

The Constitution of Entrepreneurial Subjects:  
The Alignment of Narcotics Anonymous and Neoliberalism

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## ABSTRACT

### The Constitution of Entrepreneurial Subjects: The Alignment of Narcotics Anonymous and Neoliberalism

Tara Lyons

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is the most widely used and accepted drug treatment program in North America. Despite its popularity, there is little research and literature on this twelve-step recovery program. In this thesis I argue that NA is aligned with neoliberal political rationalities, which are involved in promoting specific forms of individual responsibility and self-government in the construction of ‘addict’ subjectivities. Specifically, I argue that NA is a technology of the self that requires ‘addicts’ to transform their selves, through techniques of the self, into ‘recovering addicts’ in order to achieve recovery. These arguments are elaborated upon through a discourse analysis of the *Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text* and a governmentality theoretical framework.

Specifically, I use Foucault’s modes of objectification to explore four ways by which people in NA are turned into subjects (scientific objectification, dividing practices, unifying practices and self-objectification). I highlight the two types of ‘addict’ subjectivities found in NA; the ‘addict’ and the ‘recovering addict’. Using the examples of abstinence and confession, I demonstrate how NA instructs individuals to engage in techniques of the self in order to govern their selves according to the Twelve Steps of NA. I also discuss the centrality of the concept of freedom in this transformation and in NA in general.

## DEDICATION

To Marcella McKenna who helped me find the courage to begin this journey.

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## Introduction

He should not be bragging about taking heroin. [Colin] Farrell is a role model for children. If he thinks it is so cool he should go to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting and see the harsh reality (Baldassarre, 2004).

Narcotics Anonymous offers addicts a program of recovery that is more than just a life without drugs. Not only is this a way of life better than the hell we lived, it is better than any life that we have ever known (NA Basic Text, 1988: 103).

The pervasiveness of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) in our society is often overlooked and tacitly accepted. Abstinence from all substances and participation in twelve-step programs remain seen as the only solutions in dealing with drug and alcohol use, despite high failure rates (Peele, 1989; Davis & Anderson, 1983). In academic literature it is difficult to find investigations into the NA program of recovery, despite the presence of a body of literature that discusses the socially constructed character of drug use and addiction (Butters & Erickson, 2000; Humphries, 1999; Alexander, 1990).

This project began with a question stemming from these observations: How, and why, does NA remain the dominant drug treatment program in North America? This is a huge question without a straightforward, simple answer. Consequently, this question led to more questions, which became the research questions for this thesis: What is the relationship between NA and neoliberalism? How are 'addict' identities constituted in NA? and How is the notion of freedom conceptualized and employed in NA?

These questions led into a Foucauldian inspired, governmentality analysis of the constitution of subjects in NA. The central arguments of this thesis are: 1) NA is aligned with neoliberal political rationalities, 2) Neoliberal political rationalities are involved in promoting specific



forms of individual responsibility and self-government in the construction of 'addict' subjectivities, and 3) NA is a technology of the self that requires 'addicts' to transform their selves<sup>1</sup>, through techniques of the self it institutes, into 'recovering addicts' in order to achieve recovery.

What follows is a story of how NA is aligned with the neoliberal goals of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility, which require the constitution of specific subjects: subjects who engage in techniques of the self. I argue that there is an affinity between NA and the socio-cultural<sup>2</sup> goals of personal entrepreneurship, individual responsibility, and self-government.<sup>3</sup> Before I address NA specifically, I want to present a current example that provides a snapshot of the relationship between NA and our culture's underlying neoliberal political rationalities.

In the media we see Courtney Love arrested and criminally charged for having opiates and cocaine in her blood.<sup>4</sup> Due to this arrest her child is removed from her custody (Kaufman, 2003). Generally, she is talked about as irresponsible, immoral and as engaging in 'high-risk' behaviour. She is ordered into eighteen months of drug rehabilitation and put on probation.<sup>5</sup> This rehabilitation is most likely twelve-step based and complete abstinence will be required of her. In fact, rigid abstinence is already imposed upon Courtney Love by the criminal court.

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<sup>1</sup>I am using the terms 'one's self' and 'their selves' instead of oneself and themselves to emphasize the centrality of the self in subjectivation. By using these terms I am also highlighting individuals participation in their subjection through modes of objectification..

<sup>2</sup> The context of this work is North America, not solely Canada or the United States.

<sup>3</sup> These values are also present in the state, but exist outside of the state. It is not my goal to examine these two spheres. For a discussion of the role of the state in governmentality literature see Rose and Miller (1992).

<sup>4</sup> 'Courtney Love Pleads Guilty, Going to Rehab.' CTV.ca. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web May, 27, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> 'Love to Spend 18 Months in Rehab.' BBC News World. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web August 2, 2004.

According to the court order, she is legally banned from consuming alcohol or any substances (Vineyard, 2004). If she is found with the prescription medications *hydrocodone* or *oxycodone* she is eligible for a prison term of nearly four years.<sup>6</sup> Not only is she legally banned from consuming specific substances, it is also illegal for her to be anywhere that serves alcohol.<sup>7</sup>

In her rehabilitation program, Courtney Love will be required to participate in twelve-step groups and admit that she is an 'alcoholic' and/or 'addict'. She will be required to abstain from all substances, attend twelve-step meetings, and work on herself emotionally and spiritually through the direction of the Twelve Steps. She will be expected to act in an entrepreneurial manner by managing and assuming the risks of herself and her behaviour. She will be taught that she alone is responsible for herself, her life, and her 'recovery'. Despite being sentenced to a rehabilitation program, it will be entirely up to her to initiate, participate, and work on herself to achieve her recovery. She will be taught that working on herself and maintaining abstinence are life-long endeavours. In short, she will be required to act according to the neoliberal goals of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility.

It appears that Courtney Love has begun her self-transformation; she is quoted as saying "I have to stop drinking. That's funny, I think I can do it".<sup>8</sup> To accomplish this transformation,

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<sup>6</sup> 'Love to Spend 18 Months in Rehab.' BBC News World. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web August 2, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> 'Love to Spend 18 Months in Rehab.' BBC News World. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web August 2, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> 'Love to Spend 18 Months in Rehab.' BBC News World. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web August 2, 2004.

she will be required to engage in specific techniques of the self: confession and abstinence. If she is found to have substances in her possession a jail term of nearly four years awaits her.<sup>9</sup> If the courts decide that she has 'failed' her rehabilitation program she may have to serve a minimum of ninety days in jail.<sup>10</sup> Such failure is perceived as her choosing to live irresponsibly and immorally, whereas if she is successful in her rehabilitation program and transforms herself into a 'recovering addict' she will regain custody of her daughter and be perceived as responsible and free.

The treatment of Courtney Love is an example of the pervasiveness of neoliberal political rationalities in North American discourses and practices of drug use and treatment. She is required to transform herself (via techniques of the self learned in the drug rehabilitation program) from an irresponsible subject into a subject who acts responsibly and who desires to 'recover'. In this process of transformation Courtney Love is fulfilling the neoliberal goals of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility.

In order to explore how these neoliberal goals of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility are aligned with NA, I conduct a discourse analysis of the *Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text*. This *Text* is part of everyday practice in NA; the readings in the meetings come from this *Text*, people in NA are encouraged to work with this *Text*, and people in treatment centres are required to engage with this *Text*. The objective of this project is to explore how the discourses of NA found in the *NA Basic Text* contribute to the

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<sup>9</sup> 'Love to Spend 18 Months in Rehab.' *BBC News World*. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web August 2, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> 'Love Pleads Guilty, Going to Rehab.' *CTV.ca*. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web May, 27, 2004.

formation of specific subjects and specific forms of government in the context of neoliberal culture.

Five chapters comprise this thesis. In the first chapter I outline the history of NA, including a history of its foundation in AA and the Oxford Group. I introduce and define neoliberalism, political rationalities, and the self-help movement to contextualize the emergence of NA. Following Nikolas Rose, I argue that the 1960's saw new methods of government, new conceptions of subjects, and a radicalization of certain liberal political rationalities; those of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility.

In Chapter Two I present the theoretical framework and methodology of this project. I introduce and define the central concepts of this work: truth, power, freedom, government, subjectivity and risk. I define my interpretation of discourse and discourse analysis, which are based on the works of Michel Foucault. I also explain the relevance of using the *NA Basic Text* as the object of analysis.

In Chapter Three I explore the discourses of addiction in the *NA Basic Text* as well as the constitution of subjects in NA using Foucault's modes of objectification. I argue that NA is embedded in assumptions of addiction as a disease and is, therefore, a part of the shift to the disease model of addiction. I outline four ways by which people in NA are turned into subjects (scientific objectification, dividing practices, unifying practices and self-objectification) and the implications of these practices. I also highlight the two types of 'addict' subjectivities found in NA; the 'addict' and the 'recovering addict'.

The central argument of Chapter Four is that the NA program of recovery is a technology of self. I demonstrate how the transformation of one's self from an 'addict' into a 'recovering addict' is the goal of NA. I argue that NA is infused with neoliberal political rationalities and instructs individuals to engage in techniques of the self in order to govern their selves according to the Twelve Steps of NA. The examples of abstinence and confession as techniques of the self in NA are used to support my arguments. I also discuss the centrality of the concept of freedom in this transformation and in NA in general. In the concluding chapter I explain how this project has changed over time, my intentions, and I suggest directions for future research.

## **Chapter One:**

### **The Historical, Social and Political Context of the Emergence Of Narcotics Anonymous**

Many books have been written about the nature of addiction. This book primarily concerns itself with the nature of recovery. If you are an addict and have found this book, please give yourself a break and read it! (NA Basic Text, 1988: 1).

NA is a twelve-step based program of recovery that is derived from the twelve-step group AA. In order to explore the discourses of addiction in NA and their implications, it is necessary to contextualize the twelve-step recovery program. Thus, in the following section, I provide a brief history of AA as well as a history of the formation of NA and its *NA Basic Text*. I begin with the history of AA and its Christian roots in the Oxford Group, followed by the history of NA. In the second part of this chapter, I outline the 1960's political and social context of NA, specifically the emergence neoliberalism and the self-help and recovery movements.

#### **History of Alcoholics Anonymous**

It was in the years immediately following the end of prohibition<sup>11</sup> that AA was formed. AA is said to have its beginnings with Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob, who met in Akron, Ohio in 1935. Prior to this meeting Bill was diagnosed with having 'hopeless alcoholism' and was part of the Oxford Group (Gellman, 1964). The two men decided that they wanted to help alcoholics and started developing a small group of men in Akron. Their goal was to spread their movement beyond Akron to New York, where the second group was formed.

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<sup>11</sup> In Canada there was not complete prohibition, like in the United States, although certain provinces, such as those in the Maritimes enacted prohibition laws (Warsh, 1993). For more on Canada's prohibition see Butters and Erickson (2000).

In order to gain new members and to keep their philosophies from being misrepresented, they decided to publish a book on AA. It was Bill Wilson who wrote the book and the Twelve Steps of AA<sup>12</sup> (Gellman, 1964). The book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, was published in 1939 and gave AA its name. The second edition of this text was published in 1955 and 1976 saw the third edition. These editions brought changes to the personal stories. Specifically, they added more stories “to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more alcoholics” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1976: xii). The first section of *Alcoholics Anonymous* has been left unchanged in all three editions “[b]ecause this book has become the basic text for our Society and has helped such large numbers of alcoholic men and women to recovery” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1976: xi).

It took until the 1950’s for AA to gain more than one hundred members and to establish itself as a stable organization. The publication of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, publicity in magazines and support from John D. Rockefeller Jr. aided in increasing membership and awareness of AA.<sup>13</sup> Yet, the challenge of how to maintain increasing number of groups and members continued. In response to this challenge the Twelve Traditions of AA<sup>14</sup> were adopted and the General Service Board of AA was developed in order to assure the future of AA.<sup>15</sup> This organizational structure of AA remains today.

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix A for a complete list of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Historical Data: The Birth of A.A. and its growth in U.S/Canada.’ *Alcoholics Anonymous*. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web January 26, 2004. <[http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/default/en\\_about\\_aa\\_sub.cfm?subpageid=27&pageid=24](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/default/en_about_aa_sub.cfm?subpageid=27&pageid=24)>

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix B for a complete list of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Structure of A.A. General Services in U.S/Canada.’ *Alcoholics Anonymous*. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web January 26, 2004. <[http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/default/en\\_about\\_aa\\_sub.cfm?subpageid=16&pageid=24](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/default/en_about_aa_sub.cfm?subpageid=16&pageid=24)>

### The Oxford Group

AA's principles, philosophies and concepts were influenced by the Oxford Group, of which Bill was a member before forming AA (Gellman, 1964). The commonalities between the two groups need to be highlighted in order to understand the historical, political, and social contexts of AA.

The Oxford Group was founded by a Christian, Lutheran missionary, Rev. Frank N.D. Buchman (Clark, 1951). The group is defined as "a group of people who, from every rank, profession, and trade, in many countries, have surrendered their lives to God and who are endeavouring to lead a spiritual quality of life" (The Layman with a Notebook, 1936: 6). The goal of this group was "to bring those outside back into their folds and to re-awaken those within to their responsibilities as Christians" (The Layman with a Notebook, 1936: 6). The group centred on four absolutes: absolute purity, absolute honesty, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love (Gellman, 1964).

Many of the Oxford Group's philosophies and principles are seen in both AA and NA. For example, all three organizations regard honesty as a key principle and focus upon the sharing of one's sins and past deeds with others in the same group. 'Sharing' in the Oxford Group means one member confessing their sins to another member as well as "the exchange of guidance and other experiences" (Clark, 1951: 35). This sharing of experiences with other members is imitated in NA and AA and is central to the twelve-step programs. This concept and practice of confession will be elaborated upon in Chapter Four.



Surrender is also a common theme amongst the groups. Surrender in the Oxford Group is defined as “our complete severance from our old self and an endeavouring to live by God’s Guidance as one with Christ.” (The Layman with a Notebook, 1936: 27). Members of AA and NA are taught that the surrender of their will to their higher power is fundamental in order to experience recovery: “Complete surrender is the key to recovery, and total abstinence is the only thing that has ever worked for us. In our experience, no addict who has completely surrendered to this program has ever failed to find recovery” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 87). Further, Step Eight and Nine in AA and NA, which require making ‘amends’ to all people they have harmed, are found in the Oxford Group’s principles: “Restitution is righting to the best of our present ability wrongs we have committed in the past” (The Layman with a Notebook, 1936: 34).

The importance of prayer and meditation as ways to connect to god and god’s will (Step Eleven in AA and NA) also originates with the Oxford Group. As does the concept of self-will: “It is that little piece of self-will we keep...which prevents us from receiving the infinite and complete benefits and grace of guidance” (The Layman with a Notebook, 1936: 43). The Oxford Group states that “self-will is the hardest thing in existence to surrender to God”, but “discipline over our self-will...comes with practice” (The Layman with a Notebook, 1936: 43-44). This concept of self-will as a force which is in opposition to god’s will, as well as the idea of controlling one’s self-will and living by god’s will, is central within NA: “Self-will still leads us to make decisions based on manipulation, ego, lust or false pride” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 77); “By working the steps, we come to accept a Higher Power’s will” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 16).

Despite their original close relationship, the founders of AA separated their organization from the Oxford Group in 1937 (Gellman, 1964). This centred around two aspects: anonymity and who they wanted to help. The Oxford Group did not keep the identity of its members anonymous and the AA founders felt it was vital to keep the identity of its members confidential because of the social stigma associated with alcoholism. Second, the founders of AA wanted to help only alcoholics. They were not attempting to bring salvation upon the world like the Oxford Group (Gellman, 1964). Consequently, a split between the two groups occurred, yet the foundations of AA remain laid within the Christian traditions of the Oxford Group.

In the foreword to the second edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Bill Wilson states that “[t]hough he could not accept all the tenets of the Oxford Groups, he was convinced of the need for moral inventory, confession of personality defects, restitution to those harmed, helpfulness to others, and the necessity of belief in and dependence upon God” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1976: xvi). Therefore, the fundamental principles and concepts of AA, and later NA, originate within the Christian, missionary tradition of the Oxford Group.<sup>16</sup>

### History of Narcotics Anonymous

The NA program of recovery is based solely on the Twelve Steps of AA, with minor changes like substituting ‘alcohol’ for ‘drugs’ in step one. The *Text* states that they [NA]:

follow the same path [as AA] with a single exception; our identification as addicts is all-inclusive with respect to any mood-changing, mind-altering substance.

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<sup>16</sup> For more on the relationship between Protestantism and Alcoholics Anonymous see Valverde (1998).

Alcoholism is too limited a term for us; our problem is not a specific substance, it is a disease called addiction (NA Basic Text, 1988: xv).

The first meeting of NA was held in July 1953 in Southern California (NA Basic Text, 1988: xi). To increase membership, literature on NA was published. The first of these publications, in 1962, was a pamphlet called *Narcotics Anonymous* (also known as *The White Book*) (NA Basic Text, 1988: xi). There was still a call for a fuller, larger text, which resulted in the formation of a literature committee who gathered information and writings from NA groups and individuals participating in NA (NA Basic Text, 1988: xii). The first edition of the *NA Basic Text* was published in 1983 and contributed to the expansion of the NA program to various countries.<sup>17</sup> There are currently five editions of the *NA Basic Text* and each edition has stemmed from requests from individuals and/or groups participating in NA. For example, the third edition stems from a World Service Conference in 1986 where changes to the text include “changing Recovered to Recovering, changing specific drug names to just drugs and changing types of using to just using”.<sup>18</sup> These changes emphasize that one never fully recovers from addiction and that regardless of the type and amount of substances used, all ‘addicts’ are the same. According to NA, ‘addicts’<sup>19</sup> remain in a constant state of recovery-ing from their disease of addiction.

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Information about NA.’ *Narcotics Anonymous*. 2004. Accessed from the World Wide Web January 28, 2004. <<http://www.na.org/basic.htm#top>>

<sup>18</sup> “NA Basic Text History (short).” Accessed from the World Wide Web January 24, 2004. <<http://www.geocities.com/wildbill1979/shorthistory.html>>

<sup>19</sup> Like AA, NA is only concerned with people who have the disease of addiction—‘addicts’ cannot control their use of substances. They are not concerned with people who are not ‘addicts’ nor the general population’s use of substances.

The Twelve Steps of NA require individuals to admit that they are powerless over their addiction and that their “lives had become unmanageable” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 19). It is then necessary to hand over one’s will and life to one’s Higher Power with Steps Two and Three. Steps Four to Seven require self-inventories, while Steps Eight and Nine require one to make amends for one’s past wrongs. Steps Ten to Twelve focus on developing and maintaining one’s relationship to one’s Higher Power and to one’s self. These steps are to be practiced daily and repeated throughout one’s life.<sup>20</sup>

### Neoliberalism

The prohibition of alcohol contributed to more drugs being used, with a larger market for drugs opening in North America in the 1960’s (Stares, 1996). The 1960’s counterculture included experimentation with new and increasingly available drugs. This period of time also saw increases in the number of drug treatments developed for men (i.e., detoxification) (Kandall, 1996). At the same time, new forms of psychoanalysis were being developed that required individuals to actively participate in their treatment (Rose, 1989). These political, economic and social shifts of the 1960’s are important in contextualizing the formation of NA and the writing of its *White Book* and the *NA Basic Text*. I will focus on the shift to neoliberalism and the growth of the self-help movement to situate the development of NA in social, historical and political contexts.

Neoliberalism is a broad term with varying definitions. Some define neoliberalism as an economic philosophy (Navarro, 2002), whereas others define it as a political, social and

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix C for a complete list of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous and Appendix D for the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous.

economic philosophy that arose as a response to challenges posed to the welfare state (MacGregor, 1999). Although governmentality approaches incorporate economic, political, and social contexts in the definitions, the focus is not on neoliberalism as a political or economic philosophy, but as ‘rationality of rule’ (Rose, 1993). Neoliberalism is not a tangible policy, but a political rationality.

Rose and Miller (1992) highlight characteristics of political rationalities: they are infused with values (i.e., freedom), they express an understanding of who is to be governed (i.e., government of communities and/or individuals), and they come to be understood, articulated, intelligible, and operated through discourses. Specifically, they define political rationalities as:

the changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualised, the moral justification for particular ways of exercising power by diverse authorities, notions of the appropriate forms, objects and limits of politics, and conceptions of the proper distribution of such tasks among secular, spiritual, military and familial sectors (Rose & Miller, 1992: 175).

In sum, political rationalities change over time and contexts and underlie forms of rule and government. Thus, neoliberalism “should be seen as a re-organization of political rationalities that brings them into a kind of alignment with contemporary technologies of government” (Rose & Miller, 1992: 199).

Following this governmentality approach, which will be introduced more thoroughly in the following chapter, the focus in this work is on neoliberalism as a political rationality and on how this rationality is aligned with specific strategies of government. First, it is essential to give a more comprehensive definition of neoliberalism, and its relationship with liberalism.

With liberalism<sup>21</sup> we saw a shift to new methods of government, new conceptions of authority and expertise, and new conceptions of subjects. Who should be ruled and how this rule is carried out became central (Rose, 1993). Liberal government is dependent upon subjects who are constituted as free and self-governing, and on the establishment of expertise (Rose, 1993). Neoliberalism shares these characteristics since it is an extension of liberalism, yet there are important differences between the two political rationalities.

Paul Treanor (2004) argues that a central difference between neoliberalism and liberalism is the separation of the principles of the market from actual market production under neoliberalism. There is an overall expansion of the market through the creation of new transactions (which are done quicker), new markets, and sub-markets (Treanor, 2004; MacGregor, 1999). The goals of neoliberalism are the expansion of the market and the market becoming understood “as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs” (Treanor, 2004: 15). Thus, the neoliberal shift includes a shift to emphasizing markets, where the market and its values are extended to the public and are no longer restricted to the private sector (MacGregor, 1999; Rose & Miller, 1992). In other words, “active entrepreneurship is to replace the passivity and dependency of responsible solidarity as individuals are encouraged to strive to optimize their own quality of life and that of their families” (Rose & Miller, 1992: 198).

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<sup>21</sup> There is a relationship between liberalism and Protestantism that, due to matters of space, will not be examined in this work. For more on this relationship see Reynolds and Durhan (1996).

Neoliberalism radicalizes particular liberal goals; those of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility (Treanor, 2004; MacGregor, 1999; Petersen 1997; Rose, 1996b; Rose & Miller, 1992). This radicalization of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility is required for the neoliberal goals of market expansion. This is seen in that neoliberal government holds individuals responsible for their lives, behaviours, and decisions. Individuals are perceived “as subjects of responsibility, autonomy and choice” (Rose, 1996a: 54). Therefore, with neoliberalism we have seen the emergence of a

political rationality that reactivates liberal principles: an emphasis on markets as regulators of economic activity; skepticism over the capacities of governments to properly govern; and the replacement of ‘welfare dependency’ by active entrepreneurship (Petersen, 1997: 193).

Neoliberal political rationalities contribute to a decrease in state government and an increase in individual government through “techniques of government that create a distance between the decisions of formal political institutions and other social actors” (Rose, 1996a: 53). Consequently, a shift in attitudes, philosophies, values, and government occurred with neoliberalism. This shift “is less the birth of a new form of state than a new mode of government of the economic, social and personal lives of citizens” (Rose & Miller, 1992: 191). For example, individuals became understood as responsible for their poverty, unlike under the welfare state where risks were shared among populations (MacGregor, 1999).

Neoliberal “strategies of rule ask whether it is possible to govern without governing *society*, that is to say, to govern through the regulated and accountable choices of autonomous agents” (Rose, 1996a: 61). In the words of Rose, neoliberalism

constitutes a mentality of government, a conception of how authorities should use their powers in order to improve national well-being, the ends they should seek, the evils they should avoid, the means they should use, and, crucially, the nature of the persons upon whom they must act” (Rose, 1996b: 153).

In sum, neoliberalism in this work is defined as a political rationality that promotes specific methods of government and the constitution of particular subjects. Neoliberalism “is constituted by a political rationality embodying certain principles and ideals, and is based upon a particular conception of the nature of society and its inhabitants” (Rose & Miller, 1992: 191).

### The Emergence of Neoliberalism?

There are different understandings of the emergence of neoliberalism based on different definitions of neoliberalism. For example, Navarro (2002) argues that the shift to neoliberalism occurred in the early 1980’s because his definition is based strictly on economics. Attempting to name a year, or even a decade, that marks the emergence of neoliberalism is problematic because of the fluidity between liberalism and neoliberalism. This is a reason why some authors use the term ‘advanced liberal’ instead of neoliberalism (Rose, 1996a; Rose, 1993).

Neoliberalism does not suddenly appear on a specific date and, therefore, it “should be understood: not as designating epochs, but as individuating a multiplicity of attempts to rationalize the nature, means, ends, limits for the exercise of power and styles of governing, the instruments, techniques and practices to which they become linked” (Rose, 1999: 28). Therefore, I will not attempt to specify a date when neoliberalism emerges, yet following



Rose, I will locate the shift to neoliberal political rationalities and techniques of government among the social, political, and historical contexts of the 1960's in the following sections.

### The Relationship between Neoliberalism and Narcotics Anonymous

NA arose in the mid-1950's, amidst the post-World War II neoliberal shifts in methods of government and conceptions of subjects (Rose, 1989). This shift was influenced by the increasing importance of psychoanalysis, and changing notions of work, workers and welfare (Rose, 1989). As stated above, it was in the 1960's that NA published their first texts. It was also during this time that the twelve-step program continued to gain popularity (NA Basic Text, 1988: xi). The fact that NA was established in the post-war period and was developed and established during the 1960's and 1970's is important since this was also the period where we see the shift to neoliberal political rationalities.

The neoliberal shift contributed to the emergence of new knowledges and new conceptions of subjects. The subject was transformed "from a mere subject of legal and constitutional rights and duties into a social being whose powers and obligations were articulated in the language of social responsibilities" (Rose, 1989: 224). New techniques of government emerged, with a focus on an individual's responsibility to maintain their psychological and physical health (Rose, 1989; Nettleton, 1997). From these beginnings the self-help movement and NA were established in the 1960's (Starker, 1989; Cruikshank, 1994).

NA's break from AA provides one demonstration of the relationship between NA and neoliberalism. The definition of addiction as a disease is one way in which NA broke from

AA: “Alcoholism is too limited a term for us; our problem is not a specific substance, it is a disease called addiction” (NA Basic Text, 1988: xv). Before this conception of addiction as a disease, alcoholism and addiction were conceptualized as moral deficiencies, such as in the times prior to and during prohibition (Davis & Anderson, 1983). NA, therefore, is part of the shift to what is called the disease model of alcoholism and addiction (Butters & Erickson, 2000; Alexander, 1988).

The disease model involves individualized explanations of behaviour where health becomes a matter of individual responsibility—individuals’ become responsible for the outcomes and effects of their disease.<sup>22</sup> People are to be responsible for their health and to engage in prevention (Greco, 1993). Within this disease model, individuals are compelled to be entrepreneurs of their lives and bodies. One’s health, happiness, and recovery become projects to be undertaken (Nettleton, 1997). Defining addiction as a disease requires people to become entrepreneurial and responsible in dealing with their disease. Therefore, this break from AA is one example of how NA is aligned with the neoliberal goals of individual responsibility and personal entrepreneurship. As I will demonstrate in Chapters Three and Four, there is an alignment between these neoliberal political rationalities and NA, which requires the constitution of a particular subject.

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<sup>22</sup> Some literature claims that individuals are becoming responsible for the disease itself (Crawford, 1994; Greco, 1993). Because NA understands addiction as a disease that one is born with and that is not caused by external factors, ‘addicts’ in are not considered responsible for their disease. They are only seen as responsible for their recovery.

## Self-Help Movement

A new type of psychology, stemming in part from psychoanalysis, emerged in the 1960's. Its focus was on self-actualization and self-esteem (Starker, 1989). This movement, which I am calling the self-help movement, provided accessible psychology for all and promises of happiness and freedom. Self-help "offered a new definition of the healthy person, in which "adjustment", an important goal of the 1950's, came to mean constriction, and true psychological health meant self-expression and self-realization" (Starker, 1989: 118). NA is a part of this self-help movement emerging in the 1960's. Individuals participate in the NA program, which is individual-based and whose goal is to transform selves, not through psychiatry and doctors, but through working upon one's self with the Twelve Steps and other members of the same recovery program. People have access to 'recovery' and there are promises of happiness and freedom, if the program is followed as directed.

Elayne Rapping (1996) makes a distinction between 1960's feminist conscious-raising groups and the 1980's recovery movement. She argues that the recovery movement is the bringing together of 1960's feminism and AA. A characteristic of the recovery movement is that problems, whether with alcohol, drugs, and/or food are an individual's responsibility. In other words:

problems were not—as feminists had believed—socially determined after all; rather, they were the result of personal, internal flaws of character, of a disease called "addiction" which could be treated (although never cured) by programs and methods of the spiritual, therapeutic 12 Step programs which formed the core units of the movements (Rapping, 1996: 61).

This increased emphasis on problems and treatments as an individual's responsibility began in the 1960's with the emergence of the self-help movement and the shift towards

neoliberalism where we see the radicalization of liberal values of individual responsibility and personal entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the growth of the self-help movement coincides with the emergence of NA in the 1960's. It is interesting that both the self-help movement and neoliberalism flourish in the 1960's given the affinity between their goals and values. New conceptions of subjects and new techniques of government were developed in the 1960's that are aligned with the neoliberal goal of "managing one's self to happiness and fulfillment" (Rose, 1989: 115).

We can see this affinity again in the 1980's recovery movement. The 1980's are the time when the recovery movement becomes pervasive and where we see the rapid increase in the number and type of self-help groups based on the Twelve Steps of AA (Rapping, 1996). Of course, the recovery movement exists prior to this time, but it is during this time that the AA formula spreads throughout North America culture. The 1980's mark the time when the principles of the recovery movement become mainstream (Rapping, 1996). Likewise, neoliberalism became recognized and overt during the 1980's. Like the continuity between liberalism and neoliberalism, there is continuity between the self-help movement of the 1960's and the recovery movement of the 1980's. Both the self-help movement and neoliberalism became established and more pervasive in North American culture in the 1980's. We can see this same pattern in NA as well. NA was established and published its first text in the 1960's, while in the 1980's it publishes its *Basic Text* and its membership expands.

The publication of the first edition of the *NA Basic Text* in the 1980's corresponds to the explosion of self-help literature published during this time. The *NA Basic Text* is comparable to a self-help manual because it instructs people on how to use the NA program of recovery. Like self-help, participation with the NA program of recovery is "an individualized voluntary enterprise, an undertaking to alter, reform or transform the self" (Rimke, 2000: 62).<sup>23</sup> Thus, principles of the self-help and recovery movements include the notions that personal problems are individual-based and that individuals are responsible for transforming their selves. Likewise in NA, 'addicts' are required to act responsible and entrepreneurial in order to transform their selves; to become entrepreneurs of their recovery.

Mariana Valverde (Valverde and White-Mair, 1999; Valverde, 1998) makes a distinction between AA and other twelve-step self-help groups, specifically Co-Dependents Anonymous (CODA). She argues that the concept of powerlessness is used differently between the two groups, namely that powerlessness in AA is a continuous state of being, while in CODA she claims, powerlessness is conceptualized as temporary. Further, Valverde argues that people stay in AA for the remainder of their life, whereas people in other twelve-step groups only participate in their recovery programs temporarily. She also claims that AA members do not believe that they will be transformed into different people. On account of these distinctions Valverde argues that "AA indirectly subverts the neoliberal discourse of personal entrepreneurship and perpetual improvement" (Valverde, 1988: 129).

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<sup>23</sup> Here I am making a distinction between individuals forced into NA by the criminal justice system, whose experience in NA may not be voluntary, and individuals who enter NA without coercion.

This argument contradicts Valverde's acknowledgment that the recovery program of AA (we can extend this to NA) is based upon one's continual self-evaluation and work of the Twelve Steps in order to improve one's life. Individuals participating in NA are taught that they can be, should be, and will be re-made into a different person—a 'recovering addict'—through life-long participation in the NA program. As we will see in Chapter Three, the basis of the NA program is to transform people from 'addicts' into 'recovering addicts'. The program promises people a new life if they follow the program as outlined for the duration of their lives: "When we are willing to follow this course of action and take advantage of the help available to us, a whole new life is possible. In this way, we do recover" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 89). Further, the *NA Basic Text* discusses how engaging with the Twelve Steps is necessary in this transformation: "We get relief through the Twelve Steps, which are essential to the recovery process, because they are a new, spiritual way of life that allows us to participate in our own recovery" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 88). These steps are based on the premise that perpetual improvement is necessary, desirable, and achievable.

Thus, NA does not undermine "the neoliberal discourse of personal entrepreneurship and perpetual improvement" (Valverde & White-Mair, 1999: 401). Rather, NA is aligned with neoliberal political rationalities. The whole premise of NA is that 'addicts' will be transformed into different selves: "The program allows us to become responsible and productive members of society" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 83). NA is aligned with the neoliberal political rationality that requires individuals to actively participate in their 'recovery' through notions of individual responsibility and personal entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, CODA does emphasize continued powerlessness. Step One of the program reads: “We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable”<sup>24</sup> and narratives on their website state: “I have discovered power through accepting my powerlessness”; “I am powerless over my ego and my own mind, too.”<sup>25</sup> This powerlessness is ongoing; one has to continually reaffirm their powerlessness over their lives, egos, and minds in order to work the CODA program. Additionally, the Twelve Steps of CODA are the Twelve Steps of AA (with a change of focus to ‘co-dependency’), which are not designed to be practiced only once, but to be repeated. For example, the last three steps demonstrate the ongoing process of practicing the Twelve Steps and maintaining continual powerlessness. In Step Ten, individuals are instructed to continue to take personal inventory, which includes an inventory of whether one is successful in maintaining their powerlessness over others. Step Eleven of CODA reads “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out”, while Step Twelve instructs people to practice the principles of the Twelve Steps in all situations of their lives.<sup>26</sup> A central principle is that the individual remains powerless over others. Therefore, CODA does emphasize continual powerlessness, like AA and NA, in contrast to Valverde’s (Valverde and White-Mair, 1999; Valverde, 1988) argument.

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<sup>24</sup> ‘Foundation Documents: The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous.’ Co-Dependents Anonymous. 1998. Accessed from the World Wide Web February 7, 2004. <<http://www.coda.org/coda12st.html>>

<sup>25</sup> ‘Learning Acceptance Brings Peace.’ Co-Dependents Anonymous. Accessed from the World Wide Web February 7, 2004. <[http://www.coda.org/connect/2002/learning\\_acceptance\\_brings\\_peace.htm](http://www.coda.org/connect/2002/learning_acceptance_brings_peace.htm)>

<sup>26</sup> ‘Foundation Documents: The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous.’ Co-Dependents Anonymous. 1998. Accessed from the World Wide Web February 7, 2004. <<http://www.coda.org/coda12st.html>>

I am arguing that a self-help movement emerged in the 1960's which developed further and gained a greater stronghold in the 1980's. This movement shares important affinities with neoliberalism in that they espouse the common goals of individual responsibility and personal entrepreneurship. Therefore, the *NA Basic Text* is a part of a broader political rationality, which I am calling neoliberalism, that emphasizes a universal subject, individual responsibility, and personal entrepreneurship. These goals are part of wider discourses that contribute to a specific understanding of the subject and result in a specific form of government. I argue that the NA program and the various techniques of the self it institutes, constitutes a technology of the self which requires individuals to act upon their selves with the goal of achieving recovery. This argument will be expanded upon in Chapters Three and Four. First, I will present my theoretical framework and methodology in the following chapter.



## Chapter 2:

### Theoretical Framework & Methodology

N.A. is a nonprofit Fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing about them is that *they work* (NA Basic Text, 1988: 9).

#### Truth

Modernist approaches to truth work under the assumption that truths are discovered through processes of scientific investigation. This results in the assumption that only certain individuals (i.e., scientists) are capable of uncovering truths (Ward, 1996). In contrast, within the social constructionist and post-structuralist approach I am developing, truths are constructed. Within this theoretical framework knowledges and truths are constituted through discourses, as well as through practices such as statistics (Ward, 1996).

Central to post-structuralist theorizing is the emphasis on the historical specificity of knowledge; it is not a given that exists independently of individuals. Hence, theories are not perceived as “representations of a reality that is wholly exterior to them” (Brown, 1998: 19). Likewise, researchers and theorists are not conceived of as outside of discourse and social and historical contexts, like in modern theories. Meaning is never solidified, never established, therefore variations in how terms are used (postmodernity for example) are continual and change with time and contexts (Hall, 1997). Social experience is based on historical contexts and knowledges, ‘truth’ discourses, and thus, subjects have meaning “only

within a specific historical context” (Hall, 1997: 46). This perspective arose out of post-structuralist and feminist critiques and challenges to assumptions of the existence of one ‘truth’ and an essential subject (Flax, 1990).

There is no one fundamental knowledge and truth to be discovered. Rather, different knowledges and truths are produced through continuous construction processes involving discourses, social institutions, beliefs, behaviours, and power relations within social, economic, and historical situations. As Steven Ward points out, “all statements are not equal. Some are made stronger and more real than others.” (Ward, 1996: 16). Likewise, emotions, gender, and sexuality are not natural, innate phenomena. They are “determined by the systems of cultural belief, value and moral value of particular communities” (Armon-Jones, 1988: 33). Accordingly, I am working within a theoretical framework that does not involve the use of essentializing concepts. Such an approach allows for a discourse analysis of the NA program of recovery through its *Basic Text*, which explores how truths and subjectivities in NA are produced.

Claiming that addiction and ‘addict’ subjectivities are constructed does not mean the effects of these constructions are not felt or that individuals’ experiences are not ‘real’. I am not assuming that addiction and ‘addicts’ are simply reducible to social constructs. What I am assuming is that there are multiple processes and factors involved in the constitution of ‘addict’ subjectivities in NA, including historical and situational factors and power relations. These effects are experienced, felt, powerful, and often devastating.

## Power and Freedom

I am developing a Foucauldian approach to power where power is defined as “an action upon an action” (Foucault, 1982: 789). In this conception of power, social structures, institutions, and the state are not power, but are the “forms power takes” (Foucault, 1990: 92). To incorporate this definition of power into his work, Foucault analyzes power by asking the question ‘how?’, which puts the focus not on abstract conceptions of power, but instead on power relations (Foucault, 1982: 785-786).

Foucault views power as a technique, not to be had, owned, but to be carried out. Power is productive and “exists only when it is put into action”; it is not an essential, reified concept based upon one’s will (Foucault, 1982: 788). Power is also conceptualized as ubiquitous: “Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault, 1990: 93). There is no one source of power, it is not found in structures or institutions, and it is not localized, instead “[i]t runs through ideologies, truths, discourses, institutions, practices without being equated with any one of them (Grosz, 1990: 88). Relations and exercises of power are therefore central: “[W]hat characterizes the power we are analyzing is that it brings into play relations between individuals (or between groups)” (Foucault, 1982: 786). Power is not imposed upon people, it is “a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action” (Foucault, 1982: 789). As Mitchell Dean states: “Power...comes to operate on and through the conduct of the governed” (Dean, 1994: 162).

Using Foucault, Elizabeth Grosz describes how power relations are interconnected with texts (the 'orders of discourse') that institute and maintain practices, and with non-discursive practices (i.e., legal system, policing) that mark bodies, and, lastly, with the effects of these orders (Grosz, 1990: 89). We can see these three orders at work in NA. The *NA Basic Text* is an order of discourse that forms the practices, 'truths', and knowledges of NA, while confession is an example of non-discursive practices (which are the foundation of techniques of power and techniques of the self) in NA that 'marks' bodies (Grosz, 1990: 89). The effect of these two orders is the constitution of specific subjects: 'addict' subjects who govern themselves according to the norms of NA.

### Government

Intertwined with this conception of power is the notion of government. This conception of governing is not about control, but about governing people's actions (conduct) with the goal of maximizing their well-being (Rose, 1996b; Greco, 1993). The distinction between government and domination is that the goal of government is to act on individuals' actions and behaviours, whereas the goal of domination is to remove someone's ability to act (Rose, 1999; Foucault, 1982). This is an important distinction because it allows us to move from the idea that individuals are governed solely through repression and violence to an exploration of how individuals participate in government.

Foucault argues that government is not only governing citizens but also a governing of relationships between people and between people and 'things' (Foucault, 1991: 94). There are multiple forms, tools, and techniques of government, which are situated within historical,

political, and social contexts. Therefore, following Foucault and Rose, government in this work is defined as “all endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others...And it also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one’s own passions, to control one’s own instincts, to govern oneself” (Rose, 1999: 3).

This notion of government stems from the governmentality perspective, which originates primarily from Foucault’s article, *Governmentality*. Within this perspective the focus is on the “conditions of possibility and intelligibility for certain ways of seeking to act upon the conduct of others, or oneself, to achieve certain ends” (Rose, 1999: 19). Specifically, governmentality is defined as

a way or system of thinking about the nature of the practice of government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed), capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced (Gordon, 1991: 3).

A governmentality perspective addresses how strategies of government are carried out as well as the emergence of certain truths and strategies because “the exercise of government has become enmeshed with regimes of truth concerning the objects, processes and persons governed” (Rose, 1999: 30). Consequently, theorists adopting a governmentality perspective often embrace a strong constructivist approach, focus on epistemological questions, and frequently use discourse analysis.

A governmentality perspective is useful in understanding the construction of truths in the NA program of recovery because it allows for an examination of multiple forms and understandings of government, including the government of one’s self. This perspective

allows for an analysis of NA's discourses and practices in addition to an exploration of the relationship between neoliberal political rationalities and NA.

### Subjectivity

The notion of subjectivity used in this work is based on the question: How does an individual come to think, understand, and learn about one's self? (Rose, 1996b). Central to the answer is Foucault's definition of the subject as "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his [sic] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault, 1982: 718). This is a definition with two components; not only are people subjected to power relations, they also subject their selves through various techniques. In other words, individuals participate in the formation of their subjectivity.

Subjectivity is a complex concept. Therefore, it is important to clarify the notions of objectification, subjectivation and subjection; all of which are implicated in subjectivity. Before something can be subjected, it has to be produced as an object (a process called objectification). The processes by which individuals are turned into subjects is called subjectivation (de Courville Nicol, 2002). The two definitions of subject (subject to power, and submitting one's subjectivity through self-knowledge, self-government) refer to subjection (de Courville Nicol, 2002).

Foucault (1982) identifies three modes of objectification of the subject. The first mode is objectification through the sciences. Scientific disciplines have different conceptions of the subject. For example, psychology conceptualizes subjects as having a psyche and this

conception affects how people are governed (i.e. they are given psycho-pharmaceutical medications) and how they govern their selves (i.e. they govern their selves as a subject with a psyche). The second mode of objectification is dividing practices where “[t]he subject is either divided inside himself [sic] or divided from others” (Foucault, 1982: 777-8). For example, people are divided into categories—homosexual versus heterosexual, addict versus non-addict—that have normalizing effects. The third mode of objectification is the transformation of the self into a subject as something to be known and mastered. This mode encompasses practices that individuals perform on their selves. These three modes of objectification are elaborated upon on Chapter Three to demonstrate how ‘addict’ identities are constituted in NA.

### *Universal Subject*

In NA there is a conception of a universal subject; a subject with a shared, common ‘addict’ identity. This conception does not acknowledge differences between and among people’s experiences (Sawicki, 1994). ‘Addict’ subjects in NA are not conceived of as products of history and culture, therefore, the conception of a universal subject assumes that ‘addicts’ have a pre-given, pre-determined, underlying identity.

Feminist theory has most carefully considered this dilemma of essentialist categories. Post-structuralist feminist theories emphasize that the feminine subject is not biologically, naturally pre-determined, but is constituted through contextual factors (Grosz, 1990). One such theorist is Judith Butler, who argues that a feminine subject implies a fixed, unchanging subject, which she views as problematic politically and theoretically. Therefore, she attempts

to move beyond this conception of a subject to a notion of the subject as practices (Butler, 1990). For example, gender is not constituted in a vacuum; it is constituted via historical, political and cultural contexts. Therefore, “it becomes impossible to separate out “gender” from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (Butler, 1990: 3).

Butler argues that feminist theories need to question how subjects are constituted, not simply how they are represented. She challenges the stability of identity categories by arguing that these categories are constituted by repeated performances and by the exclusion of other identity categories. (Butler, 2001: 340). She explains this instability as the different performances of the ‘I’ and argues that there is no essential identity which underlies these performances. Instead, the repetition of performances results in and challenges the identity itself (Butler, 2001: 337). For example, there are many different ways to perform the identity of an ‘addict’, which change over time and contexts.

The assumption of a universal subject is that people are the same, that they experience life in the same ways, and that subjects are unchanging over time and with context. To ignore differences results in the exclusion of people who do not fit into the defined category of ‘citizen’; ‘addict’.

In the conception of subjectivity I am developing power relations are key, as is the assumption that subjectivities are multiple and are constructed. Power is inherent within subjectivation because subjectivities are historically, socially, and politically situated



(Sawicki, 1994). Thus, a central assumption of this work is that subjectivities are fragmented and diverse. The formation of subjectivities in NA comprises Chapter Three.

### Risk

In recent years, theorizing on risk has flourished. I will summarize some of the most well known texts on risk to demonstrate where the conception of risk I am developing fits into the existing literature.

Robert Castel (1991) discusses the death of the subject, where the subject is replaced by risk factors, which are social constructions based on actuarial models. Through examining expertise, he argues that both the death of the subject and the move to risk are related to neoliberalism. He argues that the idea that one is dangerous is different from current conceptions of risk factors. Instead of individuals being perceived as containing dangerousness, they are deemed 'risky' when specific factors are present in their life, DNA, history, et cetera. From this move to at-risk individuals comes surveillance, in the form of what Castel calls "systematic predetection" (Castel, 1991: 288). The goal of this surveillance is to foresee and prevent future events and/or behaviors by the individual classified as at-risk. Included in this form of surveillance are techniques of the self, such as self-monitoring.

Neoliberal political rationalities fit into Castel's argument through his discussion of 'hyper-rationalism' (Castel, 1991: 289). He discusses how the move to risk factors in place of subjects implicates one's consumption choices (i.e., drugs, alcohol, types of food, smoking), which are considered risk factors. Neoliberal assumptions of rationality, autonomy, and

responsibility are inherent in the move to risk factors in that the accompanying ideologies are based on “fear and security”, rational decision making, and reason; all in an attempt to eliminate risk (Castel, 1991: 289). For example, because individuals are perceived as making a decision to participate in using drugs or not using drugs, their choice and its consequences are assumed to be their responsibility. Therefore, if people choose to continue behaving like ‘addicts’ they remain high-risk, they are feared, and they are considered irrational and irresponsible.

In the conception of risk I am developing the amount of risk people are perceived as posing is relative to socially ascribed norms and values (Ewald, 1991). Such perceptions of high-risk (‘addict’) behaviour are based within neoliberal political rationalities that emphasize individual responsibility and personal entrepreneurship. If people engage in behaviour regarded as high-risk they are viewed as irresponsible, irrational, and prompted to stop the undesired behaviour in order to prevent risks to their selves and others. People are increasingly responsible for managing risks (health, safety, environmental) and managing their selves based on different knowledges and discourses of health and security. They are required to be responsible for their actions, behaviours, and attitudes. As a consequence, an individual is regarded as responsible for one’s decisions as well as one’s “personal failure” (Beck, 1992: 136).

The recovery discourses of NA operate with this conception of risk factors. ‘Addicts’ remain forever at risk of using drugs in the future and therefore must engage in various techniques of the self, such as abstinence, as prevention. Ingestion of any amount of alcohol or drugs is

considered extremely risky and detrimental to one's life. Another risk factor identified by NA is associating with people who are not in NA:

The ultimate weapon for recovery is the recovering addict. We concentrate on recovery and feelings not what we have done in the past. Old friends, places and ideas are often a threat to our recovery. We need to change our playmates, playgrounds and playthings (NA Basic Text, 1988: 15).

Rose (2000) organizes the mass of literature on government, and risk into two groups: those that emphasize mechanisms of inclusion and those that emphasize mechanisms of exclusion. He argues that the representation of the 'criminal' ('addict') has become an individual who holds a moral responsibility (or has the ability to hold such a responsibility in the future) to their selves and to their community.

Rose (2000) argues that control in government of inclusion works through continual verification of one's identity (i.e., as an 'addict' in NA) and through access to participation in society as a citizen. Under mechanisms of exclusion, those who are regarded as dangerous ('addicts') are excluded and are to be managed and under surveillance as forms of security. Individuals who are perceived as not willing or able to be responsible for their selves and for the risks and dangers they pose are regarded as immoral and excluded. In other words, "[s]ubjects are to do the work on themselves...to make them free" (Rose, 2000: 334). The goal is to foster neoliberal goals of individual responsibility and personal entrepreneurship onto excluded individuals; what Rose calls 'responsibilization' (Rose, 2000: 334).

I am hesitant to classify all risk theorizing into two categories because dichotomizing theories are limiting and perpetuate modern assumptions of binary distinctions and dualities.

I challenge the 'addict'/'non-addict' dichotomy because it is important to question the underlying assumptions of individuals fitting into one of two categories. The distinction between 'addicts' and 'non-addicts' is dependent upon social and historical contexts. Thus, the category of 'addict' is dynamic and not a neutral category.

Often missing from the literature on risk are critical discussions of the concept of risk itself. 'Risk' is reified and usually regarded as a universal concept. Risk is a constructed concept and experiences of risk are not universal or static (Lupton, 1999). Additionally, discussions of risk power relations, besides the relationship between expert and lay individuals, are absent in the literature. There is new work appearing that does look at gender and risk<sup>27</sup> although in the main body of risk theory notions of risk as a universal, neutral concept prevail.

### Methodology

To gather information about the recovery discourses of NA I am conducting a form of discourse analysis. At a basic level, discourse is defined as "a process resulting in a communicative act" (Chimombo & Roseberry, 1998: ix). Discourse is used to classify, convey, represent, perceive, and interpret ideas, beliefs, and thoughts. The concept of discourse differs from language in that discourse includes actions ('practice') as well as language: "Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language" (Hall, 1997: 44). Therefore, related to discourse is the production of knowledge.

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<sup>27</sup> See Chan & Rigakos, 2002; Lupton, 1999

Knowledge is no longer regarded as neutral or innate, alternatively, “all knowledge is located within discourse” (Purvis & Hunt, 1993: 492). Discourse and discourse analysis allow for language, and other forms of communication, to be conceptualized as central to the formation of subjects and the production of knowledge (Purvis & Hunt, 1993). The role of discourses is central in subjection and subjectivation. Our subjectivities and identities are “brought into play by discursive strategies and representational practices....power renders the body active and productive” and discourses embed bodies with power (Martin, 1998: 9). Bodies do not represent essential knowledge or truth; they are inscribed by discourses (Martin, 1998).

Language “is performative” (Rose & Miller, 1992: 177). Therefore, an analysis of discourses allows for examinations of how social truths are legitimized and accepted (Davis & Anderson, 1983). Also, “[o]nly through language can the ends of government be formulated, by portraying their object as an intelligible field with identifiable limits within which certain characteristics are linked in a systematic manner” (Rose, 1996b: 70).

Discourse analysis is defined as “the study of the use of language for communication in context” (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 1997: iii). An assumption of discourse analysis is that discourse, in a variety of forms, communicates meanings and itself has endless meanings, which are produced within contexts.<sup>28</sup> Another assumption of this method of analysis is that individuals interpret discourse, not strictly through texts, but also through the contexts and situations of the text and of the individual (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 1997). Discourse analysis assumes there are multiple meanings to texts, which are viewed as a part of and

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<sup>28</sup> Context, in this work, is defined as “a world filled with people producing utterances: people who have social, cultural, and personal identities, knowledge, beliefs, goals and wants, and who interact with one another in various socially and culturally defined situations” (Schiffrin, 1994, 364).

constructs of social contexts and locations (Chimombo & Roseberry, 1998). In the words of Rose:

It is not so much a question of what a word or a text ‘means’...but of analyzing the way a work or book functions in connection with other things, what it makes possible, the surfaces, networks and circuits around which it flows, the affects and passions that it mobilizes and through which it mobilizes. It is thus a matter of what counts as truth, who has the power to define truth, the role of different authorities of truth, and the epistemological, institutional and technical conditions for the production and circulation of truths (Rose, 1999: 29-30).

Taking context into consideration is important because “the text-context relationship is not independent of other relationships” (Schiffrin, 1994: 42). Being aware of when the text was written, for whom, how it is used, who reads it, and why one engages with the text is important. Context is established within this discourse analysis by asking who the audience is, who wrote the text, what the setting is (where and when), who is reading the text, and what are the intended messages and purposes of the text (Brown & Yule, 1983). The ways in which ‘addicts’ and addiction are discussed, written, and practiced informs beliefs and knowledges about what constitutes recovery and the subjectivities of people in NA. The role of discourse is fundamental to the constitution of subjects: “All discourses, then, construct subject-positions, from which alone they make sense” (Hall, 1997: 56). Discourses have effects and discourse analysis provides the space and methods necessary to investigate these effects.

The object of analysis for this project is the *NA Basic Text*. The *Text*<sup>29</sup> is the main book used in the twelve-step recovery program of NA. It is a highly influential text which contains the

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<sup>29</sup> For the remainder of this work, the *Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text* will be referred to simply as the *Text*.

core philosophy of NA. The *Text* is used to instruct and guide members of the NA program through recovery by use of the NA Twelve Steps. It is described as “a book about addicts, by addicts and for addicts” (NA Basic Text, 1988: xii). It is relevant for analysis because it is involved in regulating the conduct of people within NA. Additionally, the *Text* (and NA as a whole) influences public policy decisions and mainstream understandings of addiction, ‘addicts’, and recovery. In particular, the information in the *Text* provides the basis for NA pamphlets and is incorporated into meetings by having members read aloud specified sections as well as being used in recovery houses and drug treatment programs.

The first section of the *Text* (‘Book One: Narcotics Anonymous’) is composed of ten chapters that outline the twelve-step program: Chapter One *Who is An Addict*; Chapter Two *What is the Narcotics Anonymous Program?*; Chapter Three *Why Are We Here?*; Chapter Four *How It Works*; Chapter Five *What Can I Do?*; Chapter Six *The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous*; Chapter Seven *Recovery and Relapse*; Chapter Eight *We Do Recover*; Chapter Nine *Just For Today—Living the Program*; and Chapter Ten *More Will Be Revealed*. These chapters are appropriate to analyze because they outline the steps, behaviours, and attitudes necessary for ‘success’ in the NA program of recovery.

Discourse analysis is an appropriate method for this work because it allows for an examination of the ways in which addiction, recovery, and ‘addicts’ are constructed in NA without assuming there is a fundamental truth or true knowledge to be found. Consequently, this analysis allows for an exploration of my research questions because the *Text* presents insight into how ‘addict’ subjectivities are constituted in NA.

### **Chapter Three:**

#### **The Constitution of Responsible and Entrepreneurial Subjects in NA**

What makes a person an 'addict'? NA answers:

Who is an Addict? Most of us do not have to think twice about this question. WE KNOW! Our whole life and thinking was centered in drugs in one form or another....We are people in the grip of a continuous and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death (NA Basic Text, 1988: 3).

How is such an 'addict' constructed? This is the question I answer in this chapter. To demonstrate the constitution of subjects in NA, this chapter is broken into four sections based on Foucault's (1982) modes of objectification. The first mode is scientific objectification and in this section I explore definitions of addiction in the *Text*. Here I argue that the biomedical disease model of addiction results in specific understandings and conceptualizations of drug use and drug users. In the second section I discuss the two types of 'addicts' found in the *Text*: 'addicts' who continue to use drugs and 'recovering addicts' who are practicing abstinence and the NA program. I argue that these understandings are interconnected with neoliberal goals of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility. This discussion is based upon a mode of objectification Foucault calls dividing practices.

Following from dividing practices I introduce a mode of objectification called unifying practices which I use to explore the implications of NA's focus on shared characteristics of 'addicts' and common experiences of addiction and recovery. I argue that NA's subject is based on humanistic notions of the self as universal and rational, which I critique using Foucauldian and feminist theory. In the last section, I examine NA's requirement of 'addict' self-identification in the context of Foucault's last mode of objectification: self-



objectification. I conclude by arguing that NA's goal of transforming 'addicts' into 'recovering addicts' requires the constitution of a subject who acts responsible and entrepreneurial. At the end of this chapter, I introduce the argument that a particular form of government, that of a technology of the self, arises from the relationship between NA and neoliberalism; an argument that will comprise the subsequent chapter.

### Scientific Objectification

Before something can be subjected to power, it has to be produced as an object. Foucault (1982) argues there are three modes of objectification of the subject.<sup>30</sup> Subjection occurs through all three of these modes and is reliant upon a prior subjectivation process:

« L'assujettissement...représente la soumission de la subjectivité et c'est en ce sens qu'il dépend d'une subjectivation préalable » (de Courville Nicol, 2002 : 176).

The first mode identified by Foucault is the process by which subjects are objectified through the sciences. Scientific disciplines have different conceptions of the subject. For example, psychology conceptualizes subjects as having a psyche and this conception affects how people are governed (i.e., they are given psycho-pharmaceutical medications) and how they govern their selves (i.e., govern one's self as a subject with repressed conflicts). In NA, subjects are understood as people with a disease of addiction; an understanding that affects how they are governed and how they govern their selves. I will first outline how the *Text* conceptualizes addiction and 'addicts' followed by a discussion of the implications of these understandings.

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<sup>30</sup> These processes by which humans are transformed into subjects are also called subjectivation (de Courville Nicol, 2002).

### *Addiction as a Disease*

In the *Text*, addiction is conceptualized as a disease,<sup>31</sup> more specifically as a fatal disease with no cure: “[W]e have an incurable disease called addiction. The disease is chronic, progressive and fatal” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 7). ‘Addicts’ are conceived of as having no control over their use of drugs and over their disease: “Once we use, we are under the control of our disease” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 80). In sum, ‘addicts’ are perceived as having a life-long, incurable, powerful disease.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, NA broke away from AA in order to define addiction as a disease. In the *Text* it discusses the break from AA: “[W]e knew that many were still going down the road of disillusion, degradation and death, because they were unable to identify with the alcoholic in A.A.” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 85). The *Text* explains:

We have only broadened [AA’s] perspective. We follow the same path with a single exception; our identification as addicts is all-inclusive with respect to any mood-changing, mind-altering substance. Alcoholism is too limited a term for us; our problem is not a specific substance, it is a disease called addiction (NA Basic Text, 1988: xv).

Before this conception of addiction as a disease, alcoholism and addiction were conceptualized as moral deficiencies, such as in the times prior to and during prohibition (Davis & Anderson, 1983). The *Text* highlights this distinction by stating: “[W]e suffer from a disease, not a moral dilemma. We were critically ill, not hopelessly bad” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 16). Hence, NA is part of the shift to what is called the disease model of addiction

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<sup>31</sup> Addiction is defined in three main ways in the *Text*, all of which are pathologies: addiction as an allergy, as an obsession/compulsion and as a disease. I will focus on the definition of addiction as a disease because it is the most common and because the first two definitions are encompassed by the disease model.

(Butters & Erickson, 2000; Alexander, 1988). This model emphasizes individualized explanations of behaviour and drug use as well as emphasizing that one's health is one's responsibility. Consequently, subjects in NA are understood as subjects with a disease of addiction that requires specific techniques of self-government.

Because addiction is conceptualized as a disease, one way 'addicts' are represented in the *Text* is through their symptoms. Denial, compulsion, obsession, alienation, guilt, remorse, fear and pride are some of the symptoms of addiction emphasized in the *Text*. Lack of self-control is also represented as a symptom of the disease of addiction: "Our inability to control our usage of drugs is a symptom of the disease of addiction" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 20). This emphasis on symptoms of addiction is another aspect of scientific objectification in that subjects are understood to have a disease that manifests similar symptoms in anyone who has the disease. These symptoms of addiction are assumed to affect all people with the disease of addiction in the same way.

### *'Addict' Subjects*

Chapter One of the *Text* states the definition of an 'addict': "Very simply, an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs", yet, who is an 'addict' in NA is more complicated than this sentence suggests (NA Basic Text, 1988: 3). Despite the *Text* stating that addiction is a terminal disease possessing no cure ("we are never cured...we carry the disease within us for the rest of our lives"), a distinction appears in the following sentence: "We have a disease, but we do recover" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 8). There is a tension throughout the *Text* regarding whether an 'addict' can experience recovery. For example, it is

stated that “[a]ddiction is not a hopeless condition from which there is no recovery” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 10). While in direct opposition, in the chapter *Recovery and Relapse*, it reads: “We can never fully recover, no matter how long we stay clean” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 80).

This apparent contradiction can be explained: ‘Addicts’ can recover by practicing the NA program of recovery, but they can never *entirely* recover. According to NA, ‘addicts’ need to remain life-long members of NA and to practice the Twelve Steps daily in order to prevent their disease from taking over their lives: “The steps are our solution. They are our survival kit. They are our defense against addiction which is a deadly disease. Our steps are the principles that make recovery possible” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 19). Even after years of abstinence, the *Text* teaches people that they will always be ‘addicts’ and therefore will always need to practice the NA program of recovery:

We have seen addicts come to our Fellowship, try our program and stay clean for a period of time. Over time some addicts lost contact with other recovering addicts and eventually returned to active addiction. They forgot that it is really the first drug that starts the deadly cycle all over again (NA Basic Text, 1988: 75).

However, ‘addicts’ can experience recovery and transform their selves into ‘recovering addicts’ if they practice and engage in NA: “We are convinced that there is only one way for us to live, and that is the N.A. way” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 8). This distinction, and its implications, will be elaborated on in the next section on dividing practices. First, some of the implications of scientific objectification need to be highlighted.

### *Implications of scientific objectification*

Subjects in NA are understood as having a disease. This affects how they are governed and how they govern their selves. One implication of this definition of addiction is that individuals participating in NA are told that they can never fully achieve recovery. Addiction is conceptualized as an incurable disease that needs to be combated each and every day, for the remainder of one's life: "We cannot afford to become complacent, because our disease is with us twenty-four hours a day" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 97). In this sense individuals do not graduate from NA, they remain lifetime members: "We can never fully recover, no matter how long we stay clean" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 80). The only way 'addicts' can counter the effects of their disease of addiction is by diligently practicing the NA program of recovery and its Twelve Steps.

Second, the adoption of the disease model results in the necessity to diagnose and label one as having the disease of addiction. This diagnosis reinforces the binary opposition between an 'addict' and a 'non-addict' with no middle ground for people who would like to engage in substance treatment without identifying as an 'addict' (Davis & Anderson, 1983). Therefore, subjects in NA can only be 'addicts'. More specifically, 'addicts' with a permanent, life-long disease. This requires a subject who is responsible for, and manages, the symptoms and outcomes of their disease; a subject who acts entrepreneurial and responsible. This leads into another mode of objectification called dividing practices.

### Dividing Practices

Foucault defines dividing practices as processes by which “[t]he subject is either divided inside himself [sic] or divided from others” (Foucault, 1982: 777-8). People are separated into categories—homosexual versus heterosexual, addict versus non-addict, addict versus recovering addict—through discourses and practices. ‘Addicts’ are understood to have a disease that some people have and others do not. Therefore, there is a distinction made between those who are ‘addicts’ and those who are not ‘addicts’. There is also a distinction within the category of ‘addict’ between people who are practicing abstinence and NA, and people who are not. These processes have normalizing effects because one category is valued over the other.

In this section I will focus on the categories of ‘addict’ and ‘recovering addict’ found in the *Text*. I argue that there are two constructions of ‘addicts’ in the *Text*, one which is perceived as dangerous and harmful and one that is highly desired and is the goal of the NA program of recovery.

The *Text* begins with: “We cannot change the nature of the addict or the addiction. We can help to change the old lie “Once an addict, always an addict,” by striving to make recovery more available. God, help us to remember this difference” (NA Basic Text, 1988: xiii). Like I discussed in the previous section, in one sense people with the disease of addiction remain ‘addicts’ for life, on the other hand, the *Text* argues that ‘addicts’ do not have to remain ‘addicts’ and encourages them to seek recovery through NA. The distinction is between ‘addicts’ who are continuing to use drugs (‘addicts’) and ‘addicts’ who are abstinent and

practicing NA (“recovering addicts” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 9) or “clean addicts” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 85)).<sup>32</sup> Recovery is the distinction; recovery is regarded as the difference between always being an (actively using) ‘addict’ and becoming a ‘recovering addict’ who is abstinent from substances and practicing the program of NA.

These two representations of ‘addicts’ presented in the *Text* are important because they demonstrate how individuals in NA are required to replace one identity (‘addict’) with another (‘recovering addict’). The two identities are opposed to one another and the identity of ‘recovering addict’ is valued over that of the ‘addict’. One cannot have both identities at the same time, but it is possible to move between the categories. The move from ‘addict’ to ‘recovering addict’ is the goal of NA, while the move from ‘recovering addict’ to ‘addict’ is feared.

These two identities are defined in relation to one another. The *Text* revolves around how individuals are required to adopt the new identity of ‘recovering addict’ in order to experience freedom, happiness, and health. It outlines characteristics of ‘addicts’ and compares these to characteristics of ‘recovering addicts’. ‘Addicts’ are represented as selfish (NA Basic Text, 1988: 3), fearful (NA Basic Text, 1988: 15), hostile (NA Basic Text, 1988: 3), self-destructive (NA Basic Text, 1988: 77), self-pitying (NA Basic Text, 1988: 4), in denial (NA Basic Text, 1988: 80), and as living like animals (NA Basic Text, 1988: 101). On the other hand, ‘recovering addicts’ are represented as useful (NA Basic Text, 1988: 8), self-

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<sup>32</sup> I will use ‘recovering addict’ instead of ‘clean addict’ because the goal of NA involves more than being ‘clean’ from all substances.

supporting (NA Basic Text, 1988: 67), living worth-while lives, and enjoying life (NA Basic Text, 1988: 50). The message from the *Text* is:

Using addicts are self-centered, angry, frightened and lonely people. In recovery, we experience spiritual growth. While using, we were dishonest, self-seeking and often institutionalized. The program allows us to become responsible and productive members of society (NA Basic Text, 1988: 83).

To keep the identity of an ‘addict’ is represented as dangerous and unhealthy: “[T]hose of us who don’t die from the disease will go on to prison, mental institutions or complete demoralization as the disease progresses” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 7). Further, if individuals remain ‘addicts’ they are represented as irresponsible: “Through our inability to accept personal responsibilities we were actually creating our own problems” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 13). This characteristic is placed in opposition to the characteristics of the identity of a ‘recovering addict’ who is represented as healthier and working responsibly to engage in their new identity: “Now we accept responsibility for our problems and see that we’re equally responsible for our solutions” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 94).

NA requires ‘addicts’ to change—cease—unhealthy and irresponsible behaviours. Such behavioural changes are the only way people who identify or are perceived as ‘addicts’ have any possibility of being accepted within larger society. ‘Recovering addicts’ are represented as capable of facing reality and of becoming useful: “One of the continuing miracles of recovery is becoming a productive, responsible member of society” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 102). The *Text* teaches that those who adopt the ‘recovering addict’ identity will be able to participate in larger society and experience happiness and freedom, unlike those who



continue to use drugs. The *Text* emphasizes that there is hope for individuals considered ‘recovering addicts’, unlike individuals who remain ‘addicts’.

We can relate this dichotomy of ‘addict’ and ‘recovering addict’ identities to Weber’s notion of status groups. Weber defines power as spread out through society via “classes, status groups, and parties” (Weber, 1958: 181). He makes a distinction between classes and status groups. Classes are determined by economic exchange and placement in the market while status groups are defined by honor and social norms. Unlike classes, status groups are communities where “every typical component of the life fate of men [sic] [that] is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*” (Weber, 1958: 187). A common, shared lifestyle is the basis for this honor and membership in a status group. Status is based on dividing practices, thus status groups “are stratified according to the principles of their *consumption* of goods as represented by special ‘styles of life’” and are maintained by rituals and norms of behaviour within the group (Weber, 1958: 193).

Therefore, NA can be classified as a status group because it is a community that has a shared, specific lifestyle based on the consumption (or absence of consumption) of narcotics and alcohol. NA as a status group is based on “status honor, which always rests upon distance and exclusiveness” where certain behaviours and rituals are privileged over others (Weber, 1958: 190-191). Those who do not participate in the group in the specified manner established by NA are excluded since “status groups are the specific bearers of all ‘conventions’” (Weber, 1958: 191).

NA's members are governed by rituals and norms of behaviour established by the NA program and NA groups.<sup>33</sup> One of these norms is to focus on whether someone is an 'addict' or a 'recovering addict', thereby excluding other possibilities. Perceived 'addicts' are divided into these two categories and as a consequence those who contest norms in NA are not welcomed into membership of the community; they are told they are in denial of having a disease of addiction:

Most addicts resist recovery...If newcomers tell us that they can continue to use drugs in any form and suffer no ill effects, there are two ways we can look at it. The first possibility is that they are not addicts. The other is that their disease has not become apparent to them and that they are still denying their addiction (NA Basic Text, 1988: 86-87).

Consequently, the identities of the 'recovering addict' and the 'addict' are produced through this distinction between those participating in the status group of NA according to its norms and those who are not.

### *Implications of Dividing Practices*

An implication of these dividing practices is normalization. A norm is established—that of a 'recovering addict' who practices the NA program of recovery as it is prescribed—and people are measured, compared, and defined by this norm. Individuals participating in NA are judged in the *Text* for not following the NA program guidelines. If people do not admit that they are 'addicts' and that they are powerless over their disease of addiction, they are believed to be in denial: "Denial of our disease and other reservations keep us sick" (NA

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<sup>33</sup> Each NA group is governed by norms established in NA literature and through the World Service Conference (i.e., the NA Twelve Steps must be read at every meeting in order for it to call it's self an NA group). Yet the groups are able to establish some of their own norms within the guidelines of NA. For example, a group can chose which passages to read in meetings, as long as the readings are approved NA literature from the Narcotics Anonymous World Service (i.e., the NA Basic Text), they can chose for the meeting to be open or closed to the public, and/or to be smoking or non-smoking (Narcotics Anonymous, 2004).

Basic Text, 1988: 53). If they do not make a decision to turn their wills and lives over to the care of a Higher Power as outlined in Step Two and Step Three they are described as lacking willingness and faith (NA Basic Text, 1988: 25). If the self-inventories of Step Four, Step Five, and Step Ten are not taken, one is described as lacking honesty in the *Text*: “If we are not honest when we take a Fifth Step, we will have the same negative results that dishonesty brought us in the past” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 30).

The *Text* states that Step Six requires willingness: “Willingness is what we strive for in Step Six. How sincerely we work this step will be proportionate to our desire for change” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 33). Accordingly, if people do not engage with this step they are seen as lacking humility. Likewise, individuals who do not ask their higher power to remove their shortcomings in Step Seven are judged as lacking humility (NA Basic Text, 1988: 35). If Steps Eight and Nine (making amends to those they have harmed) are not practiced, one is seen as fearful and at risk for relapse: “This step should not be avoided. If we do, we are reserving a place in our program for relapse. Pride, fear and procrastination often seem an impossible barrier; they stand in the way of progress and growth” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 39). When Step Eleven and Step Twelve are not practiced, individuals are perceived as selfish and self-centred: “[O]ur egos are so self-centered that we won’t accept God’s will for us without another struggle or surrender” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 45).

The *Text* describes the appropriate ways in which to work the NA program of recovery and its Twelve Steps. Deviations from these norms are noted and judgments are made; people who deviate are perceived as lacking willingness, humility and honesty. Thus, one way

people are objectified (turned into ‘addict’ subjects) in NA is through dividing practices that separate people believed to have the disease of addiction into those who are practicing the Twelve Steps as prescribed and living ‘the NA way’ and those who are choosing to live irresponsibly and insanely. In other words, subjects in NA are divided into those who are responsible and those who are not.

### Unifying Practices

Another implication of dividing practices is unifying practices,<sup>34</sup> which focuses on similarities between members of groups while excluding other members. ‘Addict’ and ‘recovering addict’ identities are produced and maintained through dividing practices and discourses. This distinction has normalizing effects because the ‘recovering addict’ identity is established as the standard to be met. Any deviation from this standard marks a subject as irresponsible and unwilling to become sane and healthy.

Not only are there standards that distinguish between ‘recovering addicts’ and ‘addicts’, there are standards set within each category. In order for people to remain in the ‘recovering addict’ category they are required to adhere to specific norms of behaviours established by NA and outlined in the *Text*. To identify as a ‘recovering addict’ in NA, people must abstain from all substances and live “the N.A. way” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 8). This ‘way of life’ includes solidarity with NA, its principles, and other ‘recovering addicts’. Therefore, another process of objectification occurs when people in NA relate to other ‘recovering addicts’ as people with the same disease. This creates a sense of belonging and perpetuates the belief that “all addicts are basically the same in kind” who have common experiences of addiction

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<sup>34</sup> This concept was developed by Dr. Valérie de Courville Nicol during one of our discussion in 2004.

and recovery (NA Basic Text, 1988: 74). For example, Valverde argues that the sharing that occurs at NA meetings “functions as much to bind the group together and create a sense of commonality as to build up individual identity” (Valverde, 1998: 131).

We can see these unifying practices in NA’s understandings of ‘addicts’ as people who experience drug use and recovery in the same way. The assumption is that there is a commonality between all people who are ‘addicts’, which serves to produce the category and the identity of the ‘addict’ subject. This identity follows the dual conception outlined earlier between the ‘addict’ and ‘recovering addict’.

The NA program is based on a universal conception of an ‘addict’, where differences in experiences are ignored and commonalities are the focus. There are limited references to ‘addicts’ as men (NA Basic Text, 1988: 65; NA Basic Text, 1988: 84; NA Basic Text, 1988: 85) and less references to ‘addicts’ as women in the *Text*.<sup>35</sup> Instead, gender neutral pronouns such as ‘we’ and ‘us’ are used in the *Text* when discussing ‘addicts’ who use drugs in and outside of the NA program: “[W]e speak in terms of ‘we’ and ‘our’ rather than ‘me’ and ‘mine’” to facilitate “working together for our common welfare” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 73). “[T]he ‘I’ becomes ‘me’” approach works to unify people who identify as ‘recovering addicts’ (NA Basic Text, 1988: 72). The emphasis is on a certain type of person—an ‘addict’—who has common characteristics:

Addiction does not discriminate. This tradition [The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using] is to ensure that any addict, regardless of drugs used, race, religious beliefs, sex, sexual preference, or financial condition is

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<sup>35</sup> The second part of the NA Basic Text is comprised of thirty-eight narratives written from the perspective of members of the NA program detailing their experiences as ‘addicts’ and as ‘recovering addicts’. Thirteen of these stories are written from the perspective of women.

free to practice the N.A. way of life...one addict is never superior to another. All addicted persons are welcome and equal in obtaining the relief that they are seeking from their addiction; every addict can recover in this program on an equal basis (NA Basic Text, 1988: 62).

The *Text* acknowledges that people have different experiences: “Our personal experiences while using differed from one another. As a group, however, we have found many common themes in our addiction” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 59). It is considered crucial for ‘recovering addicts’ to maintain relationship with other ‘recovering addicts’: “If, while practicing these principles, we allow ourselves to feel superior or inferior, we isolate ourselves. We are headed for trouble if we feel apart from other addicts” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 97). The formation of new relationships with other members of NA is considered vital to one’s ‘recovery’ since an ‘addict’ must leave their social environment and create a new life within the NA community: “Old friends, places and ideas are often a threat to our recovery. We need to change our playmates, playgrounds and playthings” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 15).

The goal of NA is for ‘addicts’ to help each other in becoming responsible and productive members of society through learning a new way of life through the Twelve Steps: “At meetings we can share with other addicts, ask questions and learn about our disease. We learn new ways to live...Gradually, we replace old habits with new ways of living. We become willing to change” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 54). This recovery program gives individuals “a new set of associations...which are intended to aid in the unlearning of unconventional behavior” (Pfohl, 1994: 317). In this sense, the NA program is an example of “corrective unlearning” which exposes individuals in NA “to strong group pressures toward

conventionality” (Pfohl, 1994: 317). We can see the normalizing effects of unifying practices in these pressures to follow the norms of NA.

### *Implications of unifying practices*

To claim that addiction is experienced in the same way by all people and not acknowledge different experiences results in ignoring the broader contexts of drug use. Issues such as poverty, gender, and marginalization are interconnected with drug use (Measham, 2002; Boyd, 2001; Campbell, 2000; Erickson et al., 2000). Exercises of power are ignored by saying that everyone experiences addiction in the same way and that all ‘addicts’ possess the same qualities and characteristics. A teenager’s experience with drug use differs from the experiences of older persons. What drugs are used and how they are used matter, however in NA prescription medication, marijuana, alcohol, and injecting heroin are regarded as having the same effects on people. Stating that “all addicts are basically the same in kind” disregards different experiences of drug use and recovery (NA Basic Text, 1988: 74).

This results in part because of NA’s assumption of a rational, universal subject. Foucault challenges this humanist approach by arguing that the subject is produced through power relations, specifically “a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to” (Foucault, 1982: 781). Feminist theorists also critique notions of universal subjects because people who are considered irrational, such as women and in this case ‘addicts’, are excluded from the definition of a subject. As Margaret McLaren argues, “the universal norms of humanism incorporate an ideal of rationality that is constituted through the exclusion of otherness” (McLaren, 2002: 48). The notion of a universal, rational subject “erases differences that may

be constitutive of subjectivity” (McLaren, 2002: 75). Individuals’ experiences and social relationships are not addressed. The subject is conceptualized as isolated, not as situated within various contexts (McLaren, 2002).

In NA differences among people are not considered important. Rather, they are seen as distracting in the *Text*: “Addiction and withdrawal distort rational thought, and newcomers usually focus on differences rather than similarities. They look for ways to disprove the evidence of addiction or disqualify themselves from recovery” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 87). This is due in part to defining addiction as a disease, which “takes attention away from the *why* of the epidemics and their consequences, the reasons and causes for so much misery” (Rapping, 1996: 80).

### Self-Objectification

The last mode of objectification is the transformation of the self into an object to be known and mastered, which I am calling self-objectification (Foucault, 1982). This mode encompasses practices individuals perform on their selves and is included in Foucault’s definition of the subject as “tied to his [sic] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (Foucault, 1982: 781). Subjects are not passive; they play a part in their objectification and subjection. This does not imply that all subjection is negative, there are degrees of subjection; degrees to the submission of one’s subjectivity (de Courville Nicol, 2002).

One way in which subjects in NA objectify their selves is by adopting the identity of ‘addict’. In order to transform one’s self into a ‘recovering addict’ one is first required, in the NA



program, to self-identify as an ‘addict’: “We feel that each individual has to answer the question, ‘Am I an addict?’” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 7). Self-identifying as an ‘addict’ is considered the first step to recovery: “Once we identify ourselves as addicts, help becomes possible” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 7). Each person is required to identify as such in order to participate in NA. Adopting an ‘addict’ identity is central to the NA program of recovery: “Denial of our addiction kept us sick, but our honest admission of addiction enabled us to stop using” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 7-8). This self-identification is a part of Step One’s admittance that one is powerless over their disease of addiction. Once one identifies as an ‘addict’ one is required to actively participate in NA and act upon one’s self in order to transform into a ‘recovering addict’.

This self-identification is done by subjects to their selves. It serves to classify and characterize individuals as ‘addicts’ who are different from those who are ‘non-addicts’. Once one identifies as an ‘addict’, this person becomes different than others who do not have the disease of addiction and, thus, participates in particular forms of self-government according to this new identity (i.e., practicing abstinence and NA’s Twelve Steps because you have the disease of addiction). By identifying one’s self as an ‘addict’, a person is engaging in self-objectification and acting in accordance with NA’s norms that require individuals to adopt a new identity as a person who has a disease, who has no control over drugs, and who requires constant self-government to prevent the disease from taking over one’s life. In this sense, people make their selves subjects and actively participate in their subjection when they subject their selves by acting in accordance with the relevant norms of NA. NA can therefore be seen as a ‘revitalization movement’ that requires “the total

transformation of a person's self-conception, the categories by which the person defines his or her self-identity and place in the world" (Davis & Anderson, 1983: 268).

NA's individualized explanations of behaviour lead to a particular form of government based on an objectification of the self. In this form of government 'addicts' are prompted to act on their selves through particular techniques of the self according to the norms of NA (such as abstinence) to achieve the desired aim of recovery. These techniques of the self are life-long endeavors since addiction is conceptualized as a disease without a cure.

### Conclusion

Addiction is regarded as a disease that is fatal and incurable, "[h]owever, it is a treatable disease" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 7). Treatable only through the NA program of recovery, which separates individuals who are not abstinent from all drugs ('addicts') from individuals who are practicing abstinence and the Twelve Steps of NA ('recovering addicts'). This difference is central to how 'addicts' and addiction are represented within the NA program of recovery because people participating in NA are divided into these two categories. The goal of NA is to transform people with the disease of addiction from 'addicts' into 'recovering addicts'.

In the *Text*, one can choose to be an 'addict', which is strongly discouraged, or one can choose to practice NA and adopt a new identity and life as a 'recovering addict'. People are to transform their selves through the recovery process of NA from an 'addict' into a 'recovering addict'. This acts to enlist subjects in NA and gives hope of a new, improved life.

There is a contrast between one's life when one is not in NA and one's life in the NA program of recovery. One's life before participating in NA is represented as dangerous and harmful, while one's life after adopting the 'recovering addict' identity is represented as an improvement, even as a miracle: "The program works a miracle in our lives" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 11). The differentiation between one's life before NA ('addict') and after NA ('recovering addict') is highlighted through discussions of the changes one experiences due to practicing the NA program of recovery: "Daily practice of our Twelve Step Program enables us to change from what we were to people guided by a Higher Power" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 83).

The constitution of subjects who act entrepreneurial is necessary in NA. The transformation of one's self from an 'addict' into a 'recovering addict' requires a subject who manages one's life according to the principles of NA. As discussed previously, this expansion of the entrepreneur to all members of a population is a characteristic of neoliberalism: "The entrepreneur, it seems, was actually quite like us: we *could* all be entrepreneurially successful, we could all learn to be self-realizing, if we learned the skills of self-presentation, self-direction and self-management" (Rose, 1989: 115). Rose (1999) argues that neoliberal government requires the constitution of subjects who are able to continually improve upon their selves and their lives. Therefore, to transform one's self in this way requires a subject to practice the neoliberal goals of individual responsibility and personal entrepreneurship. As Petersen argues, "[n]eo-liberalism calls upon the individual to enter into the process of his or her own self-government through processes of endless self-examination, self-care and self-improvement" (Petersen, 1997: 194).

We see this neoliberal subject in NA where individuals are constructed as able to change their selves from individuals who use drugs compulsively (individuals who are represented as irresponsible, selfish, and dependent on drugs) to individuals who abstain from drug use (individuals who are represented as responsible and sane).

## **Chapter Four:**

### **Narcotics Anonymous as a Technology of the Self**

This program works a miracle in our lives. We become different people (NA Basic Text, 1988: 11).

We learn that the program won't work when we try to adapt it to our life. We must learn to adapt our life to the program (NA Basic Text, 1988: 55).

In the previous chapter I outlined two identities ('addict' and 'recovering addict') found in NA. Now the question becomes, how do 'addicts' transform their selves into 'recovering addicts'. The answer: 'Addicts' are transformed into 'recovering addicts' through a form of government called techniques of the self.

Political rationalities underlie all modes of government, therefore neoliberalism promotes particular ways of governing individuals and populations which correspond to its broader goals and political rationalities. Certain goals of neoliberal government are emphasized which require the constitution of a 'neoliberal' subject. In order for these goals, discussed in Chapter One (i.e., market expansion, the spread of entrepreneurship to all individuals), to be achieved, the constitution of subjects who act according to neoliberal imperatives is necessary. In other words, "forms of political power become intrinsically linked to a knowledge of human subjectivity" (Rose, 1996b: 62-63).

Foucault defines technologies of the self as those

which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault, 1988: 18).

Foucault (1988) makes a distinction between these technologies and technologies of production, technologies of sign systems, and technologies of power, however he notes that these technologies are interconnected. A *technique* of the self is made up of techniques or practices through which individuals seek to achieve desired goals, whereas a *technology* of the self is a broader 'system' that encompasses various, diverse techniques of the self. These technologies and techniques of government do "not seek to *crush* subjectivity but to produce individuals who attributed a certain kind of moral subjectivity to themselves and who evaluated and reformed themselves according to its norms" (Rose, 1996b: 78). Furthermore, "[i]t is through technologies that political rationalities and the programmes of government that articulate them become capable of deployment (Rose & Miller, 1992: 183).

In order to demonstrate how 'addicts' transform their selves into 'recovering addicts' I will begin with a discussion of neoliberalism, followed by a discussion of freedom. In the second section of this chapter I examine abstinence and confession as specific techniques of the self employed in NA. First, I outline more concretely how the neoliberal goals of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility underlie the deployment of specific techniques of the self.

### Personal Entrepreneurship

With neoliberalism, entrepreneurship is spread from specific individuals to all individuals. While an elite of entrepreneurs was created under market liberalism, with neoliberalism "every human being is an entrepreneur managing their own life, and should act as such" (Treanor, 2004: 10). There has been a shift from entrepreneurs as a specific group of people

who respond to the market, to entrepreneurs as all individuals in a population. Individuals are now required to organize, manage, and assume the risks of their decisions, choices: their lives. Enterprise “designates an array of rules for the conduct of one’s everyday existence: energy, initiative, ambition, calculation, and personal responsibility” (Rose, 1996b: 154). Therefore, neoliberal rationalities require the constitution of subjects who are personally entrepreneurial; who participate and compete in the market; who continually respond to the market and its discourses; who manage expertise discourse; and who make calculated decisions. Those who do not engage in this subjectivity are considered failures since they are not acting in accordance with the broader rationalities which require an active, entrepreneurial subject (Treanor, 2004; Robertson, 2001; Rose, 1996b; Greco, 1993).

This expansion of a market philosophy into the social sphere, extended to every individual, is a fundamental characteristic of neoliberalism and requires the constitution of subjects who act upon their selves through techniques of the self (i.e., learning to sell one’s self in a job interview). For individuals to act in an entrepreneurial fashion they must be able to, and chose to, act upon their selves. In other words they must participate in techniques of the self.

With neoliberalism, there has been a shift from the goal of constructing individuals as passive to the goal of constructing individuals “as active individuals seeking to ‘enterprise themselves’, to maximize their quality of life through acts of choice” (Rose, 1996a: 57). Individuals are responsible for their choices and their health and well-being. Therefore, we see an emergence of an ‘enterprising self’ which

will make an enterprise of its life, seek to maximize its own human capital, project itself a future, and seek to shape itself in order to become that which it wished to be.

The enterprising self is thus both an active self and a calculating self, a self that calculates *about* itself and that acts *upon* itself in order to better itself (Rose, 1996b: 154).

The enterprising subject as autonomous is a goal of neoliberal government (Rose, 1996b).

People are required to be, and are constituted as, autonomous in order for the governing practices of techniques of the self to be effective. Individuals are required to act as if they are autonomous in order to work and act upon their selves:

enterprise also provides a rationale for the structuring of the lives of individual citizens. Individuals are to become, as it were, entrepreneurs of themselves, shaping their own lives through the choices they make among the forms of life available to them (Rose, 1989: 226).

The neoliberal subject is perceived as able to self-govern and as responsible for this self-government: “[I]t has become possible to govern without governing *society*—to govern through the ‘responsibilized’ and ‘educated’ anxieties and aspirations of individuals and their families” (Rose, 1999: 88). Neoliberal political rationalities prompt the constitution of subjects who engage in self-government—subjects who are entrepreneurial and responsible. As such, we see the emergence of a subject who engages in specific techniques of the self. Such a subject’s objectives are to be autonomous, to manage risks, and to achieve fulfillment in areas of health, success and happiness, as well as to be individually responsible for this fulfillment by making the appropriate choices (Robertson, 2001; Rose, 1996b).

### Individual Responsibility

Neoliberalism is in part a response to the welfare state, which emphasizes social and collective responsibility (MacGregor, 1999). In contrast, with neoliberal political rationalities



individuals become increasingly responsible for their health, well-being and happiness.

Characteristics of the shift to neoliberal forms of government include the conception of the subject as autonomous, the rise in the importance and role of experts and expertise, the idea that individuals can improve their lives, and the constitution of subjects as responsible and able to govern their selves (Nettleton, 1997).

Neoliberal subjects are expected to be responsible for their health and to self-govern in order to achieve the desired goals of happiness and well-being. Individuals can “achieve normality through working on themselves, controlling their impulses in their everyday conduct and habits, [and] inculcating norms of conduct into their children” (Rose, 1999: 76). Sarah Nettleton argues that individuals are perceived as able to control their health in neoliberal cultures and consequently, individuals “have a right and a duty to maintain, contribute to and ensure” their health (Nettleton, 1997: 208). People become responsible to actively preserve and ‘better’ their current and future health. The standards of what constitutes health and well-being are established by experts, which are passed onto individuals who are required to act on their selves to ensure their health (Nettleton, 1997). As a consequence, “[g]overnment has increasingly come to rely on these ‘technologies of the self’ to shape and enhance the capacities of individuals” (Nettleton, 1997: 212).

Thus, individuals who engage with established definitions of what ‘good’ health entails are demonstrating and fulfilling the norm of “taking responsibility for determining one’s future” (Crawford, 1994: 1352). Pursuing one’s health is a rational goal in neoliberal cultures and it is the individual who is personally responsible for this pursuit. Those who do not engage in

taking responsibility for their health are deemed irresponsible and dangerous. Robert Crawford (1994) argues that the notion of the 'unhealthy other' is placed in opposition to the 'healthy self'. The unhealthy others are conceptualized as lacking self-control, as dangerous to the healthy selves, as irresponsible and as responsible for their disease. This is easily compared to the dichotomy between 'addicts' and 'recovering addicts' in NA.

This neoliberal imperative of individual responsibility requires the constitution of subjects who act in accordance with expert knowledges that inform subjects on how to act responsibly. For example, expert discourses on nutrition are disseminated and people are expected to respond to these discourses and make decisions about what they eat according to this information. People are encouraged to believe, and to act in accordance with the principle, that they are able, and have a right and a duty, to shape their future, health, and well-being.

We see this neoliberal goal of individual responsibility in NA. Recovery is explicitly defined as each 'addicts' responsibility, however there is a distinction between 'addicts' being responsible for their disease of addiction and being responsible for their recovery. The *Text* emphasizes that individuals are responsible for preventing relapse, yet they are not responsible for their disease of addiction: "Although we are not responsible for our disease, we are responsible for our recovery" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 15). 'Recovering addicts' are responsible for engaging in and practicing the NA program: "Recovery found in Narcotics Anonymous must come from within, and no one stays clean for anyone but themselves" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 80).

In this way, subjects in NA are individualized through techniques of the self. It becomes necessary for ‘recovering addicts’ to know, to understand, and to act upon their selves. The neoliberal entrepreneurial notion that “work on the self and its relations to others is in the interests of personal development and must be an individual commitment” is present within the NA program of recovery (Rose, 1996b: 79). ‘Addicts’ are taught through the *Text* to know their selves in order to regulate their conduct, beliefs, thoughts, and bodies: “[W]e form a habit of looking at ourselves, our actions, attitudes and relationships on a regular basis” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 41). The *Text* emphasizes the importance of knowing one’s self in order to maintain abstinence and recovery. As Rose argues “we have come to relate to ourselves as creatures of self-responsibility and self-mastery, with the capacity to transform ourselves and make our own lives the object of practices of self-shaping” (Rose, 1999: 95). Therefore, the practices of government in NA involve techniques of the self; techniques that require ‘recovering addicts’ to act on their selves in order to transform their selves from ‘addicts’ into ‘recovering addicts’; from unhealthy, irresponsible people into healthy, responsible people.

‘Addicts’ are thus prompted to engage in specific techniques of the self in order to self-govern for the goal of recovery. A successful recovery is defined in NA as transforming ‘addicts’ into “responsible and productive members of society” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 83). The *Text* explains that ‘addicts’ cannot be responsible, productive, happy, healthy, nor are they able to participate in society. The only way such an individual can possess these characteristics and become a good, responsible citizen is by transforming one’s self into a ‘recovering addict’: “We change every day. We gradually and carefully pull ourselves out of

the isolation and loneliness of addiction and into the mainstream of life” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 35). The Twelve Steps of NA are central in this transformation from ‘addict’ to ‘recovering addict’. There is a focus on a new way of life that is available through membership and participation in NA: “What is our message? The message is that an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 65).

Before I move into the discussion of abstinence and confession as techniques of the self in NA, an important concept needs to be addressed. For techniques of the self to be used, people must believe that they have the ability to act upon their selves. To govern one's self is to assume that one has the freedom to do so.

### Freedom

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Foucault's conception of the subject is central to understanding ‘addict’ subjectivities in NA. He conceptualizes the subject as fragmented, dynamic and fluid unlike humanist conceptions of the subject as unified and static.

Specifically, he outlines two definitions of subject: “subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his [sic] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (Foucault, 1982: 781). This understanding of the subject is central to my argument because it allows for an understanding of individuals as constructed as able and willing to participate in their own government.

Rose argues that people in neoliberal cultures are governed through their freedom and are constructed as 'free' subjects: "[M]odern individuals are not merely 'free to choose', but *obliged to be free*, to understand and enact their lives in terms of choice" (Rose, 1999: 87). Individuals in neoliberal societies are conceived of as autonomous, able to make appropriate decisions, and free to make such decisions. In these cultures, Rose (1999) argues, freedom is synonymous with autonomy in that individuals are conceptualized as able to choose which direction their lives take and as able to achieve their goals. He argues that "free individuals become governable—in a range of different ways with varying consequences—as normal citizens" (Rose, 1999: 76). Accordingly, people are expected to act upon—to govern—their actions and decisions in a responsible and entrepreneurial fashion.

This government takes place through the decisions and behaviour of subjects. For example, an assumption within NA is that 'addicts' cannot experience freedom if they continue to use drugs. According to NA, 'addicts' must practice rigorous self-government and self-discipline in order to experience freedom from using drugs: "Subjects are to do the work on themselves...to make them free" (Rose, 2000: 334). 'Addicts' have the responsibility to make their selves free through self-government and regulation: "Individuals are to be governed through their freedom" (Rose, 1999: 41).

Not only are subjects governed through their freedom, freedom is also conceptualized as a goal for the neoliberal subject: "We have acted upon ourselves, or been acted upon by others, in the wish to be free" (Rose, 1999: 67). Individuals self-govern according to established norms in their culture. The established norms in North American culture are for individuals

to achieve their own health, well-being and happiness. Individuals' lives are considered "lifestyle decisions made by autonomous individual seeking to fulfil themselves and gain personal happiness" (Rose 1999: 86). People are perceived as free to make such decisions and able to achieve the appropriate goals (to be healthy, successful, happy). The assumption is that "they *want to be healthy*" (Rose, 1999: 86). Likewise, in NA the assumption is that 'addicts' want to 'recover'.

Freedom is represented as an outcome of a successful NA recovery program: "Narcotics Anonymous offers only one promise and that is freedom from active addiction" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 102). Freedom is constructed as a reward in the form of freedom from using drugs, freedom from one's old life, and freedom from old patterns of behaviour and thought: "Before we got clean, most of our actions were guided by impulse. Today, we are not locked into this type of thinking. We are free" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 87). This freedom is to be achieved through practicing the NA program of recovery and it is through working the Twelve Steps and engaging fully in the NA program that "[r]eal freedom is now possible" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 88). In other words: "freedom is both the end of recovery and the means" (Valverde, 1998: 32).

'Addicts' participating in NA are obligated to act upon their selves; to transform their identity into 'recovering addicts' in order to be free. This transformation requires them to act upon their selves continually. They are taught that they must give up their life entirely and immerse their selves in a new way of living to experience freedom and recovery. Those who do not participate in NA are represented as choosing to live unhealthy, unhappy, and as

controlled by their use of substances. The *Text* explains that it is only active participation in the NA program of recovery that leads to the possibility of freedom: “Working the steps and maintaining abstinence give us a daily reprieve from our self-imposed life sentences. We become free to live” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 11). To experience the promised freedom from using drugs, one must practice rigorous self-government. This self-government is represented as one’s choice as well as one’s gateway to experience freedom. The practices of self-government are informed and regulated by fears of relapsing, fears of harming one’s self, and fears of not containing one’s will.

According to NA, self-control (control of one’s will and behaviours) is necessary to be free. To achieve freedom from using drugs, one is required to restrict a variety of behaviours, interactions with others, and thoughts. These restrictions are believed to be necessary for freedom, happiness, and recovery. Like Emile Durkheim argues, discipline and restraints are necessary to achieve health and happiness, which results from self-control. Such control of one’s will is necessary “because it teaches us to restrain and master ourselves, [as] a means of emancipation and of freedom” (Durkheim, 1984: 177).

This relates to the paradoxical relationship between power and freedom in NA discourses. One is required to admit and accept one’s powerlessness in order to empower one’s self with the self-control and self-discipline necessary to challenge one’s disease of addiction (Weinberg, 2000). In order to experience freedom from using drugs, it is believed that ‘addicts’ need to engage in beliefs of powerlessness at the same time as engaging in regulatory behaviours.

Now that I have established the neoliberal political rationalities that underlie government in the form of techniques of the self, I will move onto abstinence and confession as examples of government in NA.

### Abstinence as Technique of the Self

The fundamental aspect of the NA treatment of recovery is to “maintain abstinence from mind-altering, mood-changing chemicals” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 12). Since NA considers alcohol a drug, abstinence includes all forms of drugs and alcohol (NA Basic Text, 1988: 18), as well as prescription medication (NA Basic Text, 1988: 98-99). This abstinence is described as “the foundation for our new way of life” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 86). The goal of NA is a recovery that extends beyond abstinence, although not using drugs is represented as the foundation for further recovery. Without a cessation of all forms of drug use any recovery is perceived as impossible: “The first thing to do is to stay clean. This makes the other stages of recovery possible” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 81).

The importance of abstinence is evidenced by how it is celebrated and rewarded within NA. The date one begins abstaining from all drugs and becomes a new birthday, which is celebrated throughout one’s time in NA. There is a yearly celebration of abstinence where on their new birthday there is a special meeting celebrating their achievement in NA (Valverde & White-Mair, 1999). Abstaining from all substances is central to the creation and maintenance of one’s new identity of ‘recovering addict’.



## *Relapse*

To achieve abstinence and recovery, the NA program of recovery requires diligent, daily self-regulation, self-discipline, and self-government. Surveillance and government of one's behaviours, thoughts, and relationships is necessary to ensure that one does not ingest any form of mind-altering substances. If a 'recovering addict' fails to participate fully in the NA program, they are seen as at risk for using drugs: "The progression of recovery is a continuous, uphill journey. Without effort we start the downhill run again. The progression of the disease is an ongoing process, even during abstinence" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 79). To engage in abstinence requires daily work, regardless of how long one has maintained abstinence: "Experience shows that those who do not work our program of recovery on a daily basis may relapse" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 75-76).

A relapse occurs when a 'recovering addict' uses drugs or alcohol while practicing abstinence in NA. A relapse can range from one drink or one use of drugs to continual use of alcohol and/or drugs and can range from one minute to the rest of one's life. Relapse is a feared, common experience in NA. It is assumed that people participating in NA will relapse at some point in their recovery: "Because addiction is an incurable disease, addicts are subject to relapse" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 76). This suggests that 'recovering addicts' will forever be prone to relapse. Consequently, the 'addict' subject in NA is one who lives in constant fear. The dangerousness of relapse is emphasized as is the inevitability of relapsing, a combination which creates fear of one's self; the fear that one will use drugs again in the future. 'Recovering addicts' in NA are taught that if they relapse and continue to use substances they will die, live in insanity, and it will be impossible for them to be happy,

responsible, or members of larger society. Thus, ‘recovering addicts’ are taught to fear the part of their selves that is unmanageable, out of control, insane and compulsive—a fear which provides an impulse to govern one’s self.

The *Text* explains that the only way to prevent relapse is to continually and daily abide by the requirements of NA. These requirements include attending meetings, having a sponsor, sponsoring others, working the Twelve Steps, assisting individuals who are new to NA, and carrying out ‘service’ work (i.e., participating in voluntary NA committees). This maintenance of abstinence requires acting on one’s self daily, for the rest of one’s life: “Experience shows that those who do not work our program of recovery on a daily basis may relapse” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 75-76).

In the chapter entitled *Recovery and Relapse*, a relapse is not perceived as “a sign of complete failure”, but instead as a potentially positive experience because “a relapse may be the jarring experience that brings about a more rigorous application of the program” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 74). However, the *Text* talks about the dangerousness of relapses: “Relapses are often fatal” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 76); “A relapse, if we survive it,” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 75)]. Therefore, there is a tension between trying to prevent relapse at great lengths and assuming that most (if not all) ‘addicts’ participating in NA will relapse at some point.

This tension is also present in the assumption that one’s relapse is represented as one’s choice. When individuals enter into NA (voluntarily or forcibly) they are taught how the NA

program works. Once individuals have engaged with NA they are perceived as having a choice to not use drugs again: “We are not forced into relapse. We are given a choice. Relapse is never an accident. Relapse is a sign that we have a reservation in our program” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 76). A relapse is seen as an indication that a person is not working one’s program in the proper way or not working hard enough at one’s recovery. The *Text* explicitly states that it is up to ‘addicts’ to choose to stop using drugs: “We have seen the program work for any addict who honestly and sincerely wants to stop” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 10). Recovery becomes a measure of one’s sincerity, honesty, commitment, and strength of will and character.

This relates to normalizing judgment. As discussed in the previous chapter, objectifying subjects through dividing practices (‘addict’ versus ‘recovering addict’) results in normalization. Standards are established and deviations from these standards mark a subject. Therefore, individuals subject their selves by acting in accordance with relevant norms to avoid being marked. Normalization is a technique of power that individualizes subjects through highlighting differences at the same time as it requires individuals to be and act the same (Foucault, 1995).

With normalizing judgment, instead of judging individuals on the basis of right and wrong, judgment depends on where individuals are situated in relation to a norm. The central norm of NA is abstinence, therefore the explanations for relapse in the *Text* revolve around measures of one’s character in following and working the NA program. The established norm dictating whether one is an ‘addict’ or a ‘recovering addict’ is abstinence. People are required

to conform to and to practice the NA program and are defined as either a 'recovering addict' or an 'addict'.

Therefore, to prevent relapse 'recovering addicts' must diligently follow the NA program of recovery. If they do not, they are blamed for their resulting relapse: "We learn that the program won't work when we try to adapt it to our life. We must learn to adapt our life to the program" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 55). Consequently, the necessary precautions and appropriate self-government must be taken to prevent relapse: "If we begin to avoid our new responsibilities by missing meetings, neglecting Twelfth Step work, or not getting involved, our program stops. These are the kinds of things that lead to relapse" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 76). Consequently, the only way for 'recovering addicts' to prevent relapse is to diligently and actively participate in NA: "We have never seen a person who lives the Narcotics Anonymous Program relapse" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 76).

Abstinence is emphasized as the key to recovery, while relapse is represented as dangerous, to be feared, and to be avoided at any and all costs. In order to prevent relapse individuals in NA are required to engage in techniques of the self. They are required to monitor, regulate and govern all of their behaviours, actions, and thoughts in order to maintain abstinence and experience recovery.

#### Confession as Technique of the Self

Foucault (1982) argues that pastoral power is a technique of power which originates in Christianity and which has made its way out of its traditional placement in the Christian

church into mainstream society. He characterizes pastoral power as having “meticulous rules of self-examination” and “the process of confession and guidance” (Foucault, 1990: 19). He argues that pastoral power focuses on the individual and “cannot be exercised without knowing the insides of people’s minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets” (Foucault, 1982: 783). The goal of pastoral power in its modern forms is to guarantee one’s health, well-being, and safety. In this sense, pastoral power, and specifically its method of confession, is a technique of the self that allows individuals to alter both their identity and their subjectivity (from ‘addict’ to ‘recovering addict’) by performing specific actions on their bodies, thoughts, and behaviours. Confession requires individuals to reveal their selves to others in order to know their selves; to reveal the ‘truth’ of their selves (Foucault, 1988). This performance of confession allows individuals to modify their subjectivity to achieve desired goals such as recovery and freedom.

In Christian traditions, confession involves “analytical and continual verbalization of thoughts carried on in the relation to complete obedience to someone else” (Foucault, 1988: 48). In NA, confession involves the same processes yet the required obedience and disclosure is to the NA program itself, other NA members, and to one’s Higher Power. The characteristics of confession (a focus on the individual, the requirement to know one’s self, and the goal of health and well-being) are present in the NA program of recovery. The Twelve Steps orient individuals to their relationship with their Higher Power and emphasize focusing on one’s self.

Confession in NA is referred to as 'sharing'. Sharing involves speaking openly at NA meetings and one-to-one with other 'addicts' about one's feelings, past and present experiences, and how to work the NA program. Honesty in sharing one's feelings, thoughts, behaviours (past and present) with one's self and others is required to experience full recovery as defined by NA: "[W]e have observed some members who remain abstinent for long periods of time whose dishonesty and self-deceit still prevent them from enjoying complete recovery and acceptance within society" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 74). Being dishonest with one's self and with others, and not sharing openly are seen as impeding one's recovery.

This emphasis on knowing one's self and being honest with one's self is also rooted in Christian traditions. According to Foucault, Christianity obliges its followers to know their selves: "Each person has the duty to know who he [sic] is...to acknowledge faults, to recognize temptations, to locate desires, and...to disclose these things either to God or to others in the community" (Foucault, 1988: 40). This tradition is seen within the *Text* in that it emphasizes the necessity for individuals participating in NA to get to know their selves through conducting personal inventories and sharing openly and honestly with other NA members.

Sharing as confessional is persistent throughout the *Text*. The *Text* instructs 'addicts' to confess their past and present feelings, actions, thoughts, and behaviours to one's self (Step Four) and to others, including God (Step Five). This is an ongoing process in that Step Ten requires daily inventories: "We work this step continuously....We monitor our feelings,

emotions, fantasies and actions. By constantly looking at ourselves, we are able to avoid repeating the actions that make us feel bad” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 42). Members of NA are also required to share at meetings, with sponsors and those they sponsor, and with other NA members to maintain their abstinence and to achieve recovery.

Since it is the individual’s responsibility to engage with and practice the Twelve Steps, those who do not, or do not work them in a way that is deemed appropriate, are judged.

Normalizing judgments serve to enforce particular neoliberal goals and, therefore not fulfilling such norms and goals is perceived as failing. Hence, sharing as confession is a technique of the self through which ‘addicts’ in NA govern their selves.

### Conclusion

Neoliberal rationalities require the constitution of subjects who act in an entrepreneurial and responsible fashion and who engage in techniques of the self, such as making appropriate decisions in order to achieve the broader goal of health and well-being. The broader objective of these techniques of the self is “to align political, social, and institutional goals with individual pleasures and desires, and with the happiness and fulfilment of the self” (Rose, 1996a: 257).

The NA program of recovery is aligned with neoliberal political rationalities. ‘Addicts’ in NA are taught to engage in techniques of the self in order to govern their selves according to the Twelve Steps of NA. Abstinence and confession are two such techniques of the self used in NA. Maintaining abstinence, confessing one’s past and present wrongs, and continually

working on one's self (to alter one's behaviours and thoughts according to the norms of NA) by the guidance of the NA Twelve Steps in necessary ensure recovery.

Despite the requirement of abstinence from all drugs and alcohol, abstinence is not the only goal of NA: "Recovery as experienced through our Twelve Steps is our goal, not mere physical abstinence" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 75). Insight into what this means resides in Step Twelve (Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs). In the explanation of this step, the *Text* states that "a spiritual awakening takes many different forms...However, all spiritual awakenings have some thing in common. Common elements include an end to loneliness and a sense of direction in our lives" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 48). Also, the shift from actively using drugs to "[l]earning to help others"...through "acting as instruments of our Higher Power" is given as "evidence of spiritual awakening" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 49).

This recovery cannot be achieved by mere abstinence, instead individuals have to actively, daily engage with the various aspects of the NA program. The *Text* instructs 'addicts' that recovery is to be experienced through the Twelve Steps of NA. These steps are to be used in every area of one's life and are to be prioritized: "We have to keep our recovery first and our priorities in order" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 79). NA is a program which requires lifetime membership because it is "a way of life" where one learns "the value of spiritual principles such as surrender, humility and service from reading the N.A. literature, going to meetings and working the steps" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 12).



The NA program of recovery is demanding. Not only is abstinence necessary, but so is adopting an entirely new life; a new identity as a ‘recovering addict’ that requires daily management. However, the *Text* insists that “[t]here is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 9).

## **Chapter Five:**

### **Where Do We Go From Here?**

We do not have to understand this program for it to work. All we have to do is to follow direction (NA Basic Text, 1988: 88)

In this project I have explored the processes by which people become ‘addicts’ and ‘recovering addicts’ in NA. Throughout this work I have argued that NA is aligned with the neoliberal goals of individual responsibility and personal entrepreneurship. I have also argued that neoliberal political rationalities are involved in promoting specific forms of individual responsibility and self-government in the construction of ‘addict’ subjectivities.

I contextualized the emergence of NA within 1960’s North American culture with explanations of neoliberalism and histories of AA, NA, and the self-help movement. Within this context, I argued that there have been new methods of government, new conceptions of subjects, and a radicalization of certain liberal political rationalities; those of personal entrepreneurship and individual responsibility.

After presenting the theoretical framework from which I am operating, I discussed the discourses of addiction in the *Text*. I argued that NA is entrenched with understandings of addiction as a disease with consistent symptoms that can only be arrested with abstinence. Using a governmentality approach, I explored the process by which individuals become ‘addict’ subjects in NA. I highlighted scientific objectification, dividing practices, unifying practices, and self-objectification as four processes through which subjection occurs. I identified the ‘addict’ and the ‘recovering addict’ as two types of subjectivities found in NA.

I demonstrated how NA is a technology of the self that requires ‘addicts’ to transform their selves, through the techniques of the self it institutes, into ‘recovering addicts’ in order to achieve recovery. This transformation of one’s self from an ‘addict’ into a ‘recovering addict’ is the goal of NA. Further, I argued that NA is infused with neoliberal political rationalities and instructs individuals to engage in techniques of the self in order to govern their selves according to the Twelve Steps of NA. I used abstinence and confession as two examples of techniques of the self employed in NA.

Yet, the story of the constitution of subjects in NA does not end here.

There are many areas of NA left unexplored. There is space for an analysis of the role and implications of religion in NA, especially the concepts of surrendering of one’s will to a Higher Power, and spiritual awakenings. There is a relationship between NA and Protestantism that deserves examination. Most importantly, an analysis of gender and gendered subjectivities in NA is crucial. A woman’s experience of addiction may be very different from others experiences. For example, if she has children and/or is pregnant her experiences are not the same as someone without children. There is a substantial body of literature that addresses women’s experience with drug use (Boyd, 2001; Measham, 2002; Campbell, 2000; Weir, 1996). However, literature that addresses women’s experiences in NA is absent in this literature. Because NA remains the dominant substance treatment program in North America it is crucial that women’s experiences in NA be considered.

Additionally, the political and social implications of the NA program of recovery need further exploration. For example, NA's traditions to remain apolitical result in the acceptance of the status quo. Ignoring social contexts (i.e., poverty, what substances one uses, how these substances are used, and rituals of drug use) perpetuates beliefs and policies that hold individuals as solely responsible for their health and well-being. NA is not neutral. It is political, despite its claims to be apolitical:

Do you hate your body or your husband, and yet can't seem to stop eating or putting up with him? Well, never mind the causes of these feelings, or whether they are justified or not. "Here is a set of rules every day for the rest of your life and don't let anyone or anything distract you from them, because they are all that matters and they are the key to your very survival." And it is this message which makes the movement not *apolitical* as it seems, but highly political, in a most reactionary and repressive way (Rapping, 1996: 7).

The contexts in which one lives cannot be ignored. NA's strict focus and requirement of abstinence does not adequately address the complex issue of drug use. Davis and Anderson (1983) argue that the issues involved in the use of drugs and alcohol are complex and variable. Therefore, they advocate for treatment to be modified to account for differing contexts and concerns. They critique AA and NA's disease model approach because it obscures peoples' individual struggles and experiences. In other words, the adoption of the disease model removes individuals from the political and social contexts of their use of substances. This is a limited approach to drug use and treatment. Drug use is a complex and variable issue, which is why Davis and Anderson (1983) attribute the failure of treatment to this decontextualization and segregation of the individual who uses drugs from their social relationships.

My intention is not the elimination of the NA program of recovery. This program works for some people, but not for all. My critiques of this program are with its underlying assumptions of addiction as a disease for which each individual is responsible. I also challenge NA's claims of being "a proven program of recovery" (NA Basic Text, 1988: xv). My objective is to open a dialogue and to come back to the question of why NA remains the dominant treatment program in our society. Other questions provoked by this work are: What are the implications of the monotheistic conception of a 'Higher Power' in NA? What is the relationship between Protestantism and NA? How is the concept of 'powerlessness' understood in NA? and How are gendered subjectivities constituted in NA? This last question is important because of NA's focus on a universal subject that explicitly excludes gender differences of drug use and recovery experiences.

This project has transformed with time and the most drastic change has been the absence of a focus on women. Initially, my objective was to explore the constitution of women's subjectivities in NA. I wanted to do a more complete discussion of gender, but I realized that more baseline work on the constitution of 'addict' subjectivities had to be done before this was possible. It was important to understand how subjects are constituted before an analysis of gender differences in these subjectivities could be undertaken. Additionally, the methodology and object of analysis I chose did not allow for a comprehensive analysis of how gendered subjects are produced in NA. Of course, neoliberal subjects are gendered, but the *Text* is limited in its focus on the commonality between all 'addicts'. To explore gendered subjectivities in NA ethnographic work involving interviews with women in NA is necessary. For these reasons, I made the decision to focus on the constitution of 'addict' subjectivities in

general instead of only an examination of the constitution of women's subjectivities in NA. This analysis allowed for a more general understanding of how 'addict' subjectivities are constituted in NA as well as an exploration of the implications of these constitutions.

### A Final Scenario

Let us suppose that you drink socially and occasionally smoke marijuana. One of your parents becomes ill and you become the primary caregiver for many months. During this time, you began to smoke marijuana daily in the evenings to help you relax and cope with your increased stress. Does this use of marijuana make you an addict? If you were injecting heroin or smoking methamphetamines under the same circumstances, would this make you an addict?

NA would respond: "We feel that each individual has to answer the question, 'Am I an addict?'" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 7). However, your partner has become concerned and encourages you to attend NA meetings to help you stop. You attend a few meetings and decide that you are not an addict, but when you tell the people at the meetings this, they tell you that you "are still denying [your] addiction" because "[m]ost addicts resist recovery" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 86-87). The other NA members suggest that you continue to come to meetings, in fact they suggest that you attend "[a] meeting a day for at least the first ninety days of recovery" (NA Basic Text, 1988: 53). You follow this advice because you want to cut back on the amount you are using. With time you realize that you actually are an addict who has the disease of addiction, which you are powerless over and that is making your life unmanageable.

You are told that the NA program of recovery is the only way to handle your use of substances and that to achieve recovery it is crucial to “maintain abstinence from mind-altering, mood-changing chemicals” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 12). This includes alcohol and prescription medication, even though you do not believe that you have a problem with alcohol. You are taught that if you drink alcohol or use any substance you are putting yourself in great danger because you are “in the grip of a continuous and progressive illness whose ends are always the same: jails, institutions and death” (NA Basic Text, 1988: 3). If you do relapse, you have to start the NA program and its steps over from the beginning and announce to people at the next meeting you attend that you have relapsed.

Your goal is to achieve recovery and a new identity as a clean, recovering addict by participating in the NA program. This participation includes following and living the Twelve Steps daily, getting and being a sponsor, attending meetings at least once a week, and doing service work such as holding a voluntary position as treasurer in your NA group. If you do not want to participate in NA and work the Twelve Steps you are told that you are irresponsible (NA Basic Text, 1988: 13), fearful (NA Basic Text, 1988: 15), and lacking in humility (NA Basic Text, 1988: 35), and willingness (NA Basic Text, 1988: 33).

The question I want to leave you with is: Whether you identify as an addict or not, would you be able to never use any mind-altering substances, including alcohol and prescription medication, for the rest of your life? If not, does this make you an addict?

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**Appendix A:**  
**The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous**

1. We admitted we were powerless of alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscience contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**Appendix B:**  
**The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

**Appendix C:**  
**The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous**

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**Appendix D:**  
**The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.
6. An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.