

NA TODAY

Free Publication

Of The Australian Region

Jails & Institutions Edition

March 2019



Welcome to Narcotics Anonymous

We are glad that you have made it here, and hope that you decide to stay. It is important for you to know that you will hear God mentioned at NA meetings. What we are referring to is a Power greater than ourselves that makes possible what seems impossible. We found that Power here, in NA, in the program, in the meetings, and in the people. This is the spiritual principle that has worked for us to live drug-free a day at a time; and whenever a day is too long, then five minutes at a time. We can do together what we could not do alone. We invite you to use our strength and our hope until you have found some of your own. There will come a time when you too may want to share with someone else what has been freely given to you.

-From IP #22

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Editor's Introduction</i> | 3 |
| <i>International Events</i> | 4 |
| <i>Development of Virtual H&I Meetings</i> | 5 |
| <i>H&I in Far North Queensland</i> | 6 |
| <i>Because I believe in the message</i> | 8 |
| <i>An indigenous addict, 1 year clean</i> | 9 |
| <i>Poets' Corner</i> | 10 |
| <i>NA Comics</i> | 14 |
| <i>Active addiction, full of false promises</i> | 16 |
| <i>Another shot at life</i> | 18 |
| <i>NA @ Home Information</i> | 20 |
| <i>Reaching Out</i> | 23 |
| <i>NA Experiences: Part 1</i> | 24 |
| <i>Women's FD Workgroup</i> | 26 |



The NA Today Magazine belongs to all members of Narcotics Anonymous. Its mission is to provide recovery and service information, as well as recovery-related entertainment.

In keeping with this mission, the editorial staff are dedicated to providing a magazine which is open to articles and features written by members from around Australia, as well as current service and convention information.

Foremost, we're dedicated to the celebration of our message "any addict can stop using, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live."

The NA Today Magazine welcomes articles from all readers. Articles can be your own story, experience, strength and hope, a response to any article that has appeared in the NA Today, or simply a viewpoint about an issue of concern in the NA Fellowship.

Articles should be no more than 800 words, and we reserve the right to edit. All articles must include a name, address, and phone number. First names and last initial will be used as the signature line unless the writer requests anonymity.

Send us your experience in recovery, your views on NA matters, cartoons, ideas etc to:

natoday@na.org.au

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**NA NATIONAL HELPLINE
1300 652 820**

**FOR MEETINGS IN AUSTRALIA
AND OTHER INFO**

WWW.NA.ORG.AU

Dear Readers

Welcome to another edition of NA Today!

As always, we have a great collection of NA related content for you to consume. Our literature tells us that, if not arrested by an active program of recovery, the outcome of the disease of addiction is often jails, institutions or death. Many of our members have served jail time or come into contact with other institutions, and often hear the message of recovery whilst here.

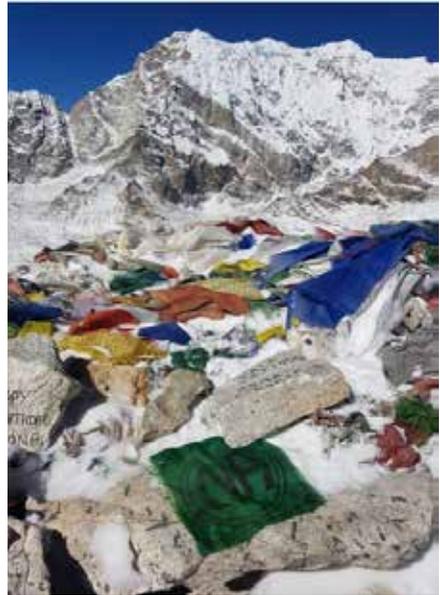
Thus, the theme of this edition is 'Jails and Institutions'.

We have a couple of articles written by members of the ARSC discussing the efforts to carry the NA message into jail populations. We also have an article by a member who heard the message whilst in jail, and some articles gathered from Reaching Out, an NA Magazine which targets addicts who are incarcerated.

Personally, the institution which I came into contact with the most as a result of my using was the hospital. I also came into contact with mental wards, rehabs, detox's and Centrelink. From staying clean a day at a time, I now no longer have to deal with any of those institutions. I was hospitalised over a dozen times due to an illness caused by my using. I would often have to front up to emergency rooms requesting help. The last time I was in a hospital bed was when I was given the Gift Of Desperation. I was sick of being sick. Thanks God, the next day, when I was ready to get clean, the doors of NA were open.

Our next issue will be on a related theme—the growth of virtual recovery.

We welcome articles from members in Australia sharing their experience, strength and hope on this, or any other, topic. We



take articles of maximum 1000, or poems, artwork, or any other way we can carry the message. Send submissions to natoday@na.org.au

If you didn't know already, NA Today is already available online. You can download this magazine and subscribe to receive notifications when new editions are released by heading to www.na.org.au/multi/na-today. If you subscribe, we'll also send you blog posts of cartoons, previously published articles, humour, and announcements for upcoming NA events in between editions.

Over the last four months I've been travelling throughout Nepal. The folks here are very passionate about recovery. Above is a photo of an NA Prayer flag, which was given to me at the Nepalese regional convention, being placed at Kala Pathar near Everest Base Camp, 5540 metres above sea level. Thankyou NA

Yours in Grateful Loving Service,

Heath W

International Events

Australia is a remote place, surrounded by sea. It can seem like the rest of the world is very far away. This section is to let our members know that no matter where you are in the world, NA is always there. Some of our members report deep spiritual growth from seeing what it's like to be an addict in another country. Others may be leaving the country for the first time, and still others enjoy the ability to travel clean, where they never could before. No matter how experienced with travel our members may be, we are never alone, worldwide.



USA

Never Alone Group - Deaf NA Meeting
Every Thursday 7pm CST
Meetings use both voice interpretation and sign ASL (American sign language).
Zoom Platform: <https://zoom.us/j/802616925>

INDIA - Lonavala

United Women's Convention of NA
18-22 September 2019
Venue:
Serenity Resort
Lonavala, India
More Info: nawomen.india@gmail.com



SWITZERLAND-Zurich

Together Free #ECCNA33
19-21 July 2019
Venue: Platzspitz Park, Zurich
Contact: bascna.nynl@outlook.com
Web: <https://www.eccna.eu/>

Development of Virtual H&I Meetings

Last year the Outreach sub-committee and the indigenous sub-committee travelled to Darwin to put on workshops around carrying the message with cultural sensitivity to indigenous Australians.

A tough topic and beautiful learning for all involved. While up there we presented to numerous facilities letting them know what NA is and what we can offer these facilities. We had been toying with the idea of a virtual H&I for quite some time. We presented to a facility that had previously been closed to having NA attend there.

Our message shared from the heart was heard by the heart, and we had a gem of an idea.

We started doing a Virtual H&I each week—video both ways. Was amazing to watch our message of hope touch the hearts of the clients at this facility.

We recently had some members from Kentucky (USA) contact to share what had worked and not worked for us regarding virtual meetings. With our support they have started one over there and I recently had the privilege of sharing at their H&I.

As a result of our virtual meetings, the facility we have been doing this at has recently started taking their clients to the local meetings in Darwin.

We have had a small struggling meeting in Victoria start to join in to the Virtual H&I as part of their meeting format. We have had speakers from the USA, India, New Zealand and Australia carrying our message of hope.

We can only grow from here. We can potentially service up to 20 facilities at a time and wholly invite PR chairs who have established relationships with addiction service providers to contact us. We would love to add as many facilities as we can.

Between this, the NA@Home meetings, and a recently made Radio CSA aimed at rural areas, we are now starting to see how we can reach out to places NA has not previously been able to reach.

With the huge improvements to the website and our phone line service by the IT subcommittee ease of access to these resources at its strongest point in our region's history.

We have already seen the increase in face to face meetings from addicts hearing the message through these platforms.

The virtual H&I also provides opportunities to do this type of service for those who are isolated, or disabled, or single parents, etc, etc. It has been beautiful to see how an isolated addict not only gets this service opportunity but has the strongest message for another in isolation.

A lot of us involved are excited to see how technology and fellowship development is breaking down the geographical boundaries. No addict need die from the horrors of addiction without hearing our message.

As an addict that got clean through online meetings in a place that at the time was 4000km from the nearest face to face meeting, it is a privilege to be part of this service and seeing the ripple on into addict's lives. It is how we thank you. "My gratitude speaks when I share and care the NA way".

YILS, Brett (Outreach Chair)

P.S. If anyone is interested in being a speaker, or has a facility in mind that may be keen to be part of this, please contact outreach@na.org.au.

H&I in Far North Queensland

After being involved in H&I in NSW and QLD for a little while now, I thought I'd share some of my experience.

When I came to north QLD 10 years ago, I came from southern NSW. I had a very workable relationship with the AOD worker in a particular southern tableland's gaol. I had an in, whereby I could thwart the ever present culture of reluctance to assist, which I received from the majority of staff members.

My involvement in farming resulted in me becoming very busy. After a few years I noticed something was missing from my life—recovery.

I was missing my H&I service.

I became involved with H&I at the local rehab, which was satisfying to say the least. I genuinely miss H&I when I don't do it.

After a period of time I came across an enthusiastic staff member from the local gaol. An opportunity presented itself.

We met the officer outside working hours; we had the opportunity to assist men inside who were trying to run their own NA meeting on a weekly basis.

We could supply all literature and banners etc., and the staff member could expedite entry to the facility for our literature and us.

Our 'brief' was to be guest speakers and to help keep it on track while maintaining an atmosphere of recovery.

That was my introduction to "institutional meetings".

Men who had been exposed to NA and wanted to get and stay clean inside. It was different. We didn't do the panel presentation as much as we shared with the men our

stories and they shared their tales of struggling to stay clean whilst incarcerated and all the stresses that accompany that.

I found I was looking forward to the gaol meetings, at times more than our regular meetings. I found Lotus meetings were a strong, very real meeting.

Once the members get beyond the "big house" stories, their sharing was an absolute inspiration.

Men struggling to stay clean in very close proximity to temptation and all the other compressed experiences that crowded, locked up men go through.

It went well for a year or more. You could tell what the honesty of sharing would be by who was there.

Gaol at times is not the place to bare your soul. Men had a weekly meeting and we attended every 2 weeks. They had their own format, which they followed.

What made the difference was having a point of contact that had some 'bark' with admin staff. The meeting grew in size till it hit the fan as larger numbers of inmates were attending.

As strong members were paroled out or relocated, group dynamics changed.

Not always a good thing. Now we are back to a formal H&I presentation format. That said, we still get 2-10 members every fortnight, often the same men (when they can work the system to attend), we can only plant the seed of recovery.

But that point of contact we have with a residential manager inside is highly valued still.

Qld corrections and NA has had some fine moments. A foray into the higher levels of dept. corrections enabled a directive that “every facility in Qld should have an NA presence”. That was great for a central clearance point and cooperation in Brisbane metropolitan facilities. It failed to reach FNQ though. Proving that each gaol favors its autonomy.

H&I in my opinion repeats its cycles.

The typical refrain of ‘remember when so & so coordinated, it went really well’. Until that individual became burnt out and suffered the fate of most before them. They walked away. This is well known within most service arms. There is an IDT from NAWS on making service attractive.

This NA presence is being duplicated in many NQ locations. Rural/ regional Qld fellowships suffer the same problems as anywhere else.

Insufficient members to cover service roles. That usually means that one person will have an attempt at serving, usually lasting some months, till distance travelled, poor attendance or lack of cooperation from staff, result in a lack of willingness to continue. Greater Qld still has work to do in some locations.

Rehabilitation units are an easier fix. They too move in cycles, with periods of many volunteers to none at all.

Qld rehabs in metropolitan centers and regional locations are well represented.

The connection, we as members of NA, have with the staff at any facility we visit, is in my

opinion, something to be valued.

What has been moving forward is women’s prison H&I in Qld.

A member from Brissi has been having a great run with members willing to present to 2 women’s prisons.

Overcrowding is a reality in prisons today. Brisbane women’s correctional center was so crowded that they changed Gatton to a women’s prison mid 2018. Qld staff were keen to get NA in the new venue. Brisbane women’s H&I are rallying to support. They turn up weekly.

Obviously we need more volunteers to maintain the weekly presentations.

Institutional meetings are happening in Capricornia correctional center near Rockhampton. NA is servicing the farm and the secure unit every 2 weeks.

Since Greater Qld moved to the new service system, previously isolated NA communities have been able to actively engage with a wider community to assist and take part in service delivery.

Communication between the rural communities has improved. This means that local groups can service their own local areas with regards to delivery of outside services more readily. I’ve been going up to Lotus with primarily one other member for a while now. I’ve found I miss the experience when I can’t attend. It keeps me in touch with how rough our lives can actually get if we’re not vigilant.

If you’re not involved with H&I, try it on for size. See how it fits. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Thanks, Tony

Because I believe in the message

When I was young, I was always in trouble with the law. I was in and out of police stations, lock up and juvenile detention centres.

I was a tear away, troubled teen and drugs were the answer to all those troubles.

They warmed me when I was cold, they shut me down when I was in trauma, they let me go through life virtually absent.

When I got older I was sent to prison for a lengthy stay. It was brutal.

I saw the worst of the worst and when I got out, I'd had enough.

I knew the only way to stay out of prison was to stop using and I had been to a couple of H&I meetings on the inside, so I knew about NA, though not properly.

It took me a while to get the hang of the total abstinence, the service etc, but when I did and my life improved so quickly, I felt very drawn to H&I.

I joined the committee and started attending H&I panels.

I was anxious at first, actually I still am usually a bit, but I push through because I believe in the message.

A few years down the track I moved to a more country area and there was some meetings but no H&I.

After some years a detox opened in our Area and there was some talk of starting a panel there.

Me and another member from the Area went and spoke to the manager of the Detox. They were a little unsure at first but let us have a start.

The meetings there have been running for over a decade now and in our Area, I often hear people sharing about their first introduction to NA through those panels.

"An addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live."

This simple message is being passed along by selfless addicts taking the time to talk to people in institutions like someone did for me.

Anonymous

An indigenous addict, 1 year clean

Hi, my name is Stewie, and I am an indigenous addict.

At 11 years of age I drank alcohol for the first time.

My family often had BBQs so I drank the half empty bottles or glasses. I remember liking the way it felt.

Growing up I suffered all sorts of abuse from my step father, physical and mental abuse.

I started smoking pot and sniffing all sorts of stuff. With the pot and the pills, plus booze, came crime and I became violent myself.

By now I was free to do whatever I wanted as I was running away from home.

It didn't take long before I ended up in a boys home and then on release, my drinking and drugging got worse.

My violence peaked. I ended up in court after a drink and drug where I received an 18 year sentence.

In prison I was introduced to the needle, first speed, then heroin and for the next 15+ years I used and abused every drug I could get my hands on.

I used violence to get drugs and then about 2 years ago, I was introduced to NA.

I went to my first meeting for all the wrong reasons. I was hoping it would help with my parole.

I tried to pretend I was doing something about my drug problem.

I didn't stop using but the message began to get through.

I heard outside guests speak and I wanted what they had. I tried to do it my way but couldn't stay clean.

Then the prison I am in started a drug intervention unit. I was ready and I had an open mind.

29 of us began our journey and after 14 weeks I am the only one who stayed clean. Then I stayed on to carry the message again and again. I was the only person to remain drug free.

I have learned to work the steps. I have a sponsor and by the grace of God I am one year clean today.

Today I am a mentor in the Unit that gave me my life back.

I try to help the addict who still suffers and I am so grateful to NA and its members who come into the prison and carry the message.

Thank you NA.

Stewie D.

Living a life based on our expectations,
Can breed self-pity and arise frustrations.
If we count the good things, we may have a revelation,
That by accepting our lives as they are, brings gratification.

We all have moments in life when we feel pain.
If we face it head on we have the most to gain.
When we learn the lesson it brings, we will never be the same.
A slightly better version of ourselves we will have attained.

A stable life requires us to first lay a strong foundation,
Clear any wreckage from our past of our own creation.
With spiritual principles we develop a deep understanding and familiarisation.
Other areas of our lives we can then begin configuration.

For us to unlock our potential,
The effort we put in is quintessential.
Not brains, nor braun are really essential,
For our personal growth to become exponential.

Learning to build a new way of life,
Takes time and effort, not happening overnight.
The best version of ourselves we begin to incite,
Old behaviours and attitudes we overwrite.

Grantley C

When I get too tired
the playground of my mind opens up
and everyone comes to play.

Darren M, Geelong.

The blackness consumes me
I am enveloped in dark
I cannot breathe
I crawl inside myself
Hurting, wanting, needing
Small slivers of light appear
The darkness has cracks
The light permeates
Growing in its intensity
I yearn to look at the light
To be bathed in its warmth
I allow the rays to wrap around me
I open my eyes to what could be
The fear subsides
The dark recedes
I stand naked in the light, wanting,
searching, hungry for it
The light wraps me up
I let go of the dark
I stay in the light
The light is where I need to be
The light is love

Anonymous.

I Was
You are heavy
Like a sac of potato
You are hard
you grow spikes on my back
A rotten smell I can barely breathe
I am familiar with you
I have known you all my life

I Will
Dragging my feet
Like quicksand you swallow me
Worry I call you
I can barely move
You suffocate me
I am familiar with you
I have known you all my life

I am
Flying on the beach
My feet barely touching the sand
I am not familiar with you
I am uncomfortable to know you
Take my hand, show me the way
I want to be with you

Andrea P

~Sponsorship~

there is a bridge
take my hand she says take my number let's walk across together into the light
I'm scared I say I'm too tired too long I've been in the dark I don't know how to walk
I've forgotten all I once knew
call me she says call me every morning at 8.30
she answers
every time I call her she answers
are you sleeping still? are you lying down?
sit up she says your voice is so soft speak up she says
come into the light
I will meet you on the bridge take my hand take my number
i'm here i'm listening just breathe she says
walk with me out across the bridge into the light, walk with me out of the dark
you are not alone, I am here
you can do this, I believe in you

Caris.

~A Real Curse~

It was a curse my mind wouldn't stop
When I needed it, my mind wouldn't start
My unmanageable mind was the thing on top
I drowned it until I even killed my heart
There in a darkened street with dim lights
I followed the curved curbs to salvation
An army that gives you the rights to fights
With humble humiliation I will face the nation
Not to scream anymore but to voice
Stability and common hum of unity
No longer expressing I did not have a choice
My eyes enlarged to far, I couldn't see
What was right in front of me
See I want it to stop and it won't
I need it to start and it don't
Christ I pray I leave it to your will
My mind body and soul is making an appeal
Your warmth, love and guidance I want to feel
Let me become part of the world that's

REAL

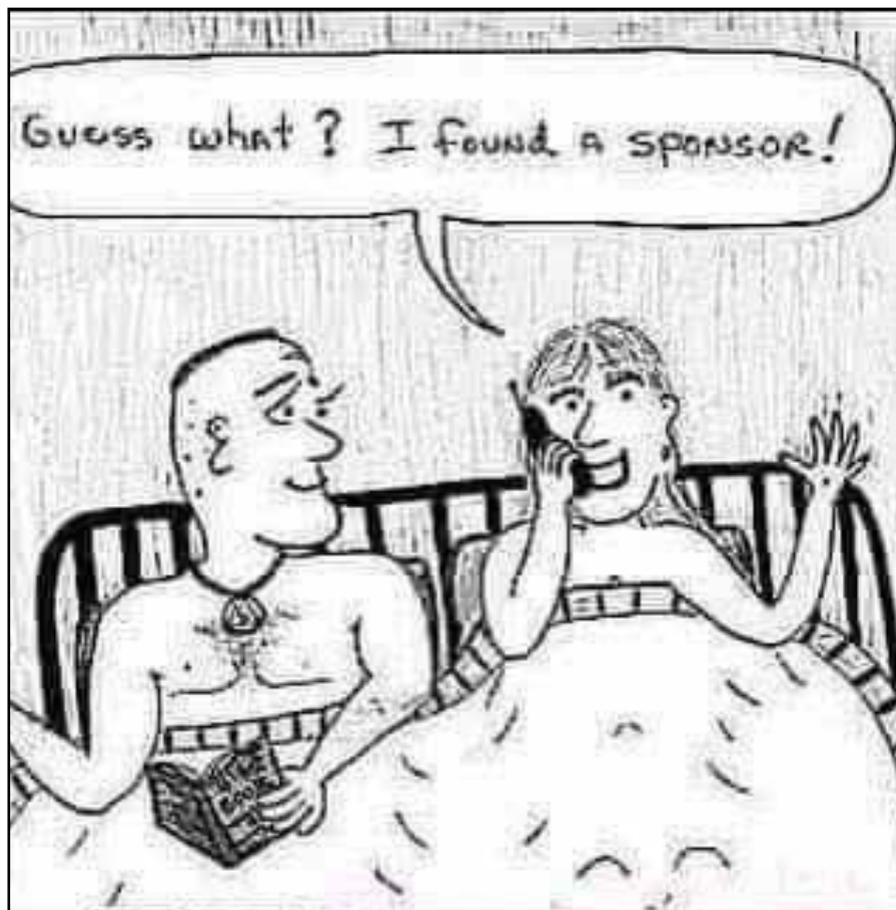
David T

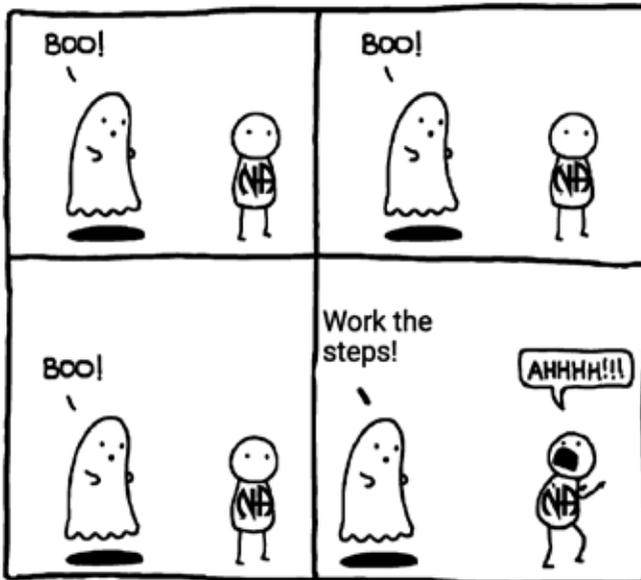
~Break-Up Letter to Drugs~

Dear Drugs,

Some of the best years of my life were with you. I learnt how to make something out of nothing and the end result was you. Many warned me, so many feared you but I embraced the life. I walked away from family, friends, work and lovers to be with you. Your friends became my friends, no matter how much I disliked them. I found myself laughing with others entrusted in you about things that went against my morals. Destroying innocent people just for units. Becoming someone I didn't even recognize in the mirror any more. I would have killed for you, I mean, I would have went to prison for you, we both know I was preparing for it. There's no easy way to say this but I've got to let you go. We had fun while it lasted but somewhere along the way I lost myself. The thought of letting you go kills me but I know if I don't I'll be the one that dies. It's become a love/hate relationship. Toxic at best. You've taken so much from me. At the start it did feel like I was taking from you. Goddamn you fooled me up well. I'm losing my health and freedom. I've met someone else that loves me for me and when you're around I am just not that. I have hurt the ones closest to me. I can't undo the damage but as long as I say goodbye to you and keep you locked out, I can apologize and I know they will forgive me. I can't argue or compromise with you. Goodness knows I have tried. I've gone back to you so many times hoping it will be different but no matter how hard I try it never is. I know you'll try and contact me. I have a long hard road to go. Soon enough you'll try to say hi to me. I'll have to remind myself of the hate and pain you bring. I am going into hiding for a while, to a place you're not welcome, into a world you're not allowed, to build my strength up so the day you do find me I can tell you NO. You're not getting the better of me. So here I am taking a stand. I'm choosing a new life; I'm choosing the NA way. I don't know what or how that looks like yet but I'm choosing a higher power. I'm choosing family. I'm choosing Kristy. I'm choosing love. I'm choosing me.

Goodbye forever, Chad.





Active addiction, full of false promises

My journey of recovery started when I was 20 years old.

I was a broken shell of a girl. I'd like to say a broken woman, by my actions and attitudes towards life reflected nothing less of a scared little girl.

I used drugs to escape reality.

I would run away from anything and anyone as soon as it got hard or whatever value they brought into my life had seemingly stopped. That's how it was for me.

As soon as things got tough or uncomfortable, I would run away, I would hide, I would change something in my life as minimally as possible for some sense of internal relief.

However, it was never fixed, I was never fixed. Change was only ever a band-aid to my seemingly endless accumulation of problems.

Throughout my life, I felt like the world owed me something, that I now see, I did not deserve. I had no regard for other people's feelings or how I affect other people. I couldn't see them. I couldn't see anyone.

All I could see were my wants and needs and how I could exploit other people to get them.

Even if I was unaware, I was doing it, I did it. I didn't do anything for anyone.

Unless I knew my relationship with that person would end if something didn't change, then I'd try really hard, because I needed those relationships, those people to hold me up, because I could not hold myself up.

I required saving many times during my active addiction.

In the beginning, drugs created this bridge to other people that I had never had before, the gap I so often felt between myself and others seemed to disappear when I was high.

It seems I had found the cure to so many things.

It was a cure to my depression, to my anxiety, my social awkwardness. It was a cure to my lack of self-esteem and my lack of confidence.

I had found my solution to living life.

I had found my purpose through the taking and using of drugs. And I was happy, at first.

It felt like stadium lights had been turned on within me and my life in general.

Through using drugs, it seemed that life had become full of opportunities. However, in the space of 4 years, drugs had taken away every opportunity, every ounce of natural light I had within me.

By the end, it felt like I had no soul left to give.

I felt this massive gape within my heart. That once discomfoting gap I'd felt, and I had used drugs to artificially fill, now felt so painful and as deep and wide as the Pacific Ocean.

I realize in hindsight, that that pain and emptiness I felt in my heart, was the lack of love I had for myself.

By the end, my world had gotten so small. The only thing that mattered anymore was the getting and using of drugs. My past haunted me, and I could see no escape insight.

The road that addiction inevitably let me down, turned out to be a trap, a dead end, full of false promises.

I could see where I was, and I didn't want to go further down. I was done. I was mentally and emotionally done. I couldn't fight this fight anymore. I couldn't recognise myself in the mirror, I couldn't see who the person looking back at me was. I was empty.

I still had a lot to lose externally, but the internal turmoil is what drove me into wanting to go to rehab.

Looking back, I am so grateful that I am a sensitive person by nature, because if I hadn't been, I wouldn't have come into recovery when I did.

When I first came into recovery through a 12-step rehab, I didn't want to accept that this is where I had ended up. This is where drugs took me and was going to take me every time.

It was hard to look at my stuff, to start lifting the thick veil of denial addiction had me embedded in.

But I did it anyway. I had to if anything was going to change.

Throughout my recovery there has been hardship and times when I've wanted to use. But one prevailing thing that outweighs the uncomfortably that comes with growth, is the unconditional love I have found through this program.

I am in love with this program and I can say I love myself now too.

Anonymous

Another shot at life

I grew up in the 70's & 80's in a small New Zealand city.

From my earliest memories there was something different about me from my 2 older brothers and my younger sister. They seemed to have boundaries & fears. There were things that they wouldn't do but I would—in a flash & without considering the consequences.

My mother was very controlling and always angry to the point of violence, my father was medicated for high blood pressure &, although he worked hard (and wasn't angry like mum), he was a daily drinker, emotionally unavailable and didn't really spend any time with us kids.

At a very young age, I remember stealing money from my mother's purse to buy lollies on the way to school (and getting caught).

Not too many years later this progressed to stealing milk money to buy cigarettes, then breaking in to places and stealing alcohol.

I really didn't care who I hurt along the way.

I grew to hate who I was and what I was doing. I remember just wanting to escape my reality, so alcohol and then drugs quickly became my good friend as they gave me some relief from the world I was creating.

It didn't take too long before the cops started knocking on my parent's door and I soon became old enough for the convictions to start clocking up.

I didn't know life could be any different; I did what I had always done despite my mother taking me to a counsellor for the behavioural stuff.

I was in complete denial and, like they say, ignorance is bliss.

I hated my life; I detested who I had become and what I was doing, but at the same time I had no idea that this was all self-inflicted and caused by what I was doing and what I believed.

It didn't take long for me to end up on yet more charges and find myself at the age of 29 wondering how I could escape this misery I had created, only to have a family friend sit me down one day and suggest I go to rehab before they sent me to jail.

So, I started going to a treatment agency and they suggested trying their controlled using program: I instantly declined because I knew from previous court ordered help that this wouldn't work for me and asked what other options there were.

They gave me fliers for some rehabs so I found the longest and what looked like the hardest and rang them straight away.

There was a waiting list and it was going to take 8 to 12 weeks to get me in, so I went on one last bender...

Needless to say, by the time I got there I was broken, mentally, spiritually, emotionally and physically bankrupt, an empty shell of a man and a poor excuse for a human.

The residential treatment centre introduced me to something I had been looking for my whole life... A new way to live.

One that didn't involve ripping people off, lying, manipulating, dealing and using.

I felt some sort of relief in the knowledge that I now knew why I had been the way I was all my life (Holy crap, I'm an addict), that I wasn't alone and that it didn't have to be this way anymore.

All I had to do was change everything!!! Damn, that's not going to be easy, but surely it has to be better than where I had come from? Surely?

I turned 30 in that rehab & had no idea at the time that I was about to change my entire life.

The rehab helped me with many things. One of the most important things that rehab gave me was an introduction to NA.

NA introduced me to more people just like me, desperate to live a life of freedom from active addiction. NA taught me that the more work I did to myself, the more gifts there were waiting for me to experience.

Finally, I found somewhere that I felt welcome, a part of, at home. Now I had a program, a fellowship and what felt like another shot at life, one I wanted to actually live!

At some point I decided that I would have a crack at getting to 2 years clean, after all, what did I have to lose?

I'd already lost everything so had more to gain by hanging around to see what it would be like.

The drugs were still out there, I could have them back anytime I wanted, but recovery was something that not many were able to

get and keep so I did what was suggested, kept going back even when I didn't really want to and slowly started getting the gifts of recovery.

Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that fronting up and being responsible for my actions would have such a profound effect on my life, but it did.

Although I was doing a lot of recovery stuff, I was also living life on life's terms for the first time in my life.

I made some mistakes, learnt some tough lessons, after all, getting clean and finding recovery wasn't the end of my insanity, but it was the start of me learning what my principles were, where my boundaries lie, what I find acceptable and what I don't.

My life since getting clean has been one of trial and error, lessons and successes, ups and downs.

Life's not about the destination anymore, for me, it's now about the journey and how I choose to travel the many paths life has to offer.

My first day clean was my first day in rehab, it was the 1st of February 2000. They took me to my first NA meeting and I haven't used a drug since. It's now 2019.

Thank you NA, you gave me the gift of life... The good, bad, and the ugly.

Much to my surprise, I love it all.

Anonymous.



NA at HOME

ONLINE MEETINGS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

The 'NA at HOME' platform currently hosts 12 weekly 'Narcotics Anonymous' meetings that members can attend virtually using the phone and internet.

To attend meetings by phone you will need to dial the landline number for your city/state and then enter the conference ID for the meeting you wish to join:

NA at HOME Landline Numbers

| City, State | Landline # |
|----------------|----------------|
| Adelaide, SA | (08) 7070 8060 |
| Brisbane, QLD | (07) 3123 4461 |
| Melbourne, VIC | (03) 8400 4256 |
| Perth, WA | (08) 6365 4437 |
| Sydney, NSW | (02) 8103 4256 |

If calling by phone use the * key to insert a comma between the landline number & conference ID eg:

70708060,440409702

Use the # key to enter the meeting when prompted and use *4 keys to mute or unmute during the meeting

NA at HOME Meeting Times & Conference ID's

SYD, Australia (UTC+11)

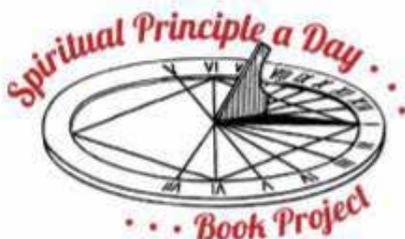
| Day | Time (SYD) | Meeting Name | Conference ID |
|--------------|------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Sunday | 7:00 pm | Early Bird Meeting | 926266442 |
| | 9:00 pm | Living Clean Discussion | 631374919 |
| Monday | 7:00 pm | Live Long Term Recovery | ****SKYPE |
| | 9:00 pm | Just for Today | 980923411 |
| Tuesday | 7:00 pm | Basic Text Discussion | 776967424 |
| | 9:00 pm | Just for Today | 905578095 |
| Wednesday | 7:00 pm | Women's Meeting | 800330959 |
| | 9:00 pm | Steps & Traditions | 633699380 |
| Thursday | 7:00 pm | It Works How & Why | 573701848 |
| | 9:00 pm | Just for Today | 501143121 |
| Friday | 9:00 pm | Speaker - Just for Today | 523140721 |
| Saturday | 7:00 pm | Ask It Basket | 482943120 |
| | 9:00 pm | Steps & Traditions | 440409702 |
| Special Room | TBA | Conventions, Marathons.. | 790184928 |

To attend meetings online you will need to download BlueJeans. Use the following link: <https://www.bluejeans.com/downloads#tools>

If using the BlueJeans app, simply 'Join with ID' using the Conference ID for the meeting you wish to join.

The NA at HOME platform can be contacted via Skype: na_at_home

We've got a new book in the making!



*compiling our experience
with applying spiritual
principles in our daily lives*

Visit www.na.org/spad for opportunities to submit material online and/or find the materials you can use to host a workshop, large or small.

We'll solicit material with rolling deadlines on various spiritual principles over the next three years.

The project webpage (www.na.org/spad) will be updated regularly to reflect the current focus. Our hope is that interested members—on their own or in groups—will workshop the spiritual principles being focused on at any given time, and send in the writing they collect. Consider planning regular get-togethers with your friends, sponsees, or home-group members to contribute to this effort, or working through your local service body to form a project-based workgroup or ad hoc committee. As we produce drafts based on your words and ideas, we'll ask the Fellowship to review the work and offer additional input. All of this is a long way of saying: We need you! Thanks in advance for pitching in.

Principles & quotations to work on through March 2019:

*Balance • Compassion • Creativity • Goodwill • Grace • Harmony
Humility • Imperfection • Intimacy • Maturity • Resilience • Vulnerability*

www.na.org/spad

You can submit your input online (www.na.org/spad), by email (spad@na.org), or by mail (SPAD; 19737 Nordhoff Place; Chatsworth, CA 91311 USA)

**Prison in Georgia. Unity Day meeting, World Convention
2018, Orlando, Florida.**

**There were 23,000 attendees with more than 100 prisons
participating in the Unity Day call.**





My name is DR and I am an addict incarcerated for three and a half years now. I have 16 months to go. I recently changed prisons and have been here for nearly six months.

I originally got clean in 1992 and was on the ground floor in a newly established area. That area had just five meetings per week in the beginning.

When I was arrested in 2013 after 21 years of being clean and hard work, that area boasted nearly 40 meetings per week.

This is my third relapse. Only four hours of using, and I picked up a case.

Where I am now is a place of humility.

I came to prison judging my peers for not being able to stay clean in a locked environment, but was given a new set of eyes to view them through this past weekend.

There is only one H&I meeting here a month. The same people come every month, and there are some people who hear their message for the first time ever. Only two units out of six have weekly meetings with inmates.

I listened instead of preparing ahead of time what I would share. I mean I really listened.

I heard a woman share how she would manipulate the parole board into letting her stay because she thought she couldn't stay clean on the outside. She felt like she needed more time.

I heard another share that everything was in its place and she was looking forward to release. After ten years in prison, she was going to a two-year program.

I will never understand how you can stay in this circle of buildings and not use.

It is as if my higher power has given me another chance to go home and get it right this time. Maybe this time I will listen and spend less time sharing.

After more than two decades in this program, I am no longer a baby. I have so very much to learn. Trying to keep clean and alive.

DR, California, USA

Reprinted from Reaching Out, January 2019

NA Experiences: Part 1

When I first started doing this recovery thing all those years ago I had absolutely no idea what I was getting myself into, I knew I had a problem, I thought that problem was drug related, and I felt that I needed to do something to change the situation I had found (or more realistically, gotten) myself into.

To say that I had a fairly simplistic outlook towards the circumstances of my life would have been a gross understatement, but there was really no way I could have visualised the complexity and depth of the disease of addiction.

I quite honestly just didn't have any understanding of why I felt compelled to use drugs or alcohol on a daily basis, why I felt hopelessly lost without some form of relief.

And even had I of had some faint inkling about these concepts, I just wouldn't have had the vocabulary required to of expressed them, my ability to explain myself on topics of emotions and feelings just wasn't something I had needed when I was in active addiction so I had never made an effort to educate myself on personal reflection (in addition to having skipped the class on consequential thinking, but that's a discussion for another time and place).

Needless to say that the first few years of my membership in Narcotics Anonymous were a roller coaster ride, peri-

ods of great joy, happiness, and above all hope, countered by times of despair, emotional pain, and anguish.

Some times everything seemed to go along nicely, I'd feel relief from self and occasionally even a connectedness to myself and others, and I took those moments for granted expecting them to last indefinitely as though they were mine by right.

Then something would happen that seemed beyond my control that would shake the weak foundations of my recovery, crushing my sense of hope and faith, proving that I was once again powerless over life and the world around me.

Usually this would be caused by what I will term as emotional relapses, situations where I had unknowingly bestowed responsibility for my emotional welfare on external factors, usually people, more often than not romantic.

Of course looking back at this now it is painfully obvious how this was a recipe for disaster, and will I am sure be hardly any surprise to many as a relapse waiting to happen, as many older, cleaner members have often stated "the relapse happens long before we pick up that first drug".

So what motivated me to re-ally commit to this program, to decide to actually try and get the most out of what I suspected was actually on offer here?

I'd like to say that I simply became sick and tired of being sick and tired, or that the feelings of isolation and loneliness I felt had become bad enough in the extreme that I accepted that I just couldn't do this on my own, or perhaps even that the pretty girls and cool, interesting people I met regularly in the rooms inspired me to keep coming back.

But the truth is much more simple, much more fundamental - I had plain and simply run out of options, there was just nothing else on my self survival radar that could even offer me a slight chance that there was a way to escape the suffering I felt emotionally, the suffering which I hadn't yet understood to be an inability to feel love for myself.

For me rock bottom was when I honestly just didn't have anywhere else to turn to.

So one day after yet another relapse that hadn't made the pain I felt disappear, I dragged myself back into a chair and sat down, hoping that the relief I knew was available in this program would once again help me to get through the hard times.

Only this time I had decided that I wanted a more lasting, ongoing relief from the pains of active addiction.

And this brings me to the whole point of this reflection on my experiences, taking responsibility for my recovery.

It sounds cliched, but I've only ever gotten out of this program what I've put into it, when I go along for the ride without putting in any kind of work I have no real control over where the journey will take me.

This just simply isn't enough for me anymore, I need to know that no matter what life throws at me that I will be able to get through, that I can survive anything that comes my way using the strength and tools I get when I work the program of Narcotics Anonymous in its entirety.

I no longer pick and choose which parts I feel apply to me or that I'm comfortable with.

I try to remember that this is a program based on spiritual principles, as it says right there on the 12 Step card "Three of these that are indispensable are honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness"

I've become more accepting of the fact that I have to be truthful, especially with myself about how I'm travelling, and how I'm reacting to my feelings.

NA Experiences: Part 1 (cont.)

I've given myself the freedom to try new ways of working my program and being receptive to the advice of others, and I have surrendered to the fact that this recovery means more to me than I could of possibly imagined when I first walked through the doors of a meeting and sat myself down.

This may seem like I've gotten away from simply being able to not use drugs, and that's because drugs really were only the tip of the iceberg, most of my disease was beneath the surface.

These days I try to live this program in my daily life and in all my affairs, applying the concepts of spiritual principles to how I interact with not just the world around me, but also with the world within me.

I'm proud and grateful to be able to say that it's a wonderful feeling to be able to live life without fear thanks to a simple daily program of recovery.

Bart, Melbourne.

Women's FD Workgroup

Hi everyone

For some time now, the Women's Fellowship Development (FD) Workgroup has been working on an environmental scan of women in the Asia Pacific zone.

Here is a link to the form <https://goo.gl/forms/SW8CJPmO6yxV9Bb23>

We need your support to get this out to women; please share this information with your areas and

regions; with your home groups; with your sponsors and sponsees and most importantly with all women you know are part of our fellowship.

If there is anything that the workgroup can do to further assist you to support us please drop us an email and let us know apf-women@apfna.org or reply to this email.

In loving service

[Women's APF FD Workgroup](#)

A Warming Of The Spirit



CAIRNS NA
CONVENTION
JULY 26 - 29

The Cairns Fellowship invites you to join us for the Cairns 2019 NA Convention, here in the beautiful tropical paradise of Far North Queensland, Australia.

WHEN 4.45pm Fri 26 July to 4.45pm Sun 28th July 2019

WHERE Novotel Oasis Resort, 122 Lake St, Cairns

COST *Prior to 1 June 2019*

Weekend package (including rego & dinner Fri & Sat) \$90
Registration only \$40

After 1 June 2019

Weekend package (including rego & dinner Fri & Sat) \$100
Registration only \$50

Purchase meals on the 26 or 27 July 2019

Dinner Friday night \$20
Dinner Saturday night \$30

REGISTRATION For more details, registration, payment instructions and a link to the Facebook page please visit the events page at www.na.org.au

Oh and please register and pay as early as possible for catering purposes. Just in case, the bank details: Queensland Area Service Committee BSB: 124 050 Account number: 20988136

MORE INFO Contact Ange - CairnsNA@gmail.com
or Hamish - call/text +61 478 078 456 or email hamish1988@icloud.com

**Welcome to Country Ceremony
2018 Byron Bay NSW Far North Coast Area Convention.**



**WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR
ARTWORK ON THE COVER OF
NA TODAY?**

**PLEASE SEND THROUGH AT YOUR HIGHEST
RESOLUTION FOR
CONSIDERATION TO:**

NATODAY@NA.ORG.AU



