

CLEANSHEET



GREATER PHILADELPHIA
REGION



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The CLEANSHEET is a function of a subcommittee of the Greater Philadelphia Regional Service Committee. The primary purpose of the CLEANSHEET is to provide a written message of recovery to addicts seeking recovery, to promote unity, and to provide our members with news.

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THE CLEANSHEET COMMITTEE.

HIV INSIDE OR OUTSIDE ISSUE ?

With so many people inside the rooms suffering from HIV and finding it difficult to recover because the stigmatism attached to being HIV positive, we need to ask ourselves is it an outside issue. Our traditions tell us we have no opinion on outside issues, however when that issue affects the recovery process within the rooms then perhaps we should take a look. There is a group forming the region by HIV positive addicts, WHY? Because as a rule people don't feel comfortable sharing their recovery in a "regular" meeting. Once again fear and prejudice has raised it's ugly head. We do not and should not tell people how to recover from the virus, but we should let them know they can recover from the disease of addiction inspite of the virus

***** THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH *****

The lack of self acceptance is a problem for many recovering addicts. This subtle defect is difficult to identify and often goes unrecognized. Many of us believed that using drugs was our only problem denying the fact that our lives had become unmanageable. Even after we stop using, this denial can continue to plague us. Many of the problems we experience in ongoing recovery stem from an inability to accept ourselves on a deep level.



POETRY CORNER

Hugs

It's wonderous what a hug can do.
A Hug can cheer you when your'e blue.
A Hug can say , " I love you so,"
Or "Gee, I hate to see you go."
A Hug is, "Welcome back again,"
And, " Great to see you! Where've
you been?"
A Hug can soothe a small child's pain
And bring a rainbow after rain.
The Hug! There's just no doubt about
it--
We scarcely could survive without it!
A hug delights and warms and charms
It must be why God gave us arms.
Hugs are great for Fathers and Mothers,
Sweet for sisters, Swell for brothers.
And chances are your favorite aunt
Loves them more than potted plants.
Kittens crave them. Puppies love them.
Heads of State are not above them.
A hug can break the language barrier
And make your travels so much merrier.
No need to fret about your store of 'em;
The more you give the more there are of them
So stretch those arms without delay
AND GIVE SOMEONE A HUG TODAY !!!!!

SOUNDS LIKE INSANITY TO ME

A shattered life I had lost,
A picture perfect scene of pain.
And to deal with the sickness, that pulls at my heart,
Telling me to live that life once again.
To violate the freedom, To forfeit the joy,
To surrender the peace that I know.
And to return to the misery that destroys the soul,
And to live in the hell thats below.
To give up the relationship I've found with God,
And this wonderful fellowship that be.
And receive the epitome of isolation and loneliness,
SOUNDS LIKE INSANITY TO ME
To turn my back on the friends God has placed in my life,
And to walk away from the hope that I see.
To trade in peace for pain, success for failure,
And become a slave instead of remaining free.
HOW DARE ! Such thoughts invade my mind,
and threaten the gift that was free.
I don't care what it promises,
I don't care what it says
IT SOUNDS LIKE INSANITY TO ME

Melvin Montgomery





I felt like the world had dropped out from under me when I first found out that I had the virus. I felt like I had nothing to look forward to but to die. One of the first things I learned when I came around the program was self acceptance. I feel that recovering from the disease of addiction has helped me to accept being HIV pos. I believe that the program works with regard to both diseases and that I need to apply the same principles toward both issues.

At first I didn't know how comfortable sharing in the rooms, but understanding the importance of the third step and tradition allowed me to be more open and to feel free about talking about my second disease.

A lot of people believe that HIV is an outside issue but the reality is that a large percentage of the fellowship struggles with either wondering if they have it or if they can recover knowing that they do have it. A lot of it has to do with the lifestyles we led before and during recovery.

It's been said that we're prisoners of our own minds, my greatest fear is that I may pass the virus on to my mate, whom I love very much. Sometimes it gets in the way of making love to her because of the fear. Other people in the rooms are real supportive and understanding, which reinforces the fact that this is a loving and caring fellowship. That makes me more comfortable sharing on group level in the hope that I might be able to help someone who is just like me.

I look to the future with hope, faith and an overwhelming trust in a power greater than myself. I believe that he works miracles through men and one day a cure may be found. I made a decision in my third step to accept whatever his will is for me. I don't think I have any bad days in recovery. The program has taught me to accept and live life on its own terms without the use of drugs. So I live on day at a time and go through what I go through and try to recognize the growth.

I don't worry about it becoming full blown, but I do think about it all the time. The first step tells me that I'm powerless but not helpless. There is something I can do and that is do the things necessary for me to stay healthy. Don't Use, see a doctor regularly, take my medication, eat healthy and pray. I've learned to accept myself the way I am but that I'm powerless over the way people feel about my disease and me. Today my God is caring and loving and that makes everything better. I don't go around advertising my condition but I don't hide from people either, if it comes up I share my experience with it. Two years later I still live a full and productive life. I work five days a week, make meetings regularly and live a basically "normal" lifestyle. I'm very happy.

Addict Avon G





Being in a relationship with someone who's hiv pos

My name is Betty and I'm a recovering addict who is involved with a recovering addict who also lives with hiv. I wanted to let people know that it is possible to recover and be in a monogamous relationship with someone who has the virus. I really don't know where to start but I must say that this relationship enhances my recovery eventhough there can be trying times. I know today that I'm responsible for my own recovery and happiness, he only adds to it. I don't hear too many people in the fellowship sharing that they're in a relationship with someone HIV pos., but I know that there are a few, and that there can be problems that we need to be comfortable enough to share about when needed. When he first told me he had the virus we were in the process of just establishing a friendship. That friendship grew into something special despite that neither one of us was looking for a relationship. We're there for each other and we can share openingly with each other today. There are times when we get on each other's nerves but these are the ups and downs of living life on lifes terms. There are days that I want to run but thanks to a God of my understanding and the principles that was given to me I haven't. We have been together for over 10 months. I've learned not to feel sorry for him but rather to respect him and his recovery. He allows me to be me and go through what I have to in order to sustain my recovery. He has allowed me to be the best person that I can be on any given day. In short we love each other and try to be there for each other.

Betty J.

N.A. Birthdays

Anne K.	1yr	July 16th	Vannesa S.	9yr	July 20th
Steve D.	3yr	July 27th	Bonnie C.	4yr	July 25th
Steve D.	4yr	July 6th	Sheldon L.	8yr	Sept 2nd
Babs B.	8yr	Sept 4th	Mary M.	5yr	Aug 8th
Chris M.	2yr	Aug 15th	Ron	3yr	Aug 5th
Scott D.	11yr	Sept 25th	Neal I.	6yr	Oct 25th
Jill F.	11yr	Aug 30th			





In the beginning being a senior citizen didn't mean much as I seldom thought of myself "old", and when at age 68 I began tripping for the first time in my life, I gave no thought at all to my age but I thought a lot about instant sexual gratification. As a result I learned how to use crack cocaine. I had a brief but intense love affair with both the woman who introduced me to crack and the drug itself.

My first contact with N.A. was in Oct. 1990 after I had used for two and a half months. Somehow even then, my Higher Power gave me the message that I was doing something could cause my death, but I was even more aware that I could go bankrupt and my life savings would go down the drain.

In Nov. of that year I went into a hospital for what I later realized was a "rehab program" which for me lasted 4 weeks. It was there that I was reintroduced to N.A.. The whole experience was a lark for me but I was fascinated by what went on in the meetings. People in the meetings made me feel welcome but I left with only the foggiest idea of what being an addict meant. I soon began to use again and after Christmas found myself back in the hospital. People greeted me with acceptance and deep concern for my well being in meetings and I began to see the urgency and seriousness of my predicament. When I left this time I made meetings in earnest and again felt the warmth and sincerity of the rooms.

I took suggestions and made a 90 in 90 and got a sponsor but I relapsed nonetheless. By this time it became obvious to me that I was the oldest person in any meeting and I looked for anyone with gray hair and was near my age. I occasionally met someone in their 40's and 50's but senior citizens like me. As I continued with my sponsor, I began to see the importance of the twelve steps, using phone numbers and fellowshipping with other addicts. I had a long standing relationship with a woman I met in the hospital and several others that I met since then. I longed for a sexual relationship with one of these women but it didn't work out that way, so I continued to fantasize and masturbate at home alone.

In the beginning making meetings was hard because I felt out of place being sometimes the only white person in a meeting not to mention the only senior citizen. But people showed me genuine love and affection, not to mention acceptance and I began to feel better about being here. This was a big step for my self esteem which had went way down. I cannot express the love I feel and the love I received in these rooms by people both black and white and young and old. The feelings of discomfort I felt in the beginning have left and can only be a gift from my Higher Power.

Over time I continued to relapse but I kept coming back each time gaining more clean time then before and now I'm working the steps, opening up to people and acknowledging the power of my addiction. I've come to realize that it is no longer about the drug but rather my self obsession, attitudes and ideas. Today I'm involved in service and in my homegroup. Recovery has been long and difficult for me, but the rewards have been worth it. Today I enjoy my life and look forward to each new day.

love and respect Tom M.





The story starts the 19th of March 1982. Two of my friends and I were shooting pool and drinking. We're shooting methamphetamine to stay up and drink beer and drive around after playing pool. We ended up in Pennsburg, Pa to visit my cousin, We were playing cards, drinking and smoking dope, you know? Well it got to be around 1:45 am and we were running out of beer. So we ran to the local bar for last call. The three of us each bought two six packs. Then we drove home back to Phila.. Well on the way home we hit a creek bridge and my friend Danny died of a Chest injury.

My other friend Tom, broke one leg and dislocated his hip. I myself broke my right leg, messed up my face and ended up in a coma for three months. Well it's been a long hard road to go. I am now in a rehabilitation co. for head injured people. So far I learned how to walk, talk, now comes the hard part. I've got to learn to think properly. As they say "live a structured life". I came into contact with N.A. and now I have 10 months clean. I thought I should write you people to maybe let people know that it could be worse. I hope you would publish this letter.

thank you,
keep in touch
Charles T. Griffith III
578 Laurel Court
Bensalem, Pa.19020

WHAT'S NEW AT THE REGIONAL SERVICE OFFICE

FOR SALE

- 12 Concepts of N.A. Service now available
- Just For Today Daily Meditation Book
- Basic Text and Pamphlets on Tapes
- N.A. Way Magazine
- Bi-Plate Medallions yr.s 1 - 21
- Medallion Holders both Necklace and Keychain
in both Silver and Gold
- Literature in Spanish and N.A. Cards
- New Pamphlet -- In Times of Illness
- Various Speaker Tapes





LETTERS FROM BEHIND THE WALLS

To whom it may concern:

I have been incarcerated since 1983. I have been a resident at the State Correctional Inst. at Muncy. I have been involved in N.A. meetings, drug and alcohol group therapy, and one on one counseling here at Muncy. I'm now going to N.A. meetings and I should be going to a center soon. I would like to know if it is possible for me to communicate by mail to obtain a sponsor?

I'm a 34 year old black female and I live in the Phila. area. I know that once I 'm released from Muncy that I would like to have the support of a sponsor. Are you able to help me in this matter? I will await a response from you. Thank you for your time and effort in this matter.

Marsha Stockton # 006887

P.O. Box 180

Muncy, Pa. 17756

Hi family

My name is Curtis Jackson BN3210 and I'm a drug addict. I am currently incarcerated at S.C.I. Waymart State Prison. Iam now in a drug and alcohol program trying to get help and learn about my problem and how to stay clean and to get my life back in order.

Here in this program we have literature on alcohol, which is ok, but I also need literature on drugs. Because crack cocaine was my drug of choice so I will be going to N.A. meetings more than I would a.a.meetings. So if you can send me some literature on N.A. and a N.A. meeting book of the Phila . area so when I leave here or complete this program I can find a home group and meeting to go to for help in my recovery. Thank you May your Higher Power Bless You

Curtis Jackson

P.O. Box 256

Waymart, Pa 18472-0256

TWELVE CONCEPTS OF N.A. SERVICE

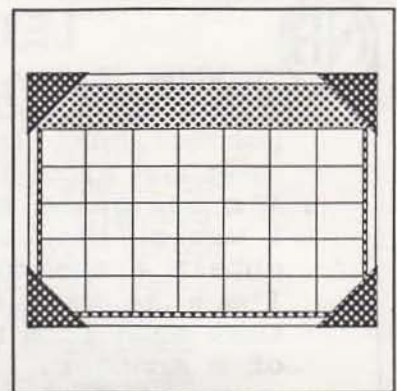
1. To fulfill our fellowships primary purpose, the NA groups have joined together to create a service structure which develops, coordinates, and maintains services on behalf NA as a whole.
2. The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.
3. The NA groups delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it.
4. Effective leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous. Leadership Qualities should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.
5. For each responsibility assigned to it the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.
6. Group conscience is the spiritual means we invite a loving God to influence our decisions.
7. All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in it's decision making processes.
8. Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.
9. All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.
10. Any member of a service body can petition that body for the redress of a personal grievance, without fear of reprisal.
11. NA funds are to be used to further our primary purpose, and must be managed responsibly.
12. In keeping with the spiritual nature of Narcotics Anonymous, our structure should always be one of service, never of government.





GREATER PHILADELPHIA

REGION OF N.A.



ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

31st - Halloween Party and Dance Small Wonder Area contact
Reggie(302)427-2806

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

19th - Small Wonder Area bus trip to Tri-State Regional Convention in
Pittsburgh, Pa. contact Reggie (302)427-2806

Thanksgiving Day - Inner City Area Annual Thanksgiving Day Marathon
and Pot Luck Dinner, Holy Child Church Broad and Duncannon Sts Phila.
10am to 10pm

26th to 30th - Bee Hive Area Birthday Convention, Ramada Inn Public
Square, Wilkes Barre, Pa. Contact Al C. (717) 457-3318

living Life on Life's Terms

Why die when you can live
and enjoy just being alive.
To Feel the pleasure, To Feel the pain,
Peace and Confusion inside
To Know the Ups and Downs
And to experience what they both are all about.
And to walk through them each, One day at a time
Without taking the easy way out.
For life is a Two edge sword and a Paradox with a Twist
And the moment you refuse to take the Bad with the Good
True Life ceases to exist.
Its easy to swallow the Pleasure but "OH" how we choke on the Pain
But to digest one and to vomit up the other
Means we'll only have to swallow it again
To accept Life, as Life..... is the only thing we can do
And ask for help from a God who Loves us...and He'll be there for you
For he made life possible ...and he sees it from a different view
Give him control, complete control..and all things become possible
For when things are going well, and you're feeling good
Enjoy it, like there will be no end....
and never forget when the pain comes
That the Joy will Soon Come Again
Melvin Montgomery

