



Our Behaviour Speaks for us..

OKLAHOMA EASTERN AREA OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE PROBLEM?

As an Area Service Committee (ASC), we come together to help the groups of N.A. carry the message of recovery. Over the past several months, there has been growing concerns that the behavior of some addicts is starting to affect our ability to carry the message of recovery in the Eastern Area.

As an extreme example, a smaller Oklahoma community had some issues that

were so bad that Narcotics Anonymous is no longer welcome to hold a meeting anywhere in that city. You read correct, kicked out of an entire city! Now that is a problem.

Our literature tells us that we have the right to practice our own program. We can choose our own path, but we do not have the right to jeopardize the recovery of others.

The Eastern ASC is distributing this flyer to accomplish two things:

- Get addicts talking about the concerns
- Remind everyone that we are in this together. Talking about behavior should not be about “you and me”, but about we.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Any time we mix with the “real world”, our behavior may provide the only window to Narcotics Anonymous that a member of the public will ever see. To help us achieve our primary purpose of carrying the message, we need always remember to put our best foot forward.

NA has always relied heavily on reputation and word of mouth. A counselor recom-

mends meeting attendance, a family member heard “it works” from someone else, or a friend of an addict recognizes NA as a safe place to be.

However the initial spark occurs, negative behavior can only serve to jeopardize our ability to carry the message of recovery. If there is one thing we should all be able to agree upon. One addict still suffering is one too many.

WHAT CAN I DO?

The single most important thing I can do, is be responsible for my own behavior. Sometimes we mess up because we do not know any better. Other times, our emotions get the better of us. Once I figure out where I have wronged, it is my job to clean up my side of the street.

What about everyone else? In my home group, I have a vested interest in seeing

the meeting stay alive and free. I should feel confident that I can approach any addict at my group that needs help in seeing the true nature of their behavior. As long as I approach them with love and support, only growth can come from the experience.

Don't forget, this is a “we” program. Involve other group members in these

“While autonomy gives us certain freedoms, it also implies a responsibility for the actions and for the continued well-being of NA. As groups, we exercise our responsibility to the fellowship by taking inventory of our behavior and how we hold our meetings.”

It Works How and Why, page 156¹

difficult conversations. We do this not to gang up on our fellow member, but to take the “you and I” out of the conversation and focus on how “we” can move forward and carry the message of recovery.

WHAT CAN “WE” DO?

Our literature tells us that our defects ‘die in the light of exposure’. We need to talk about the issues soon and often. As NA groups, we can overcome anything. Bring it up as a topic in your meetings. Discuss them during your group conscience. Use

this sheet as a starting point for the conversation. If you have issues, and have found a solution, share that experience with the rest of Eastern Area through your Group Service Representative (GSR).

Above all, remember that you are not alone. If the issues faced by your group seem to be too much to face alone, please contact the Eastern Area ASC. Together we can achieve anything.

WHAT TYPES OF BEHAVIOR CAN BE A PROBLEM?

KEEP IT CLEAN

How clean we keep our house can be a direct window to the state of our insides.

Whether it be at a meeting or at an event, cleaning up after ourselves is critical to maintaining a good relationship with the facilities we use. We are guests, and need to be careful to behave that way.



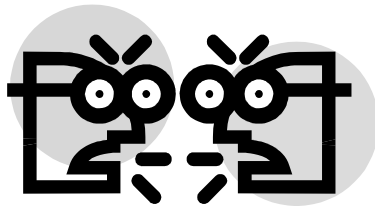
Remember the little things—"All I did was toss a little cigarette butt.". While they may be small, they carry a lot of power to make people mad. Every addict makes their own choice on whether to smoke or not. We all respect that very personal decision. Like it or not, smoking is a huge issue for the facilities we use (hospitals, churches, etc.). One little cigarette butt can cost us a meeting location.



"HE HIT ME FIRST"

This line may make you smile, but let there be no mistake, physically or verbally assaulting another person is a serious situation. There is no good reason for this type of behavior. Our personal recovery requires we put this behavior behind us. If a situation ever arises where someone believes physical force is necessary, it is time to involve the police. When we hold meetings and events in public facilities, we have an obligation to use the public methods for handling extreme situations.

The message needs to be clear, NA will not tolerate this type of behavior at our meetings or events.



RESPECT MY HOUSE

We cannot have a meeting without a location. The places we hold our meetings should be as important to us as the home we live in. Each facility will have its own set of rules and requirements.

Parking on the grass, smoking in non-smoking areas, leaving a mess for other tenants, damage to facilities (accidental or intentional). All these things can negatively effect the future of our group's home. Groups need to make sure that all members understand the requirements of the facility, especially the newcomer and visitor.

If I break a rule I knew about, shame on me. If I never knew about the rule, shame on us.

CONCERNS FOR OUR GROUP:

In addition to the issues listed above, our group also has the following concerns:

OUR BEHAVIOR SPEAKS FOR "US"

One of the things that attracted us to NA was the assurance that we would be accepted exactly as we are. While this may be true (and hopefully always will be), this does not mean that others outside NA will also do the same. Some may say, "So what, I will just stick with the winners." That may be great for us, but it does nothing to help those who have yet to make it to our program.

If we stay in these rooms long enough, we reach a point where we are comfortable with others knowing that we are in recovery. We proudly wear NA shirts and we share with others close to us that we have found a new way a life. This new found personal growth can be a blessing but, it also comes with a great responsibility.

When we go out for coffee or gather before and after meetings, we represent the program of NA. Getting loud, using profanity or just generally making a scene does not look good for NA. Like it or not, our behavior in public can be a direct reflection of our program.

The public's view of NA is important to achieving our primary purpose. We rely on our reputation to attract new members and obtain referrals. Like our literature states, we may be the only version of the Basic Text another person may see.



WHERE ARE MY KIDS?

"My kids are my biggest joy and my biggest challenge"

Many of us have found ourselves in a position where we have needed to bring children to a meeting. When we have to choose, our recovery must come first. Many meetings have taken steps to provide an atmosphere safe for our kids. This safe place is dependent on each parent taking responsibility for their children. NA does not provide a babysitting service (although some groups may).



Accidents will happen (especially with children) and kids will become disruptive (no matter how hard we try). We need to work together to protect our kids at our facilities and to protect our facilities from our kids. Remember, a child alone is in bad company. Children should be supervised at all times.

Keep Coming Back!!

