

find a new way to live. We carry that message at our recovery meetings, where those who have some experience with NA recovery can share about it, and those who need to hear about NA recovery can listen. When an individual under the influence of a drug attempts to speak on recovery in Narcotics Anonymous, it is our experience that a mixed, or confused message may be given to a newcomer (or any member, for that matter) For this reason, many groups believe it is inappropriate for these members to share at meetings of Narcotics Anonymous. It may be argued that a group's autonomy, as described in our Fourth Tradition, allows them to decide who may share at their meetings. However, while this is true, we believe that group autonomy does not justify allowing someone who is using to lead a meeting, be a speaker, or serve as a trusted servant. Group autonomy stands only until it affects other groups or NA as a whole. We believe it affects other groups and NA as a whole when we allow members who are not clean to be a speaker, chair a meeting, or be a trusted servant for NA.

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# NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



CULTIVATING AN  
ATMOSPHERE  
OF RECOVERY

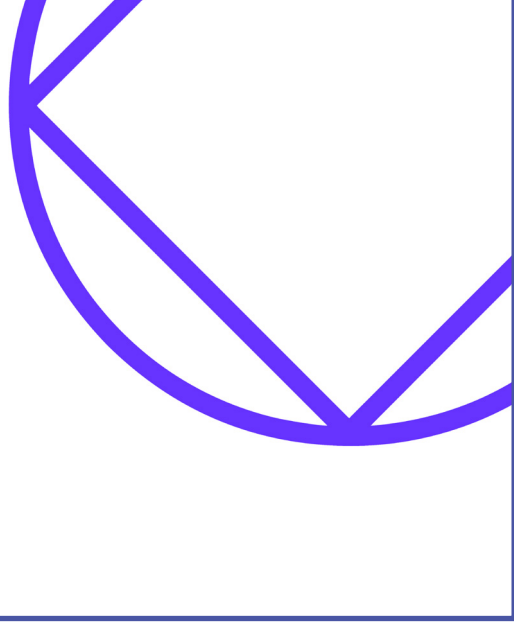
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Literary Work in progress. Please copy and share this with your local Home Group for Review and Input

This document was written in open participation by members of the Groups of The Anonymi Foundation.

Please send your input to  
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## **CLOSED MEETINGS (FOR ADDICTS ONLY)**

A Narcotics Anonymous meeting is a refuge for addicts. It is intended to be a safe and beneficial place where an addict can hear about and participate in recovery from the disease of addiction. As much as we might like to, we cannot be all things to all people. A closed meeting in Narcotics Anonymous is for those individuals who identify themselves as addicts or those who are uncertain and think they might have a drug problem. A closed Narcotics Anonymous meeting provides a freedom that is necessary for more personal and intimate sharing by Narcotics Anonymous members. It does so by providing an atmosphere in which addicts can feel more certain that those attending will be able to identify with them, and share their own experience, strength, and hope. Newcomers may feel more comfortable at a closed meeting for the same reason. At the beginning of a closed meeting, the leader or chairperson often reads a statement explaining why the meeting is closed and offering to direct nonaddicts who may be attending to an open meeting.

## **NON-AFFILIATION**

Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step program of recovery from the disease of addiction. The Twelve Traditions make possible our Fellowship and therefore our recovery. Tradition Six prohibits us from affiliation with any other organizations or any other outside enterprises. We are not affiliated with anyone, including probation offices, state parole offices, correctional institutions, halfway houses, or treatment facilities. To report on another member's attendance or participation in our Fellowship to any agency or institution is to affiliate with that agency or institution.

In addition, our Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions protect anonymity of our members. In our meet-

ings we have a place to share our experience, strength, and hope, as well as our trials and tribulations we encounter in our struggle to progress in our recovery. Without freedom to express ourselves, without fear of what may be reported to an outside agency or person charged with our supervision, our recovery and the recovery in our Fellowship would be severely inhibited.

Sometimes courts, parole agencies and probation officers require that "court cards" or attendance verification papers be carried by the persons they supervise and signed by the secretary of the meeting. This is a transaction between the supervising agency and the individual members involved. The individual is free to attend or not attend, participate or not participate. When we as N.A. members actively report to a supervising agency regarding another's anonymity, we jeopardize the chance for that person's recovery within our Fellowship. It is our suggestion that the supervising agency be visited by several members of the area's Public Information committee so that an explanation of our program may be supplied along with information regarding our Twelve Traditions and the importance of adhering to them. It has been our experience that when individuals in the community gain an understanding of how our program works, we have an opportunity to see that it works through meetings with addicts who have found recovery through our Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, they become supportive of them as we are.

## **TRUSTED SERVANTS & AN ATMOSPHERE OF RECOVERY**

Our Second Tradition tells us, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." Our trusted servants, therefore, are the backbone of the group

and their regular attendance at all meetings is extremely important. One of the pitfalls which has caused many NA groups to suffer or even fold has been the election of officers who were unqualified to serve or did not have a history of recovery in our fellowship. Often NA elections have seemed to be popularity contests rather than the selection of trusted servants. The officers of a group must be chosen with great care because of the responsibilities that their offices carry and the potential effect bad officers can have on the group. Fulfilling the commitment to serve is important. As a general guide, we have found that trusted servants are most successful if they have certain assets necessary for the performance of their responsibilities. These qualifications include:

1. The willingness and desire to serve
2. A history of recovery in NA (we suggest a minimum of one year clean time)
3. An understanding and working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of NA
4. Active participation in the group

Members on drug replacement programs such as methadone are encouraged to attend NA meetings. But, this raises the question: "Does NA have the right to limit members' participation in meetings?" We believe so. While some groups choose to allow such members to share, it is also a common practice for NA groups to encourage these members (or any other addict who is still using), to participate only by listening and by talking with members after the meeting or during the break. This is not meant to alienate or embarrass; this is meant only to preserve an atmosphere of recovery in our meetings. Our Fifth Tradition defines our groups' purpose: to carry the message that any addict can stop using and