

WHAT ABOUT ANONYMITY?

Crystal Meth Anonymous

an·o·nym·i·ty (ăn'ə-nīmī-tē)

1. The quality or state of being unknown or unacknowledged. (Also, the quality or state of being unnamed or unidentified.)
2. One that is unknown or unacknowledged.

We're creating this document to start a conversation. We encourage our members to discuss the various aspects of anonymity so that we may eventually create a pamphlet centered around anonymity for CMA.

Anonymity is an important core principle for us. The disposition of your anonymity is a tremendously personal thing, and only you can decide if you want your anonymity broken. Some of our members may not want it known they are addicts. Protecting the anonymity of everyone protects the fellowship as a whole. Individual boundaries around anonymity vary from member to member, and we can practice humility by respecting the individual levels of comfort for each member, recognizing that some may need more consideration than others. If protecting your anonymity is of great concern, rest assured we do our best to keep our affairs anonymous. Whether you realize it or not, you benefit from this basic concept.

Some of us have careers in chemical dependency treatment. Those people might only be effective in their work if their anonymity is broken in order to carry the message. Some of us engage in outreach to the public at large or to addicts unable to attend regular CMA meetings. Those of us who participate at this level understand that we give up our anonymity on a temporary basis. Those are both personal choices.

Most of us believe contributing to the fellowship anonymously is humbling. At the root of anonymity, as currently practiced by Twelve Step programs, is the importance of humility and sacrifice—the giving up personal desires for the overall good. Our Twelfth Tradition gives principles precedence over any individual's interests.

Some of us have had electronic communications sent to us with no consideration to those who perhaps may want to remain anonymous. As communications evolve, we find ourselves deluged with automated messages. Some of those messages come from members of our fellowship. Sometimes members are included in group messages with harmless intentions, but our anonymity is still compromised just the same. How would you feel if you received a digital message from a member of our fellowship and the message had nothing to do with CMA? How would you feel if your spouse read the message? Your boss? We try to keep our worlds separate because anonymity ensures that we have a safe place to share and thrive.

Just as the individual needs anonymity, groups need anonymity too. We must be careful when using the CMA name which may create legal liability issues for the organization and its board members. By protecting the fellowship as a whole, we ensure we have a seat for the member coming into the rooms for the first time.

Say no one knew you were an addict, how would you feel about showing up for an open meeting at a public location like a park with a banner advertising Crystal Meth Anonymous? Would you stay at such a meeting? Would you come back? And would you be concerned if it drove off potential addicts needing help yet fearing for their anonymity? As members, we should have an expectation of anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy at our meetings. We strive to have safe places to share our feelings with no outsiders able to observe us and make judgements.

To be most effective, cohesive anonymity should be practiced by everyone in the fellowship. We've found that many members of CMA struggle understanding the various aspects of anonymity. To that end, we present a series of questions for you to explore centered around anonymity:

- How do you define anonymity?
- What spiritual principles do you associate with anonymity?
- How do you separate personal life and recovery life?
- What is the difference between privacy, anonymity and confidentiality?
- Where are the boundaries with social media?
- What is your expectation of privacy and safety concerning your personal information outside of the meeting?
- What are the differences of anonymity inside and outside of the fellowship?
- What is the relationship between anonymity and humility?
- Why do we not use last names?
- In what ways can maintaining anonymity extend beyond your personal identity?
- Has your anonymity ever been broken? How did you respond?
- How do anonymity and equality relate to each other?

We hope you'll discuss these issues and questions amongst yourselves so that we can continue to explore them and improve as a fellowship. With this information a pamphlet, reading, or other documents can be developed. Unity is essential to our continued existence and the consensus of the fellowship is essential. As our Traditions conclude: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

CMA PI&O Approved Literature

© *Crystal Meth Anonymous*

12.11..2017