

Suggested Answers to Frequently Asked Questions in PI Presentations

1. Does NA consider alcohol a drug?
 - a) *Yes, we do. One of our group readings, "How It Works", states... (read last paragraph of How It Works).*
2. My employee is sober for two years after treatment and doesn't go to meetings. Is that OK?
 - a) *We really can't tell you if this is "OK" or not. We can say that part of our program is attending meetings on a regular basis.*
3. Is drug addiction hereditary?
 - a) *NA does not have an opinion on this topic. This is something that scientists and doctors could answer better than we.*
4. Aren't nicotine and caffeine drugs?
 - a) *Although it can be said that nicotine and caffeine are mood or mind-altering drugs, we believe that each individual member of NA must make their own decision on whether to the use of these substances is acceptable. We believe that an NA member can still be clean and maintain a spiritual program while drinking coffee and tea or smoking tobacco. We don't believe this is possible by still using marijuana or liquor, for example.*
5. Do you also recognize [gambling, excessive shopping, overeating, obsessive-compulsive behavior] as addiction?
 - a) *When we refer to addiction, we refer to the obsessive and compulsive use of drugs. Our meetings are for those persons who have a problem with drugs.*
6. I believe in NA and want to help NA. What can I do?
 - a) *Your positive remarks to others about our Fellowship are a beginning. We do not accept outside contributions nor do we have non-addict volunteers in our Fellowship. The best thing you can do to help us is to advise a person with drug problems is NA is here, that there is no cost to join us, and that we might be able to help that person.*
7. How can you tell if someone is an addict?
 - a) *In general, we don't give that kind of advice. We don't even tell people who come into our meetings whether he or she is an addict or not. We allow individuals the opportunity to know for themselves if they are an addict of not. We do have a pamphlet titled "Am I An Addict". It has many questions from our Fellowship's collective experience on what it's like to live as an addict. The person who reads it can answer for himself or herself whether they have a drug problem and may possibly be an addict. You are welcome to read it and may give you insight to your question.*

8. How can I tell if someone is under the influence of drugs?
 - a) *We don't give that kind of advice. Doctors or other professionals could answer this question better than we could.*
9. What's the difference between drug use and drug abuse?
 - a) *NA is a Fellowship of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. We have no opinion whether a person is a social user or an addict. This is up to the individual person to decide and a time will come when the answer to this question will become obvious.*
10. How can I get someone to stop using drugs?
 - a) *From our personal experiences, you can't stop a drug addict from using. The addict will only stop when there is a desire to stop using and seek help. If you know somebody who is using, you may wish to give them some of our literature and a meeting schedule so that they can come to one of our meetings to see if NA can help them, stop. NA does not do so-called drug "interventions" nor do we give advise to family members, friends or employers in how to deal with a using addicts.*
11. What do I do if I find drugs in my home or at work?
 - a) *We do not give you legal advice on this topic. You'll have to deal with your own conscience as a family member and a member of society.*
12. I know someone who is [deaf or blind or otherwise challenged] but refuses to go to your meetings. Is there anything you can do for them?
 - a) *Depending on which the situation is about a deaf or blind or challenged person, you may answer like this "We have special materials for this type of person with [audio tapes of our Basic Text and Braille editions of our pamphlets] or [we have meetings that have handicapped access at XXX location]". Its always difficult for an addict to attend an NA meeting for the first times due to feelings of separation and shame. Especially in a situation where the person has a physical challenge in receiving our message of recovery." You may not have the answers at the moment for the particular situation, advise the person asking that your committee will seek the information and get back to them.*
13. Do you verify attendance at your meetings? Can I check with you if my [friend, husband, employee, etc.] is really going to your meetings?
 - a) *No, NA does not verify the attendance of addicts at meetings. However, as a courtesy to those persons attending our open meetings because of legal issues or for out-patient treatment programs, some of our groups will allow the secretary of that meeting to initial a form provided by the attendee. And not all groups will honor this request. Some groups will do it with or without restrictions. But on a whole, we do not verify the attendance of any member nor do we maintain any type of membership roles.*

14. What's the difference between NA and drug treatment centers? NA and psychotherapy?
- a) *Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit organization, which charges no fees or dues to its members. We do not have medical staff or professional counselors to treat or advise our members. We do not present ourselves as professionals to the addicts that come to us seeking recovery. We offer ourselves as addicts, the same as them, who have learned how to stop using drugs, lost the desire to use drugs and have found a new way to live. [For the psychotherapy question] Our meetings are not conducted like a psychotherapy session. We do not allow cross talking nor do we have professionally trained facilitators.*
15. Is the [local] Treatment Center any good?
- a) *We have no opinion or endorse any organization, treatment center or hospital programs. We do have some of our meetings at treatment centers, hospitals or institutions to carry our message of recovery to the addicts within them. This should not be interpreted as an endorsement of these organizations or their particular modality of treatment for drug addiction. We still adhere to our Traditions as best we can while carrying our message to addicts at these institutions.*
16. If a person is under the influence of drugs, can they participate in NA meetings?
- a) *We do not exclude addicts who may be under the influence of drugs at our meetings. Our Third Tradition states the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using. We do not require our members to be clean to be a member or to attend our meetings. However some of our groups do not allow using addicts active participation in their meetings, such as sharing or holding a position of service at the meeting. To keep our message in meetings clear, most groups ask that if a person has used within the last 24 hours that they refrain from sharing and that they speak to someone after the meeting if they need to talk. We also suggest that those under the influence not be volunteers in service such as the members you see here today.*
17. What can we do to prevent our [children, employees, friends, etc.] from becoming drug addicts?
- a) *We can't give you advice on this topic of concern. Our Fellowship is not about preventing people from becoming drug addicts. We are about helping those men and women who cannot live life without using drugs.*
18. Where is your office located?
- a) *(If you have a local service office, give the contact information) We have a World Service Office in the Los Angeles area of California in the United States. This is where our worldwide services efforts are coordinated from. The majority of our literature is manufactured and distributed there also. Extensions of the World Service Office are located in Canada and in Belgium. The address and contact information is printed on all of our pamphlets and on our Basic Text if you wish to order literature or seek more detailed information on NA as a worldwide organization.*

19. How much do you charge for your services?
 - a) *We charge no fees or dues for our services nor do we accept outside contributions. NA is supported by the individual NA member through donations of time and money along with the sales of NA literature.*
20. How do you deal with the mentally ill addicts?
 - a) *We do not exclude addicts from our meetings because of their health issues, whether physical or mental. Our Third Tradition states the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using.*
21. Do you refer addicts to detoxification centers? Which are the best ones?
 - a) *NA does not refer addicts to any outside organizations nor do we endorse any other organizations.*
22. Does NA operate any treatment centers or detoxification units?
 - a) *No, NA does not run any treatment center or detoxification services to addicts.*
23. Do you have information about [AA, CA, NARANON, ALANON or other 12 Step Program]?
 - a) *We only have information today about our Fellowship. We are not affiliated with any other 12 Step program. We can only suggest that you check the telephone book or an informational referral agency for information on other 12 Step programs.*
24. What about using drugs while you're pregnant?
 - a) *We are not medical professionals and we cannot advise you on this topic.*
25. Isn't [person's name] a member of NA?
 - a) *We do not identify members of our Fellowship to anyone! We try our best to practice anonymity within our Fellowship and strictly so outside of it. We also practice personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and video. We ask for your respect in not identifying any member of NA in anyway that would compromise their anonymity.*
26. Are your meetings confidential? Is that legal?
 - a) *We try our best to be confidential and respectful of anonymity. However we cannot fully guarantee confidentiality or full anonymity in the community nor do we have a legal right to confidentiality such as a doctor or an attorney has.*
27. Do you have counselors? Is that a "sponsor"?
 - a) *We do not have professional counselors in NA. A "sponsor" is a NA member with experience in working the 12 Steps of NA who advises a fellow member on how to participate and experience our program.*
28. Do you certify addicts are clean of drugs for [law enforcement, doctors, social welfare organizations, etc.]?
 - a) *We do not test, certify or guarantee any member is clean from drugs.*

29. I'm not an addict, but can I attend your meetings?
- a) *We have meetings that are open to the public and are listed as such on our meeting schedule. We do ask that you respect our closed meetings, which are for addicts and for those who believe that they have a problem with using drugs.*
30. How long do you have to attend meetings before you get cured?
- a) *We as a Fellowship do not believe that there we are ever cured from the disease of addiction. We believe this to be a lifelong recovery process. Going to meetings is a part of our program and we are encouraged to attend meetings regularly.*
31. Do you teach AIDS prevention techniques?
- a) *No, we do not teach AIDS prevention techniques as an organization.*
32. Does NA support harm minimization?
- a) *NA has no opinion on the harm minimization concept. NA has its place in the area of recovery from drug addiction. NA does not participate with other organizations to promote harm minimization or any other addiction related philosophies.*
33. Do you have special meetings for [youths, men or women, homosexuals, HIV positive addicts, etc.]?
- a) *If your area does support the specific orientated meetings mentioned in the question, refer the questioner to your local meeting schedule as a guide. If your area does not have this special type of meeting, you may answer something like this, "We currently do not have any of these meetings in our area, although in other areas of [geographic location], these types of meetings are well supported."*
34. Do you help addicts get [jobs, social welfare assistance, education, housing, health services, etc.]?
- a) *NA is not a social service nor does it makes referrals for addicts to social or government agencies that provide these types of services. [Optional] Our program teaches us self-responsibility, we learn to solve our living problems with those that can best help us: if you have a medical problem, seek health assistance, legal problems, seek legal assistance, etc.*
35. Is NA only for addicts who use narcotics?
- a) *We believe our problem is not the use of any specific drug or group of drugs. Our problem is the disease of addiction, and our program is one of abstinence from all drugs.*

36. What does the term "dual addiction" mean?
- a) *The term dual addiction has no application for us. We believe there is one disease, regardless of drugs used. All addicts are welcome in NA. We make no distinction among them.*
37. Are you "clean and sober"?
- a) *Clean and sober is a phrase used by members of Alcoholics Anonymous. We don't use the phrase in Narcotics Anonymous. It is our belief that to speak in this manner suggests that there are two diseases, that one drug is somehow separate from the rest, requiring special recognition. Narcotics Anonymous makes no distinction between drugs. Alcohol is a drug. Our identification as addicts is all-inclusive, allowing us to concentrate on our similarities, not our difference. We use the terms "clean-time" and "recovery" to specify our total abstinence from all mood and mind altering substances*
38. NA, AA, CA, OA...aren't they all the same? What's the difference?
- a) The similarities of all these Fellowships are the 12 Steps, the core of our programs. The difference is our first step, where we state that we are "powerless over our addiction", whereas other Fellowships address other drugs specifically. We have our own literature and program, which makes us what we are, and that is what makes us attractive to the addict seeking recovery