

Families Anonymous Inc.

Media Kit

FA Public Information Committee
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Introduction

Families Anonymous (FA) strives to reach those people negatively impacted by the disease of addiction, whether family or friends of the addict.

Support from the media makes it possible for us to carry the FA message of hope and recovery in the U.S, Canada, and far beyond these borders.

In this document you will find information describing the history of FA, our stated purpose, the structure of the fellowship, our program of recovery, how our meetings are held, and how our traditions guide our fellowship.

We hope that the information is helpful, and thank you for your continuing support. If you have additional questions or would like further information, please contact our Public Information Committee at pi@familiesanonymous.org.

What Is Families Anonymous

Substance abuse and dependency are pervasive in today's society, often devastating the life of the dependant person as well as the lives of families and friends. Those with family members or friends involved in drug or alcohol abuse suffer mental, emotional, and often physical pain while they watch hopelessly as addiction consumes their loved ones. Families Anonymous is a 12 Step fellowship for those families and friends who have known a feeling of desperation concerning the destructive behavior of someone very near to them, whether caused by drugs, alcohol, or related behavioral problems. Our program is for those impacted by addiction, not for the addict.

Our Recovery Program

FA works in many ways. Our members find recovery and serenity through the study and practice of the Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous. Its basic strength however comes from concerned sharing of common problems at our face-to-face and online meetings. It provides a way for family members and friends to put their lives back together and to find a sense of serenity.

Our History

FA was formed and incorporated in 1971 by a group of southern California family members who struggled with addiction in loved ones. They adapted the FA Twelve Steps and FA Twelve Traditions from Alcoholics Anonymous, with AA's permission.

FA is now in its 42nd year and has grown to encompass more than 500 meetings weekly in 35 US states and 12 countries spanning 6 of the 7 continents. Besides our face-to-face meetings, FA offers both interactive and email based online meetings.

FA Recovery Literature

FA is proud to be a leader in providing Recovery Literature for the families and friends of those who have a problem with substance abuse or related behavior problems. We offer an extensive list of titles in book, pamphlet, bookmark, parchment, poster, and audio formats. Our daily inspirational book "*Today A Better Way*" is in its 13th printing and has sold over 50,000 copies. Our literature can be purchased at most meetings or by ordering it from our online store or the FA World Service Office.

An important part of our program is brought to us through the practice of our 12th Step – *Carrying the Message*. Items created to describe FA and attract new members are available to our member groups for free download from our website.

Structure of FA

Our World Service Board of Directors (WSB), elected by our member groups, serves FA. The WSB meets monthly and holds an Annual Business Meeting and election in conjunction with our Worldwide Convention.

FA groups may unite to form a local Intergroup; a coordinating body formed of representative member groups in a geographical region. Additionally, a National Service Boards (NSB) may be established in countries outside the US whenever the growth of groups has created a need for local administration of the program and related business matters. The NSB also manage and coordinate translation of FA literature into local languages.

The WSB administers our World Service Office (WSO) which implements board policies and the FA charter. The WSO supports our members by responding to requests for information, shipping literature, assisting in the formation of new groups, communicating with members and the public, and maintaining our business records.

Significantly however, our Traditions tell us “*Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or FA as a whole*”. Each group chooses its officers, meeting place and time, and how to best handle its finances. They determine how best to attract new members and how best to inform local agencies of our existence. The WSB and WSO do not govern; they are merely trusted servants.

Anonymity

FA members take care to preserve their personal anonymity at the “public” level: press, radio, television and new media technologies such as the Internet.

We believe that the concept of personal anonymity has spiritual significance - that it discourages drives for personal recognition, power, prestige, or profit that cause difficulties within the fellowship.

While each member is free to make his or her own interpretation of the principal of personal anonymity, no individual member is ever recognized as a spokesperson for the fellowship locally, nationally, or internationally. Members speak only for themselves. The fellowship has no control over a member’s decision to “break anonymity”, but such individuals do not have the approval of the overwhelming majority of our members.

Public Relations

Our Public Relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. We recognize a responsibility to inform the public that FA exists and has but one goal, to help them deal with issues caused by addiction in a loved one. So important is this concept that we rarely use the term “Public Relations”, but rather “Public Information”.

We recognize that the most powerful public information technique we have is to encourage our members to “carry the message’ of their experience with the disease, and how they found recovery through the practice of our program. By sharing their experiences, strength, and hope, new members are attracted to our program.

FA Meetings

Our meetings are lead and organized by the members themselves. No professional counselors or therapists are involved, but they may serve as guest speakers. There are no fees or dues. Our groups are supported by voluntary donations from the members themselves.

The meeting discussions are guided by our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and other FA approved readings and literature. Members share their experiences rather than advising or counseling others. By doing so, they reinforce their own recovery and inspire the newcomer.

Uniqueness of Families Anonymous

Unlike many other 12 step programs, Families Anonymous is not drug or behavior-specific. It benefits those impacted by the negative actions and behaviors of a loved one regardless of the substance or activity of choice.

Most new members arrive in crisis with a child, spouse, parent, sibling, or friend in jail or in a recovery facility. FA focuses on the *member’s recovery* (a change in attitudes and reactions) by addressing a range of crippling *behaviors* (co-dependency, denial, enabling, rescuing, controlling, manipulating etc.) and *emotions* (anger, fear, guilt, resentment etc.)

Financial Policy

FA has a tradition-based policy of being self-supporting, declining outside contributions from non-members.

Expenses at the group level for rental of meeting places, coffee, refreshments, purchase of FA literature etc. are met by “passing the basket” at each meeting. Many groups set aside some of these funds to support the fellowship as a whole by making regular donations to their local Intergroup, NSB, and the World Service Office.