

Information for groups considering opening

Hello everyone;

There is now some exciting news regarding groups of 50 or less being able to meet. We know that the idea of reopening meetings is something some groups may be able to consider with this news, however there are things we should consider before reopening our home groups. One thing we need to keep at top of mind when doing this is that as a Narcotics Anonymous group we represent NA. We need to follow the public health requirements fully in order to keep the NA name in good standing with the public, health professionals and others. There are some groups that, in order to follow all public health rules, may not be able to reopen for others it should be a carefully considered opening. We want all members to be able to return to in-person meetings feeling safe and comfortable.

We are not putting this out intending to govern or tell groups what they have to do, this is simply information to consider and keep in mind when looking at opening. Please read it in it's entirety as it contains good and hopefully helpful information.

Some things to consider when thinking of reopening a meeting:

- ◆ **Contact** and discuss with the landlord the idea of restarting your meeting and if they have any special considerations you might need to follow. Maybe look into getting a larger space for the meeting if needed.
- ◆ **Signage:** Posting of public health rules and meeting space health protection guidelines should be looked at. This would make it clear to all attendees what is expected of them. Things like sanitation rules, health guidelines like symptoms to watch for and anything else members might need to know before entering, during or after the meeting.
- ◆ **Sanitation:** How are we going to clean the meeting space before and after the meeting. Wiping down all high touch areas, chairs and anything that may be used or touched during the meeting. Do we have hand sanitizer available for members to use or is there a readily available bathroom with soap and water for hand washing? Do we need to require people to wash or sanitize their hands as they enter the meeting. Will we require the wearing of masks at times that physical distancing is difficult, like entering or leaving the meeting.
- ◆ **Limit of 50 people:** This means that a *maximum of 50 people* may be in attendance at any time. Consider if your meeting space can accommodate 50 people with physical distancing or will the group have to limit below 50 people to maintain distancing. Have a greeter at the door counting to make sure that the meetings maximum number isn't exceeded. Develop a plan on what to do if/when an additional person above your meetings seating capacity shows up. Following our traditions we shouldn't be turning anyone away. One option could be that before the meeting starts, or as people arrive, find out who might volunteer to

leave the meeting to allow the extra person to stay. Once the meeting is at capacity (Max 50, with distancing) have someone at the door to prevent additional people from just walking in. Another option could be to split the meeting between rooms. Maintaining physical distancing while doing so and ensuring that the two groups don't mix and go over the 50 person limit. It would be good to have a designated secondary chairperson and the additional room already set up to minimize moving around and interactions.

- ◆ **Physical distancing:** the people at the meeting must maintain physical distancing of 2 meters or 6 feet while at the meeting. What does this mean for our meetings? Chairs would have to have a 6 foot bubble around them. Look at maybe placing tape marks on the floor to indicate seating spots. Physical distancing isn't just seating, How are people going to come in and leave while maintaining this? Does the space have two doors, one can be designated an entrance and one an exit. If that isn't possible then maybe let people know once they enter the meeting they should not leave until the end of the meeting if there is only one means of accessing the meeting, to prevent people from crossing at the door. Ask people to minimize movement during the meeting to help with distancing. There can be no hugging or linking arms for a circle after the meeting.
- ◆ **Readings:** Ask members to have readings on their phones to read or sanitize the reading cards before and after use. Though with the JFT reading it might be unwise to pass around a book which is difficult to clean.
- ◆ **Meeting Format:** Modify the meeting format to include any changes or public health rules for the meeting. Consider having a stationary tray or dish for the 7th so it isn't passed around, Don't make change from the 7th and have only one member then count and handle the 7th maybe with gloves or washing hands both before and after. Placing the 7th directly into a zip-lock bag until its deposited at the bank. Maybe only take email money transfers for the 7th if your group isn't comfortable with this.
- ◆ **Key tags:** Will your group give out key tags? How would this be accomplished? Sanitize them and lay them out for the recipient to come up and claim.
- ◆ **Literature:** Making pamphlets available might not be advisable right now as they may get handled by multiple people and are difficult to clean. Most pamphlets are available at www.na.org. Sale of books also might have to be modified. If your literature hasn't been touched since the meeting closed, consider not touching it. Only touch it to sell it and before handling it wash/sanitize your hands.
- ◆ **Refreshments:** There should be no refreshments offered at this time. Members of course may choose to bring their own.
- ◆ **Washroom facilities:** are they clean and do we need to maintain them that way?
- ◆ **Group storage container:** Wash/sanitize your hands before accessing this container. Maybe designate one home group member to access it per meeting. This would limit any cross contamination of the container.

Remember as we mentioned that as a group, through our conduct we represent NA at our meetings. Several of our Traditions speak to this: #1, #4, #5, #6, #7, #10 and #11. Some of what's above are suggestions, which your group should consider, however most are public health rules which have ramifications if they are not followed. Consequences can include but aren't limited to fines(individual or group), losing our meeting space, damaging the NA programs reputation and maybe even other 12 step fellowships. Some members of the public see all 12 step fellowships as the same. We need to conduct ourselves with this in mind.

Individual members also need to decide if attending an in person meeting is right for them. If in a high risk group or there is a need to self isolate, attending a meeting might not be appropriate. Definitely don't attend a meeting if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Cough or worsening of a previous cough.
- Fever (chills, sweats)
- Sore throat.
- Headache.
- Shortness of breath.
- Muscle aches.
- Sneezing.
- Nasal congestion/runny nose.
- Hoarse voice.
- Diarrhea.
- Unusual fatigue.
- Loss of sense of smell or taste.
- Red, purple or bluish lesions on the feet, toes or fingers that do not have a clear cause.

If you're experiencing any of these symptoms visit the 811 website. Following general health practices as well, anytime you're feeling unwell consider staying home,

It is exciting that we are now looking at getting back together in the physical rooms of NA. We do however need to reopen meetings in a careful well thought out manner, so we can provide a safe comfortable meeting space. If your group has any questions or concerns about reopening don't hesitate to ask a member of Area. If we don't have an answer we can help find one.

Yours in Service CNA executive committee