

Letter from the Editor

In this issue of the Nar-Anon News Messenger, our topic is sponsorship. You will find in the article, *How to Find a Sponsor*, important and helpful tips on finding an experienced sponsor with whom we have a good personal connection. A sponsor can and will make all the difference in your recovery journey and experience.

You will see articles on what it means to be a sponsor, the rewards we get from helping guide a sponsee through their journey and growth.

You will also see articles on being a sponsee and what happens when we work the steps.

Our topic for our next newsletter is going to be "Change." Send us your articles on how your life has changed from when you first came into your first Zoom meeting or your first in-person meeting.

The Privilege of Being a Sponsor

Today there was a newcomer at our meeting, hurting and confused and desperately seeking answers. We have all been there. We know that place well. This newcomer was trying to understand the "rules." Did we get to tell all about what was going on with the addict, could we ask for advice, could someone tell us if we had done the right thing? People explained how we do not give advice but share our own experience. One person said, "I can't give you any advice, but I will share my own experience from this last week." Then this person told us about making a decision, a choice, in circumstances quite similar to those the newcomer had shared. This person said they had no idea if it was the right choice, but they did know it was a choice they had to make for their own mental health. I knew this person had come to the program a while back, just as desperate as today's newcomer, unable to even begin to consider their own needs. And today, they found the wisdom and courage to let someone new see how they had made a decision based what was necessary for themselves rather than on what might get the addict clean.

I am so grateful to be able to witness their growth. In time, I am pretty sure they will become a sponsor, and pass on what they have learned. This is how it works if we work it. For me, sponsorship is the lifeblood of the program. We give back what we can, in gratitude and humility, for what was given to us by our own sponsors. And in so doing, we get to watch recovery happening in real time, and watch ourselves learn more each day, from the small miracles unfolding before our eyes. Sponsorship gives me the great privilege of witnessing another person's spiritual growth.

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Articles are due by Feb 28, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
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My Sponsorship Experience

“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions.” I keep my sponsees names confidential as I would hope my sponsees keep my name confidential. “*Questions on Sponsorship*”, Page 7 begins with a guideline of questions, thoughts, and agreements to share with a potential sponsee. As a sponsor, my boundaries include scheduling meetings and phone calls not to exceed 15–20-minutes.

We begin with Step One and go through them in order. I ask new members to read all of the introductory pages of the 12-step workbook, pages i - xii. There is great spiritual information here. During these meetings my sponsee will read me their answers to questions from the 12-Step workbook. We may discuss their answers. I may say ‘good writing’, ‘good insight’, or share a relevant situation from my experience. How frequently we talk is up for negotiation. If a sponsee is not a “writer” and many of us are not, we may simply discuss their answers to the questions. My style of sponsorship includes lots of flexibility. This is the same as I am gifted by my sponsor. Putting our thoughts into words can allow us to release painful feelings, helps us grow, move us forward and improves our quality of life.

Dealing with codependency issues, enabling obsessions while sponsoring: I have had experience where a new sponsee seemed plainly stuck in their obsession of the addict. The main job of sponsorship is to help a member work the Nar-Anon Program. When faced with this situation, I first suggest we stay focused on ourselves and continue to work the steps. Secondly, I remind them we agreed to work at least 50% of our time with me listening to their step study answers. Otherwise, I feel as though I am not fulfilling my agreement to help my sponsee work on their Nar-Anon recovery.

How to handle crisis:

- Breathe slowly and deep.
- First things first: what has to be done in the next hour?
- Any issues of safety? If yes, do you have a plan?
- Focus on the next step to take, especially in safety matters.
- Actions/options for a person in crisis: Do you need to do something and if so, what? Call a doctor? Call 911? Get in the car and leave?
- Sponsor Support: As a sponsor, I support my sponsee before and after setting a boundary, making a decision, and taking the next step.
- Remember: crisis management is to support a person in changing themselves by utilizing step work.

Important do's & don'ts for a Sponsor:

- Do remind sponsee to find a sense of steady calm.
- Do maintain boundaries concerning a sponsees' crisis.
- Don't get sucked into a sponsees 'crisis.



For meeting updates and to find virtual meetings, go to www.naranonnorcal.org/meetings

This is my experience. Take what works and leave the rest.

The family disease of addiction had me crawling into my first meeting on bloody hands and knees. I was determined to find a better way to live. When I had a few years in the Nar-Anon program, I found myself back in desperation and surrendered my resistance to work the steps. I read the steps from our little yellow step reader (*this was our first step working guide*) and listened to them at meetings. I read and thought about the questions from our step workbook. It was time. I needed to get a sponsor. It was so against my personality to ask for help or direction, especially when I desperately needed it. I read the pamphlet "Finding a Sponsor." The pamphlet was free literature on the table. The suggestions for finding a sponsor were to look for someone:

"-I could trust with intimate personal things not appropriate to share at meetings

-already working the steps with a Sponsor

-who attends meetings as regularly as me

- I could relate to, who told my story

-who is the same gender

- who had what I wanted"

I gathered up enough courage to ask a long-time member, 'J.' She probably never knew it, but she was pivotal in my recovery. She answered, "Let me think about it," and never got back to me. For some reason, I did not take it personally. Because of my program practice, attending meetings, reading literature, being of service as secretary, learning to talk to the God of my understanding by using prayer and practicing meditation and listening for HP's will for me, I had enough recovery on board to *let it go* bit by bit. I had begun to trust that it might be for the best because my HP was in charge. I let it go. How did I do it? I guess I was already practicing steps 1-3 without realizing it, I turned it over.

Sometime later a member asked me, *"hey what happened to the women with the short black hair? She had a lot of recovery; I really got a lot out of her shares."* Although I did not know who he was asking about, I had been thinking about doing some outreach calls. (I needed my meeting to grow and circle up more wagons around me.) 'J' had taught us how to do anonymous outreach calls to home phones and how to leave anonymity-protective messages on home answering machines. (So grateful for cell phones!)

Since I was the current secretary, I used past attendance phone lists and called members we had not seen for a while. I called some of the names I knew and cold-called a few I did not know. Well, my future sponsor "X" was a cold call, but she began talking with me as if we were old friends picking up a conversation thread! She explained that she had been working in another program to focus on other issues, but was ready to come back to Tuesday night, her home group. This was the first I heard that endearing and super appropriate name for my meeting. As that auspicious phone call wrapped-up, we promised to see each other next Tuesday. That was many years ago, she remains my sponsor, dearly beloved life-long friend and someone who holds my best interest at heart. She taught me how to bring my "mess" to my sponsor and my "message" to my meetings. Although there were fewer sponsors then, my Higher Power delivered exactly the right one.

Other ways to find a sponsor is to visit other meetings. With Zoom it's super easy to discover other meetings. There is now a sponsor list from our region with names, phone numbers and the name of meetings the sponsor attends. Choose someone that you think you will be comfortable with. As my dad always says, "Ask. Always ask, what's the worst that could happen?" When your sponsor says something that makes you mad or uncomfortable like, *"who promised you life would be fair?" "What's in it for you?"* or *"What's the payoff? There's always a payoff."* When my irritation wore off. I checked every irritating question using a Step 10 Inventory process to learn more deeply about myself, "More will be revealed" to quote my sponsor.

I encourage my sponsees to consider sponsoring other members once they have completed the steps. Not everyone can do it, and that's okay. It is one of the ways we carry the message. It is common for people to be apprehensive about taking this next step in our recovery. No one expects perfection.

When I began sponsoring, I was worried about how to do it, not knowing all the answers and what other people would think. I voiced my concerns to my sponsor. She told me that there is no one way to sponsor. I did not need to have all the answers, and I only needed to be concerned with my Higher Power, myself and my sponsee.

Nevertheless, I was very nervous when I started working with my first sponsee. In addition to the workbook, I had prepared a 72-page outline which included 12-step information from the workbook and the internet so that I had "all" the answers to questions asked of me. I no longer use the outline. I know now that part of the journey is allowing my sponsees to find the answers they are seeking by reading, asking questions of other members, and allowing their Higher Power to provide answers. I give my input when asked.

When I begin with a new sponsee, I suggest various ways we can move forward. This includes my sponsee reading the workbook and answering the questions. Sometimes, we take turns reading the workbook. Then, we review the sponsees answers. Sometimes, we just review their answers. This is a fluid process and I am flexible.

We all learn and process information differently. When I worked the steps, we met in person. Now, the phone and/or video can be used. The sponsee chooses what works for them. This can change as we progress.

Sometimes life gets in the way. I don't take it personally when someone decides they can't continue or chooses to work with a different sponsor. Sponsorship is part of my program. It keeps me in it and helps me to see where my program is lacking. I believe that I receive equal or more benefit by being a sponsor. I highly encourage it!



NorCal Website Updates & World Service Website Updates

NorCal Website Update:

- Keeping your meeting or committee up-to-date on the Nor Cal website is important for those newcomers or service members looking for your meeting.
- Did you change locations, change the day you meet, change the time you meet, or is your meeting closing for a holiday? Please let us know, we will make the changes on our 'meeting finder' on the Nor Cal website.
- Also, please keep us up to date on your contact information for your group, i.e., service emails, private contact emails, GSR and Alt GSR emails and phone numbers.
- Just send an email to meetingupdate@naranonnorcal.org let us know what you need changed

World Service Website Update:

Send group update, GSR, Alt-GSR, or other contacts info to World Service website

<https://nar-anon.org/edit-group>

For meeting updates and to find virtual meetings, go to www.naranonnorcal.org/meetings

Please Contribute to Nar-Anon

In keeping with the Seventh Tradition of self-support, because literature sales have not bounced back from the pandemic and new electronic literature sales have not yet filled the gap, our fellowship needs our help.

We suggest each member contribute an anniversary or birthday donation - for example, join us in sending \$1 for each year of your personal recovery.

Also, please check with your group, area, or region treasurers, to learn whether the amount above the prudent reserve is being sent to the next level. This is a member supported organization which provides what is needed to the fellowship through our members' contributions. Once money is contributed at the group level, it belongs to the fellowship and should be donated to the next level. (Area, Region, or WSO)

In the Guide to Local Services (GLS), page 6-5, *The region will make regular donations to WSO of all funds over its established prudent reserve.* Page 9-1 *Although it is appropriate to ensure funds are available to carry out the normal tasks of groups, areas and regions, these entities should avoid the accumulation of funds in excess of their immediate needs (prudent reserve). Excess funds should be contributed to WSO for the benefit of Nar-Anon as a whole.* Go to **(click link) [Contribute-to-Nar-Anon](#)**

-OR- Hover your phone's camera over the QR Code, go instantly to the WSO Contribute Website:



BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUTS

June 1, 1980	Oakland, Mondays, 44-years
September 2, 1980	Concord, Tuesdays, 44-years
September 2, 1997	San Francisco, Tuesdays, 27-years
September 7, 2009	Roseville, Mondays, 15-years
September 10, 2015	Martinez, Thursdays, 7pm, 9-years
October 14, 2014	Novato, Tuesdays, 10-years
October 18, 2015	Chico, Wednesdays, 9-years
December 16, 2019	Stockton, Mondays, 5-years



Congratulations on another year!

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Nar-Anon World Service Board Opportunities

The Nar-Anon Family Group Guide to World Services – Conference Approved – 2023, page 30-32

Trustee Qualifications:

- Six years of Nar-Anon service, which must include serving as one of the following: area/regional officer, delegate or alternate delegate or any combination thereof
- Have participated in step, tradition, and concept studies
- Familiarity with Nar-Anon’s service structure
- Familiarity with Nar-Anon’s bylaws, policies, and guidelines
- History of both completing work independently and working well within a group
- Organizational and communication skills
- Management or financial knowledge
- Ability to prepare and present motions (proposals), plans, and management policies and procedures for Nar-Anon’s growth
- Willingness to initiate and facilitate new projects
- Ability to spend sufficient time attending meetings and serving on a world service committee
- Ability to discuss and consider opposing viewpoints

Term of service:

- Elected for one term of six years and may serve one additional consecutive term if re-elected.

Application:

- If you are interested in applying for a position on the World Service Board, please download the *Candidate Application Form for the World Service Board* (below), complete the form, and attach the completed form to an email addressed to wshrcommittee@nar-anon.org.

WANTED

**Calling all Nar-anon members....
Our Region needs you!**

We have several positions that need to be filled.

Vice Chair: The vice chair should be willing to become chair at the end of the current chair's term. If the chair is unable to fulfill the position, the vice chair assumes the chair's position for the duration of the term or until an election assembly is held. The recommended experience for this position is three (3) years continuous service in Nar-Anon. Duties • Is a co-signer on the RSC bank account

Treasurer: The treasurer is the custodian of the RSC's finances and bank account. The recommended experience for this position is two (2) years continuous service in Nar-Anon. Duties • Maintains accurate records of RSC financial transactions • Issues receipts for any contributions received • Makes disbursements to cover RSC expenditures • Submits a written report at each RSC meeting of all financial transactions that have occurred since the prior meeting • Presents an annual summary of income and expenses to the RSC for budget planning • Reports the RSC's current financial status at the assembly • Presents the RSC's proposed budget at the assembly for approval • Forwards the delegate's equalized expense sum to WSO by the established deadline as set forth by the WSC committee • Is a co-signer of the RSC bank account

We also need: Outreach Coordinator, Convention Coordinator, Literature Coordinator, and member-volunteers for Web and Tech committee, etc.

**Interested members can reach out to
Chair@naranonnorcal.org or Delegate@naranonnorcal.org**

2025 World Service Conference

April 3, 2024	Deadline to submit motions that propose to change the Guide to World Services or the Guide to Local Services to the World Service Policy and Guidelines Committee for review.
June 30, 2024	WSC Committee informs each region of equalized expense amounts.
July 2, 2024	Deadline for the World Service Policy and Guidelines Committee to send the motion maker(s) a written response.
August 1, 2024	Deadline to submit Conference Agenda Report (CAR) motions in draft form to the WSC Committee.
October 7, 2024	Deadline for CAR motions to be in final form to the WSC Committee.
November 26, 2024	CAR available and distributed to regions.
December 26, 2024	Deadline to submit Common Welfare Topics (CWT) to the WSC Committee.
December 31, 2024	Deadline to inform WSC Committee of region's intention to attend the WSC 2023-2025 and submission of equalized expense sum by each regional treasurer. Deadline for WSB members and world service committee chairs to inform the WSC Committee of their intention to attend the conference.
January 25, 2025	Conference Approval Track (CAT) material available and distributed to regions. The Common Welfare Topics (CWT) poll is sent to the WSB, World Service Committees, and the regions. Deadline for world service committee reports, regional reports, world service Ad Hoc committee reports, and regional assembly minutes showing election or continued endorsement of delegate and/or alternate delegate.
March 26, 2025	Deadline to submit replies to the CWT poll to the WSC Committee. Agenda for WSC 2025 distributed to all attendees.
April 25 – April 28, 2025	World Service Conference 2025 - Torrance, CA

Location

Virtually Accessible for Attendees

Hosted from the World Service Office
Nar-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc.
23110 Crenshaw Blvd. Suite A, Torrance, CA 90505