



H.A.W.S. **MAINLINE**

Heroin Anonymous World Services

Monthly Bulletin

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This informational bulletin's purpose is to
increase communication between the groups of
Heroin Anonymous throughout the world.



APRIL **2022** ISSUE



Photo by: [veeterzy](#)

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H.A.W.S.O.B. UPDATE

Latest news from our World Service Office Board

Greetings from the HA World Services Board!

Here is some information to help you stay up to date with all things Heroin Anonymous. For those of you Mainline subscribers that are new, the HAWS board is compiled primarily of HA members who meet monthly to tend to HA business throughout the year.

The HAWS board is continuing to work with the world conference committees to prepare for the HA World Service Conference in Phoenix, AZ in July this summer. Speaking of the conference... registration for the conference is live on the HA website under the conference tab! If you plan on attending, you may now register and book a room.

As a reminder from last month, we have fully restocked chips!

Do you love HA and talking to HA members? Well, look no further for a service opportunity: The Outreach Committee is reaching out to new and small HA areas around the country to build connection, unity, and provide support when needed. If this sounds exciting to you, email HAWSOutreach@HeroinAnonymous.org to get more information!

Speaking of service opportunities... Are you a service work junkie? Do you nerd out on 12 step Traditions and Concepts instead of finding them dull and depressing? Do you want to be a part in making sure that HA is here for years to come? Then service with the HAWS board may be right for YOU!

Our nominations committee is continuing to screen applications, interview, and recommend candidates to join the board. We are accepting applications for the following position:

- At-large Voting Member: This position is for new members to the board. Its sole function is to show up and help us to

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discuss and vote on decisions; eventually these members join other committees and may be asked to fill other roles.

- Non-Heroin Addict Advisor: This is someone who is not a member of HA. They may be an expert in recovery fellowships, non-profits, or possess various business skills that they wish to volunteer for the good of HA.

If you are interested, please send service resumes, references, and inquiries to: hawssecretary@gmail.com

In loving service,
Anna A., HAWS Outreach Chair

BEYOND HUMAN AID

Personal Story: Chris S. - San Diego, CA

After an almost decade-long presence in AA, I found myself just as hopeless as when I started. I had worked the steps, gone through 15 sponsors, been to hundreds if not thousands of meetings, gone to AA and NA conventions. I mean, I had done all of it. Yet I found myself after another relapse, waking up to the shakes, taking 1,2,3 shots of vodka, throwing up in the paint bucket by my bed, snorting half an 80mg Oxy, smoking some weed, and then laying in the fetal position for 5 minutes 26 seconds to 5 minutes and 32 seconds-the exact amount of time it took for everything to kick in-so I could peel the covers back and get out of

bed, just to start it all over again. I was beyond human aid.

After sharing these atrocities one more time at an AA meeting, begging for help, and getting shut down because it was alcohol, not heroin, they wanted to hear about, a kind soul approached me after that meeting. He said his name was Wayne H. and that I should come to a meeting on Sunday called HA. I said, "What's that?"

He said, "Heroin Anonymous. It's based on the 12 steps only we can discuss heroin." I said, "Awesome!" I had never heard of that. The next Sunday I showed up and there were

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only five or six of us, but when I said, "I am Chris, and I am a heroin addict," this pressure came off me and I felt like there might be some hope in that room. That was Feb 2010.

To see where HA has gone now is incredible. I mean, I go to HA meetings in towns I used to go to that didn't even have heroin! But this is more than that. I had to find a Power greater than myself and more powerful than my disease. I didn't need some funny nicknamed guy like Three-Eyed-Bob to save my butt.

I couldn't just go to my one meeting a week; that wasn't enough for me. Even having a commitment of bringing doughnuts for the 6 people in that room wasn't enough. When I got here I had big problems and a small God.

But I was lucky that my concept of God was enough for me to reach out to, and He responded rather quickly in fact.

I took my will back, and after three years decided heroin addicts can

drink, right? WRONG. Luckily for me once again when I asked Him for help, He responded. Since that day, over eight years ago, I haven't missed one single day of prayer and meditation-not one! Everyone wants to know the secret to recovery and there isn't one. You don't give up.

God never promised that you would be immune to life's throat punches; He promised that when you get punched, He will help you find your voice again so you can keep helping others that still struggle. I have been punched many times in the last eight years, but I am here today. Thanks to God I'm still speaking, still serving, and still sober. In this disease, failure is only in not taking action on the 24 hours we get based on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. May God Bless you and keep you until then.

-Chris S.

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UNDERSTANDING AUTONOMY

Tradition Twist: Justin W. - Rochester, NY

"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or H.A. as a whole."

Tradition 4, for me, is the closest we have in this program to a set of "rules". Many organizations have strict rules and guidelines that its members must follow, backed by

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opaque legalese and loosely veiled threats. On the contrary, our program is guided mainly by suggestion, hoping that our primary purpose and strong fellowship will guide us toward a well-functioning program. We have the wonderful authority as individuals and groups to pretty much do whatever we want inside of our H.A. homegroups; but, as we will explore, we all must be careful to not damage the reputation of our neighboring groups or the global image of H.A.

Tradition 4 grants the authority for individual groups to format and carry out their meetings with a great degree of autonomy, purely decided by the conscience of that group. The group can decide to be open or closed, what readings to use, what format to follow, even deciding whether to announce the Mainline or not (announcing it at your meeting is probably the right answer!). The power of autonomy in each individual meeting allows for adaptation of the unique needs of its members and the differing communities of heroin addicts that exist throughout the world. If you were to travel to any of the hundreds of H.A. meetings across this country you would see this for yourself!

Though this tradition grants a great degree of autonomy, it also helps to protect the welfare of neighboring groups. It is best practice for any group that has any plans that may

affect neighboring groups to confer with them before enacting them.

Perhaps a group wants to create an ad for a local radio network that advertises their meeting, in the hope of attracting future members to the program. Let us say that this meeting is a closed meeting and has a strong opinion on medication assisted treatment, which is absolutely permitted due to their autonomy. In this situation, the other groups in this city do not share a similar opinion and are concerned that the opinions and practices of one group now reflect upon theirs and could possibly alienate newcomers. It is always important to keep Tradition 1 in my mind: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon H.A. Unity". Anything that can disunify our fellowship should be avoided whenever possible. Here, a quick phone call or discussion between meetings could have developed into a clear conscience that fostered unity and collaboration.

Some may wonder how the actions of just one group can damage the image of H.A. as a whole. The recovery world is a rather small place and many addicts attend similar locations for rehabs, detoxes and half-way houses. If a meeting was to have a strong opinion on outside matters or controversial practices, those who attend this meeting could develop false notions that this

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represents every H.A. meeting across the country. An example could be the direct affiliation with a religious institution, beyond the usual practice of renting out space in church basements. If someone attends a meeting during a stay at a local rehab and comes to find that an H.A. meeting is practicing a specific religion at that meeting, the idea that H.A. only allows X or Y religion could quickly spread, keeping many possible heroin addicts from finding this gift of recovery.

Instead, when having your group consciences, ask, "Is what we are doing in the spirit of the traditions? Are we fostering unity in our fellowship? If not, is this action worth it?"

The freedom that this program has given all of us is something that I cherish deeply; for a long time my life was chained to a dope house. I love that this tradition embodies that freedom that I cherish while supporting the future growth of our amazing program. I will leave you with my way of describing the rhetoric of this tradition. "Do whatever the hell you want and God will sort it out, just don't harm anyone else in the process".

~Justin W. Rochester, NY

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THE RIGHT OF APPEAL AND PETITION

Concepts Column: Pat B. - Rochester, NY

What's up readers!

Today we are going to start with a little visualization exercise.

Imagine you are in an intense corporate boardroom, the shareholders have just voted to close the factory in Winnipeg, increasing profit margins by 78% and cutting 3,000 jobs, the vote passes 14 to 1. After the vote the chairman says, "well maybe we aren't really sure, hey manager from Winnipeg, want a chance to talk us out of

this?" Then the losing manager gives a heartwarming plea to the board about the jobs back home and the entire room decides money isn't that important and changes their vote!

That sounds completely insane right? I can't imagine anything like this happening in corporate America, but this very scenario plays out in service committees and homegroups every day.

In today's column we will explore the rights of appeal and petition!

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Concept five states: "Throughout our World Service structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered." In my opinion, the literature around this concept lays out one major right and a smaller one that tags along. The major right in Concept Five is the "Right of Appeal", This is often referred to as a "minority opinion" or "fifth concept statement". Along with this comes the lesser known "right of petition" which simply means that we can bring something up again if it was voted down, and that groups, committees and boards should always be willing to hear concerns about their past decisions when appropriate.

Heroin Anonymous is run similarly to other nonprofits; many of our homegroups, committees, and our conference conduct business using "Robert's Rules of Order" or parliamentary procedure. Don't freak out, this is a fancy way of saying we have a chair, make motions, and hold votes. But what really sets 12-step programs apart is that we have added one special part, the ability to let the losing side share a final plea to overturn the vote!

This mechanism really is our failsafe-one last chance to make

sure someone's Higher Power didn't show up late with some inspiration, giving the majority a chance to really ask if this is the best possible decision. Typically, after a vote is held, the chairperson will ask, "Is there a minority opinion (or 5th concept statement)?" and only people from the losing side of the vote may share. After the statement, a new vote is taken and even if one person changes their mind, the vote may be reopened for discussion. Of course, various committees and groups may have different guidelines around how and when the 5TH Concept may overturn a vote.

The principles around Concept Five can be summed up as a spiritual second guess, The AA service manual warns against an "uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority", it asks us to be brave enough to question the crowd and listen to the unpopular opinion. I don't know about you all but since I quit dope, I have never been wrong... ok maybe a few times. This concept gives me the reminder that it is always ok to pause, take a deep breath, pray, and consider changing my mind.

- Pat B.

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If you would like your meeting featured in our meeting spotlight or have any other content you would like to submit, please feel free to contact us at haworldbulletin@gmail.com.

Thank you!

The Folks at The HAWS Mainline

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