

For the Parents or Guardians of Young People in NA

Young addicts all over the world have found recovery from drug addiction in Narcotics Anonymous, but not without often struggling through some very common questions with their family or caregivers. This pamphlet addresses some of the questions parents or caregivers may have when a child finds NA. The information here is not meant as advice about how to parent your child; rather, it relates some common experiences about how to support a young person recovering in NA. This information can also be helpful for any loved one interested in learning more about the issues a young member faces in recovery.

The NA Program

The following points about the Narcotics Anonymous program are meant to help parents and family members have a better understanding of what a young member is experiencing when they come to NA.

What Can I Expect When My Child Finds NA?

The program of NA is found in the Twelve Steps (as well as other NA literature) and focuses on addiction as a “physical, mental, and spiritual disease that affects every area of our lives.” As a result, recovery in NA involves more than simply abstinence from drugs.

Some parents worry that NA is only for those who have used “hard” drugs, like heroin. Although NA stands for “Narcotics Anonymous,” NA is a fellowship for addicts who have used any type of drug or mind-altering substance like inhalants.

What Happens at NA Meetings?

Many parents are curious about what happens at NA meetings. NA members have had a variety of experiences and come from many walks of life. This diverse group comes together in NA meetings to help each other recover from addiction and learn a new way to live. NA members typically socialize before and after meetings, and in many communities greet each other with hugs. This is part of how members form

Recovery in NA is an ongoing process—members continue to attend NA meetings long after they've stopped using drugs. Asking your son or daughter when they are going to stop attending meetings doesn't come across as supportive.

Getting involved and encouraging your child's recovery are probably the most important actions you can take. Simple things, such as telling your child you are proud of him or her, help support the recovery process. Some parents even attend their child's recovery anniversary and encourage regular contact with a sponsor. It is completely appropriate to take time to get to know the new NA members in your child's life.

Understanding Relapse

It is not uncommon for some recovering addicts to relapse and return to using drugs. There are often consequences from family members as a result of this behavior, but a relapse doesn't necessarily mean that an addict won't return to recovery and eventually find continuous abstinence from their drug use. Unfortunately, relapse is a part of some people's recovery process. However, our literature explains that "we have never seen a person who lives the Narcotics Anonymous program relapse." Many members come back from a relapse and enjoy long-term recovery. For more information about relapse, see the chapter in the Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text titled "Recovery and Relapse" or the *Recovery and Relapse* informational pamphlet.

Support for Families

Many family members find the support they need in groups designed to help the families and loved ones of addicts (such as Nar-anon and Families Anonymous). Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with these organizations, nor do we recommend one program over another. We simply provide this information in a spirit of cooperation.

This material was created from the experience of younger members who have successfully stayed clean from drugs in Narcotics Anonymous. We hope this information will help other young members and their parents in this often confusing process of recovery.