Being Helpful to Our Friends

What is Alcoholics Anonymous?

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship of people who have had an alcohol use disorder. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, and available almost everywhere. There are no age or education requirements. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her alcohol use problem.

Our members primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Some Facts About A.A.

* A.A. began in the USA in 1935—with one alcoholic, Bill W., talking to another alcoholic, Dr. Robert S. The spirit of empathy at this meeting is the same spirit that holds together meetings in over 180 countries all over the world.
* AA began in Australia in 1945.
* As of 2022, there were more than 120,000 groups worldwide and an estimated active membership of 2,1200,000. [Estimated 20,000 members in Australia.] A.A.’s literature has been translated into over

 100 languages.

 It is estimated there are over 40 programs that use the basic 12 step format proposed by AA

# A Program of Action

* The Twelve Steps comprise the program of recovery, and are principles based on the actual recovery experiences of early members.
* Starts with an alcohol use disorder
* Not being able to control the amount taken once using drinking, and not being able to stop entirely when one tries to do so
* Next an acceptance that there may be a solution and more guidance is needed to help solve the problem
* A decision is made to begin the work to understand what is the real reason for drinking

# Self examination

* A written self -analysis is undertaken, with the help of an experienced member, to uncover, discover and discard resentments, harms and fears
* Past harms are examined and where possible amends made
* A continuing program of honesty, self- searching and helping others is commenced and maintained on a daily basis

## A.A.’s Spirit of Service

 A.A. members help others in order to help themselves. From page 89 of the Big Book, the basic text of Alcoholics Anonymous:

“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail…”

## A.A. Unity

* A.A. is not a professional organization – it is a looseknit Fellowship.
* A.A.’s Twelve Traditions are a set of principles which provide for A.A. unity and act as a guide for members, groups and the Fellowship as a whole.

## A.A. Traditions

**The Characteristics of A.A.’s Traditions can be summarized as follows:**

* Focusing only on helping alcoholics.
* Self-support, declining outside contributions.
* No affiliation or endorsement of other causes, including religion, education, reform, or prevention.
* Non professionalism.
* Group and member autonomy.
* Personal anonymity as A.A. members at the public level.
* Principles before personalities.

What Does A.A. Do?

* The A.A. program, set forth in our Twelve Steps, offers the alcoholic a way to develop a satisfying life without the use of alcohol.
* The program is discussed at A.A. group meetings.
* A.A. members share their experience with anyone seeking help with a Alcohol use disorder; they give person-to-person service or “sponsorship” to the alcoholic coming to A.A. from any source.

What Does A.A. Not Do?

* Solicit members or furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover.
* Make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses.
* Provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment.
* Keep attendance or case histories.
* Offer religious services.
* Provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or any other welfare or social services.
* Provide domestic or vocational counselling.
* Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.
* Engage in or sponsor research.

## Singleness of Purpose

* A.A. offers help to alcoholics, and the focus of A.A. meetings is recovery from alcoholism.
* Anyone interested in finding out more about A.A. may attend **open** A.A. meetings.
* Only those with a **drinking** problem may attend closed meetings or become A.A. members.
* People with problems other than alcoholism are eligible for A.A. membership *only* if they also have a drinking problem.
* A.A. makes its message and Fellowship freely available.

What the sufferer does with it is up to him or her.

## A.A. and Professionals

**How do A.A. members and professionals interact?**

* A referral from a professional may provide the motivation an individual needs to seek help.
* A.A. members provide a support network and practical experience for those who want to stay sober.
* A.A. members are available in your community to offer help to your alcoholic clients or patients.

What Kinds of A.A. Meetings are There?

* Open meetings – including ID Meetings, Steps and Traditions Meetings, Topic Meetings and Big Book Study Meetings, open to all, a local member would be willing to take you or a client/patient to an open meeting.
* Closed meetings – for A.A. members or those with a drinking problem
* Other Meetings – taken by A.A. members into correctional and treatment facilities

Cooperation with the Professional Community

(CPC Committees)

* A.A. members form C.P.C committees to inform professionals and future professionals about A.A. – what we are, where we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do.
* Maintain contacts with local professionals.
* Provide appropriate A.A. Literature
* Provide presentations to professionals or clients on: History of A.A., A.A.’s Twelve Steps, What A.A. does and does not do, etc.
* Exhibit at health fairs and professional conferences.

Suggestions on How to Find and Use A.A.

* Maintain contact with Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee members.
* Use a local A.A central office for meeting or contact information.
* Attend Open A.A. Meetings yourself.
* Talk to people in A.A. about their experiences and learn from them about recovery.
* Read A.A. Literature –
* Alcoholics Anonymous [Big Book]
* Newsletter for professionals. [available at www.aa.org.au]  Other books and pamphlets.

## Alcoholics Anonymous Australia

National AA Helpline: 1300 222 222.

Information @ www.aa.org.au

Thank You!