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Hello my name is Piet de Boer I'm Swedish with a very Dutch name. And I'm a world board member of Narcotics Anonymous World Services with its headquarters in Los Angeles, USA.

I have Jimmy Engström a Narcotics Anonymous member from Sweden with me here today.

There are also several of our local members of Narcotics Anonymous in Lithuania with us these days here at the conference.

You can meet us all more informally at our exhibition stand where we can show you more about our literature and answer your questions about NA.

I would like to thank the organizers for the invitation to this conference and all other participants.

I would also like to thank you for coming and showing interest in Narcotics Anonymous.

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If you have considered recommending Narcotics Anonymous to someone who has a drug problem, you may have a few questions about our organization. We hope to answer those questions during this conference.

We will talk about

- Who are members of NA?
- Anonymity
- NA meetings
- How does NA work?
- Rate of growth
- NA survey results
- NA in the community
- How to contact Narcotics Anonymous
- Questions



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Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit, international, community-based organization of recovering addicts whose primary purpose is to help addicts stop using drugs by utilizing a twelve-step approach. Active in over 140 countries speaks 65 languages and with translations going on in about 40 of these languages.

Narcotics Anonymous sprang from the Alcoholic Anonymous Program of the late 1940s, with meetings first emerging in Los Angeles area of California, and has grown into one of the world's oldest and largest organizations of its kind.

Narcotics Anonymous members learn from one another how to live drug-free and recover from the effects of addiction in their lives.

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Anyone who wants to stop using drugs may become a member of Narcotics Anonymous. NA is comprised of people who come from many cultures, age groups, professions and backgrounds.

The only requirement to become an NA member is the desire to stop using drugs. The choice of joining the NA fellowship rests with the individual.

There are no dues or fees for membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions.

All ethnic and religious backgrounds are represented among NA members. Once a national fellowship reaches a certain level of maturity, its membership generally reflects the diversity or homogeneity of the background culture.

Membership is not limited to addicts using any particular drug.

Those who feel they may have a problem with drugs, legal or illegal, including alcohol, are welcome in NA. Recovery in NA focuses on the problem of addiction, not on any particular drug.



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Anonymity

The basic premise of anonymity allows addicts to attend meetings without fear of legal or social repercussions. This is an important consideration for an addict thinking about going to a meeting for the first time.

Anonymity also supports an atmosphere of equality in meetings. It helps insure that no individual's personality or circumstance will be considered more important than the message of recovery shared in NA.

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NA meetings

NA's primary approach to recovery is its belief in the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. Members take part in NA meetings by talking about their experiences and recovery from drug addiction.

NA meetings are informally structured, held in space rented by the group, and are led by members who take turns opening and closing the meeting.

NA meetings and other services are funded entirely from donations by addict members and the sale of recovery literature. Financial contributions from non-members are not accepted.

Most NA meetings are held regularly at the same time and place each week, usually in a public facility. There are two basic types of meetings those that are open to the general public and those closed to the public (for addicts only).

Meetings vary widely in format. Some formats are: participation, speaker, question and answer, topic discussion, and some have a combination of these formats.

The function of any meeting is always the same: to provide a suitable and reliable environment for personal recovery.



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How does NA work?

Addicts helping each other recover are the foundation of NA. Members meet regularly to talk about their experiences in recovery. More experienced members, known as *sponsors*, work individually with newer members.

The core of the NA program is the Twelve Steps. These "steps" are a set of guidelines outlining a practical approach to recovery. These twelve-steps are adopted from AA Alcoholics Anonymous, in 1953. We have only broadened their perspective. We follow the same path with a single exception; our identification as addicts is all-inclusive with respect to any mood-changing, mind-altering substance. Our problem is not a specific substance, it is a disease called addiction.

Disease of addiction is a global concept and drugs that were being used are irrelevant. Drug use is merely a symptom of the disease.

By following these guidelines, the twelve-steps, and working closely with other members, addicts learn to stop using drugs and face the challenges of daily living.



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Narcotics Anonymous is not a religious organization and does not mandate any particular belief system. It does teach basic spiritual principles such as honesty, open-mindedness, faith, willingness, and humility that may be applied in everyday life. The specific practical application of spiritual principles is determined by each individual.

Recovery in NA is not a miracle cure that happens within a given period of time. It is a process, ongoing and personal. Members make an individual decision to join and recover at their own pace.

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Rate of growth

Since no attendance records are kept, it is difficult to estimate what percentages of those who come to Narcotics Anonymous ultimately achieve long-term abstinence.

The only sure indicator of our success is the rapid growth in the number of Narcotics Anonymous groups over the last several years and the rapid spread of NA.

In 1978, we had fewer than two-hundred registered groups in three countries; in 1982, eleven countries had twelve-hundred groups; in 1993, 60 countries had over 13,000 groups holding over 19,000 meetings; as of today, it is estimated that there are over 35,000 registered groups holding over 50,000 weekly meetings in 140 countries.



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NA survey results

The socioeconomic strata represented by the NA membership vary from country to country. Members of one particular social or economic class start most national NA movements, but as their outreach activities become more effective, the membership becomes more broadly representative of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

The following demographic information was revealed in a survey of almost half of the 13,500 attendees at the 2003 NA World Convention in San Diego, California:

Men/Women

55% of the respondents were male

45% of the respondents were female

Ethnic Diversity

The ethnic diversity of our membership seems to be representative of the geographic location of our survey. When we conducted this survey in 2003 in San Diego, California, 70% of respondents were white, 11% were black, 11% were Hispanic, and 8% were other.

In 2002 in Atlanta, Georgia, 49% of respondents were white, 39% were black, 4% were Hispanic, and 8% were other.

Age

3% of the respondents were under 20

Most members seem to be between 30-50 years old.

1% were over 60 years old

I will rush through the rest of these diagrams you can find them in a pamphlet called Membership survey 2003 at our literature stand.

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NA in the community

Although not associated with any religion, political group, organization or institution, NA welcomes the cooperation of those in government, the clergy, the helping professionals, and private voluntary organizations. NA' non addict friends have been instrumental in getting Narcotics Anonymous started in many countries and helping NA grow. NA accepts no financial contributions from non-members.

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Volunteer committees of NA members are formed to coordinate many services within the community.

Narcotics Anonymous have no professional counsellors and maintain no clinics or residential facilities.

However NA may offer services as:

Participating in **Health Fairs and Conferences** conducted by professional organizations at which NA may have display booth and/or presents information at a workshop, such as this one.

Community Awareness Meetings may be conducted by NA members to inform the community of the existence of Narcotics Anonymous and its available services.

Presentations are often provided to churches, parole officers, judges, counsellors, nurses, doctors, and schools, among others, for information purposes.

Public Service Announcements can provide information about NA distributed to the public via the media.

Phone line Services may provide local meeting information and general information about NA.

Meeting Lists, which are locally, produced schedules that contain times of and locations for meetings in the community.



Services to Hospitals & Institutions are provided by local committees through meetings/presentations to introduce those people attending to some of the basics of the Narcotics Anonymous program.

They carry the NA message of recovery to addicts who do not have full access to regular NA meetings. This is provided to hospitals, jails, addiction treatment facilities, detox centers, and other institutions.

Literature Services include a variety of books, pamphlets and audio tapes that is published in many languages.

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How to contact Narcotics Anonymous

In many communities, Narcotics Anonymous is listed in telephone directory. Many phone line numbers and meeting locations can be found on our website at www.na.org

Phone lines are staffed by recovering addicts, or by a service that can contact recovering members. Phone services are primarily designed to help addicts find meetings close by.

If there is no phone line in your community, or if you have questions about Narcotics Anonymous, please contact NA's World Service at the World Service Office and we can provide you with information about meetings or other services, as well as a catalogue listing all of NA's recovery literature.

If we have time for any questions I'm happy to take them now.

Please see us at our literature booth at this conference. Thank you all for coming.