

Reaching Out

October 2024



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“Narcotics Anonymous is a bridge to life, and a path we can walk throughout our lives. The gift is freedom.”

Living Clean, Chapter 1, “Living Clean”

From the Editor

We would like to welcome all of you to the NA World Services newsletter, *Reaching Out*. We hope that the contents of this newsletter will assist you in your recovery or H&I efforts. There are three sections to *Reaching Out*. The first section, "From the Inside," is filled with letters from incarcerated addicts, sharing their experience, strength, and hope as they find and maintain recovery from addiction through NA.

The second section, "From the Outside," is an opportunity for Hospitals & Institutions subcommittees to offer their experiences obtained through carrying the NA message of recovery to addicts who are unable to attend regular meetings. You may also find personal experience from those members who heard the NA message on the inside and are now living and enjoying life on the outside.

The third and newest section, "Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside," features members sharing about successfully transitioning from treatment, a hospital, or an institution to living on the outside.

We encourage submissions for *Reaching Out* from members and H&I subcommittees. Please consider that we are more likely to publish articles that focus on how NA has helped an individual to recover while incarcerated rather than those that concentrate on the horrors of drug use. Send all submissions to *Reaching Out*; NAWS, PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409-9999; USA, or to handi@na.org

GET INVOLVED AND HELP US CARRY OUT OUR FELLOWSHIP'S PRIMARY PURPOSE!!

Our planned publication deadlines are as follows:

Issue	Deadline
January 2025	15 October 2024
April 2025	15 January 2025
July 2025	15 April 2025

And finally, did you know that electronic subscriptions to Reaching Out are free? New issues will be emailed to you four times a year. To sign up, visit www.na.org/reachingout.

Dear Reaching Out,

I finally ended up in jail. My first sentence but not my first time. More than half my life I've been selfish: to my mother, family, and all my friends. They all are gone.

I am an addict and used every day. My life has taken me through trials and many losses and this only led me to higher highs. My kids and everything are lost.

But on this day, I'm alive. I'm trying from behind the walls to take another look. I say I'm trying because the only place I could seek help was from Narcotics Anonymous. Upon my release I'm anxiously waiting to go to meetings. Until then I'm using all my resources and my Higher Power. I'm working the Twelve Steps and I thank NA for showing me another look at myself and my life.

KM, California, USA

Dear Reaching Out,

I'm currently incarcerated here in PA in a State Drug Treatment program. I will be released shortly to rehab for 60 days until I go home.

While in this program I have progressed in my recovery, and I've been able to share my experience, strength, and hope with the other ladies as well. I chaired NA meetings, gave out literature and gave others hope. I currently celebrate three years and nine months clean time. There is nothing like being clean—I love it. NA showed me how to live again, think with a clear mind, and make rational decisions.

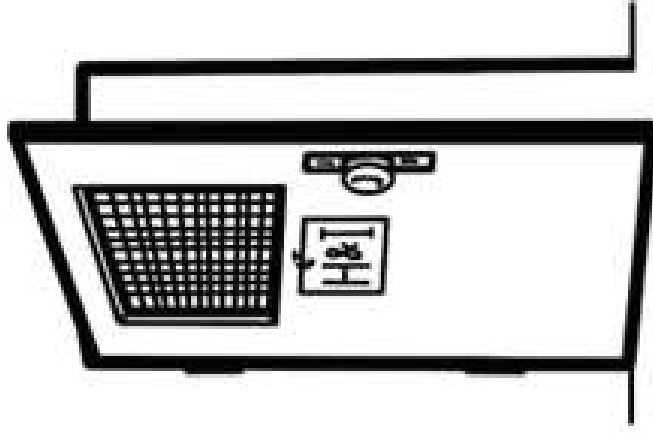
There is nothing I would trade for being clean. As I tell the ladies, "You never have to use again." I'm just very thankful that

I joined your newsletter while I was incarcerated. I told myself I would write, hoping that at least one of my stories would be published. I will write again once I'm on the outside and again for H&I.

For me, sharing my experience in my first incarceration; I ran and joined NA groups and meetings. I had to "stay connected to be protected."

NA is my new way of life. It brings me joy. I look forward to it daily. The first thing I'm going to do once I'm released is to go to the home group meeting. That's where I belong.

GQ, Pennsylvania, USA



AZ H&I



Dear Reaching Out,

I have been in recovery for the last five years and four months. I have a long history of drug abuse. Since the age of 13, I have used drugs to cover the pain of being molested as a child. For 27 years, I let myself be chained to the cycle of addiction. I was ok with the fact that I lived my life for one thing, to get high.

Today, I am able to lean into my faith and, with the help from a community of recovering addicts at this institution, I am able to abstain from all use of drugs. Through the Twelve Steps, my sponsor, and this quarterly newsletter, I have been able to maintain my clean time and growth.

I wasted numerous years living in addiction, and even though I am confined in a physical prison, I am excited about the years of freedom I have lived. You, too, can have this freedom that comes with being clean. We let go and let God lead the way. May you find your healing and remember you are not alone.

RG, California, USA

Many NA members, groups, and communities design recovery-oriented art. We believe that carrying the NA message of recovery is a creative act, and images provide a powerful message of the freedom we can find in NA.

If you would like to see your art printed here, please send jpegs or pdf files to Handl@na.org, or mail to Reaching Out; c/o NA World Services; PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409.



Anonymous Inmate Art

Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

Hi, My name is ES, and I would like to share my experience, strength, and hope.

I have been familiar with NA since 1993. After four rehabs and a stay in County jail in 1997, I was able to stay clean for six years. I left the program and fellowship, gave up my commitments, and began to run on self-will. I only focused on work and family—but I started using drugs.

This led me straight into handcuffs. I once again found meth-amphetamine and was jailed four times in a row.

I finally ended up in federal lockdown facing serious time. I started praying. I had eight children and two grandchildren, and my 80-year-old father, who I might never see again. By the grace of my Higher Power and the federal court system, I bonded out to a recovery house and back to the NA fellowship.

Today, I have fully admitted my life is completely unmanageable and I am powerless over my addiction. I now know I must change everything to be successful in this life. It's a long journey of surrender and willingness.

ES, California, USA



South Africa H&H

From the Outside

Dear Reaching Out,

Sometimes in the echoes of silence these memories reverberate and come alive. Most times when I look back, I stand in gratitude for the men and women of Narcotics Anonymous. Especially, for the person from the WSO who sent me a Basic Text while I was in solitary and Sid C from Kansas City who wrote to me so eloquently about God and recovery while I was in lockdown. These acts of kindness helped me find my humanity and begin an awakening of the heart.

I was put back into general population where H&I came into play. Every Wednesday, Jimmy H showed up in his sneakers with H&I speakers who carried a message of hope and a promise of freedom. They spoke of the spiritual way of life that they had been given through the Twelve Steps and active participation in Narcotics Anonymous.

I was paroled to the Rio Grande Area of Narcotics Anonymous. Life got good very quickly, yet to my dismay, I eventually used drugs again because I put other priorities in front of my recovery.

The power of love from the Fellowship of NA once again saved me from the room I was dying in. That room where so many of us die alone, doing one more drink, one more hit, one more fix.

June 8th of 2013, I went back into the rooms. My late sponsor Shannon L. spoke to me on that rainy day over a cup of coffee about anonymity, "selflessness," and working the Steps. From this perspective and letting go of everything I thought I knew about who I thought I was, and becoming a part of NA, surrendering to being a part of something greater than myself. He had me read daily, a Jimmy K quote: "Let's never forget that you and I have been given through illness, through suffering and through disease, a talent for helping other human beings like ourselves. Let's never forget that we have it, and we are responsible for others."

FROM THE OUTSIDE

I have been of service on a group, local, and regional level in H&I and PR since 2013; I've been carrying this lifesaving message to prisons, jails, treatment centers, and homeless shelters, "That no addict seeking recovery need ever die from the horrors of addiction."

CF, Colorado, USA



CIRCNA XVIII

CALLING ALL H&I MEMBERS!

Please submit your story to the quarterly NA newsletter, *Reaching Out*. We are looking for recovering addicts, like you, to share their experience of finding recovery behind the walls and maintaining it on the outside. Your story carries a powerful message of hope for the incarcerated addict! Thank you.

Please send your story to:

Narcotics Anonymous World Services;
PO Box 9999; Van Nuys, CA 91409,
or to Handl@na.org.



Transitioning from the Inside to the Outside

Whether you left from a treatment center, jail, prison, hospital, or institution, you are moved from the “inside” to the “outside” to be drug-free, productive members of society. We think your experience may be invaluable to others as they embark upon their transition.

We are offering questions to help stimulate your thinking so that you may want to share your experience with us; we will publish your article in *Reaching Out* to help others.

1. What did you do on the first day of your release/discharge?
2. What steps did you take to help your recovery in the community? Do you think the transition steps are the same for addicts who are being released after 30 days or ten years?
3. What are some of the challenges you encountered when you reentered the community?
4. How did NA help you with information so that you were able to attend a meeting upon release/discharge?
5. How do you think NA may have been better able to help you in your transition, and do you have any suggestions to offer so NA may be better able to help others as they transition?

We look forward to reading your experience and providing this information to others. Thank you for helping us assist others in their transition.



“When at the end of the road we find that we can no longer function as a human being, either with or without drugs, we all face the same dilemma. What is there left to do? There seems to be this alternative: either go on as best we can to the bitter ends—jails, institutions, or death—or find a new way to live. In years gone by, very few addicts ever had this last choice. Those who are addicted today are more fortunate. For the first time in man’s entire history, a simple way has been proving itself in the lives of many addicts. It is available to us all. This is a simple spiritual—not religious—program, known as Narcotics Anonymous.”

Narcotics Anonymous, “We Do Recover”

Order Form

Reaching Out is a quarterly, recovery-oriented newsletter made available free of charge to incarcerated addicts through Narcotics Anonymous World Services. If you will be incarcerated for at least six more months and would like a free subscription to *Reaching Out*, complete and return the following form.

Reaching Out is also available in a printer-ready format, for free download at www.na.org/reachingout

Reaching Out is also available by a 20-copy bulk subscription at a cost of \$38.05 annually. If you are interested in purchasing a bulk subscription, please complete the following form and return it along with a check or money order.

- I am an incarcerated addict (and will be for at least six more months) and want a free subscription to *Reaching Out*.
- I want to purchase _____ 20-copy bulk subscriptions of *Reaching Out* @ \$38.05 each, total \$ _____.

Name _____

Identification Number _____

Facility Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Reaching Out

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www.na.org/reachingout

ATTENTION INMATES

If you are relocating and your mailing address changes while you are incarcerated, please update your new address with us so that we can maintain your subscription to *Reaching Out*.