

# BASIC TEXT REVIEW AND INPUT

Hello from your World Board,

**T**hank you for your willingness to read the Basic Text review and input draft and share your thoughts with us. This draft has been a long time coming, and we are excited about it. We hope you enjoy it and are inspired by it. We look forward to your ideas about how we can make this draft even stronger. Along with the draft itself, we are enclosing some questions to guide your input. Of course, we welcome any of your ideas, whether they match these particular questions or not. The input we receive from the fellowship will help guide revisions to the review draft. The approval draft of the text, the draft that will be voted on at the 2008 World Service Conference, will be published in September 2007 and included as an appendix in the 2008 *Conference Agenda Report*.

## BRIEF BACKGROUND ON THE PROJECT

**T**his draft springs most immediately out of a motion in the 2004 *Conference Agenda Report* (<http://www.na.org/wsc2004/car-toc.htm>):

*Motion 4: To approve work on revisions to the Basic Text, Narcotics Anonymous, that includes:*

- *no changes made to Chapters One through Ten,*
- *the addition of a new preface to the Sixth Edition preceding the current preface (the current preface will remain the same and be titled "Preface to the First Edition"),*
- *the replacement of some or all of the current personal stories, in order to better reflect the broad diversity of our fellowship, and*
- *a brief introduction to the revised personal stories section.*

*The timeframe for this work will be two conference cycles, from 2004 to 2008, including a six-month review and input period. The approval form of the Sixth Edition Basic Text will be distributed as an appendix to the 2008 Conference Agenda Report for a minimum of 150 days.*

As the essay in that CAR explains, there is quite a history leading up to that motion. In 1998, a ten-year moratorium on Basic Text revisions ended, and a six-year period of discussion and evaluation began. During those six years there were surveys, workshop sessions, discussions, and portions of board meetings devoted to the question of whether to revise the text, culminating in the motion above, passed at the 2004 WSC.



Shortly after the 2004 conference, the board formed a workgroup comprised of ten members from six countries (and four continents). A solicitation for written personal experience went out to the fellowship in ten languages, and we received more than 700 pieces from 35 different countries. From February 2005 to July 2006 the workgroup has been occupied with helping us to evaluate the submissions we have received and shaping the text as a whole. Most of the submissions came in at the end of the collection period (December 2005) or even later than that, and with the volume of writing, it's taken us quite some time to read and evaluate everything you sent us.

## WHERE THE PROJECT NOW STANDS

**A**s we reported in the July *NA Way* the text you see here is not all polished and tied up in a bow, being sent out for your blessings. We know there are some obvious gaps—for instance, we would like to see more geographic diversity in the submissions—and there may be some pieces that need further editing, and so on. There is a year between the release of the review draft and the publication of the approval form, and we look forward to revising this draft with the help of your input. That means two things—first, the draft you see here will certainly change. There may be additional pieces in the approval form. There may be some pieces here that are no longer in the final draft. There may be changes to the pieces that remain. After all, if the text didn't change, what good would a review really be? The second thing to be aware of is the sooner you get your ideas to world services, the sooner we can use those ideas to begin revising the draft. If we get a flood of input the last week of the review period it will be much more difficult to consider and implement the ideas. Make no mistake—we will give all input received before the deadline due diligence, but if you can send it earlier rather than later, that would be very helpful.

## NEW TITLES

**O**ne of the first things you may notice is that the designations "Book One" and "Book Two" are gone. In their place, we are offering the titles "Our Program" before the first ten chapters and "Our Members Share" before the personal experience. We have discussed the possibility of renaming the text in this way since the inception of this project, and it still makes good sense to us. The Basic Text is one book: The first part contains a synthesis of our experience in the third person ("we"), and then the text illustrates those principles in action in the lives of our members ("I"). The new titles are intended to better reflect that.

The title "Our Members Share" is one of a number of possibilities we contemplated, including "Our Stories" and "Our Voices." We aren't yet convinced we've found the "perfect" title. If you have any input on what we should call this part of the Basic Text, we welcome your ideas.

## WHAT DOES THE DRAFT CONSIST OF?

**A** new preface: This preface will be in addition to (not in place of) the existing preface. It will come right before the existing preface, which will be retitled "Preface to the First Edition."

*Not Chapters One through Ten:* This draft does not contain the text of Chapters One through Ten because these chapters have not been revised.

*An introduction to the "Our Members Share" section of the book:* The initial motivation to add an introduction here was to explain the sudden shift in focus from Chapters One through Ten to a part of our book devoted to showing the program in action in our members' lives. In addition, the introduction explains some of what the reader can expect to find in this part of the Basic Text.

*Our Members Share:* Of course, the bulk of the draft is taken up with the shared experience of our members—the section of the Basic Text we're proposing to title "Our Members Share." Several things will immediately strike you as different here. First, the pieces are organized into sections. Each section begins with a collection of shorter pieces of experience—sort of like the sharing in a topic meeting. Finally, each of the longer pieces that follow is summarized in a brief abstract (we are also proposing that these abstracts be included in the table of contents). We hope that you'll share your impressions of all of these structural changes in addition to letting us know what you think of the content itself.

## QUESTIONS WE'VE BEEN ASKED

**O**ne of the questions we've been asked most frequently is whether we will be conducting this review in the same way as the original review for personal stories in the First Edition of the Basic Text. That is, will we be sending out a group of stories and asking the fellowship to vote each of them up or down? We think that type of approach would not suit this revision. We have tried, in this draft, not just to assemble a group of interesting stories but to create a collection: A chorus of voices that reflects a range of members and experiences from all across our fellowship. So, just as in a chorus you wouldn't want to collect too many sopranos and not enough altos, here we have thought about how the pieces all fit together. We have worked to put together a collection that represents the diversity and richness of NA. We hope that as you read, you will also think about the collection as a whole: It is natural that some voices may be more or less appealing to each of us individually, but we ask: Do they work together to create an accurate and useful portrait of our fellowship?

Another question we've often been asked stems from the nature of a "personal story." It's not immediately obvious to many members how one could conduct a review of personal experience. While it's certainly true that we aren't in the business of making up experience, it is also true that we have edited every piece included (except those in the initial "Beginnings" section). If you feel something is unclear or inconsistent with NA principles, for instance, it's possible that the text might be edited for clarity. In brief, this is NA literature, and you are NA—we want to know what you think.

## THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND WHEN REVIEWING THE TEXT

**A**s we mention above, the "Our Members Share" section is meant to work as a collection. We hope to get your input on the work as a whole as well as input on particular pieces if you have any. You are not being asked to vote on each of the pieces in the collection.

Within the personal experiences themselves we did a couple of things differently. We kept colloquialisms—local or regional expressions—and tried to explain them. We have done our best to preserve the details that give a sense of individual voice and location. We also tried to preserve the author's capitalization of God/god or Higher Power/higher power out of respect for the diversity of our beliefs.

## SO WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

**T**he questions that follow are meant to help you in giving input. You may choose to provide individual input or input from a group. If you are discussing the text in a group, you can be as formal or informal as you like. Any group can give input—a standing committee, an adhoc committee, a homegroup, or a group of friends or sponsees. Regardless, it will probably help for you to appoint a facilitator and a recorder at the beginning of each session. You may want to set some basic ground rules for discussion before you start. For example, at some of our world service functions we've encouraged everyone to take a turn without debating each other; we have determined at the start of discussion that all ideas are welcomed, and that has encouraged participation. You need not come to a consensus as a group, unless you choose to do so; you can simply record everyone's ideas about the material.

Enclosed here (and available online: [www.na.org/conference/bt](http://www.na.org/conference/bt)) are some ideas for workshops. The first is a short session designed to get general input on some of the material. It is intended to inform and inspire those who come so that after they leave they will be more likely to read and give input on the material. The second is a follow-up session for those who wish to discuss the material as a group after reading it all. We would discourage dividing the text so that different members each read a piece of it, because then you won't be able to get a sense of the work as a whole.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**A**s mentioned above, all of the input from the fellowship will be considered when revising the text. An approval form of the text will be published in September 2007 and also available as an appendix in the 2008 *Conference Agenda Report*.

## DEADLINE AND ADDRESS

**Input is due by 28 February 2007**

**We'd like to hear what you think as soon as possible, so please send us your input as soon as you can!**

**You can give input online at [www.na.org/conference/bt](http://www.na.org/conference/bt)**

**Or send your input to:**

**World Board  
19737 Nordhoff Place  
Chatsworth, CA 91311 USA**

**Or email: [worldboard@na.org](mailto:worldboard@na.org)**

# BASIC TEXT REVIEW AND INPUT QUESTIONS

The following questions are meant to help you in giving input on the review draft of the Basic Text. Please use these questions to inspire your thinking and discussions, not to limit them. You will notice that the draft is not line-numbered. That is because line-by-line input is, as a general rule, not as helpful as input focused on larger issues such as concepts, tone, audience, etc. If you do make reference to a particular spot in the text, please refer to the page number.

**Preface:** So much has happened—NA has grown so much—since our book was first published, it seemed like a good time to publish a new preface. This is a common practice when a book is revised. This preface would be added to the text in addition to, not in place of, the existing preface.

*Is there something we are missing that you'd like to see in the preface?*

*Is there anything in the preface that doesn't seem appropriate?*

**Introduction to "Our Members Share" section:** The shift in the text from Chapters One through Ten to a collection of first-person experience can seem abrupt to someone picking up the text for the first time. This introduction is meant to explain that shift and to give people some sense of what to expect in the pages that follow.

*Does the introduction help the reader through the piece well enough?*

*Is there anything missing you'd like to see included in the introduction?*

*Is there anything that doesn't seem appropriate?*

**Sections:** We have divided the collection of personal experience into four sections.

*Do the names of the sections adequately reflect what is contained in them?*

*Do you have any ideas about sections you'd rather see?*

*Do the individual pieces fit the particular sections? Are there any pieces you feel should be moved?*

**Reflections:** Three of the sections begin with a collection of shorter pieces of experience from members—a sort of mosaic or collage. We aren't sure what to call these (and maybe they don't need a name at all). Right now, we are using the word "reflections." We've also thought about calling them "vignettes" or "cameos." Please let us know if you have any ideas.

*Do these collections feel too long or too short?*

*Is there content that you would rather see reflected in them?*

*Are there any pieces that don't belong here or pieces that feel awkward or unfinished?*

**Abstracts:** Each individual piece in the collection has a brief summary, an abstract, which appears at the beginning of the piece and will be printed in the table of contents. This is intended to help members find particular kinds of experience they may be looking for more easily.

*Are the abstracts helpful to you?*

*Do all of the abstracts accurately describe the stories? If not, which don't seem to describe the stories well enough?*

**The Sharing:** The rest of the collection consists of pieces from individual members. Again, this is meant to be a *collection*—not a bunch of individual pieces thought of separately, but an orchestra or chorus.

*As you read through the collection with that understanding, is there a story or stories that you thought particularly reflected your experience? Or—if not, is there something you think should be added to the collection?*

*Are there pieces that seemed particularly outstanding to you? If so, why?*

*Are there any stories that you think don't belong here? And if so, why not?*

*Are there things that feel repetitive or inconsistent with our message of unity?*

*Are there things you think are missing from the collection—concepts, demographics, a type of experience?*

*As you read through, what was the strongest point of the collection: What did you like best about the collection as a whole?*

*As you think about the collection as a whole, what do you think most needs improvement or change?*

**Overall:**

*Do you have any other input on the draft?*

## Preface to the Sixth Edition

Many of us have never known recovery without the Basic Text—our meetings open with readings found in its pages; it sits on the literature tables in our groups; and the book itself has been a constant in our recovery through the months or years or decades. It has been twenty-five years since the first edition of *Narcotics Anonymous*, our Basic Text, was published, and in that time, NA has grown and changed in countless ways. In many respects, the Basic Text has been instrumental in that evolution. In 1982, the year the World Service Conference approved the Basic Text, there were about 2,700 weekly NA meetings; today there are more than 40,000. Twenty five years ago, most places in the world did not offer an NA meeting every night of the week. In fact, most places didn't offer a meeting *any* night of the week. Now NA is in 123 countries and we speak sixty-five languages. The Basic Text itself is translated into sixteen languages.\*

Certainly NA's growth cannot be attributed to the power of this book alone. But the fact is the Basic Text is one of the most effective means we have of carrying the message. Where it is published and distributed, NA grows, not just in numbers but in breadth of recovery and experience. As our members stay clean ten, twenty, thirty years, and more, they are confronted with challenges beyond "not picking up the first drug." In the Sixth Edition, you will read stories of addicts who stayed clean through the loss of loved ones, severe or fatal illnesses, raising children, marriage, divorce, getting an education, pursuing careers, and much more. The common thread through all of these varied experiences is that we draw strength from the NA program regardless of how long we have been clean or what life situation we are facing. Over the decades we have lived a lot of life on life's terms and we have learned a lot about what it means to recover from addiction in that context.

Now, with the publication of our Sixth Edition Basic Text, we can say NA has in many respects, come of age. That process has not been without growing pains, however. From 1983 to 1988, we published five editions and a revision of the Basic Text. Those changes were spurred by and gave rise to tremendous conflict in our fellowship. In fact, for years afterward, the fellowship as a whole was unwilling to consider revising the book again. Frankly, many of us

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\* The numbers in this paragraph are updated with each printing. These figures are as of \_\_\_\_\_.

thought we would never see the day that a new edition of the Basic Text could be welcomed by the fellowship.

And so it is a real marker of our ability, as a fellowship, to grow and change that we are publishing a Sixth Edition of the text. Nonetheless, Chapters One through Ten remain as they were in the Fifth Edition. These ten chapters speak to many of us in a way that no other piece of literature does, in a voice that is difficult, if not impossible, to duplicate. What is significantly different in the Sixth Edition text, however, in addition to this new preface, is the personal experience that follows Chapters One through Ten.

It would be impossible to list all of the ways in which the face of NA has changed over the years, and this new edition doesn't pretend to be a mirror, reflecting back a perfect image of our membership, but it does aim to represent the richness of our differences as well as it can. The Basic Text already tells us that any addict is welcome in NA regardless of what we look like, how old we are, and what kind of spiritual beliefs we hold. Addiction is a disease that does not discriminate, and neither does the program of NA. Admittedly some people hold a picture of the "typical" candidate for NA, and that vision is fairly narrow—urban, criminal, needle-user. Certainly, that describes many of us, but we are also professionals, and parents, and students and so on; living in small towns, and rural communities in countries all over the world. We can only hope to gesture at our diversity in the space of one book. Even our name itself, *Narcotics Anonymous*, may not fully describe our membership. Addiction has nothing to do with where we come from or the specific substances we used.

Our members come from every walk of life. We are not contained within political or geographic boundaries, nor are we limited by any individual differences in faith or philosophy. In this respect, we are a kind of utopia; no matter what conflicts are unfolding in the world at large, inside the doors of NA, our common welfare comes first. Our text explains that this unity of purpose helps us "to achieve the true spirit of anonymity" where all of us are equal as members of the group. With that as our foundation, we as individual recovering addicts are each able to find our own distinct voice and to sing a song that is uniquely ours to sing. This new edition presents some of those voices.

We hope the Sixth Edition Basic Text will offer a vision of recovery for addicts around the world—those who have already found the rooms of NA and those who will walk through our doors tomorrow. Over the years our fellowship has changed and our literature has expanded and

been revised, but the message remains the same: an addict, any addict, can lose the desire to use and find a new way of life. You are welcome here. Please stay and be part of our growth, change, and recovery.

## Introduction to Our Members Share

In our meetings, our lives, and our literature, we help each other by sharing our experience and the tools we use to live clean and recover. The Basic Text is an expression of this desire to share our recovery: Our collective wisdom describing the program in the first ten chapters, and here, our individual experiences living the program. Our members' lives depend on our program; our program comes to life through the voices of our members.

Our First Tradition teaches us to look past our differences for our common welfare. The concept of unity described in this tradition is not the same thing as uniformity; over time we find that those differences are precisely the things that enrich us. In the particulars of our stories the truth of our message comes through; we see how much alike we really are. This can seem like a contradiction in NA: Our development as individuals and as a fellowship is about fostering our common bonds and common identity; at the same time we cultivate and cherish the things that make each of us who we are. We need both of these points of view to stay strong and grow.

Since our Basic Text was first published, we have grown and changed as a fellowship. Our membership has broadened and our experience has deepened. Today we are truly worldwide, and each of our local NA communities contains worlds as well. Together we made a decision to revise this part of the book to embrace and reflect these changes. In the pages that follow, our members share their experience getting clean, staying clean, and living clean.

The experience shared is as wide-ranging as we are ourselves. Our members write about going back to school, losing people they love, struggling with illness, making amends, coming to terms with their sexuality, raising children, serving the fellowship we all love, and countless other successes and challenges. It would be impossible to fully reflect the diversity in who our members are or what we have gone through in one collection, but here we have gathered some of that richness.

Those who are already familiar with the Basic Text will notice several structural changes here. Part of the motivation to revise the text was to make it easier to navigate. To that end, each individual piece is very briefly summarized at the beginning and in the Table of Contents. If you are looking for something specific (like someone who struggled with illness, or someone who got clean young) you may be able to find it more quickly.

We have organized the collection into four sections, the first of which is called "Beginnings." The five stories here come from earlier editions of the Basic Text, and have not

been edited for this edition. These voices of some of our early members are a window on our earlier years. In addition to these five, several other previously published stories (from the English Basic Text, as well as other-language editions of the Basic Text and White Book) have been edited and included elsewhere in the collection.

After “Beginnings,” the text is divided into three more sections, each of which begins with an assortment of quotes from our members. In the “Coming Home” section, members share about finding NA, or in some cases, starting NA in their part of the world. Our readings tell us that anyone can find a home in NA “regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion.” In the “Regardless of” section, members talk about their journey to find acceptance in NA, and to make NA a place where all of us can feel safe and welcome. The final section, “Life on Life’s Terms,” focuses on practicing the principles in the face of all that life offers: Fully awake and alive, we confront joy and tragedy and the simple pleasures of day-to-day life.

You may not relate to everything you read here—just as you might not identify with everyone who shares in an NA meeting—but we hope that at least some of these voices will touch and inspire you. In NA we learn that as addicts we are not unique, but as people we are individuals, and our experience matters. Collectively we are so much more than the sum of our parts. Each of us, regardless of our clean time or where we came from, has something to contribute by sharing openly and honestly, and something to gain when we listen with an open heart.

## Basic Text Complete Abstracts

Following are the collected abstracts as they appear at the beginning of each story. This document is included here to make it easier for you to reference the individual pieces.

### **BEGINNINGS**

*I Found the Only NA Meeting in the World*..... 15  
When this addict's wife found the only NA meeting in the world, he got hooked on the loving, caring, and sharing that goes on in NA. In his story from our First Edition, he tells us that when he found NA against all odds, the chaos of his life ended and the adventure began.

*Mid-Pacific Serenity* ..... 21  
In his story from our First Edition, NA gave this beachcomber an outline for living. This addict finally found his "paradise" in the twelve steps.

*If You Want What We Have* ..... 27  
After a lifetime of using, this "southern gentleman" learned that the most gracious thing he could do was open the doors to an NA meeting. In this story from our First Edition, he recalls that the first time a man told him he loved him was in Narcotics Anonymous.

*Fearful Mother*.....33  
In this story originally published in our Little White Booklet and added to the Basic Text at the Second Edition, a mother learns that she can come out of the paralyzing fear of addiction and turn her whole life around. She claims her seat as a woman in NA and hopes that one day more women will find recovery.

*I Was Different* .....37  
Not all addicts reach jails or institutions in order to hit their bottom. In his story, originally published in the LWB and later included in our Second Edition, this "different" addict explains that his disease kept him confined to a life of fear and loneliness. He found serenity in a simple life in Narcotics Anonymous.

### **COMING HOME**

*Now It Is Possible* .....47  
When she got clean, there was no NA in her country. She started NA in Turkey and was passionate about the program even when nothing else was meaningful to her.

*The Point*.....49  
His best friend overdosed and he kept using. Years later, this addict returned to his old neighborhood and made peace with his past.

- Part of the Solution* .....55  
She was an angry wife and mother who thought that pills could solve her problems. Instead she found the solution in the steps. This is a story from our First Edition, edited for inclusion here.
- Carrying the Message* .....59  
They used together and got clean together, but this addict got active in the program and his brother did not. This Saudi Arabian member found in the loss of his brother a powerful drive to carry the message.
- Young Addict, Young NA Fellowship Grow Up Together* .....63  
She found NA when she was only fifteen, and now she's stayed clean more than twenty years.
- A Quiet Satisfaction in Being Useful* .....67  
Sometimes he is the only person in the room at a meeting, but that only renews this Kenyan addict's commitment to recovery.
- Restored to Dignity* .....71  
She walked into NA—literally—and found hope and freedom. For this Chilean woman, emotional balance begins with honesty.
- Second Chance* .....75  
A host of bad choices ultimately led to relapse for this addict with thirteen years clean. It was a hard road back to recovery, but NA loved her until she could love herself.
- A New Beginning* .....79  
This addict found a home from his very first meeting. He did what was suggested, and he hasn't had to use again.
- Jails, Institutions, and Recovery* .....83  
This story from our First Edition, edited for inclusion here, tells about one member who found freedom while doing time through the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.
- What Makes Me Happy Now* .....87  
When NA first started in Japan, even members didn't believe a normal life could be possible for a woman in recovery. As the fellowship matured, women sharing their experience in meetings changed their lives and their culture.
- Sandwich* .....93  
A simple act of kindness showed this Dutch addict that he belonged in Narcotics Anonymous. He worked through his fears that a relationship with God would be barred to him because he is gay and learned to trust the power of love.
- A Brazilian Full of It!* .....97  
As an entertainer she traveled the world, but found herself in the isolation of addiction wherever she went. This dancer found grace out of the spotlight, in the rooms of NA.

*Sick and Tired at Eighteen* .....103  
This story from our Third Edition, edited for inclusion here, tells the story of a girl who came to NA a teenager on a court card and found love, acceptance, and peace of mind.

*Start a Meeting, They Will Come* .....107  
He checked himself into treatment to avoid prison, but while he was there he found hope in the pages of a Basic Text. There was no NA in his part of rural Illinois, so he started a meeting and he's stayed clean through his own growing pains and those of the fellowship.

*Kia Ora Koutou* .....111  
NA's message got through to this Maori addict. She got clean out of spite, but she stayed clean because of hope.

*By The End of the Road* .....115  
She thought she was a traveler, but it was really a need to escape herself. This addict from Norway found her way home on a Mediterranean island.

#### **REGARDLESS OF....**

*Growing Up in NA* .....125  
When she got clean at sixteen in Chicago, she had no way of knowing that more than twenty years later she would wind up in Italy, feeling how service connects us all.

*One Third Step for Me, One Giant Leap for my Recovery* .....127  
Addiction took him away from his Orthodox Jewish roots, but recovery helped him forge a new relationship with a God of his understanding.

*Finally Connected* .....133  
After a lifetime of feeling different, this addict found the key to connection in a common needs workshop.

*From Gang Leader to Discussion Leader* .....137  
As a gang member in South Central LA, he didn't think he had a future. But NA kept its promise and now he has eight years clean and the life he always wanted.

*Terminally Unique* .....139  
Because she is HIV-positive, this transsexual addict was nearly denied surgery. Waiting helped her build a stronger relationship with a Higher Power.

*How Do You Spell Relief?* .....145  
When she started going to meetings at sixteen, she was only looking to avoid a prison sentence. To her surprise, she found serenity through the steps and service. This is a story from our First Edition, edited for inclusion here.

- A Textbook Case* .....147  
This Iroquois member ended up in an institution for “hard cases.” When he found NA, he realized he was a textbook-case addict.
- Atheists Recover Too* .....151  
The process of recovery and the spiritual principles of NA are a power greater than himself for this atheist addict.
- Never Alone* .....155  
She got clean with her husband of twenty years, and eight years later nursed him through terminal cancer while both of her parents were terminally ill. Now, at sixty-one, she shares that the program can help any of us, regardless of age or circumstance.
- Regardless of Age* .....159  
She was the youngest person in the room, but she felt a connection right away. Over time, she came to realize that recovery from addiction is a bond that transcends age.
- Academic Addict* .....163  
As a PhD student in pharmacology, his knowledge of drugs almost killed him. Now he is a professor with more than twenty years clean and an understanding that recovery is not a science.
- Finding a God That Worked Through People* .....169  
Struggling for years in the seminary, this recovering Pastor thought he had betrayed God by choosing NA; but instead he discovered a simple truth: God worked through people.
- I Was Unique* .....173  
When he was new in the program, he learned that, despite his professional background and education, he belonged in NA. He stayed clean since his story was published in our First Edition and revised it himself for this edition. Sadly, he did not live to see its publication.

## **LIFE ON LIFE’S TERMS**

- Breath of Life* .....183  
Even in a remote corner of Paradise, the disease can find us—and so can recovery. She kept coming back, and found freedom through fearless inventory work.
- Life and Death in NA* .....187  
He lost a brother and a son to the disease of addiction, but NA taught him to say “I love you,” even in the face of so much loss.
- The Same Path* .....193  
He was terrified to tell the group who he was, but when this gay addict opened up, he learned he was right at home.

- Inside Job* .....197  
When she had years clean, depression almost killed this recovering addict. But a renewed commitment to recovery brought relief—a deeper relationship with her Higher Power.
- God Walked In* .....201  
Among the gifts and challenges this addict has faced in his twenty-eight years clean are cancer and open-heart surgery. From it all, he has learned about surrender and love.
- A God-shaped Hole* .....205  
A Dutch punk rocker finds meaning and purpose in selfless service.
- One Potato* .....209  
This HIV-positive lesbian has survived great adversity to find grace in some unlikely places.
- Picture not Perfect* .....215  
Life without drugs was more painful than he anticipated, but he found relief in the steps and a home for himself in NA in Stockholm.
- Generational* .....219  
As a parent, sometimes recovery means accepting your children's disease as well. This woman helped her sons find their way home.
- Enough* .....223  
This addict had years clean before he was willing to face his addictive behavior in recovery. He now knows he doesn't have to talk clean and live dirty anymore.
- Free at Last* .....227  
This French member came to NA under a cloud of grief and regret, and found relief and even joy by following the suggestions she heard in meetings.
- Becoming Whole* .....229  
Addiction is not the only disease this member has had to deal with. Diagnosed with schizophrenia, she has journeyed in recovery from suicidal patient to mental health counselor.
- The Good We Do* .....233  
A string of "coincidences" led this addict to find a sponsor and to see that our acts of service can have far-reaching effects.
- I'm So Grateful That God Still Hears an Addict's Prayer* .....235  
Through giving back, this inner-city addict found that his relationship with his community and his God are the keys to real success.
- Speaking Up* .....239  
This member from Ireland grew up quiet and withdrawn, but recovery helped him overcome his fear of speaking in public to find his voice and himself.

*The Gratitude Side of Circumstance* .....245  
His recovery journey brought him from a job as a pharmacist to one working with recovering addicts and has given him the tools to deal with life's challenges—illness, grief, and intimacy.

# BASIC TEXT

## Review and Input Workshops

### Beginning workshop

90 minutes

This 90-minute workshop is designed to inspire people to participate in the review and input stage of the Basic Text project. This workshop should help set the stage for members to read the draft text and either send in their individual input or meet together in a later session to gather their collective input.

#### SET UP, BACKGROUND, AND INTRODUCTIONS

5–10 MINUTES

Give an overview of the session and explain its purpose. You could say something like:

This session is intended to get us all thinking about the ways we can carry our message through sharing our experience in print. We will talk together about the purpose of telling our stories, and we will brainstorm about what kinds of experience we would like to see in NA literature and what our hopes for this project might be.

Ideally we will leave this session with a deeper understanding of what we might hope for from this revision to the Basic Text as well as inspiration to read the draft and give input on it.

Depending on who is attending, you may need to give some background on the project itself. If so, the cover material for the review draft has a very brief overview of the project that may be helpful to reference. Also, the July *NA Way* has a short article on the review and input stage of the project that you may want to pass out to people. You can find that piece online [http://www.na.org/naway/en/July06/Jul06\\_Basic\\_Text\\_Update.pdf](http://www.na.org/naway/en/July06/Jul06_Basic_Text_Update.pdf).

Explain that the project is now in the review stage. The review period runs from 1 September 2006 to 28 February 2007. The purpose of the review period is to get feedback from the fellowship about the draft—to find out what people like and don't like, what we should add or delete or change. The "approval form"—the draft that will be voted on at the conference—will be published in September 2007 and included in the 2008 *Conference Agenda Report*.

Reviewing this kind of shared experience presents some challenges. The collection as a whole is like a meeting in that not everything will speak to every member. Some pieces will ring more true to you than others. (An advantage of doing a follow-up input-gathering session to talk about the collection of experience itself is that people who come will get a better sense of the pieces that speak to other members.)



This session is not designed to collect input on the whole text. We will only give input on a few specific pieces of writing in this session—the Preface and the Introduction to “Our Members Share” section (this is the part of the book now called “Personal Stories”; this revision proposes to change the title to “Our Members Share” and include the title “Our Program” on the page before the first ten chapters). *If you plan a follow-up workshop or workshops you can explain that here; if not, you can explain that this workshop should help everyone in their individual reading.*

Begin by having everyone introduce themselves and share some (brief) thing about themselves that others may not know. If you have a large group, you will probably want to break into smaller groups after introductions. Groups of 8 to 10 should be fine.

## **READ AND GIVE INPUT ON “PREFACE”**

**20 MINUTES**

Read and discuss the preface to the text as a whole. This can take place in small groups or one large group depending on how many people are present. Make sure that there is someone to facilitate and someone to record ideas.

Begin with a general discussion about the preface: This new preface would precede the original preface, which would be retitled “Preface to the First Edition.” After the description of our symbol, the preface is the first thing in our text. Ask if anyone has any ideas about what might go in a new preface to the text.

You can explain that, generally, a preface contains some of the reasons for undertaking a work. In the case of this project, one of the primary motivations for writing a new preface was to talk about the role of the Basic Text since its publication and the reasons for revising the text.

Make sure everyone has a copy. Read through the whole piece. You can take turns reading paragraphs.

Discuss these two questions:

- Is there something we are missing that you’d like to see in the preface?
- Is there anything in the preface that doesn’t seem appropriate?

## **READ AND GIVE INPUT ON “INTRO” TO *OUR MEMBERS SHARE***

**15 MINUTES**

Much like the exercise above, this part of the workshop focuses on reading and discussing the Introduction to the “Our Members Share” section.

Again, you may want to begin with a general discussion. The cover sheet to the review draft explains: The shift in the text from Chapters One through Ten to a collection of first-person experience can seem abrupt to someone picking up the text for the first time. This introduction is meant to explain that shift and to give people some sense of what to expect in the pages that follow. Ask if anyone has any additional ideas about what they would expect to find in the introduction.

Make sure everyone has a copy. Read through the whole piece. You can take turns reading paragraphs.

Discuss these two questions:

- Is there anything missing that you'd like to see in the introduction?
- Is there anything in the introduction that doesn't seem appropriate?

## **WHY DO WE SHARE EXPERIENCE?**

**30-35 MINUTES**

The remainder of the workshop is devoted to a more general discussion and brainstorming session about the purpose of written personal experience. This discussion should help set the stage for reading the collection and give world services valuable input about what the fellowship would ideally like to see in such a collection.

Some of the questions you may want to ask include:

- What do you think this sort of collection should accomplish?
- What do you hope or expect from this revision?
- What kind of experience would you love to be able to pick up a piece of NA literature and read?
- What do you hope to see in the revised "Our Members Share" section?
- What would have helped you when you were new?
- What would help you now?

## **CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP**

**10 MINUTES**

Once again, you may want to reiterate the purpose of the session overall: to think in broad terms about our written experience and to encourage members to read the rest of the draft and either come to a follow-up workshop or submit their own individual input.

You may want to summarize some of the session's discussions for members and remind them of some of the ideas people had for what a collection of personal experience might contain.

Encourage everyone to submit input to the Basic Text project. People can make copies of a draft if there is one available locally and submit input online [www.na.org/conference/bt](http://www.na.org/conference/bt) or via email or post.

Or they can sign up to access the draft online:

<http://portaltools.na.org/PortalTools/subscriptions/Login.cfm>

Or they can request a draft by emailing [worldboard@na.org](mailto:worldboard@na.org) or sending a request via post to:

World Board  
19737 Nordhoff Place  
Chatsworth, CA 91311  
USA

# Follow-up Input Workshop

## 90 minutes

Some groups may want to meet again after everyone has read the draft. You can structure such a follow-up meeting in whatever way makes sense for the group. Some groups will want to have one follow-up meeting and gather input on the rest of the questions. Others will want multiple meetings—perhaps held as members are reading the text—and gather the input in stages. If you decide to hold more than one meeting, you could, for instance, hold a meeting to discuss the first two sections of the collection and then a meeting to discuss the last two sections of the collection and then a third meeting to discuss the collection as a whole. Again, do what makes sense given your resources. The following session is a suggested outline for people having one follow-up workshop.

### OPENING

10 MINUTES

Depending on who is present, you may have to recap some of the background and introductory material from the first session.

Let people know the purpose of this session is to collect input on the work as a whole. Ninety minutes is not much time to do that. They should feel free (encouraged) to send in any individual input that doesn't get covered in this workshop.

Have everyone introduce themselves and share some (brief) thing about themselves that others may not know. The first part of the input will be collected in three small groups, so divide into three equal groups. If there are people present who haven't read all of the draft, try to split them up into different groups.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

25–30 MINUTES

Make sure each group has a facilitator and a recorder. Each group has two or three questions to discuss:

#### Group One: Sections

We have divided the collection of personal experience into four sections.

- Do the names of the sections adequately reflect what is contained in them?
- Do you have any ideas about sections you'd rather see?
- Do the individual pieces fit the particular sections? Are there any pieces you feel should be moved?



### Group Two: Reflections

Three of the sections begin with a collection of short reflections from members—a sort of mosaic or collage of our experience.

- Do these collections feel too long or too short?
- Is there content that you would rather see reflected in them?
- Are there any pieces that don't belong here or pieces that feel awkward or unfinished?

### Group Three: Abstracts

Each individual piece in the collection has a brief summary, an abstract, which appears at the beginning of the piece and will be printed in the table of contents. This is intended to help members find particular kinds of experience they may be looking for more easily.

- Are the abstracts helpful to you?
- Do all of the abstracts accurately describe the stories? If not, which don't seem to describe the stories well enough?

## **FULL GROUP DISCUSSION**

**45–50 MINUTES**

The second part of the input-gathering will take place in a large group. Make sure there is a facilitator and recorder for the large group. You may want to refresh everyone's memories about the discussion at the first workshop. In particular, the ideas from that workshop about what people hope or expect from this revision may be helpful in gathering input on the collection as a whole.

Some things to keep in mind when discussing these questions are that this is a collection, not just a bunch of individual pieces but a collection that is intended to work together to represent the diversity and richness of NA as a whole. And, as mentioned above, not every piece will appeal to every member. Be respectful of other's views and use this workshop as an opportunity to learn about how your fellow members feel and what moves them, not to "correct" their feelings.

These are the questions from the cover material that accompanies the review draft. You will not have time to get through all of them, so you will probably want to pick three or four and encourage people to submit individual input as well.

- Is there a story or stories that you thought particularly reflected your experience? Or—if not, is there something you think should be added to the collection?
- Are there pieces that seemed particularly outstanding to you? If so, why?
- Are there any stories that you think don't belong here? And if so, why not?
- Are there things that feel repetitive or inconsistent with our message of unity?
- Are there things you think are missing from the collection—concepts, demographics, a type of experience?

- As you read through, what was the strongest point of the collection: what did you like best about the collection *as a whole*?
- As you think about the collection *as a whole*, what do you think most needs improvement or change?

## **CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP**

**10-15 MINUTES**

As with the workshop above, you may want to summarize some of the ideas of the day. Encourage everyone to submit input to the Basic Text project. People can make copies of a draft if there is one available locally and submit input online [www.na.org/conference/bt](http://www.na.org/conference/bt) or via email or post.

Or they can sign up to access the draft online:

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Or they can request a draft by emailing [worldboard@na.org](mailto:worldboard@na.org) or sending a request via post to:

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