

PLUGGED IN

A Newsletter for the Suncoast Area of Narcotics Anonymous

Welcome!

Welcome to this new edition of Plugged In! We are your new editorial team. We are following a theme for the next twelve months — the 12 steps. We invite you to consider the coming month's theme when you make your submissions. Our new "Ask a Sponsor" column fits this step-work theme particularly well — ask away!

Grab us at meetings or email us and tell us what you think, what ideas you may have, and if something we published was meaningful and useful to you. We want to tell stories, hear poetry, encourage one another in our recovery, and give each other insight into how to work a more meaningful program.

Talk to us!

-Ethan C. and Cole Y.

Our Members Share

Addiction is not a respecter of men
It cares not who you are nor where you've been
This demon has no remorse for whom it affects
No thought for families or marriages it wrecks
You're unaffected? You might think so
But I can assure you, it's destroying someone you know
Whether we label it a choice or incurable disease,
Eventually it brings us all to our knees
Does it really matter if we give it a name?
Decent people are dying just the same
Does it really matter if we give it a name?
[Drug], [other drug], [more drugs], just say no, just abstain.
Sounds pretty simple, and for some it must be
But it's not black and white, at least not for me
I'm living proof an addict can be redeemed
We can love, serve and become what we dreamed
I've heard it said, "let them die, it's their choice."
Thank god I'm still living, to give those dying a voice
You turn your head, and pretend not to see
That junkie on the bus. Well, that junkie was once me
We're burying our loved ones at a rapid pace
No time to ignore it. No time to waste
It's an epidemic of epic proportions
Don't be deceived by statistical distortion
This poem is written to bring awareness
In hopes that more addicts may not perish
To those who struggle: fight hard, do not cease
To those who've lost the fight: may you rest in peace

-Sheri 2017

My Sponsor

Whenever I need you it takes a simple call
 You help me get through things, no matter how small
 You're always there to lend an ear
 To help me see things a little more clear
 Some of your words may be cliché
 But you always know just what to say
 Whether you get very real or just make me laugh
 You're always guiding me down the right path
 Whenever I'm in doubt and need a helping hand
 You show me how to be a better man
 Yours is a bridge I surely will never burn
 Because you do for me expecting nothing in return
 Always reminding me of the things I can gain
 Standing by my side when I'm going through pain
 Although life can be an adventure
 It's a great one with you as my mentor
 I am very fortunate and consider it an honor
 To have you as my friend, my brother, my sponsor
-Eddie C. (Dedicated to Chris D.)

Anonymous Essay on Gratitude

Having and practicing gratitude have so many benefits in my life. When I focus on the things I am grateful for, my overall view on life is drastically more positive. A key component in practicing gratitude is expressing gratitude whenever possible. For me, this could be something as simple as saying, "thank you." My favorite way to express gratitude is to continue to work my program and always try to do the right thing. I feel this is the best way to portray that I am truly thankful for my life today. It shows the people who have helped me (and continue to do so) that their effort are not wasted. It is the most apparent way to express my appreciation and gratitude.

Gratitude is a great way to change my perspective when it begins to become negative. As I've been told, I get to do things I sometimes dread. This couldn't be more true! When I find myself annoyed or stressed at anything in my life, thinking of how things used to be helps bring me to the realization of how grateful I am today!

-Anonymous

Ask A Sponsor

Tired of your sponsor always being right? Want a second opinion? Each month we will be interviewing an area sponsor. This month's subject is "Miracle" Dave F.

What are the biggest changes you've seen in the area in your 30 years of recovery?
-Christopher C.

A: The biggest change to this area is the amount of meetings that are available daily. In 2001, when i moved here, you where lucky to find a meeting every day, and you would have to leave our region to accomplish a 90 in 90.

The biggest change in the NA program in the last three decades was the publication of the NA Step-Working Guide. When it first came out, this was the best thing I could have imagined; we now had a guide with questions that had been collected from thousands of addicts and it created more continuity in how step work was being presented to sponsees. Over the years, though, I have seen it become a liability to the connection between sponsor and sponsee, and it is being used as a homework sheet that is given to a sponsee to fill out with very little input or connection from the sponsor.

Is there an IP to help with daily inventories?
-Danielle H

There is. IP #9, Living The Program, has a suggested inventory so that we can do a daily spot-check of our recovery.

Get involved! Public Relations

Each month we will feature a different subcommittee, this month's is Public relations, brought to you by Jamie S.

The Public Relations Subcommittee of FDC is one of the six subcommittees responsible for the outward face of Suncoast NA to the world at large. If you've attended a regular meeting of NA, you've most likely heard Tradition 11, which states "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and film." This tradition is the cornerstone of NA's public relations policy.

However, five other traditions also guide us in our public relations efforts. Traditions three and five say that "the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using," and that "each group has but one primary purpose--to carry the message to the addict who still suffers." Traditions six and seven state that we won't lend our name or endorse or finance any other organization. And we will not seek funding from anyone except our membership. And lastly Tradition ten: "Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

The PR subcommittee's role is to inform the public about what NA does for addicts. Letting them know what the NA program is, and how we can help them or somebody they know. If you would like to help with our efforts, we are looking for members who want to be of service to the fellowship. We have opportunities to speak to groups such as medical professionals, social services, law enforcement, and clergy, and we need members to cover these events. We also have poster drives coming up for our area, and we are going to need a large number of volunteers to assist with these efforts. So if you'd like to pitch in, we'd love to have you!

Danielle H. PR subcommittee chairperson, and Jamie S., co-chair

Why is it important for the men to stick with the men and the women to stick with the women?
-Cayla P

There is a bulletin #5 that explains some of the reasons for this suggestion, especially when it involves H&I commitments. In my opinion the biggest reason is that it is hard enough to stay focused on recovery so why do we want to introduce another distraction. My first sponsor told me that even in the poorest countries in the world they do not put two sick people in one hospital bed.

How do you stay excited about recovery?
-Tim G

I stay excited about recovery by remembering how desperate and miserable I was when I was using drugs and wanted to stop but couldn't.

When I find myself judging a meeting or getting bored, I have to do a new service commitment, change up my meetings, pray and meditate and do some step work.

Ask a Sponsor will be a recurring feature. Next month's guest is Tim G. Please submit your questions to newsletter@suncoastna.org.

Announcements:

The World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous, WCNA 37, will be held from 8/30/2018 - 9/2/2018 at the Orange County Convention Center - West Concourse 9800 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819. More information can be found at <https://www.na.org/?ID=wcna-index>

The Florida Region Convention of Narcotics Anonymous, FRCNA XXXVII, will be held from 7/5/18 - 7/7/18 at the Hilton Tampa Downtown, 211 N. Tampa St. Tampa FL, 33602. More information can be found at <https://www.frcna.com>

Celebrate!

Jason 3/17/05 13 yrs.

Robbie G. 3/19/97 21 yrs.

Jim K. 4/1/07 11 yrs.

Michelle B. 3/19/11 7 yrs.

David L. 4/1/17 1 yr.

Cee 10/4/16 18 mos.

Heather G 3/27/17 1 yr.

Shelby B. 3/10/17 1 yr.

Cayla P. 3/28/17 1 yr.

Julie H. 10/28/16 18 mos.

Refuse to Use

Pining away for a better day,
Please make this desire go away.
Fiending for a fix or to be fixed,
Messages and emotions are mega mixed.

Bring me light to illuminate this fight,
Allow me to learn to make it right.
Patiently preparing to become alright,
Deliver hope to my mind tonight.

Fearful fantasies of forgetful regression,
Don't let anything stop my positive progression.
Fever dreams of lighting one up,
Instead, I invite recovery to overflow in my cup.

-Kara S.

Submissions:

Submissions are welcomed. Please share your recovery in the form of essays, poetry, or artwork by emailing newsletter@suncoastna.org.

Next month's theme will be the First Step. So while all submissions are welcome, submissions focusing on Surrender and personal experience with the First Step will be particularly helpful.

newsletter@suncoastna.org.

Your submission to the newsletter is your approval for print. Edits for grammar, language, and clarity will be made when and where necessary. Please leave out specific names of substances.