

## WHAT EXACTLY IS FAMILIES ANONYMOUS®?

We are a fellowship of concerned relatives and friends facing the reality that problems of someone close to us are seriously affecting our lives and our ability to function.

“But I’m not the one who needs help!” is a statement that virtually all of us have uttered at one time or another. It seems so obvious to us that it’s someone else who has the problems! Many of us feel annoyed or shocked when our addicted loved one refuses to seek help and resents any efforts we make to intervene, guide or give advice.

As a fellowship, FA® members are dedicated to practicing a constructive approach in dealing with the family illness of addiction. As we attend meetings, we learn from shared experiences and wisdom. We benefit from knowing we are not alone, and that there is a better way. We recognize the mistakes we all have made while trying to do the best we possibly could. The realization that we are part of an understanding and loving community helps us begin feeling good about ourselves again. Not only does attending FA meetings often set the stage for **our** recovery, but it can also encourage beneficial changes in other family members, including the addicted loved one who brought us to this program.

## WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS BRING FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO FA MEETINGS?

Adolescent problems may run the gamut of lying, stealing, hostility, running away, delinquency, truancy, substance use, difficulties at school, and more. Adult problems may include squandering family income, staying out all night, being gone for days, getting arrested, becoming violent or destructive, losing jobs, and the like.

The chaos that comes with substance use disorder also spills over into the lives of family members and close friends. We suffer along with our addicted loved one.

## HOW DOES FA AFFECT THE FAMILY MEMBER WHO HAS A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER?

FA is compatible with other Twelve Step recovery programs. Even in situations where our addicted loved one refuses to accept help, changes in family attitudes can influence that person’s motivation and set the stage for recovery.

## WHAT IS EXPECTED OF NEWCOMERS AND VISITORS?

The only questions asked are:

- What is your first name?
- Do you have any questions about the program or comments you’d like to share?

## WHAT HAPPENS AT MEETINGS?

Members share their experiences—both their successes and their failures—and are supportive of others who might be going through a current crisis. Meetings may focus on a specific topic: fear, expectations, hopelessness, anger, anxiety, communication, overprotectiveness, and many others. We study the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions—the heart and soul of our program. From time to time, we may invite guest speakers from other Twelve Step programs or professionals working in the recovery field. Group members take turns volunteering to lead meetings, which usually last about 1½ hours, although they may be shorter or longer, depending on the group’s decision.

## DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Yes! As FA members openly share their personal stories, each is helped by the thought that, *“I am not the only one struggling with the wreckage that substance use disorder brings upon a person’s family and friends.”* Our groups include people who have had experiences, fears and worries similar to our own, yet have found a measure of serenity and hope. Some of our members’ addicted loved ones have chosen recovery, while others have not made that decision. Nonetheless, we learn that, even if our loved ones continue to use, our working the FA Twelve Step program can lead us toward serenity and a better way to live. We say in our program:

**“Keep coming back.  
It works if you work it.  
It won’t if you don’t.  
So work it. You’re worth it!”**

FA often fills the gap in available professional resources and can help families come to grips with the insidious nature of substance use disorder. FA effectively helps members and friends see their roles in perpetuating this family disease and the ways they can contribute to their own and their loved ones’ recoveries.

We carefully protect the anonymity of our members; last names and occupations are not revealed at meetings. No member questions or advises other members, even if he or she happens to be a professional in the recovery field. Everyone in the group benefits when we practice *placing principles above personalities*.

People are frequently referred to FA by professionals familiar with our program who treat families and individuals for substance use disorder. These professionals as well as those in the legal system recognize the benefits their clients can derive from learning and practicing FA’s Twelve Traditions and Twelve Steps (adapted from those of Alcoholics Anonymous).

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO ATTEND A MEETING?

There are no dues, fees, or charges of any kind. FA is self-supported through donations and the sale of our self-published literature.

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There is no formal enrollment. Information about a local group or an online meeting can be found on the FA website, FamiliesAnonymous.org.

## FAMILIES ANONYMOUS IS...

... a group of new friends who won't be shocked by the nature of your problems and who will stand by you as you learn how to gain sanity and serenity in your life.

... people just like you—helping other people just like you.

Please feel free to visit a meeting. You will be most welcome.

**NO last names**

**NO forms**

**NO formal enrollment**

**NO dues or fees**

**NO community funding**

**NO outside donations**

**NO government grants**

**NO commercial fundraising**

## DO YOU NEED FAMILIES ANONYMOUS?

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 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?



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# FAMILIES ANONYMOUS®



## FOR ME?

## BUT I'M NOT THE ONE WHO NEEDS HELP!

Maybe – but if you've ever thought that the habits, actions, or escape patterns of someone close to you are seriously affecting **your** life, please continue reading this pamphlet. Families Anonymous® (FA®) members have walked in your shoes and are on the same road as you.

Attending FA meetings is something you can do for yourself to help restore your serenity and sanity. You *can* become calm enough to sleep again. The world will stop spinning. Peace and sanity will return.

*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.*