

Heroin Anonymous

Bringing the Message Home

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Introduction

Many of us have come into Heroin Anonymous broken and ready to try anything to start a new life free of heroin addiction. Thankfully, a new fellowship was formed on July 26, 2004, when a heroin addict called and asked about starting a meeting for heroin addicts in recovery. This was the genesis of the fellowship that has brought hope to so many who are suffering from heroin addiction.

As a member of Heroin Anonymous, you can be an example to heroin addicts that there is a way out of active heroin addiction. The purpose of this writing is to suggest how to bring this message to your community and help the next heroin addict. These are some of the things we have learned when beginning new meetings:

Getting Started

When bringing Heroin Anonymous to a community there is much to be done. There are a few pre-existing options through which you can easily recruit new members. Talk to halfway houses or rehabs to inquire about support. Sometimes pre-existing meetings allow announcements. When all else fails just start networking before and after meetings to form a group of friends who want to help heroin addicts as you do.

Pick a location for the meeting. This is sometimes a church, other times a meeting hall or halfway house will allow the use of their facility.

Pick a time for the meeting. This selection can be important to the progression of the meeting moving forward. The day of the week is also important. Determine the best available option for those who are willing to attend. Another consideration is for those who are yet to attend. It is important to position the meeting so that the message is available to the largest number of people who wish to hear it.

Once these facts are in order it is time to announce the formation of the meeting and the arrival of Heroin Anonymous! This can be done by making flyers to place at meeting halls, announcing at meetings, and networking at meetings. This is generally done a few weeks in advance so that people who wish to attend can have the time to ensure their schedules do not conflict.

Meeting Setup

This next part can be exhaustive but fun! It is time to decide what kind of meeting there will be. Generally, there are two options:

- Meetings can be either **OPEN**: available to all or **CLOSED**: available only to heroin addicts.
- Some meetings are **MEN'S** only while others are **WOMEN'S** only. Though it may be considered that the basic **CO-ED** formula will allow the message to spread faster in the early stages of bringing Heroin Anonymous to your community.

Once these determinations are made it is time to decide what format the meeting will follow. Remember Tradition Four states that "Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or H.A. as a whole." Meaning as long as your group or meeting is being set up to help heroin addicts and is not affiliated with any other organization you can design and run it in many different ways. Here are some of the options, though the group conscience can come up with their own formula:

- **Topic:** A person from the meeting selects a topic for the meeting.

- **Meditation Book:** There are many books that provide a daily meditation that can be used for discussion.
- **Mainline:** The mainline is the newsletter for H.A. available on heroinanonymous.org with a new release available each month going back several years.
- **Big Book:** Selections can be taken at random or sequentially from the Alcoholics Anonymous text.
- **Step:** The meeting can discuss a different step each week. This is a chance for people to learn about the experiences of others in the fellowship. Reading from the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions can set the mood for each discussion.
- **Traditions:** This approach may be for the more advanced fellowship in your community where it is more necessary for the approach to service to be defined. Reading from the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions can set the mood for each discussion, though there is also information available online.

Additionally, there are a few methods of executing meetings that the fellowship has found helpful in ensuring a smooth meeting experience. They are:

- **Tag:** After each share, the speaker selects the next person to speak.
- **Ticket:** Raffle tickets are obtained and distributed to members as they enter the meeting. A ticket is drawn after each speaker to select the next speaker.
- **Open Share:** Members volunteer to speak once the previous speaker is done.
- **Sequential:** After a member speaks the process moves around the room from that person.
- **Speaker:** This approach allows a member with experience to share that experience, strength, and hope with the meeting for an extended duration of time.
- **Stick:** Sticks, often popsicle sticks, are obtained and different topics are written on each of them. A cup with the sticks is then passed around and a member draws one at random to speak on the topic. Make sure they do not return the stick to the cup but return the stick at the end of the meeting.
- **Meditation:** This approach calls for a period of time, usually 10-20 minutes for meditation, and then members are encouraged to share.
- **Check-In:** This is a basic approach where members simply check in about where they are at.
- **Book Study:** This approach calls for the reading of the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous pausing after reading a portion for members to share.
- **Fellowship:** This idea was that the meeting breaks into smaller groups to discuss a topic and get to know each other.

Moving Forward

Now that you have some idea of what type of meeting you want, it is time to execute the plan. The meeting can be any combination of ideas, some meetings have half speaker half-open share, so don't get the impression you are locked into any of the possibilities that were listed.

Once a location, time, and format are chosen it is time to get started! Consistent outreach has proven to be an effective tool to spread the word of the new meeting and gain attendees. Talk to people as mentioned above employing your charisma and serenity to bring the message to the heroin addict who still suffers. Remember a meeting is anytime two or more heroin addicts get together and help each other stay sober.

Meetings take time to grow in attendance. Try not to set expectations, just keep moving along and others will be attracted to the message you are carrying.

There is much to be said about a clever name for the group. Creating a name is an exciting piece of the meeting experience. You can visit heroinanonymous.org for ideas of meeting names from around the country. Be creative and have fun.

The Homegroup

The homegroup (Meeting) helps to run and maintain the meeting so that heroin addicts who suffer can continue to have a safe place to go in pursuit of the solution. Sometimes the homegroup is only one person early on doing much of the service commitments, but in time more people will likely want to join. The second tradition empowers the homegroup to manifest the group's conscience for that particular group and the fourth tradition guarantee's its autonomy. The group conscience or "business meeting" is generally held monthly. For more information on the home group, feel free to reference the Home Group pamphlet available at heroinanoynous.org.

Here is a list of the common service commitments, but they are not limited to this list:

- **Chair:** Operates the meeting and reads the format.
- **Key tags:** Hands out key tags for any milestones which are achieved and keep stock.
- **Treasurer:** Keeps track of the total amount of 7th tradition that the meeting has while recording the amount brought in each time and the amount spent by the meeting. They may also set a prudent reserve to ensure three months of expenses and also pay rent.
- **Secretary:** Makes any announcements in the meeting and records the minutes during the group conscience/business meeting.
- **General Service Representative (GSR):** This function is usually necessary if there is a District Intergroup and is a representative of this meeting.
- **Coffee:** This person is responsible for making sure there is coffee for the meeting. VERY IMPORTANT!
- **Greeter:** This person welcomes people to the meeting and helps them to feel as though they belong. This is crucial to the new members of our fellowship because feeling welcome has often made the difference whether they stay or not.
- **Baskets:** Sometimes members of the homegroup need a service commitment but there are none available. This is an option to get someone involved where they carry the 7th tradition baskets around the meeting.
- **Literature:** This position is responsible for keeping a supply of books and pamphlets on hand for easy access to members.

When establishing these service commitments, the homegroup should establish its bylaws. This is the formula that the group agrees should be followed when executing the service commitments. This may include suggested sobriety time requirements and the length of the service commitments. This helps keep principles before personalities as well as the second tradition in effect.

Running a Group Conscience

This part can be tricky when the homegroup becomes large. Therefore, Robert's Rules of Order are the standard by which the group conscience is operated. The good news is that Robert's Rules of Order can be suspended if that is the will of the group conscience. However, Robert's Rules of Order are the standard approach that has continued to work by keeping the group conscience focused. This will only be a basic breakdown as the book on Robert's Rules of Order is very lengthy. This is the order of events which the typical Robert's Rules group conscience proceeds:

1. Serenity Prayer
2. Attendance
3. Reading of the minutes recorded by the secretary from the previous group's conscience. A motion to accept the minutes if approved is made.
4. Each service commitment checks in and reports
5. Old Business. Any unresolved motion from the last group conscience that were tabled for discussion.
6. New Business. Any new motions for the homegroup to consider or table for the next group conscience.
7. Motion to close
8. Prayer

What is a motion? Motions are made by individuals of the group conscience OTHER THAN the person chairing the group conscience, the chair of the group conscience can only pose questions as they are the mediator. Any motion made must be seconded by another member for the discussion to begin. If the motion is seconded then the discussion begins and when done the chair calls a vote and counts those who approve, disapprove or abstain. If the discussion gets out of order a "call to order" can refocus the group.

Joining hands with other groups...

Though there may not be other H.A. meetings nearby, there may be others in your area. Check the heroinanonymous.org website and see what other meetings may be close by and reach out to them.

Sometimes when there are three or more groups a district may form calling for an intergroup.

Each H.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting...

The 7th tradition is important in keeping the fellowship healthy. It is important that no other entity be allowed to use H.A. for their own purposes. We should never rely on a 3rd party to spread the word of H.A. That's our duty. We should always pay rent no matter how small to maintain this tradition. We accept contributions from our own members.

Contact Heroin Anonymous World Services

Once the meeting is established it is important to contact Heroin Anonymous World Services and inform them of the emergence of a new meeting. This helps others who are suffering from heroin addiction to find the meeting through the website heroinanonymous.org. This is important as people from other places have come to meetings that they found listed on the website when they were desperate to find a place where they can learn about the solution. H.A. World Services can also supply a meeting starter kit free of charge which contains a few key tags and a few basic formats. These formats can also be obtained electronically at heroinanonymous.org so that you may edit the format script based on the group conscience and meeting type.

List the new meeting at [**hawswebmaster@gmail.com**](mailto:hawswebmaster@gmail.com)

Meeting starter kit: [**hastartupkits@gmail.com**](mailto:hastartupkits@gmail.com)

TWELVE STEPS OF HEROIN ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over heroin - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to heroin addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

TWELVE TRADITIONS OF HEROIN ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon H.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for H.A. membership is a desire to stop suffering from heroin addiction.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or H.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the heroin addict who still suffers.
6. A H.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the H.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every H.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Heroin Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. H.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- 10.10. Heroin Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the H.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11.11. 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.
- 12.12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE

H.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other heroin addicts achieve sobriety.

Our 5th Tradition states -

Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the heroin addict who still suffers.

SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE

H.A. is a group of heroin addicts helping other heroin addicts achieve sobriety through the 12 steps of Heroin Anonymous. In keeping the focus on heroin addiction in our meetings we are providing a place where heroin addicts can come together and share their common problem, addiction to heroin, as well as their common solution. By maintaining our singleness of purpose we recognize our limitations and are ensuring that the heroin addict will always have a place they can go to find recovery.