



Dulles Corridor Area
Narcotics Anonymous

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Events

None Scheduled

Join the Special Events
subcommittee!

The Group Conscience

Step Seven

We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

By Christina R.

I feel like NA duped me.

I heard our three part promise that “an addict, any addict, can stop using (ok I guess I shall do that), lose the desire to use (I guess that would be helpful if I’m to continue to live a drug free life - yes, I’ll take that) and find a new way to live (wait- what? why?). I guess I didn’t hear that third part.

Through repetition, ritual, and good old fashioned brain washing I have begun this process of finding a new way to live.

I will attempt to keep these ramblings focused on the Seventh Step but I must include the Cliff’s Notes version of my Sixth Step experience as a prologue for continuity’s sake!

Steps Six and Seven have been pivotal in my recovery. They are the first steps to which I felt connected. I came in to the program determined to be the best student ever; so I wrote on my step work promptly and thoroughly. For whatever reason, I did not feel anything while working Steps One through Five. I suppose I did feel one thing. I felt smug. I felt superior regarding anything to do with spirituality and a Higher Power as, having grown up in organized religion, I believed I had spirituality all figured out. Oh what a great unlearning I had waiting for me! That is a whole different story, one which I am still living and inevitably will be living for the rest of my life. That prospect is both scary and glorious, and I have NA to thank for it, too.

Step Six brought a crippling self awareness that I had not asked for. I came to NA in an attempt to stop living like a garbage animal. To stop getting arrested. Mainly to stop running out of drugs. I didn’t want a new way to live, as I wasn’t sure I wanted to live at all. I knew I was

going to end up in a position where I would not be able to use drugs the way I needed to use drugs. 24/7. That was the motivating fear required for me to make a change in my life.

Until I stopped using, my only conscious fear was running out of drugs. This was a daily terror. When the drugs were finally removed, the real fear set in. Two decades worth of numbing wall construction crumbled quickly. I was left empty and miserable. I was terrified, depressed, lonely, and whatever the opposite of a pink cloud is. My experience is that if I remove the drugs without replacing them with something better, I will use again.

I wrote on the Sixth Step slowly, methodically, and earnestly. I prayed for willingness. I acknowledged that I was in for a “personality change if I was to stay clean”. I love the part of the Sixth Step that says “where we are not humble we become humiliated, when we are greedy we come up unsatisfied”. I also started to notice that when I am judgmental of others I tend to judge myself more harshly and am more sensitive to other people’s judgment of me. When I gossip, I live in fear of what others are saying about me. When I am unforgiving of others, I am unable to forgive myself. I was alienating myself from others and creating my own paranoia.

I was constantly letting myself and others down, which in itself was nothing new;

“When I am unforgiving of others, I am unable to forgive myself. I was alienating myself from others and creating my own paranoia.”

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being aware of it, however, was new. I felt the weight of shame heavy on my life. I longed for connection and intimate relationships with others but I was creating my own blocks to love.

I don't think I did a proper Fourth Step as I don't remember identifying patterns to carry over into Step Six. I Googled "list of recovery defects" and waded through them, A-Z. I identified 27 defects. I wrote a lot. A LOT. Something happened to me during this year of writing. I cried daily. I remember asking another recovering addict, "Why am I like this? Why do I "feel" this deeply?" She told me I was self centered and it made me cry even more. Thank god for friends in the Program that speak the truth to us. More was to be revealed in regards to self centeredness.

Whilst writing on this step and growing in this self awareness, I started to behavior modify myself into defect removal. I attempted to stop speaking gossip out of my mouth. I attempted to stop judging others out loud. But this effort to change myself on my own terms produced no internal heart change. I still felt judgmental, jealous, and unforgiving on the inside. Do do do, work work work. Wasn't I doing this right? Why did I still feel shitty? Why did I dislike myself so intensely?

I finally finished writing on the Sixth Step at 11:55 PM December 31, 2018 (in the hallway at the Dulles Corridor New Years Eve dance).

I progressed on to Step Seven. This is my experience. It is deeply personal and that's what I love about this program. We have our guidebook in the Basic Text, we have collective consciousness in other recovering addicts, but the way in which my higher power executes my recovery is personal to me.

I read Step Seven in the Basic Text

and It Works How and Why. I wrote answers to the questions in the NA Step Working Guide. It was in the following months after finishing the writing when the action and lessons began.

I begged God to remove my shortcomings immediately. This did not happen. What did happen was that I entered into the most painful year of my recovery to date. I made a big mess of my life in 2019. My main players, jealousy, judgmentalism, resentment, anger, shame, unforgiveness, comparison, reared their ugly heads. I had a minor mid-life crisis and acted out in ways that did not serve my highest good. I hurt others and alienated myself from my recovery network. It was a dark year. I contemplated leaving the program.

"The Basic Text says the Seventh Step is an action step. We are to ask God for help and relief and we are to ask others in the program to give us direction."

My sponsor has an infuriating way of laughing when I share my pain with her. I have repeatedly asked her to validate my misery before she cracks up.

When I bring her situations that I deem less than favorable she throws her head back and laughs, shaking her hand to the sky as in a fist bump with God and says "Yes God! Thank you! Thank you for giving Christina another opportunity for growth!" She has been doing this since I started working with her. It was during the Seventh Step process that I began to understand what she was doing. She started rubbing off on me. The best way I can describe it is that my

eyes started opening to the fact that life was happening FOR me not TO me. My mind started shifting from one of lack and of victim mentality to one of opportunity for personal growth. This, for me, is a spiritual awakening. Forty years of victim mentality and negative self talk started giving way to a new way of thinking.

The exact same situations that I messed up in 2019 repeated themselves in my life months later, and don't you know, with eyes beginning to open to the process I was in, I accepted the challenge to try things differently. This was the Seventh Step in action for me. I have begun to thank God with laughter when difficulties arise. These are my lessons and opportunities for growth. I haven't executed redos flawlessly but I am gentler on myself now despite not living in perfection. This is huge. I can laugh at myself instead of beating myself up. I know another chance will circle around and give me more opportunity for improvement. I have begun to see difficulties as opportunity to grow, just as my sponsor has been doing since day one.

The Basic Text says the Seventh Step is an action step. We are to ask God for help and relief and we are to ask others in the program to give us direction.

I did both of these things.

Asking God for Help. - God cannot remove my defects without my consent. I had to join my Higher Power in mutual effort. My role - trust and pray. Less "doing" and more "letting go". That religious deconstruction I mentioned earlier started during my Seventh Step. Where I found I had been closed minded because of religious brainwashing, I now found myself opening my mind to a different source of spirituality. All the right

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teachers appeared. Meditation became life giving. I found a spiritual practice that lit my soul on fire. I began to relax into the Second Step knowledge that my Higher Power is all loving - meaning, to me. there is no room for wrath or judgement or punishment, caring, and greater than me. If I truly believe in a benevolent force that is more powerful than I, why wouldn't I trust it? My "head knowledge" was starting to connect to my heart.

Asking others experience - I called a few recovering addicts who I knew had experience with this step. They reminded me that the step said we "humbly asked God...". They reminded me that humility was the main spiritual principle of this step. What did "humbly" mean in this context? One addict told me that "humbly" meant to them "submission to God's timeline."

They reminded me that the Basic Text says the "main objective of Step Seven is to get out of ourselves and strive for the will of our Higher

Power". Wait a second! The goal isn't solely my own personal happiness? I'm still working on this one. Side note - since I believe I am useless to the world and to others unless I am happy, I do believe it is a part of Gods will is for me to be happy! Phew.

The Basic Text says that Step Seven is our road to spiritual growth. The expectation of immediacy that I entered into the step with gave way to an appreciation of the fact that my spiritual growth and transformation is a slow process. I don't want to miss a beat of this journey - of this awakening to love and reality. I am no longer blind to the small victories along the way. I now think it would be boring to recover in the blink of an eye. What else would there be left to do?! I am enjoying this journey of growth with its simultaneous bumps and tiny wins. Of course perfection and total enlightenment are the goal! Jk guys.

In the Sixth Step, I found that what I had heard shared in meetings was

true. All of my periphery defects of character could be whittled down to the root of self centered fear.

In the Seventh Step, one of the spiritual lessons I started to learn was that my fear is simply an absence of love. I cannot fight this fear - it has been too powerful of a force in my life. What I found I could do instead was replace it. With love.

Love is the enemy of fear. I intentionally invite love in to my life on a daily basis. I am not naturally brimming with love; I lean towards fear. I am rewiring my brain to become addicted to love. Love for myself and love for others.

Oh yes I'll probably always have these defects of character. I now accept and acknowledge them with grudging respect and no longer fight them. Instead I make a conscious effort today to live in love rather than fear and invite god in to mediate shortcomings as seen fit.

Seventh Tradition

Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

By Allen J.

The Seventh Tradition is about self-support. Pretty obvious isn't it, since the words "fully self-supporting" are part of the Tradition!?! The question most addicts ask is: "How does this apply to me!?" Great question!

Let me re-phrase the issue: "Does the Seventh Tradition apply to how we live our lives as addicts in Recovery OR is it only about Groups (and perhaps service boards and committees)?" In other words, do Addicts actual work the Traditions - like they work the Steps - or are the

Traditions only something to keep the Group from spinning out of control?

There are Tradition Working Guides out there, so the short answer is "Yes, some Addicts work the Traditions." I have done so and I encourage you to also try it. Consult your Sponsor and we can all talk if your Sponsor wants. Or just you and I can talk. Whatever. Let's put on a Traditions Working Zoom workshop for whomever wants to learn something new about themselves and their Recovery! The bottom line is that the Traditions

are part of the personal Recovery of those who want them to be.

However, unlike the Seventh Step, the Seventh Tradition was NOT written for individual Addicts. It targets the Groups and says that "Every N.A. Group ought to be fully self-supporting..." What about the service boards or committees like Area Service and Regional Service Committees? Nope, the Tradition does not mention them! When the Traditions were formulated by AA, and then later *continued on page 4*

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adopted by NA, service boards and committees were NOT NA! NA meant the Groups; period. Everything else was simply a way for Groups to bond together (Special Events) and to facilitate activities that required dealing with entities outside of the Fellowship: mostly hospitals, mental health facilities, and jails (H&I). Fancy stuff like literature and PI efforts came later. The Traditions did not address Area and Regional service boards or committees other than to say that they were to be directly responsible to those (Groups) they served; but neither did the Traditions says that service boards or committees created by the Groups somehow became NA; everything was about the autonomous Groups carrying the message.

Groups form the Fellowship of NA. Our Groups exist to carry the message of Recovery through NA to Addicts. We meet regularly and openly so that Addicts can be referred, or self-refer themselves, into NA. Group meetings also help us support each other. Groups also help us clarify our own personal message of Recovery as we learn to share honestly about our struggles and successes. Anything that would cause us to twist our message to suit another is unacceptable and so our Traditions focus our Groups on a Primary Purpose: “carrying the message to the Addict who still suffers”.

The Traditions work together. Tradition Four says Groups are to be autonomous (independent) of every possible alliance or bond – even other NA Groups – except when to do so would affect NA as a whole. Only self-supporting Groups are fully independent. Only they do not owe allegiance to anyone because they do not incur any debts that obligate them to anyone. “Fully” self-supporting means we do not accept even a social

debt of acknowledging Jesus Christ if we meet in a Christian Church, recognizing the Way of Buddha if we meet in a Buddhist Temple, or even the sovereignty of the government if we meet in a government building. Do we owe curtesy to the places kind enough to lease us rooms? Certainly. Respect? Yep - we show respect by paying our rent on time and in full. In fact, Groups that cannot support themselves financially need to fold and Groups that get pressured to allow the preacher, monk, or sheriff to “briefly speak” at meetings need to move. That is what the Seventh Tradition is about.

“Groups form the Fellowship of NA. Our Groups exist to carry the message of Recovery through NA to Addicts.”

If the Seventh Tradition does NOT say that service boards and committees should be self-supporting, how is it that the Traditions apply to them? Through the Groups! If a Group (or collection of Groups) wants to create another entity to do something, the Group(s) remains 100% responsible for that entity. Thus, Groups which form an Area Service are 100% responsible for the Area Service actions and behavior and the ASC needs to always be full dependent upon the Groups that form it. Indeed, an ASC, RSC, WSC, or Convention that becomes fully self-supporting needs to be cut off and abandoned since by doing so it becomes something other than NA!

Tradition Six says that an NA Group out never lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise. This help Groups keep the Seventh Tradition. With the right to create service boards or committees

comes the duty to fully manage and direct these entities (Tradition Nine). Groups must be actively involved in these entities do. Group members must participate in all the activities and decision making of such entities. This includes not only the Area Service but any entities created by an Area Service. Thus, when an ASC creates subcommittees, these subcommittees must also be fully responsible to those Groups they serve and the Groups must fully participate in everything that the subcommittees do. Fully self-supporting thus means that Area subcommittees owe their allegiance to the Area’s Groups and to no one else, but it also means that Groups must actively manage and participate in these subcommittees.

Does the Seventh Tradition apply to ASC subcommittees? No, it applies to the Groups which formed the ASC and the subcommittees. Thus the H&I, newsletter, outreach, policy, and the Admin committees do not have to be financially self-supporting; they can (and often do) rely upon Special Events and Literature as well as the Groups themselves to generate the necessary funds. Yet these subcommittees may only exist if the Groups actively support and direct them; when Group support ceases, so do these subcommittees (even if they “exist” on paper as a policy decision of the Area Service).

Must Group donations fund all service boards and committees? No, Groups support the Area Service and its subcommittees by attending Area Service meetings, helping out on subcommittees, promoting and finding people to meet H&I opportunities, and attending Special Events.

Incorporated entities are not NA. An incorporated entity, by definition,

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is answerable only to itself. Its directors and managers owe a duty to the entity and cannot be bound to any other master. The entity itself is indebted to the government for its charter is existence and is indebted to pay taxes and registration fees and must align its policies and intentions with the laws, policies, and intentions of the government. Such entities cannot be “fully self-supporting declining outside contributions” and cannot have as their primary purpose “to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.” There is simply no other consistent viewpoint. By contrast, NA Groups are fully self-supporting, decline outside contributions, owe allegiance to no one, remain autonomous (apart) from everyone and everything except by their own choice and on their own conditions, and thereby remain 100% able to focus on their primary purpose; things that are

impossible for incorporated entities.

Incorporated entities exist who call themselves “NA” and who claim to be in the business of “doing NA”. Even when such entities were created by well-intentioned addicts in Recovery, Groups should not associate or affiliate with them, neither endorsing nor opposing them, and should not send Group funds or Group “representatives” to encourage their efforts. This is Tradition Six. Incorporated entities should not call themselves NA and Groups should not “lend” them the NA name. Individual addicts may attend their conventions (CPRCNA, AVCNA, the World Convention) and camp-outs (BRANA) and even buy their literature (NAWS, Hazelton), but Groups must remain non-affiliated in order for the Group itself to remain fully self-supporting. Groups may choose to put on their own camp-outs

(the 42nd annual white water rafting trip in June is 100% Group supported and directed) and should put on and attend Special Events through the Area Service. Groups may also create, produce, and distribute NA literature (like this Newsletter!), or may use NA’s existing literature, trademarks, and copyrights, but when a Group begins to actively support an outside incorporated entity simply because it calls itself “of NA”, the Group begins to violate NA’s Traditions and is heading away from its Primary Purpose.

Interesting in learning more about Tradition Seven and all the other Traditions? Let’s be fully self-supporting and host a Learning Day to teach ourselves about what is right, and wrong, for a Group to do. And perhaps we can discuss how, and whether, individual addicts can and should learn to incorporate the Traditions into their personal Recovery!

NA Super Speaker Fest

Lost Dreams Awaken: New Possibilities Arise

By Barbara P.

On March 6, 7, and 8 I met some of the most interesting people in NA I have ever met. To qualify as a speaker for this convention, you had to have over 30 years clean and there were 54 speakers in attendance. As far as conventions go, it was on the small side. There were probably somewhere around 200 people at this convention and it was only in its 2nd year. Even so, I marveled at the fact that more people were not at this convention to hear the wisdom these men and women shared. The speakers were absolutely fabulous, as you can imagine sharing over 30 years of experience, strength and hope. I gained as much, if not more, from listening to these folks share their experience in small groups outside the convention rooms. I found myself in a

group of people listening to a seasoned vet in the program: Bo S. He had over 40 years clean and a lot of experience.

Bo was involved in an experimental literature group. There was a table set up in the middle of the room with 4 chairs around it. Bo occupied one chair; the typist, Peggy Randon occupied another chair; an addict named Greg occupied a 3rd chair. Surrounding the 4 person table was a literature committee. In turn, one person from the literature committee could take that empty seat for a specified period of time. The 4 people at the table would discuss and come to a census on one sentence at a time of The Basic Text, which was The Gray Book at the time. I don’t

know how long this process took, but it must have been lengthy. When it was completed, The Santa Monica Text, as its called, was left out on the table for the night. When everyone returned the next morning the manuscript was gone. A manuscript called the Santa Monica Text has been published later, but Bo says he will never touch it. It can’t be proven to be the real text. I was so humbled and grateful to meet these oldtimers in NA. They were willing to share anything and everything they knew and felt to help other’s stay clean. The love at that convention was palpable.

I’m struck so often by the phrase “Whomever doesn’t learn from history is doomed to repeat it.”

NA History

By Jim M.

Narcotics Anonymous started in several places in the late 40s and early 50s. NA as we know it started in Southern California in 1953, but there were other fellowships known as Addicts Anonymous at a treatment 'farm' in Lexington KY, and Narcotics Anonymous was available in New York City and Cleveland, OH, but they weren't using the 12 steps as we know them today. None of these groups were observing the 12 Traditions. The eastern Fellowships of NA were associated with the Salvation Army. In many places, NA groups were formed with support of Churches and Prisons, but only those formed by addicts for addicts proved enduring. Those groups got support and literature from Southern California, though Cleveland made their writings available to the early fellowship(s).

By 1960, there was only one meeting in Southern California, and it was struggling. A man named Jimmy Kinnon was a strong member of this group, and he and others committed to a fellowship that would abide by the 12 Traditions. They began writing more literature, expanding the Buff Booklet into the Little White Booklet with Who is an Addict,

How It Works, What Can I Do, and Recovery and Relapse. These were all written by Jimmy K. What Is NA and Why Are We Here were written by Jimmy and Sylvia W. By the late 1960s, NA had a mimeograph machine, and named it's publishing arm CARE for Compassion, Action, Respect and Empathy. The first edition of the basic text list the publisher as CARENA 12 years later.

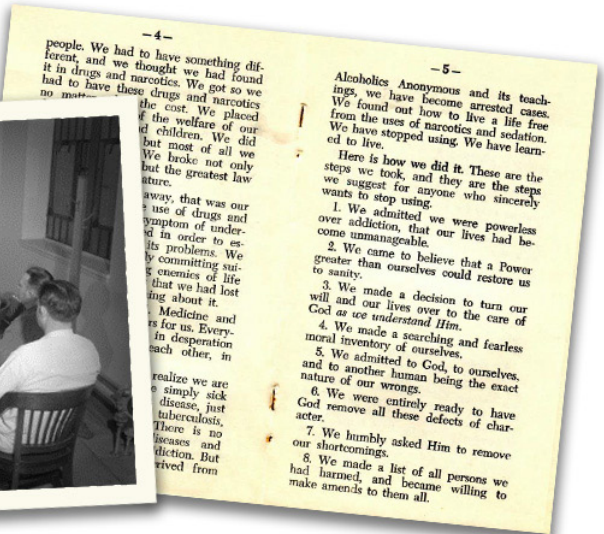
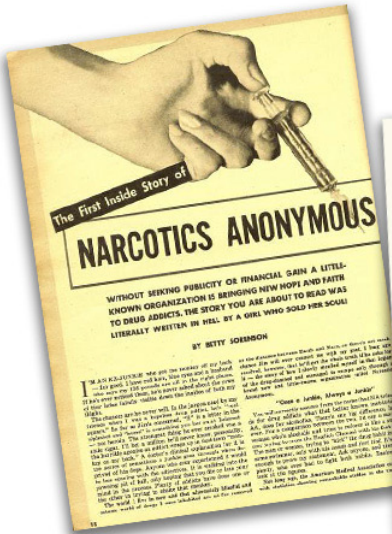
Of course the 1960s were a growth decade for drug use but not for recovery. NA did spread to the San Francisco Bay area (particularly the East Bay by the end of the decade). There was also the first group in Australia, called Drugs Anonymous. Australia would later serve as a major springboard for global NA, particularly in Asia and the Pacific.

Growth was slow but foundational. The first attempts at service committees were made at that time. In particular, Northern California and Philadelphia followed AA's Intergroup Model. A common way for a young fellowship to express itself was through newsletters. The fellowship in Lexington, KY had long published The Key. NA started publishing The Voice of NA, later just The Voice in the mid-60s. There

are many records of newsletters from other isolated fellowships visible thru my main sources for this article. { NA's Miracles Happen, published by NA in 1998 (not fellowship approved, it's not recovery literature) and <http://narchive.magshare.net/> }

With the 70s, NA continued to gather strength and solidity. Beginning in 1970, there were 39 NA meetings worldwide. Greg Pierce became a member of the fellowship and penned 'The Triangle of Self-Obsession', 'Living the Program', and 'An Approach to Writing the Fourth Step'. His story was also included in the Little White Booklet 'I Was Different' and later the basic text as 'I Was Unique'. He later (1974) developed The NA Tree with Jimmy K, which later became 'The Temporary Working Guide to the Service Structure', which still describes the service structure in most of the US.

By the late 1970's, there were more NA meetings outside California than there were within, but there were still less than 500 NA meetings known. Work was begun on the Basic Text, and the first NA World convention was held outside California in Houston TX in 1978.



Dulles Corridor Area of NA

Our area is located in Northern Virginia and holds about 20 meetings per week in Aldie, Ashburn, Chantilly, Herndon, Leesburg, McLean, Purcellville, Reston, and Sterling.



Anniversaries

Barbara P.

3 Years
July 7
BYOBT

Grace H.

3 Years
July 8
New Hopefuls

Christina R.

5 Years
July 28
BYOBT



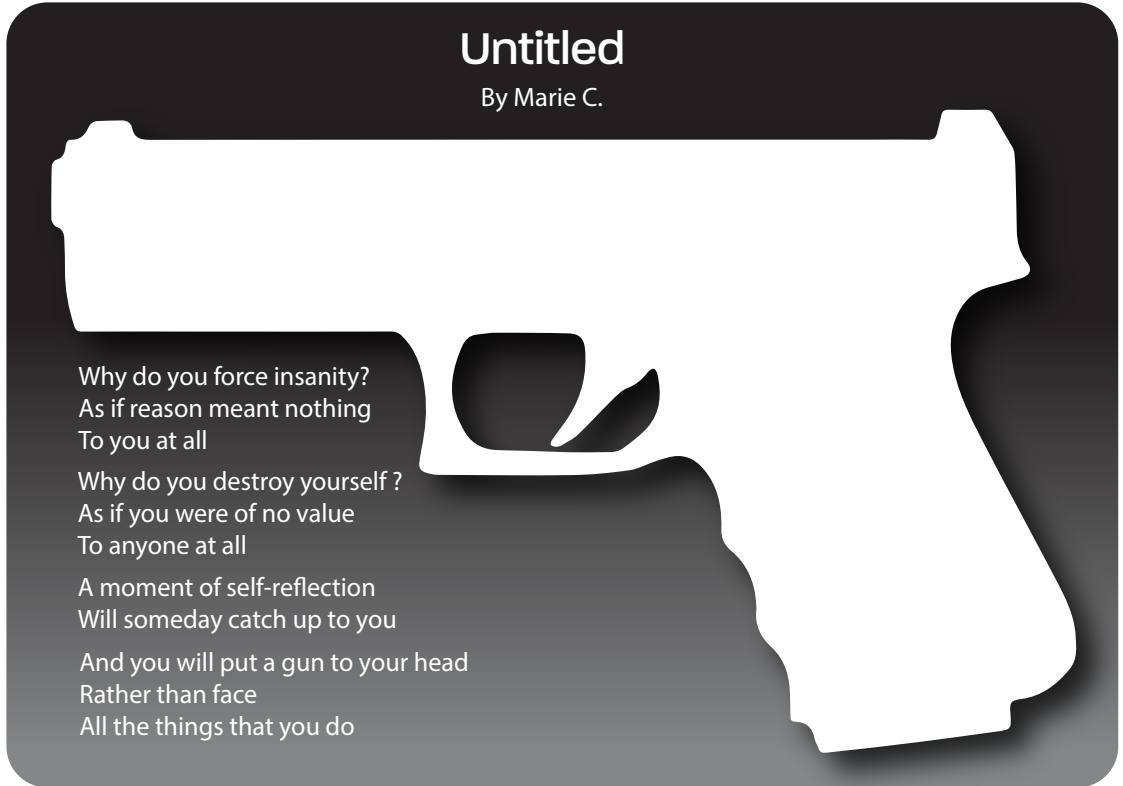
Narcotics Anonymous

is a nonprofit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We meet regularly to help each other stay clean. We are not interested in what or how much you used, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help.

Artists' Corner

Untitled

By Marie C.



Why do you force insanity?
As if reason meant nothing
To you at all

Why do you destroy yourself?
As if you were of no value
To anyone at all

A moment of self-reflection
Will someday catch up to you

And you will put a gun to your head
Rather than face
All the things that you do

Service Calendar

H&I

Oh hold due to COVID-19

Newsletter

First and Third Sundays
2:00 PM
<https://zoom.us/j/763730265>

Outreach

Some schedule
Sterling, VA

Policy

Some schedule
Location TBD

Public Information

Some schedule
Location TBD

Special Events

First and Third Saturdays
2:00 PM
<https://zoom.us/j/627293285>

Dulles Corridor Area Service

<http://www.dcana.org/>
Last Sunday
2:00-4:00 PM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86540386350>

C&P Regional Service

<http://www.cprna.org/>
Every second Saturday, every other month
10:00 AM Subcommittee Meetings
12:00-5:00 PM RSC Meeting
Rotating location (by area)

Autonomy Zonal Forum

<http://autonomyzonalforum.org/>
Every six months
Two day event(?)
Rotating location (by region)