

**A Report To The Members of the Upper Cumberland Area of Narcotics
Anonymous Concerning the Findings of the Area Inventory
October 31, 2004**

Fellowship Concerns to be Addressed in Inventory

Issues affecting our Unity

- Affiliation with other fellowships
- Open & closed meetings (too many open, not enough closed)
- Apathy in service structure (no traditions guiding the groups)
- Groups isolation (too many meetings for one group)
- Powerful personalities dominating group consciences
- Enforced enrollment (drug courts, TC aftercare)
- NA message only in NA groups (discussion of outside issues and literature other than NA).
- Being diverted from primary purpose by money, property, & prestige (Convention taking precedent over basic services)
- Groups violating 7th tradition and 11th concept
Sand bagging the basket money
- Lack of sub-committee guidelines and ineffective Area policy. No

Services provided

- Areas ineffectiveness as a resource in communities seeking relief from addict behavior. No credibility in our communities – No PI; No H&I;

No Phone line ; No Outreach

- Lack of practicing anonymity in all our Traditions having an adverse affect on Area as a whole. (Big me – Little you – rotation in services)
- Non-addicts involved in NA's decision making process (at Group and Area level)
- Tradition violations dictating group consensus, allowing it to govern Group's behavior (autonomy issue)

1st Step

"We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves"

The purpose of a searching and fearless moral inventory is to sort through the confusion and the contradictions of our lives, so that we can find out who we really are. We are starting a new way of life and ^{need} to be rid of the burdens and traps that controlled us and prevented our growth.

Agenda for Area Inventory Report

1. Ongoing affiliation with outside organizations (AA) and private enterprises (Treatment Centers)

Groups meeting in other fellowship facilities is an implied endorsement of that fellowship, denying the newcomer or visitor the clear NA message. Other fellowships literature that is available to addicts in a NA meeting is in direct conflict of our **Traditions** and must be addressed in order for NA's survival in the Upper Cumberland Area.

This ongoing **Traditions Violation** has a severe Negative Impact on our Sponsorship Tree and Area Service endeavors. Our identification as Addicts and our Message of Freedom from Active Addiction, by utilizing NA's **12 Steps & 12 Traditions** is severely impaired. Sponsors from other Fellowships do not have a working knowledge of NA's Steps, Traditions or Service Oriented Policies, Guidelines or Service Manuals; therefore how can members of other Fellowships guide NA members through NA's recovery and Service endeavors effectively.

This type of group behavior that endorses this philosophical approach to recovery are doing themselves and newcomers seeking relief from the pain of addiction a great disservice.

It will ultimately destroy the one aspect of recovery that our very lives depend on and that is, NA Unity. Read 6 points based on Tradition which describes an NA Group.

2. This type of **Implied Endorsement** creates a major problem of Groups not being able to have "**Closed**" meetings for "**Addicts Only**". One addict helping another is the **Basic Spiritual Concept** that our Fellowship is based on. We, as recovering addicts are not free to practice this sacred precept if the Group denies us the ability to do so. By allowing non-members, non-addicts, or any body else who chooses to be present at the only source available to us seeking recovery, we are not free to disclose our pain, our fears and indiscretions that are so disturbing to us that we use drugs to escape the responsibilities of life.

The Spiritual Principle of Anonymity, which is the Spiritual foundation of all our Traditions has been effectively rendered useless in this environment. Our identity as "Addicts" will be lost, along with our efforts to survive as a Fellowship.

3. Apathy in Service

Another aspect of this Tradition violating conduct is that in order to justify its existence it must constantly circumvent the 12 Traditions through a Spiritually fraudulent and Tradition distorting Group Conscience disguised as "Group Autonomy". Our literature, which is an extension of the **One Ultimate Authority** expressed in the Group Conscience of Our Fellowship, clearly states that no tradition shall conflict with another. That means that any Group Conscience, no matter how good the intentions are, will be a spiritually invalid Group decision if it is in conflict with the guiding documents of NA. Decisions at the Group level that negatively impact other Groups or NA as a whole has proven in the past to have deadly consequences to its members and our Fellowship. The most serious impact of this conduct is that it deprives addicts seeking recovery to participate in the Spiritual

realm of our 5th Tradition which clearly states that “Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry the message to the “Addict” who still suffers. NA members who are deprived of the Spiritual Conduct of our Traditions at the Group level will be rendered confused and betrayed upon trying to fulfill Service obligations at the Area or Region level of Service. The Upper Cumberland Area Service Committee has been impotent in this endeavor since its conception. At no time in its 12 years of its existence has it initiated or formulated or created policies or guidelines to guide the basic fundamentals of our 5th Tradition in the various service providing sub-committees that reach out to the suffering addicts in our communities. These Services which are dependent on the Groups which participates as members of the Upper Cumberland Area have been non-existent since 1996. Absolutely void of a phone line service, (2) H&I meetings, no PI projects what so ever. This type of conduct on the Groups behalf speaks volumes of their disregard to our Steps, our Traditions, and our Concepts of Service. Read page 164 & 165 of It Works How And Why.

4. Group Isolation

This type of conduct by Group members does have a profound impact on other Groups and our Unity. We have to ask ourselves if having multiple meetings by one Group deprives its members from participating in other Groups which is fundamental to our Unity. If Groups focus on having 3, 4 or 5 meetings a week and insist on Home Group participation at all meetings, it puts a serious strain on Group Trusted Servants to maintain an atmosphere of recovery. It's an invitation to put inexperienced newcomers in positions that they are not quite ready for or it allows powerful personalities to dominate the Groups' decision making process.

Another form of isolation is Groups who have asked to be served by the UCASC and put on our meeting schedules and refuses to participate in Area Services or donate funds to implement these services. These Groups have the same difficulties as all NA Groups who are trying to survive outside our Steps, Traditions and Concepts. These groups cannot be effective in their communities to reach out to the suffering addicts through Service endeavors, (ie. H&I, PI, phone line, Outreach, etc.)

5. Enforced Enrollment

One of the external forces that could destroy us is upon us without our approval. Drug Courts across our country are forcing drug offenders from their courts into mandatory participation in our fellowship. They have to attend multiple meetings a week and that includes other fellowships. This takes away our fundamental requirement for membership: the addict's personal desire to stay clean. They are designated “addicts” by the criminal justice system not by their own admission. Not only is this distracting at meetings, but many addicts are in fear of their anonymity being disclosed by non-addicts and intimate sharing is fearful. This takes away our freedom as recovering addicts to help one another.

The lack of a competent Service structure in our fellowship is allowing this conduct to be inflicted upon us. Strong NA Groups in our communities involved in our primary purpose could provide structured H&I meetings in the court's facilities that would satisfy the drug court's demands. A structured Public Information

committee could intervene is our Fellowship's behalf and express our concerns and what our Service structure is capable of providing. This is a Service endeavor that can be obtained, provided our Groups are grounded in our Traditions.

6. Being diverted by money, property, prestige or Area convention taking precedent over our basic services.

This was an intense topic at our inventory sessions. Many addicts participating in this endeavor had a lot of difficulty accepting this Area's propensity to provide extravagant, over-indulging social events while totally ignoring our Service structure. The facts that all our Steps, all our Traditions, all of our Concepts tell us that these Services must be provided in order for us to be successful in our recovery and our unity. One of the most disturbing aspects of these discussions was that the leaders or experienced members of Narcotics Anonymous have supported and condoned this behavior for many years. This conduct resulted in a very disunifying distrust among our Fellowship. The addicts who wanted to focus on our Services were alienated and hurt by this distortion of our Service Committees priorities. Huge sums of basket money was used to amuse us, yet no suffering addict in our Area was capable of finding our meetings. It would be very disturbing to this Area if we could know the number of addicts who have died in the Upper Cumberland Area as the result of not having in place the only way they could find a recovering addict to share with in the last 12 years.

7. Groups violating 7th Tradition & 11th Concept – misappropriation of Fellowship funds.

Another Tradition violating behavior that is prevalent in the Upper Cumberland Area is groups "**sand bagging**" the basket money. Our 7th Tradition clearly states that we are

fully self supporting, declining outside contributions. That's what the basket is for. For any group that refuses to follow our financial guidelines that are clearly defined in our Service Guide, it is taking upon itself a flagrant violation of our Spiritual Principles.

This self centered indulgence has a direct and profound effect on other Groups and NA as a whole. It clearly states that Groups pay their expenses, keep in prudent reserve one month expenses for emergencies and pass the rest on to the next level of Service. In many of the Groups in our Area, this spiritual principle is totally discarded. This is truly another example of how distorted the Groups use of "autonomy" is affecting the well being of our Fellowship. These donations are given to the Groups in good faith that it will be used exclusively to fulfill our **Primary Purpose** as designated in our **Spiritual Principles**. To hide these funds inside the Group, denying our Fellowship these much needed resources is an insult to the integrity of our Fellowship.

Is this the example that you wish to pass on to the newcomer who someday will be a Trusted Servant of NA? This type of conduct will kill more addicts than it will ever save.

Areas ineffectiveness as a resource in communities seeking relief from addict behavior. No credibility in communities; No PI; No H&I; No Phonenumber.

8. In many of our Group's communities, NA has no credibility what so ever. Our communities are undergoing an epidemic of addict behavior that is devastating families, hospitals, social services, health care providers and the criminal justice system. Our civic leaders, politicians, churches all have been pleading for help to stress the devastating affect on their well being. This plea has fallen on deaf ears in our service structure. At no time has the UCASC been capable to say to the communities that we live in that our program can be an affective answer to their problems. Not only are we as a Fellowship in the Upper Cumberland Area, but at the Regional level also incapable of fulfilling our 5th Tradition. Absolutely not one project is offered to serve our communities. To fulfill our obligation to the God of our understanding and our 5th tradition, there has to be some major changes in our personal recovery, our Groups and our Service Structure. The one aspect of recovery that is an absolute is that: **"addicts only"** can participate in our Service providing sub-committees and these addicts have to have an understanding of the NA program of recovery. When that understanding is denied the newcomer and NA members at the Group level as a result of flagrant Tradition violations, then the last paragraph of the 6th tradition in our basic text will ring true. Pg 67 basic text.

9. **Tradition violations dictating Group consensus, allowing it to govern Group's behavior (autonomy issues).**

Another problem that we have to deal with is the treatment industry rhetoric that is openly implied in our Groups. That is advocating to the newcomer that they attend meetings in any fellowship, get sponsors from either fellowship, stay abstinent for a year then make a decision about which choice to make. This outside influence on our Recovering community has been devastating to NA. The Upper Cumberland Area was founded during an era when treatment centers were available to all the counties that make up the UCANA. There was a constant flow of clients being fed into our rooms from the hospitals and TC's. Good intentions on our founding member's behalf, placed NA meetings in the other fellowships rooms which led to an accepted practice that has left a serious negative influence on both fellowships. The meetings in the UCANA were structured as open discussion meetings to meet the needs of our only source of newcomers. This was an accepted practice until the treatment centers died out in the mid 90's and we were left with open discussion meetings in the other fellowships meeting facilities. At about this time the rooms started to dry up for there was no phone line, no H&I, and no PI. No community providing services that were available to our Groups to re-establish our bloodline through community outreach. Treatment advocates in both fellowships were left with only one alternative – to develop a philosophical approach that both fellowships are one and the same. How far from the truth can that concept be? This residue from an outside private enterprise has left an indelible negative impact on our Fellowship, our Service structure and our sacred code of conduct and Traditions. Our Traditions are God given spiritual boundaries that tells us if we allow this type of philosophical behavior in our rooms, we will perish not only as addicts, but our Fellowship as well. We are constantly

warned at every NA meeting that **“one thing more than anything else that will defeat us in our recovery is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward spiritual principles: 3 of these that are indispensable are honesty, open-mindedness and willingness.** The Spiritual principles of NA are the basic pillars of our recovery. The Steps of personal recovery, the Traditions which guide Group behavior and the Concepts to guide our service structure. All of those spiritual principles are non-negotiable. What part of **“it is only through understanding and application that they work”** that is so confusing to addicts seeking recovery in our Area. To allow treatment center advocates and their philosophical rhetoric to influence our Groups and our identity as “addicts” in our decision making process is totally unacceptable. These three basic pillars of principle are God’s gift to addicts in the world. It is up to us as members of NA to guard them with vigilance and use them wisely. Our lives depend on them.

It is our hope that the results of this inventory will be considered seriously by each Group. Are we as Groups guilty of any of these violations? If so, what are we willing to do to be members of NA and carry the clear message of NA? That is **“that an addict, any addict, can stop using, lose the desire to use and find a NEW way to live”**.

In Loving Service,
Upper Cumberland Area Service Committee
Administrative Committee