

ICAP (Inter-Congregational Addictions Program) is a network of women in consecrated life who are recovering from addictions in 12-Step programs. Our purpose is to enhance and strengthen recovery from addictions through connection, access and fellowship with other sisters/women religious.

## Walking and Working with Sisters to Initiate and Sustain Recovery

ICAP sees addiction as a complex health/medical/psychological/social condition that involves repetitive behavior related to substances and/or activities in which a person feels compelled to engage in, despite adverse consequences for the individual and others in her life. By linking sisters based upon the common good of their identity as human beings who have an addiction, ICAP demonstrates that one can be a religious sister and an “addict” of one kind or another.

Navigating recovery is challenging for everyone, regardless of their path in life. Women in consecrated life face unique obstacles of community life, leadership or ministry expectations, and stigma surrounding addiction and/or mental illness. Listening and sharing with other sisters/women religious in recovery offers an additional support to working a 12-Step program of recovery.

## Education and Intervention

If you are in leadership and are interested in learning more about addiction recovery, ICAP has members who are certified in addictions treatment and can help plan and implement education for religious communities. Additionally, if there is concern of a sister in active addiction, these sisters are trained to plan and implement interventions.

“Admitting to myself that I didn’t just have a problem, I had an addiction was one of the hardest things I have ever done. The shame and stigma I felt as I started my journey of recovery was crushing. Being able to hear other women religious share their stories and the years of sobriety helped me to overcome this shame and learn to love myself as God loves me.”

ICAP Member



## History of ICAP



**Mid-1970s:**

Education & Intervention, Inc., a 501 (c) (3) corporation founded in Saint Paul, MN to address the State of Minnesota's interest in providing chemical dependence services to youth.



**1977:**

Sisters Letitia ("Letty") Close, B.V.M. and Mary Gene Kinney, B.V.M. are asked by their congregation, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to help develop internal services of information, referral and crisis intervention to help their own sisters. This experience led them to realize the great need for support for sisters struggling with addiction.



**1979:**

Education & Intervention, Inc., was retired in MN. Sister Letty, one of the incorporators, transferred the corporation to Illinois, where Sisters Letty and Mary Gene resided. Together they repurposed the mission to create an outreach service to Roman Catholic sisters for their chemically dependent members, naming it Inter-Congregational Addictions Program or ICAP.



**1986:**

The director of Guest house, a treatment center for priests, deacons, and brothers located in Lake Orion, Michigan, consulted with Mary Gene and Letty to explore ways of serving women religious.



Late 1980s: Letty created an advisory board of women religious to provide guidance as Guest House developed a treatment program tailored to address the needs of women religious who approach their addiction and recovery in a different way than men do.



1988: A monthly meeting for sisters in recovery starts in Chicago, Illinois with sisters coming from the surrounding area. Meeting on the third Sunday of each month, this meeting met in person until COVID-19 moved it to be a virtual meeting.



1989: An annual retreat planned and led by ICAP members began to take place in the greater Chicago area each summer begins and continues today.



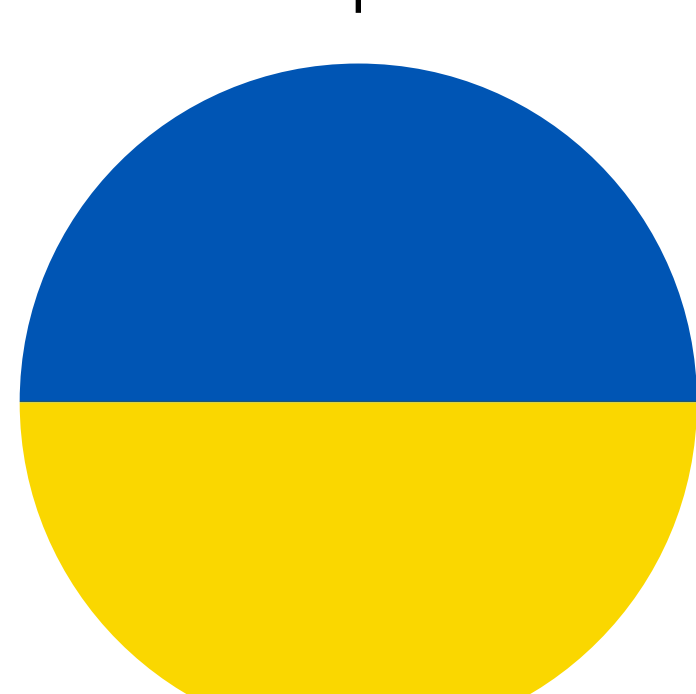
1993: Guest House launches a treatment program for women religious with Letty serving on its board of directions as the new program was being implemented.



2009: Through a series of workshops directed by Mary Gene and Letty, 90% of all women religious in Croatia learned about recovery and ICAP.



2019: Letty's official retirement though she continues to volunteer and follow the progress and life of ICAP as she is able.



2020: ICAP began its connection and ongoing support, including financial support through donations, for the Transfiguration House in the Ukraine, a treatment center for clergy and religious.



2022: Mary Gene officially retires and with that the corporation of Education & Intervention, Inc. is dissolved. ICAP as a program of women religious walking together in recovery continues its mission. ICAP continues to help and support education of leaderships on addiction and offers support and advice through trained members for interventions and inquiries.

## More about Addiction

ICAP sees addiction as a complex health/medical/psychological/social condition that involves repetitive behavior related to substances and/or activities in which a person feels compelled to engage in, despite adverse consequences for the individual and others in her life.

Women religious/sisters face unique obstacles and misconceptions in getting support and help. ICAP offers support and education to both individual sisters and to leadership and congregations.

**Myth:** Religious sisters can be expected to recognize their own problem and seek help.

**Truth:** Depending on the physical and psychological state of the individual, she may in denial about her addiction or compulsive behaviors. Often the individual is blind regarding her own behaviors.

**Myth:** Anyone can conduct an intervention and make the sister in active addiction see her problems and unhealthy dependencies.

**Truth:** Crisis intervention work should be undertaken by trained professionals only. Congregational leaderships may try confront the individual with the problem but intervention without proper training can have disastrous results for the individual and the community.

**Myth:** Congregational leaders may assume that physicians will discover that the sister is having a problem with a substances or is struggling with a mental illness.

**Truth:** A person who is abusing substances or engaging in a compulsive behavior is often very good at hiding this from others, especially from physicians who may only see them a few times a year.

**Myth:** Treatment options are limited to only locally known resources.

**Truth:** There are several options for treatment on a national level and it is vital to find the best fit for the sister and not be limited only to local resources.

**Myth:** Follow-through plans after treatment can be discontinued once a sister is better.

**Truth:** Recovery is a life-time journey. Follow-through plans after treatment need to be prioritized including regularly attending meetings and staying in contact with others in recovery. Additionally, congregational leaderships may fail to utilize the valuable help and experience available from other sisters in their congregation already in recovery.

## One of a Kind

ICAP is a unique program. There are no other such programs for sisters in either the United States, or in Canada. The scope of outreach is currently reaching sisters in 31 states and the province of Ontario, Canada.

## Education and Intervention

If you are in leadership and are interested in learning more about addiction recovery, ICAP has members who are certified in addictions treatment and can help plan and implement education for religious communities. Additionally, if there is concern of a sister in active addiction, these sisters are trained to plan and implement interventions.

### Additional Resources:

Guest House [www.guesthouse.org](http://www.guesthouse.org)

Love First Intervention <https://lovefirst.net/>





# Membership

Members of ICAP accompany each other by:

- Planning and taking part in 12-Step Spirituality Retreats with other sisters
- Sharing experience, strength, and hope in a variety of ways of communication
- Participating and sharing at in-person or virtual meetings as a support, not replacement of their individual program meetings

There is no cost for membership, but we do accept gifts and contributions to sustain the work of ICAP

There is no required length of membership in ICAP - you may join or leave as you wish.

Anonymity and confidentiality are as fundamental among us as it is in your recovery programs. Therefore, no one would know about your membership in ICAP unless you would wish to disclose it. ICAP does not reveal or communicate about its individual members to anyone whether in positions of religious leadership or of church leadership.

12-Step Recovery Programs currently represented in ICAP membership includes but are not exclusive to:

- Alcoholic Anonymous (AA)
- Al-Anon
- Overeaters Anonymous (OA)
- Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA)
- Eating Disorders Anonymous (EDA)
- Emotions Anonymous (EA)
- Gamblers Anonymous (GA)
- Debtors Anonymous (DA)
- Sexaholics Anonymous (SA)
- Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Homes (ACA or AcoA)
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
- Clutterers Anonymous (CLA)
- Internet & Technology Addicts Anonymous (ITAA)
- open to any 12-step recovery program

## Membership form

If you are interested in becoming a member of ICAP, please fill out the following form and someone will contact you:

**ICAP Inquiry Form**

Form description

**First Name \***

Short answer text

**Last Name \***

Short answer text

**Email address and/or phone number**

Short answer text

Required

**Phone**

Home

## Retreats

Retreats with Guest House in partnership with ICAP



January Virtual Retreat - 2027 information coming soon

Spring California Retreat - TBA



ICAP Retreat - Darien, Illinois

June 28-July 4, 2026

Carmelite Spiritual Center

8419 Bailey Road · Darien, Illinois

[REGISTER ONLINE](#) or [Print PDF Form](#)  
(coming soon!)

## Get in touch!

Anonymity and confidentiality are as fundamental among us as it is in your recovery programs. Therefore, no one would know about your membership in ICAP unless you would wish to disclose it. ICAP does not reveal or communicate about its individual members to anyone whether in positions of religious leadership or of church leadership.

If you are interested in becoming a member of ICAP or learning more about ICAP, please fill out the following form and someone will contact you:

### ICAP Inquiry Form

Form description

**First Name \***

Short answer text

**Last Name \***

Short answer text

**Email address and/or phone number**

Short answer text

Phone

Home

Office

Cell

**How is it best to contact you? \***

Email

Phone

Text

**May we leave a message? \***

Yes, voicemail only

Yes, voicemail or with another person

No

**Why are you contacting us? \***

Interested in membership

General Interest or Question

**Tell us more about yourself**

Long answer text

