<u>OUTLINE DRAFT #1 -7-08</u> FOR REVIEW AND INPUT - NOT FOR USE IN NA MEETINGS

<u>A Journey into</u> <u>Understanding the</u> <u>12 Traditions of NA</u>

A Journey into Understanding the Traditions Through a Series of Questions, Answers, and Viewpoints

Sometimes a question has an answer that we can all agree upon. Sometimes the response to a question will vary depending on the point from which it is viewed. Some questions do not have an answer and can only be a fuel for meditation in search of a higher understanding and new spiritual awakenings.

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3. A Journey into Understanding the 12 Traditions Tradition 1 (through 12)

New Jersey Regional Service Conference of NA – Literature Review Committee REVIEW AND INPUT MATERIAL – NOT FOR USE IN NA MEETINGS

1. Introduction

<u>Understanding and applying the principals of the 12 Traditions</u>

Narcotics Anonymous began in 1953. A little known fact is that the Fellowship ceased to exist for a few years in the 1950's because the meeting(s) folded. The reason some of those original members gave for the failure of the Fellowship was a lack of understanding or application of the 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. We keep what we have only with vigilance. Vigilance requires awareness and caution. If we do not seek to understand the 12 Traditions and apply the principals, then we may suffer similar consequences.

The simplest method of understanding the principals within the 12 Traditions may be to separate their application into the different environments in which we use them and review each of them individually and collectively according to how the Tradition creates the environment suited for that situation. The simplest classifications for separating the environments may be:

How and Why the Traditions influence the NA Member
How and Why the Traditions apply for an NA Meeting
How and Why the Traditions apply for an NA Group
How and Why the Traditions apply for NA Services outside the Group
How and Why the Traditions apply for the Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship
How and Why the Traditions apply in our personal recovery

Questions:

(Literature Development Note: A goal of this project is to provide the definitions for the terms, principals, and applications that are within our traditions and give examples of actual application. The Questions should relate to how we are applying the principals and concepts within the tradition in comparison to the descriptions provided.)

Questions for the NA Member

- Do I care about how the Traditions apply?
- Is the NA Meeting important enough to me to care about how it works?
- Am I willing to take the principals that we practice in my Home Group and apply them in my family relationships, work environment, and in society?
- How can I practice these principals in all of my affairs?

Questions for the NA Group

- How can our Group better understand the 12 Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous?
- How well does our Group understand and participate in matters that effect other Groups or NA as a whole?

<u>Understanding the difference between the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions</u>

The difference between the Steps and Traditions is that the Steps describe a process of internal personal recovery for the individual Addict and the Traditions describe a set of principals or conditions that define the external environment of a Group.

We come into NA and start with Step 1, then Step 2, then Step 3 and so on. This is similar to watching a tree grow. First there is a seed, then there is a stem, then there is a leaf, then there are flowers, fruit and so on. The process is primarily linier. You have to start with the seed and you may not get to the fruit for a while. The 'NA Tree' was the name of our first NA Service Manual. The growth of a tree is a good example of the process of the 12 Steps in our recovery. The survival of the tree is a good example of the 12 Traditions.

The Traditions create the environment that the process of the Steps can thrive in that is similar to the environment for the tree. The tree needs soil, water, air, sunlight and so on. The need for these elements in the tree's environment is non-negotiable. Just as a tree will die without water, regardless how much soil and sunlight it has, the process of recovery through the Steps will not occur in a Group that does not apply all of the Traditions. The farther that we get from the balanced environment that the Traditions create, the closer we get to withering in our addiction.

The 12 Steps outline an **internal process** of personal spiritual growth and change. Addicts begin the process of recovery in NA with little or no understanding of the 12 Steps and continue to learn, grow, and apply the principals in a life-long, never ending process.

The process is primarily linier (in a straight line progression), in that we first have to admit our powerless over our addiction in Step 1 and then come to believe in a Power Greater Than Ourselves in Step 2. We start applying all of the 12 Steps in our lives as soon as we enter recovery, even if our process is very limited in the beginning. We never complete or fully master any of the steps or perfectly apply any of the principals within them. We grow and learn to apply the principals within the steps in a continual cycle of growth in our recovery.

The 12 Traditions describe the **external environment** (the surroundings of, and influences on, a particular item) that is required for a Narcotics Anonymous Meeting, Group, and Service Structure to exist. The Traditions do not describe a process of recovery. The process of recovery is outlined in the 12 Steps. The 12 Traditions describe the primary purpose, collective need, requirements for membership and service, priorities, and restrictions necessary for the process of the 12 Steps to occur in an NA Meeting, within the NA Group, or any services performed by Service Boards and Committees that are formed by the Groups. While the 12 Traditions are commonly regarded as the rules and regulations of NA, they are actually a set of Spiritual Principals that create the perfect environment for the spiritual process of the 12 Steps to be shared between Addicts, Groups, and the Fellowship as a whole. This same set of Spiritual Principals can also be adapted and used to create a healthy environment within our families, workplace, and in the community.

Definitions: (Literature Development Note: A goal of this project is to provide the definitions for the terms, principals, and applications that are within our traditions and give examples of actual application.)

• **Internal process:** personal spiritual growth and change

• External environment: the surroundings of, and influences on, a particular item

(the collective environment)

Questions:

(Literature Development Note: A goal of this project is to provide the definitions for the terms, principals, and applications that are within our traditions and give examples of actual application. The Questions should relate to how we are applying the principals and concepts within the tradition in comparison to the descriptions provided.)

Questions for the NA Member

- How well do I understand 'How and Why' Narcotics Anonymous works? What do I need to learn?
- How has my participation in NA shown that I care about the Fellowship that has made my recovery possible?

Questions for the NA Group

- Does our meeting have an environment that stimulates recovery through the 12 Steps?
- Which Traditions do we discuss most during our business meeting?
- Which Traditions do we discuss least during our business meeting?
- How does our Group share, maintain, and protect the meeting environment.

Questions for the NA Service Boards an committees

Does our committeeDoes our committee

<u>Definitions – The Statement of a Collective Understanding</u>

A goal of this project is to provide a collectively accepted definition for the terms, principals, and applications that are within our traditions.

The definitions of many words or phrases have a different meaning that is determined by the group or organization that uses them. The medical, legal, and science professions have their own dictionaries that have specific definitions for otherwise commonly used words. In Narcotics Anonymous, many of us were exposed for the first time to the definition of God as a 'God as we understood Him'. Our definitions of Addiction and Addict are not from the medical or legal profession. The definition of Addiction is based on our Fellowship's collective understanding a disease that is physical, mental, and spiritual. In the same respect, our definitions of 'Common Welfare', 'Group Conscience', or 'Primary Purpose' are exclusive to our Fellowship and require a definition that is a statement of our collective understanding. Our personal application of the principals may be as unique as each individual Addict, but the definition of the common principals that we use to describe the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions should be based on a common agreement.

Some terms that need a definition that applies to their use in Narcotics Anonymous

Common Welfare	NA Fellowship	Service Centers	outside issues	
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NA Unity	NA Program	special workers	N.A. name	
Group Purpose	vigilance	. N.A., as such	public controversy	
Ultimate Authority	trusted servants	NA Meeting	personal anonymity	
Group Conscience	N.A. as a whole	directly responsible	Anonymity	
NA Membership	primary purpose	committees	spiritual foundation	
Desire	N.A. message	service boards		
NA Group	self supporting	may create	non-professional	be organized
outside	remain forever	no opinion on	addict who still	ought never be
contributions	non-professional	outside issues	suffers	organized
ties that bind us	those that would	principles before	public relations	attraction rather
together	tear us apart	personalities	policy	than promotion

Definitions: (Literature Development Note: A goal of this project is to provide the definitions for the terms, principals, and applications that are within our traditions and give examples of actual application.)

- <u>NA Fellowship</u>: The entity of Narcotics Anonymous is each of us as individual Addicts that join together as a community or collective Spiritual Entity. The Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship is a Spiritual Entity (something that has a distinct, separate existence) that exists as the collective Spiritual Bond between the Addict Members that participate in it.
- NA Program: The total process of recovery that includes going to meetings, working and living the 12 Steps, sponsorship, and service.
- NA Group: The NA Group is the Primary Physical Entity in Narcotics Anonymous. As Addicts we are all members and a part of the Group. All of our Service Boards and Committees are extensions of the Group as defined in our 9th Tradition (and several others). Narcotics Anonymous does not exist without the NA Group.
- NA Meeting: 2 or more Addicts sharing the process of the NA Program within the boundaries of the 12 Traditions.
- <u>Service Boards and Committees</u>: Service Boards and Committees in Narcotics Anonymous are a direct extension of the Group Entity
- NA Message: That no Addict seeking recovery need die from the horrors of addiction. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom.
- Entity: An Entity is something that has a distinct, separate existence. All physical or material things are entities. Each Addict is an entity. An entity can also be an organization or Fellowship. The Fellowship of NA is an entity. A Group is an entity. The committees and boards of an ASC, RSC, and the WSC are entities.
- Event: An Event only exists while it is occurring. The NA Group is an entity that exists within the fellowship of its members. However, the NA Meeting is an event that only exists from the opening prayer until the closing prayer for each meeting. The World Service Conference meeting is an event, not an entity. It only exists from the opening until the closing of the meeting.
- <u>Process</u>: A process is a naturally occurring or designed sequence of changes of properties or attributes of an object or system. (lat. processus movement)
- <u>Spiritual Entity</u>: Something that has a distinct, separate existence that only exists as a Spiritual Bond

2. Understanding How And Why

How and Why the Traditions influence the (new) NA Member

Definitions: (Literature Development Note: A goal of this project is to provide the definitions for the terms, principals, and applications that are within our traditions and give examples of actual application.)

• Power Greater than Ourselves

An NA Meeting is the first 'Power Greater than Ourselves' that most of us experience in Narcotics Anonymous. We admitted that we were powerless enough to need to come to the meeting, and our surrender to the God of our understanding was not strong enough to work without support.

Most of us have no understanding of what Traditions create the environment that we experience when we come to our first meetings, but a few of the traditions tell us that we are probably in the right place. A few of the other Traditions are having more influence on us than we will understand for a while.

Applying the most relevant Traditions to the situation (Note; While it is true that all 12 Traditions

apply all of the time in every area of NA, it may be simpler to understand the Traditions by focusing on a few at a time in different situations.)

3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.

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

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Questions:

(Literature Development Note: A goal of this project is to provide the definitions for the terms, principals, and applications that are within our traditions and give examples of actual application. The Questions should relate to how we are applying the principals and concepts within the tradition in comparison to the descriptions provided.)

Questions for the NA Member

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Questions for the NA Group

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Questions for the NA Service Boards an committees

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•	Does our committee	•

What is Narcotics Anonymous

Our Basic Text states that NA is a non-profit Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. In Narcotics Anonymous we refer to the NA Fellowship, the NA Program, the NA Group, Meetings, and NA Service Boards and Committees as all a part of NA either collectively or individually. It may be easier to understand what Narcotics Anonymous is if we first try to understand each of these components.

Definitions: (Literature Development Note: A goal of this project is to provide the definitions for the terms, principals, and applications that are within our traditions and give examples of actual application.)

• <u>NA Fellowship</u>: The entity of Narcotics Anonymous is each of us as individual Addicts that join together as a community or collective Spiritual Entity. The Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship is a Spiritual Entity (something that has a distinct, separate existence) that exists as the collective Spiritual Bond between the Addict Members that participate in it.

- NA Program: The total process of recovery that includes going to meetings, working and living the 12 Steps, sponsorship, and service.
- NA Group: The NA Group is the Primary Physical Entity in Narcotics Anonymous. As Addicts we are all members and a part of the Group. All of our Service Boards and Committees are extensions of the Group as defined in our 9th Tradition (and several others). Narcotics Anonymous does not exist without the NA Group.
- NA Meeting: 2 or more Addicts sharing the process of the NA Program within the boundaries of the 12 Traditions.
- <u>Service Boards and Committees</u>: Service Boards and Committees in Narcotics Anonymous are a direct extension of the Group Entity
- <u>NA Message</u>: That no Addict seeking recovery need die from the horrors of addiction. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom.
- Entity: An Entity is something that has a distinct, separate existence. All physical or material things are entities. Each Addict is an entity. An entity can also be an organization or Fellowship. The Fellowship of NA is an entity. A Group is an entity. The committees and boards of an ASC, RSC, and the WSC are entities.
- Event: An **Event** only exists while it is occurring. The NA Group is an entity that exists within the fellowship of its members. However, the NA Meeting is an event that only exists from the opening prayer until the closing prayer for each meeting. The World Service Conference meeting is an event, not an entity. It only exists from the opening until the closing of the meeting.
- <u>Process</u>: A process is a naturally occurring or designed sequence of changes of properties or attributes of an object or system. (lat. processus movement)
- <u>Spiritual Entity</u>: Something that has a distinct, separate existence that only exists as a Spiritual Bond

Questions for the NA Member	
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Questions for the NA Group •	<u> </u>
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Questions for the NA Service Boards an committees

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•	Does our committee	?

What is the NA Fellowship

The word "fellowship" is used 140 times in the Basic Text (Chapters 1 to 10). Examples of the use are: Fellowship approved literature, our Fellowship, the Fellowship, the Fellowship grew, the individual and the Fellowship, a worldwide Fellowship, collective group conscience of the Fellowship, shared experience of the Fellowship, a non profit Fellowship, secure in the love of the Fellowship, serve the Fellowship, the needs of the Fellowship, the love and security of the Fellowship.

Our Basic Text states that NA is a non-profit Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. A fellowship can be defined as a community of interest, activity, feeling, or experience.

With this definition we can determine that Narcotics Anonymous includes the members in a collective partnership. The body of Narcotics Anonymous is each of us as individual Addicts that join together as a community. The Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship is a Spiritual Entity (something that has a distinct, separate existence) that exists as the collective Spiritual Bond between the Addict Members that participate in it. If we separate ourselves from the Fellowship, we separate ourselves from NA.

None of us can recover by ourselves. Narcotics Anonymous more than just the Group, the literature or the service structure. The 12 Steps may be the process of personal recovery, and the 12 Traditions may define the existence of a Group, but many Addicts have relapsed because they tried to live and work the NA Program without becoming a part of collective group conscience and experiencing the collective love and security of our Fellowship.

Applying the most relevant Traditions to the situation(Note; While it is true that all 12 Traditions apply all of the time in every area of NA, it may be simpler to understand the Traditions by focusing on a few at a time in different situations.)

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.		
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our Service Centers may employ special workers.		
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.		

10. N.A. has no opinion on outside issues, hence the N.A. name ought necontroversy.	ever be drawn into public
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Questions for the NA Service Boards an committees	
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What is the NA Program

The word "program" is used 298 times in the Basic text (Chapters 1 to 10). Examples of the use are: 'a Program of complete abstinence, the Program works miracles, our Program is a way of life, Living the Program, a universal and total Program, call it the Group, the Program, or we can call it God, we live our Program, we are examples of the Program working, to adapt our life to the program, is a God-given Program, surrender ourselves to the NA Program, we work the Program, live the Program, our 12 Step Program, the HOW of our Program, a Program of recovery'

The many references to our 'Program' seem to encompass the total process of recovery. A process is defined as a sequence of changes. This would include working and living the 12 Steps, making meetings, sponsorship and service, and being a part of the Fellowship.

The chapter in the Basic Text that is titled 'What is the NA Program', refers to the 'Program' in some uses as the NA Group and the NA Meeting, but most of the descriptions of the 'Program' refer to the actual process of recovery.

We can attend a lot of meetings, hang out in service, and live in conventions, but never truly live a 'Program of Recovery'. Many Addicts have relapsed because they tried to become a part of the collective love and security of our Fellowship without doing the work to live and work the 12-Step NA Program.

applying the most relevant Traditions to the situation (Note; Washington apply all of the time in every area of NA, it may be simpler to understand the Traditions by different situations.)	
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose to carry the message to the ac	ddict who still suffers.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.	
4. Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Gro	oups, or N.A. as a whole.
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Questions for the NA Group	
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Questions for the NA Service Boards an committees	
Does our committee	?
Does our committee	

How and Why the Traditions apply for the NA Group

Most of the Traditions refer to the NA Group. The NA Group is the Primary Physical Entity in Narcotics Anonymous. As Addicts we are all members and a part of the Group. All of our Service Boards and Committees are extensions of the Group as defined in our 9th Tradition (and several others). Narcotics Anonymous does not exist without the NA Group.

"The primary purpose of an NA group is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still stuffers. The group provides each member with the opportunity to share and to hear the experience of other addicts who are learning to live a better way of life without the use of drugs. The group is the primary vehicle by

which our message is carried. It provides a setting in which a newcomer can identify with recovering addicts and find an atmosphere of recovery."

FROM THE GUIDE TO LOCAL SERVICE IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

"NA groups – not NA meetings – are the foundation of the NA service structure. Together, the NA groups are responsible for making service decisions that directly affect them and what they do in their meetings as well as those that fundamentally affect the identity of Narcotics Anonymous. For instance, new NA literature is approved by regional delegates at the World Service Conference only after they have received direction from the groups they represent. Likewise, "proposals to change NA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, name, nature, or purpose should be approved directly by the groups" before they can become effective, in accordance with our Second Concept."

FROM THE GUIDE TO LOCAL SERVICE IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

(Note; While it is true that all 12 Traditions

Applying the most relevant Traditions to the situation

apply all of the time in every area of NA, it may be simpler to understand the Traditions by focusing on a few at a time in different situations.)
1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group conscience; our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each Group has but one primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

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

Every N.A. Group ought to be fully self supporting, declining out	side contributions.
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Questions for the NA Service Boards an committees	
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How and Why the Traditions apply for the NA Meetings

An NA Meeting is when 2 or more Addicts are sharing the process of the NA Program within the boundaries of the 12 Traditions.

"NA meetings are events at which addicts share with one another their experience in recovery and in the application of the Twelve Steps. While many – if not most – NA meetings are in fact hosted by an NA group, other NA meetings occur at the time: informally among friends, at large area or regional speaker meetings, at conventions, in schools, institutions, and so forth. The NA group is an entity; the NA meeting is an event; and NA meetings may be held without the sponsorship of an NA group."

FROM THE GUIDE TO LOCAL SERVICE IN NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Applying the most relevant Traditions to the situation (Note; While it is true that all 12 Traditions apply all of the time in every area of NA, it may be simpler to understand the Traditions by focusing on a few at a time in different situations.)

3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups, or N.A. as a whole.
Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.
Questions for the NA Member
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Questions for the NA Group
Questions for the NA Service Boards an committees • Does our committee ? • Does our committee ?

How and Why the Traditions apply for NA Service Boards and Committees

The Ninth Tradition suggests that groups organize separate boards and committees to serve their needs. We are not organized but may organize boards and committees to serve us. The development of these services is based squarely on the groups' needs. We create these boards and committees to serve us in fulfilling those needs.

The groups provide regular information about their condition and their activities. This information helps our boards and committees better understand and serve the needs of the groups.

Responsible service boards and committees consult the groups in matters directly affecting them and seek direction from the groups in matters not already covered by existing policy. By maintaining regular two-way communication between NA groups and the boards and committees serving them, we create an atmosphere of responsibility that serve our fellowship and its primary purpose well

NA Service Boards and Committees are formed by the Groups or their representatives and all Service Boards and Committees are directly responsible to the Groups. Therefore it can be determined that the Service Boards and Committees in Narcotics Anonymous are a direct extension of the Group Entity.

Applying the most relevant Traditions to the situation (Note; While it is true that all 12 Traditions apply all of the time in every area of NA, it may be simpler to understand the Traditions by focusing on a few at a time in different situations.)

9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our Service Centers may employ special workers.
2. For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority a loving God as He may express Himself our Group conscience; our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
11. Out public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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What is Narcotics Anonymous?; An analysis of the principals that apply to the process

To accurately understand how and why the 12 Traditions apply in Narcotics Anonymous, we need to accurately define what Narcotics Anonymous is. If we look at all of the components of Narcotics Anonymous, we find that each component is either an Entity, a Process, or an Event. These components all combine to become Narcotics Anonymous. An accurate description of Narcotics Anonymous could then be: 'Narcotics Anonymous is an NA Entity creating an NA Event to cause an NA Process to occur.'

Table 1'Narcotics Anonymous is an NA Entity creating an NA Event to cause an NA Process to occur.'

		(Note. These examples are not a complete
NIA E-44-	NIA Essent	description of each process)
NA Entity	NA Event	NA Process - The Program
TIL C	N.A. N.C	
*	Š	Carrying the Message- Traditions
1		Sharing the 12 Steps -Recovery
		Sharing the 12 Steps -12 th Step
1	<u> </u>	Group Conscience - Traditions
The Addict	Group Business Meeting	Service -12 th Step
Sponsee	Sharing a 5 th Step	Sharing the 12 Steps -5 th Step
Sponsor	Sharing a 5 th Step	Sharing the 12 Steps -12 th Step
Area H&I Committee	Jail H&I Presentation	Committee Service – 9 th Tradition
The Addict	Jail H&I Presentation	Service -12 th Step
Area Meeting List Committee	Distribute Meeting Lists	Service -12 th Step
World Board	Literature Translations	Committee Service – 9 th Tradition
World Board	NA Way prints a list of	Committee Service – 9 th Tradition
	new Translations	
The Addict	World Board Meeting	Service -12 th Step
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NA Fellowship	NA Way prints a list of	Unity
	new Translations	
	Sponsor Area H&I Committee The Addict Area Meeting List Committee World Board World Board The Addict	The Group The Addict The Coffee maker The Group The Group The Addict The Group The Addict The Addict The Addict The Addict Sponsee Sponsor Sharing a 5 th Step Sponsor Sharing a 5 th Step Area H&I Committee The Addict Jail H&I Presentation Area Meeting List Committee Distribute Meeting Lists World Board World Board World Board The Addict World Board World Board World Board World Board The Addict World Board World Board NA Way prints a list of new Translations The Addict World Board Meeting NA Fellowship NA Fellowship

Questions for the NA Group

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Searching For Solutions

(Literature Development Note: A goal of this section is to give examples of actual applications of this Section. This could include common conflicts related to the Traditions or applications and successful solutions)

Common Conflicts related to the Traditions	
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Definitions: (Literature Development Note: A goal of th	is project is to provide the definitions for the
terms, principals, and applications that are within our tro	aditions and give examples of actual application.)
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