

The NA Hug

- In a 1994 interview with Bob Stone he said, "But hugging was not a custom of the Fellowship on the west coast at the time. That was something that they learned from the folks in the east".
- On March 17, 2014 Dave F. said of when he was at Eagleville Hospital in January 1974, "we were hugging everybody (counselors, therapists, patients). When we got out of this facility we continued the hugs. The members of another Fellowship were not receptive to it".
- Below is an excerpt from an interview with Roy Porta by Boyd P. and Danny M. This transcript is courtesy of Boyd and Chris B.

Roy P. Interview

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Roy: Man, we were devastated. We were devastated. This guy, I mean, he had been through it. We called him Jumping Jim because he had jumped out of a second story window in a meth panic, had broken his ankle, got pins and all this stuff and because he was still out on the street, he never got the pins taken out. Gangrene set in. He had a partial amputation of his foot. This guy had experienced some heavy duty pain on the street. And yet, without the meetings, he picked up. We went to the funeral, and we were crying and hugging, and that was not something we did much of in those days in Philly, was the hugging stuff. But it brought us closer together. That was the first man who died, first person who died around here.

Danny: How did the hugging get started, that you know of?

Boyd: What year was it that this guy died?

Roy: That Jimmy died? It would have been the end of '71—cuz I remember it was cold—or the beginning of '72. It was the winter of '71, '72.

Danny: Did you all go to the funeral?

Roy: I went to the gravesite too. I remember it being really cold.

Danny: I've still got several more questions.

Boyd: Oh, definitely.

Danny: Tell us about the hugs, what you know about hugs, how that started.

Roy: What I saw, once again, the people who had come out of the Eagleville program, they did that. They would hug. "Show me some love," and this kind of stuff.

Danny: So, hugs came from Eagleville then?

Roy: They came from the Norristown area. We didn't think much of it down in Philly. It was kind of like, "That's group therapy stuff."

Boyd: About approximately what year do you think that was, Roy, that they started doing that, and y'all started being a little [abrasive?] with it. Can you give me a timeframe?

Roy: Yeah, like '72, '73, started seeing it.