

The Value of NAADAC Membership: *Intangible Benefits*

By Gerard J. Schmidt, MA, LPC, MAC, NAADAC President

Have you ever joined a club or an organization and after time has passed wondered, “Why am I continuing to belong here or pay these dues?” It is at these moments we reflect and begin thinking about how we — or the club or organization — benefit, either directly or indirectly, from our involvement.

I invite you all to reflect on your experiences with, the benefits you gained from, and the contributions you have made to NAADAC and the addiction profession. My own personal experiences have been gratifying and remarkable since I became a member of NAADAC in the early 1980s. At that point I had no idea what laid ahead, including all of the marvelous and remarkable professionals I would encounter over the years and the experiences that I have had that have helped make and shape me as a professional and as a person.

One of my first memorable experiences with NAADAC was meeting an individual who had come into West Virginia from neighboring Virginia representing NAADAC to do some training for the newly-founded West Virginia Association of Addiction Professionals. That woman, Charlotte Chapman, opened up a whole new world of

addiction treatment skills and knowledge that made me hungry for more. Little did I know that this would lead me down a path of volunteerism within the West Virginia affiliate, and eventually at the national level with NAADAC. Since that time, I have networked with and met thousands of addiction treatment professionals all over the United States, Iceland, Hong Kong, South Africa, Puerto Rico and many other places. The faces, towns, and countries may change, but the problems and effects addiction causes are global. Being able to represent NAADAC and share not only knowledge, but bring needed resources to many of these areas, has been rewarding in and of itself.

Another intangible but clear benefit I have experienced as part of my involvement with NAADAC is the ability to advocate for the addiction profession and those individuals with substance use disorders on both the state and national levels. I realize that direct contact with legislators through meetings and other forms of contact with their staff is not something everyone is capable of or comfortable with. However, through the NAADAC advocacy trainings and conferences I have been involved with over these many years, I have learned that advocacy takes on many unique

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Counseling Theories, Practices, and Skills (January 2018), and *Module III: Ethical and Professional Issues in Addiction Counseling* (May 2018). We are also updating *Clinical Supervision: An Overview of Functions, Processes, and Methodology*, to be released this Fall. All of these manuals are great reference tools for agencies and great teaching tools for colleges/universities and training programs.

In addition to the training manuals and other products that NAADAC offers, it also offers over 150 hours of webinars covering a variety of addiction and co-occurring disorder topics from the best trainers in the country! We are very proud of the education and knowledge that these trainers impart in the webinars. Each webinar is worth at least 1 CE, and all of these webinars are available on demand 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

NAADAC recognizes that it is important for addiction professionals to carry a professional liability insurance policy and has worked to make finding and purchasing a policy easier (and less financially burdensome) on its members by partnering with the American Professional Agency, Inc. (APA). APA offers professional liability insurance policies at a discounted NAADAC-member rate for counselors, clinical supervisors, peer recovery support specialists, students and agencies/facilities. If this is something you

have not considered before, please review the information on our website at www.naadac.org/insurance.

NAADAC is continuously working to build new membership benefits, such as group discounts that will benefit you professionally. These are still being finalized but will be announced soon on the NAADAC website and in the *NAADAC Professional eUpdate* newsletter.

NAADAC works consistently to increase the value of NAADAC membership and has for over 46 years! We hear your ideas and welcome them! Feel free to contact me or the NAADAC staff with other suggestions or ideas! Together we make a difference!



Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCAC II, CDC III, SAP, is the Executive Director of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, and has worked as an addiction professional for over 35 years. She has been a trainer in Domestic Violence/Anger Management and Conflict Resolution for over 25 years as well as an international, national and state trainer in a variety of topics. Moreno Tuohy is also a curriculum writer in addiction screening and evaluation, counseling methods, conflict resolution, co-occurring disorders, and medicated assisted treatment and recovery, and has written articles published in national and other trade magazines. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and is certified both nationally and in Washington State.

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roles and we can all contribute in some capacity. Contributions can take the form of writing letters or emails to state and national legislators, attending community meetings, making small donations to candidates who support our causes, or just by simply stating your message at work, at home or in the community. Those who we serve experience stigma that has, at times, prevented them from receiving needed services and even caused them to experience discrimination. Our voice and our ability to stand up for them and for the addiction professionals that serve them is a privilege and part of being a NAADAC member.

Over the past thirty-five years, I have had the distinct honor and privilege as a NAADAC member to help develop and provide a variety of trainings for both NAADAC members and other addiction professionals nationwide. Having the opportunity to take the years of experience and professional interactions I have had and apply them to a training module has been remarkably rewarding. We all have a responsibility to share what we have for the betterment of our profession. All of you have unique skills and talents that those entering the profession can benefit from being exposed to. Do not pass up that experience of sharing what you have experienced as a bridge to those coming after us.

My favorite benefit that comes from my association with NAADAC is the opportunity to mentor and shape professional growth and development of those now coming into our profession. We all are aware of the dramatic shortage of qualified and trained addiction treatment professionals across the United States. Each of us needs to be able to provide mentoring, guidance, and consultation to those in either educational programs with a focus on addiction or to those who have addiction-specific degrees and are entering the profession. Our remarkable skill sets and experiences, as well as the needed insights to guide and shape professional development, is invaluable. We all had mentors in our own professional development, and these experiences were an important part of shaping our growth and development and leading us to be the addiction professionals we are today. When called upon or if you perceive a need to mentor, please do not pass up that opportunity. You will find it truly rewarding and a way for you to grow as well. **Remember: we are a link to the future!**

Being part of NAADAC offers many opportunities for involvement for you to share your talents and skills in leadership roles at a variety of

levels. From volunteering as a member of one of the many NAADAC committees or running for office to offering your own unique talents as a trainer, NAADAC affords you the opportunity to become as involved as you would like to be. Don't sit back and assume that someone else can and will do it. Don't rob the profession of your talents and skills. We need you and we need your involvement. I know from my own personal experience that you will find it to be rewarding! The opportunity to help shape the face of treatment and to help develop and move forward legislative agendas that will directly affect the delivery of services is only part of the reward that comes from your commitment.

Finally, when looking at how you benefit from any organization you are a part of, you must look at what you are willing to invest of yourself, whether it be your time, skills, talents, or ideas. Our profession is one where individuals depend on our insight, commitment and skills to help them through some of the most difficult decisions and assist them in rebuilding lives devastated by addiction. NAADAC is an organization comprised of many talented and skilled treatment professionals, which makes it a marketplace for an exchange of concepts, ideas and practice models that can be effectively used in your practice. Don't miss the opportunity to meet and share with your colleagues across the United States either directly at a conference, on a webinar, or at a training or mentoring event. Remember, those in and striving for recovery are counting on you each and every day.



Gerard J. Schmidt, MA, LPC, MAC, is President of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals and the Chief Operations Officer at Valley HealthCare System in Morgantown, WV. He has served in the mental health and addictions treatment profession for the past 45 years. Publications to Schmidt's credit include several articles on the development of Employee Assistance Programs in rural areas and wellness in the workplace, addictions practice in the residential settings and an overview of addictions practice in the United States. He has edited Treatment Improvement Protocols for CSAT for several years and has been active with the Mid-Atlantic ATTC. Schmidt had served as Chair of the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCCAP) and NAADAC's Public Policy Committee, and as NAADAC's Clinical Affairs Consultant. Awards include the Distinguished Service Award in 2003 and the Senator Harold Hughes Advocate of the Year in 2010. In addition to his national and international work, Schmidt has been active within West Virginia in advocating for and supporting State legislative issues related to addictions and addiction treatment.