

# Enhancing Your Professional Identity

NAADAC Membership can be Your Best Resource for Networking, Education, News and Support

By KATIE KRIEGER

Membership

In an economy with continuous budget cuts, minimal job security and unpredictable changes in the addictions workforce, professional identity is more important than ever. Staff retention, turnover and education continue to be concerns in the addictions community. NAADAC, the Association for Addictions Professionals, aims to address these issues by creating an outlet for professionals to be supported, grow and build an identity.

## National Connections

A major part of maintaining professional identity is belonging to a network and making connections. Having the support of a national organization is key to standing out. A student member who joined NAADAC says, "I feel like I have somewhere to go if I have any questions. By being active in my local chapter I have far more contacts than I would have if I was not a member." NAADAC members not only have an outlet for support, but they also have opportunities for actively participating in their affiliate by becoming a board member, a guest speaker or a contributor to NAADAC's publications. Each of these qualifications will enhance your professional identity or create an opportunity for growth in the field.

## The Education Advantage

The field is constantly evolving with new research, studies and findings. Especially with new healthcare laws initiating in 2014, it is important to stay up-to-date on the most current information related to the profession. NAADAC offers a quarterly magazine, *Advances in Addiction and Recovery*, weekly email updates and a newsletter, all of which provide information on new studies and updates. NAADAC member Ashley says, "I love the 'breaking news' and latest research information sent to me electronically. It keeps me updated on all of the hard work and dedication of the professionals in this field."

In addition to news updates, NAADAC offers members continuous online education with notable speakers and researchers. NAADAC member Joe says, "NAADAC's webinars have given me a national perspective and invaluable resources for a fast evolving sector." If you are working toward your license or maintaining your credentials, you will need to continue earning a certain number of CE credits annually. Members can view webinars for free and earn over 75 CE credits online. Webinar topics include neurochemistry, adolescents, ethics, spirituality, peer recovery, CBT and many more issues relevant to addiction-focused profession-

als. If you fall behind on education and updates in the field, you may lack the knowledge you need to support your clients, so staying informed is crucial.

## We Fit Where You Are

Addictions professionals at any level of practice are welcome to join NAADAC. A NAADAC student member says, "I joined NAADAC because I am just starting out in the field. I am a student member and actually joined my first semester in college. I am about to finish my third semester and my practicum and apply for my counselor intern license." Those seeking certification can receive discounts on materials and tests, and guidance through the certification process. Veterans of the field who become members will stay connected through events, networking and other available opportunities in the organization.

## Eventful Networking

Networking outlets are also available through hundreds of events and conferences around the nation. Annually, NAADAC invites members and non-members to the Advocacy Leadership Summit and the NAADAC National Conference, offering discounts on flights to this year's location, Atlanta, Ga. Other events that may appear in your state include retreats, conferences and workshops related to professional addictions education.

A well-rounded professional identity entails staying up-to-date on research in the field, maintaining connections within the addictions profession and being knowledgeable for clients. A NAADAC membership is your best resource for networking, education, news and support.



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