



A Safe Place excerpts from a proposed MA pamphlet

Autonomy & Group Action

Because MA, as such, ought never be organized (*Tradition Nine*), it is individual members and groups who ensure that all members feel as safe as possible in MA. There is no government within MA and no central authority, legal or otherwise, to control or direct the behavior of MA members. Our Fourth Tradition further indicates that the formation and operation of an MA group resides with the group conscience of its members. MA groups and district bodies are autonomous.

Membership

MA's Third Tradition states that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana. While this policy allows our door to be open wide enough for ANYONE with a marijuana addiction to recover, the door is equally open to a range of behaviors that can challenge the safety and vitality of our meetings and members. For this reason, vigilance, coupled with mindfulness of our group and individual safety, is key.

Dealing with Disruptions

While most groups operate smoothly and without incident, there are times when situations can disturb or threaten the group and its members. This is often characterized by an individual being confrontational, aggressive, or unwilling to put the needs of the group first. Such behavior can hijack the meeting's focus and detract from the message of recovery.

Recognizing the importance of an atmosphere of safety and well-being, many groups have taken actions

to keep these distractions and disruptions to a minimum at their meetings. Disruptive behavior may sometimes be preempted through written behavioral expectations included in the meeting's format, to be read by the secretary or leader. These commonly include things like "no cross-talk" and the silencing of cell phones.

*All members
should feel as
safe as possible
in MA.*

Other situations that groups have addressed through their group conscience include: sexual harassment or stalking; threats of violence; bullying; financial coercion; racial intolerance; sexual orientation or gender identification intolerance; pressuring MA members into a particular point of view or belief relating to medical treatments and/or medications, politics, religion, or other outside issues. In addition, there may be other behaviors that go on outside of typical meeting times (during "fellowship," for example) that can affect whether someone feels safe returning to the group. When troublesome, these situations should be discussed at business meetings for a group conscience on how to handle them. A frequent first-line solution is an MA member (or members) speaking directly to those who are acting inappropriately.

Having a small group undertake this task, ideally with at least one "experienced" MA member included, may make the process easier and more effective. If the offender's sponsor is known, that person may also be asked to be of assistance. As a last resort, the disruptive member may be asked to stop attending the meeting for a specific period of time. Groups that take this drastic action do it in order to preserve the common welfare of the group and to maintain MA unity. In the language of one particular group, "you are welcome at this meeting, but your inappropriate behavior is not."

In any situation, if a member's personal safety is in jeopardy, or the situation breaches the law, appropriate action may be taken so that group and individual safety is ensured. Calling the proper authorities does not go against any MA Traditions. Anonymity is not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior.

Our Primary Purpose

It is hoped that our common suffering as addicts and our common solution in MA would transcend most issues and curtail negative behaviors. When that is not the case and corrective measures are employed, our hope is to be guided by right motives and a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. It is important not to lose sight of the end goal of returning to our primary purpose, once the integrity of our group experience has been restored.

Predatory Behavior

A newcomer may be particularly

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ANL's Purpose

The purpose of **A New Leaf** is to carry the message of recovery from marijuana addiction. It is through the written experiences of recovering addicts and their stories that we may find experience, strength and hope.

Articles submitted should reflect recovery, unity, and service.

The articles contained in **A New Leaf** are the sole opinions of the authors and do not reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole. MA is not affiliated with—and does not endorse or accept contributions from—any outside enterprise.

We are reaching out to districts to update the ANLP Liaisons and birthday lists. Additionally, district/group service representatives, including but not limited to those serving as ANLP Liaisons, are encouraged to stay in touch: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org

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vulnerable to the unwanted sexual attention of another member with underdeveloped sexual boundaries. The group needs to protect its members (especially newcomers) from anyone who might interfere with their chance of recovery. Victims of harassment, inappropriate or predatory behavior can let the group know about such situations, often through a sponsor or trusted friend. Much of the information previously covered on resolving incidents of disruptive behavior can be similarly applied here.

Sponsorship remains a powerful way of providing the newcomer with the information and support needed to avoid a predatory situation. It should be noted that a sponsor for whom the newcomer is likely to have no sexual attraction is vital to their protection. The chances of sexual misunderstanding can be lessened if the experienced members are sensitive to the sexual orientation of the newcomer and offer advice about sponsorship accordingly. Ensuring that a newcomer is always taken under the wing of at least two experienced members of the group who have clear boundaries is another way a group can take precautions against the advances of a predatory member.

Romantic Interactions

Defining what is appropriate/inappropriate on this subject is difficult, especially in light of increasing awareness and inclusion of the spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identifications. The simplicity of “women sticking with the women,” and “men sticking with the men” may no longer be entirely sufficient as a simple guideline for averting the distractions of romantic interaction early in recovery. Whatever the case may be, one guideline generally shared among almost all 12-step fellowships, is the suggestion of avoiding entry into romantic

relationships within the first year of sobriety. This falls under the larger umbrella of not making any major decisions or life changes in the first year, to ideally minimize any distractions while trying to construct the most solid foundation possible for a newfound life in recovery. The emotional challenges of a new relationship may bring additional stresses that can threaten sobriety at a fragile time for the newcomer.

Phone, email, social media, etc.

These communication tools have been invaluable resources for recovering addicts to share experience, strength and hope. At the same time, they can also serve as additional avenues for unwanted sexual attention. Discretion should be used when providing contact information to others. Groups can also strengthen the language found on meeting phone lists to clearly state appropriate and inappropriate use.

Some Reminders

- Talk about issues of safety at the group or district level before they arise.
- Safety is something each member attending an MA meeting can be mindful of.
- Make sure that it is clearly communicated what MA is and what it is not.
- Remember that sponsorship plays an important role and sponsors can be helpful in pointing out warning signs or unhealthy situations to their sponsees and to newcomers.
- Groups may develop their own guidelines and procedures on safety, and incorporate those topics into group inventories.
- In all discussions about safety, it is important to keep the focus on our primary purpose, our common welfare, and to place principles before personalities.

As I Understood God

When I first came into MA and realized there was the “God” word in the Steps, I really thought about getting up and walking out. God? Are you kidding me? You mean the old, white fart, with the long grey beard, on the gold throne, who had been throwing big lightning bolts at me my whole life? No way.

It didn’t take long before I realized that a lot of other folks in the meetings had a problem with that too. It wasn’t that God. It was “as I understand God”. It could be my own understanding! The words “Higher Power” were meaningful to me. I appreciated that concept. I also liked that the gender was taken out of God. It was not God–He. Maybe it was God–She. Maybe it was God–It. It was as I understood God. It was a power greater than myself. And so, for the first few years, the meetings and MA members were my Higher Power. We could do something together that I could not do alone. I’d tried too long.

As the years have gone by, my concept of God, Creator, Higher Power has had many definitions and/or concepts. And a great realization has come to me. I don’t have to understand God! How could I? I am a small human on a small planet, in a small solar system, in an ordinary galaxy in a HUGE universe. So when I see pictures of our galaxies or nebulae or other galaxies, I say, “There, that’s God.” But some small part of that huge God is what I think of as a loving, caring, parental God, who wants me to be a loving, caring person. That part of God, my part of God, wants me to be happy, loving and serene. And that’s the God I pray to. What are my prayers? There are really only two:

“Help me, Help me, Help me” and
“Thank you, Thank you,
Thank you.”

~by Anonymous

Jittery Feeling

The Jittery feeling
The apathy
The lack of motivation
The triggers, the temptations
The pit of despair that sits in my stomach.
The angst that pokes at the side of my ribs.
The cold sweats that wake me in the middle of the night.
The thoughts that keep me up too late into the dark, dark night.

Why such torment?
Why such a struggle?
To gain my freedom!
Sometimes the cost seems so high.
Sometimes the journey seems so hard.
Sometimes it seems hopeless.

I feel hopeless now in this moment of clarity.
The smiles come behind an iron veil.
I give myself over to the oblivion and fall into the void.
I give myself over to the hopelessness and my addiction.
I give myself over to the notion that I am incapable of doing this by myself.
I give myself over to the creator, to the medicine wheel, to the wind, the mountains, to the rain, and the rivers that wash away the film of scum that covers me.
Wash away the affliction and carry me to the ocean of your bounty –
Where I can be cleansed
Where I can be clean
Where I can float in the bounty of your multitude

Wela’lin Gisu’lgw
(Thank you Creator)

~by Anonymous

Willingness

Topic: Willingness to Go to Any Lengths

MA quote: “The practice of rigorous honesty, of opening our hearts and minds, and the willingness to go to any lengths to have a spiritual awakening are essential to our recovery.” *The Twelve Steps of Marijuana Anonymous*

When I started feeling marijuana was a problem in my life, I was attending sweat lodge ceremonies and the protocol is to be clean off drugs and alcohol (including marijuana) for four days prior to the day of the Sweat. I have always loved the spiritual aspect of my native culture and wanted to get more into this way of life, but my addiction to marijuana always seemed to hold me back. I would sometimes not be able to attend the sweat lodge ceremonies because getting high was always more important. I know today that I want to be free from the obsession that follows after using marijuana. I have struggled with marijuana for most of my life and I feel now it doesn’t serve me well. I now feel willing to go to any lengths for my recovery from all mood and mind altering substances. I want to be open, honest and willing with myself and stay true to myself and by doing that I need to work this program thoroughly to the best of my ability if I want to succeed and if I fall to get back up and give it my all!

Final thought: Today I’ll ask the Creator to guide me in my recovery and to keep me willing to help myself and to be there for a fellow addict.

~by Anonymous



Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG

MA World Services

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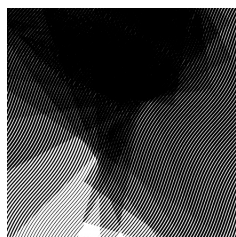
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	www.madistrict3.org			www.marijuana-anonymous.com	
DIST. 4	Western Washington	+1.206.414.9270	DIST. 17	Denmark	
	www.madistrict4.org			www.ma-danmark.dk	
DIST. 5	Orange County	+1.714.999.9409	DIST. 18	Sacramento, CA	+1.916.341.9469
	www.madistrict5.org			www.sacramentoma.org	
DIST. 6	LA County North	+1.818.759.9194	DIST. 19	Toronto, ON, Canada	+1.416.999.2244
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	www.madistrict11.org			www.newenglandma.org	
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	www.madistrict12.org		DIST. 24	Vancouver, BC, Canada	+1.778.554.8997
DIST. 13	MA Online		PHONE	MA Phone Meetings	
	www.ma-online.org			www.ma-phone.org	
DIST. 14	London, England	+44.300.124.0373			
	www.marijuana-anonymous.co.uk				

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over marijuana, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon MA unity.



Dive In & Let Go • Steps 10-12

Sunday, January 17th - 1pm-4pm PST

An Online Workshop hosted by District 6 madistrict6.org/workshop

We extend our warmest welcome to the global MA fellowship to share the experience of this online event. We have produced this approach to stimulate the energy around practicing the steps with meaning, purpose, and ease.



Celebrating 189 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Guy	11/27/2018	2 yrs.
Louise R	12/3/1998	22 yrs.

District 3

Ryan C.	11/22/2003	17 yrs.
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District 4

Thor H.	12/6/2000	20 yrs
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District 5

Amanda	12/17/2014	6 yrs.
Andrew S.	12/13/2015	5 yrs.

Colin	12/3/2011	9 yrs.
Gary R.	12/10/1990	30 yrs.
Laura R.	12/15/2018	2 yrs.
Lisa S.	12/7/1993	27 yrs.
Russell T	12/7/2019	1 yr.

District 8

Joe M	12/17/2015	5 yrs.
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District 12

Owen K	11/17/1997	23 yrs.
Matt M	11/06/2017	3 yrs.
Randy F	12/10/2007	13 yrs.

Other

Josh F.	11/29/2017	3 yrs.
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MA Phone

Quinn J.	12/28/2019	1 yr.
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See your sobriety date here!



Submit your sobriety date to your local GSR, ANLP Liaison, or e-mail to: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org