

The Gulf Coast Area of Narcotics Anonymous

Newsletter | July 2020





Still Going Strong

Physical Meetings Remain Open in the Gulf Coast Area

Physical meeting attendance is booming in the Gulf Coast Area. Narcotics Anonymous takes no stance on outside issues, but due to recent spikes in COVID cases, safety is a priority. When making the choice to attend physical meetings, please adhere to the rules of the establishment, as well as any recommendations from the Center for Disease Control. It is our responsibility to ensure that we do everything we can to keep our meetings open in the these trying times. Check the Gulf Coast Area of Narcotics Anonymous calendar at nagulfcoastfla.org for more information on various attendance regulations and safety suggestions. Further, ZOOM meetings are still available every day for addicts who do not wish to attend meetings in person and these meetings will remain active for the foreseeable future. Feel free to reach out to us with updates to make sure this list is complete!

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Wear a face covering at all times
- Maintain six feet distance from other attendees while sitting or standing
- Use hand sanitizer after touching door knobs, chairs, tables, books, etc.
- If hosting a meeting, sanitize all items used during the course of the meeting
- Do not touch your face or eyes
- Do not pull your face covering down while speaking, sneezing, or coughing
- Do not attend if you have been in contact with someone sick, feel sick yourself, or have traveled recently
- Respect the concerns of others at all times

SUNDAY	
9:30AM – 10:30AM	The Ultimate Weapon Freedom Clubhouse
4:00PM – 5:00PM	End of the Road Fort Myers' Grace Church
6:00PM – 7:00PM	Not Quite There Yet Freedom Clubhouse
MONDAY	
10:30AM – 11:30AM	Down & Dirty Freedom Clubhouse
12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets Reflections Park
7:00PM – 8:00PM	Clean & Serene Cape Connections Church
7:00PM – 8:00PM	Filling the Void Freedom Clubhouse
7:00PM – 8:00PM	New Beginnings Cape Coral's Grace Church
TUESDAY	
10:30AM – 11:30AM	Down & Dirty Freedom Clubhouse
12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets Reflections Park
WEDNESDAY	
10:30AM – 11:30AM	Down & Dirty Freedom Clubhouse
12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets Reflections Park
7:00PM – 8:00PM	Just For Today Freedom Clubhouse
THURSDAY	
10:30AM – 11:30AM	Down & Dirty Freedom Clubhouse
12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets Reflections Park
6:30PM – 7:30PM	Against All Odds Fort Myers' Grace Church
FRIDAY	
12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets Reflections Park
7:00PM – 8:00PM	Dare to Win Freedom Clubhouse
8:00PM – 9:00PM	Bridge to Recovery Beach Baptist Church
SATURDAY	
7:00PM – 8:00PM	Hot Topic Group Freedom Clubhouse

Please note that none of the listed facilities are affiliated with Narcotics Anonymous.



Stepping Through COVID

Addicts Who Dove into Stepwork During the Pandemic

While physical meetings have returned to the Gulf Coast Area, many addicts have found that the solitude forced on them by the COVID crisis has encouraged them to put pen to paper and push through their Stepwork. Below are some anonymous thoughts from local addicts - with various lengths of cleantime - who have worked Steps One, Two, and Three over the past few months.

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

"This wasn't my first time working Step One. I've gone through the steps five or six times in my life. Starting a new round right when the lockdown started wasn't planned, but it was good timing. When everything happened, I tried to push back. I wasn't going to stay home, I wasn't going to let anyone tell me what to do. But, working this step again, and talking to my sponsor, helped me better understand that in all things I need to surrender to win. When I try to force my will on things, stuff gets bad. And if I'd had my way, my life would have gotten very, very, very unmanageable. I could have gotten sick, gotten someone I care about sick, who knows! So, yeah, thankfully, I have the Steps in my life, and a good sponsor to talk about them with. Might not be here otherwise."

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Step Two

We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

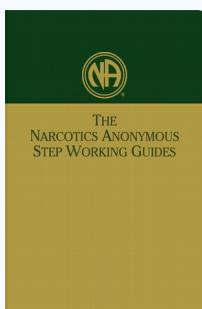
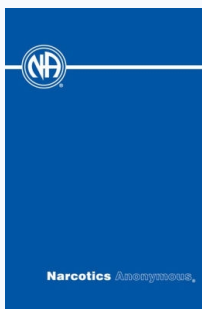
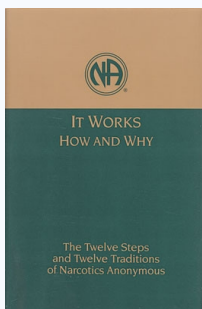
"I finished Step One during a so-called 'break' from my 'essential job' and felt worn out. I was like, 'Okay, I surrendered, what now?' I was stuck at home and going crazy and then I got the news that I was going to be given less hours, but not let go, at work. Fortunately, my sponsor was on point with Step Two. Told me that Step Two was about hope. Hope that things can get better if I have a little faith in something that's not me and my self-will. I said, 'But I'm not super religious' and she said, 'That's fine, fortunately this is a spiritual, not religious program.' So we talked and I started to understand that, whatever my Power is, it can help me find hope in place of the shame, guilt, and sadness that had filled my life up until that point. I'm just accepting that things can be better for once – that in and of itself is a big change for me. No more hopelessness. Now I'm all about hope."

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Step Three

We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

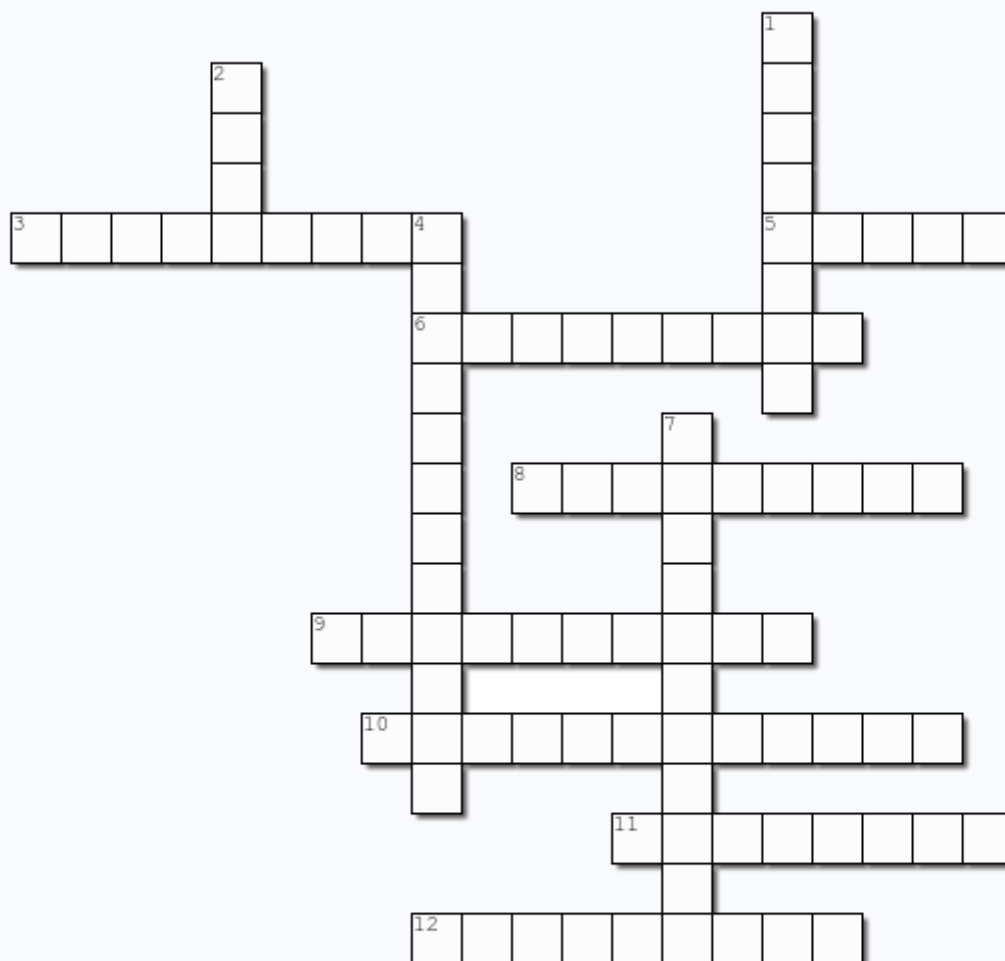
"It's hard to view this one as an ACTION STEP, like my extremely dramatic sponsor tells me it is. I've never had to turn something over and take it like I'm doing something proactive. You say 'turn over' and it's like giving up the keys to your house, your car, your kids, whatever. But, that's not it. Right now, if I'm trying to exert control, I'm driving that car off the cliff, I'm burning that house down, I'm abandoning those kids, right? I need help. And I need to make the choice to allow my Higher Power to help me, instead of letting the drink and drugs tell me what to do."





STEP ONE

All the words and clues are derived from the section on Step One in the Basic Text.



Across

3. Does not work alone for any length of time.
5. They change us into what we don't want to be.
6. Not the same as defeat.
8. A physical, mental and spiritual disease.
9. What we overcome when we surrender to the principles of NA.
10. Our lives before coming to NA.
11. This is not the product of social acceptability.
12. The desire to use when we are destroying our lives.

Down

1. Things that did not work for us: lovers, new jobs, hospitals, and so on.
2. What we all need to ask for.
4. Rob us of the benefits of the program; must be rid of them when we surrender.
7. Often seen together with honesty and open-mindedness.



You're Kitten Me

One Addict's Experience with a New Pet During Recovery

~ Addicts in recovery deal with responsibility in many ways. For some, it is as simple as paying rent at a halfway house on time or waking up early for the first job they've held in years. For others, it is the act of calling their sponsor, hitting a meeting, or avoiding people who use. However, a few addicts make the choice to bring a pet into their homes for the first time in their lives. In no way is this a good option for every single addict in recovery – this is one addict's experience with making this choice and how it impacted their recovery. ~

* * *

First, I want to say that you shouldn't rush out and get a cat because someone else did. What worked in my recovery might not work in yours. I would not have rescued him if I didn't have the stability of a good job and a solid program backing me up. Second, owning a pet is not for everyone – it is not like buying a car or a TV, it is not an accessory. You don't get to throw them on the curb or return them if you don't like them. These are living beings and my program has taught me what that means.

After a few years of being clean, I got lonely. I am an older person. My husband died before I was able to get this whole recovery thing down. I have a son who is grown and lives in another state. We see each other on holidays and we text (he's better at this than me) but we aren't as close as we once were. My using saw to that. It is taking a lot longer than I expected to mend that relationship.

Anyways, like I was saying, I got lonely. I was tired of coming home from my job – which I do love these days – to an empty roost. So I went to the Humane Society. And I met Kitty. That was his name, for better or for worse. He was older, too, like me. The staff told me that his previous owners had gotten sick of him when he “stopped being a kitten.” I didn't have to look at any other animal. I knew he was the one for me. And that he was going to need a new name, one more dignified and fitting his age!



I brought him home with his new litter box and food bowls and toys, and let me tell you, it was rough. He peed behind the couch; he scratched at me; he hissed. He was not used to love. But I was patient. I accepted that this was going to take time like everything in my recovery. Eventually, he started jumping up on the couch with me. And then, he started to rub on me. Finally, he started sleeping in bed with me, purring until I fell asleep. I named him Leo.

Now I can barely get any time alone. I included a picture of him on his perch, looking at me with affection in his beautiful eyes. It is constant. I don't know when it happened, but he fell for me. I might have bad days, I might have days where I want to use, or where I feel like I am more apart from than a part of the Fellowship. But, I always have my Leo. I don't know if he would love me like he does if I didn't have NA in my life. And now, I always have something to look out for. **Someone**, I should say. Sometimes, we need extra love... especially now.

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From the Chairperson
Reach Out and Help Support Your Newsletter

To the Gulf Coast Area,

We're coming back to life down here, aren't we? Things are starting to feel a little more familiar, but the "New Normal" is still in effect. Yet, some things never change: the Gulf Coast Area needs you to get **involved** now, more than ever. Whether it's coming up with ideas for the newsletter or any other commitment you can think of, the Gulf Coast Area needs **your** help.

Please, reach out to me via email at:

newsletter@nagulfcoastfla.org

Or, call me directly at **239-339-3512** with anything you'd like to see in the newsletter. **Your** ideas need to be heard and seen – this newsletter isn't meant to be the product of one person.

And, if the newsletter isn't your thing, ask anyone you can get your hands on about how you can get involved in area service at any level. You are an **essential** part of my and every other addict's recovery, no matter what you do!

Thank you for letting me serve,
Nick H.