

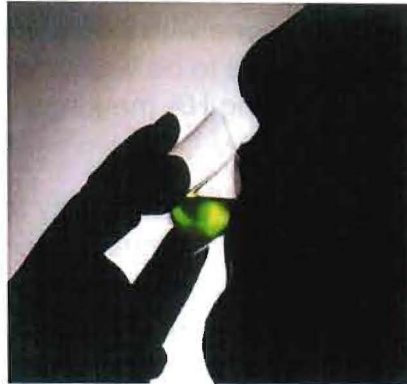
THE NET—WORK

August /September 2010

NA SAYS “METHA-DON’T”

Contributed by: Tom Q., Max Forman, Sean Forman, Jose DeLeon

The fellowship of NA and the World Service Board of Trustees posted their views on drug replacement therapy (Methadone) in a bulletin on the NA website, called bulletin #29. It states that the members on methadone ARE encouraged to attend NA meetings, but also that these members can only perform limited participation in said meetings. It goes on to compare a person who is on methadone with an addict who is actively using. It encourages persons on methadone to “participate only by listening and by talking with members after the meeting, or during the break only”. But they tell us that it is not meant to alienate or embarrass us, but to reserve an atmosphere of recovery in their meetings. This way of thinking has become a constant hurdle for anyone using methadone AS A MEDICATION.



It is disturbing to think that in order for methadone consumers to be successful within the fellowship, they must constantly lie about their methadone treatments to their fellow members, to their home groups, and maybe even their sponsor to prevent being victims of prejudice. The fellowship claims that they do not practice any form of prejudice and that they have “no opinion on Methadone maintenance or any other program aimed at treating addiction.” Yet in the same bulletin (bulletin #29), which came from the NA official website states that “ the fellowship believes that allowing active addict and methadone consumers to speak during meetings would distort or pervert the central message of NA.

This subject struck a chord with NET Steps' very own Jose De Leon who responded with an article of his own. The following excerpts are from Jose's own very well thought out article: “Sometimes not taking a stand so the people would know your position on this important subject could be the most dangerous thing anyone can do. The first ten pages of the (In Times of Illness) booklet have plenty of supportive statements. First, I want to remind you that this is a prescribed medication by a medical doctor and not someone selling a drug outside their home or out on a corner. We were talking about a licensed medical doctor within their respective state. I am not talking about street or home dealers who supply their customers with illegal drugs including (benzos). The medication that these doctors prescribe are both legal and life - saving.

Inside this issue:

Our opinion	1
Methadone Stigma	3
Meth -a-don't	1
Meth-a-don't continued	2
Job Information	4
Behavior Health Info	4
Emergency Shelter Info	4

Special points of interest:

- The tenth annual Recovery Walk A Thon will be held on September 25 at Penn's Landing Riverside Park.
- September is national drug addiction and recovery month.

NA says “Metha-don’t”



Cont from page 2...

They remind us that taking medication as prescribed for an illness not the same as using illicit drugs. The concept of abstinence can be confusing. It's helpful to remember the importance of making a conscious decision not to medicate or treat our own illness. Clean time is an issue for each of us to resolve individually with our sponsor and our higher power. The urge to allow ourselves to suffer unnecessarily rather than to take medication may be great. Just as we wouldn't suggest that an insulin dependent diabetic stop taking their insulin, as we wouldn't suggest that our mentally ill addicts stop taking their prescribed medication. NA fellowship's members primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers, and not to give medical advice. With all the information laid out in front of a responsible committee. A proper and fair decision ought to be made that truly supports ALL individuals who struggle with the disease of ADDICTION. Those who are coupling their methadone with illegal drugs, are not to be viewed as a person in the recovery process, even though they are to be welcomed into any AA/NA meeting according to the basic text. Prejudice in these life-saving NA meetings needs to stop and stop quickly.

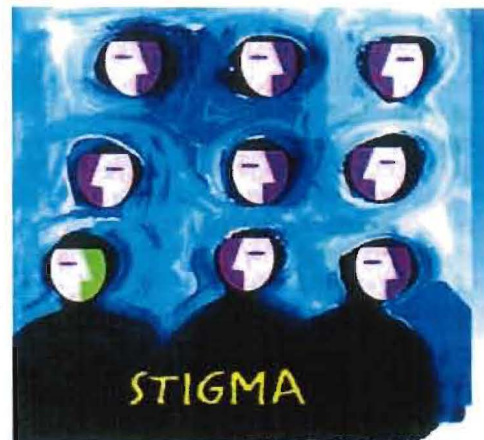
Throughout this controversial subject is it easy to be negative about the AA/NA fellowship. In reality the fellowship has saved and contributed to countless lives on or off methadone. It is important to find a meeting that will not intimidate or judge us based on the **medicine** we take to better our lives. In fact, there are many meetings that support their members despite the **medication** that they may be taking. Remember that everyone in the fellowship are addicts who come together for one universal purpose, which is to stop using no matter what the circumstance, and to better our lives by helping one another. It is clear that these members of the fellowship, who practice prejudice of any kind are violating these simple, practical and universal truths of recovery. Do not let these people win the battle to keep yourself alive through the fellowship. The fellowship works, it is proven, and may potentially save your life as well as the lives of your families and friends. The fellowship of AA/NA is a loving, and productive method for addicts to take back the control of their lives



Methadone Stigma

By John Carroll

It is my belief that the single most difficult "side effect" of being on Methadone is its negative image. Methadone is a life-sustaining, life saving medication that gets NO RESPECT. Net Steppers work hard to achieve recovery, and making changes in thinking and behaviors. Despite the hard work and successes achieved by many, Net Steppers still get criticized for being "dirty". Some of you may recall the NA Meeting that Net Steps had hosted for years on Sunday mornings. Net Steppers were "not allowed to have positions of responsibility : because they were on Methadone. I found this hard to believe so in researching and consulting on the topic, I have learned that NA actually suggests that anyone on methadone is welcome at a meeting, but they are only allowed to listen and not allowed to speak! Oddly both AA and NA have similar positions on medication, they both clearly state that "one should not have a position either for or against any prescribed medication." So



their position against methadone is pure discrimination. We have several nurses who are working to get their nursing licenses restored after living a clean and sober life. In all cases, these Net Steppers are achieving their sober living goals which has been supported by the right medication. Well it seems that the PA nursing board has an unwritten policy that they will not restore a nursing license while the nurse remains on prescribed medication, specifically methadone. The nursing board is being sued in this regard because this is another example of twisted thinking against one's prescribed medication. Finally we are concerned about several pieces of legislation, some of it developed by Philadelphia politicians who want to further regulate methadone. It is believed that the same thinking as seen in AA and NA, that Methadone is a drug, and not a medication,

prevails. The legislation proposes to limit insurance payment for treatment, limit access to transportation support, limits on operating a motor vehicle, expanding take home restrictions and other actions. When you add this type of political power and combine it with the American dislike for Methadone, you encounter open hostility like evidenced at the Bustleton Civic Meeting last year regarding the new site where methadone treatment was attacked. The Philadelphia Office of Addiction Services sees this stigma as a major health problem and will be conducting a series of meetings on the topic. They have also funded a position paper identifying the problem authored by the famous William White. I meet people who tell me proudly that they don't believe in methadone, as if it were some kind of religion. The truth is that methadone is a medication, that when used in a dynamic counseling program, is the most effective treatment available for people who are opiate addicted. We are proud of all the Net Steppers working hard to live a sober lifestyle.

From a clinical perspective, few practitioners experience the satisfaction of participating in a process that restores and enhances quality of life to the extent seen in methadone treatment. After more than thirty years, I marvel at the corrective properties of methadone on the human brain as seen in the wonderful changes that occur."

JT Payte, MD - Co-Chair, Committee on Opioid Agonist Treatment
American Society of Addiction Medicine, 1999

ton Civic Meeting last year regarding the new site where methadone treatment was attacked. The Philadelphia Office of Addiction Services sees this stigma as a major health problem and will be conducting a series of meetings on the topic. They have also funded a position paper identifying the problem authored by the famous William White. I meet people who tell me proudly that they don't believe in methadone, as if it were some kind of religion. The truth is that methadone is a medication, that when used in a dynamic counseling program, is the most effective treatment available for people who are opiate addicted. We are proud of all the Net Steppers working hard to live a sober lifestyle.



VITAL INFORMATION A VERY BRIEF LIST BY MAX FORMAN

What you know can be just as important as who you know. We feel that it is extremely important in recovery to keep ourselves informed, healthy and stable. But more importantly, we all should be able to receive a helping hand when we need it, especially when we are struggling with our new but chaotic lifestyle. Unfortunately recovery does not come with a handbook telling us step by step how to overcome life's problems big and small. Listed below are exclusive sources that have been very helpful in solving these common problems, for example these sources can help in emergency housing, employment, health care, education, and much more. If you need more detailed information on these or different services, contact your primary counselor. Here is a brief list of the very many services available.

Emergency Shelter Programs :

Intake and social services for men: 1360 Ridge Ave Phila PA 19123 2152360909

_Intake and social services for women, families, and couples 141 N Juniper St Phila PA 109107 PH:2156867150 or 52 at the office of emergency shelter services

Employment:

Baker Industries 3506 F Street Phila PA 19134 2152915700. This agency provides employment and training to homeless men and women, ex-offenders, and recovering substance abusers in the Philadelphia area.

Community Occupational and Readiness Placement Program (CORPP):

1217 Sansom St 7th Floor Phila PA 19107 2155928011 Job Placement, computer training, and labor market skills provided.

Impact Services Corporation: 1952 E Allegheny Ave Phila PA 19134 2154232955. This Agency helps ex offenders, homeless, veterans, and recovering people. They offer Job readiness, placement, case management and life skills training.

Vocational Rehabilitation Office, Department of Labor And Industry: 444 N 3rd St. 5th Floor. Phila PA 19123. 2155601900. provide jobs for those with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities.

West Philadelphia Congreso de Latinos Unidos, INC: 216 W Somerset (EDSI) Phila PA 19133 2157638870 .

This is just a partial list of employment agencies, for more information, ask your counselor about employment agencies.

Behavioral Health (Mental Health and Drug/Alcohol information)

Community Behavior Health (CBH):

24 hours/ 7 days a week. 18885452600, TTY-2154137198

IN Emergency Situations, you can call the Crisis/ suicide counseling Hotline 24/7 2156864420

Einstein CRC, Albert Einstein Medical Center: Germantown Community Health Center Campus, Olney Ave and Wister St. Phila PA 19144 2159518300 . Serving North, Lower Northeast, and Northwest Philadelphia.

