

# The Day

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## Narconon Promises 80% Cure

# 'I'll Have Them Off Drugs in A Week'

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New London may soon have a drug rehabilitation program that guarantees 80 per cent rate of cure after only four to eight weeks of treatment.

"There are no other existing program that have a higher rate of cure than 30 per cent," said the Rev. James Meisler, minister of public relations of the Church of Scientology of New York. "Narconon guarantees an 80 per cent effective rate of cure." Narconon is an offshoot of the

Church of Scientology.

"If a drug program is getting 25 per cent results, that's the rate of addicts who could rehabilitate themselves with no program at all," continued Meisler. "Give me two druggies and I'll have them off drugs in a week."

### Proposal Discussed

A proposal for a Narconon program in New London was discussed last Wednesday at an open meeting at the YWCA. The program could possibly be based in the YWCA, pending the June 19 decision of the Y's board of directors.

"I believe in the program. I'm looking for space and for people who need help," said Patrick Healey, investigator at LEGACY. "It works faster than any program I've seen."

Healey, who has been investigating Narconon since November will direct the New London program. He is also negotiating with officials at the Connecticut Correctional Institution in Niantic to set up a program there.

Among the 25 who attended the open session were former drug addicts, an official from the Niantic prison, dropouts from other drug programs and officials of the Church of Scientology of New York and Boston.

"How does the program deal with guilt?" asked an audience member. "I was on drugs for four years and one of the biggest problems for me was dealing with guilt."

"Basically, he finds out he's bigger than guilt," replied

Meisler. "He starts taking responsibility for things he's done. Just being able to recognize these things and not have to justify them puts him in control of that feeling."

### Apathy Worse

"Much worse than guilt is apathy," commented Healey. "Like stealing your mother's insurance money or watching a friend O.D. (overdose) and not caring. Apathy is the next thing to death. Guilt is a good sign."

Such answers dismayed the audience members, who demanded more specific details about the program. At one point, a woman charged, "I feel like you're playing 'I've Got A Secret.'"

In response, Meisler explained that the program is based on communication. "We regard communication as the universal solvent," he said. "The idea is to get the addict out of the past into the present, so the past doesn't affect him any more."

The program includes eight communication drills. The first, explained Meisler, is to have the addict sit in front of another person until he feels comfortable in his presence. "If he can feel comfortable with another person, then he can begin to feel comfortable with himself," he said.

Narconon, said Meisler, goes beyond the state of addiction to prior problems in the addict's life. "We rehabilitate the addict not just to the state before drugs, but to a state beyond that."

Other drills, continued Meisler, involve communicating and receiving communication from another person. Still another, he said, "is being able to listen without being distracted by things around you."

Healey described a student-coach drill, where one addict coaches another and then they reverse roles. "You find out you can lead," said Healey. "You discover you're not a freak."

"When you're an addict, you're completely invalidated by society. When you go through these drills you find you can help someone else."

The goal of the drills, said Meisler, is to enable the addict to control himself. "Not Skinnerism control," he said. "Part of being able to control oneself is the ability to take orders from another. Like a job—you have to be able to take orders from the boss."

Narconon is primarily a post-detoxification program to keep the addict off drugs once he has "kicked." "If a guy is kicking," explained Meisler, "it takes a good deal more personnel. He needs 24 hour care. If the addict is in physical pain, we work with a competent medical doctor." Scientology, he added, believes that man is a spiritual being who can heal his own pain.

Although it takes an average of four to eight weeks to complete the program, Meisler said each person progresses at his own speed.

Unlike any other drug programs, Narconon does not commit addicts to half-way houses or institutions. The program is run strictly on a voluntary basis while the individual leads a normal life. "In other existing programs it takes one or two years before a person is out on the street," said Healey.

Even though the program works fast, Healey hastened to add that it's definitely not easy. "It's as tough as three days of cold turkey," he said.

Narconon was founded in 1966 by a prisoner at Arizona State Penitentiary. William Benitez, a convict with a long history of drug abuse, read a Scientology book during his last stay at the prison.

Benitez applied the techniques of Scientology to drug rehabilitation. In the first four years of Narconon at the prison, only eight of the 57 graduates returned to prison and only two went back on drugs.

Today, there are four Narconon programs in prisons on the West Coast and two in the Boston area. Deac Finn, director of the Narconon program at the Boston Naval Brig (United States Correctional Center) attended the meeting at the YWCA. Meisler runs a Narconon program in the Delaware Correctional Center, which is funded by the State Office of Drug Abuse.

### Alcoholics Too

Although Narconon is primarily aimed at rehabilitating drug addicts, it has been applied to alcoholics as well. Deac Finn directs a Narconon program at the Long Island Alcoholics Hospital in Boston. "Narconon is aimed at anybody with any type of problem in society — not just drugs," said Healey.

Healey is also interested in Narconon as a preventative program for "young people who just started taking drugs before they get addicted." For that purpose he would like offices on both the New London and Groton sides of the Thames River to hold two hour sessions in the afternoons and evenings.

"Once the Y board makes its decision, all we need is two weeks to set up," said Healey. "If someone needs help before then he can call me. We're not equipped to handle hard-core addicts, though." The program, he added, would cost the addict \$30.