

Basic Text Approval Draft Cover Memo

The approval draft of the Sixth Edition Basic Text will be voted on at the 2008 World Service Conference (27 April to 3 May). Copies of the draft can be ordered from NA World Services for \$8 or downloaded for free from our FTP site. (See the end of this report for more information on both of these options.) The draft will also be included as an addendum to the *2008 Conference Agenda Report*.

Many of you have been following the progress of this project for years: Hundreds of you contributed your stories, and hundreds more sent input on the review draft. Nonetheless, communication in NA being what it is, we know that many others are looking at this text thinking, “What the heck is this?” And so we begin this cover memo with a recap of the history of this project. If you still have questions about any aspect of the draft or the project after reading this cover material, don’t hesitate to ask us: worldboard@na.org.

Looking Back

WSC 2004 and the Beginning of the Project

We could fill a dozen pages trying to answer the question, “How did we get here?” A lengthy “prehistory” leads up to this project, including conference motions, fellowship discussions, and other world service projects. You may be relieved to read, however, that we will not try to review all the events of those years here. (You can find a very brief summary of that history on our website: <http://www.na.org/conference/bt>.) Instead we will summarize the work on the project itself, beginning with the motion that passed at WSC 2004.

Motion 4: To approve work on revisions to the Basic Text, *Narcotics Anonymous*, that includes:

- ◆ no changes made to Chapters One through Ten,
- ◆ the addition of a new preface to the Sixth Edition preceding the current preface (the current preface will remain the same and be titled “Preface to the First Edition”),
- ◆ the replacement of some or all of the current personal stories, in order to better reflect the broad diversity of our fellowship, and
- ◆ a brief introduction to the revised personal stories section.

The timeframe for this work will be two conference cycles, from 2004 to 2008, including a six-month review and input period. The approval form of the Sixth Edition Basic Text will be distributed as an appendix to the *2008 Conference Agenda Report* for a minimum of 150 days.

This motion was the means by which the fellowship authorized work to begin on the project. Ordinarily, project plans and literature ideas are not initiated through motions in the *CAR*, but because the Basic Text is unique among our literature and is so important to us as a fellowship, we have tried to encourage a conversation about the project from its outset. In the same spirit, the *CAR* also reported the board’s initial ideas about the revision—that we hoped, through this revision, to better reflect the diversity of the fellowship today and the breadth of our experience

living clean. In order to accomplish that, the essay explained, we would have to combine traditional methods of soliciting stories with other strategies, such as using contacts in local communities to help us or conducting interviews.

The *CAR* essay also outlined some of our initial thoughts about the preface and introduction, and the idea that we might organize the experience in sections and use abstracts to summarize each piece. We asked members to let us know what they thought about dropping the labels “Book One” and “Book Two” in a possible Sixth Edition of the text. In short, we tried to share as many of our thoughts as we could because we didn’t want this project to feel like a surprise to anyone. Most of the ideas in the 2004 *CAR* continue to inform the draft you see today.

After the conference, the board formed a workgroup of ten members from six countries (and four continents), which met for the first time in September 2004. In addition to the obvious geographic diversity, the workgroup members were purposely chosen to span a wide range of experience and demographics. Over the course of the next several meetings, the workgroup framed a plan for the project and drafted a piece to solicit writing from members of the fellowship.

Soliciting Material

In February 2005, the solicitation was mailed to conference participants, regions, and areas. World services translated it into six languages (German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Swedish) and three other translations were undertaken on a local level (Greek, Hebrew, and Turkish). All of these were posted on the web. The solicitation was also published in *The NA Way*, taken on world service trips, and distributed locally by many NA communities around the world. We set up a webpage for the project, www.na.org/conference/bt, where we could post updates and relevant documents, including session profiles that we created to help members facilitate local workshops, and an announcement piece that members could use at conventions. World services held sessions at many events including the world convention, workshops, and zonal forums.

We were committed to getting the word out to as many members of the fellowship as possible and making it as easy as we could for them to contribute to the project. The effort paid off. The solicitation period ran for almost a year (from February through December 2005), and in the end, we received an extraordinary amount of submissions—more than 700—from all over the world. More than 20% (161) came from outside the US. We received submissions from the following countries:

Argentina	Germany	Mexico	Puerto Rico	Switzerland
Australia	Greece	Nepal	Russia	Trinidad
Belgium	India	Netherlands	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Brazil	Ireland	New Zealand	Singapore	United Kingdom
Canada	Israel	Nicaragua	South Africa	United States
Colombia	Italy	Norway	Spain	Venezuela
France	Japan	Portugal	Sweden	West Indies

The range of cleantime was also striking:

More than 30 years clean: 6

More than 20 years clean: 79

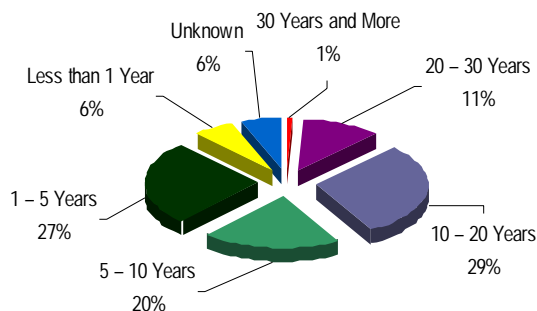
Between 10 and 20 years clean: 204

Between 5 and 10 years clean: 137

Between 1 and 5 years clean: 185

Less than 1 year clean: 39

Unknown cleantime: 41



Evaluating Material

With more than 700 submissions to read, the workgroup was kept very busy during the evaluation phase of the project. The submissions were all evaluated in a blind process, where the submissions were anonymous, that consisted of several stages. First, each piece was read by three or four workgroup members. If any one of them felt the story should be considered further, that story was then read by half of the workgroup members who ranked the stories using the same criteria, including recovery content, quality, style, structure, and how it fits into the work as a whole. All of the previously published stories (from the Fifth Edition and the other-language versions of the Basic Text and White Booklet) were also numerically ranked alongside the new submissions using the same set of criteria. In the case of the Fifth Edition stories, the board also read and evaluated those pieces. When a majority of members reading a story felt that it should remain in the mix, it was subjected to a third round of evaluation. This time the workgroup as a whole read the piece aloud and ranked it alongside the others. We also knew we wanted to preserve some of the original stories for their historical value, and those are the pieces that comprise the “Beginnings” section of the draft. It was a tough task, but after evaluating every story with due diligence, the workgroup was able to begin assembling the draft.

One of the things we learned when evaluating the material, which was reinforced when we sent the draft out for review, is that we are truly a diverse bunch. While we were as objective as we could be when evaluating the stories, in the end if we each had made a list of our favorite stories (which in fact we did at one point), those lists would be radically different. In that way, we realized, the collection is sort of like a meeting: Not everything will speak to each of us, but when you put it all together it feels like NA recovery.

Review and Input

On 1 September 2006, the review draft was released to the fellowship. The review period ran through February 2007. In that time, we distributed more than 7500 copies of the draft. (We mailed 4493 paper copies, and members downloaded 3009 electronic copies.) Given those numbers, we were expecting more input than we received. In total, we had approximately 350 pieces of input, with 60% coming from individuals, 17% from groups, and 23% from committees.

We aren’t certain where every piece of input came from. When we initially posted the input forms online, we tried to make them as anonymous as possible to encourage members to submit their thoughts. Only after the pages were up for a while did we realize it would be helpful to know where the input was coming from, and so we know locations for a little more than half of the input.

About 90% of that input came from inside the US and about 10% from a dozen other countries, which is a fairly accurate reflection of the US/non-US ratio of our membership as a whole.

Countries from which we received input:

Brazil	Greece	New Zealand	Turkey	UK
Canada	Ireland	Norway	Uganda	
Gibraltar	Kuwait	Russia	US	

Most of the input was positive. There were some isolated pieces that criticized the collection as a whole, but the overwhelming numbers of members wrote to say they appreciated the diversity of experience in the collection and especially its international character. Most said that they had found the abstracts and the division into sections to be helpful.

A number of members, however, seemed confused by the “reflections,” those brief pieces of experience collected at the beginning of each section. Many members found them distracting. At the same time, some of the input praised the reflections, pointing out that they will be helpful for addicts who don’t read well or who have difficulty concentrating. The reflections, they noted, are like the sharing at a topic meeting, while the longer stories are like a speaker meeting. And this is one of the challenges when dealing with review and input. What do we do when people have strong but opposing opinions? This is usually the case with input: Very rarely does it give clear direction. Usually, it points to issues that need to be discussed and considered. In the case of the reflections, we decided to keep them in the draft, but we have noted them in the table of contents and also included a short explanation each time they appear.

This is just one example of the way that input shaped changes to the draft. We moved stories, revised abstracts, clarified language, and consulted the input when deciding what pieces to cut from the review draft.

Filling Gaps

While the review period was taking place, as we reported on the cover for the draft itself, we were still busy hunting for material. The draft wasn’t yet everything we’d hoped. We didn’t have any stories from Eastern Europe, for example, or even more strikingly, from the country responsible for a quarter of our Basic Text sales last year, Iran—to name just two of the more obvious gaps. We felt it would be irresponsible not to continue looking for stories that rounded out the collection. In addition, your input pointed to some experiences that were missing—such as members who find NA when still on drug replacement or members who are diagnosed with mental illness and must remain on medication. And so we worked to try to collect additional experience to fill some of these gaps. While that means that we are releasing an approval draft with stories that haven’t been through the fellowship review process, doing so seems better than the alternatives—either extending the project for two more years or not including any additional material, even when prompted to do so by fellowship input.

The Approval Draft

We knew that our attempts to collect “gap-filler” stories, together with the impact of fellowship input, would result in a much-changed text. We didn’t want to surprise anyone when we released an approval draft that differs substantially from the review draft, so we

communicated the fact that this would happen in as many places as we could—on the cover memo to the review draft, in *NAWS News*, in *The NA Way*, on trips, and in conference reports. Now we are finally presenting you with the approval draft itself. As expected there are a number of changes from the review draft.

The most substantial difference is the addition of ten stories:

- “The Only Requirement”: from a member who was on drug replacement
- “Sowing the Seed”: from an Israeli member
- “The Spirit of Service”: from an Iranian member (a man)
- “Another Chance to Live”: from an Australian member
- “A Serene Heart”: from a member with a mental illness who takes medication
- “Just Say Yes”: from an Indian member now recovering in the Middle East
- “Mosaic”: from a Russian member
- “It Is Worth It”: from a Colombian member
- “Sacred Places Inside”: from an Iranian member (a woman)
- “NA is a Roadmap”: from a Portuguese member

In order to make room for these new pieces, we had to cut ten other stories. This was one of the most difficult sets of decisions we had to make when revising the text. After considering fellowship input, our own sense of the individual stories, and the overall mixture of demographics and experience, we cut the following ten stories:

- “Now it is Possible”
- “Part of the Solution”
- “A New Beginning”
- “Sick and Tired at Eighteen”
- “How Do You Spell Relief?”
- “Finding a God that Worked through People”
- “The Same Path” (Part of this story has been used as a reflection.)
- “God-shaped Hole”
- “Picture not Perfect”
- “Free at Last”

In addition, we moved the unedited version of “Jails, Institutions, and Recovery” to the “Beginnings” section of the draft. We had received input that it was confusing to have some of the Fifth Edition stories in other sections, and now all of the stories from the Fifth Edition are in the same section, except “I Was Unique,” which was revised by its author for this project. We also added a set of reflections to the “Beginnings” section, again prompted by your input on the draft. These reflections all come from stories published in the Fifth Edition.

Along with the stories that were added and cut and the changes to the “Beginnings” section, we made countless smaller changes. We revised both the preface and introduction in response to fellowship input, and we made a number of changes within the stories. In many cases, we worked with the authors of the stories themselves, some of whom contacted us and asked for changes, others of whom we contacted and asked for clarification.

Together we have all worked on improving the draft; the authors of the stories, other members of the fellowship, and the board and workgroup have each contributed to this revision. The result is a much better text. Once again, thank you to all who participated.

Looking Ahead

What to Expect Next: CAR Material and Motions

This draft of the text is called the “approval draft” because it is the one that will be voted on at the next World Service Conference. In addition to this publication, the draft will also be included as an addendum in the next *Conference Agenda Report*, which will contain a number of motions related to the Basic Text.

Separate Motion to Replace Stories

The board has discussed drafting a separate motion to replace the existing stories in the Basic Text with those in the approval draft. If that motion passes, then a motion to approve the Sixth Edition draft as a whole will be offered. Offering a distinct motion to replace the stories, we believe, will make it easier for local communities to separate the issues when workshopping the material.

Book One and Book Two Titles

The *CAR* will also contain a motion to replace the titles “Book One” and “Book Two” with “Our Program” and “Our Members Share,” respectively. The Basic Text is one book, and these titles (“Book One” and “Book Two”) give a misleading impression. Replacing those titles with more accurate ones is an idea we’ve reported since the 2004 *Conference Agenda Report*, and we’ve heard a lot of positive feedback from you regarding this idea.

Statistical Information in Preface

The preface to the Sixth Edition, you may recall, contains a number of statistics such as numbers of NA meetings and countries where NA is found. We will ask for the ability to update these statistics regularly with the date noted “as of” in the footnote.

Just for Today Quotes

Once again, we are confronted with the issue of how to deal with the quotations in *Just for Today* that will refer to out-of-print literature if the motion to approve the Sixth Edition passes. There are thirteen quotations from personal stories in the Fifth Edition that are not included in the Sixth Edition, as well as a quote from the current *Youth and Recovery* IP, which WSC 2008 will be considering replacing. The *CAR* will contain a motion to remove the citation (the reference that includes the page number and source) from these quotes and to add a footnote at the beginning of the book explaining that quotes without a citation are from previous versions of NA literature that are no longer in print. The motion would put in place a standard approach for dealing with citations when we revise literature that is quoted in *Just for Today* without having to create a new “version” of *JFT* every time we change another piece of literature.

In addition, the foreword in *JFT* notes that the page numbers of the opening quotations refer to the Fifth Edition of the Basic Text. If the Sixth Edition is approved, we would add a footnote explaining that the page numbers now reference the Sixth Edition. (This

footnote and the changing of page numbers in *Just for Today* are production matters that do not require a motion in the *CAR*.)

Revised Index

Another issue we have asked you about is that of the Basic Text index. This revision will, of course, require updating the index to the text, but we thought it was a good opportunity to go a step further and *revise* the index. The current index is not as helpful as it could be. In some cases, it gives a long list of every time a given word occurs. “Addiction,” for instance, has more than 100 pages listed in the entry, with no way to distinguish among them. In other cases, a word such as “inventory,” for instance, is only listed once. In short, the index could be made more useful. We have heard nothing but positive feedback from the fellowship about the idea, so we will offer a motion in the *CAR* to revise the index in the Basic Text. We plan to have a copy of the revised index for conference participants to see before WSC 2008.

Copyedits to Chapters One through Ten

While the revision to the Basic Text has not involved the first ten chapters at all, we will be including a motion in the *CAR* that asks for two specific copyedits to the text as a whole. First, to replace the name “N.A.” with periods after the two capital letters with “NA” with no periods. Second, to remove the reference in the footnote to Tradition Eleven that mentions *A Guide to Public Information Newly Revised*—which is no longer in print. Both of these are the kinds of edits that we would make as a matter of production in any text other than the Basic Text (in fact, we have updated “NA” from “N.A.” in all of our other publications), but because of the sensitivity involving revisions to the Basic Text, we are including a motion in the *CAR* to address these changes.

Distribution Issues

We want to make the adoption of the Sixth Edition as easy as possible for members and for those who distribute our literature. The motion to approve the Sixth Edition will include wording specifying that the Sixth Edition of the text is the only edition approved for sale and distribution. This would replace the current wording related to the Fifth Edition (see text following).

From A Guide to World Services, page 40

Date Carried 25 April 1991

The voting participants of the 1991 World Service Conference, after much discussion and consideration of several motions, voted to issue the following statement to the fellowship:

“The Basic Text, Fifth Edition, is the only edition of the Basic Text that is currently approved by the World Service Conference of Narcotics Anonymous for publication and sale. The World Service Office Board of Directors is entrusted with the responsibility for protecting the fellowship’s physical and intellectual properties, including the Basic Text, and at the board of directors’ discretion, shall take legal action to protect those rights against any and all persons who choose to infringe upon this literature trust.”

We will make clear, however, that this allows us as well as those who sell our literature—RSOs, regions, areas, and non-fellowship customers—to buy and sell the Fifth Edition until the Sixth Edition is available and to continue to sell existing stocks of the Fifth Edition after that date as long as they make it clear that there is a new edition available.

Production Issues

The size of the Sixth Edition, some of you may have already surmised, will be larger than the Fifth. There are more stories and more pages (more than 400, as opposed to the current 286), but we will make some changes in production in order to keep costs down. The trim size and the paper stock will both change. The Sixth Edition will be a half-inch taller and wider, and will use the same paper as *It Works: How and Why*. Nonetheless, we will have to raise the price of the book to \$11.00. (It is currently \$9.75.) We have held price increases in abeyance for ten years, but we will not be able to do so any longer. In fact, even if the size were not going to change, we would probably have to increase the price of the text since it will have been a decade since we've done so. We already have a policy of price review process underway, and we plan to release a set of recommendations about price increases before the conference. Any increases would not be scheduled to take effect until Fall 2008, and publishing them in advance of the conference gives conference participants the opportunity to discuss the changes with us at WSC if they choose.

These production issues are not part of the decision at the conference. The conference has been very clear (as is the FIPT) that they don't want to consider production or pricing issues, but we want to keep everyone informed about all of the issues surrounding the text.

Translations Policy

When we first began this project, we hoped that the Sixth Edition would be so international in scope and so reflective of the best NA has to offer that communities around the world would embrace and want to translate the collection. Currently, our policy gives local communities several options regarding personal stories when translating the Basic Text: They can just translate Chapters One through Ten; they can translate the entire English-language text, including all of the personal stories; they can write their own stories for the text; or they can include a combination of local stories and stories from the Fifth Edition.

The board has begun discussing the possible impact a new edition of the Basic Text might have on this policy. With a new collection of stories that emphasizes our diversity and the worldwide nature of Narcotics Anonymous, the board has begun to question whether this policy continues to make sense.

The original intent behind the personal story policy is to provide some place for local members' stories if a language community feels there is a need for that literature. Many communities, however, seem to understand that policy as *encouraging* or even *obligating* them to create local story collections, rather than simply explaining an option, even when doing so means diverting their attention from more important projects. In the case of small, emerging communities, the stories they have collected are often marked by conceptual troubles with issues such as drug specificity and differentiation of drugs and alcohol. What's more, even in cases where the writing reflects a clear understanding of our principles, the Basic Text may not be the best place for a local collection. As the foundational piece that explains Narcotics Anonymous, the Basic Text seems best reserved for a collection of experience that seeks to

reflect worldwide NA as a whole, as this one does. The White Booklet could be a good alternative for a local collection of stories.

In light of all of these factors, we are considering revising the personal story section of the translation policy so that language communities who want to compile a collection of local stories could consider doing so for their version of the White Booklet. They would need to write to the board with a request to begin such a project, and that would give us the opportunity to have a conversation together about the issues for their particular community before the work began. The Basic Text, in turn, would be reserved for some or all of the stories from the draft you have in front of you.

We are not yet at the point of drafting a motion for the *CAR*, but we need to get to that point soon because the *CAR* is published in a matter of months. As we have more discussions on the topic, we will report to you through *NAWS News* or in the course of conference reporting. And of course, we welcome your input on this issue (and any others).

In Conclusion

If you need more copies of the approval draft, there are several ways to get them.

You can download them for free from our FTP site (for more information, see the main page for the project: <http://www.na.org/conference/bt>).

You can order them from world services for \$8.00 each (inventory item no. 9146):

NA World Services

19737 Nordhoff Place

Chatsworth, CA 91311

Fax: 818.700.0700

Phone: 818.773.9999

Or use our online literature sales area to order copies: http://www.na.org/online_literature_sales_entrance.htm

As we mentioned, the draft will also be included as an addendum to the 2008 *CAR* and voted on at the conference. If approved, the Sixth Edition should be available for sale 1 October 2008.

We are grateful for the opportunity to do this work on behalf of the fellowship. It is an honor to serve as your board, and we have been humbled by the stories NA members have shared with us. Thank you again to everyone who was willing to put pen to paper for this project. And we want to also call attention to the dedication of the Basic Text workgroup, which met fifteen times over the course of almost three years, an unprecedented level of activity for a single workgroup. Thank you. We are proud of the work and the vision of NA it reflects. This collection captures our diverse and growing fellowship even better than we'd imagined. From Israel to Iran to Illinois, addicts are getting clean and staying clean in Narcotics Anonymous. The personal experience shared in the Sixth Edition will help so many of those members as they move through life on life's terms, and the addicts who will walk through our doors tomorrow looking for a message of hope will surely find it here.