



Complete Abstinence in Narcotics Anonymous

An informational pamphlet written by NA members in open participation, and approved by the NA Groups where it is found.

This version of this pamphlet was created by NA members in open participation, Longwood, FL, 03/14-16/2014

These Home Group Members have approved this document. Feel free to contact us.

“Our gratitude shows when we care, when we share, the NA Way.”

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BEING CLEAN VS. DRUG REPLACEMENT THERAPY

The cornerstone of the Narcotics Anonymous program is complete abstinence from all mind and mood altering chemicals. Let us admit that medications are not the same as drug replacement therapy DRT. Taking prescribed medications are for medical problems. Short-term reduction for eventual complete abstinence is a start, but you are not clean in NA, while on DRT. We support you in your choice of method of detoxification, but do not confuse this process with being clean. Using methadone, suboxone etc., is an attempt to treat a drug problem with a drug. The use of a prescribed drug as a replacement for your drug of choice is using. This is a substitution and until we stop using it we are not clean in Narcotics Anonymous. Our disease can only be arrested through complete abstinence.

WE ARE NOT DOCTORS

In the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous we are all addicts even if we have a professional title outside the rooms. We are a fellowship of addicts seeking recovery from addiction. When we talk about addiction we are talking about the disease of addiction with its most apparent symptom being our inability to stop using drugs. Our recovery program

is one of complete abstinence from all drugs. Complete abstinence is not a medical opinion. It is a practice of our principles. It is not an outside issue but an inside issue that is essential to our recovery. We follow a spiritual, not religious program that provides recovery through the 12 Steps of NA.

COMPLETE ABSTINENCE

“Total abstinence is the only thing that has ever worked for us” and is one the first things we hear when we arrive in Narcotics Anonymous. Complete abstinence is the beginning, middle and end of our recovery. Our clean time, and our recovery from the disease of addiction begins with that first step. This pamphlet will address some of the spiritual principles we have used in our program to reach total abstinence from all mind and mood altering chemicals. We understand that there are cases where addicts are hospitalized and given narcotics for things such as major medical emergencies or major accidents. Our basic text already gives us the answers to these situations such as “using local anesthesia, avoiding our drug of choice, stopping drug use while still in the hospital, and spending extra days in the hospital in case withdrawal occurs are some options”. This pamphlet is not focused on these issues, this pamphlet is focused on drugs used by some doctors to treat the disease of

addiction. So to the newcomer who has been put on any of these types of medications, please keep coming back. Although as addicts we are not responsible for having this disease of addiction, through NA we are given a choice to recover. Once we make this choice we are responsible for our recovery.

SURRENDER

“Complete surrender is the key to recovery.” The process of surrender is a result of living in utter desperation and pain. It is the result of working double overtime to find a solution that does not require giving up drugs completely. It is difficult to accept that drugs are the problem when we have not been able to find peace and serenity by any other means. When we make the decision to surrender, we get relief from the pain of making our own decisions. Surrender is positive for us because we find hope. Once we have surrendered, we open opportunities for other addicts to help us with our problems. We have seen many addicts surrender to this program and detox in the rooms of NA and live productive lives in our society. We have also seen many addicts go to other places and detox and come back to NA and celebrate total abstinence in the rooms of NA. We know any addict can get and stay clean but they must surrender to the program of Narcotics Anonymous for that to happen.

Surrender is just the first step to this process, there are many other key spiritual principles you will need along the way such as...

WILLINGNESS

We surrender to a program of total abstinence when we absolutely cannot continue using and there is simply no fight left in us. Now we must become willing to follow some simple suggestions that we hear in meetings. We may not believe that these suggestions are going to help us but we do them anyway because we don't know what else to do. We may think that we don't need a sponsor but we get one anyway because we are afraid not to. We need to become willing to do anything to stay clean. We have to stop holding back inside. We have to let go of self-will and give up control. When we are completely abstinent, our spirits are open to the full gift of Narcotics Anonymous. We see the results. We have found a fellowship of addicts like us and they are staying clean. We belong and we have found a pathway to peace and freedom from active addiction. Growing in the principles of surrender and willingness, and we are ready for . . .

COMMITMENT

Commitment is not one of the spiritual principles most people associate with the early steps. Now the question is: “if

we are powerless, how can Narcotics Anonymous help?” We begin by asking for help, and this is accomplished by working the 12 steps” where the spiritual principles we have discussed in this pamphlet come from. They are the backbone to a life of complete abstinence; without them we will die. Once we surrender and become willing to do whatever is necessary to become abstinent we need to stay committed to the process in order to not go back to the way of life we once knew. We need to make a commitment to a home group and stay clean no matter what. A commitment to a sponsor is also crucial to this new way of life, for we cannot do this alone!!!

OUR SOLUTION

Our first step says, “we admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.” If we believe that limited drug use is possible then we have not taken step one, we have not surrendered, and we will use again. Step one is more than an admission of powerlessness, and must be followed by change. We must stay away from people that are using, even if it means we must avoid family members, friends and co-workers. We might have to break free completely of everything and everyone we know. There is no substitute for surrender. This may be very uncomfortable but we do it anyway

because we know in our heart of hearts that this is the only way. Based on a life of desperation and a glimmer of hope we make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the principles of Narcotics Anonymous. To sum it up in a nutshell, it is simply a decision to take the steps and understand that they are the solution to maintaining complete abstinence. Faith comes after this way of life becomes a reality. This way of life comes to some swiftly and to others slowly but it doesn't come at all if we are still clinging to the idea that we can have it while still using. Remember these four things:

1. The cornerstone of the NA Program is complete abstinence.
2. There is no substitute for surrender.
3. Recovery is a radical change of everything we think, do and believe.
4. Without commitment to this fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous we will go back to the life we once knew.

In closing we want you to know that your choice of how to detox is yours to make. The sole purpose of this Informational Pamphlet is to help you through your choice of detox to complete abstinence.