

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS®
SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Administrator places the following information in the Chat Room:

- URL for the FA® website: familiesanonymous.org
- URL for free downloads of FA material: familiesanonymous.org/literature/free-downloads
- URL for FA e-store, to purchase literature: familiesanonymous.org/shop
- URL for FA donations: familiesanonymous.org/donate
- Email address for Zelle donations to the FA World Service Office: donate@familiesanonymous.org
- [Optional] Email address for Zelle donations to the local FA group _____

[Alternatively, the above information may be made available to the group via email or screen sharing.]

~~ THE LEADER STARTS THE MEETING ~~

We welcome you to the regular [day] _____ meeting of the [city or group name] _____ group of Families Anonymous. My name is _____, and I will be your leader for this meeting.

Just a reminder to please mute the audio on your line until it is time for you to share. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, please be in a location away from nonparticipants.

Also please enter your first name and phone number in the Chat Room of this meeting if you wish to share this information with others. If you would like to lead a meeting or are willing to sponsor someone, you may also specify that in the Chat Room.

If there are any visitors or newcomers present, please unmute your line and introduce yourself, by first name only. **WELCOME!** If you are willing to stay online for a few minutes after the meeting concludes, we will have someone available to greet you and answer any questions you may have.

Are there any second- or third-timers? **WELCOME BACK!**

Announcements: Are there any announcements by the secretary?
Will the treasurer please report?
Are there any other reports or announcements?
Thank you.

Families Anonymous is primarily for those 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. When you come into this room you are no longer alone, but among friends who have experienced similar problems. We will respect your confidence and anonymity, as we know you will respect ours:

**WHOM YOU SEE HERE, WHAT YOU HEAR HERE,
WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE, LET IT STAY HERE.**

Usually the longer we continue to struggle alone, the more our thinking becomes confused. We have found that working our Twelve Steps enables us to live comfortably—in spite of unsolved problems—and often removes obstacles to the recovery of those who brought us to this program.

Here we begin to understand that to be of real help to others, we must first be willing to be helped ourselves. We ask only for the wisdom to see ourselves as we really are; for the courage to do something about our own lives, with the help of a Power greater than ourselves as we understand this concept; and for the grace to release with love those we are concerned about and cease trying to change them.

We believe we are dealing with a family illness that can be treated by a change of attitudes. We try to study our literature with an open mind, attend as many meetings as possible, and exchange phone numbers with other members for help between meetings.

Families Anonymous has basic readings that form the foundation of our Twelve Step program. They are read by different members at every meeting to remind us of the message they carry.

(We now go into the readings, which the Administrator will place on the screen as each is announced.)

(The Leader will call on people to read.)

1. **INTRODUCTION** (Optional)
2. **ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER** (formerly ABOUT DRUG ABUSE)
3. **FOUR DESTRUCTIVE FORCES**
4. **THE TWELVE STEPS**
5. **THE TWELVE TRADITIONS**
6. **HELPING**

THANK YOU!

These readings, along with other material, are available as free downloads on the Families Anonymous website. Our Administrator has placed the link in the Chat Room. There is also a large selection of excellent FA literature for sale on our e-store; the Administrator has placed that link in the Chat Room as well. Many of us have our favorites and will be happy to assist you after the meeting in recommending a few pieces that will help you understand the program and start you on your road to recovery.

Remember that even when you're not at a meeting, your program travels with you. So when you feel the need for support, phone another member. You can find that information in the Chat Room.

As a reminder, we will not take a break during this meeting, as we would normally do when we're face to face.

If anyone would like to lead a meeting, remember any piece of FA literature, such as a bookmark, a Step or Tradition, or a reading from *Today A Better Way* (TABW), makes an excellent topic for discussion. Different members lead our meetings; we encourage everyone to take a turn. It is empowering to lead a meeting no matter how long you have been attending FA. Remember when leading, that the topic should be no longer than 10 minutes and is meant only to begin the group discussion.

Anything you hear at this meeting is strictly the speaker's own opinion. If a member says something that you cannot accept, remember that he or she is merely speaking from personal experience—and not for Families Anonymous. There will be time at the end of the meeting for anyone who has not yet shared. **BEFORE WE BEGIN**, we encourage everyone to feel free to enter into the discussions and ask questions about the program.

So that everyone will have a chance to contribute, we avoid Crosstalk, which is defined as:

- Speaking without being recognized by the leader
- Carrying on a separate, one-on-one, side discussion during the meeting
- Questioning or counseling another member

IF THERE IS A NEWCOMER: You have shown courage by taking the 1st step and attending your first meeting. We encourage you to attend at least six meetings before deciding if FA is the program for you. *[If newcomers are present, read Letter to the Newcomer (#6001) or the January 1 reading in TABW.]*

[Optional:] Let us pause for a moment of silent prayer or meditation.

~~ **THE LEADER CONDUCTS THE MEETING** ~~

[Optional:] The leader may start with a short personal story about his or her experience in FA and how the program has changed him or her. For instance, “What I was like before FA, what happened, and what I’m like now.”

IF THERE IS A NEWCOMER, ASK: Newcomers, do you have any questions or wish to share? *(Allow for any questions or comments.)*

After the newcomer finishes speaking, leader says: We’re glad you chose to join us tonight. **Please remember that we will have someone available to meet with you after the meeting if you stay online at the end.**

Is there anyone else who hasn’t spoken or would like to share now?

~~ **GRATITUDE: PASSING THE VIRTUAL BASKET** ~~

The principles of Families Anonymous are found in our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Our Seventh Tradition states that each group should be fully self-supporting. While no dues or fees are required for membership, our voluntary contributions are used to pay for meeting costs and literature. They also allow us to help carry the message of our program to others through our continued support of FA’s World Service Office. Your generosity is encouraged and greatly appreciated.

As we don’t pass the basket online, anybody who wishes to contribute to Families Anonymous may do so online at FamiliesAnonymous.org and then click the “Donate” link.

We have also implemented Zelle as a virtual form of “passing the basket”. When setting up the recipient, use **donate@familiesanonymous.org** as the email address to which the funds will be sent.

[Optional:] If your group has set up a method for contributing to your local group, indicate that here.

If you have any questions, please reach out to our Treasurer, _____. Thank you for supporting us.

~ CLOSING ~

The very essence of our program is that everything is merely suggested. Our progress can be made in our own time and in our own way. As this is an anonymous program, we ask all members and visitors to respect our anonymity. The stories you hear are told in confidence and should not be repeated outside the meeting. They are told so that we might better understand this program and ourselves, and to give encouragement to new members. Thank you all for participating. It is our sharing that makes this program meaningful and helpful. When you leave here, take with you those thoughts that will be most helpful to you and leave behind those that you cannot accept.

And now, for those who care to join us, we will say the Serenity Prayer. *[Wait for Administrator to put it on the screen.]*

**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.**

[End with (optional):]

**KEEP COMING BACK.
IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT, IT WON'T IF YOU DON'T.
SO WORK IT, YOU'RE WORTH IT!**

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