



FAMILIES ANONYMOUS®

SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT For In-Person, Virtual and Hybrid Meetings

[OPTIONAL FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS:]

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Administrator places the following information in the Chat Room or makes it available to the group via email or screen sharing:

- URL for the FA® website: familiesanonymous.org
- URL for free downloads of FA material: familiesanonymous.org/literature/free-downloads
- URL for FA e-store, to purchase literature: familiesanonymous.org/shop
- URL for e-resources: familiesanonymous.org/literature/e-resources
- Other URLs, depending on the country and location of the group: _____
- URLs for donations, such as:
 - For direct donations to FA: familiesanonymous.org/donate
 - For donations to FA using Zelle: donate@familiesanonymous.org
 - For donations to the local FA group: _____
- URLs for social media sites with an FA presence:
 - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/familiesanonymousofficial>
 - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/familiesanonymousofficial>
 - Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@familiesanonymousofficial>

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.

Our meetings begin at _____ and end by _____. If you have a cell phone, please silence it for the duration of the meeting. This will avoid interruptions and help all of us focus on the members who are sharing.

[FOR VIRTUAL AND HYBRID MEETINGS:]

If you are joining the meeting via conference call or an online platform (such as Zoom), please turn on your video screen and keep it on throughout the meeting. Mute your audio device when you are not speaking, and turn off any other electronic devices that could interrupt the meeting. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, be alone in a location where other people will be unable to view or hear the meeting, and do not record the meeting. Onscreen, please identify yourself by first name and last initial only.

Are there any visitors or newcomers present? **WELCOME!** If you would like to stay for a few minutes after the meeting concludes, let us know and someone will be available to greet you and answer any questions you may have.

Are there any second- or third-timers? **WELCOME BACK!**

[OPTIONAL:]

Now, let's all introduce ourselves by first name only.

[ANNOUNCEMENTS:]

Does anyone have any reports or announcements? ... or any communications from the World Service Board to share with the group?

Thank you.

[OPTIONAL:]

Before we begin, let's pause for a moment of silence or personal meditation. [PAUSE BRIEFLY.]

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 confidentiality 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.

When someone suffers from substance use disorder, family and friends are affected. We believe that all of us can be helped 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.

[FOR GROUPS THAT MAINTAIN A GROUP PHONE LIST AND POSSIBLY ALSO AN EMAIL LIST:]

Our group maintains a list of members willing to be contacted between meetings.

With our phone list, we can reach out to other members during a crisis or simply when we need to hear the friendly voice of someone who cares and understands us. This way, even when we're not at a meeting, our program travels with us.

[ADD THIS IF YOU HAVE AN EMAIL LIST:] Our email list enables us to send meeting reminders and other information, directly or through an app such as WhatsApp.

Feel free to add your own first name, last initial, phone number, and email address.

Families Anonymous has basic readings that form the foundation of our Twelve Step program. These readings are available in printed form in the *FA Basic Pamphlet* (#1001) and as free downloads on the Families Anonymous website. They are read by different members at every meeting to remind us of the message they carry.

I will now be asking some of you to read aloud the following titles when I announce them.

[FOR VIRTUAL AND HYBRID MEETINGS: THE ADMINISTRATOR WILL, IF POSSIBLE, PLACE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING READINGS ON THE SCREEN AS IT IS ANNOUNCED.]

1. **INTRODUCTION** [*OPTIONAL READING*]
2. **ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER** [*FORMERLY ABOUT DRUG ABUSE*]
3. **FOUR DESTRUCTIVE FORCES**
4. **THE TWELVE STEPS**
5. **THE TWELVE TRADITIONS**
6. **HELPING**

~~ **BREAK** [optional] **and LITERATURE**~~

[FOR MEETINGS THAT → **CONTINUE WITHOUT TAKING A BREAK:**]

Whenever you are able, we invite you to browse through the large selection of excellent FA literature for sale on our website's e-store, which is *familiesanonymous.org/shop*. Many of us have our favorites and will be happy to assist you by recommending a few pieces that will help you understand the program and support you on your road to recovery.

[FOR MEETINGS THAT → **TAKE A BREAK BUT**
→ **DO NOT HAVE LITERATURE FOR SALE ON SITE:**]

We'll take a brief break now and resume in ____ minutes. Either during this break or after the meeting, we encourage you to browse through the large selection of excellent FA[®] literature on our website's e-store, which is *familiesanonymous.org/shop*. 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 you on your road to recovery.

[FOR MEETINGS THAT → **TAKE A BREAK AND**
→ **HAVE LITERATURE FOR SALE ON SITE:**]

We'll take a brief break now and resume in ____ minutes. For those of you who are attending in person, this is a good time to look through the samples of FA[®] literature displayed on our group's literature table. For those attending virtually, we invite you, either now or between meetings, to browse through the large selection of excellent FA literature for sale on our website's e-store, which is *familiesanonymous.org/shop*. 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 support you on your road to recovery.

~~ **PRACTICING THE PROGRAM** ~~

Any piece of FA literature, such as a bookmark, a Step, a 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 they are merely speaking from personal experience—and not for Families Anonymous. There will be time at the end of the meeting for anyone to share who has not yet shared.

We encourage everyone to feel free to share, by first indicating your desire to speak and then waiting to be called upon by the leader. So that everyone has 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

[IF A NEWCOMER IS PRESENT:]

If you are a newcomer to FA, you have shown courage by taking the first step and attending your first meeting. We encourage you to attend at least six meetings before deciding if FA is the program for you. [THEN READ OR REFER TO *LETTER TO THE NEWCOMER* (#6001) OR THE JANUARY 1 READING IN *TODAY A BETTER WAY* (#1015).]

~~ THE LEADER CONDUCTS THE TOPIC MEETING ~~

[NOTE: IN THIS SECTION, THE “LEADER” MAY BE THE SAME PERSON WHO HAS BEEN READING THIS “SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT,” OR IT MAY BE A DIFFERENT MEMBER WHO WILL BE PRESENTING THE TOPIC AND LEADING THE DISCUSSION.]

[ESPECIALLY WHEN A NEWCOMER IS PRESENT:]

The leader may share, or ask for a volunteer to share, a short personal story (no more than three to five minutes) about their experience in FA and how the program has changed them. For instance, “What I was like before FA, what happened, and what I’m like now.”

[SETTING THE STAGE:]

The leader presents the topic they have selected for this meeting, often including readings from TABW, and sets the stage for members to share their thoughts and experiences. This should take no more than about ten minutes.

We'll now open the meeting for members to share their thoughts and experiences about the topic of the meeting or something else they would like to share with the group. Each member's share should take no more than three to five minutes, so that everyone who wishes to speak has an opportunity to do so. As leader, I will call on people whose hands are raised.

[WHEN NO MORE HANDS ARE RAISED, THE LEADER ASKS:]

Is there anyone who has not spoken and would like to share now?

~~ GRATITUDE: PASSING THE BASKET ~~

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, literature, and refreshments at in-person meetings. 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.

[ADD FOR VIRTUAL AND HYBRID MEETINGS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES:]

Unlike at in-person meetings, where a basket is passed for donations, we are not able to pass a basket online. But anybody who wishes to contribute to Families Anonymous may still do so online by going to FamiliesAnonymous.org and then clicking the “Donate” link. FA has also implemented Zelle as a virtual form of “passing the basket.” When setting up the recipient, use **donate@familiesanonymous.org** as the email address to which the funds will be sent.

[ADD FOR VIRTUAL AND HYBRID MEETINGS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES:]

Unlike at in-person meetings, where a basket is passed for donations, we are not able to pass a basket online. But anybody who wishes to contribute to Families Anonymous may still do so online by going to [INSERT THE DONATION INSTRUCTIONS AND LINK].

~~ 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 again 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.**

[OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL CONCLUSION:]

**KEEP COMING BACK.
IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT, IT WON'T IF YOU DON'T.
SO WORK IT, YOU'RE WORTH IT!**



Families Anonymous, Inc.
701 Lee Street, Suite 670, Des Plaines, IL 60016-4508
(847) 294-5877 • fax (847) 294-5837 • (800) 736-9805 (USA only)
Website: www.FamiliesAnonymous.org • Email: famanon@FamiliesAnonymous.org



FAMILIES ANONYMOUS® and the FA® acronym
are federally registered trademarks, and
the FA logo is a trademark, owned
exclusively by Families Anonymous, Inc.