

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a forest floor. The foreground is filled with a thick layer of fallen autumn leaves in various shades of brown, orange, and tan. Some leaves are clearly visible, showing their veins. In the background, several tree trunks are visible, and the foliage is a soft, out-of-focus golden-brown color, suggesting a warm, sunny day in autumn.

# *The Gulf Coast Area of Narcotics Anonymous*

Newsletter | November 2020





# Thankfully Open

## Physical Meetings in the Gulf Coast Area

With the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, many local addicts will be traveling to celebrate with families in friends. Those addicts whose families are not able to celebrate with them might be gathering with friends, or might even find themselves working during a holiday rush. Due to the amount of travel and contact coming this month, 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](http://nagulfcoastfla.org) for more information on various attendance regulations and safety suggestions. Further, digital meetings are still available every day for addicts who do not wish to attend meetings in-person; these meetings will remain active for the foreseeable future. Feel free to reach out to us with updates to make sure the included list is complete!

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Wear your face covering **over** the nose
- 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
12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets   Reflections Park
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

12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets   Reflections Park
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### WEDNESDAY

12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets   Reflections Park
7:00PM – 8:00PM	Just For Today   Freedom Clubhouse

### THURSDAY

12:00PM – 1:00PM	Sick As Our Secrets   Reflections Park
6:30PM – 7:30PM	Against All Odds   Fort Myers' Grace Church

### FRIDAY

10:30AM – 11:30AM	Down & Dirty   Freedom Clubhouse
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

9:00AM – 10:00AM	Solutions in the Sand   Bowditch Point Park
6:30PM – 7:30PM	Recovery First   LaBelle's Christ Central
7:00PM – 8:00PM	Hot Topic Group   Freedom Clubhouse

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



# *Family, Friends, and Fellowship*

## *Three Addicts on How They're Spending the Holiday*

~ “I have been blessed to move through all of life’s colors over the years, but without the steps, my NA family, and the principles that I have learned, these life changes would have been much more difficult to cope with and also celebrate. I believe that the longer I’m on this planet, the more wisdom I develop, but I also believe that that wisdom deepens and I end up going full circle to a profound state of innocence, and what a freedom that innocence brings. ” - Basic Text, p. 334 ~

This season allows many addicts to celebrate with the families, both inside and outside of the fellowship. Below are three addicts takes on Thanksgiving festivities.

### **GOING HOME**

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*For the first time since getting clean, I get to go home for the holidays. My parents didn't want anything to do with me for the first two years I was clean because they figured it was just another lie. But, I think the work I'm putting in is finally getting through to them. I'm not owed a relationship with my family after everything I put them through – I know that.*

*I'm grateful today that I get to have them in my life again. And that's only because of the program. If it weren't for the work I put in and staying clean just for today, one day at a time, I wouldn't get to figure out how to bake pumpkin pie. That's the only thing I have to worry about today. Whether or not I'm going to mess up a pie and screw up dessert.*

*Not getting the next one. Not getting out of jail. Not going to detox. Just pie. And that's beyond my wildest dreams.*

### **NEW FRIENDS**

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*I don't have much in the way of family left. My mother passed away before I got clean and my dad has never been part of my life. Fortunately, because I come to meetings and go out to eat and get involved in service, I have friends in my life now who are basically my new family. When they found out I didn't have anywhere to go for the holiday, they opened their doors and invited me.*

*The girl who used to rob people? You want me to come over? You're letting me hang out in your house, around your kids? You sure that's a good idea?*

*I guess it is these days because I make a choice every day to be a better person and the only reason I get to make that choice is because I come to meetings and work my steps. I never thought I'd have friends, because they got in the way of using. But, today, I'm glad I do.*

### **THE ROOMS**

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*When I got out of treatment a few years ago, I just started walking. I did not have anyone who would come pick me up because I had burned all my bridges. I did not have any money because I was unemployable. I did not have a car because I had sold it. I had nothing but a meeting list.*

*So, I walked down the street to the gas station and asked where a church was because a meeting was supposed to start there at noon. I had only seen the people come in for the talks when I was in treatment. I did not know what to expect, especially since it was Thanksgiving of 2014! I figured no one would be there. But, there they were. Sitting in chairs in the parking lot because the church people had forgotten to unlock the door!*

*And I have been home since. If they had not been there, I'm not sure where I'd be.*



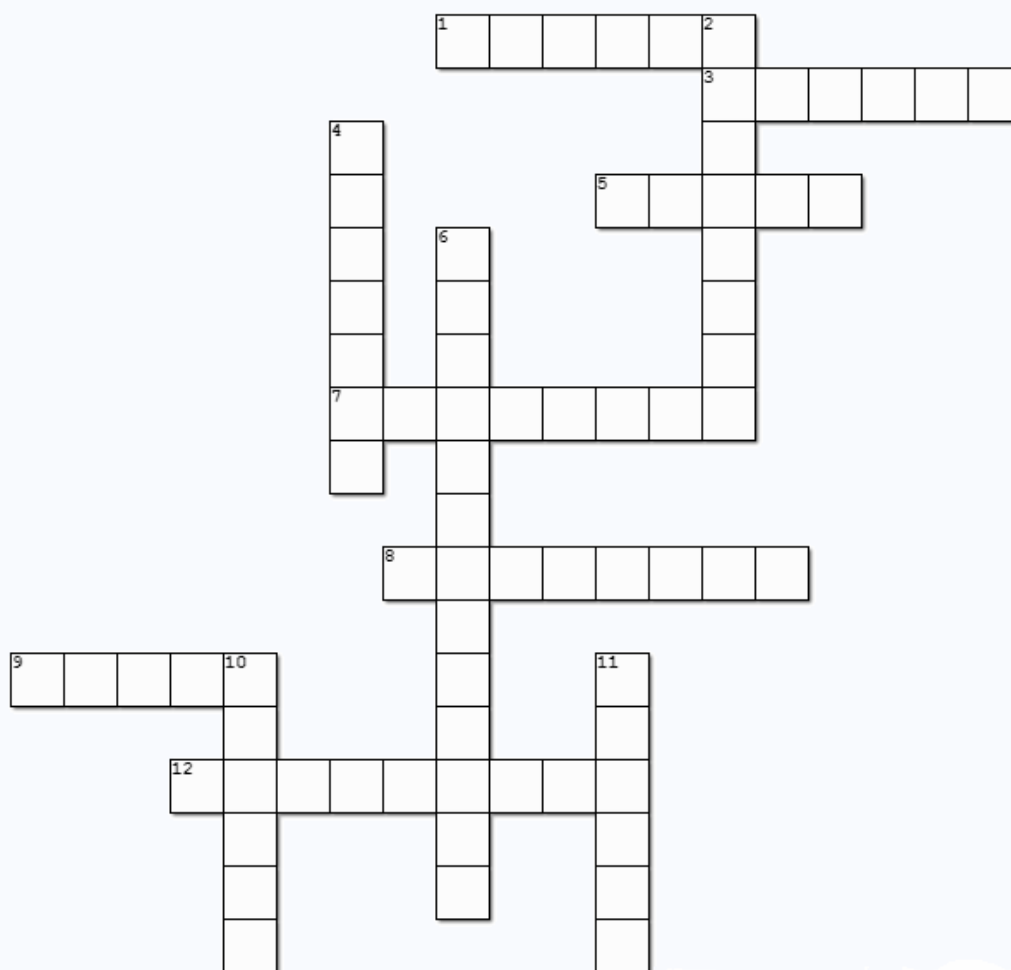


# Stepwork Crossword

## Not Quite the XBOX Series X or PS5

### STEP FIVE

All the clues are derived from the Basic Text... and some are from Thanksgiving!




#### Across

1. Our surprising good qualities.
3. What we must be when we admit everything.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ being, or who we admit to alongside ourselves and God.
7. A synonym for grateful, especially this time of year.
8. What we come to recognize as we work the steps.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ nature of our wrongs that need to be admitted.
12. A side dish served with another clue in this puzzle.

#### Down

2. The part of the past that we trap.
4. Things we need to work on.
6. What we overcome to avoid future guilt.
10. Makes you sleepy.
11. The person we admit things to, so long as we trust them.



## *Fall in Florida*

### *One Local Addict Reflects on Change in the Program*

*Some things never change.  
Fortunately, that statement doesn't apply to me anymore.*

The Gulf Coast doesn't really get to experience fall like the rest of the country. Things are still hot out. I get sweaty in my car before the AC kicks on. The sun beats down on me at work. My electric bill is nearly the same now as it is in the middle of July.

I'm getting older in the rooms. I've got kids. They've got kids. Those kids have pets. I have to make so many plates of food this November. So many mouths to feed. Twenty years ago, I couldn't feed myself.

Twenty years ago, I failed out of school. My parents didn't let me move back in. My boyfriend left me for someone he said was more "stable" and easier to "bring home to mom and dad." I didn't need any of them. I had my drugs. I had my drinks.

*I had it all.  
Including the pain.*

And it got big and great and terrible enough one day and I couldn't take it anymore. I thought about ending everything. I had it planned out. I had the bridge picked out. But, something happened. I felt something tug on me and tell me not to do it. To do something else.

So I went to a church. It didn't feel right. The people there looked at me like I was going to hurt them. I went to a detox center. It didn't work. The moment I got out, I was running again. If there was anything I could find, it was the next one.

One night, I was in a parking lot, leaning against a wall. About to pass out. And I saw a bunch of people who sort of looked like me, smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee and laughing. I figured they'd know where to cop. And they did. They just didn't do that anymore. They'd found a new way to live. They found out how to change.

They took me in with them, sat me down, handed me a paper with the words WHO IS AN ADDICT? on the top. And the rest is history. I kept going back to that meeting, reading, sharing, got a sponsor, worked steps, and never looked back. Once I was given the chance to change, I took it. And now I have to make a big Thanksgiving dinner for my family, and my family's families, and so on and so on.

*I'm glad I'm busy with love these days.  
I'm glad I let myself be helped.  
I'm glad I let myself be loved.  
I'm glad I let myself change.*







*From the Subcommittee  
Looking for Support in the Gulf Coast Area*

To the Gulf Coast Area,

I hope everyone out there has something to do this Thanksgiving. If you don't, share about it! So many addicts in the Gulf Coast Area are just looking for ways to open their doors to members of our Fellowship.

If you have any ideas about what you want to see in the newsletter, email me at:

[newsletter@nagulfcoastfla.org](mailto:newsletter@nagulfcoastfla.org)

Or, call me directly at **239-339-3512** with anything you'd like in the newsletter. We are still short on content due to, well, 2020 being one heck of a year. But... **your** ideas need to be heard and seen – this newsletter isn't meant to be the product of one person.

If the newsletter isn't your thing, ask **anyone** 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!

Thank you for letting me serve,  
NickH.