



New to AA?

We hope this guide will help answer some of your questions.

Who can attend an AA meeting?

Anyone can attend an **open A.A.** meeting. If you attend a meeting, you will notice that most of us identify ourselves by our first name, and the fact that we are alcoholics. If you are not an alcoholic, or not sure, feel free to identify yourself as a visitor. We encourage you to introduce yourself to a few folks before or after the meeting. We believe you will find that any AA member will be happy to answer any questions, no matter how simple, or how personal or difficult. We stay sober by sharing our experience.

Anyone with a *desire to stop drinking* can attend a **closed A.A.** meeting. There are no dues or fees for A.A. meetings, and anonymity is a practice and a tradition in A.A. If you are looking for help with your drinking we strongly urge you to talk to someone at the meeting.

If you are concerned about someone else's drinking

You may want to contact Al-anon. They are a 12-step organization for family and friends of Alcoholics. Al-Anon has a website at Al-Anon.org. We find it does little good to try to push or drag a problem drinker into AA – they have to want it for themselves.

What is AA?

The primary purpose of AA is to carry our message of recovery to the alcoholic seeking help. Together, we can do what none of us could accomplish alone; through our mutual experience we can provide ongoing support for each other.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses or opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. – *the AA Preamble*



What does AA do?

A.A. members share their experience with anyone seeking help with a drinking problem; they give person-to-person service or “sponsorship” to the alcoholic coming to A.A. from any source. The A.A. program, set forth in our Twelve Steps, offers the alcoholic a way to develop a satisfying life without alcohol. This program is discussed at A.A. group meetings. Open speaker meetings-open to alcoholics and non-alcoholics.(Attendance at an open A.A. meeting is the best way to learn what A.A. is, what it does, and what it does not do.) At speaker meetings, A.A. members “tell their stories.” They describe their experiences with alcohol, howthey came to A.A., and how their lives have changed as a result of A.A. Open discussion meetings-one member speaks briefly about his or her drinking experience, and then leads a discussion on A.A. recovery or any drinking-related problem anyone brings up. (Closed meetings are for A.A.s or anyone who may have a drinking problem.) Closed discussion meetings-conducted just as open discussions are, but for alcoholics or prospective A.A.s only. Step meetings (usually closed)-discussion of one of the Twelve Steps. A.A. members may also take meetings into correctional and Treatment Facilities. A.A. members may be asked to conduct informational meetings about A.A. in schools, hospitals, and other public forums. These meetings about A.A. are not regular A.A. group meetings. (See Public Information Committee)

How to find an A.A. Meeting

We are an anonymous bunch, but you can find A.A. meetings all over Oregon, and often at a variety of times and locations to suit any schedule. Go to medfordareaaa.org for a list of current meetings.

What A.A. does not do

1. Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover
2. Solicit members
3. Engage in or sponsor research
4. Keep attendance records or case histories
5. Join “councils” of social agencies
6. Follow up or try to control its members
7. Make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses
8. Provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric Treatment Facilities
9. Offer religious services
10. Engage in education about alcohol
11. Provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or any other welfare or social services
12. Provide domestic or vocational counseling
13. Accept any money for its services, or any contributions from non-A.A. sources
14. Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.



Conclusion

And if this hasn't answered your questions, reading the pamphlets below from AA World Service in their digital format, may help any other questions you still have. Also, keep this [Beginners Guide](#) handy to help you in the meantime.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS TO BEGIN YOUR NEW JOURNEY:

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (available for purchase at [aa.org](#) or your local Central Office)

TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS (available for purchase at [aa.org](#) or your local Central Office)

DAILY REFLECTIONS (available for purchase at [aa.org](#) or your local [Central Office](#))

PAMPHLETS Experience, Strength and Hope: (pdf link for immediate reading)

[A BRIEF GUIDE TO ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS](#)

[MESSAGE TO TEENAGERS](#)

[WOMEN IN A.A.](#)

[A.A. FOR THE BLACK AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN ALCOHOLIC](#)

[A.A. FOR THE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN](#)

[YOUNG PEOPLE AND A.A.](#)

[A.A. FOR THE OLDER ALCOHOLIC — NEVER TOO LATE](#)

[LGBTQ ALCOHOLICS IN A.A.](#)

[THE "GOD" WORD: ATHEIST AND AGNOSTIC MEMBERS IN A.A.](#)

[A.A. FOR ALCOHOLICS WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES — AND THEIR SPONSORS](#)

[ACCESS TO A.A.: MEMBERS SHARE ON OVERCOMING BARRIERS](#)

[A.A. AND THE ARMED SERVICES](#)

[DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DIFFERENT?](#)

[MANY PATHS TO SPIRITUALITY](#)

[MEMO TO AN INMATE IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL](#) (An illustrated pamphlet for inmates)

About A.A.: (pdf link for immediate reading)

[IS A.A. FOR YOU?](#) 12 questions

[FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A.A.](#)

[IS A.A. FOR ME?](#)

[A NEWCOMER ASKS IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN YOUR LIFE?](#)

[THIS IS A.A. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SPONSORSHIP](#)

[THE A.A. GROUP](#)

[PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL](#)

[THE TWELVE STEPS ILLUSTRATED](#)

[THE A.A. MEMBER—MEDICATIONS AND OTHER DRUGS](#)