



WORLD SERVICE BOARD OF TRUSTEES BULLETIN #14

The relationship of Narcotics Anonymous to NarAnon and Families Anonymous

This article was generated by the World Service Board of Trustees in August 1987 in response to the needs of the fellowship. It represents the views of the board at the time of writing.

The World Service Board of Trustees has received many inquiries during the past few years which have asked specific questions about how to go about cooperating without affiliating when it comes to NarAnon and Families Anonymous. The need to address this issue arose from a confusion between the letter of our Twelve Traditions, and the spirit of love, understanding, and caring which we all feel as individuals.

It has become clear to us that the phrase "cooperation not affiliation" is no longer suitable for Narcotics Anonymous. Undoubtedly this attitude and these words have served us over many years, but it appears that the growth and development of our fellowship demands a revised expression. In consulting the dictionary, "cooperation" means "the act of working together to a common end or the association of a number of people together in an enterprise, the benefits of which are shared." This definition can present a problem in addressing our relationship with any other organization, including NarAnon and Families Anonymous. Strictly speaking, the object or goal of our fellowship is not the same as any other fellowship. In this respect, it is impossible to cooperate without also endorsing or affiliating.

The World Service Board of Trustees believes that a policy, or attitude, or phrase which serves our purpose best and guides our fellowship well is "a policy of non-affiliation." This clearly conveys the fact that we do not associate with, connect with, or adopt any other organization or purpose. Traditions Six and Ten refer to these issues, and there can never be any formal relationship between Narcotics Anonymous and any other fellowship or organization.

As individuals, we have tremendous respect for these other fellowships and support the need for them. As grateful recovering addicts, we carry intense and genuine love and understanding in our hearts.

Adherence to our Twelve Traditions does not preclude or negate these feelings. We must remember, however, that Narcotics Anonymous, NarAnon, and Families Anonymous are separate fellowships, each with their own purpose. These organizations are not enmeshed with each other nor are they interdependent.

We believe that by reflecting back upon our own paths, we can find the way to convey this respect, love, and support, without endorsing or affiliating with other fellowships. Our family members and loved ones were often instrumental in allowing us to face the consequences of our addiction by not helping us! We now have the opportunity to support them by not interfering and also by simply pursuing our own purpose as guided by the spiritual principles of Narcotics Anonymous. While we all may have our own way of supporting our loved ones, NA can only remain true to our primary purpose and the guidance provided in Traditions Six and Ten. Consistent fellowship action which is guided by these principles is the kindest and most loving path for us to follow, both for ourselves and our family members and loved ones. This helps these other fellowships to address their own needs in a sensible, appropriate, and non-dependent manner.

Our relationship as a fellowship with NarAnon and Families Anonymous, as with treatment centers, clubhouses, or any other organization or enterprise, can then be simply and clearly defined as one of providing information. We provide--and will continue to provide--information about what we do, where we do it, where our meetings and conventions are held, etc., to anyone who asks for it. At the same time, we avoid any type of affiliation or special treatment for any people or organization outside of Narcotics Anonymous.

The World Service Board of Trustees believes that many of the practices in which we have engaged as a fellowship run counter to our traditions. The intent of these actions was usually sound, and it has taken many years of experience and study to evaluate them with respect to our Twelve Traditions. These include listing Families Anonymous and NarAnon meetings in NA directories, on flyers for NA conventions, or in NA registration forms, and the practice of obtaining meeting places for these other fellowships at conventions or other NA activities. Additionally, utilizing speakers from the NarAnon and Families Anonymous Fellowships is a practice which does not adhere to our traditions. However, we encourage phonline workers to use common sense and good judgment in making known to family members that NA is for the drug addict and that family members may find family oriented recovery fellowships to be beneficial.

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