

N323 Substance Abuse Self Help Group

Lakeview College of Nursing

Taylor Spelman

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I attended a Narcotic Anonymous meeting local to me. The experience was interesting and definitely shifted my thoughts and opened my mind and eyes. I learned many things that I will be able to apply and use going forward in my nursing career. According to Primary Purpose Area of NA, “NA is an international, community-based association of recovering addicts with more than 67,000 weekly meetings in over 139 countries. Narcotics Anonymous books and information pamphlets are currently available in 49 languages, with translations in process for 16 languages” (“Primary Purpose Area of NA, 2024).

The goal of Narcotics Anonymous is to be able to provide a safe place for recovery addicts to share their experience and recovery processes. This core of this meeting was based on a Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous. The steps cover and are a guideline a practical way to approach recovery. During the meeting, it was mentioned that following these steps and working with other members, it teaches them to stop using and face challenges of living without drugs. Although many addicts want to feel and do better right away, one thing to remember is that these meetings don't cure you overnight or the day of, but instead is a lifelong battle they will have to face every day. To attend the meetings, there is no previous experience or recommendation required. Anyone with a drug addiction who is considering quitting or needing help to recover is welcome to attend. Once you attend a meeting, you are officially a member. No other things are needed to be done.

Many different stories were told at this meeting. Before stories were told, everyone who wanted to participate in introducing themselves could and were able to share whatever they felt comfortable with sharing. Most people felt comfortable enough to share and felt they were in a safe environment. There was no judgment of others during this meeting. One thing I enjoyed seeing was, they provided notebooks/journals to allow them to write feelings, thoughts, and even

healthy coping strategies. Every time they attend a meeting, they go through and give the option for them to share what they may have written down while they were not attending a meeting. They also went through and shared opinions and thoughts on the next step of the twelve-step program. They all made a goal for themselves to achieve. Reaching breakthroughs in life during the recovery process is difficult. One thing they do to acknowledge their achievements is by providing them with key-tags that represent how long one is sober for. It is rewarding for them and to see how proud some of the people were, was very eye opening. It gives them meaning and hope for them to continue going strong in their journey.

I had many takeaways from this experience. I was able to observe the real struggles people have during the recovery process. It is not as easy as it may seem to be for people on the outside looking in. These meetings provide a very safe space for recovery addicts to share their story and really get the help they want and may need. Supporting others who make mistakes in life is a big thing I saw during this meeting. The endless support and help they continue to provide is amazing. It is important to want to do and be better and get the help you need. Encouragement goes a long way for recovering addicts.

References

PPANA.org - Primary Purpose Area of NA. (2024). Ppana.org. <https://www.ppana.org/>