

# Alcoholics Anonymous



Alcoholic anonymous

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

AL-ANON & ALATEEN

[www.al-anon.alateen.org/](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/)

## What is alcoholism?

As A.A. sees it, alcoholism is an illness. Alcoholics cannot control their drinking, because they are ill in their bodies and in their minds (or emotions), A.A. believes. If they do not stop drinking, their alcoholism almost always gets worse and worse.

Both the American Medical Association and the British Medical Association, chief organizations of doctors in those countries, also have said that alcoholism is an illness.

## What are the symptoms?

Not all alcoholics have the same symptoms, but many — at different stages in the illness — show these signs: They find that only alcohol can make them feel self-confident and at ease with other people; often want “just one more” at the end of a party; look forward to drinking occasions and think about them a lot; get drunk when they had not planned to; try to control their drinking by changing types of liquor, going on the wagon, or taking pledges; sneak drinks; lie about their drinking; hide bottles; drink at work (or in school); drink alone; have blackouts (that is, cannot remember the next day what they said or did the night before); drink in the morning, to relieve severe hangovers, guilty feelings and fears; fail to eat and become malnourished; get cirrhosis of the liver; shake violently, hallucinate, or have convulsions when withdrawn from liquor.

## What can the families of alcoholics do?

A.A. is just for the alcoholics, but two other fellowships can help their relatives. One is Al-Anon Family Groups. The other is Alateen, for teenagers who have alcoholic parents.



## What does A.A. NOT do?

1. A.A. does *not* run membership drives to try to argue alcoholics into joining. A.A. is for alcoholics who *want* to get sober.
2. A.A. does *not* check up on its members to see that they don't drink. It helps alcoholics to help *themselves*.
3. A.A. is *not* a religious organization. All members are free to decide on their own personal ideas about the meaning of life.
4. A.A. is *not* a medical organization, does *not* give out medicines or psychiatric advice.
5. A.A. does *not* run any hospitals, wards, or sanitariums or provide nursing services.
6. A.A. is *not connected* with any other organization. But A.A. does cooperate with organizations that fight alcoholism. Some members work for such organizations — but on their own — *not* as representatives of A.A.
7. A.A. does *not* accept money from sources outside A.A., either private or government.
8. A.A. does *not* offer any social services, does *not* provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, or money. It helps alcoholics stay sober, so they can earn these things for themselves.
9. Alcoholics Anonymous lives up to the “Anonymous” part of its title. It does *not* want members' full names or faces to be revealed on radio, TV, newspapers or on new media technologies such as the Internet. And, members do not tell other members' names to people outside A.A. But, members are *not* ashamed of belonging to A.A. They just want to encourage more alcoholics to come to A.A. for help. And, they do *not* want to make heroes and heroines of themselves simply for taking care of their own health.
10. A.A. does *not* provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

**The TWELVE STEPS  
of  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

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.

**The Twelve Traditions  
of  
*Alcoholics Anonymous***

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.
2. For our group purposes 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 A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; 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 A.A. 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 our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

**AA Preamble**

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.

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The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop drinking.

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There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

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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.

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