

# A newsletter of the Autonomous Region of Narcotics Anonymous.

someone in NA who believes in me

and wants to help me in my recovery

The Autonomous Region of Narcotics Anonymous is comprised of groups & individual members who have come together to support each other in carrying the message in their local communities. Regardless of literature preferences, location or meeting formats.

## In this issue:

- Members Speak
  - Personal Responsibility
  - Tradition One
  - We can legally print our own Narcotics Anonymous literature
  - Mountain of Strength

## Our members speak

Anonymous

Personal Responsibility?

"Through our inability to accept personal responsibility we were actually creating our own problems." This sentence was written by Sylvia Wexler in 1960. How is "personal responsibility" determined when it comes to Narcotics Anonymous? It's obviously clear that nobody else can write our 4th Step, attend meetings, develop our personal program, or define the God of our understanding for us. On the other hand, how is "personal responsibility" determined when it comes to Narcotics Anonymous service?

Getting involved in NA Service was the best thing I accidentally did, so that action still fell under my inability to accept personal responsibility. I signed up to be an Area Service Representative Alternate (ASR Alt.) without knowing what responsibilities came with the position, or even what ASR stood for. I knew what alternate meant - I thought it meant I didn't have to do anything if the non-alternate did something. In other words, I was willing to volunteer to do something if someone else didn't.

*(Continued on page Two)*

This is our Fifth issue of this monthly newsletter. Our intention is for this newsletter to serve as a vehicle to communicate experience, strength and hope in recovery among the members and groups of ARNA. We welcome your input into this newsletter. Please contact us at [newsletter@arna.world](mailto:newsletter@arna.world).

Please send anything you would like to share with other members and groups of ARNA, including - personal experience, strength and hope in recovery; what becoming a part of ARNA has meant for you and your group; challenges and successes you have experienced in becoming a member of ARNA; anything else you would like to communicate with other members and groups of ARNA.

This is your newsletter. We will do our best to serve you by delivering an updated issue regularly, editing your input into an easily readable format, to facilitate effective communication between the groups and members of ARNA. We will also welcome any ideas you may have to improve the quality and effectiveness of this newsletter.

# Our members speak

## Seeking Outside Help

I received treatment for my addiction at one of the top treatment facilities in Asia. So I am no stranger to counsel from non-addicts. If it were not for that institute I would never have entered recovery. There is no shame in taking help from those who are trained to give it. In fact a large portion of our program teaches us to have the courage to ask for help.

Recovery has given me everything I had dreamt of during active addiction. I managed to finish my education, earn a professional degree, and have an honest relationship with a beautiful human being. It has given me a sense of dignity that I had lost years ago.


Upon being discharged from the treatment facility, I stopped all therapy sessions. I met with the psychiatrist regularly so that they would monitor the medication for my mental health issues. But there was no talk therapy to address my low self-worth issues. I thought sponsorship and working the steps were the answer to all my issues. That's what you all told me at the meetings.

For the first few years I ignored my issues of low self-worth. I did not realize the contempt that I was carrying around for myself. I often feel that I don't deserve the gifts life has given me, that I am stupid and useless. I am sure this would come as a shock to my near and dear, because I have a very confident demeanor, a certain cockiness about me. I believe this was a tool I adopted to counter the negative feelings of worthlessness.

At this point in my recovery I have worked the steps twice. In the most recent steps I worked, the underlying theme that kept reoccurring was a clear resentment towards my actions that brought my life crashing down. In the ninth step I wrote a letter apologizing to myself, hoping that would quench my anger towards myself. The self-talk that I go through on a day-to-day basis is so negative. If anyone spoke like that to a friend of mine, I would be enraged.

In the program, we often help guide the thoughts of one another. I've met and have given suggestions to many addicts to help them with negative thoughts. The irony was, I couldn't help myself. The girl I was dating at the time was a psychology student. She suggested I seek therapy. I insisted to her that the 12 steps and my sponsor were all that I required to overcome my feelings of low self-worth. Through the help of my sponsor and honest sharing it came to my attention that the way I spoke to myself was wrong. I never thought of myself as a person, or that my own inner dialogue also has an effect on the way I treat others. If I cannot treat myself kindly, it makes it difficult for me to treat those that I love with kindness.

*(Continued on page Three)*

 (Continued from page One) Personal Responsibility?

Showing up to that first Regional Service Committee (RSC) meeting, I was welcomed with open arms (hugged), provided with Service Manuals, along with some literature that was out for Review and Input. In fact, I was made to feel so welcomed I needed to escape as quickly as possible. Once I made my escape, I felt stuck with my decision, unable to accept any personal responsibility for my situation. I was unable to leave the hotel room and return to the new friends I had just met through NA service.

Eventually, I was able to obtain some ability to be responsible. This came about after staying clean for a little while, getting a sponsor, working a few steps, and asking a lot of questions. One of the first experiences I found that led me toward that ability was a clear understanding of what my responsibility entailed. I discovered the best explanation hidden in Chapter Two of my Basic Text, What is the Narcotics Anonymous Program? It came in a very small sentence, "Our primary purpose is to stay clean and to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." There it was! For the first time in my life I felt like I had a purpose, a personal responsibility - and it felt good! This sentence told me that maybe I can help someone else, that perhaps all the painful years of active addiction leading me to that point were worth it, if I could help one person find this new way to live. Now that's a gift that can keep on giving.

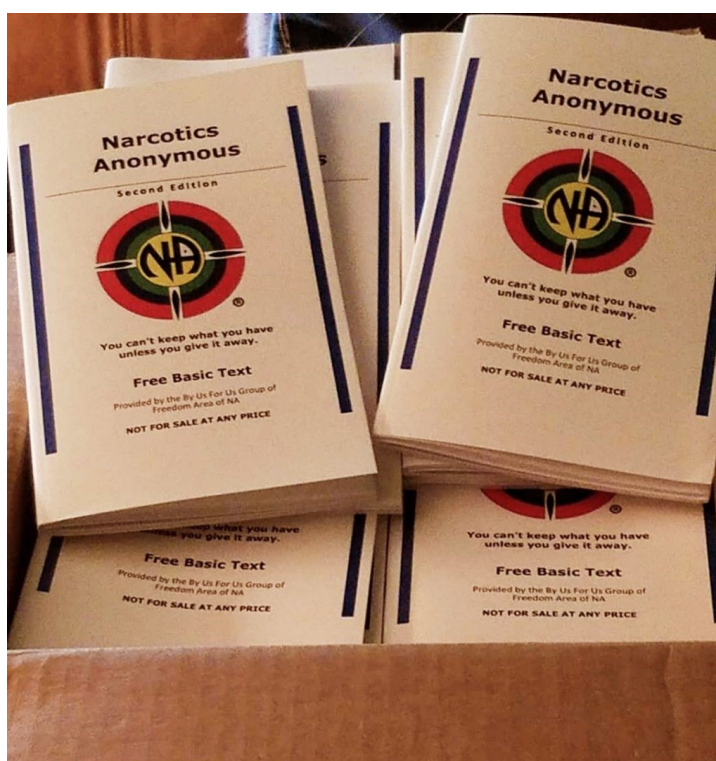
Having accepted responsibility, I waded deeper into NA Service. I studied all of our literature and service manuals with a quizzical mind, and asked more questions. I approached NA service the way President Kennedy asked America in 1960, "Ask not what NA can do for you, ask what you can do for NA." It felt good to deliver books to prisoners, answer a helpline call, give someone a ride to a meeting, write guidelines, and attend committee and sub committee meetings. But most of all, it felt good to watch other people recognize that somehow the need for drugs had in some way been lifted from them.

(Continued from page Two) Seeking Outside Help

Recently I was having a conversation with a friend and I told her some unnecessarily blunt truths. She was incredibly hurt by these unkind words, which made me reflect on my outlook on life. There are certain unspoken relationship boundaries that you don't cross. Being the addict that I am, I crossed all of them, but was clueless that I'd done anything wrong. I went to my sponsor with the broken pieces of my friendship. We reflected on the incident together, and both agreed that the unkind words were actually a projection of how I feel about myself. This is the incident which broke the camel's back. I'm starting to see the people around me getting hurt because of my low self-worth. My sponsor suggested seeking professional help to deal with the self-resentment I was hanging on to. I felt beaten, just like how I was when I came to the program.

This time, though, it was bittersweet. I knew that my thinking and actions had to be altered. Because of the resounding success I've had with recovery, I know that asking for help does not make me pathetic. I am willing to try anything that may help me overcome my shortcomings. I know that therapy might not make anything better, that these issues of low self-worth might be God's gift to me. But I have a possible solution to deal with this baggage that I've been carrying for all these years. I recently had my first therapy session. I felt a lot of pain that I have not been dealing with. It was not a pleasurable experience, but my discovery that I had an issue was empowering because now I can learn how to deal with it. I feel a lot lighter.

I have been practicing a few exercises we went over. I was also given an assignment which was much like a fourth step. With a professional I am able to delve deep into my issues. My sponsor is my spiritual guide, not a psychological professional. He is also my friend. He tells me about his life and the challenges he deals with. A professional charges you for their time and the main focus is you and your problems. Seeking outside help does not make me weak - it is preparing me for the further hurdles that life will throw at me. I choose to take all the help that I can get, both inside and outside of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.





# Our members speak

We can legally print our own Narcotics Anonymous literature

Every Narcotics Anonymous member yearns to be active in sending a message of hope to all the suffering addicts worldwide.

When I made the decision to become a maker or practical buyer of our NA literature and give it away freely, I was told to do my own research on if it is in fact legal and a lifesaving activity to engage in, as a NA member. The negativity on this subject in our NA fellowship was confusing to me. I worked as a Caseworker in a prison from 1984 until 2003 where there was nothing NA related for the inmates. It was a heart-wrenching experience when incarcerated addicts committed suicide. Many times, when they were confined in the hole without a top bunk, they had to twist a sheet around their necks and spin around on the floor, a slow tortuous death as they were too miserable to live. I remember like it was yesterday the miserable feeling calling their loved ones to tell them their son or brother had ended it all.

Would a basic text, made easily available for them, have possibly saved them? How many lives has NA literature saved? If we were still using and were mentally or physical imprisoned would we be grateful to have easy access to a basic text for free? Would we care what edition we received? Why in the hell would there be any opposition by any groups from getting our lifesaving basic text economically to those who need it most?

Many years of research on printing our NA literature, has taken us on an amazing recovery journey. We have been blessed to meet some of the most incredible loving fellow addicts; many who knew Jimmy Kinnon; all of these old-timers live the 5th tradition "Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers". We pray daily for our fellowship to be even more united, for us to support each other for the good of the fellowship and the addicts not born yet. For many members the 5th tradition's primary purpose keeps us clean, a matter of life or death for us.

Examining Tradition Four:

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole. The Basic Text says, "This means our groups are self-governing, and not subject to outside control." In their 1988 report to the WSC the Select Committee on Service Structure stated: "Group autonomy gives each group the right to accept or reject any decision made on its behalf, even if that decision is otherwise supported or rejected by the vast majority of other NA groups." It's Works How and Why says, "Group autonomy gives groups the creative freedom to find individual ways to carry the message." and, "With an open-minded attitude, we are receptive to new ways of reaching addicts."

The service center believes that they define the meaning of our Traditions through their policy decisions and through their use of the World Service Conference to affirm decisions they make. Groups use traditions to make decisions not a service center.

Tradition 2

Many pray that when we die, God knows we did our best to give hope at all costs, not allowing politics or non-education to cloud the rights of group conscience to provide those still suffering addicts our NA Basic Text basic, so beautifully written for free out of love for us by more than 1100 fellow NA addicts. What edition narcotics anonymous basic text is used practically to spread hope for those suffering is of no consequence to God and our group's understanding.

No addict wants to see another addict die

Today we should unite as a loving NA recovery fellowship and notify all NA members that we can print our own literature. We have made a shortcut for new members and those old-timers in doubt with a factual declaration statement. Proofed by groups, old timers and legal counsel – A Traditions- based statement detailing why and how Groups can and should print our NA literature.

Together our entire fellowship, united as recovery warriors have a responsibility to spread hope to suffering addicts all over our world. We have the opportunity and privilege of freely giving NA literature in the most obvious places it is needed, growing our fellowship as it was originally intended, such as prisons, jails, hospitals and institutions, homeless shelters, rich and poor countries groups, treatment centers, motels, pawn shops and the streets.

Utilizing honesty; our beloved NA members need not be confused

Promoting unity - We pray for all groups' anonymity in our loving fellowship through our ultimate authority and our Higher power. If a newcomer has an edition of our basic text we do not use in our group, buy them or have them get the basic text edition you use ASAP. We need to come together for the sake of our newcomers utiliz-

(Continued on page Five)



(Continued from page Four) We can legally print our own Narcotics Anonymous literature

ing our traditions. We need to come together now for the addict not born yet. How long is too long for addicts all over the world to go without our life saving literature as is unaffordable for them and they are mistakenly told it is illegal to print our own literature?

Our Grey Book, 2nd edition, 3rd edition (some call baby blue), 4th edition, 5th edition and 6th edition of our NA basic text, all these editions have never been disapproved, they have never been illegal.

We are taught NA recovery is an action program;

We take care of our area's literature needs thus providing hope where there is none. Many of us grew tired of sitting on our behinds handcuffed while we were told a service center was supposed to take care of this. We were told, "Be a part of a fundraiser, inmates can write letters and standby. Be careful what you do as the service center will have you ostracized if you join the wrong NA group." As a newcomer it was easy to feel governing and bullying from NA cliques and traditions were not being followed in our adult recovery program. Suffering addicts are dying every day. Why would any NA recovery warriors want to stop groups giving back freely; our NA literature of hope? This experience was detrimental to my personal recovery.

Old-timers valued message

Old-timers tell us the best book to put in a still suffering addict or newcomers' hand is our NA basic text. The little white book is excellent and economical; however, the print is small; many using addicts do not have reading glasses especially in jail. Also, the "Introduction to NA" book is extremely formal, nothing beats an NA basic text that addicts can more easily relate to.

Researched Facts from FIBT & hard won experience from old-timers

To print our NA Literature so no one in the World can criticize your group and all members should support you, follow the guidelines below and you can support our 5th tradition and 12th step with integrity.

Join a group that is printing and giving freely. Or start a NA group. Discuss printing and giving freely then pray on it. There are many valid reasons to print, here are some appropriate examples:

\* Your group has no NA literature.

\* Still suffering addicts with nothing are dying today.

\* Area jails and prisons have no NA literature for inmates or in their institutional libraries.

Over the last 40 years the entire world's prison population is exploding due in part to the disease of addiction. The USA currently incarcerates more of its citizens than any Country in the world for drug related and alcohol offenses. Newcomers leave their first meeting without a basic text because they cannot afford one. For many members giving basic texts (of any edition) is part of our personal recovery program to become productive members of society.

If a Group decides, as part of its Group Conscious process, to produce literature or otherwise use the NA name or logo(s), the Tradition 2 and 4 are satisfied. If the Group ensures that the use and distribution of the literature is neither attributed to the Group ("Freely provided by ABC Group") nor identified as "for" a particular recipient (the cover cannot identify the beneficiary "Property of . . . XYZ" or "Gifted to . . . XYZ", Tradition 6 is satisfied. The Group may receive reimbursement for printing and distribution costs, but the Group is ultimately responsible for the costs and per Tradition 7 the failure of a recipient to reimburse the Group does not relieve them of their responsibility to pay for the printing and distribution.

The Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust or (FIPT) below allows NA groups to print. The reliance upon Trustee Bulletins is probably misplaced as the service center believes it has legally superseded these with the FIPT. Nor (per point 2) should there be a requirement that NA Groups only print literature to be used within the Group as a Group's use of the NA Fellowship's intellectual property is controlled by the Traditions and not the determination of a Service Board or Committee (or a Special Worker) per Tradition 4.

Only NA groups have the authority under IP Bulletin #1 to reproduce fellowship-approved recovery literature in certain instances. When preparing to reproduce NA Fellowship-approved recovery literature, we suggest that NA groups discuss the Fourth Tradition and follow these six general guidelines:

1. An NA group shall only reproduce NA Fellowship approved recovery literature when it has a clear need to do so.

2. NA Fellowship-approved recovery literature reproduced by an NA group should be distributed only within that group. Such materials should always be given away free of charge; they should never be sold to generate income.

3. The text of NA Fellowship-approved books and pamphlets reproduced by an NA group should not be altered or modified in any way.

(Continued from page Five) We can legally print our own Narcotics Anonymous literature

4. The copyright for the item being reproduced should be shown prominently as follows: "Copyright (c) [year of first publication by NAWS], Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved."

5. As long as the conditions of IPB# 1 and this IPB# 4 are met, no advance permission is required. Groups need not, but are encouraged to, register themselves with the World Service Office.

6. In the event that there is any conflict relating to the or interpretation of this bulletin, the procedure outlined in IP Bulletin #5, Conflict Resolution Within the NA Fellowship, will govern

Making amends to my Father through God's purpose for my group with H&I

My Dad grew up during the great depression. He was the greatest humanitarian I have ever met, a walking service center for others. He would bury dead animals along the road so they could go to heaven. Still today many years after his death people mention they really miss Jerry Hicks walking all over town with his dogs, always smiling and waving. The old teacher was always interested in what you were doing with your life and any problems you had, he was always full off positivity. If I could just be 5% the man my dad was, it will have been a good life.

Can you relate or imagine trying to explain to him our frivolous literature controversy? My Dad was alive when I first went to NA. He met some of the members; he was loved there as much as me. He ran the educational department at the Lorton federal prison & worked in other prisons before that. From that prison and the streets of D.C. he knew what addiction was and how sick it is. He told me I had finally found my place, a home with NA. He had watched his only son use and destroy himself for more than 28 years. Imagine telling him instead of using hard earned money to buy or make basic texts to save addicts lives that for every dollar we give to a service center they use 7 cents for fellowship development and, and 93 cents of every dollar for rent and to pay themselves? I am positive my dad would not give them much consideration, as addicts are dying today, and he did not play games with money. He would want us to use our money to give hope directly.

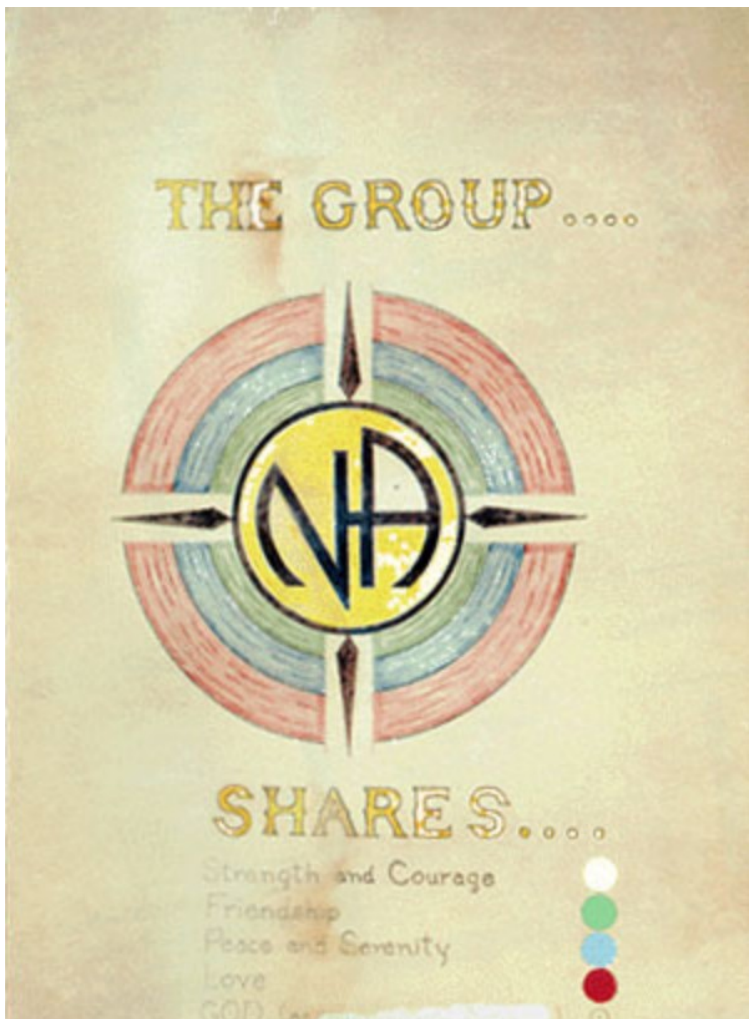
This basic text printing verification report can be translated in other languages and forwarded to Countries that have been told it is illegal to print our own NA literature while suffering addicts there are dying. It should be noted that a special service center believes that they define the meaning of our Traditions through their policy decisions and through their use of the World Service Conference to affirm decisions they make. Again groups use traditions to make decisions not a service center.

By not dragging our feet we can help our fellowship grow. How many suffering addicts have been left out when we are told to pay prices for a basic text we cannot afford to buy in quantity? For whose benefit?

\*Also we can and are ready to put out a video that teaches how to make affordable basic texts.

\*It is relevant that NA members realize they can write their own group literature.

\*Why not have a basic text that includes a step working guide attached in the back for us to donate to the prisons? Nothing could be more powerful in the hands of a suffering addict. Inmates are having their own meetings and utilizing sponsorship behind the wall, where available. We are having inmate sponsors.



# Our members speak

About 600,000 results (0.02 seconds)

## mountain of strength

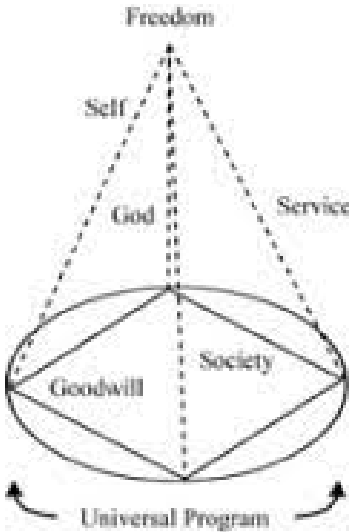
**Meaning:**mountain of strength. **Arna** as a girl's **name** is related to the Hebrew **name** Arnina. The **meaning** of **Arna** is "mountain of strength".

www.thebump.com › arna-baby-name

I’ve heard some talk about what ARNA means, what it stands for. I did some research, and found the definition above. The serendipity of the name “ARNA” and this definition fired my imagination and gave me visuals of a mountains with an “NA” carved into its crevices. To many cultures, a mountain symbolizes raised consciousness; where we go to seek our spiritual strength and nourishment.

I visualize ARNA as being a mountain of strength and hope. This mountain supports NA groups to be truly autonomous. *“Autonomy gives our groups the freedom to act on their own to establish their atmosphere of recovery, to serve their members, and to fulfill their primary purpose. It is this aspect of autonomy that makes it one of our most precious possessions”* (from Tradition 4). With the hope of real unity among groups working together to support each other to be autonomous, ARNA merely exists to support and strengthen each group, and in turn, the fellowship.

As the group grows in its autonomy, its members begin to recognize and realize that somebody else is not going to do for them, what they can and should do for themselves, in terms of service and taking care of their group’s primary purpose. As each empowered group member creatively and spiritually takes responsibility for their group, they allow a loving and caring Higher Power to work through their Group’s Conscience, the way the predecessors envisioned it when they laid out these traditions.



The description of our Symbol, as described in the beginning of our significant literature, talks about the pyramid growing up from the four sides – *“All parts thus far are closely related to the needs and aims of the addict seeking recovery and the purpose of the fellowship seeking to make recovery available to all. The greater the base, as we grow in unity in numbers and in fellowship, the broader the sides and the higher the point of freedom.”* I see ARNA as that quiet, peaceful mountain of strength – the growing combined strength of its members helping each other to grow in autonomy and unity of purpose - ever reaching higher up in our combined consciousness as we grow in strength and unity.