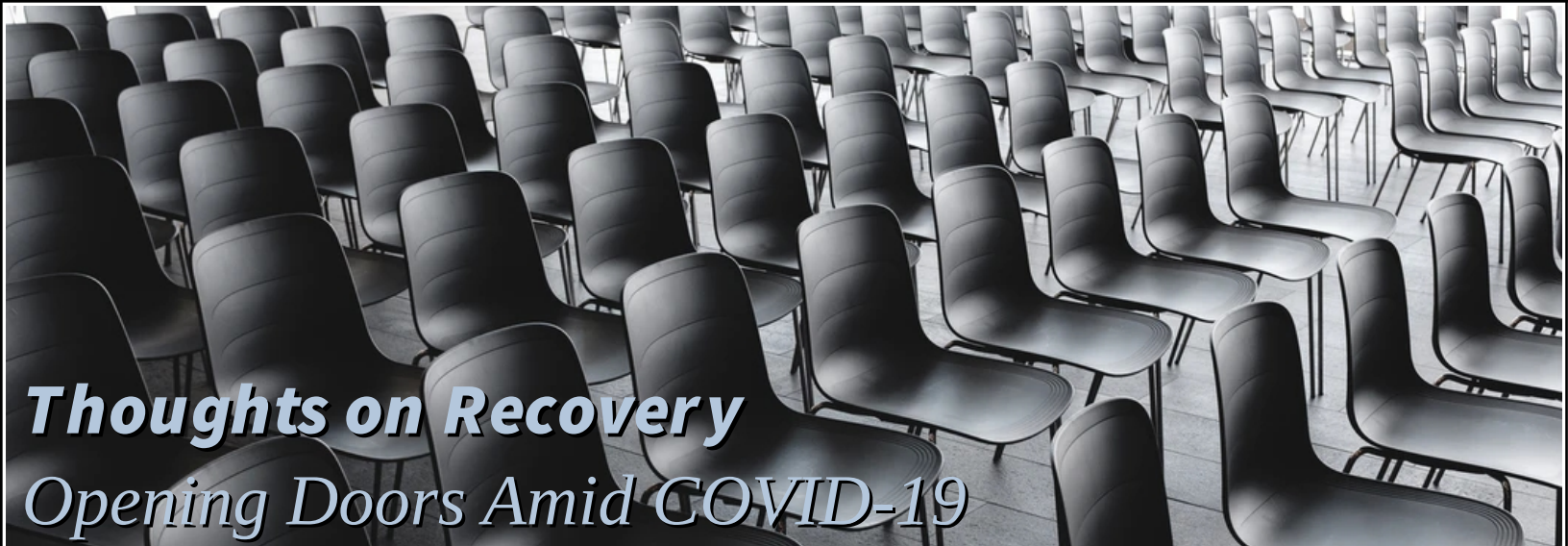


The Gulf Coast Area of Narcotics Anonymous

Newsletter | May 2020





Thoughts on Recovery

Opening Doors Amid COVID-19

While Narcotics Anonymous takes no stance on outside issues, it's members often do. As the Gulf Coast Area deals with the impact of COVID-19, many addicts have developed strong opinions on things like online meetings, fellow-shipping, and, perhaps most divisively, returning to physical meetings. Below are some anonymous thoughts from different sides of the issues facing the Gulf Coast Area.

"Government can't keep me locked in my house forever. I didn't get recovery staying at home staring at my computer. I got it going out and taking risks. That sounds reckless now that I say it out loud, but I don't care."

I got my masks, I got my hand sanitizer, I got my social-distancing skills. I'm ready. And if some of my friends aren't? That's fine – I got a million ways to stay in touch.

"I'm going crazy cooped up. I need people, I need to see them. I got furloughed from a super-social job and I think this lock-down taught me how much I need people now that I'm clean."

I've never been to a real meeting. I got clean during the pandemic. All I know is looking your faces on my phone. I want to meet you.

"I want everything to go back to normal. If I can go to a meeting, that's a start. I can be part of the world getting back to being sane."

"If I can stand in line at the store and keep six feet away from people, I can go to a meeting and sit six feet away from people. It's not that hard, and people are acting scared for no reason when they need to be thinking about their recovery."

"I'm more than worried. All it takes is someone who doesn't have the best hygiene to come in and start trying to hug people. I'm not sure I could turn down someone hurting for a hug. I don't want to get sick."

"My mom has some kind of disease that makes it so she gets sick real easy. I still live with her. I think I'm going to stick with online meetings because of that. They've been a godsend so far."


"I think I've gotten too lazy to go back to meetings. I feel content laying on my couch staring at my phone."

I was just diagnosed with diabetes. I'm immuno-compromised. I'm not going to meetings for a long time.

"I miss everyone a lot. But, I'm out of work and I have a lot of doctor's appointments coming up because of surgery I had before this all happened. I can't risk getting sick and not being able to see my doctor."

"Why take the risk when I get forty, fifty addicts beamed into my home every night?"

I survived worse. Another month sitting on my couch, watching TV, going to online meetings isn't going to kill me. It's not sacrifice. It's just another way things are.



Staying Clean While Staying Clean

Addicts Learn to Cope with the New Normal

You can't change anything without changing everything. How many times has this been said in the Gulf Coast Area? As local addicts try to get back to normal they have had to come to terms with the idea that things won't be exactly the same. Masks, hand-sanitizer, and more have become the "new normal" - but addicts in recovery embrace change. Here are some - mostly light and fun - insights from local addicts on how they are coping with the changes COVID-19 has brought to the area.

"I spent over twenty years wearing masks to meetings. [Laughs] I mean, you know what I mean. So, I don't see any issues with people wearing something on their face to keep them safe. It's what you say that helps people learn who you are. It's how you share. I don't think a little bit of cloth is going to stop people from opening up at a meeting. I bet it'll actually help. [Laughs again.] I mean, it's like they're pulling a heist over on us, right? But instead of taking cash or something their dumping all their feelings on us and we have to help them sort it out. It's the perfect crime. [Laughs yet again.]"



"If there's one part of this I want to keep after coronavirus is a thing of the past, it's the social distancing part. People legally have to stay six feet away from me? That's awesome. I'll hug who I want to hug, thank you very much. Some of my most awkward moments in the room came from people trying to squeeze me too hard. I'm a small person! I can't take a million hugs. If this makes people think for a minute or two before they try to bear-hug the crack addiction out of me, I'll be grateful. But, jokes aside, some days, you do need a hug. And I'm glad to know that people really mean their hugs right now..."

"Listen. The amount of people I know who freaked out about having to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer or whatever made me question a number of my friendships. Like, were you not washing your hands before all this happened? Oh my God! I can't believe it. I really can't. But, 'he who is without sin' and all that, this did make me take a closer look at what I was doing regarding my own hygiene. I was walking up into meetings, shaking hands, hugging, pecking ladies on the cheek, drinking coffee, opening doors for folks - all without really thinking about giving myself a squirt of hand sanitizer or anything like that. So, maybe this whole experience taught me something."



A close-up photograph of a person's hands. The right hand is holding a dark pen and is in the process of writing on a white sheet of paper. The left hand is resting on the paper, with fingers slightly spread. The person is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a desk or table.

Letter from the Chairperson

Getting Involved

To the Gulf Coast Area,

This newsletter is for addicts in recovery, and it is written by those same addicts. Please, if you have any ideas for articles, stories, or features, reach out. If you have creative writing, poems, cartoons, anything related to recovery, please reach out. The newsletter subcommittee wants to reflect the area, not the singular vision of one or two addicts. As you might have noticed, this issue was a bit sparse on content. That's because we need you to reach out to our email at newsletter@nagulfcoastfla.org or to call the chair directly at 239-339-3512 with anything you'd like to see in your newsletter.

Thank you for letting me serve,
Nick H.