



# FAMILIES ANONYMOUS®

AND THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

## COMMUNITY LEADERS

### What Is Families Anonymous?

Families Anonymous® (FA®) is a self-help fellowship based on an adaptation of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. We who belong to FA are family members and friends concerned about our loved ones who are struggling with substance abuse, dependence or addiction.

### Why Is FA Needed?

Substance use disorder (SUD) has dire physical, mental, emotional and spiritual impacts on the people who suffer from it, and its effects don't stop with just those people.

Although only one person in the family may be using drugs, the problem rapidly expands to include the entire family in "a kind of madness," often called codependency.

In Families Anonymous, we learn a better way to live. We learn how to change ourselves; in doing so, we find serenity in spite of turmoil.

*Learn more* →



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**FAMILIES ANONYMOUS** 

The pain and anguish felt by parents, siblings, grandparents, spouses, partners and others are symptoms of *codependency*. Codependency is an imbalanced interpersonal relationship in which one person, such as a parent or spouse, allows his or her well-being to depend on the well-being of another person, in this case their addicted loved one.

Codependent people often need special help to regain their own lives, find some peace of mind, let go of hyper-responsibility, and stop making situations worse by enabling other people's self-destructive behaviors. **Families Anonymous provides that help.**

Staying tuned in to their loved ones while not interfering directly in what they do; encouraging and supporting their loved ones' *positive* choices while not getting caught up in their problems or issues: These are among the critical changes FA members make in themselves as they are attending FA meetings and working the program.

## How Does FA Work?

The **focus of the FA program is on the friend or family member**, not on their addicted loved one (for whom many other recovery programs are available).

FA groups are open to anyone concerned about another person's current, former or suspected use of drugs or alcohol. Groups hold meetings (in-person and virtually), usually weekly, in locations throughout the United States and in more than a dozen other countries. **FA is not a religious program, and no dues or fees are required for membership. Anonymity is stressed in all aspects of the program** for the protection of members and their loved ones; for this reason, first names only are used.

By following FA's Twelve Step program of recovery—which includes basic readings, discussion of recovery topics, and sharing of experiences—members find a way to put their lives back together and achieve some sense of serenity. **Newcomers are welcome to just sit and listen; or they may speak, if they wish**, asking questions about the program or sharing their concerns and struggles that have brought them to FA.

Over time, the changes they make in themselves, and the new ways they interact within their families, can exert a positive impact on their family dynamics, most likely benefitting even their addicted loved ones.

## How Can Families Anonymous and Professionals Cooperate?

People suffering the effects of a loved one's addiction often turn to professionals for guidance about what to do or where to get help.

For more than 50 years, countless professionals from all walks of life have **made referrals** to FA.

Many professionals also turn to FA for their own **personal healing**. They attend FA meetings regularly as lay members, leaving their jobs outside the meeting. In FA, everyone is equal and anonymous. By maintaining each other's anonymity, FA groups are able to keep "principles above personalities."

Some professionals go even further, by **starting additional FA groups**. Once a group is up-and-running, the professional steps aside so that all the group's members can have a role in managing its meetings in accordance with FA's Twelve Traditions, which require autonomy, anonymity, rotation of leaders, and no other affiliation.

## Community Leaders

Many cities have leaders who plan public forums or town hall meetings to address substance use in their communities. Are you one of these leaders?

If so, you are well aware how beneficial such events can be for sharing information.

These safe, nonthreatening gatherings are ideal for **reaching out to people** who are confronting a loved one's addiction and who might be finding it awkward and embarrassing to publicly voice their questions and concerns.

Even if substance use disorder is pervasive within their neighborhoods and wreaking havoc in their families, their first inclinations may be to stay silent and withdraw socially, so as to hide their feelings of hopelessness, shame and guilt.

When you reach out through your forums and meetings, please **consider including FA members as speakers and panelists**. Invite them to **tell their stories** about how FA has helped them and their families. They can explain how the FA program has put them on a recovery path toward acceptance and serenity—and how it can do the same for other suffering families.

FA members know firsthand about substance use disorder and can **share practical information, much-needed comfort and hope**.

**Substance use disorder spans all demographics.** The disease does not discriminate. Friends and families suffer just as their addicted loved ones do, but **no one has to struggle alone. Families Anonymous can help.**



### Our Invitation to You

*We invite you to learn more about Families Anonymous by visiting our website or contacting our World Service Office.*

- Find meetings that exist in your community and beyond (in-person and virtual). Get help in starting new ones.
- Discover a wealth of recovery resources, some available for free download.
- Look through recent and past issues of FA's newsletter, *Serenity Messenger*, and read testimonials and personal stories written by FA members who share how the program has changed their lives and put them on a path toward recovery and serenity.

## Recovery Resources



**Find a Local Group**  
[In-Person Meetings](#)



**Visit our Bookstore**  
[Online Bookstore](#)



**Join a Virtual Meeting**  
[Online Meeting Directory](#)



**Look Around our Website**  
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## Contact Us

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