

# INTRODUCTION

*(Optional Reading)*

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS™ is a fellowship of people whose lives have been affected by the use of mind-altering substances or related behavioral problems of a relative or friend. Any concerned person is encouraged to attend our meetings—even if there is only a suspicion of a problem.

Many recovery programs are available for our addicted loved ones, when they are ready to seek help and recovery. However, FAMILIES ANONYMOUS is for us: the parent, spouse, brother, sister, or other emotionally involved relative or friend.

In the beginning we seem to be most helped by listening to those who have shared similar experiences and found some answers. By attending meetings, studying the literature, talking to other members, and working the Twelve Steps of this program, suddenly or gradually our situation begins to look different to us and our reactions to it begin to change. What is happening? We are learning to face reality with comfort, and our emotional growth is being encouraged. These changes in ourselves can create an atmosphere in the family that promotes recovery.

Our authority in FAMILIES ANONYMOUS is a Power greater than ourselves, as we understand this concept. Our groups are self-directed; leadership is rotated among our members, who assume various responsibilities that keep the group functioning. No dues or fees are required for membership. We use first names only in order to uphold FA's tradition of anonymity that helps protect the privacy of everyone concerned.

Our program is open to all, regardless of our various beliefs—or lack of belief. A member's acceptance of a "Power greater than ourselves" is strictly a personal, private choice. We are not affiliated with any religion, sect, political entity, or institution. Our primary purpose is to practice the principles of FAMILIES ANONYMOUS so we may help ourselves by helping others with similar problems.

We have found that working on ourselves is the most important single thing we can do to help those we care about. In this process, **many find that they learn a better way to live.** There are no rules or "musts" in our program, except perhaps one: "Keep coming back!"



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