

# If You are a Professional...

## A.A. Wants to Work With You

Cooperation with the professional community is an objective of A.A., and has been since our beginnings. We are always seeking to strengthen and expand our communication with you, and we welcome your comments and suggestions. They help us to work more effectively with you in achieving our common purpose: to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

### ***A Resource for the Helping Professional***

Professionals who work with alcoholics share a common purpose with Alcoholics Anonymous: to help the alcoholic stop drinking and lead a healthy, productive life.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a nonprofit, self-supporting, entirely independent fellowship— “not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution.” Yet A.A. is in a position to serve as a resource to you through its policy of “cooperation but not affiliation” with the professional community.

We can serve as a source of personal experience with alcoholism as an ongoing support system for recovering alcoholics.

### ***How the Program Works***

A.A.’s primary purpose, as stated in our Preamble, is: “. . . to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.”

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. Members share their experiences in recovery from alcoholism on a one-to-one basis, and introduce the newcomer to A.A.’s Twelve Steps of personal recovery and its Twelve Traditions that sustain the Fellowship itself.

*Meetings.* At the heart of the program are its meetings, which are conducted autonomously by A.A. groups in cities and towns throughout the world. Anyone may attend open meetings of A.A. These usually consist of talks by one or more speakers who share impressions of their past illness and their present recovery in A.A. Some *open* meetings — to which helping professionals, the media and others are invited — are held for the specific purpose of informing the nonalcoholic (and possibly alcoholic) public about A.A. *Closed* meetings are for alcoholics only.

Alcoholics recovering in A.A. generally attend several meetings each week.

*Anonymity.* Anonymity helps the Fellowship to govern itself by principles rather than personalities; by attraction rather than promotion. We openly share our program of recovery, but not the names of the individuals in it.

### ***What A.A. Does NOT Do***

A.A. does not: Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover; solicit members; engage in or sponsor research; keep attendance records or case histories; join “councils” of social agencies; follow up or try to control its members; make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses; provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment; offer religious services; engage in education about alcohol; provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money or any other welfare or social services; provide domestic or vocational counseling; accept any money for its services or any contributions from non-A.A. sources; provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

## ***Referrals From Judicial, Health Care, or other Professionals***

Today numerous A.A. members come to us from judicial, health care, or other professionals. Some arrive voluntarily, others do not.

A.A. does not discriminate against *any* prospective member. Who made the referral to A.A. is not what interests us — it is the problem drinker who elicits our concern.

*Proof of attendance at meetings.* Sometimes a referral source asks for proof of attendance at A.A. meetings.

- Groups cooperate in different ways. There is no set procedure. The nature and extent of any group's involvement in this process is entirely up to the individual group.
- Some groups with the consent of the prospective member, have an A.A. member acknowledge attendance on a slip that has been furnished by the referral source. The referred person is responsible for returning the proof of attendance.

## ***Singleness of Purpose and Problems Other Than Alcohol***

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as 'substance abuse' or 'chemical dependency.' Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Anyone may attend *open* A.A. meetings, but only those with a *drinking* problem may attend *closed* meetings.

## ***A.A. Members and Medications***

A.A. does not provide medical advice; all medical advice and treatment should come from a qualified health care professional. The suggestions provided in the pamphlet "The A.A. Member—Medications and Other Drugs" may help A.A. members minimize the risk of relapse.

## ***How to Make Referrals to A.A.***

Alcoholics Anonymous can be found on the internet at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) and in most telephone directories by looking for 'Alcoholics Anonymous'. (Some professionals ask the person they are referring to call the local A.A. number while still in the office, thus offering an immediate opportunity to reach out for help).

Or, you can contact the General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous for help and information. G.S.O.'s A.A. Website [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) can aid in finding local resources.