

12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a Twelve Step Fellowship dedicated to helping one another. The Twelve Step programme is AA's suggested programme for recovery from alcoholism and its effects.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

AA's Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which AA maintains its unity and relates itself to the work about it, the way it lives and grows.

1. Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends upon AA unity.
2. For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group Conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every AA Group ought to be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
9. AA as such, ought never be organised but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of Press, Radio and Films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, every reminding us to place principles before personalities.

A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland



General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG

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What Anonymity means to AA

For AA members anonymity means protection from public disclosure for themselves and their families. This anonymity means that family members will not be bullied or harassed or ridiculed at work or at school over their family member's alcoholism. At the public level, members are not identified in the media, such as TV, film, social media, radio or print media. This anonymity is especially important to newcomers, who may fear public exposure as well as exposing their families to comment and possibly even endangering their jobs and their livelihood.

AA meetings

Out of the 195 countries in the world, AA meetings are held in approximately 180. AA is truly a worldwide fellowship. Each group usually holds a number of meetings each week, ranging from one meeting a week to many meetings a day, depending on population and local need. There are two main types of meetings: 'open' and 'closed.' "Open" meetings may be attended by relatives and friends of AA members as well as interested members of the public. "Closed" meetings are for alcoholics only and are usually more personal in nature, with many or all members present sharing their "experience, strength and hope" with each other. These closed meetings are the backbone of the AA fellowship, and the main way members meet with each other in friendship, to offer support and help to each other.

How is AA funded?

"There are no dues or fees for AA membership." This means that there is no official charge for membership. Naturally, money is needed to run AA's many services. AA operates on a voluntary contribution basis. At some point during each closed AA meeting, a minute or two break is taken for Tradition Seven, which states that "there are no dues or fees for AA membership" but that AA is fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. A basket is passed around the room and members make an anonymous donation, which they feel they can afford, to the upkeep of the fellowship and its services and offices. This is AA's only source of funding. No person, outside agency or government may contribute, ensuring that AA is not influenced by any other agenda except its own primary purpose – "to help the still-suffering alcoholic."

AA and other groups and agencies

The fellowship of AA cooperates with all, but does not affiliate with any, outside agencies, NGOs, other 12 step fellowships, or other charities. AA does not engage in research, make any medical or psychological diagnoses. AA does not provide drying-out facilities, halfway houses, nursing, or religious services. AA does offer its message of recovery to all these services but maintains its independence, to better carry out its Primary Purpose.

**For further information on Alcoholics Anonymous
visit www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie**

What is alcoholism?

For thousands of years now, alcohol problems, alcohol abuse, alcohol misuse and alcoholism have been recognised as personal problems. It is only recently that alcohol problems are being recognised as both personal, family, mental health and also societal health problems. The set of causes of alcohol problems continue to be debated among experts worldwide. Why do some people, and not others, develop alcohol problems? Is it the alcohol that is the problem, or is it the person who drinks? While there is as yet no definitive answer to these questions, there is a solution to the myriad problems brought on by alcoholism. That solution is the programme of Alcoholics Anonymous. We in AA focus on the solution and not on the problem.

What is Alcoholics Anonymous?

AA's introductory statement, known as the Preamble, reads: "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 or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses or opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety."

AA is a worldwide, voluntary, mutual-help fellowship for people who wish to become free from alcohol and to achieve long-term sobriety. This is the sole requirement for membership, a desire to stop drinking. One becomes a member of AA simply by turning up at an AA meeting and declaring a wish to become free from alcohol. There are no membership records, no lists of names or addresses. AA is fully confidential and anonymous. How much a person drank is not important. What matters is how much alcohol affects the person. A newcomer becomes a member simply by declaring him/herself to be so. Our website www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie provides much valuable information on AA and its services and activities.

Membership

There are approximately 650 AA groups registered throughout the island of Ireland, with an estimated total membership of 15,000. Weekly, throughout Ireland, there are over 2,000 AA meetings. In addition to physical meetings, many groups also hold regular online meetings. Information on meetings is available at www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie Worldwide, it is estimated that AA has over two million members.

Sobriety

In Alcoholics Anonymous, complete abstinence from alcohol is the goal. Members achieve this seemingly impossible goal by 'staying away from one drink for one day' and repeating this every day. As the days accumulate, sobriety becomes the new normal condition for members. Sobriety is maintained by regular attendance at AA meetings and by practising AA's suggested Twelve Steps for recovery from alcoholism. Members also benefit greatly from the friendship and experience of alcoholics who have recovered.