



ARE YOU TORN APART

TRYING TO COPE

WITH A LOVED ONE WHO HAS
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER?



YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU.

In the complicated society we live in today, many families don't realize they share similar pain, anger, anxiety, shame, self-pity and fear caused by their concern about the disruptive, destructive behavior of a loved one with substance use disorder or related behavioral problems. **Although just 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.

We at **Families Anonymous**® (FA®) have found a safe haven where we can share our problems with others who understand. The details of our personal stories may differ, but our feelings and heartbreak are the same. In FA we learn to recognize the roles we play in our families—and how these roles aggravate our situations, making them worse. We learn how to change ourselves; in doing so, we **achieve serenity in spite of turmoil.**

WHAT IS 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.

FA began in the early 1970s and has become an international fellowship that helps people experiencing the fallout from substance use disorder in their homes and families.



IS FAMILIES ANONYMOUS A RELIGIOUS PROGRAM?

No. Although FA has a spiritual basis formed on the principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, it is not a religious program. Each member's belief (or lack of belief) in a Higher Power is personal and private. We are not affiliated with any religion, sect, political entity or institution.

TELL ME ABOUT ANONYMITY.

Anonymity is the foundation of our program. First names only are used. We avoid rendering opinions on outside issues; we do not participate in public action groups; and we do not lend our name to any outside enterprise. These parameters allow us to stay focused on our recovery and keep principles above personalities.



ARE THERE REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP?

FA welcomes anyone concerned about a friend or loved one who is, was or is suspected of being involved with drugs or alcohol. **There are no dues, fees or other obligations for membership.**

Each FA group is fully self-supporting, so voluntary donations are gratefully accepted from members. FA groups pay their own rent, buy FA literature and make donations to the World Service Office to support the FA fellowship as a whole.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT MEETINGS?

FA groups hold regularly scheduled meetings, and leadership is rotated among the group's members. Some meetings focus primarily on the Twelve Steps, with the group studying a specific Step. Other meetings explore FA's Twelve Traditions, a framework of guidelines that define our groups and help keep them strong and healthy. Still others focus on a topic selected by the meeting's leader: a key word or slogan (such as expectations, enabling, control, or one day at a time); or a page from FA's book of daily readings, *Today A Better Way*™; or excerpts from other FA literature pieces that contain the wisdom of longtime members.

Using the meeting's focal point, and always being guided by the principles of the FA program, we take turns discussing our experiences, strength and hope in support of each other. **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.



HOW CAN I FIND A MEETING?

More than 400 meetings are held weekly in the United States and at least a dozen other countries. Simply look on the FA website (under “Find a Meeting”), or call or email the World Service Office (WSO). Choose the meetings that are best for you.



IN-PERSON meetings are the original type of FA meeting. Interested in starting a new group in your area? Find more information on the FA website or contact the WSO.



VIRTUAL meetings are available entirely online or in a hybrid format. Login (or dial in on your phone) on a day and time that works for you no matter where you find yourself.



E-MEETING is an email-based discussion group available 24/7 with hundreds of members from all over the world.

HOW DOES FA HELP A MEMBER?

At our meetings, we share our successes and struggles. By telling our stories and listening to those of others, we gain strength, hope and courage to try new ideas and different ways of coping with the challenges we face. We each “recover” at our own pace and, in turn, encourage others to persevere in doing the same.

Our focus in FA is on changing ourselves, not others; on changing our words, feelings, attitudes, actions and reactions. When we transform ourselves, serenity can enter our lives in spite of unsolved problems. Often the changes we make in ourselves provide opportunities for our addicted loved ones to also choose recovery for themselves.



DO YOU NEED FAMILIES ANONYMOUS?

A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONCERNED FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

To discover the answer, reply to the following questions as honestly as you can. Fill in each blank with the name of the person who is causing you concern.



1. Do you lie awake worrying about ____?
2. Do you feel frustrated in your attempts to control ____?
3. Do you disapprove of ____'s lifestyle?
4. Do you argue with ____ about their choice of friends?
5. Do you find it increasingly difficult to communicate with ____?
6. Does ____'s behavior have you "climbing the walls"?
7. Do you often ask, "Where have I failed?"
8. Do you feel it is necessary to protect ____, whom you regard as unusually sensitive?
9. Are you trying to compensate for some family misfortune, divorce, death, illness?
10. Are you embarrassed to discuss your situation with a friend or relative?
11. Do you find yourself lying or covering up for ____?
12. Do you feel resentful or hostile toward ____?
13. Do you find it increasingly difficult to trust ____?
14. Do you worry about ____'s behavior affecting other members of the family?
15. Do you blame others for ____'s problems?
16. Do you blame yourself?
17. Are ____'s problems undermining your marriage or other relationships?
18. Do you find yourself playing detective, fearful of what you will find?
19. Do you go from place to place seeking help for ____?
20. Is concern for ____ giving you headaches, stomachaches or heartache?

- *If you answered YES to any three of these questions, this is an early-warning sign.*
- *If you answered YES to four or more, chances are that you could use some help.*

**DON'T DO IT
ALONE**

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU



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