

# CLEANSHEET



GREATER  
PHILADELPHIA  
REGION



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The Cleansheet is a function of the Greater Philadelphia Regional Service Committee. The primary purpose is to carry the written message of recovery to addicts seeking recovery, to promote unity and to provide our members with news. The opinions expressed herein are those of individual members of Narcotics Anonymous and Do Not Necessarily represent those of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole. All material becomes the property of the Cleansheet. All material must be original and be accompanied by the permission slip on the back.



## PREJUDICE IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

The following is not a policy statement from the World Service Board of Trustees. It is intended merely to stimulate thought and discussion on the topic of prejudice and how it affects Narcotics Anonymous.

### WSB External Affairs Committee

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using;" isn't it? That's what our Third Tradition says. But in some N.A. groups, it almost seems as if a few more membership requirements have been added. Though it may not be said aloud, the impression you get from such groups is this: "You've got to come from the same racial or ethnic, or social, or economic, or educational, or sexual background as we do in order to be accepted here. It's not enough, just to have a desire to stop using."

In July, the World service conference held a workshop in Arlington, Virginia. One panel focused a portion of its discussion on the subject of prejudice in Narcotics Anonymous. Participants felt the discussion was long overdue, and that we as a fellowship should begin to further explore ways to "raise our consciousness" and, thus, to begin changing our attitudes and behavior. The purpose of this article is "to begin raising our awareness of how we treat one another so that, ultimately, any addict seeking recovery, "regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion," may find what they seek among us.

### AWARENESS

We can't begin to change unless we're aware there is a need for change. As addicts, we reflect the society we come from. We bring our racism, classism, sexism, and all our other prejudices with us into recovery. We accept unacceptable behavior, in ourselves and in each other, because "that's the way it's always been." We all suffer, to greater or lesser extent, from this kind of thinking; it's the way of the world we've been raised in. What can we do? Well, to deny our bigotry only allows us to continue old thinking and behavior. But when we admit we discriminate, we can

begin to address that thinking and behavior with the tools of recovery.

In N.A. we're told to "show up and tell the truth." When addicts hear other addicts share their pain and their fears, something wonderful happens. Open discussions in our meetings can be very important to helping us see how prejudice affects our ability to carry the message to others. "Choosing Freedom from" as a discussion meeting topic, for example, can open the lid on the defects we try to hide from one another, and sometimes from ourselves.

Sponsorship is another tool to be put to work. What would occur if we all took a mini inventory of ourselves, an inventory focused on prejudice, its affect on our lives, and its impact on our fellowship? And what would happen if every N.A. member talked with their sponsor about their fears of people from other backgrounds or lifestyles? Whenever we work the steps with open minds and hearts, healing begins to take place.

### INTO ACTION

When we can accept that we are indeed bigoted, without making any excuses, then we're ready to take action. The miracle begins when we accept that, as individuals and as a fellowship, we frequently fall short of our own principles. Yes, this is who we are today and yes today we need to change. Acceptance here does not mean, "Will, that's just the way things are." Acceptance means taking responsibility for ourselves, and seeking the courage to change. At the Arlington workshop, individual members shared about their own experiences of prejudice - not only ways in which they it's cruel sting, but ways in which they had inflicted that sting on others. People talked about not being hugged because they were black; being shunned because of their use of essential, prescribed medication; avoiding members who have disabilities; being fearful of people from different educational levels; avoiding anyone with different sexual preference from their own. Some of these things hampered their own recovery; some hampered their role in supporting the recovery of others; all of it made them hurt. They admitted it, and they asked all of us, as a fellowship, to help them change.

Yes, it's true: we come from a

prejudiced society. That does not mean, however, that we must remain forever bound by prejudice. The N.A. program offers freedom, not only from drug addiction, but from the insidious defects of character that keep us from living full, healthy, happy lives. By working the steps, we can rise above our shortcomings. In doing so, we can set an example for one another, and for others in our communities, of what spiritual recovery is about.

How can you "show up and tell the truth" about prejudice in N.A.? You can:

1. Raise the topic at a discussion meeting.
2. Contact your regional convention committee, and ask them to hold a workshop on prejudice at the next convention.
3. Ask your area and regional service committees to consider whether prejudice affects any of their services.
4. Talk with your sponsor about how prejudice-yours and others-affects you and your recovery. Talk with those you sponsor, too.
5. If your group conducts an annual inventory, ask that "prejudice" be one of the subjects they examine.

Prejudice in N.A. hurts the whole fellowship, from the oldest old-timer to the newest newcomer. We, as members of a fellowship based on spiritual principles, can not and must not settle for anything less than freedom from prejudice.

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### Thought For This Issue

We grow through pain in recovery and often find that such crisis is a gift, an opportunity to experience growth by living clean. Before recovery, we were unable to even conceive of the thought that problems brought gifts. This gift may be finding a strenght within ourselves or regaining the feeling of self-respect that we have lost.

N.A. Basic Text, Pg. 99

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# RECOVERY FROM THE INSIDE



Hi Family,

J u s t dropping a line to say thanks for the publication of "Clean Sheet." Read the article "About Addicts Who Want Recover" and it got me thinking about how much I've gotten from N.A. and how little I've given back. So I feel it's time for this addict to start really getting involved because as I still understand it, it's a "we" program and not an "I" program. By the way, God willing, I'll have six months on June 26th. Please Print in "N.A. Birthdays."

Danny D.

Dear Cleansheet,

My name is Francis. I am incarcerated at Holmesburg Prison. I'm here because of drugs, but through regular N.A. meetings I now can face my addiction and am on the road to recovery. I am a sentence inmate who will be released in early November. I plan to stick with N.A. because being around positive people who actually care about me and have time to listen to what I went through will keep me off drugs. A bunch of guys here want to have our own meetings as well as Tuesday night meetings. If you could send me any literature that may help us, such as, The Basic Text, Just For Today Meditation Book, etc, they would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you  
Francis K.

To Whom May Have Compassion:

My name is Carlos. I have a substance abuse problem. This problem has led me were I am now. I'm incarcerated at the House of Correction in Northeast Phila. It took this to happen to me, to finally

realize and admit to my self that I have a problem. Well, to make a long story short. I want, I need, and I do desire help from your organization. The Social Services Programs within these walls do not care. I need and want someone to care about me. Please help me in my search. I would like some type of correspondence from your organization on how to recover, how to love myself, and a in-house or out-patient program that I can get involved with on the day of my release. Please respond.

Thank you,  
Carlos G.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Montgomery County Area

Presents 2nd Shades and Shorts boat ride, Saturday, August 28, 1993 Boarding time 11:00 pm; Departure 11:30 pm. Return: 2:00 am; Price: \$20 per person plus parking. Liberty Bell II. For info contact: Ronda P. 215-272-7755  
Anice M. 215-270-0321  
Patrick F. 215-278-9540

### ANNIVERSARY CLEAN DATES

Bulah 8-14 1 yr  
Reggie 8-14 4 yrs  
Karen 8-12 1 yr

### GROUP ANNIVERSARY

38th & Chestnut Street Group of N.A.  
Celebrates their 13th Anniversary, Friday, August 13, 1993; Doors open at 6:00 pm; Meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

Part of the Healing Process  
Celebrates their 5th Anniversary, Thursday, August 26, 1993.

### NEW GROUP

A Gift From God Group and the Stand By Faith Group has merged; new name: A Gift From God Comes With Faith.  
Meetings: Friday nights at 7:00 pm at 5901 Spruce Street. All are welcome

## ABOUT ADDICTS WHO WANT RECOVERY

When I first came to N.A. there was no Basic Text. Now there is through the help of addicts who want recovery. Then a few more pamphlets came along with the Just For Today book last year. All worked on by addicts who want recovery.

Now I've been clean for awhile and I'm still being told, if I want something, I've got to work for it. I wanted this fellowship, so I had to put time into it. I didn't know I was going to get something back, I trusted my sponsor and other people who were here.

Today I look around and only see a handful of addicts who want recovery. I see a lot of people who just want to go to a meeting and leave out for the party right after. They don't stay for the business afterward. I guess maybe some don't understand what goes on then.

### CAN I SHARE.....?

During a business or group conscience meeting, the recovery meeting you attended earlier, has their business taken care of. This is what keeps your group running! You just don't buy coffee, literature and pay rent-You participate in N.A. as a whole.

Recovery starts at home, which I believe is your home group. If you are grateful for N.A. then you are a part of it, Gratitude means action. Don't just raise your hand to complain about not being able to pay your bills.

In N.A. we are a growing number of addicts seeking recovery. What we need to be to help this fellowship grow strong is to be addicts who want recovery. If you want it, you need to be involved; or you can just sit back and let everyone else do it...You can be alone to suffer the consequences of not being a part of life like you were in your active addiction.

### (NOW THE POINT!)

On February 13, 1993, a regional workshop on worldwide information was held in Philadelphia. Was your group represented? Only 20% of our region was. Lots of information will never reach the group level because of this apathy. So obviously you don't want to be a part of this if you're not about addicts who want recovery.

Looking For The Fellowship,  
Henry D., Regional Svc Rep Alt

*The Cleansheet needs the participation of it's readers.  
Share your experience, strength and hope on any topic  
related to your recovery or the N.A. program. Send your  
articles, artwork, comments or suggestions to:*

*Cleansheet*

*C/O*

*Greater Philadelphia Regional Service Office*

*6212 Ridge Ave, Phila. Pa 19128*

*attn: Cleansheet*

**OR CONTACT 'CLEANSHEET' CHAIR: WALTER B. (215) 924-5637**

**PICK UP THIS**



**WHATS NEW AT REGIONAL SERVICE OFFICE**

*12 CONCEPTS OF N.A. SERVICE  
JUST FOR TODAY DAILY MEDITATION BOOK  
BASIC TEXT AND PAMPHLETS ON TAPES  
THE N.A. WAY MAGAZINE*

*BI-PLATE MEDALLIONS YR.S 1-21  
MEDALLION HOLDERS  
BOTH NECKLACES AND KEYCHAINS  
IN BOTH SILVER AND GOLD*

*LITERATURE IN SPANISH  
N.A. TWELTH STEP CARDS  
NEW PAMPHLET -- IN TIMES OF ILLNESS  
VARIOUS SPEAKER TAPES*

**PHONELINES**  
**PHILA 7 BUCKS COUNTY**  
215-934-3944  
**CHESTER COUNTY**  
215-344-3250  
**DELAWARE COUNY**  
215-5349510  
**LACKAWANNA COUNTY**  
7 17-963-0728  
**MONTGOMERY COUNTY**  
215-496-2826  
**WILKES -BARRE**  
717-283-0828  
**OUTSIDE WILKES-BARRE**  
1 -800-464-4010  
**DELAWARE**  
302-429-8175  
**NEW JERSEY**  
1-800-992-0401



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