

HOME GROUP

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

7 An NA Group is made up of NA members who function
8 together according to these Spiritual principles, hold at least
9 one regularly scheduled weekly NA meeting, and are an
10 integral part of each other's recovery.

11 Narcotics Anonymous is “about” recovery from the
12 disease of addiction through complete abstinence and the
13 Twelve Steps. An NA Home Group is where committed
14 members focus their sharing and carry this message to the
15 addict who still suffers.

16 The primary purpose of an NA Group is to carry the
17 message to the addict who still suffers. Each Group designs
18 its own “atmosphere of recovery” to meet the needs of its
19 members. We can only keep what we have by giving it away.
20 Our Group is composed of people like us whose ideas of

1 recovery resemble ours. This makes our Group feel like home.

2

3 Home Groups are mentioned at many meetings. Ask the
4 people attending your meeting if they have a Home Group or if
5 they can describe what a Home Group is and how to use one.
6 New NA members usually have little or no understanding of
7 how a Home Group works, nor have they joined one. Some
8 members even misunderstand the idea of a Home Group to
9 the extent of claiming to have two or more.

10 One might ask, "How do I find a Home Group?" First, new
11 members should attend as many different NA meetings as
12 possible. Once we determine the meeting we like the best, we
13 make a commitment to ourselves to attend this meeting every
14 week. We suggest that it be within a reasonable distance so
15 that we cannot use inconvenience as a reason not to attend.
16 We suggest choosing a meeting that does not conflict with
17 other living commitments (i.e. family, job, school, etc.) One
18 member shares . . . "A Home Group is where I feel safe; a
19 place where I am accepted for who I am. I have come to
20 realize that an addict alone is in bad company."

1 When we get together, we can share feelings and
2 thoughts with other members, and in this way we gain the
3 experience, strength, and hope of recovery through empathy.
4 Sharing with the same people over a period of time creates a
5 bond that can tie us together. Honest sharing can be a way
6 the Home Group utilizes one of the most effective tools to
7 arrest and recover from the disease of addiction – the
8 therapeutic value of one addict helping another. A Home
9 Group can share in all your fears, hopes, and joys. Home
10 Group members encourage and assist us in our recovery and
11 celebrate clean time with us. They are reassuring, honest, and
12 loving. We grow with them as they become a large part of our
13 recovery. A Home Group is where we learn how to live without
14 the use of drugs. Part of recovery from addiction is learning to
15 live life on life's terms. The people that we meet at our home
16 group's meetings, who have committed themselves to working
17 the Steps of NA, can help us stay clean through our specific
18 living situations. Early recovery can seem like living from crisis
19 to crisis. We not only need answers to our general questions
20 but specific answers today to our current problems.

21 The Home Group sponsors the new member until they

1 find a sponsor of their own. Our Home Group sponsors us in
2 many ways and allows us to use the recovery experience of
3 others. We learn the principles of recovery and effective ways
4 to live clean by sharing after meetings or when we go out
5 together. We may even find our sponsor at our Home Group
6 and use the Group's meeting as a place and time to share
7 with them.

8 Once we choose the Group that will get to know us better
9 than any other, we make a decision to commit ourselves to
10 that Group. It is common to write our name, phone number,
11 and clean date in the Group book as an active commitment to
12 become part of that Group.

13 As we become more comfortable and familiar with the
14 Group and its members, we will probably be asked to serve in
15 a number of different ways. Some of these are setting up,
16 cleaning up, making coffee, and chairing at Group meetings.
17 Becoming active in a Home Group helps us learn to be
18 responsible for our own recovery.

19 Many recovering addicts talk about becoming a
20 responsible member of society, but few talk about becoming a
21 responsible member of a Home Group. There are

1 responsibilities that accompany membership in a Group
2 including regular attendance, carrying the message,
3 welcoming the newcomer, attending business meetings,
4 participating in the Group Conscience, and servicing the
5 Group's needs.

6 The autonomous Narcotics Anonymous Home Group is
7 the primary unit and focus of our service structure. This is
8 where the Conscience of NA is created and developed. NA
9 Groups decide what Narcotics Anonymous becomes.

10 Each NA Home Group exists in a community with different
11 characteristics: rural, urban, suburban, etc. Each NA Home
12 Group has a unique combination of living experiences and
13 talents among its members. Size of the Group and interests of
14 its members will determine the direction the Group grows in.
15 Some Groups will be able to provide nearly all of the
16 necessary services for themselves. Other Groups will need to
17 band together with neighboring Groups with similar needs to
18 perform common services co-operatively. Our 4th Tradition
19 autonomy and the creative freedom in our 9th Tradition
20 provides for each Group's individual needs. Many Home
21 Groups do H&I and PI work on their own, according to their

1 members' willingness and Group Conscience.

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3 Whether our Home Group is in the city or small town
4 there are many things that each Group has in common. The
5 obvious needs of any Group are to have responsible members
6 to ensure the opening and closing, format, funds collected,
7 and rent paid along with communicating with other Groups
8 and NA as a whole. Our experience shows these general
9 services are needed. A dependable atmosphere of recovery
10 requires that Home Group members arrive on time to open the
11 meeting and to ensure it is cleaned-up and properly closed.
12 There should be a member who is willing and able to be a
13 contact person to the facility where the meeting is held in case
14 of problems.

15 Many Groups select a member to conduct or "chair" the
16 meeting in an orderly recovery-oriented fashion so that an
17 atmosphere of recovery is maintained during the meeting.
18 Let's not kid ourselves; meetings do close for various reasons.
19 Lack of participation or funds and poor behavior jeopardizes
20 the meeting place. Each Home Group has the responsibility to
21 share with its members that inexcusable behavior can not be

1 tolerated lest we risk losing our meeting place. We need to be
2 each others' eyes and ears to ensure our Home Group's
3 meeting will stay open each week. In some cases our
4 irresponsible behavior has kept NA out of facilities. It is up to
5 the Home Group members to make sure all the facility's rules
6 are followed as to not give NA a bad name.

7 Just as members find it helpful to communicate with each
8 other, Home Groups may find it helpful to communicate with
9 the rest of NA. We generally select a member from our Group
10 to inform us about and communicate with the rest of Narcotics
11 Anonymous. This requires a member who is willing and able
12 to represent the Group by carrying the Group's Conscience,
13 its motions, and needs to other levels of service.

14 Groups generally select someone to be responsible for
15 the Group's funds and replenishment of its inventory (i.e.
16 literature and supplies). Finances may be discussed at every
17 business meeting. We, as addicts, can easily be tempted with
18 control so the Treasurer should be someone who will follow
19 the Group's direction on how to spend its money. We pay rent
20 for our meeting place and most of our other services require
21 financial expenditures of some kind. During the meeting

1 money is collected according to our 7th Tradition. Most Groups
2 select a financially responsible, mature member with integrity
3 to handle the Group's finances.

4 While a Home Group's service needs vary, most find it
5 desirable to select trusted servants with significant recovery
6 and common sense. Service positions may require different
7 skills but no position is more important than any other. Some
8 Home Groups are very structured for service positions with
9 clean time requirements while others are less structured. The
10 most important requirement is the willingness to serve. There
11 is nothing written in stone on what a Home group must do
12 other than keep our primary purpose to carry the message.

13 One common problem we often experience is that we
14 may place unrealistic expectations on the members of the
15 Home Group. Even in recovery we may still expect people,
16 places, and things to carry us through life. Home Group
17 members will often share their own experiences with living
18 problems when we ask them. However, it is not their
19 responsibility to provide for our needs or wants such as
20 helping us get a job or driving us to the store, etc. We soon
21 find that other members will not let us abuse them or the

1 program, but they will spend all the time in the world sharing
2 how to find this new way of life through the Steps.

3 Some members perceive the Home Group as a social
4 situation. This can be dangerous. Although we often think of
5 Home Group members as extended family, we must also
6 remember that we are all addicts who suffer from a disease
7 that is self-centered and self-destructive. At times feelings of
8 isolation and rejection may seem to suggest that we should
9 back away from these new friends. We seek out an
10 experienced member who has gotten past these pitfalls and
11 can help us use the Steps and Traditions to focus on the basic
12 meaning of a Home Group. It is a place to open our hearts to
13 recovery.



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