

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

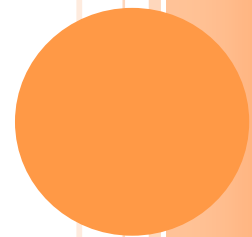


AA wants to work with you

Cooperation with the professional community is an objective of AA and has been since our beginnings. We are always seeking to strengthen and expand our communication with you and we welcome your comments and suggestions. They help us to work more effectively with you in achieving our common purpose: to help the alcoholic who still suffers

Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional
Community Committee. Area D Southern Region of Alcoholics
Anonymous

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Information for Professionals

A FEW BASIC FACTS ABOUT AA

Alcoholics Anonymous is well known as an organization for people who want to stop drinking. At the same time, there are some points about AA that may be unclear to the general public & even to professionals working to help problem drinkers.

Founded in the United States in 1935 when one alcoholic discovered he could stay sober by helping another alcoholic. Alcoholics Anonymous now has more than two million members in some 180 countries.

AA's sole purpose is helping people recover from alcoholism, & it has no affiliation with any other group or organization. Members anywhere in the world can come together to form an AA group of which there is an estimated 106,000 worldwide.

Among other facts about alcoholics Anonymous are:

- *Membership is free.* AA groups usually pass a basket around at meetings to cover the cost of renting a meeting room & for other incidental expenses such as coffee.
- *AA is not a religious organization;* it is not allied with any religious organization & requires no religious belief as a condition of membership. Members include Catholics, Protestants, Jews Muslims, Hindus, agnostics & atheists.
- *AA does no recruiting.* The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no other requirements to be met, no initiation fees to be paid, & no forms to be filled out. It is completely up to anyone considering joining AA to determine if they have a problem with alcohol & whether they will deal with it in Alcoholics Anonymous. A person becomes a member of AA simply by deciding they want to be a member.
- *AA groups are autonomous* & run by the members themselves.
- *AA is not a temperance society.* Members acknowledge their inability to drink safely but have nothing to say about the drinking of others. It is a principal of AA that it has no opinion on what are termed outside issues
- *AA is not affiliated with any Hospital or Rehab or any other such facility.* No professional service of any kind are offered or performed under AA sponsorship.
- *AA meetings take many forms,* but at any meeting there will be alcoholics talking about how drinking affected their lives & what life as a sober member of AA is like.
- *Anonymity is respected.* Newcomers can turn to AA with the assurance that their attendance at meetings will be kept private.
- *“Open” meetings of AA: are meetings* that anyone may attend to observe how AA works. “Closed

“meetings are reserved for those with a drinking problem.

- *Contacting AA*. Information on how to find local AA meetings can be found in telephone directories & web sites including www.aa.org.au & AA times

WHAT AA DOES NOT DO

1. AA does *not* run membership drives to try to argue alcoholics into joining. AA is for alcoholics who want to get sober.
2. AA does *not* check up on its members to see that they don't drink. It helps alcoholics to help themselves.
3. AA is *not* a religious organization. Members are free to decide on their own personal ideas about the meaning of life.
4. AA is *not* a medical organization, does not give out medicines or psychiatric advice.
5. AA does *not* run any hospitals, wards or sanatoriums' or provide nursing services.
6. AA is *not* connected with any other organization. But AA does cooperate with organizations that fight alcoholism. Some members work for such organizations-but on their own-not as a representative of AA.
7. AA does *not* accept money from sources outside AA, either private or government.
8. AA does *not* offer any social services, does not provide housing, food, clothing jobs, or money. It helps alcoholics stay sober, so they can earn these things for themselves.
9. Alcoholics Anonymous lives up to the “Anonymous” part of its title.

It does *not* want members' full names or faces to be revealed on radio, TV, newspapers or the internet or any new media technology. Members do not tell other members names to people outside AA. Members are not ashamed of belonging to AA; they just want to encourage more alcoholics to come to AA for help. They do not want to make heroes of themselves, simply for taking care of their own health.

10. AA does *not* provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

INFORMATION FOR PROFESSIONALS

If you are a Professional, AA members are available to cooperate with you. AA has many service committees who are available & can provide you with information on AA upon request.

AA has material available in Braille, a video for the Deaf & hard of hearing, CD's & easy to read literature.

AA literature has been translated into many languages & is available from the National Office of Alcoholics' Anonymous

PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL

Sobriety – freedom from alcohol- through the teaching & practice of the twelve steps is the sole purpose of an AA group. There are certain things that AA cannot do for anybody regardless of what our desires & sympathies may be.

Some professionals refer to alcoholism & drug addiction as “substance abuse” or “chemical dependency”. Non-alcoholics are therefore, sometimes introduced to AA & encouraged to attend AA meetings. Anyone may attend open AA meetings, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings.

A renowned psychiatrist, who served as a non-alcoholic trustee of the A.A. General Service Board, made the following statement: “Singleness of purpose is essential to the effective treatment of alcoholism. The reason for such exaggerated focus is to overcome denial. The denial associated with alcoholism is cunning, baffling, and powerful and affects the patient, helper, and the community. Unless alcoholism is kept relentlessly in the foreground, other issues will usurp everybody’s attention.”

Many AA members who have a dual problem join outside groups such as Narcotics Anonymous. The twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are available to any outside group who wishes to use them

Conclusion

The primary purpose of A.A. is to carry its message of recovery to the alcoholic seeking help. Almost every alcoholism treatment tries to help the alcoholic maintain sobriety. Regardless of the road we follow, we all head for the same destination, recovery of the alcoholic person. Together, we can do what none of us could accomplish alone. We can serve as a source of personal experience and be an ongoing support system for recovering alcoholics.

