

# Alcoholics Anonymous in your Community

**HOW THE FELLOWSHIP  
OF A.A. WORKS  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY  
TO HELP ALCOHOLICS**



*ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*<sup>®</sup> is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

- The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

- A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

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

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New York, NY 10163

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

Alcoholics Anonymous is grateful to the many nonalcoholics, professionals and others who have supported the A.A. program of recovery. Thousands of us owe our lives to them and our debt of gratitude knows no bounds.

## **A.A. and Alcoholism**

Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide fellowship of men and women who help each other maintain sobriety and who offer to share their recovery experience freely with others who may have a drinking problem. The program A.A. suggests consists basically of “Twelve Steps” designed for personal recovery from alcoholism.

A.A. today can be found in more than 180 countries. Approximately two million alcoholics have achieved sobriety in A.A., but members recognize that their program is not always effective with all alcoholics and that some may require professional counseling or treatment.

A.A. is concerned solely with the personal recovery and continued sobriety of individual alcoholics who turn to the A.A. Fellowship for help. The movement does not engage in alcoholism research or medical or psychiatric treatment, and does not endorse any causes — although A.A. members may participate *as individuals*.

The movement has adopted a policy of “cooperation but not affiliation” with other organizations concerned with the problem of alcoholism.

Alcoholics Anonymous is self-supporting through its own groups and members and declines contributions from outside sources. A.A. members preserve personal anonymity at the level of press, films, and broadcast media.

From the beginning, many A.A. members have come to believe that alcoholism is a progressive illness — spiritual and emotional (or mental), as well as physical. The alcoholics we know seem to have lost the power to control their drinking.

### ***How does A.A. work?***

A.A. can be described as a method of treating alcoholism in which the members are supportive of each other, sharing with each other a large body of similar experiences in suffering and recovering from alcoholism.

### ***What are A.A. groups?***

The basic unit in A.A. is the local (neighborhood or city) group, which is autonomous except in matters affecting other A.A. groups or the Fellowship as a whole. No group has power over its members.

Of more than 66,336 groups in the U.S. and Canada now known to A.A.’s General Service Office,

about 1,000 are in treatment facilities; over 1,400 are in correctional institutions.

Groups are usually democratic, served by short-term “steering committees” of members. Thus, no group has *permanent* leadership.

### ***What are A.A. meetings?***

Each group holds regular meetings at which members relate their experiences to each other — usually in relation to “the Twelve Steps,” suggested for recovery, and “the Twelve Traditions,” suggested for relationships within the Fellowship and with the community.

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as “substance abuse” or “chemical dependency.” Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Nonalcoholics may attend *open* A.A. meetings as observers, but only those with a *drinking* problem may attend *closed* A.A. meetings.

### ***Who are A.A. members?***

People who think they have a drinking problem are welcome to attend any A.A. meeting. They become members simply by deciding they are members.

A.A. members are men and women from all walks of life, from teenagers to 90-year-olds, of all races, with all manner of formal religious affiliations and with none at all.

### ***Where can you find A.A.?***

Many local A.A. service committees will, upon request, provide informational presentations for your organization. Sessions can be tailored to meet your needs. A typical agenda might include one or several A.A. films and a presentation by one or more A.A. members on “What A.A. Is and What It Is Not.”

Look for “Alcoholics Anonymous” online or in any telephone directory. In most urban areas, a central A.A. office can answer your questions or put you in touch with A.A. members.

If A.A. is not in your local directory, write the General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or visit our website: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).

### ***What is A.A.’s General Service Office?***

This office serves as a world clearinghouse of A.A. information and publishes A.A. literature. It is under the direction of the General Service Board of A.A.,

composed of both recovered alcoholics and non-alcoholics.

Neither the office nor the board has authority over A.A. members or groups. Both are responsible to the groups, and report annually to a General Service Conference, including delegates selected by A.A. groups in the United States and Canada.

### ***What can you expect from A.A.?***

1. A.A. members help any alcoholic who demonstrates an interest in staying sober.
2. A.A. members may call on the alcoholic who wishes help — although they may feel it is best for the alcoholic to request such help first.
3. Local A.A. offices often know where hospital treatment of alcoholism is available, though A.A. is not affiliated with any type of treatment facility.
4. A.A. members are glad to share their experience with anyone who is interested, either in conversation or at formal gatherings.

### ***What does A.A. NOT do?***

A.A. does *not*: Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover; solicit members; engage in or sponsor research; keep attendance records or case histories; join “councils” or social agencies (although A.A. members, groups and service offices frequently cooperate with them); follow up or try to control its members; make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses; provide detox, rehabilitation or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment; offer religious services or host/sponsor retreats; engage in education about alcohol; provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money or any other welfare or social services; provide domestic or vocational counseling; accept any money for its services, or any contributions from non-A.A. sources; provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

*NOTE: An individual A.A. member may do some of these things on a private, personal basis, but this is not a part of his or her A.A. membership. Many professionals in the field of alcoholism are also A.A. members. Their professional work, however, is NOT a part of their A.A. membership. A.A. as such does not profess competence to perform professional services such as those listed above.*

**A.A. PUBLICATIONS** Below is a partial listing of A.A. publications. Complete order forms are available from the General Service Office of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. Telephone: (212) 870-3400; Website: aa.org.

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**BOOKS**

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS  
DAILY REFLECTIONS  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE  
AS BILL SEES IT  
DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS  
'PASS IT ON'

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**BOOKLETS**

LIVING SOBER  
CAME TO BELIEVE  
A.A. IN PRISON: INMATE TO INMATE

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**PAMPHLETS**

**Experience, Strength and Hope:**

WOMEN IN A.A.  
A.A. FOR THE BLACK AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN ALCOHOLIC  
A.A. FOR THE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND A.A.  
A.A. FOR THE OLDER ALCOHOLIC — NEVER TOO LATE  
LGBTQ ALCOHOLICS IN A.A.  
THE "GOD" WORD: AGNOSTIC AND ATHEIST MEMBERS IN A.A.  
A.A. FOR ALCOHOLICS WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES —  
AND THEIR SPONSORS  
ACCESS TO A.A.: MEMBERS SHARE ON OVERCOMING BARRIERS  
A.A. AND THE ARMED SERVICES  
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DIFFERENT?  
MANY PATHS TO SPIRITUALITY  
MEMO TO AN INMATE  
IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL  
(An illustrated pamphlet for inmates)

**About A.A.:**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A.A.  
IS A.A. FOR ME?  
IS A.A. FOR YOU?  
A NEWCOMER ASKS  
IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN YOUR LIFE?  
THIS IS A.A.  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SPONSORSHIP  
THE A.A. GROUP  
PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL  
THE A.A. MEMBER—MEDICATIONS AND OTHER DRUGS  
SELF-SUPPORT: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX  
THE TWELVE STEPS ILLUSTRATED  
THE TWELVE TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATED  
THE TWELVE CONCEPTS ILLUSTRATED  
HOW A.A. MEMBERS COOPERATE WITH PROFESSIONALS  
A.A. IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES  
A.A. IN TREATMENT SETTINGS  
BRIDGING THE GAP  
A.A. TRADITION—HOW IT DEVELOPED  
LET'S BE FRIENDLY WITH OUR FRIENDS  
UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY

**For Professionals:**

A.A. IN YOUR COMMUNITY  
A BRIEF GUIDE TO A.A.  
IF YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AS A RESOURCE  
FOR THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL  
A MESSAGE TO CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS  
IS THERE A PROBLEM DRINKER IN THE WORKPLACE?  
MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY ASK ABOUT A.A.  
A.A. MEMBERSHIP SURVEY  
A MEMBER'S-EYE VIEW OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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**VIDEOS** (available on aa.org)

A.A. VIDEOS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE  
HOPE: ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
A NEW FREEDOM  
CARRYING THE MESSAGE BEHIND THESE WALLS

**For Professionals:**

A.A. VIDEO FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS  
A.A. VIDEO FOR LEGAL AND CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS  
A.A. VIDEO FOR EMPLOYMENT/HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS

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**PERIODICALS**

AA GRAPEVINE (monthly)  
LA VIÑA (bimonthly, in Spanish)

## A DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.

I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.

And for that: **I am responsible.**

This is A.A. General Service  
Conference-approved literature.

