

# Do You Need Help to Stop Drinking?

## About AA

Alcoholics Anonymous® 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 AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA 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. *Copyright© The AA Grapevine, Inc*

## The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

Part of the recovery program that AA suggests is set forth in the Twelve Steps. Based on the experience of AA's earliest members, the Steps are a record of the principles and practice they developed to maintain sobriety (after many other approaches had failed). The Steps are a suggested program of recovery.

## The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

During its first decade, AA as a fellowship accumulated substantial experience which indicated that certain group attitudes and principles were particularly valuable in assuring survival of the informal structure of the Fellowship. In 1946 these principles were reduced to writing by the founders and early members as the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

## Meeting Types

Meetings are the mainstay of Alcoholics Anonymous. ([Click here for a link to meetings by area, day and time](#)). While no two meetings are the same, many meetings will have a rotating chairperson who will lead the meeting. The chairperson will open the meeting and follow the format that has been voted on by the group. If the chairperson asks if any newcomers are present, feel free to raise your hand and introduce yourself by first name only. In this way, the other members will see that you are new and will welcome you. After the meeting they will answer any questions that you may have. When you first walk into a meeting, you'll probably see lots of people drinking coffee, exchanging pleasantries and even laughing. Don't worry – you're not in the wrong place! A.A. has changed millions of peoples lives, and it can change yours too.

The most common meetings are:

**Open Meetings:** As the term suggests, these are meetings that are open to all people; alcoholics, non-alcoholics or to anyone wanting to solve a personal drinking problem. Beginners meetings are usually open so that a newcomer can bring a friend, family member or spouse for support if they wish.

**Closed Meetings:** These meetings are limited to those that are Alcoholics. They provide an opportunity for members to share with one another on problems related to drinking patterns and attempts to achieve stable sobriety. They also permit detailed discussion of various elements in the recovery program.

**Beginners Meetings:** These meetings are geared towards newcomers – usually people with less than one year of sobriety. A topic will be suggested by a chairperson and then members can, if they wish, share their experience, strength and hope about the topic. In this way, beginners will start to understand the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and how they can stop drinking, one day at a time.

**Speaker Meetings:** One or two members of AA will “tell their story” - what it was like, what happened and what it's like now. Newcomers are urged *not* to compare but to *relate* to the speaker's experience.