



SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to respond to the reality of current and evolving mass media technologies by providing insight on social media as it relates to the principles of the Nar-Anon program, particularly anonymity.

Introduction

Social media has become a fast-growing communication tool in our society. It is a means for friends and families to connect with one another. Businesses, companies, and organizations promote products and services via social media to reach large audiences by broadcasting, similar to press, radio, films, and television. This document explores the ability of social media to protect the anonymity of users.

Tradition 11: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, internet, and other forms of mass media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all NA members.

Attraction rather than promotion – Attraction is the appeal our program offers and can be as simple as making information about Nar-Anon available at locations where people who need Nar-Anon can find it. Our members carry a message that can impact Nar-Anon either positively or negatively. Promoting is when we take our message further, such as making promises or using the face of a member or prominent person to endorse our fellowship. Our public relations policy, as it relates to our message, is Nar-Anon has something to offer that others may want. If our message is consistent and appealing, those who need us will seek out our meetings.

Personal anonymity – Protecting our personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, internet, and other forms of mass media sends a message to those considering Nar-Anon. It is a safe place where no one will divulge your private information because they protect their own so carefully.

Need always – This leaves no room for negotiation at the level of press, radio, films, internet, and other forms of mass media. We are free as members to determine our anonymity at a personal level, but at the public level we are called to look to Tradition Eleven. When we are talking with friends, professionals, and in situations that are one-on-one, we are free to divulge our participation in the Nar-Anon program. In many cases, this is vital to our primary purpose of carrying the message to families and friends of addicts. It also helps when we sign agreements with meeting facilities. In public, we need always maintain personal anonymity because businesses and organizations search social media to vet future employees. Social media sites are for-profit businesses whose earnings are derived by selling user information to advertisers. When we make our membership known publicly, we risk presenting ourselves as the voice of Nar-Anon.

With special care of all NA members - Just as important as protecting our personal anonymity, we are asked to give special care to all NA members. The spirit of this tradition does



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not stop with NA members; it includes our addicted loved ones and other Nar-Anon members. When we mention others by name or by their relationship to us in a post on a public forum, we could unknowingly expose them to judgment and harm. Members in other fellowships, even those related to us, deserve to have their anonymity protected. It is theirs, not ours, to break. NA members go to great lengths to protect their anonymity; we must not take this for granted. Although our tradition does not state those yet to find NA, spiritually, we learn to protect theirs as well. We never know when someone we love may become a member. We are asked to protect the anonymity of everyone who attends our meetings, even those who don't come back. This furthers the appeal of what Nar-Anon offers.

Nar-Anon's Tradition Eleven differs from most other Twelve-Step fellowships in that "internet and other forms of mass media" are named specifically. The conscience of the fellowship at the 2008 Nar-Anon World Service Conference made a wise decision in acknowledging emerging and not-yet-existent technologies. The term "mass media" can be used to describe any technology used to communicate to a large audience.

Personal Use of Social Media and Anonymity

When using social media, the personal anonymity of our members cannot be secured when we set up our profiles using our full name so our friends and family can find us. This leads to breaking personal anonymity and is in contradiction to Tradition Eleven. Even in situations where the communication is presumed to be private, electronic media makes it very easy for recipients to accidentally or intentionally share our posts and pictures with others.

As members, many of us use social media. It is a personal choice. We cannot guarantee the protection of the anonymity of our Nar-Anon friends and NA members by using the privacy and security options many of these sites offer. Some sites allow contacts to be organized so a post is only seen by those specified in a particular group or category. It is a good practice to use security options but using these options does not guarantee anonymity. Social media privacy settings can be confusing and change rapidly. We have no control over when and how they change.

Some questions to ask ourselves:

- Why must we protect the addict's anonymity?
- What is our responsibility as members of Nar-Anon when participating in social media?
- Do we have any control over privacy settings of those who "follow" us?
- Can we be sure a message or post will not be forwarded or shared?
- Can we be sure privacy settings today will be the same tomorrow?
- Who might be affected if we break our anonymity?

Use of Social Media by Groups, Areas, and Regions



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Groups, areas, and regions using social media should look at our traditions for guidance to make an informed group conscience decision. For example, if the group, area, or region is using the Nar-Anon name or logo on a social media page, it can be interpreted as the official voice of Nar-Anon. Tradition Four states: *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other Nar-Anon Family Groups, or NA as a whole.* By using the trademarked logo, it may be interpreted that we are representing the entire fellowship.

Some questions for the group conscience:

- When social media is used, are we affecting Nar-Anon or NA as a whole?
- Is the use of social media in conflict with Tradition Four?
- Is it promotion to use the Nar-Anon logo on social media sites?
- Can the social media we use guarantee protection of members' anonymity?
- Do areas and regions have autonomy?

How Can Service Members Use Internet Technologies in Observance of Our Traditions?

Groups, areas, regions, and service committees sometimes use internet groups and forums as a communication tool. This is not social media. Trusted servants setting up these closed forums and/or groups should use security measures, such as usernames and passwords, that only allow those invited to have access. This will protect the anonymity of everyone.

Trademark, Copyright, Nar-Anon's Name, Logo, and Literature

One of the principles underlying Tradition Eleven is no individual, group, area, or region speaks for Nar-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., [NFGH, Inc.]. The voice of the fellowship comes from our World Service Conference. When a member, group, area, or region uses the Nar-Anon name and/or logo in social media, others may assume they are officially speaking for NFGH, Inc.

"The Nar-Anon name and logo are trademarks of NFGH, Inc. Placing the symbol ® or capital letters "TM" to the right of all Nar-Anon trademarks shows that the Nar-Anon name and logos are legally owned or registered trademarks. This helps protect the fellowship's legal right to ownership of its trademarks. Nar-Anon's trademarks must not be used in any way that would serve to endorse, finance, promote, or affiliate the Nar-Anon Fellowship with any outside enterprise. These trademarks must not be used in any manner that could draw us into a public controversy." ~ Nar-Anon Family Groups Guide to World Services (GWS) - page 28.

Use of the Nar-Anon name and logo on social media sites is prohibited by trademark laws. The permitted use of literature by members, groups, and regions is outlined in the *GWS*.

Conclusion



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Social media, as a networking tool, is a resource for friends and family members. As individuals, using it is our choice. However, as members and trusted servants of the Nar-Anon Fellowship, we must always keep our Twelve Traditions in mind. Experience suggests that the unity of the Nar-Anon Family Groups depends upon our adherence to these traditions.

Technology, including social media, is constantly changing. Privacy on the internet can never be guaranteed. Nar-Anon members using social media must be responsible and use caution when utilizing these technologies.

The integrity of NFGH, Inc. is vital in achieving our fellowship's primary purpose, which includes protecting the anonymity of our members, NA members, and our addicted loved ones. It is essential that our members choose wisely when using resources such as the internet and social media. This document is written in the spirit of service to help members, groups, areas, and regions understand Nar-Anon's principles relating to social media. Our conclusion is that it is not possible to use social media and protect the personal anonymity of members and others. Since anonymity is the spiritual nature of our fellowship, at this time, there are no social media sites operating under the direction of Nar-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Tradition Twelve states: **Anonymity** is the spiritual foundation of **all** our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.