

Families Anonymous

For Relatives and Friends Concerned About the Use of Drugs or Related Behavioral Problems

FACT SHEET

ORIGIN AND BASIC PURPOSE: Families Anonymous (FA) was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of California in 1972 to serve people concerned about the use of mind-altering substances or related behavioral problems of a relative or friend.

RANGE OF ACTIVITY: More than 500 meetings are held weekly throughout the United States and in Australia, Canada, Greece, India, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, and the United Kingdom; online e-meetings and web-based forums take place as alternatives or supplements to face-to-face meetings (see FA website for details).

HOW TO CONTACT: Referrals to local FA groups may be obtained by calling the World Service Office or visiting the FA website. Several Intergroups sponsor local information lines and/or have websites linked to the FA website.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE: Leadership is conducted by a membership-elected World Service Board (WSB), which meets monthly, proposes and carries out policy, and oversees the World Service Office (WSO) and various standing and ad hoc committees. An annual business meeting and election are held in conjunction with an annual convention. In several states, Intergroups coordinate local and regional activities and provide support to individual groups. The WSO is staffed by a part-time employee and trained volunteers who implement board motions and policies, administer the organization's charter, direct individuals to local support groups, process and ship literature, assist in the formation of new groups, and provide the public and professionals with information and referrals.

WEEKLY MEETINGS:

- Meetings are organized and led by the group's members on a rotating basis.
- Professionals may not serve in a professional capacity, but they may be members or guest speakers or choose to start a group.
- No dues or fees are required; groups are financially self-supporting through voluntary donations from within the fellowship and through the sale of FA literature.
- Meetings are guided by the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and other FA readings; discussions focus on relevant topics or FA-approved literature; members' support is offered, as needed, between meetings; some meetings occasionally present qualified guest speakers.
- Members share their experiences, hopes, and strength—but *do not* give advice to others—thus reinforcing their own recovery and inspiring newcomers.
- FA has no affiliation with any religion, sect, political entity, institution, or other organization.

PUBLICATIONS: FA has an extensive catalog of self-published sheets, pamphlets, booklets, bookmarks, and CDs as well as a daily inspirational book, *Today A Better Way* (TABW), which is published in American English (more than 83,000 copies in print) and has been translated into British English, Bengali, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Castilian Spanish, and Mexican Spanish. Literature topics focus on personal recovery, encouragement, and hope. Literature is written from within the fellowship for personal and group use. Public information is available for professionals, hospitals, and other support organizations.

SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS: Al-Anon, Co-Anon, and Nar-Anon are support groups for family members of, respectively, alcoholics, cocaine addicts, and addicts of nonspecific drugs or narcotics. FA makes referrals to other Twelve Step fellowships when appropriate.

UNIQUENESS OF FAMILIES ANONYMOUS: FA is *not* drug, alcohol, or behavior specific. Members focus on themselves—on their recovery from *codependency* and on changing any of their attitudes and behaviors (e.g., denial, enabling, rescuing, controlling, manipulating, and a whole range of other crippling actions and emotions) that prevent their own recovery and that of their addicted loved ones.

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