

INCLUDE THE FAMILY

It's said that the average practicing alcoholic affects the lives of at least five others and that alcoholism is a family illness. We find that the family that gets sick together can often recover together. The best way to do this is to share your program of recovery with your family. Here are some of the AA activities that are family-oriented:

OPEN MEETINGS - Take your spouse, family members and interested friends to hear the stories of AA speakers and to share in the fellowship. Open meetings are listed in our "Where & When" directory and anyone, *alcoholic or non-alcoholic*, may attend.

SOCIAL EVENTS - Suppers, dances, picnics and other social activities are often sponsored by groups for AA members and their families.

CONFERENCES - Weekend conferences at resorts and hotels are held throughout the year and offer activities for AA members and their families. Often Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are held at the same time. Brevard Intergroup has information on many of these conferences displayed in the office and many are listed in the back of the *Grapevine* and *Box 459*.

Al-Anon is available to any interested person who cares about an alcoholic. Alateen is meant for the teenager. Both use the same Twelve Step of recovery to improve their own lives. Al-Anon and Alateen have their own organization, separate from A.A.

ASK FOR HELP

When you need help, ask your sponsor or one of your group's seasoned members. If they are unavailable or unable to help, call Brevard Intergroup. Don't be afraid to ask for help - all AA members remember "*what it used to be like*" as a newcomer and will gladly share their experience, strength and hope with you.

The family that gets sick together can often recover together.

GROUPS vs CLUBS

There are several clubs in the area which are home to A.A. meetings. Many newcomers get the relationship between the clubs and AA groups who hold their meetings at clubs confused. There are no dues or fees for membership in A.A. or an A.A. group - regardless of where it meets. Clubs do typically charge the *club members* (who usually are A.A. members too) dues. The clubs make ends meet by renting space to A.A. groups for their meetings, by selling coffee and soda and from the dues of club members. All A.A. groups pay rent for the meeting room whether they meet in a club, a church or elsewhere.

WHEN YOU TRAVEL

Just as you found friends in meetings all over the Spacecoast, you will also find members in almost every city and town in the U.S. and most parts of the world. Indeed, this brochure is a modified version of one brought back from California by a local A.A. member.

Whenever you travel, take along a copy of the *U.S., Canadian or International Directories* (from Intergroup) which contain valuable information to help you get in touch with local A.A. members when you are away from home. Also, look in the local phone book under "*Alcoholics Anonymous*" and it's likely you will find an answering service or an Intergroup/Central Office that will help you make an A.A. contact. You are never far from a meeting.

BE A PART OF

So now you've made a start. If you are like most of us, we think you might find these suggestions helpful on your journey to a comfortable, happy sobriety. Remember that you never have to be alone if you use the tools that A.A. has to offer you. The fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous provides support and guidance to all alcoholics who reach out for help. Our very survival requires that we must carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We need you. Keep coming back!

Making A Start In Alcoholics Anonymous

A Guide for the Beginner

BREVARD INTERGROUP

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YOU MAKE A START

You have made a decision. You have taken Step One. You have said to yourself, "Yes, I am one of those people who is powerless over alcohol. My life is unmanageable. I can't stop drinking and I want help." You have discovered that, just as it says in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* alcohol is cunning, baffling and powerful.

A.A.'s plan of recovery will introduce you to a few simple principles which will show you how others have stopped drinking and how they maintain their sobriety. They can work for you as effectively as they have worked for others. Here are some suggestions which we feel can be helpful to you on your path to recovery.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Alcoholics Anonymous is a "*one day at a time*" way of living. This simple program provides us with the tools necessary for staying sober, accomplishing tasks, solving problems and cleaning up the past. More importantly, it gives us a way to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a Higher Power of our understanding.

In learning to apply AA principles to our lives, we ask for help from our Higher Power, from our sponsor, and from other AA members whom most of us have come to depend upon for our recovery.

**EASY
DOES
IT!**

GO TO MEETINGS

All over Brevard County every day of the year - mornings, noontimes and evenings - there is help in the form of meetings for you and every alcoholic who has a desire to stop drinking.

Use our handy "Where & When" directory to find out exactly where and when all the meetings are held. We recommend that newcomers attend meetings often - better too many than too few! As one AA member puts it, "the Big Book is your road map, the meetings are your filling stations".

GET A SPONSOR

Our experience shows us that having a sponsor is an essential element in our recovery. Your sponsor will listen to you and tell you what has worked for them, point out trouble spots and help you decide what to do about them. In other words, your sponsor helps you to understand the AA program and guides you along the path of recovery.

Although sponsors can't solve your problems, they can help you to face up to them with honesty and courage, and find ways to solve them by using the AA program. You can usually count on sponsors to do their part and to encourage you to do yours.

Who should you ask to be your sponsor? First, pick a recovered alcoholic! We *strongly* recommend men sponsors for men, women sponsors for women. Listen to those who share in the meetings, noting those who you can identify with, and who are good examples of sober living and then speak to them after a meeting. Humbly asking for help is the first step to recovery.

JOIN A HOME GROUP

When some of us were introduced to AA through a particular group, we thought we had been *assigned* to that group and should not go to other meetings. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Visit various groups - before, during and after you've chosen your home group. But sooner or later you should naturally settle down to regularly attending a meeting you choose as your "home group".

There are many different types of groups available. Your home group should be one in which you can maintain sobriety and that you feel you are a part of the group. Pick a home group that is active in AA service work - one that has an Intergroup Representative, a Group Service Representative (GSR) and also financially supports the Alcoholics Anonymous service structure. After you have been sober for a while, you'll understand there is much, much more to A.A. than "*don't drink*

and go to meetings" and groups active in service will offer more growth. Your home group ought to be the place where you are challenged to keep growing and where you feel you have so many friends you just don't want to stay away!

READ THE BOOKS

As soon as you can, we suggest you read and study these important books which explain the A.A. recovery program, our history and our traditions.

**Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book)
Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions
A.A. Comes of Age
Dr. Bob & The Good Old Timers
As Bill Sees It and Pass It On**

These books are *A.A. General Service Conference approved literature*. We suggest that you read them . . . and reread them. They can be a source of inspiration and understanding. Many of us begin our "quiet time" by reading a paragraph or chapter from one of them. They are the basic source of our program of recovery. Other A.A. literature is available and can be found on the literature table at most A.A. meetings. Browse through the selections and choose what interests you.

There's an excellent monthly publication that many read called the *Grapevine*. It is filled with interesting articles for the sober alcoholic. *Box 459* is a bi-monthly newsletter published by the New York Office and contains lots of information regarding what's going on around the globe in A.A. - you can usually obtain a copy from your home group. Brevard Intergroup publishes a terrific monthly newsletter, *The Unifier*, covering items of interest and social activities for all A.A. groups and members in Brevard County. This local newsletter can be found at most groups or at the Intergroup Office. Intergroup also maintains an extensive inventory of A.A. books and pamphlets.