

A. Our Third Tradition states that "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using" and outpatients in a methadone program should be encouraged to attend N.A. meetings. Our Third Tradition does not state that certain types of addicts in certain programs are barred from membership in N.A. Further our Fifth Tradition states that "each group has but one primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." Outpatients in a methadone program certainly fall into this category.

Q. We are having a controversy in our group regarding outpatients in a methadone program. A large number of these addicts are beginning to attend our meeting and some of the members of our group believe these addicts cannot attend regular N.A. meetings, others of us believe these individuals should be welcome in our meetings. Are there some guidelines concerning this situation?



Over the past year we have had several requests from individuals desiring access to the World Service Board of Trustees files. It was advanced that the Fellowship needed the information provided by those files; the N.A. Fellowship was growing at a rapid rate and the trustee files would yield much needed answers to tradition questions that continually were surfacing. The Board of Trustees discussed at length this issue and came to the conclusion that individuals writing the Trustees sometimes brought very sensitive issues to them and that the Trustees needed to preserve the anonymity of those writing them. On the other hand the trustees recognized the Fellowship's need for the information contained in our files. As a result we went through and took all of the questions asked over the past two years. We put those questions most often asked of us and our answers together in the following report. We would like to bring the two questions on the last page of this report to the attention of the conference. The question regarding use of the name Narcotics Anonymous and the question regarding the listing of Naranon meeting with a disclaimer in our N.A. directories has been brought to our attention often.

Special Report  
 TO: The World Service Conference on Trustee correspondence

A. Each month the World Service Board of Trustees receives at least two or more letters regarding the use of literature other than N.A.-approved literature. This month there are three such letters: one regarding the use of A.A.'s Twelve Step Bible in an N.A. meeting, and yours. All three letters state that their group conscience approves of the use of these

Q. We use the Day by Day book published by Hazelden in two of our meetings here. Our group knows that this is not N.A.-approved literature, but our group conscience feels it is not in violation of any of our Traditions.

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A. The issue of babies or small children in meetings is not a Tradition question but rather a matter for the group conscience. In discussing this matter the concern is not the baby or whether the baby has an honest desire to stay clean, but rather the mother's or father's welfare and recovery. The real issue seems to be whether an addict with a baby or a small child who is unable to obtain a sitter for the child can attend the meeting.

Q. A member of our Fellowship brought an infant to one of our meetings, and as a result our group found itself involved in a controversy. Some members claimed this was a violation of the Traditions because there was no way the baby could have a desire to stop using. Our question relates to whether the presence of a baby or children in meetings constitutes a violation of the Traditions.

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A. It is our belief that this statement does in fact violate Tradition Three, the assumption being that it is alright for an individual to come "under the influence" to one meeting the first time he or she attends, but thereafter come clean. Our literature and our Third Tradition states "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using". Our Fifth Tradition states "Each group has but one primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." To use a format which prohibits the still using addict from meetings is contrary to our traditions.

Q. In our meeting format it states that newcomers are welcome and that it is alright to attend the first meeting using but "thereafter come clean. This is for the protection of the group." Is this statement a violation of our Traditions?

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materials, and that they have the right to use any literature of their choice by virtue of the group conscience.

Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step program of recovery from the disease of addiction. It is not a program of recovery as set up by A.A., the Bible, or Hazelden. When we dilute our message of recovery with literature other than N.A.-approved literature, we create confusion in the minds of the newcomer. They are often confused as to whether the N.A. Program is really A.A., a religious Bible study, or a part of Hazelden. The World Service Board of Trustees believes that the use of literature other than N.A. approved literature by a group does affect other groups and N.A. as a whole. The seeds of controversy, chaos, and disunity are planted which ultimately are capable of destroying N.A. as a whole. The distinction of our Fellowship as a separate entity is clouded and unfortunately newcomers may be lost in the confusion.

Many of us use literature other than N.A. literature in our personal programs, as an adjunct to recovery. Some utilize meditation guides, some read the Bible, and some members read other literature regularly as a part of their recovery process. However, literature other than N.A.-approved literature belongs outside of our meetings.

We suggest that if your group feels strongly about having a meditation book or pamphlet, you form a literature committee and begin to generate material for a meditation guide for Narcotics Anonymous.

We have Twelve Traditions. Group conscience is a part of Tradition Two and when it is followed in conjunction with Tradition Four it does not allow one to override the other or any other Tradition while remaining a part of N.A. An N.A. meeting to be considered an N.A. meeting, must fully comply with all of the Twelve Traditions.

2. Our group reads the "One Day at a Time" meditation guide published by a private company. Someone has informed us this is a violation of Tradition Six. Is this true?

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A. The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous has, over the years, been successful in offering to its members recovery from drug addiction, one day at a time. Narcotics Anonymous does this by utilizing literature approved by the Fellowship. It is the position of the Fellowship that reading of literature other than approved N.A. literature at an N.A. meeting constitutes a violation of our Traditions. Much has been written and is available that is of benefit to individual members of Narcotics Anonymous. Many of us read materials we find helpful to us as a part of our own personal programs. However, in order to adhere to our traditions, it is

Q. Our group wants to start a Nar-Anon and Nar-Ateen meeting. We have found a place large enough to accommodate three meetings at the same time and are very excited about helping our family

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A. The reading of the Bible in an N.A. meeting is a serious violation of our Traditions. The primary purpose of any N.A. group is to carry the message of recovery through the N.A. Program to the addict who still suffers. The N.A. Program consists of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The use of literature other than N.A.-approved literature in meetings constitutes a violation of Traditions, and this includes the reading of the Bible. The use of literature other than N.A.-approved literature dilutes the message of recovery and causes controversy and disunity within the Fellowship. An addict seeking recovery from addiction comes to our program seeking a way to live without using drugs, and needs to hear the message of recovery which is provided in our literature. The Bible or any other literature from religious, spiritual, or philosophical organization, while often helpful to many of us, is not a part of Narcotics Anonymous and belongs outside of N.A. meetings. N.A. has no opinion on outside issues, and the Bible is definitely an outside issue.

Q. One of the members in our area has taken to reading passages from the Bible in our meetings. What is your opinion regarding this practice?

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A. While the Day by Day book may be a very valuable adjunct to recovery, it cannot be sold in N.A. meetings if the meeting is to be considered an N.A. meeting. The selling of this publication in a meeting is a clear violation of Tradition Six. Even though a group conscience vote may have been taken on this issue, group conscience does not override the Traditions. A meeting cannot read, sell, or distribute literature other than N.A. approved literature and consider itself an N.A. meeting.

Q. Our group has taken two group conscience votes on whether to sell the Day by Day book at our meeting. One member of our group states this is a violation of Tradition Six. How can this be when we have taken two group consciences, and does the principle of group autonomy allow us to do this?

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essential that we read only N.A.-approved literature in our meetings to prevent our program from becoming diluted.

members also find recovery. How do we go about starting these meetings?

A. We believe that it is extremely important for family members to look at their part in the disease and their responsibility for recovery. We are pleased that your group was able to find a place which can also accommodate Nar-Anon and Nar-Ateen meetings. However, we caution you with respect to our Sixth Tradition. Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step Program for addicts seeking recovery from addiction. Nar-Anon and Nar-Ateen are for family members seeking recovery. Narcotics Anonymous groups should not start a Nar-Anon group, nor should they start a Nar-Ateen group. If we are to adhere to our Twelve Traditions, Nar-Anon and Nar-Ateen groups need to be started by individuals desiring membership in that fellowship or individuals who are already members. Narcotics Anonymous is a separate and distinct Fellowship and is not in any way affiliated with any other Twelve Step Fellowships, including Nar-Anon.

A. As individual members, we may encourage our families and friends as well as the family members of other recovering addicts to attend a Twelve Step Fellowship for their own recovery. While we would be wise to do this, we cannot as a group make announcements in our meetings regarding the activities of any other Fellowship, including Nar-Anon, nor can we list any meeting other than an N.A. meeting in our directories. To reiterate: Narcotics Anonymous is a separate and distinct program and we need to avoid affiliation, whether it be with Nar-Anon or any other organization or fellowship.

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Q. In our area a number of family members attend open N.A. meetings and these family members often raise their hands and participate. Is this alright?

A. It is a violation of our Traditions for family members to share in Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Narcotics Anonymous is a Twelve Step Fellowship intended to carry the message of recovery from addiction to the addict who still suffers. Our meetings provide a place where one addict can share his/her experience, strength, and hope with another addict. N.A. meetings are not a place for members of another fellowship or for family members to share. Family members and members of other Twelve Step Fellowships cannot share about recovery from drug addiction Narcotics Anonymous is for drug addicts. There are other Twelve Step Fellowships for family members.

A. It would be extremely difficult to withhold information regarding Nar-Anon to family members who call on the N.A. hotline. It would also be inappropriate not to advise someone who was obviously in need of medical assistance that they need to get medical help. However, care needs to be exercised when suggesting Nar-Anon for family members or medical assistance. The languages used to convey the information should be such that an endorsement is not made or implied concerning these resources. For example, the information could be imparted in this manner: "While we are a helpline operated for the purpose of allowing addicts the opportunity to discuss their desire to stop using,

Q. We have just organized a hotline for Narcotics Anonymous in our area and have received some calls from family members and from one individual obviously in need of medical help. We would like some suggestions on how to handle these calls. Some of us would like to refer family members to Nar-Anon and also recommend medical help when it seems appropriate. How can we do this and stay within the tradition?

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A. We believe that making specific referrals through our N.A. hotlines would in fact violate the Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous, with or without a disclaimer. In order to remain consistent with the Twelve Traditions, the entire referral page listing referral services and numbers needs to be removed. Hotlines are comprised of individual members of the Fellowship. These members share their experience, strength, and hope with the individuals who call. Sometimes members suggest that the caller receive medical attention; however, specific referrals should be avoided and common sense needs to be exercised.

With respect to Nar-Anon, we believe that again the individual answering the call might state that while we are not affiliated with Nar-Anon, it has been our experience that family members of addicts have often found help for the chemical problem in their family through Nar-Anon.

Q. We are enclosing a list of referral sources including hospitals, state and county agencies and Nar-Anon, which we use for referral sources on our telephone hotlines. We use a disclaimer with these referrals. Is it appropriate for us to do this?

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Family members who are sharing in N.A. meetings should be politely informed of the Traditions, and perhaps it could be suggested that they form a Nar-Anon group.

Q. Some members in our area are making announcements and passing out fliers for prayer and meditation workshops. Some of us believe this to be a serious violation of Tradition Six.

A. Making announcements and passing out fliers for a prayer and meditation group is a very serious violation of Tradition Six. Only N.A. related announcements can be made in a N.A. meeting and Anonymous is not a prayer and meditation group nor is it affiliated with a prayer meditation group. We are a Twelve Step Program of recovery for addiction.

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A. There should be a separation between the internal but "official" communication of the local N.A. membership and announcements of "more fellowship" activities. It is necessary for non-N.A. activities to be handled separately even though the participants also happen to be members of Narcotics Anonymous. Your newsletter should not include fliers or notices for non-N.A. activities even if they have members in common. The Program of Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with any clubhouse, social group or club. Social clubs and groups have their own guidelines, rules, and stipulations for membership. They are not Narcotics Anonymous, nor do they fall within the N.A. structure or comply with our Twelve Traditions.

To affiliate the two as you describe is a violation of our Sixth Tradition.

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Q. In our area we have an N.A. clubhouse and another club whose members are also N.A. members. Our local newsletter often includes notices for fund-raising activities by these two groups. In the opinion of the WSF, is this a violation of the Traditions?

A. Concerning medical facilities there are many listed in the phone book and you should perhaps go to the one closest to you. On the subject of family members. Some of our members families have found help in Nar-Anon. Although we are not affiliated with Nar-Anon we can get an address or phone number. We share our experience, strength and hope on hotlines and some of that experience, strength and hope can involve Nar-Anon and our suggestion of medical assistance but it should not in any way constitute our endorsement of those organizations.

We are frequently asked for information by family members or specific facility. We cannot endorse any

Q. Our group decided by group conscience vote to have the "12 Promises" and the "Third Step Prayer" from A.A. put up during an N.A. meeting here. Is this a violation of the Traditions as some have said?

A. An N.A. meeting using the promises from Alcoholics Anonymous and/or the Alcoholics Anonymous "Third Step Prayer" constitutes a violation of Tradition Six. In order for a meeting to call itself an N.A. meeting it must adhere to all the traditions, including Tradition Six, which states that we are not affiliated with any other organizations including Alcoholics Anonymous.

When we use literature or recovery material from another organization or fellowship we, in effect, affiliate with that fellowship. Alcoholics Anonymous gave Narcotics Anonymous permission to adapt their Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to our program. They have not given us permission to use any other A.A. material.

The World Service Board of Trustees has consistently held that only N.A.-approved literature and materials may be used in N.A. meetings.

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Q. We are a new area and many of our members attend both N.A. meetings and A.A. meetings. We recently started a newsletter in our area and make a practice of listing members who are celebrating clean time anniversaries and at which meeting they will be taking a cake. Some of these members are taking cakes in A.A. and the A.A. meetings where they will be taking cakes are listed. Some of us believe this practice is in violation of our Sixth Tradition.

A. You are correct; listing an A.A. meeting in an N.A. newsletter, either or other publication is a violation of Tradition Six as this constitutes affiliation. It is a violation even if an N.A. member is celebrating his/her anniversary at the A.A. meeting. This practice should be discontinued and effort should be made to encourage these members take their anniversary cakes in N.A. meetings.

It sounds as though your area is having the same kind of tradition problems that other areas and regions have when there is very little long-term N.A. recovery in the area.



A. The World Literature in its guidelines has stated that in writing and developing literature, whenever A.A. appears, the phrase "another Twelve Step Fellowship" or "Program" be substituted. To the best of our knowledge there is no decision anywhere which prohibits an N.A. member from mentioning A.A. in an N.A. meeting. It is important that the members share in N.A. meetings about working the N.A. program and talk about N.A. recovery. However, we would not presume to tell anyone how to share their experience, strength and hope in an N.A. meeting. Alcohol is a drug and someone who used alcohol and no other drug should consider himself an addict and identify himself as such. He would also need to talk about Narcotics Anonymous and

Q. We have a two part question for you. First we would like to know about the Board of Trustees decision which states that it is a violation of our traditions to mention A.A. in an N.A. meeting? Also we have a question about a couple of members who recently began attending our meeting here, one is an alcoholic who never used any other drug. The second is an addict who got clean in A.A. and began attending our meeting two months ago. Can the first individual share at our meeting and what is the clean time of the second member? Some of us believe it to be 13 months, others say it's only two months.

A. First, there is no violation of any tradition for an N.A. member to be a member of another Twelve Step Fellowship. Second, it is equally not a violation of Traditions to serve in more than one Fellowship. There would be no violation of the traditions as long as the individual left the other Twelve Step Fellowship out of his service work in N.A. An individual, for example, might be serving as a treasurer in another Twelve Step Fellowship and might also serve as a secretary of an N.A. meeting.

Q. Our question is whether an N.A. member can hold a service position in Narcotics Anonymous while maintaining membership and a service position in another Twelve Step Fellowship?

A. The program of Narcotics Anonymous is a program for addicts seeking recovery from the disease of addiction. While alcohol is a drug and an alcoholic is therefore an addict, in order to participate in a N.A. meeting, one must be able to identify as an addict and talk about recovery in N.A. This is for the protection of the group and the newcomer.

Q. The chairperson at our N.A. beginners meeting identifies himself solely as an alcoholic. Is there a tradition break?

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recovery from drug addiction. Addiction to alcohol is addiction to a drug. While we would not presume to decide anyone's anniversary date, as this is a matter best left to the individual, his conscious and his sponsor, it is our opinion that an individual's clean time begins following the last use of mind or mood altering chemicals.

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Q. We are having a Tradition problem in our area. We have some members of our Fellowship who got clean in A.A. and have recently joined our Fellowship. When they share in meetings they talked about their recovery in A.A. and N.A. This is upsetting some of our older members who claim this is a violation of Tradition Six. What do you think?

A. It is true that some of the members of our Fellowship initially found their recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous and later found their way into Narcotics Anonymous. The express purpose of our meeting is for one addict to share experience, strength and hope with another. Every member of our Fellowship should be encouraged to share their story. If A.A. is a part of an individual's story it should not be inappropriate for that individual to share it. We cannot, however, dictate what an individual shares in a meeting. Many members use the phrase "another Twelve Step Fellowship." Those who have done so avoid controversy without having to feel dishonest because they wanted to share openly that another program was a part of their recovery. Our members should develop patience for each other and allow others to freely express themselves without undue criticism, judgement or evaluation.

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Q. Last night at our regular Tuesday night meeting a member of our group was sharing about how he had found Narcotics Anonymous after attending A.A. meetings for a period of several years. At this point another member jumped up and accused him of violating Tradition Six and our group is in conflict over this incident.

A. The World Service Conference Literature Committee in its guidelines provide good advice on this issue. They require that the phrase "another Twelve Step Program" be used rather than making specific reference to A.A., O.A., G.A. etc., when it is appropriate. However, many of us in Narcotics Anonymous were first introduced to N.A. through another Fellowship such as A.A. and it is inappropriate to dictate the way one member shares his experience, strength and hope. As your area grows in maturity

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A. T-shirts, cups, posters and other such items are commonly purchased by family members, friends and other significantly

Q. We have held a number of dances, raffles, picnics and other fund raisers and are now in the process of selling T-shirts to our members bought one of these T-shirts and the question was then raised: Is it a violation of the Seventh Tradition for a non-member to buy T-shirts, raffle tickets and admission to dances and other N.A. activities?

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1. Friends and family members often attend these functions with the addict.
2. Many non-addicts attend these functions to find out about the program only to later identify themselves as addicts.
3. A common sense approach to the Traditions is helpful and Seventh Tradition is not generally interpreted as preventing an addict's loved ones from attending a recreational activity sponsored by N.A., but rather to ensure that we remain self-supporting.

A. There is not a tradition problem with accepting donations for convention registrations, banquet tickets, dances, picnics, etc. from non-addicts. The following points may be helpful:

Q. We question the practice of selling convention registrations, tickets to dances, picnics and other N.A. activities to non-addicts. Is this practice consistent with our Seventh Tradition?

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A. The reference to A.A. in "Why Are We Here" is not a violation of Tradition Six. It does not constitute an endorsement but rather is an acknowledgement of the origin of our Twelve Steps and Traditions. It goes on to give some background in them and expresses gratitude towards A.A. for allowing us to adapt their steps and traditions to our program.

Q. Our Sixth Tradition speaks of endorsement. In our approved literature, "Why Are We Here," we refer to made to A.A. is this not an endorsement?

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and understanding of the traditions, it will experience a corresponding growth in patience and tolerance.

A. Groups should follow Tradition Seven and decline outside contributions. This would include organizations conducting activities which benefit N.A. We realize it becomes tempting to get money from other programs, because it helps with the purchase

Q. A half way house in our area would like to put on a BBO for Narcotics Anonymous. We are a new area desperately in need of funds for the purpose of literature and could really use the money but are questioning whether it is within the traditions for non-N.A. organizations to conduct activities which benefit N.A. what is your opinion?

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A. Many groups and area committees sell the Basic Text for more than the purchase price as a way of financing activities and purchasing other literature. However, it may be wise to advise members at the time of purchase, the nature of the increase, and how it serves to further our primary purpose. If the groups who make up your area service committee are in agreement with this practice, we see no difficulty whatsoever. This practice does not constitute a violation of our traditions but is a matter of group anonymity.

Q. Our areas raises money to finance activities and to help new meetings meet their rent when they are unable to do so, by selling the Basic Text for slightly more than we purchase it for. One of our members believes this violates the traditions. Could you provide clarification please?

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A. We see no problem with your group's practice of selling the Basic Text for less than you paid for it. We believe that this is a matter of group autonomy as long as you are self-supporting through your own contributions.

Q. May we sell copies of the Basic Text to our members for less than we paid for it?

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related to members or our Fellowship. There is no violation of our traditions in allowing these individuals to purchase these items. The matter of raffle tickets, admission to dances, banquets etc. should be considered in the same manner. However, it would be inappropriate and a violation of our traditions to actively solicit the purchase of tickets and other items from non-N.A. members.

Q. We are looking for ways to raise money to fund some of our activities. Car washes, raffles, and selling T-shirts have all been discussed at length. We wish to know whether these fund-raising activities fall within the guidelines of the Twelve Traditions. Can we use the N.A. logo? What about anonymity?

A. The Board of Trustees sees no difficulty whatsoever with using the N.A. logo on T-shirts, provided they are sold at fund-raising activities of Narcotics Anonymous by members of Narcotics Anonymous and not by private entrepreneurs. The

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Q. Our area is considering holding a swap meet sale. Would this be a violation of Tradition Seven as we would be soliciting funds from outside our membership?

A. N.A. must always be self-supporting through our own contributions and for that reason efforts to generate funds must, of necessity, be from within the Fellowship. To solicit funds from outside the Fellowship violates the Seventh Tradition. Conducting a sale for Narcotics Anonymous at a public swap meet would therefore constitute a violation of our Traditions.

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Q. An individual in our area worked for a produce company and our area's entertainment committee is putting on a fund raising dinner. The company this person works for wants to donate a large quantity of vegetables, salad fixings and fruits to us for our dinner. Someone told us this would be a violation of traditions. Would you clarify?

A. We understand that a produce company is donating a large quantity of vegetables, fruits and salad fixings to your entertainment committee for fund raising activity of Narcotics Anonymous. We suggest that service boards and committees not accept this type of donation as we are self supporting through our own contributions, and need to avoid outside contributions. We believe the acceptance of such donations sets a dangerous precedent, and some type of payment needs to be arranged.

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of literature for other essential expenses. Never-the-less it needs to be an element of our recovery as individuals and also as a group that we become self supporting. To allow other organizations to hold fund raising functions to benefit Narcotics Anonymous is a violation of Traditions Six and Seven.