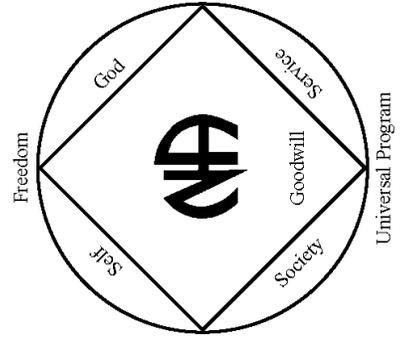




HOME GROUP



WWW.NAHELP.ORG



Anonymi Foundation
P.O. Box 4404
Allentown PA 18105

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Literary Work in progress. Please copy and share this
with your local Home Group for Review and Input

Developed and Distributed by the Groups in
A.S.I.S for NA, The Anonymi Foundation.

Please send your input to
nahelp.org@gmail.com

WWW.NAHELP.NL

What a Home Group is, Why We Need One

This booklet describes what a Home Group is, why we need one, and how we use one. It also describes our idea of the Home Group's responsibility to teach its members the Spiritual principles of recovery through the Steps and sharing through the Traditions.

An NA Group is a gathering of NA members who function together according to the Steps and Traditions, hold at least one regularly scheduled weekly NA meeting and are an integral part of each other's recovery.

Narcotics Anonymous is "about" complete abstinence and recovery from addiction. An NA Home Group is where committed members focus their sharing and carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

In our twelve step work, we usually bring a new person to a meeting of our Home Group. This is because the primary purpose of an NA Group is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Each group naturally designs its "atmosphere of recovery" to meet the needs of its members. One of our basic needs as recovering addicts is to carry the message: to give it away so we may keep it. Our Group is composed of people like us whose ideas of recovery resemble ours, who want to help us while helping themselves. This makes our Group feel like home.

Home Groups are mentioned at many meetings. Ask the people attending your meeting if they have a Home Group or if they can describe what a Home Group is and how to use one. New NA members usually have little or no understanding of how a Home Group works, nor have they joined

one. Some members even misunderstand the concept of a home group to the extent of claiming to have two or more.

One might ask, "How do I find a Home Group?" First, new members should attend all the meetings available on their meeting schedule. The reason we do this is so we can decide which meeting offers us the most comfortable atmosphere of recovery, a place where we can feel at home. After we determine which meeting we like the best, we make a commitment to ourselves to attend this meeting every week. We suggest that it be within a reasonable distance so that we cannot use inconvenience as a reason not to attend. We suggest choosing a meeting that does not conflict with other living commitments (i.e. family, job, school, etc.) One member shares . . . "A Home Group is where I feel safe; a place where I am accepted for who I am. I have come to realize that an addict alone is in bad company."

When we get together, we can share feelings and thoughts with other members, and in this way we gain the experience, strength, and hope of recovery. Sharing with the same people over a period of time creates a bond that can tie us together. This sharing can be a way the Home Group utilizes one of the most effective tools to arrest the disease of addiction. A Home Group can share in all your fears, hopes, and joys. Home Group members encourage and assist us in our recovery and celebrate clean time with us. They are reassuring, honest, and loving. We grow with them as they become a large part of our recovery. A Home Group is where we learn how to deal with life and how to live without the use of drugs. Part of recovery from addiction is learning to live life on life's terms. The people that we meet at our home group's meetings, who have committed themselves to working the steps of NA, can help us stay clean through our specific living situations. Early recovery can seem like living from crisis to crisis. We not only need answers to our general questions but specific

still expect people, places, and things to carry us through life. Home Group members will often share their own experiences with living problems when we ask them. However, it is not their responsibility to provide for our needs or wants such as helping us get a job or driving us to the store, etc. We soon find that other members will not let us abuse them or the program, but they will spend all the time in the world sharing how to find this new way of life through the steps.

Some members perceive the Home Group as a social situation. This can be a dangerous concept. Although we often think of Home Group members as our extended family, we must also remember that we are addicts and still suffer from this self-centered and self-destructive disease. At times, we may be hurt by the actions of our fellow Home Group members. Gossip, rejection, and feelings of isolation may seem to suggest that we should back away from these new friends. If we seek out a fellow member, experienced in recovery, who has gotten past these pitfalls, they can help us use the steps to live beyond the small-mindedness of addiction and focus us on the true meaning of a Home Group; A place to open our hearts and recovery to the addict still suffering both in and out of our rooms.

answers today to our current problems. Practical sponsorship allows us to use the recovery experience of others. Our Home Group sponsors us in many ways. We learn the ideas of recovery at meetings. We learn effective ways to live clean by sharing with Home Group members after meetings and when we go out for coffee. We may even find our sponsor at our Home Group and use the group's meeting as a place and time to share with them.

Once we choose the group that will get to know us better than any other, we make a decision to commit ourselves to that group. In groups, where it is common, writing our name, address, phone number, and clean date in the group book is an active commitment to become part of that group and strengthen our recovery.

As we become more comfortable and familiar with the group and its members, we will probably be asked to serve the group in a number of different ways. Some of these are; set-up, clean-up, coffee-making, and chairing at group meetings. Becoming active in a Home Group helps us learn to be responsible for our own recovery.

Many recovering addicts talk about becoming a responsible member of society, but few talk about becoming a responsible member of a Home Group. There are responsibilities that accompany membership in a group including regular attendance, carrying the message, welcoming the newcomer, attending business meetings; participating in the group conscience, and servicing the group's needs.

The Autonomous Narcotics Anonymous Home Group is the primary unit and focus of our service structure. This is where the conscience of NA is created and developed. NA Groups decide what Narcotics Anonymous becomes.

Each NA Home Group exists in a community with different characteristics: rural, urban, suburban, etc. Each NA Home Group has a unique combination of living experiences and talents among its members. Size of the group

and interests of its members will determine the direction the group grows in. Some groups will be able to provide nearly all of the necessary services for themselves. Some will need to band together with neighboring groups with similar needs to perform common services co-operatively. Our 4th Tradition autonomy and the creative freedom in our 9th Tradition provide for each group's individual needs. Many Home Groups can, and should do H&I and PI work on their own, according to their member's willingness and group conscience.

Our experience shows there are some general services needed. Whether our Home Group is in the city or "Small Town, USA" there are many things that each group has in common. The obvious needs of any group are to have responsible members to insure the opening and closing, format, funds collected and rent paid out along with communicating with other groups and NA as a whole. A dependable atmosphere for recovery requires that Home Group members are responsible to open the meeting place on time for each meeting and to make sure that the meeting place is cleaned-up and closed properly following each meeting. There should be a member who is willing and able to be a contact person to the facility where the meeting is held in case of problems.

Many groups select a member to conduct or "chair" the meeting in an orderly recovery-oriented fashion; to see that an atmosphere of recovery is maintained during the meeting. Let's not kid ourselves, meetings do close for various reasons; lack of participation, no involvement, lack of funds and behavior that jeopardizes the meeting place. Each Home Group has the responsibility to share with its members that inexcusable behavior can not be tolerated lest we risk losing our meeting place. We need to be each others eyes and ears to ensure our Home Group's meeting will stay open next week. In some cases our irresponsible behavior has kept NA out of certain facilities. It is up to the

Home Group members to make sure all the facility's rules are followed so as not to give NA a bad name.

Just as it is difficult for members to recover in isolation, Home Groups find it difficult to survive without communicating with the rest of NA. We generally select a member from our group to inform us about and communicate with the rest of Narcotics Anonymous. This requires a member who is willing and able to represent the group, carrying their votes, motions, and needs to other levels of service.

Groups generally select someone to be responsible for the group's money and replenishment of its inventory (i.e. literature and supplies). Finances may be discussed at every business meeting. We, as addicts, can easily be tempted with control so the Treasurer should be someone who will follow the group's direction on how to spend its money. We pay rent for our meeting place and most of our other services require financial expenditures of some kind. At each of a group's meetings, money is collected according to our 7th Tradition. Most groups select a financially responsible, mature member with integrity to handle the group's finances.

While a Home Group's service needs vary, most find it desirable to select trusted servants with substantial recovery and lots of common sense. Some Home Groups are very structured for service positions with a clean time requirement while others have minimal structure and clean time requirement. In all Home Groups the most important requirement is the willingness to serve. No service job is more important than the other, some require different skills but none is more important than the other. There is nothing written in stone on what a Home group must do other than keep our primary purpose – to carry the message.

One common problem we often experience as new members, is that we may place unrealistic expectations on the Home Group and its members. Even in recovery, we may