

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS®
SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT

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.

If you have a cell phone, please turn it off now and leave it off for the duration of the meeting. This will avoid interruptions and help all of us focus on the member who is sharing.

[For the FA Phone Meeting and other phone-in meetings:] If you are joining the meeting via conference call, please mute your phone when you are not speaking, and turn off any electronic devices that may interrupt the meeting. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, please be in a location away from nonparticipants, and do not record the meeting.

Are there any visitors or newcomers present? **WELCOME!** Are there any second- or third-timers? **WELCOME BACK!** Let's introduce ourselves by first names only, starting with [name] _____.

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. Will each person who has one of the following titles please read it aloud when I announce it?

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

The telephone list being passed around is for sharing our phone numbers between meetings. It is helpful to call someone during a crisis, or when you just need to hear the friendly voice of someone who cares and understands you. Feel free to sign our roster with your first name, last initial, and phone number.

We'll take our break now and resume in ____ minutes. This is a good time to browse through our selection of excellent FA® literature. Many of us have our favorites and will be happy to assist you in selecting a few pieces that will help you understand the program and start you on your road to recovery. Our group [describe how your group prices literature and whom to pay].

~~ **BREAK** ~~

~~ **RESUME THE MEETING** ~~ **PRACTICING THE PROGRAM** ~~

Has the telephone roster been all the way around the room? If not, please pass it on.

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.

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

[For Meeting Without Walls meetings:] To be recognized by the leader, please click on the “COMMENT” tab on the right side of the Ventrilo screen. Type an exclamation point at the bottom of the new window and hit Return. After you have been recognized, you can clear your explanation point by opening up the comment window and hitting a return in the same place.

TO THE 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 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.”

~~ GRATITUDE: PASSING THE BASKET ~~

Newcomers, do you have any questions or wish to share? Is there anyone else who has not spoken or who would like to share now?

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 rent, refreshments, 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.

~~ 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, *[name]* _____ will lead us in the Serenity Prayer.

**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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