

The Unified News of NA

The purpose of this publication is to research and respond to questions and concerns that may impact our personal recovery and the fellowship.

To Text or Not to Text That is a Question for Addicts

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According to Tradition Five, *"Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry the message to the addict who still suffers."*

That message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live.

Our primary purpose is the most important function of any NA group – to help addicts find freedom from active addiction. And we accomplish this by sharing our recovery directly with one another.

For groups to carry the message, we must create an atmosphere of recovery. This includes starting on time, having an effective format so all can participate, and keeping the meeting recovery-oriented.

We show our care and willingness to help by greeting people when they enter the meeting, preparing lists of telephone numbers to distribute to newcomers or giving packets of literature to those who are unable to purchase items that cost money.

On the other hand, there are many distracting influences that can divert us from our primary purpose.

If a group uses meeting times to discuss their business and finances or to talk about some controversial subject, it will distract from carrying the primary message. Should we get caught up in socializing with our friends, ignoring another addict who may be in pain and needs our encouragement, it will distract us from carrying the primary message.

One of the most increasing distractions from carrying the primary message is texting during a meeting. It is a fact that when someone is texting, they block out everything around them and their attention is directed towards their phone. When someone is sharing or talking to them in a meeting, people who are texting are not paying attention to their surroundings.

Let's get honest with ourselves. If we are spending most of our time texting, what message of recovery are we carrying? Frankly speaking, we are ignoring other

addicts who may be in pain and who need our encouragement. We also may be missing out on some life-saving information and inspiration.

Each member is responsible to help the group carry the NA message of recovery. All of our actions convey a message.

So members, when we shout out "keep coming back", let's hope that our actions do not reflect a "don't give a damn attitude" to our visitors. If we are spending our entire time texting in the meeting instead of carrying the message of recovery, how can we hope to fulfill our primary purpose?

Emergencies are emergencies. But really, can't most of the texting wait until after the meeting? Our recovering lives depend upon it!

**METRO
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Email Addresses

We're on the
Web!

See us at:

www.rvana.org



"To text" or "not to te:

SPEAKING OUT ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

Who is looking at your content? And how much are you sharing?



Social media platforms, as tools for disseminating information and content to wide audiences, have the potential to be used in spreading positive messages about recovery and the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. But they might also harm individual members or the fellowship as a whole.

In keeping with the Eleventh Tradition, we must be aware of how our online behavior reflects on both the fellowship and its individual members.

One way we can protect ourselves is by being mindful of what audiences can view the content we share on social media about recovery and the fellowship. Is the information we post visible globally to anyone on the Internet or only to a restricted group of people, such as users of a forum or an approved list of contacts?

It is important that we not only protect the fellowship and our own recovery by maintaining our own anonymity, but also the

anonymity of other members.

In using social media platforms to network with other NA members, we must also be aware that because we cannot control other members' privacy settings, we could accidentally "out" them to their friends, family, or coworkers by posting NA-related comments, events, or photographs to their profiles, or by tagging them in NA-related content.

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TRADITION ELEVEN

Carrying the Message—Not the Addict—to the Public

Some organizations use celebrity members as public spokes persons hoping to enhance their credibility. But as Tradition Eleven tells us: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

What if the celebrity later relapses? What good would that do to our fellowship's credibility?

The same could apply to any individual member put in the public spotlight.

We need always maintain personal anonymity in the public eye because the credibility of the NA message could be greatly affected by the messengers. Public anonymity helps keep the focus of our public relations on the NA message, not on the addicts who deliver it.

On occasion, it may be helpful to share our

experience of Narcotics Anonymous with a friend or coworker. But for the most part, our recovery attracts others. We become a living testament of the effectiveness of our program.

By carrying the message, not the addict, to the public, Tradition Eleven asks us to express our faith in a program that works!

Speaking Up About Social Media (cont.)

In order to apply the Eleventh Tradition to your online sharing, please consider practicing these guidelines in your online interactions:

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- **Know your audience.** On some social networking platforms, including Facebook, you can control the audience (be it global, only your friends, or only a selected group of friends) with which you share each individual post.
- **Adjust your privacy settings to ensure that NA-related content is only visible to other NA members.** If the platform allows you to segregate contacts into lists and restrict visibility of your content to only those lists, you can restrict NA-related content to be visible only to other NA members.
- **Divorce the content you share from explicit affiliation with NA.** For example, in creating events or photo albums, use a title like "Spring BBQ" rather than "NA Spring BBQ."
- **Do not upload any photographs of other members at NA-related events without their permission.** This applies to people in the background of your photographs.
- **Do not tag other members in content without their permission.** Be mindful that on some platforms, including Facebook, facial recognition software can be used to automatically tag individuals in photographs. This feature can be disabled for all photographs you share, or tags can be removed for individual photographs.
- **Be aware of how the non-NA-related content you share could reflect on the fellowship.** If you publicly "out" yourself as a member of NA, everything you post before and after that has the potential to affect the reputation of NA as a whole.

Join a Subcommittee, Serve Your Community!

Volunteer subcommittees coordinate services within our community. Because NA accepts no financial contributions from non-members, has no professional counselors and maintains no clinics or residential facilities, we count on our members to deliver the list of services below:



- ❖ **Community Awareness Meetings** inform the community of the existence of Narcotics Anonymous and its available services.
- ❖ **Health Fairs and Conferences** are events conducted by professional organizations at which NA has presents information.
- ❖ **Presentations** are often provided to churches, parole officers, judges, counselors, nurses, doctors, and schools, among others..
- ❖ **Public Service Announcements** are created to provide information about NA distributed to the public via the media.
- ❖ **Phoneline Services** include a helpline number which has NA members who volunteer to talk to others addicts and provide information.
- ❖ **Meeting Lists** are locally produced schedules available in print, on-line at www.rvana.org and searchable by smart phones.
- ❖ **Services to Hospitals & Institutions (H&I)** provide meetings or presentations to hospitals, jails, addiction treatment facilities, detox centers, and other institutions.
- ❖ **Literature Services** include a variety of books, booklets, pamphlets, audio and large-print editions (available in several languages).

Call the NA Helpline or visit your Area Committee for more information on joining a Subcommittee.

Area Trusted Servants and Subcommittee Contacts

Richmond Area Contacts

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