

# Families Anonymous

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

**To: The Concerned Family Member or Friend**  
**From: Some People Who Have Been “Through It”**

Have you found evidence—or do you have even a vague suspicion—that someone close to you may have a problem with drugs or alcohol? Is that person displaying behaviors that could be related to substance abuse?

We know what it’s like to feel alone in coping with the nagging worries and apprehensions that accompany our suspicions or discoveries of substance abuse. We remember our own feelings of panic and frustration as we agonized over our fears for our loved ones. For a while, some of us tried to ignore what we were witnessing, because we were too afraid to examine the situation more closely. After all, what would we do if we discovered that our fears were well-founded?

When suspicions and evidence turned into reality, our frantic attempts to “help” only made the problem worse. Our loved ones grew more hostile and rebellious, which left us even more upset and desperate. At times we felt resentful and depressed by the extent to which our own lives were being affected by another person’s problems.

But then we found the Families Anonymous® (FA®) program, where we learned that one person’s substance use disorder affects the lives of *everyone* close to that person, and that *we ourselves* were in need of help. We came to realize that most of our efforts to control or change the situation were, in effect, unintentionally *enabling*; that is, they allowed or encouraged our substance abusers to continue their self-destructive patterns. What a great relief it was to discover more effective ways of coping with our situations, while at the same time gaining some peace of mind, hope, and help in learning a better way to live.

We learned that, regardless of whether or not our loved ones are ready and willing to stop using drugs and alcohol, there are things *we* can do to avoid *standing in the way* of their recovery from substance abuse. Recovery programs are available for users who are seeking help. FA, by contrast, was created for *us*: the parent, grandparent, spouse, sibling, or other emotionally involved relative or friend.

FA groups meet weekly in communities throughout the U.S. and in more than a dozen other countries. Your attendance at meetings is welcomed, with no need for prior arrangements. When you come to a meeting, you may choose to participate in group discussions, or you may just sit and listen. First names only are used so as to preserve the anonymity of all, and no dues or fees are required for membership.

To find a meeting near you, please call us or visit our website. We invite you to begin learning a new way of living and to find a degree of serenity amid the chaos created by substance use disorder.

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