 9-11, 2018

Bridge to Serenity XIII: Discover the Difference—A New Way to Live
Wyndham Philadelphia - Bucks County, 4700 E Street Road
Feasterville-Trevoze, PA 19053
nikkischu@outlook.com

[Georgia Region Nar-Anon VII](#)

March 23-25, 2018

The Road Less Traveled
Jekyll Island Convention Center
75 Beachview Drive N.
Jekyll Island, GA 27513
www.naranonga.com

[2nd Annual Oklahoma Nar-Anon Convention](#)

March 24, 2018

Marriott Tulsa Hotel Southern Hills
1902 E 71st Street
Tulsa, OK 74136
Save the date!

[NCRNFG XXX San Jose Convention](#)

March 29-30, 2018

San Jose Convention Center
San Jose, CA
Mary W 650-814-6746 or
Naranon.northvalley@gmail.com
Save the date!

[Staten Island Nar-Anon's 4th Spirituality Breakfast](#)

April 8, 2018

Sharing Our Experience, Strength, & Hope
The Hilton Garden Inn
Staten Island, NY

[The Northern California Region Nar-Anon Family Groups Bi-Annual Convention](#)

June 8-10, 2018

University Plaza Waterfront Hotel
110 West Fremont Street
Stockton, CA 95202
Ruth B. ken.ruth.barnett@sbcglobal.net

[Nar-Anon World Convention](#)

August 30 to September 2, 2018

Worldwide Passport - Recovering Together
Orlando, FL
[Pre-Register Now for a \\$20 discount!](#)

[Southern California Region 28th Annual Narathon](#)

September 8, 2018

4221 Rose Drive
Yorba Linda, CA 92886
Save the date!

[New York Region Convention](#)

November 9-11, 2018

The Joy is in the Journey XXVIII
The Villa Roma Resort
Callicoon, NY
Save the date!



Nar-Anon Family Groups

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Headquarters**

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Email: wso@nar-anon.org

**Phone: (310) 534-8188
or (800) 477-6291**

Share Your Events

Did you know there is a page on the Nar-Anon website where you can share information about upcoming events? Go to <http://www.nar-anon.org/events> to see a list of upcoming events. Or send a PDF to events@nar-anon.org if you have a flyer you would like to share.

