

VOLUME LIX | ISSUE II | MARCH/APRIL 2022

SERENITY MESSENGER

FOR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS CONCERNED
ABOUT ANOTHER'S USE OF DRUGS, ALCOHOL,
OR RELATED BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FAMILIES ANONYMOUS FELLOWSHIP

Photo Credit: Shlomo H.

SERENITY MESSENGER

Newsletter of the Families Anonymous Fellowship

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the northern hemisphere, the "dark season" of winter will soon come to an end, and spring, the traditional season of renewal, will begin. Plants come out of their winter dormancy to sprout new leaves. Hibernating animals emerge from their winter torpor to forage for food. Migrating birds return from warmer climes to mate and produce offspring in their summer homes. Spring is full of activity and change and, above all, vibrant life.

Nonetheless, we may still be struggling with the emotional, physical and financial burdens that come with having a loved one who is suffering from a substance use disorder. While nature bursts with the cycle of life, we may feel that we, along with our addicted loved one, are trapped in a never-ending dark spiral that cannot end well.

If that's true for you right now, it can be hard to feel optimistic; but our Twelve Step program teaches us that whatever is happening now is just for today. It doesn't have to be this way forever. We have no idea what the future holds.

As the saying goes, "Keep coming back," because if we keep working the program and attending meetings, we can rediscover the peace and joy in our lives. It doesn't happen instantly. Indeed, it may take years for us to learn how to truly take care of ourselves and to love yet refrain from enabling our relatives or friends who suffer from this insidious and baffling illness. But even the most glorious sunrise starts in utter darkness and takes hours to fully unfold.

Hope for ourselves and for the recovery of our loved ones is always possible as long as there's life. We surrender to and believe that our higher power can restore both ourselves and our loved ones to sanity and hopefully sobriety. We accept that the darkness is only for today and that no outcome, good or bad, is preordained. We believe that with the tools of the Twelve Steps and the support of our FA program, we can live complete, happy lives regardless of the ultimate outcome of any troubles that bedevil us today.

Those acts of faith feed oxygen to the spark of hope that this program tells us we can hold in our hearts. Our faith, in both the program and the wisdom of our friends in this fellowship, allows us to drop our obsessive, unhealthy regard for either yesterday or tomorrow, and to instead live fully in each moment. As nature renews itself in spring, so the program can renew us, if we allow it. If we work it.

Enjoy the season, and be well. And keep coming back.

IN FELLOWSHIP,
BOB S.

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WORD FROM THE BOARD

CLIVE W., THE WORLD SERVICE BOARD'S UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE, SHARES ABOUT HIS FA JOURNEY AND HIS ROLE IN WSB

My FA journey started six years ago, when our lives spiraled out of control in a frighteningly short period of about four months after our daughter's marriage ceremony. We went from a really happy place to a place of despair and were especially fearful about what was happening to our two young grandchildren. Until that time, we had no understanding or knowledge of drugs or the impact of addiction. Like most parents, at first we thought that we could fix the problem, but quickly we started to follow the downward slope that most of you have also been on, a slope leading down to despair, fear and empty wallets.

Our salvation, though we did not know at the time, was being referred to a local FA meeting in Gloucestershire, England. Our first few meetings passed in a blur, but the abiding memory that both my wife and I have is the comfort that, first and foremost, we were not alone in our experiences. In many ways, this shared experience and mutual support were as important as our FA readings and the Twelve Step program itself.

Over time, FA has given us the tools to help turn our lives around in spite of unresolved issues. It has brought both us and our addicted loved one to a place of relative calm and stability, while preparing us for the next lurch and relapse. We started to develop a measure of serenity and gratitude for what FA was doing for us and for other new members who came to the group—many of whom had endured much more harrowing experiences, often for many years and even decades, before they had found FA.

I have found that being of service has improved and enhanced my own recovery. In 2020 I joined the UK Service Board that coordinates the work of FA in the UK and Gibraltar.

I felt that it was really important to give something back to FA. I wanted to work to ensure that the fellowship would continue to prosper and be there for other new members so they could find their recovery as we had. This started in a small way when the treasurer of our group moved on, leaving the post vacant. So I took on this service armed with a carryall bag containing a small notebook, a bag of loose change, a

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SERENITY MESSENGER

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WORD FROM THE BOARD

(CONT'D)

collection purse, and a wad of paper receipts and monthly bills from our meeting venue. The task was not onerous and was well within my skill set, as I run a small business.

As our recovery has progressed, I have taken on more service roles. I am a volunteer twice a month supporting our UK telephone helpline that operates for 6 hours a day, 7 days a week (1pm – 4pm and 6pm – 9pm). It is really uplifting to be able to take calls from people who are at the end of their tether, not knowing what to do or where to turn, and to be able to offer them a truly understanding ear that comes from a shared experience. As helpline volunteers, we then direct them to a group (in-person or virtual), giving them a chance to break out of their cycle of despair and worry and begin their recovery.

“My role on FA’s World Service Board is to provide a UK perspective on the work of the fellowship as a whole and to provide a conduit for information and ideas to pass across the Atlantic in a personal way that impersonal email cannot do.”



I have found that being of service has improved and enhanced my own recovery. In 2020, I joined the UK Service Board that coordinates the work of FA in the UK and Gibraltar. As of this month, I have passed on the role of treasurer of my local group to take on the role of treasurer for the UK board—a slightly more challenging task, with bank accounts and spreadsheets replacing the notebook and bag of loose change.

My role on FA's World Service Board is to provide a UK perspective on the work of the fellowship as a whole and to provide a conduit for information and ideas to pass across the Atlantic in a personal way that impersonal email cannot do.

Here in the UK, we interpret Tradition 2 (“Our leaders are trusted servants; they do not govern.”) by limiting membership on the UK board to three years in any one stint, after which a member must stand down. This means that the board is constantly refreshed by new members with new approaches and ideas—though we do rely upon members stepping up to the plate of Step 12 to keep the show on the road. This can be challenging at times but has served us well in the 41 years that we have been established in the UK.

For those of you that have some measure of stability in your lives and in your relationships with your addicted loved ones, I would recommend taking a service role. However small your role, whether local or national, this service will bring so much more well-being and progress to your recovery than the expenditure of your effort in giving of that service.

YOURS IN SERVICE,
CLIVE W.

FACE TO FACE WITH ADDICTION

A member reflects on the pervasiveness of addiction in his family and how he is finally making sense of it



I've had addiction in my life most of my life. I've heard it, seen it, and, yes, even met it face to face.

I was in a family group last year in Palm Springs, California, and was asked to go into the center circle, address Addiction as I understand it to be, and ask it questions or tell it the way I felt. I began by telling Addiction that I have known it all my life. That it probably came over to America with my ancestors on a ship from Ireland a long time ago and has been with me, at some level, ever since.

I first heard Addiction as a young boy, lying in my bed at night and hearing my alcoholic father verbally abuse my mother and older siblings. I heard my mother's futile efforts to get my father

to stop drinking and to recognize what his drinking was doing to our family. These sounds later turned to sights, as I began to watch these addictive behaviors wreak havoc on most of our family and lay the groundwork for the dysfunction and turmoil that would become the dynamic of our family today. I watched as my siblings began their journey into addiction.

I watched as my older brother, whom I idolized and wanted to emulate, turned into an addict whom I no longer wanted to idolize or emulate. I watched my mother's eyes as I walked her up to his casket and listened to her pour her heart out to God, asking, "Why?" I watched Addiction take the life out of my wife Lauris' brother's lungs and saw him die holding her hand, his body riddled with lesions and disease. His picture is on our team's t-shirts at the AIDS walk each year.

Even after seeing and hearing all I have about this disease, I didn't see it coming again to place its grip on my own children, until it was too late. Once I found myself pitted against it again, the fight was on. In the past, it always ended the same way: my loved one would die. I wasn't going to let that happen again!

I heard some FA members having a conversation once about addiction and debating if it's really a disease or not, and what underlying pathology leads someone to actually choose to lead that kind of life. There is much to debate about disease and choice, but there is no debate that addiction exists. It's real.

My son Jay was really trying to hide his using. But we saw the signs everywhere. He was disappearing all the time, stepping back into his lonely world. At one point I was testing him every day, trying to get past his crucial court date to keep disaster from striking. All the talking; his younger siblings wanting to be with him; his stepmother's broken heart—none of it mattered. When I caught him cheating while taking his urine test, that was it. Five hours later we were at the airport heading to Minnesota.

“ These sounds later turned to sights as I began to watch these addictive behaviors wreak havoc on most of our family and lay the groundwork for the dysfunction and turmoil that would become the dynamic of our family today. ”

FACE TO FACE WITH ADDICTION

(CONT'D)

On our way to the airport, Jay was very emotional, and I was really upset. There was just nothing to say. This was the fourth time in 18 months I was taking him to rehab. I wasn't ready to be separated again from my only son. Why can't he just be like everyone else's son? Everyone I talk to at work and all my friends—their sons are doing great, working hard, traveling, and here I am heading off to rehab yet again. This time, though, the unexpected happened. Jay and I got in the car for the drive to the airport but we weren't alone. I was about to come face to face with the invisible demon that is trying to destroy my life and my son's: Addiction.

“We saw the signs everywhere. He was disappearing all the time, stepping back into his lonely world.”



We were getting closer to the airport, and you could hear a pin drop. His beautiful brown eyes, that for so many years had been full of spirit and clarity, were satin-black and soulless. When I looked over at him, all I could see was his dark silhouette; he looked so grim and cold. He was stiff and rigid, and his scarf was so tight around his neck it looked like a serpent was choking him. He was crying and making sounds; it reminded me of the way he had sounded when he was three years old. The way he said the word “Dad,” and those sobs as I held his hand in mine, his hand felt small and weak like a little kid's hand. His addiction was taking him over physically and trying to trick me into feeling sorry for him by making me want to help the little boy I had helped so many times through all of his doubts and fears as a child. The air in the car grew cold, and I was so close to Addiction I could smell it. My mind raced, thinking of my years around it, my brothers that it took, my son that it has in its grip. I realized that it is a living demon with a mind of its own.

As we got closer to the airport, and the realization came over Jay that he was not going back home, and that his cries were not being heard, and that he was only hours away from getting sober, I saw his inner spirit come through. In a matter of minutes, he went from what I have just described to a smiling face, and I saw him let it go right there. I saw him surrender. As he walked to the gate, he looked back at me and mouthed, “I love you, Dad.” For as long as I live, I will look at Addiction as never before. I will argue its existence as a disease, and I will fear its power. I realize that Addiction can't be beaten; I must respect it, put it in its place, but always be conscious of it. It will always be there, and I know it exists: I saw it.

“His addiction was taking him over physically and trying to trick me into feeling sorry for him by making me want to help the little boy I had helped so many times through all of his doubts and fears as a child.”

FACE TO FACE WITH ADDICTION

(CONT'D)

I have several large binders that represent the burden I put on myself and my wife in my attempts to battle my children's addiction for them. What's in the binders represents all levels of the disease and all my efforts to control its outcome. Legal, medical, scientific, therapeutic, physiological—it's all there. Logistically, I went everywhere I could in my efforts to find the answers. I traveled thousands of miles, but to no avail. I finally reached the point where I was lost. I began to lose hope. I prayed for my loved ones every minute of the day. I even tried to manage God to help them. I was insane!

“Logistically, I went everywhere I could in my efforts to find the answer. I traveled thousands of miles but to no avail. I finally reached the point where I was lost. I began to lose hope.”

Then one day, after months and months of our family therapist telling me, “You need to get help. Go to a meeting. Go get help for yourself,” I walked through the doors of my first Families Anonymous meeting. I was greeted by Tom, who gave me a big handshake and said, “Welcome. We're glad you're here.” From that moment, my life has changed. I made the decision to turn my will and my life to the care of my Higher Power.

Since that day, I have accepted and practiced the Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous, and I found something out. While I have always been powerless to control my father's abuse, my brother's addiction, my wife's brother's choices, and the choices of my son and daughter, I am not powerless to control what I do. I can fight this disease; I can stop it from controlling what I do and what happens to me. I am winning that fight.

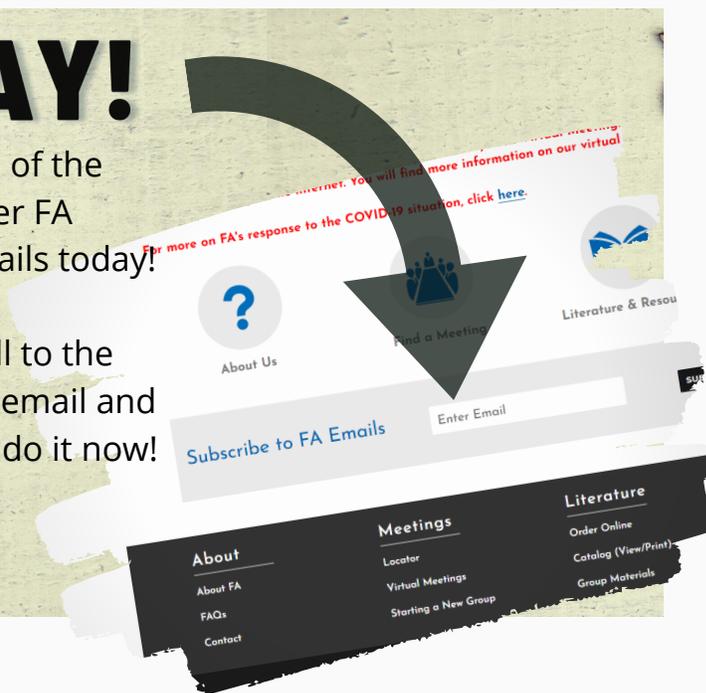
JIM M.
REPUBLISHED FROM THE TWELVE STEP RAG,
NOV-DEC 2011, VOL XXXX

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NEW
SLETTER





FAMILIES ANONYMOUS AT 50

THE BEGINNING



THE FAMILIES ANONYMOUS FELLOWSHIP WAS FOUNDED JUST OVER 50 YEARS AGO.

THIS IS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF SHORT ARTICLES DETAILING THE EARLY DAYS OF FA.

This fellowship, with our well-defined Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions adapted with permission from Alcoholics Anonymous, began in an arguably nontraditional way: secession. On April 29, 1971, 50 people who had been attending various California Nar-Anon meetings met in Beverly Hills to discuss organizing a new recovery group. This new group would be tailored specifically and exclusively to the needs of the families of those with loved ones or friends suffering from the disease of drug addiction.

That same day, the National Council on Alcoholism was holding a convention at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim. Marilyn G., part of the Nar-Anon breakout group, attended the convention where she met the Rev. Mr. Joseph Kellerman. Kellerman, a recognized authority in the field of alcoholism and family treatment systems, had written a booklet for Al-Anon titled *Guide to the Family of the Alcoholic*. Marilyn G. was in the process of revising that booklet for her Nar-Anon breakout group, so she invited Rev. Kellerman to the organizational meeting in Beverly Hills.

Rev. Kellerman declined; he had another meeting to attend in Pasadena. Not to be deterred, Marilyn offered to drive Rev. Kellerman to his Pasadena meeting, then on to the Beverly Hills organizational meeting, and finally back to the convention hotel in Anaheim, a total of approximately 100 miles. He accepted.

He was so impressed with the delegates' warmth, fervor and devotion to the nascent program that he offered to work with them. He helped them revise his *Guide to the Family of the Alcoholic* and donated it for their use, along with another work entitled *Open Letter to My Family*. Both pieces remain in our literature catalog today (*A Guide for the Family of the Drug Abuser* [#1002] and *An Open Letter to My Family* [#2007]).

At the next meeting, on May 5, from a list of 30 suggestions, the fledgling fellowship adopted its name: Families Anonymous. The group circulated a draft of what would become our bylaws and established a Literature Committee. The first drafts of the *Basic Pamphlet* (#1001) and the *Guide for the Family of the Drug Abuser* were already available for review.

“
At the next meeting, on May 5, from a list of 30 suggestions, the fledgling fellowship adopted its name:
Families Anonymous”

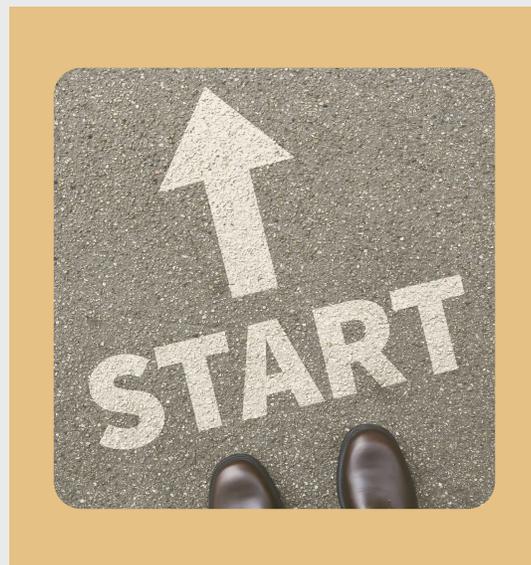
FAMILIES ANONYMOUS AT 50 (CONT'D)

About two weeks later, on May 21, drafts of Open Letter to My Family, Suggested Format, Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Three Destructive Forces, and the New Meeting List were circulated for review. As always, the Literature Committee was working hard!

The fellowship was starting to take shape.

NEXT TIME: Our first office; becoming a non-profit; getting the word out about Families Anonymous.

The information in this article was gleaned and/or adapted from minutes of the Board of Directors and from a short history written by Marylou M., with contributions and edits by Marilyn G./B., and Ida Mae D.

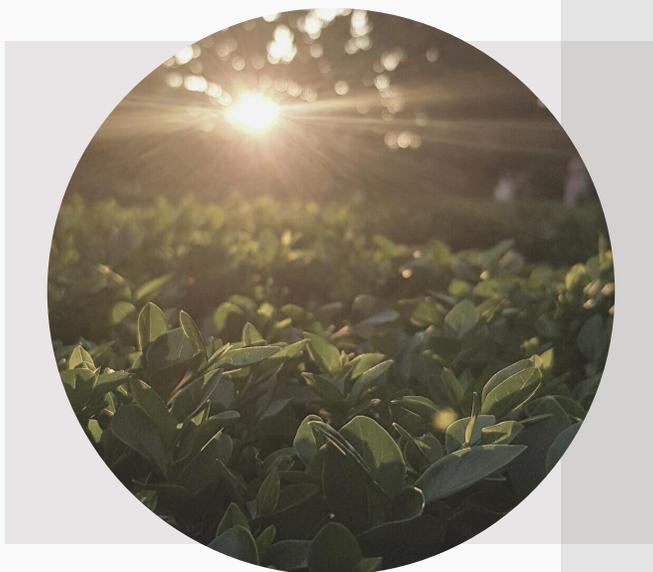


RELEASE

Before coming to Families Anonymous, I was completely wrapped up in my children. I thought that by focusing my attention on them, I was showing how much I loved them. Someone in an FA meeting pointed out that our love for our children can be compared to sunshine. When the sun's rays are filtered through trees or latticework, the results are pleasing and beneficial; people smile, and plants thrive. But when even one small beam of light is concentrated and magnified upon a certain spot, a leaf, or a person, destruction sets in: a fire, severe sunburn, or worse.

Right away, I appreciated the parallel. My children were being overpowered by my intense involvement in their lives. Since then, I remember to filter my love and to care for them through the screen of my own fulfilled program of life.

ANONYMOUS
REPUBLISHED FROM THE 12 STEP RAG MAY-JUNE, 2011, ISSUE
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HOW TO SUBMIT ARTICLES TO THE SERENITY MESSENGER

Original articles, poems, photographs or artwork can be emailed to the Serenity Messenger at newsletter@familiesanonymous.org.

Even if you don't think so, your story and experiences are unique and important and can help someone else in ways you can't imagine. Write down your thoughts in whatever way you can, and send them to us. Our editor will work with you to help you tell your story!

Below are some of the formats that we usually publish. You can also read older issues of the Serenity Messenger on our [website](#) to know what kinds of stories we publish.

Cover stories: Personal essays between 700 and 800 words. If you have a story idea in mind and want to work with our editor while you write it, feel free to send a few lines explaining what your essay will be about.

Articles: Shorter articles between 300 and 450 words. These can be on any subject of interest to FA members. Some of the themes we often include are –

- Reflections on the 12 Steps
- How you came to FA
- How FA has impacted your life
- Your relationship with your addicted loved one
- Reflections on self-awareness
- Gratitude



Think of something you may have shared at a meeting that you felt seemed particularly enlightening or interesting, and explain that in a few simple paragraphs. If you need ideas to awaken your creativity, open and browse through some past issues of our Newsletter under the archived section of that page.

Focus:Group: This section gives a different FA group in each issue the opportunity to tell the fellowship what's special about its approach to meetings and/or the 12 Steps. If you'd like to volunteer your group, or if you know of a group you think would like to write a Focus:Group article, please let us know.

We welcome your poems, too.

SUBMISSION SPECIFICATIONS

- Articles must be typed in Word.doc (preferably in the font Times New Roman, size 12 pt, single-line spacing) and attached to your email.
- Mention your group if you're comfortable.
- Scanned artwork and photographs (originals only!) must be attached to your email. They should be in .jpg or .png format and no greater than 5 mb in size.
- Include a line or two in your email explaining the context of your submission, and mention your group if you're comfortable.

We encourage you to think about answering this call TODAY!



FOCUS: GROUP

GROUP 1906
Roswell, GA

WE ARE NOT ALONE - WE ARE AS CONNECTED AS EVER GROUP 1906'S PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVE

Quarantines and mask mandates can be confining, and lockdowns may seem lonely. Working remotely can find us feeling distant and removed. But we have options. We are not forced to isolate, and we are not alone. Support and serenity still exist. We can find compassion and kindness. We can connect and encourage.

The pandemic may have paused many in-person meetings, but our group in Roswell, Georgia has discovered that recovery is not on hold nor is it suspended. It is alive and at work, and authentic connection is as prevalent as ever. When this group began in 2011, a few people gathered together to find comfort and acceptance despite the unsolved issues surrounding someone else's use of drugs or alcohol. The behaviors of someone we cared about may have seemed overwhelming, but together we could navigate the chaos and even seek out our own recovery. Group 1906 grew as members shared their stories and struggles. We reached out to others who found themselves in similar circumstances, and we returned to treatment center family groups sharing the help we found at Families Anonymous meetings. Over those first nine years, people attended, people drifted, people reappeared – and reappeared again – and some stayed for years. And then the pandemic arrived ...

– “

Personal connections, authenticity, and compassion had built and sustained our group. Would these be lost in an online format? How could newcomers feel welcome and a part of us?

” –

Convinced of the value of connection for friends and family members struggling with another's addiction, our group was motivated to find a way to continue meeting in spite of Covid. In March 2020, we tried Zoom meetings at our regular day and time hoping people would accept, if not embrace, this new format. Personal connections, authenticity and compassion had built and sustained the group – would this be lost in an online format? How could newcomers feel welcome and a part of us? How long would we have to meet remotely? Could we manage the technology?

We are happy to share that personal connection is not lost. In fact, it has grown as we work together to navigate the pandemic and the disease of addiction. Some of our members welcome the shorter commute Zoom offers. Others appreciate the ability to meet even if they find themselves out-of-town. It's not perfect - we do miss the hugs and conversations before and after meetings, but we've come up with options that help. What did surprise us is that our group grew through virtual meetings. We never imagined people would join our group from three



Want to learn more about how your FA group can thrive and grow? Go to familiesanonymous.org, click on "Members" and go to "Group Materials," where you'll find an array of helpful, informative publications concerning group dynamics and management.

Still have questions? Send an email to GO@familiesanonymous.org.

Have a great meeting!

FOCUS: GROUP (CONT'D)

time zones away. How do you welcome someone who lives 1,000 miles across the country? How is it that they feel not only a part of the group, but know they are valued friends?

A year and a half ago, one of our new members from Pennsylvania learned about our group through a recovery center's continuing care group she attends. Encouraged to try Families Anonymous by another mom who also participates in this continuing care group, she felt warmly welcomed at our FA meetings. We set aside Zoom Breakout Rooms at the end of each meeting so people can casually chat together. One breakout room is specifically for newcomers. Members take turns hosting this room where we offer newer attendees a more intimate opportunity to share their story, ask questions about the program, and receive a welcome kit. We discover how they heard about our group, which in turn, helps us to foster greater awareness of our presence. We include them in a weekly email and invite them to join our private Facebook group where members help each other outside of meetings.

“Some of our strongest members have never been in the same room together. But there is no lack of intimacy; we genuinely care about each other regardless of the physical distance between us. What an amazing testament to the program! It works if you work it—virtually or otherwise.”

Just like our local attendees, this concerned parent is drawn to our group by the atmosphere of healing and hope she encounters. The camaraderie she experiences keeps her coming back week after week. “I have never had the feeling that because I live several hundred miles away, I am a stranger among these wonderful men and women. We are united in sharing our courage, strength, and hope. We feel each other's pain and rejoice in each other's accomplishments.” The connection is real – when our group shifts to hybrid meetings and travel feels appropriate, she would like to make an in-person appearance, and we couldn't be happier. The friend we came to know across a laptop screen in a virtual meeting will be welcomed with real, live open arms.

Hayley W is another member who has not been hampered by virtual meetings. In fact, she credits our group located on the other side of the country, as saving her during the worst experience of her life. “If I didn't

FOCUS: GROUP

(CONT'D)

have this group, I wouldn't be able to get up each morning and live day to day." Despite residing in Colorado, Hayley W has attended our Georgia group regularly for almost two years. Her son's treatment center therapist shared Families Anonymous with her, and she is drawn to our group by the other parents who struggle with the same issues and feelings that she encounters. "This group has taught me I am not alone. The only way I will continue each day is by taking care of myself and working my own program. The group has given me hope when I never thought it was possible." Hayley W has only known us virtually, but the relationships and recovery are real. Some of our strongest members have never been in the same room together. There is no lack of intimacy – we genuinely care about each other regardless of the physical distance between us. What an amazing testament to the program! It works if you work it – virtually or otherwise.

So where do we go from here? Will we ultimately return to in-person meetings as we knew them? In our case, NO! Both of these women are important members of our group as are other pandemic joiners from California, Tennessee and other locations too far to drive. Hybrid meetings keep our group intact. For a few weeks in 2021, we tested this format before Covid escalated again. We had good success with a laptop and a \$125 speakerphone that allowed everyone – in-person and online – to see and hear each other. Our meeting facilitators led both in-person and via Zoom. Post-pandemic our FA groups are no longer defined by geographic location. The personal connections we forge as we share our experience, strength and hope are what bind us together and define us as a group. Hybrid meetings preserve the intimacy we've built and allow us to continue to carry our message to others.

If you would like to learn more about GR1906's online meeting experience and helpful tips they've learned, please email: FA.Roswell.Georgia@gmail.com

“Today, our FA groups are no longer defined by geographic location. The personal connections we forge as we share our experiences, strength and hope are what bind us together and define us as a group.”

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Because of the COVID-19 crisis, many FA groups are now meeting online. Go to familiesanonymous.org; then in the [Virtual Meetings](#) section, click on the [Directory of Face-to-Face Groups Meeting Online](#) button to find out when those meetings are being held, and how to access them.

If you're part of a face-to-face FA group that's now holding an online meeting and your information isn't there, or if your information is incorrect, please send your additions or corrections to Nicole at dmc@familiesanonymous.org, and she'll update the spreadsheet.

Thanks, and stay safe!

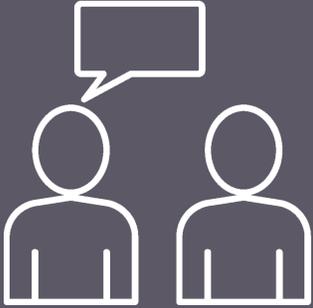
EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT:

JOIN US FOR OUR TWO MONTHLY ONLINE TRADITION AND STEP SESSIONS ONLINE!



The WSB and Education Committee invite you to Step UP and join us for the following two monthly sessions:

SESSION ONE: THE TRADITION AND STEP OF THE MONTH



All are welcome to attend this interactive group meeting using the GoToMeeting virtual format (see below). At these meetings, we will study the tradition and step of the month. These will generally be held on the first Saturday of each month from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm (ET). (For specific dates, please refer to the calendar on the following page.)

We will be using Literature Catalog #1004 *The Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous* and #5010 *The Twelve Traditions in Action*. We hope you'll join us, and that you'll continue this type of combined meeting in your own groups.

SESSION TWO: TWELVE STEP WORKSHOP USING #1019 THE TWELVE STEP WORKBOOK

This individualized workshop is a great opportunity for personal growth and recovery. Workshops will be held from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm (ET) on the same dates as the The Tradition and Step meetings. (For specific dates, please refer to the calendar on the following page).



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- *The Twelve Step Workbook* (#1019): The latest edition, published in 2017 includes the text of the Blue Booklet, *The Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous* (#1004)
- Older editions of the workbook can still be used along with the Blue Booklet, *The Twelve Steps of Families Anonymous* (#1004), available for \$4.00
- Notebook or loose-leaf paper and a binder
- Willingness and commitment
- Honesty and Humility

Please refer to the following page for dates/times and login information!

QUESTIONS OR TO REQUEST A RECORDING OF PREVIOUS STEPS,
EMAIL DONNA D AT DONNAD@FAMILIESANONYMOUS.ORG

EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT

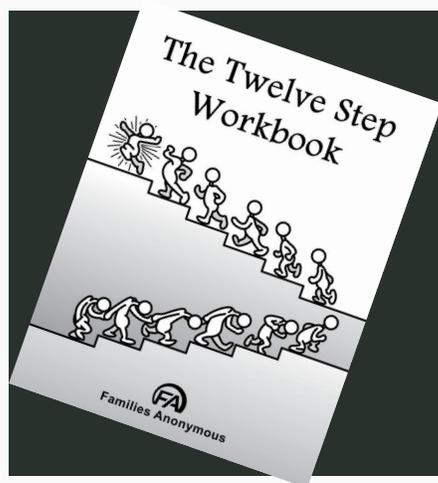
(CONT'D)

2022 EDUCATION COMMITTEE SESSIONS

TRADITION & STEP MEETING	Tradition & Step	STEP WORKSHOP USING 12 STEP WORKBOOK #1019	LITERATURE TOPIC MEETING	LITERATURE SELECTION
1:00-2:30 pm ET		4:00-5:00 pm ET	1:00-2:30 PM ET	Topics will be
Interactive		Independent Work	Interactive	updated when avail.
*January 8	1	*January 8	^January 29	The Gift of Awareness
February 5	2	February 5	February 26	The Helping Collection
March 5	3	March 5	March 26	FA and Sponsorship
April 2	4	April 2	^April 30	Bereavement, Healing, & Hope
May 7	5	May 7	NONE	NONE
June 4	6	June 4	June 25	Funny Thing...Humor... in FA
*July 9	7	*July 9	^July 30	What Do I Say?
August 6	8	August 6	August 27	TBD
*September 10	9	*September 10	September 24	TBD
October 1	10	October 1	^October 29	TBD
November 5	11	November 5	NONE	NONE
December 3	12	December 3	NONE	NONE
1 st Saturday		1 st Saturday	4 th Saturday	
*2 nd Saturday		*2 nd Saturday	^5 th Saturday	

ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD ONLINE USING the newly updated GOTO app
ID# 705-976-781

OR USING THE LINK BELOW: <https://meet.goto.com/705976781>



NEED TO PURCHASE "THE TWELVE STEP WORKBOOK"? [CLICK HERE](#) TO ORDER YOUR OWN COPY FROM OUR ESTORE FOR \$12.00 + S&H.

DOLCE FAR NIENTE

I recently learned about the Italian phrase *Dolce far niente*, which essentially means “the sweetness of doing nothing.” But *Dolce far niente* isn't about not taking action or being lazy. To Italians, it means finding life's beauty in even the smallest things: a sunny day, a good meal, or the warm smile of a friend or family member. It means slowing down and mindfully living in the moment. It means treasuring every minute spent with the people we love, and never feeling guilty when we do things just for ourselves.

It is about letting go and creating space for ourselves to make positive changes in our lives.

How wonderful to find a simple phrase reflecting what I have learned and worked for throughout my ongoing recovery journey! And to think it was there all along in Italy...

My wish for everyone is to have some *Dolce far niente* in your life. Take a deep breath and enjoy the moment. Savor the peaceful beauty of being fully present and aware. Live in and love today, without any concerns about the future or the past.

Let go—for haven't you found that the act of letting go of unhealthy attachments can feel good? There's no need to hold onto things or negative relationships because of comfort or fear.

Then take it a step further. Look back on the situations that have taught you lessons, scenarios in which you grew, and the gratitude you can share toward yourself and others. Reflect upon where you were, where you are, and the obstacles you have overcome. Remind yourself how lucky you are to have traveled this road, and appreciate the people you've met along the way.

And the best part of all is that there is more to learn, more personal growth, more to share, more to be grateful for, and more support from your Twelve Step program. Keep coming back. It works when you work it.

MAXINE L.
FLORIDA



“ My wish for everyone is to have some *Dolce far niente* in your life. Take a deep breath and enjoy the moment. ”

THINKING OF SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE OR ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SERENITY MESSENGER?

For our upcoming issue the deadlines to submit announcements is April 23rd.

We gladly accept submissions of articles, letters, poetry, or artwork at any time!

Email us at newsletter@familiesanonymous.org.
We'd love to hear from you!

SPOTLIGHT ON LITERATURE

STARTING A NEW GROUP (#8004)

No Families Anonymous group near you? How about starting one? This would be a great way to spread the Families Anonymous message of hope and healing to others in your community.

To help understand what you would need to do, please read on!

There are only five components needed to start a new group...

1. A regular meeting place (physical location and/or online platform)
2. A *Starter Kit* (#8003) **Note:** This kit is available at no charge by calling the WSO at 847-294-5877 or 800-736-9805.
3. A copy of FA's *Suggested Meeting Format with Basic Readings* (#5003) or *Suggested Meeting Format with Basic Readings for Virtual Meetings* (#5003V) **Note:** These publications are part of the Starter Kit. You can also download them for free from the FA website [here](#).
4. Some additional FA literature pieces to hand out, use during your meetings, or offer for sale
5. A few potential members

You undoubtedly have other questions, such as:

- What's involved in finding a suitable meeting place or online platform?
- What can I expect to pay for the meeting room or online platform?
- How will my group be financed, whether we meet in person, virtually, or using a combination of the two?
- How should the meetings be conducted?

THE GOOD NEWS IS, FA HAS A PUBLICATION—**STARTING A NEW FA GROUP (#8004)**—THAT ANSWERS ALL THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS.

AND THE EVEN-BETTER NEWS IS, THIS PUBLICATION IS AVAILABLE FOR FREE ON FA'S WEBSITE. YOU'LL FIND IT TO BE AN INVALUABLE TOOL FOR GETTING A NEW GROUP UP AND RUNNING!

Interested in our full literature catalog? Download your own copy [here](#), or check out our [eStore](#) online!



DONATIONS

COMMEMORATIVE DONATIONS

- In memory of Melissa D's mother, Betty Lou S., from Group 494
- In memory of Elke C., on behalf of Group 1813



GROUP DONATIONS

OVER \$500

- GR0494 IL, Winnetka
- GR1152 NJ, Englewood
- GR1522 IL, Chicago
- GR1735 NJ, Ramsey/Mahwah

\$101 - \$500

- GR0134 FL, So Miami
- GR0171 IL, Arlington Heights
- GR0173 IL, Park Ridge
- GR0746 IN, Evansville
- GR0976 NJ, Freehold
- GR1288 NJ, Leonardo
- GR1318 FL, Boca Raton
- GR1820 IL, Westmont
- GR1906 GA, Roswell

UP TO AND INCLUDING \$100

- GR0279 NY, Amityville
- GR0288 OH, Pepper Pike
- GR0478 IL, Glenview
- GR0554 NJ, Rockaway
- GR0590 NY, Islip Terrace
- GR0888 MI, Essexville
- GR1096 VA, Richmond
- GR1187 CT, Bloomfield
- GR1345 NJ, Cherry Hill
- GR2070 CT, South Glastonbury
- GR2087 Russia
- GR2136 CO, Fort Collins

As per the Seventh Tradition, each group should be self-supporting. Your donations also help support the activities of the World Service Office. For more information on how to donate, please [click here](#) or visit www.familiesanonymous.org and click **DONATE NOW!**

Thank you for supporting the many activities of FA World Service.

Your contribution is tax-deductible.

DONATE



A HUGE THANK YOU to the following members who have donated directly to the Families Anonymous World Service Office. WE APPRECIATE YOU and your support of the fellowship! We are also grateful to everyone who donates to their local group. It is your generosity that allows us to carry the program to others. Thank you for GIVING BACK so others can know they are not alone. Thank you for PAYING IT FORWARD so concerned friends and family members may learn there is something we can do to help ourselves and our situation. Together we can find a better way to live - THANKS TO YOU!



- Abby N
- Alesia S
- Allison A
- Amy D
- Amy P
- Andrea D
- Andy L
- Anonymous
- Anthony R
- Antoinette B
- April S
- Ardie R
- Barbara C
- Barbara M
- Barbara S
- Barbara S
- Barbara Y
- Bernie B
- Beth F
- Bob M
- Bruce B
- Bruce D
- Carol C
- Carol S
- Carolyn K
- Cathy R
- Chip S
- Chris H
- Christine C
- Cindy C
- Claudia S
- Cozetta L
- Cynthia S
- Deb C
- Deborah S
- Dennis S
- Dina S
- Don B
- Donna D
- Doreen B
- Doreen R
- Eileen H
- Eileen L
- Eileen L
- Eileen M
- Elisabeth L
- Elisabeth N
- Franklin F
- Gerald W
- Giovanni N
- Harry L
- Hector R
- Hilary A
- Ina G
- Jake S
- James H
- James H
- Jeanette B
- Jeff S
- Jiaan P
- Jim N
- Jo Anne B
- Jon S
- Juley S
- Karen S
- Kathy A
- Kathy S
- Kelly M
- Ken P
- Kenny G
- Kimberle G
- Klinette K
- L A
- Laura C
- Laura E
- Laura R
- Lisa M
- Lizette P
- Lori B
- Lori W
- Lorraine R
- Madelyn M
- Magda R
- Margaret O
- Margaret W
- Marge B
- Maria S
- Marianne S
- Marie C
- Mary B
- Mary M
- Mary Ellen S
- Mary Jo S
- Michele P
- Neal S
- Patricia S
- Patrice B
- Paul R
- Paula T
- Peggy H
- Priscilla H
- Randee I
- Rich B
- Richard O
- Richard S
- Robby S
- Robert G
- Robert M
- Robert S
- Roger S
- Rosemarie B
- Ruthanne O
- Santi B
- Sara O
- Sheila G
- Sheri R
- Stacy K
- Steven R
- Susan C
- Susan F
- Susan L
- Susan T
- Suzanne M
- Suzanne N
- Thomas D
- Thomas P
- Valerie B
- Valerie E
- Vicki G
- Victor T
- Victoria S
- Wendy L
- William V
- Yingjun W

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