

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS NEWSLETTER IN HAMILTON AREA

SEPTEMBER 2023 ISSUE



<https://nahamilton.org>



Welcome to the Narcotics Anonymous newsletter of the Hamilton Ontario area! We are part of a global organization dedicated to helping those affected by substance abuse and addiction. We offer support through our meetings, group activities, and events. Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment where members can share their experiences, strength and hope, while learning from each other. We also provide resources and information to those seeking help. Our members come from all walks of life and have all kinds of backgrounds and experiences. We believe that no matter how long someone has been using, they can find relief from addiction. We offer a wide range of activities to help our members feel supported and empowered. This includes organized meetings, group activities, and events such as movie nights, game nights, and recreational activities. We also have a volunteer program to help our members pursue their goals. Our newsletter contains updates on our activities, upcoming events, and other helpful resources. We strive to provide our members with the support and resources they need to get, and stay clean. We hope you will join us in our mission to provide support and resources to those affected by substance abuse and addiction. Thanks for joining us!



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WHO WE ARE

A member of Narcotics Anonymous (NA). Membership is not limited to addicts using any particular drug. Those who feel that 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, and not on any particular drug.

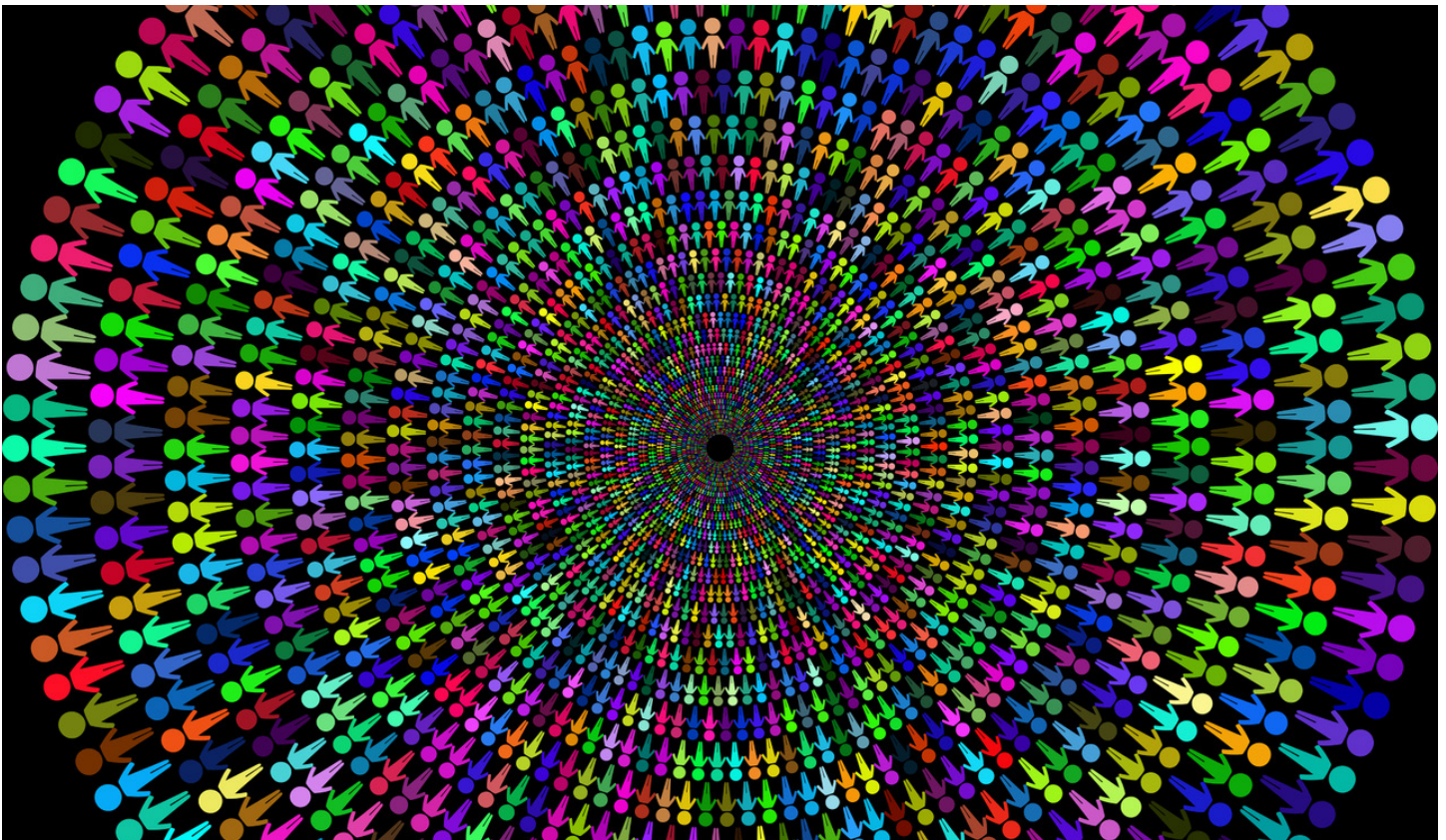
WHAT WE ARE

Narcotics Anonymous is a nonprofit fellowship or society of humans for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.



WHERE WE ARE

Most NA meetings are held regularly at the same location. There are two basic types of meetings; those that are open to the public and those that are closed to the public (for addicts only.) NA meetings are informally structured. The function of any meeting is always the same. To provide a suitable and reliable environment for personal recovery.





FOR THE NEWCOMER

You don't have to be clean (drug free) when you get here, but after your first meeting we suggest that you keep coming back and come clean. You don't have to wait for an overdose or a jail sentence to get help from N.A., nor is addiction a hopeless condition from which there is no relief from the desire to use drugs.

WHAT IS OUR MESSAGE

What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live. Our message is hope and the promise of freedom. When all is said and done, our primary purpose can only be to carry the message to the addict who still suffers because that is all we have to give.



AN ADDICT ALONE IS IN BAD COMPANY

Having difficulty dealing with reality? Call someone in NA. Ask people at meetings to write their name and phone number on a piece of paper or add it to your contact list on your cell phone, so you'll have an alternative to being in your own bad company.





MEETING FORMAT LEGEND

B: Beginners	BK: Book Study
BT: Basic Text	C: Closed
D: Discussion	JT: Just for Today
LC: Living Clean	O: Open
QA: Question and Answers	So: Speaking only
VM: Virtual Meeting	WC: Wheelchair

HELPLINES

English	(888) 811-3887
French	(800) 385-7247
Farsi	(888) 377-7881

SERVICE MEETINGS

Hamilton Area Service Committee: It's on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 10:00am



Date and Time	Name of NA Group Meeting	Address	Meeting Format Legend
Sunday: 9:30am (1 hr)	Gage Park Group	Gage Park Hamilton ON, L8M 1N6	O
Sunday: 7:00pm (1½ hr)	Courage to Change	170 Dundurn Street First Unitarian Street South Hamilton ON, L8P 4K3	O, D, JT, WC, BK
Sunday: 7:30pm (1½ hr)	Clean and Free Group	1831 King Street East Hamilton ON, L8K 1V8 (Anglican Church of the Nativity at Barons)	O, BT, So, WC
Monday: 7:00pm (1½ hr)	An intro to Narcotics Anonymous. (This meeting is designed for peopple who are new to NA so you can get your questions answered and find the help you need)	(Virtual Meeting)	B, QA, VM
Monday: 7:30pm (1½ hr)	H.O.W. Group	100 West 5th Street Hamilton ON, L9C 3R2 - Enter off Fennell outside the auditorium (Saint Joseph's Healthcare, Enter off Fennell Ave, through lobby to Seminar Room A217)	C, D, WC, BK
Tuesday: 7:00pm (1.25 hr)	Mountain Freedom Group	1300 Fennell Avenue East Hamilton ON, L8T 1T6 (Bus: Upper Kenilworth to Fennell)	O, D, WC, BK
Wednesday: 7:00pm (1½ hr)	New Beginnings Group	1 King Street Stoney Creek ON, L8G 1G7 (Stoney Creek United Church)	O, D, JT, LC



Date and Time	Name of NA Group Meeting	Address	Meeting Format Legend
Thursday: 7:00pm (1½ hr)	Hope Group	166 Charlton Avenue West Hamilton ON, L8P 2C8 (Central Presbyterian Church, moved to virtual Meeting via Zoom)	O, BT, D, VM (password: <u>Recovery</u>)
Thursday: 7:00pm (1 hr)	River Edge Group	174 Caithness Street East Caledonia ON, N3W 1C2 (Grace United Church, Fellowship room.)	WC, BK
Thursday: 7:00pm (1.25 hr)	Strong Hold Recovery	720 Ninth Avenue Hamilton ON, L8T 2A3 (Trinity Presbyterian Church)	O
Friday: 5:30pm (1½ hr)	Friday Night Group	70 James Street South Hamilton ON, L8P 2Y8 (Saint Paul's Presbyterian Church)	C, BT, D
Saturday: 1:30pm (1½ hr)	Learn to Live Group	115 Stanley Avenue Hamilton ON, L8P 2L5 (Blessings Christian Church, Corner of Locke and Stanley. Parking is off Stanley)	O, BT, D



Just for today Reading (Taken from JFT reading)

Secrets are reservations

“Eventually we are shown that we must get honest, or we will use again.”

Basic Text, p. 85

_____•_____

Everyone has secrets, right? Some of us have little secrets, items that would cause only minor embarrassment if found out. Some of us have big secrets, whole areas of our lives cloaked in thick, murky darkness. Big secrets may represent a more obvious, immediate danger to our recovery. But the little secrets do their own kind of damage, the more insidious perhaps because we think they’re “harmless.”

Big or little, our secrets represent spiritual territory we are unwilling to surrender to the principles of recovery. The longer we reserve pieces of our lives to be ruled by self-will and the more vigorously we defend our “right” to hold onto them, the more damage we do. Gradually, the unsundered territories of our lives tend to expand, taking more and more ground.

Whether the secrets in our lives are big or little, sooner or later they bring us to the same place. We must choose—either we surrender everything to our program, or we will lose our recovery.

Just for today: I want the kind of recovery that comes from total surrender to the program. Today, I will talk with my sponsor and disclose my secrets, big or small.



JOE

My name is Joe and this is my story.

My journey began as a young child living with addicted parents who were unable to care for my siblings and I. There was physical, mental, sexual abuse and neglect from birth. I experienced abandonment and trust issues and I ended up growing up in foster care and although I had an amazing foster family, I struggled with not really knowing what love was as well

as not knowing what a real family was supposed to look and feel like. When I was 8 my foster father passed away and that really hurt because he was the only positive male role model I had in my life, his death was followed by several losses including my grandfather, my grandmother, my best friend in 2014 and my sister in 2012. I began to fill the void with scandalous sexual encounters selling myself on the street living as a homeless teen at the age of 15. I started smoking pot at the age of 16 which progressed to drinking at 18 and then I was introduced to the dance floor drug scene by my social worker at 19, which was around the time I met my first husband. We divorced when I was 23 because he would prove to be unfaithful, verbally and physically abusive. Looking back on it now, it seems as though I was groomed to accept this behavior from a very young age as my brother would physically abuse me and began sexually assaulting me when I was 12. Feeling like there was a void inside me that I could not fill,



I felt like something was missing. I tried to fill that void with all my relationships leading to me having several sexual partners, it seemed to me that the meaning of love was sex and so my life began to revolve around that. Some relationships lasted a couple of days some a couple of weeks my longest relationship being 3 months until I met my first husband whom I was with for 4.5 years. When my relationship with my husband broke down and I really felt like I could not handle being alone, which to this day is my biggest fear. I started dating again thinking it would help me to feel worth something and not like I had been thrown away like garbage. It wasn't until 2010 that I tried my D.O.C, I was dating a guy and I did not like feeling like he isolated and ignored me when he used, so I began using thinking it would bring us closer.

After that relationship ended, I never thought about using again until 2015. When I started using again it was minimal maybe a \$40-\$50 bag every 3-4 months and at this point I was only smoking my D.O.C. I worked my day job and only used on Friday and Saturday making it back to work on Monday. It really did not feel like a problem until it progressed after my birthday in January of 2017, when I met a man on an on line hookup site. We met and spent 3 days using together and it felt like bliss, I'm not sure when I fell in love with him, but I convinced myself it was love at first sight. He was 6 foot something, with gorgeous eyes and a great smile, dirty blond hair and I felt like he was exactly what I thought beauty was. He had been through pain and heartache, it felt like he understood me, I thought to myself how could I go



wrong, he was beautiful and had life experience. It was amazing at first then it progressed with his addiction and now with mine, what had seemed like using every few months turned into monthly for me, however what I did not know was his method of use was not the same. He would use for a week at a time not just on the weekends and soon enough I was using during the week as well and I began using in the same method as he was. It seemed blissful all over again and we were supposed to share our lives together but soon the drug use made him stray and we were at each others' throats. I would beg him to stop using and get beat with coffee tables or whatever else was handy. Eventually he left and then continued to leave and return several times, leaving me longing for him. He would go to be with someone else and when

he would come back, he would say all the things I needed to hear to take him back, inevitably drugs would be used, infidelity would happen, and I would get hurt. He would say let it go, it's in the past but I couldn't and would continue to hurt in terrified silence. When he was gone, he would continue to email me and calling me a junkie which achieved the desired effect of making me feel worse, not only because it was true but also because I felt as though I had become my parents. Finally, he left and met another guy and soon after they were together and planning to get married. During this time, I tried to control my addiction and the pain that I felt the relationship had caused me and found that I was failing. It was not until October of 2018 that I reached out to someone in the rooms, I did not know then that he would become my sponsor.



I was not ready at this point to work a program and I felt as though I did not need meetings and convinced myself that meetings were bad for me because addicts hung out at meetings and addicts use drugs and wasn't, I trying to stay clean? However, I found out that I needed a meeting when I was feeling a slip or coming back from a relapse and trying to get back on the wagon. It was not until 2019 near the end of February beginning of march that I finally admitted that I needed help because I could not do it on my own. My ex and I ended up back together, using no drugs this time but he still could not handle me and could not love me without conditions. I flew across the country to be with another man whom I had dated 10 years prior and maintained not using while I was with him but after a month he felt as

though I was a negative influence and he kicked me out. I felt disconnected, I was alone with nothing, living on the streets of a city I wasn't familiar with, broke, triggered and wanting to use to numb the pain. Finally, I got back home and was able to stay with some amazing friends however eventually they could not house me because my behavior ended up getting me banned from the building. My ex's engagement fell through and he again returned to me and again I took him back, it still failed. I was alone again living in a motel and I had lost my job, I had lost my friends, my family wasn't speaking to me, I felt as though I had nothing and no one. In my despair I reached out to my friend from Narcotics Anonymous again and told him I need help. He took me to a meeting and now I am working a program which includes going



to meetings daily and trying to build a life for myself in which I can take pride, knowing that using only masks my feelings of unworthiness. I know that if I pick up again, I will end up back where I was homeless, alone and afraid and because of Narcotics Anonymous I strive everyday to live sober just for today. And today im able to tell my story in more detail at meetings and conventions throughout ontario and canada, i hope one day to be on the narcotics anonymous world services panel. My name is Joe W and I am an addict.





MOTIVATION

I always thought it was impossible to stay motivated to be drug and alcohol free. Every time I thought about it, I felt like I was walking through a muddy swamp, and the more I tried to get out of it, the more stuck I got.

Then I met Nicole.

Nicole was a recovering addict, and she was full of motivation and determination. she had

been through a lot in life, and she had found a way to stay clean and sober. she told me about her daily routine and how she kept himself motivated and focused.

she said that each morning, she would wake up and write a list of goals for the day. she would make sure to include activities that would help her stay away from drugs and alcohol, such as attending a support group or meeting with a



sponsor. she would also include activities that would help her stay positive and focused, such as reading a book, going for a walk, or meditating.

Nicole also said that she had a few mantras that she would repeat throughout the day to help her stay focused on his goal. she would say things like, “I am strong; I am sober,” or “Today, I will stay focused on my goals.”

Finally, Nicole said that she has found it helpful to remember why she wanted to stay clean and sober in the first place. This could be

anything from wanting to be a better parent to wanting to live a healthier life.

By following Nicole’s advice, I have been able to stay motivated to be drug and alcohol free. I have been able to stay focused and positive, and I have been able to achieve my goals. It has been an incredible journey, and I am grateful to have had the guidance of someone like Nicole to help me stay motivated and focused.

A dark, grainy photograph of a prison cell. The room is dimly lit, with a small light source visible in the distance, creating a sense of confinement and isolation. The walls are made of rough, textured stone or concrete. A doorway is visible in the center, leading to a darker area. The overall atmosphere is somber and oppressive.

SURRENDER

Enlightenment and the freedom it brings are always imminent but our very efforts to catch hold of what we are seeking may prevent us from discovering what is already there. There is the image of the man who imagines himself to be a prisoner in a cell. He stands at one end of this small, dark, barren room, on his toes, with arms stretched upward, hands grasping for support onto a small, barred window, the rooms only apparent source of light. If he holds on tight, straining toward the window, turning his head just so, he can see a bit of bright sunlight barely visible between the uppermost bars. This light is his only hope. He will not risk losing it. And so he continues to strain toward that bit of light, holding tightly to the bars. So committed is his effort not to lose sight of that glimmer of life-giving light, that it never occurs to him to let go and explore the darkness of the rest of the cell. So it is that he never discovers that the door at the other end of the cell is open, that he is free. He has always been free to walk out into the brightness of the day, if only he would let go.

Author unknown



SUBMIT A STORY



Do you have a special story, experience, or moment that you would like to share? Whether it is a funny or a touching moment, we want to hear your story! We are always looking for great stories that we can share with the world. If you would like to share your story, simply email it to newsletter@nahamilton.org. Be sure to include only your first name and a brief description of your story. We are excited to hear your story and are looking forward to hearing from you!



COME AND JOIN US FOR A FUN AND SPOOKTACULAR

OCT 29TH
170
DUNDURN
ST

HALLOWEEN DANCE

POT
LUCK
STYLE

COURAGE TO CHANGE
GROUP
MEETING WILL BEGIN
AT 7:00 & THE
DANCE TO FOLLOW

SS AT THE
DOOR.

A Halloween-themed illustration on a dark orange background. It features a large orange pumpkin in the center with the words 'HALLOWEEN DANCE' written on it. Surrounding the pumpkin are various spooky elements: a black bat, a white ghost, a black witch's hat, a black cat, a black tombstone with a cross, a jack-o'-lantern, a mummy, a scythe, and several small orange and red spiders. The text is arranged around these elements, providing details about the event.



Service Work

- Are you interested in doing service work? Get involved with the Activities Committee. No clean time requirements. Please send an e-mail to activities@nahamilton.org to get involved.
- Do you have bookkeeping experience? Get involved in the service! You must have 3 years or longer clean time to qualify. The HASCNA committee is in need of a Treasurer. For more information, please attend the next HASC meeting or contact Brenda V, at secretary@nahamilton.org





NA Quote

Addiction makes a person feel hopeless and trapped. It controls us and makes us forget who we used to be. However, recovery is a step toward gaining control of your life again. You no longer have to be a slave to the disease. With sobriety, it is possible to regain that sense of freedom you felt you lost so long ago.



Thank you so much for taking the time to read the Narcotics Anonymous of Hamilton Newsletter. Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover from their addiction to drugs and alcohol. We offer a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental environment for members to work together to overcome their addiction and lead productive, healthy, and meaningful lives. The Narcotics Anonymous of Hamilton newsletter is designed to keep members and the community informed on what we are doing, upcoming events, and news from our group. Our newsletter also contains stories of recovery and hope that inspire and motivate members. We hope that you have gained insight and inspiration from reading this newsletter and that it has helped you to better understand the work that we do and the lives that we touch in our community. Thank you again for your interest and support of Narcotics Anonymous and our Hamilton group.

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