



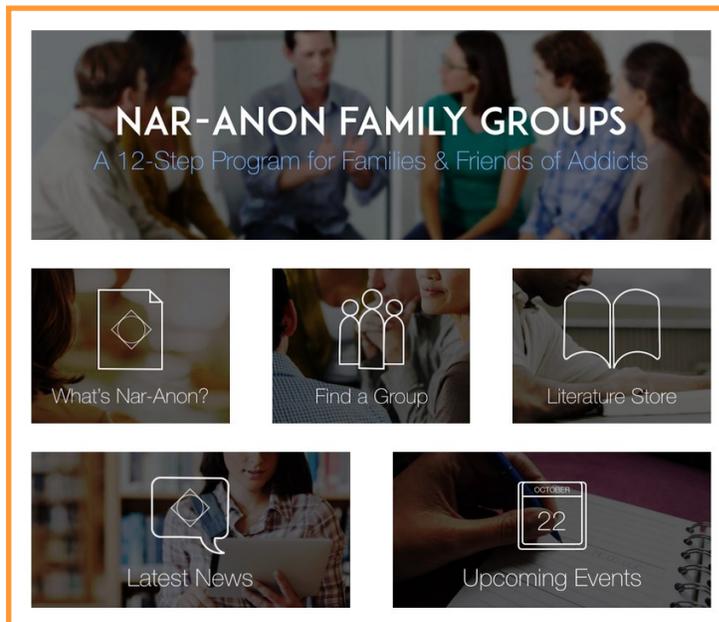
Newsletter of the Nar-Anon Family Groups

The Serenity Connection

Check out the new Nar-Anon Family Groups website:

- Find a meeting anywhere in the world
- Learn how to start a new group
- Download Nar-Anon Service Guides
- Find out about Narateen
- Get great outreach ideas
- Purchase literature
- Find upcoming events in your area

New Website! New Content! New Navigation!



The new Nar-Anon website has been rebuilt from the ground up (and will go on evolving) to continually better serve both existing Nar-Anon members, and more importantly, newcomers to the program. The responsive design makes reading content simple and achievable using any device. The always-present and refined navigation bar makes it easier than ever to get to where you want to go. The new website provides a new visual and interactive way to find meetings nearby, and much, much more. Welcome to the new site. We really think you'll like it!

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Are You the ONE? Service Challenge!

Did you know....

There are 11 Nar-Anon World Service Committees (plus a translation sub-committee) run by 90 committee members, made up of:

- 11 board members holding a total of 28 committee positions in addition to their board responsibilities
- an Executive Director who holds 5 positions in addition to her full time management responsibilities!
- 62 members at large (delegates, alternate delegates, and members)

Dedicated members who make up these committees devote countless hours of their time and expertise in the service of Nar-Anon Family Groups worldwide. Without these volunteers, the work of Nar-Anon could not be done. However, with so few members carrying the load, it will be difficult to keep Nar-Anon moving forward in a timely fashion.

That's where you come in. If you have been a member of Nar-Anon for three years, you could be eligible to serve on a Nar-Anon WS Committee! If only ONE member from each region/area/group steps up to serve on a WS Committee, we can make Nar-Anon a truly efficient and effective organization. I challenge YOU to be the one. Let's make it happen!

Our Members Share

Living Life

Basing my choices on what I don't want is like driving through life backwards trying not to hit anything.

This is how I lived my life prior to finding Nar-Anon. The fear of having to relive the pain of my past kept me looking in the rear view mirror; not looking forward out of fear of the pain that might be in front of me. I would drive the same path over and over again because it was familiar. I had convinced myself that I could control my life and everything in and around it if only I could avoid those bumps and ruts in the road. The result of living my life this way caused me to put up so many barriers and roadblocks that my life became very small, dark, and isolating. I was not living life at all; I was avoiding it.

I didn't want to move forward because it would make me vulnerable to pain and disappointment. It wasn't until I became sick and tired of being sick and tired of looking at the same scenery over and over again that I was ready to try something different. Attending many meetings, getting a sponsor, and working the steps gave me courage to change my focus from the rear view mirror to the front wind-

shield, facing forward, and leaving my past behind. I found there was a reason for the small print on rear view mirrors stating things appear larger than they really are!

The first thing I noticed was that I was on the wrong damn road. I had been missing all the signs in my denial and my attempt to control. The road on which I was travelling was not mine. It belonged to someone else. Working my steps and listening to my Higher Power, I was able to see the road I needed to travel, but it took me a while to find the courage to begin that journey. I could hear the voices of my Higher Power and my sponsor gently guiding me to turn or to consider my choices. I had all kinds of excuses not to do the next best thing in my recovery, but that was okay too, because now I could see where I wanted to go.

I had to be willing to be vulnerable to begin my journey on my own road. It was scary. I left the road of misery, pain, and chaos that active addiction had put me on, and I wanted a guarantee that my journey would be pain-free. I had learned tools and a better way to live. I could either sit idling in indecision or move forward. Moving backward was no longer an option. Accepting life on life's terms,

knowing I was powerless over the outcome, was a difficult hill to climb. I began to focus on the process, doing the work of allowing life to unfold, and knowing whatever was over the next hill can be faced with faith and hope rather than fear.

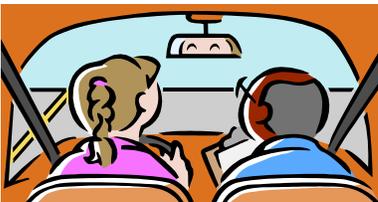
I was surprised to find how much I had changed through working my program. The past pain I tried to avoid for a very long time was no longer the same pain I had moving forward. I cannot go back to that same miserable place because I am different now. I do have a way of dipping my toe into those miserable potholes now and again. I am finding even those moments can bring comfort because they let me know I am human, remind me of where I have been, keep me humble in my recovery, and give me choices I didn't know I had.

I am so grateful for the fellowship and long-timers who loved me while I was learning to love myself and find my way. I am grateful you stand beside me with a hand to help me up when I fall, if I am willing to reach for it. I love stepping into life rather than stepping away from it.

Dawna

"In Nar-Anon, I learn to forgive, release, and move forward with my life."

SESH, September 16



"Focusing on me is similar to driving in the appropriate lane for the turns I must make to find serenity and peace of mind."

Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope, Nar-Anon Family Groups Daily Reader, July 12.

Step Two and My Higher Power

When I joined Nar-Anon, I struggled with the concept of a Higher Power. I grew up in a family that was active in a religious community but when I left home, I stopped participating in any organized religion. I grew to believe that whatever problems arose in my life, I had the power within me to solve them. I was strong and didn't need to ask for help. As far as I was concerned, that was just part of growing up. I was at last a mature adult!

However, life didn't turn out to be quite that simple. I became very good at hiding my feelings and thoughts, fearing if I revealed any weaknesses, I would be judged as less than adequate. I stuffed all those real feelings down inside where they couldn't be seen by anyone else. Unfortunately, keeping them hidden did not make them disappear. It just allowed me to put off dealing with things in my life that were too uncomfortable to confront. They festered away until I couldn't ignore them any longer. Instead of looking inside, I exploded in anger, lashing out at whomever happened to be nearby. Usually it was a family member who had no idea why I was so angry. Even I didn't know why I was angry.

Coming to Nar-Anon has

helped me start to solve the puzzle of my anger. It has opened my eyes to the fact that I am not alone. It has led me gently down the path of recovery, allowing me to discover along the way that I have people around me who really care. Nar-Anon has taught me I don't need to keep my feelings and thoughts inside. I won't be judged by my words and actions. I am learning to share what's really going on in my life even though it may be uncomfortable.

Nar-Anon has taught me there is a power greater than myself. It may not be the religious God of my youth, but it is there nonetheless. It may not look like a prophet in white robes. It may not appear to me as a lightning bolt, but it has a presence. I can give it whatever form works for me.

I give thanks for the members in my Nar-Anon group who helped me struggle through my first and second step studies, questioning the concept of a Higher Power at every turn. They were so very patient and understanding! My hat goes off to all the wonderful people who created our very own step study guide, *The Nar-Anon Thirty-Six*. It wasn't until I embarked on my third step study, with the help of this wonderful docu-

ment, I really got it. At last, I had a Higher Power to turn to when I was in pain and needed help.

The quotes below helped me come to an understanding that my Higher Power can be whatever I want it to be. They are written by Nar-Anon members and appear in Step Two of *The Nar-Anon Thirty Six*.*

~ At first the idea of having a Higher Power in my life, in any form, was foreign to me. I realized I was just resistant to the concept of the God of my upbringing; a God that was judgmental, a God that supposedly loved me, but only if I behaved according to strict societal and church guidelines. One day I heard someone say, "I can only believe in a God who dances," and that turned it around for me. A Higher Power, Great Spirit, or Goddess who is joyous and only wants me to be happy is the only kind of spirituality I will accept in my life. The name of the Power is irrelevant.

~ What do I mean when I say Higher Power? I was raised with specific religious beliefs

* From *The Nar-Anon Thirty-Six, Steps One – Nine*, 2014, NFGH Inc., Step Two, pages 26-27.

Our Members Share

"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Nar-Anon Step Two

so I have no novel idea about what God means to me. I do not, however, believe in the same God I did as a child. I was afraid of Him. I now believe in a Higher Power of love who can work more miracles in my life than I could have ever imagined, if I just get out of the way and let Him do it.

~ My Higher Power is something I cannot describe in words, much less define. My Higher Power does not have a face or body. I do not see, feel or think of a Higher Power as being a certain sex, age, or ethnicity. I often call my Higher Power "God" be-

continued on page 4...

"The process of coming to believe will help restore me to sanity. The strength to move into action comes from this belief. I am beginning to understand this Higher Power concept."

Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope, Nar-Anon Family Groups Daily Reader, Feb. 20

Our Members Share

“Recognizing my fears and shortcomings...with the help of my Higher Power, has given me hope and the ability to recognize my strengths.”

SESH, August 8

Confronting Our Fears

When I was approached to start a meeting for Nar-Anon, I thought to myself, “Am I the one to be doing this?” Sound-ed simple; just start a twelve-step meeting for friends and families of addicts. Denying that I could be of any use to anyone, I hesitated for almost a year before taking the big step and going for it.

During that time, my son was well on the way to recovery and I could see the spiritual emphasis of his twelve-step program working for him in unbelievable ways.

I eventually mustered the courage to approach an organization for a meeting space. When I was told there was a room available, I experienced a total release of fear and I thought, “What was I so afraid of?” Many years of working and volunteering had given me a deep sense of compassion

and patience. Past family situations had helped me understand that life can change in an instant, and had taught me to trust in a loving God. And, when anxiety and the thought of relapse put me off keel, the Serenity Prayer helped me return to normalcy.

With renewed confidence, I opened the doors to the first Nar-Anon meeting in our area. I could not guess in advance how people would react to the program. As it turned out, many did not feel the need to continue attending meetings after a few months. I had to trust they gained something from what was shared at meetings, from Nar-Anon readings, and from studying the Twelve Steps. Each of these tools helps sow the seed from which can grow better way of life. They help us become non-judgmental, understanding, compassionate, loving, and caring towards our-

selves and others. We can each move ahead in our own time and in our own way.

In the beginning, I had to stem my tendency to control the group. Over time, I learned to call upon the Nar-Anon Traditions to help guide me and provide balance to our meetings. As our group grew, we learned that healthy meetings need members to serve and carry the message. We filled the leadership positions in our group and went on to help build a regional structure in our province.

It has been a true pleasure serving in Nar-Anon. As I look back over close to 30 years of service, I never forget the initial fear I felt in confronting the unknown. My life is so much richer as the result of my experience in Nar-Anon. Today, I wouldn't change a thing!

Step Two and My Higher Power ...continued from page 3

cause I think of God as being all powerful, all forgiving, all understanding, and all loving.

~ Sometimes I think of God as a being who nurtures me as if I was in the palm of a hand, although as a unifying force, God is never confined to a human image. My Higher Power is wise, like friends in my program who give me their time, strength, and hope. The fact that I have been given life

and can enjoy it and experience God's creative energy through everything, people, nature, music, art, and ideas, is humbling. These gifts shared with me are from a Higher Power. I am just now realizing God is present in change, fear, tragedy, and loss. With my Higher Power, I am working through life's problems so I can appreciate life's joys.

~ My Higher Power today is

loving and caring, and is there when I am in need. My Higher Power today loves me for all my faults and my assets, no matter what.



~ What is God? I think God is an unknowable quantity. To

attempt to define God is to say one knows what God is, which means I could be leaving something out.

Now, my Higher Power walks by my side, as a close friend who never judges what I do or say. My Higher Power may not look like anyone else's, but it is there for me and I am no longer alone. For that I am eternally grateful.

California Has a New Region!

Since the beginning of Nar-Anon Family Groups (NFG), California has been comprised of two very broad geographical areas that divide this large state into southern and northern regions. The majority of groups were located in the largely populated areas of San Diego, Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco's South Bay.

As years have gone by and the large area between the northern and southern regions has grown in population, so has the need for sup-

porting families and friends of addicts. Nar-Anon meetings have started over the last decade in this middle part of California, some of them far from the established service structure of the southern and northern regions.

Trusted servants from newer groups decided to take the opportunity to connect for support. Thus the idea of forming a third region was born.

The concept was taken to four groups in December 2013. After much time spent in dis-

cussion, reading the GLS, GWS, traditions, and concepts of service, seeking our Higher Power through prayer and group conscience, and talking to service sponsors, a Central California Region Formation Committee was formed.

The committee, comprised of 18 members from the state of California, elected interim officers. Every month the committee made progress and grew to strengthen the establishment of a third region in our Golden State.

October 2014 marks the Cen-

The Nar-Anon Program

tral California Region's (CCR) first Elections Assembly and Service Committee meetings. We are grateful for those who helped us along the way. This has truly been a year filled with wonder and opportunity.

If anyone is interested, CCR would be happy to share details of our process and be of service to NFG as a whole.

What's Worked for You?

Last Issue's Question

What is the most powerful gift you have been given as a result of sponsorship?

When I first came to Nar-Anon, I knew immediately that I needed to find a sponsor. Fortunately, I quickly found someone who had what I wanted; serenity, inner peace, and a loving soul. She had been attending Nar-Anon for years, even after her addict had found recovery.

One of our first exercises was a resentment list. My assignment was to list all of my resentments, even those that had nothing to do with the addict. I was to write until nothing more poured out of me. As each part of the assignment progressed, I learned how hard headed I was (I kept replacing the items my addict kept pawning), how little control I had over my life, and

how I treasured my resentments and carried them with me for years. It was through this assignment that I also learned to recognize what I had control over and what was actually my responsibility.

The best and final gift I received from my sponsor was to forgive others, even my addict. Years later, the addict I had divorced told me he thought I would never forgive him for all he had done to me. I looked at him and told him with truth in my heart, "I already have." Without my sponsor and her gift, I may never have become willing, much less able, to forgive. My sponsor taught me how to forgive. What a precious, precious gift.

This Issue's Question

I have been part of a group that took a group conscience and used Nar-Anon contributions to fund food and drinks for a party. This made me feel uncomfortable. Have you ever felt dissatisfied with your group's use of contributions? How were you able to resolve this issue?



31 Days in Narateen Daily Reader

The WS Narateen Committee has begun working on a Narateen daily reader. It will contain 31 readings written by Narateen members who share how the Narateen program has helped them. We are asking for inspiring stories of recovery that other teens can relate to.

Share on any topic you feel is important. Just think of struggles you've been through and how Narateen supported you.

Keep it simple! You don't

have to be a good writer or write essays well. Your experience, strength, and hope are what really matters. You can even audio record your sharing. Just choose a topic, record yourself for about 3-4 minutes, and send it to us by email.

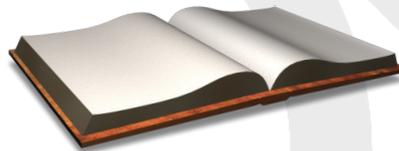
A completed copyright release form, including your parent's or guardian's permission, must be submitted with anything you share. Email your Narateen sharing and release form to Narateen@nar-anon.org.

You may also mail your shar-

ing and release form to:

Nar-Anon World Service Office
22527 Crenshaw Blvd.
Suite 200B
Torrance, CA 90505

Together We Grow!



"As I continue my high school education, I also continue to work my program. Today I have hope for a better future."

SESH, September 16

Nar-Anon Donations

Please read this message at your business meetings this quarter



Help support Nar-Anon's continued mission by contributing what you can. Your donation helps Nar-Anon ...

- stay staffed to answer 20,000+ calls and emails a year
- continue in-house upkeep of the Nar-Anon website and webstore
- send outreach literature to providers and institutions
- develop new Nar-Anon literature
- create future innovations to the program and WSO

Please remember the Seventh Tradition: "Every group ought

to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

Did you know you can make a donation to Nar-Anon online?

It's easy! Just go to the [Nar-Anon Webstore](#) and click on **Donate** at the top of the page. This takes you directly to the [Support Nar-Anon](#) page where you can either select a design-

ated amount to donate or enter a custom amount. Confused? Then click on the [Webstore Getting Started](#) video or check out the FAQ for helpful information. Try it!

Please remember that in order to avoid affiliation with outside enterprises, only Nar-Anon members may donate.



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Subscriptions to date:
3,228!

Committee Corner

Outreach Committee

Share Hope with Nar-Anon's Audio PSA

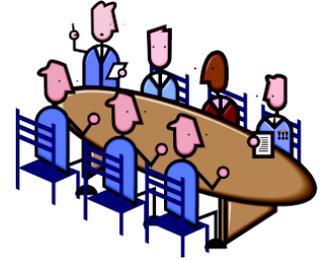
Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are messages in the public interest designed to raise awareness and change public attitudes and behavior towards a social issue. They can be utilized for outreach over venues such as radio, TV, cable network, internet classifieds, and public information boards at no cost. A Nar-Anon PSA can be a powerful tool, carrying Nar-Anon's message of hope and practicing the principles of Step Twelve, Tradition Six, and Tradition Eleven. Please consider using a conferenced approved PSA to help build awareness of Nar-Anon in your community.

WS Outreach Challenge #5

Challenge Goal: Request local radio stations' PSA time to share the Nar-Anon Audio PSA.

What to Do:

1. Using the telephone book or the internet, compile a list of local radio stations and their contact information.
2. Call the radio station during normal business hours and ask to speak to the person responsible for the station's PSA broadcasts.
3. When you reach the person responsible for PSAs, identify yourself as a Nar-Anon member, briefly explain the program, the PSA, and ask if the station would be willing to broadcast the 30-second PSA. A sample script might read:
"My name is Jane and I am a member of Nar-Anon Family Groups, a worldwide 12-step fellowship for those affected by someone else's addiction. Nar-Anon recently developed a 30-second audio PSA directing the listeners to find information about Nar-Anon at our website or toll-free number. Would the radio station be willing to broadcast this PSA?"
4. If the designated person is not available, ask if you may leave a message or get an email contact and follow up.
5. If the station agrees to air the PSA, [CLICK HERE](#) to go to the WS Website Outreach Page. Scroll down to **Outreach Tools**. Under Outreach Tools, go to **PSA Downloads** and click on "here" for the audio-only version.
6. If a station agrees to air the PSA, follow-up with a thank you message, expressing Nar-Anon's gratitude for the air time.



7. If the station does not agree to air the PSA, it is a good practice to follow-up with an email thank you asking them to please consider Nar-Anon for a future PSA. Remember to check back with the station in the future.

If you have any questions or would like to request support with this outreach challenge, please email: outreach@nar-anon.org.

Narateen Committee

The Narateen Committee is thrilled to share news from the 2014 World Service Conference. The World Service Narateen Safety Guidelines were approved at WSC 2014 and are available on the website. They were written by members of the Narateen Committee to ensure the safety of Narateen members, facilitators, and Nar-Anon/Narateen as a whole. All new and existing facilitators are required to complete certification, register with the WSO, and agree to background checks. Certification is a formal acknowledgement that a member has met the requirements to be of service to Narateen. It is recommended that a Narateen Process Person keep records, communicate with potential facilitators, and receive results of background checks. The complete Narateen Safety Guidelines are available for download on the [Narateen](#) page of the WSO website.

As the result of a motion passed at WSC 2014, the term "Facilitator" will replace "Sponsor" to eliminate the confusion between a personal sponsor and a Narateen service member. All Narateen literature is currently being updated to reflect this change. Please view the [Narateen](#) pages on the new website.

Literature Committee

New Literature Submission Page on the Website

The World Service Literature Committee is asking for original writings on The Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service, for possible inclusion in the Nar-Anon 36. Writings should be accompanied by a Copyright Release Form, which is included in the Literature Writing Guidelines pamphlet and may be found on the NEW [Literature Submissions page](#) on the website and on page 43 of the Guide to World Services. Submissions can be sent to LitCom@nar-anon.org.

Upcoming Events

Click on event titles for details
or go to the [WSO website](#)

Nar-Anon @ MCBNA VI

January 23-25, 2015

“Journey to Serenity”

Monterey Conference Center

One Portola Plaza

Monterey, CA 93940

888-688-7834

montereynaranon@gmail.com

Nar-Anon Eastern PA Region 2015 Convention

March 6-8, 2015

“Bridges to Serenity X— It’s About
Time!”

Crowne Plaza

4700 Street Road

Treose, PA

Save the date

Nar-Anon New England Region Convention 2015

April 24-26, 2015

“With Faith there is Hope”

Courtyard by Marriott Downtown

63 Grand Street

Waterbury, CT 06702

Rose T. 203-641-9380 rtrtrys@gmail.com



Six Simple Steps

When the addict does things
That arouse my anger,
Or send me into panic,
Or make me gasp in disbelief,
The First Step shows me
I am powerless over the addict,
And helps me focus on my own serenity.

When I feel my life is
Out of control,
Spiraling downward
Into a pit of despair,
The Second Step reminds me
That, with God, anything is possible;
Even the restoration of my sanity.

When the weight of my cares becomes
Too great to bear,
Having tried and failed
To make sense of my own life,
The Third Step allows me
To release my control and
Turn all of my problems over to God.

When I come to wonder exactly
How much blame I bear
For the chaos that
Befell my family,
The Fourth Step directs me
To look inward for answers,
Since only there can I find truth.

The Back Page



When I finally recognize
That I am not perfect,
And see what my mistakes
Have cost me,
The Fifth Step teaches me
To admit my wrongdoings
So I have freedom to move forward.

When I trace my errors back
To my own personal weaknesses,
Character flaws I have
Lived with all my life,
The Sixth Step prepares me
To let go of my old behaviors,
And let God help me discover
A better way to live.

TM



Newsletter Submissions

Articles are welcomed from all Nar-Anon members. Please focus on the Nar-Anon program and share your experience, strength, and hope (ESH) from the perspective of a Nar-Anon member. Submit articles to newsletters@nar-anon.org. Each submission must be accompanied by a signed [Release Form](#) before it can be published.

**** Next Issue Submission Deadline: January 20, 2015****

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