

# A.A. at a glance

## **What is AA?**

Alcoholics Anonymous is a voluntary, worldwide fellowship of men and women from all walks of life who meet together to attain and maintain sobriety. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership.

## **Current Membership**

It is estimated that there are over 131,000 groups and more than 2,200,000 members in approx. 200 countries. In Great Britain there are over 4300 group meetings every week.

## **Relations with Outside Agencies**

The Fellowship has adopted a policy of cooperation but not affiliation with other organizations concerned with the problem of alcoholism. We have no opinion on outside issues and neither endorse nor oppose any causes.

## **How AA is supported**

Over the years, Alcoholics Anonymous has affirmed and strengthened a tradition of being fully self supporting and of neither seeking nor accepting contributions from non-members. Within the Fellowship, the amount that may be contributed by any individual member is limited.

## **How AA Members maintain sobriety**

AA is a programme of total abstinence. Members simply stay away from one drink, one day at a time. Sobriety is maintained through sharing experience, strength, and hope at group meetings and through the suggested Twelve Steps for recovery from alcoholism.

## **Why Alcoholics Anonymous is 'Anonymous'**

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of AA. It disciplines the Fellowship to govern itself by principles rather than personalities. We strive to make known our programme of recovery, not individuals who participate in the programme. Anonymity in the public media is assurance to all AA's, especially to newcomers, that their AA membership will not be disclosed.

## **Anyone may attend AA 'Open' Meetings**

Anyone may attend open meetings of AA. These usually consist of talks by a leader and two or three speakers who share experience as it relates to their past illness and their recovery in AA. Some meetings are held for the specific purpose of informing the non-alcoholic public about AA. Doctors, clergymen and public officials are invited. Closed discussion meetings are for alcoholics only.

## **How AA was started**

AA was started in 1935 by a New York stockbroker and an Ohio surgeon (both now deceased), who had been hopeless drunks. They founded AA in an effort to help others who suffered from the disease of alcoholism and to stay sober themselves. AA grew with the formation of autonomous groups, first in the United States and then around the world.

## **What AA does not do**

AA does not keep membership records or case histories, engage in or sponsor research, join councils or social agencies (although AA members, groups and service officers frequently cooperate with them), follow up or try to control its members, make medical or psychiatric prognosis or dispense medicines or psychiatric advice, provide drying-out or nursing services or sanatoriums, offer religious services, provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or other welfare or social services, provide domestic or vocational counselling.

## **How you can find AA in your town**

Look for Alcoholics Anonymous in your local telephone directory: in many places a local AA number is also included in the useful numbers section. These telephones are manned by volunteers who will be happy to answer your question and/or put you in touch with those who can. If there is no local telephone service office close to you, phone the National Helpline Number.



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**Website address:** [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

**National Helpline Number:** 0800 917 7650

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