

WHAT EXACTLY IS FAMILIES ANONYMOUS™?

We are a fellowship of concerned relatives and friends facing the reality that the problems of someone close to us are seriously affecting our lives and our ability to function. “But I’m not the one who needs help!” is the statement that just about every one of us has made at one time or another. It seems obvious that it’s someone else who has the problems! Many of us feel annoyed or shocked that the “problem person” refuses help—or even resents *our* efforts to help.

As a fellowship, FA™ members are dedicated to practicing a constructive approach toward some-one else’s problems. As we attend meetings, we learn from our experiences, benefit from the shared misery we feel, and recognize the foolish mistakes we all have made while trying to do the best we possibly could. The realization that we are not alone helps us to begin feeling good about ourselves again. Not only does attending FA meetings often set the stage for **our** recovery, but it can also encourage changes in other family members, including the loved ones who brought us to this program.

WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS BRING FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO MEETINGS?

Adolescent problems may run the gamut of lying, stealing, hostility, running away, delinquency, truancy, substance abuse, difficulties at school, and more. Adult problems may include squandering family income, staying out all night, being gone for days, being arrested, becoming violent or destructive, losing jobs, and the like. The disease of substance abuse can cause chaos in the lives of family members and friends.

HOW DOES FA AFFECT THE FAMILY MEMBER WHO HAS A SUBSTANCE-ABUSE PROBLEM?

FA is compatible with other Twelve Step recovery programs. Even in situations where the troubled person refuses to accept help, changes in family attitudes can affect that person’s motivation and set the stage for recovery.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF NEWCOMERS AND VISITORS?

The only questions asked are:

- What is your first name?
- Would you like to make a comment or ask a question about the program?

WHAT HAPPENS AT MEETINGS?

Members share their experiences—both their successes and their failures—and are supportive of others who might be going through a current crisis. Meetings may focus on a specific topic: fear, expectations, hopelessness, anger, anxiety, communication, overprotectiveness, and many others. We study the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions—the heart and soul of our program. Meetings usually last about 1½ hours, although they may be shorter or longer, depending on the group’s decision.

WHO LEADS THE MEETINGS?

Group members voluntarily take turns leading meetings. From time to time, groups invite guest speakers from other Twelve Step programs or professionals who work in the recovery field.

DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Yes! As FA members openly share their personal stories, each is helped by the thought that, “*I am not the only one struggling with the wreckage that substance abuse brings upon a family.*” Our groups include people who have had similar experiences, fears, and worries yet have found a measure of serenity. Some of our members’ addicted loved ones have chosen recovery; others have not yet made that decision. Nonetheless, we learn that even if our addicts continue to use, working the FA Twelve Step program can lead us to serenity and a better way to live. We say in our program:

“It works if you work it, and it won’t if you don’t!”

FA often fills the gap in available professional resources and can help families come to grips with the insidious disease of substance abuse or addiction. FA effectively helps family members see their roles in perpetuating this family disease and the ways they can contribute to their own and their loved ones’ recoveries.

We carefully protect the anonymity of our members; last names and occupations are not revealed at meetings. No member advises other members, even if he or she happens to be a professional in the recovery field. Everyone in the group benefits when we practice *placing principles above personalities*.

People are frequently referred to FA by professionals who are familiar with our program and who treat families and individuals for addictive disease or the problems that may ultimately enmesh them in the legal system. These professionals recognize the benefits their clients can derive from learning and practicing FA’s Twelve Traditions and Twelve Steps (adapted from those of Alcoholics Anonymous).

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO ATTEND A MEETING?

There are no dues, fees, or charges of any kind. FA is self-supported through donations and the sale of our self-published literature.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There is no formal enrollment. Information about a local group may appear in the box below, or it can be found on the FA website or by contacting the World Service Office (see next panel).

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS IS...

... a group of new friends who won't be shocked by the nature of your problems and who will stand by you as you learn how to gain sanity and serenity in your life.

... people just like you—helping other people just like you.

Please feel free to visit a meeting. You will be most welcome.

NO last names
NO forms
NO formal enrollment
NO dues or fees
NO community funding
NO outside donations
NO government grants
NO commercial fundraising

For local meeting information, contact:

DO YOU NEED FAMILIES ANONYMOUS?

1. Do you lie awake worrying about ____?
2. Do you feel frustrated in your attempts to control ____?
3. Do you disapprove of ____'s lifestyle?
4. Do you argue with ____ about his or her friends?
5. Do you find it increasingly difficult to communicate with ____?
6. Does ____'s behavior have you "climbing the walls"?
7. Do you often ask, "Where have I failed?"
8. Do you feel it is necessary to protect ____ because he or she is unusually sensitive?
9. Are you trying to compensate for some family misfortune, such as divorce, death or illness?
10. Are you embarrassed about discussing your situation with a friend or relative?
11. Do you find yourself lying or covering up for ____?
12. Do you feel resentful or hostile toward ____?
13. Do you find it increasingly difficult to trust ____?
14. Do you worry about ____'s behavior affecting other members of the family?
15. Do you blame others for ____'s problems?
16. Do you blame yourself?
17. Are ____'s problems starting to undermine your marriage?
18. Do you find yourself playing detective, fearful of what you may find?
19. Do you go from place to place seeking help for ____?
20. Is concern for ____ giving you headaches, stomachaches, or heartache?

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FAMILIES ANONYMOUS



FOR ME?

BUT I'M NOT THE ONE WHO NEEDS HELP!

Maybe – but if you've ever thought that the habits, actions, or escape patterns of someone close to you are seriously affecting **your** life, please continue reading this pamphlet. Families Anonymous (FA) members have walked in your shoes and are on the same road as you.

Attending FA meetings is something you can do for yourself to help restore your serenity and sanity. You *can* become calm enough to sleep again. The world will stop spinning. Peace and sanity will return.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.