



WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

March 15, 1983

WSC Administration Committee

Bob Rehmar, Chairman
9710 Casuso Street
Los Angeles, CA 90035
(213) 553-7499

George Hollahan, Vice Chairman
9200 S. W. 97th Ave
South Miami, FL 33176
(305) 279-0404

Kevin Fahy, Treasurer
1807 Speyer Ln.
Redondo Beach, CA 90278
(213) 374-3197

To: The Worldwide Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous

From: The WSC Administration Committee

In response to many inquiries regarding exactly what changes, deletions and/or corrections were made in Traditions Four and Nine of the Basic Text (referred to in both the WSC Literature Committee Chair's letter of March 1, 1983 and the Chairman of the Board of Trustee's letter of March 1, 1983), we are enclosing copies of the exact changes made. They are circled for your clarification.

WSC Public Information Committee

Lorraine Drinkwater
402 Cook St.
Victoria, B.C.
V8V3Y7
(604) 382-0762

WSC Finance Committee

Martin Chess
P.O. Box 11228
Eugene, OR 97440
(503) 485-1397

WSC Policy Committee

Larry North
P.O. Box 3035
Winchester VA 22601
(703) 667-5861

WSC Literature Committee

Page Culbertson
260 Manning Rd #29
Marnetta, GA 30064
(404) 428-6187

WSC Institutional Committee

Bob Bergh
964 Central St
San Francisco, Ca 94115
(415) 346-0567

In loving service,

Bob Rehmar

Bob Rehmar, Chairman
WSC 82-83

World Service Board of Trustees

Chairman
8114 Fallon Avenue
Whittier, CA 90605

WSO Board of Directors

President
6222 Vineland Avenue
No. Hollywood, CA 91606

we have found, knowing that only those who have a desire to stop using and want what we have to offer will join us in our way of life.

TRADITION FOUR

"Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A. as a whole."

The autonomy of our groups is necessary for our survival. A dictionary defines autonomous as "having the right or power of self-government...undertaken or carried on without outside control." This means our groups are self-governing and are not subject to outside control. Every group has had to stand and grow on its own.

One might ask, "Are we truly autonomous? What about our service committees, our offices, activities, hot-lines, and all the other things that go on in N.A.?" The answer is that these things are not N.A. They are services we utilize to help us in our recovery and to further the primary purpose of our groups. Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women, addicts meeting in groups and using a given set of spiritual principles to find freedom from addiction and a new way to live. All else is not N.A. These things we mentioned are the result of members caring enough to reach out and offer their help and experience so that our road might be easier. Whether we choose to utilize these services is up to the group.

A Narcotics Anonymous group is any meeting which meets regularly at a specified place and time for the purpose of recovery provided that it follows the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. There are two basic types of meetings: those which are opened to the general public and those closed to the public (for addicts only). Meetings vary widely in format from group to group. Some are participation meetings, some speakers, some question and answer, some special problems discussion.

Despite the type or format a group uses for its meetings, the function of a group is always the same: to provide a suitable and reliable environment for personal recovery and to promote such recovery. These Traditions are part of a set of spiritual principles of Narcotics Anonymous, and without them, N.A. does not exist.

We say that for N.A., autonomy is more than this. It gives our groups the freedom to act on their own to establish their atmosphere of recovery, serve their members, and fulfill their primary purpose. It is for these reasons that we guard our autonomy so carefully.

It would seem that we, in our groups, can do whatever we decide regardless of what anyone says. This is partly true. Each group does have complete freedom, except when their actions affect other groups or N.A. as a whole. Like group conscience, autonomy can be a two-edged sword. Group autonomy has been used to justify the violation of the Traditions. If a contradiction exists, we have dipped away from our principles. If we check to make sure that our actions are clearly within the bounds of our Traditions; if we do not dictate to other groups, or force anything upon them; and if we consider the consequences of our action ahead of time, then all will be well.

TRADITION FIVE

"Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry the message to the addict that still suffers."

"You mean to say that our primary purpose is to carry the message? I thought we were here to get clean. I thought that our primary purpose was to recover from drug addiction." For the individual, this is certainly true; our members are here to find freedom from addiction and a new way of life. However, groups aren't addicted and don't recover. All our groups can do is plant the seed for recovery and bring addicts together so that the magic of empathy, honesty, caring, sharing, and service can do their work. The purpose of this Tradition is to insure that this atmosphere of recovery is maintained. This can only be achieved by keeping our groups recovery oriented. The fact that we,

each and every group, focus on carrying the message provides consistency of action and purpose makes possible what seemed impossible.

The Twelfth Step of our personal Program also says that we can still suffer. Working with others is a powerful tool. "The therapist another is without parallel." For the newcomers, this is how they learned to stay clean. For the members this reaffirms their commitment. It is the most powerful vehicle we have for carrying the message. When it is somewhat bound by interpretation and personality. The problem feelings, the intensity, and the strengths are sometimes lost. In our personalities, the message of recovery is a recurring theme.

"What would happen if our groups had another primary purpose be diluted and then lost. If we concentrated on making money, in social club, we could find many friends and lovers. If we specialized many smart addicts. If our specialty was medical help, many would be anything other than to carry the message, many would die or

What is our message? That an addict, any addict, can stop using and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise. If done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict that is all we have to give.

TRADITION SIX

"An N.A. Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any side enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

Our Sixth Tradition tells us some of the things we must do to carry our purpose. This Tradition is the basis for our policy of non-affiliation. It is the continuation and growth of Narcotics Anonymous.

Let's take a look at what this Tradition says. The first thing a group To endorse is to sanction, approve or recommend. Endorsements can be seen direct endorsements everyday in T.V. commercials. An implicit endorsement is specifically stated.

Many other organizations wish to ride on the N.A. name. To do so is an implied endorsement and a violation of this Tradition. Hospitals, parole and parole offices are some of the facilities we deal with in carrying out our purpose. Organizations are sincere and we hold N.A. meetings in their establishments. We do not finance or allow them to use the N.A. name to further their growth. We do not carry the N.A. principles into these institutions to the addicts who still suffer. It is their choice.

The next thing we ought never to do is finance. This more obviously means to help fund or to help support financially.

The third thing warned against is lending the N.A. name to other programs. For example, several times other programs have tried to use their "services offered" to help justify funding.

This Tradition also tells us "who." A related facility is any place where an addict might be a halfway house, a detox center, a counseling center, a clinic, or any of such places. People are easily confused by what is N.A. and what is not. Recovery houses which have been started or staffed by N.A. members

the most confusion exists when it involves a clubhouse situation. New members often identify the clubhouse with Narcotics Anonymous. We should make these people know that these are not the same. The second "who" are outside enterprise is any agency, business venture, religion, society, organization, other Fellowship. Most of these are easy to identify, except for the other anonymous is a separate and distinct Fellowship in its own right. Our Twelve Step Fellowships specialize in other problems, and our relationship is cooperation, not affiliation." The use of literature, speakers, and relationships in our meetings constitutes an implied endorsement of an outside

comes on to warn us what may happen: "lest money, property, prestige, and purpose." These often become obsessions and shut us off from our primary purpose. This type of abuse can be devastating; for the group, it can be a trap. We must not waver from our primary purpose, addicts die who might have found

TRADITION SEVEN

Our group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

is an important part of our new way of life. For the individual, this is true. In our addictions, we were dependent on people, places, and things. We look for things to supply the things we found lacking in ourselves. As recovering addicts, we are independent, but our dependence has shifted from the things around us to a dependence on the length we get in our relationship with Him. We, who were unable to function, find anything is possible for us. Those dreams we gave up long ago can be ours as a group have been a burden to society. In N.A., our groups not only have the right to do so.

is a problem for us. We could never find enough to support ourselves and our group; we were conned, begged and sold ourselves; there was never enough money to support our recovery, money is still often a problem.

is our group: there is rent to pay, supplies and literature to buy. We take a responsibility to cover these expenses and whatever is left over goes to support our primary purpose. Unfortunately, there is little left over once a group pays its bills. No one can afford to kick in a little extra to help. Sometimes a committee is formed to raise funds. These efforts help and without them, we could not have remained in need of money, and even though it is sometimes frustrating, we remain in need of money; we know the price would be too high. We all have to pull together we learn that we really are part of "something greater than

money is clearly stated: "We decline any outside contributions; our group is self-supporting. We accept no funding, endowments, loans, and/or gifts, regardless of intent. Whether the price is money, promises, concessions, favors, or anything else, it's too high for us. Even if those who offer see no strings, we still would not accept their aid. We cannot afford to let anyone pay more than their fair share. We have found that the price paid by our groups must be fair. We will not put our freedom on the line.

TRADITION EIGHT

"Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers."

The Eighth Tradition is vital to stability of N.A. as a whole. In order to understand this Tradition we need to define "non-professional service centers" and "special workers." With a proper understanding of these terms, this important Tradition is self-explanatory.

In this Tradition we say we have no professionals. By this, we mean we have no staff psychiatrists, doctors, lawyers, counselors, etc. Our program works by one addict helping another. By employing professionals in N.A., we would destroy our unity. We are simply addicts of equal status freely helping one another.

We recognize and admire the professionals. Many of our members are professionals in their own right. It is just that there is no room for professionalism in N.A.

A service center is defined as a place where N.A. service committees operate. The World Service Office or local regional and area offices are examples of service centers. A clubhouse or halfway house, or similar facility, is not an N.A. service center and is not affiliated with N.A. A service center is, very simply, a place where N.A. services are offered on a continuing basis.

"Service centers may employ special workers." This statement means that service centers may employ workers for special skills such as phone answering, clerical work, or printing. Such employees are directly responsible to a service committee. As N.A. grows, the demand for these workers will grow. Special workers are necessary to insure efficiency in an ever expanding Fellowship.

The difference between professionals and special workers should be defined for clarity. Professionals work in specific professions which do not direct services of N.A., but are for personal gain. Professionals do not follow N.A. Traditions. Our special workers, on the other hand, work within our Traditions and are directly responsible always to those they serve, to the Fellowship.

In regards to our Eighth Tradition, we do not single out our members as "professional"; by not placing professional status on any member, we insure that we remain "forever non-professional."

TRADITION NINE

"N.A. as such ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve."

This Tradition defines the way our Fellowship functions. We must first understand what N.A. is. Narcotics Anonymous is addicts who have the desire to stop using, and have joined together to do so. Our meetings are a gathering of members for the purpose of staying clean and carrying the message of recovery. Our Steps and Traditions are set down in a specific order. They are numbered, not random and unstructured. They are organized, but this is not the type of organization referred to in the Ninth Tradition. For the purpose of this Tradition, "organized" means having management and control. On this basis, the meaning of Tradition Nine is clear. Without this Tradition, our Fellowship would be in opposition to spiritual principles. A loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience is our ultimate authority.

The Ninth Tradition goes on to define the nature of the things that we can do to help N.A. It says that we may create service boards or committees to serve the needs of the Fellowship. None of them has the power to rule, censor, decide, or dictate. They exist solely to serve the Fellowship, but they are not a part of Narcotics Anonymous. This is the nature of our service structure as it has evolved and been defined in the N.A. service manual.