

**PUBLIC INFORMATION PRESENTATION**  
**Alcoholics Anonymous**

**INTRODUCE:** Yourself and other AAs present

- We're members from the local AA Public Information committee
- We are not professionals or experts – just AA members

**PREAMBLE:** (Explain that this is read at the beginning of most AA meetings)

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 nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

**AA HISTORY:**

- AA was founded on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1935, when Bill Wilson met Bob Smith.
- Bill W. was a New York stockbroker and chronic alcoholic who been sober for a few months.
- Dr. Bob was an Akron, Ohio, physician and chronic alcoholic who was still drinking.
- Bill was on a business trip in an Akron hotel and became tempted to step into a bar. Instead, he stepped into a phone booth to call a local church. He knew that talking to another alcoholic would help him stay sober. The church knew Dr. Bob had a drinking problem and gave Bill his telephone number.
- After their first meeting, Bill W. and Dr. Bob helped each other stay sober and worked tirelessly to help other alcoholics.
- The first edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (known as the Big Book) was published in 1939. It includes the “Doctor’s Opinion,” outlines the 12 Steps and presents many stories from AA members who have achieved sobriety.
- Today, there are about 126,000 AA groups in 180 nations worldwide, with more than two million members. There are more than 64,000 groups in the United States alone.

**ALCOHOLISM: A DISEASE:**

- Third leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. (National Institutes of Health)
- The American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association both recognize alcoholism as a disease.
- So, it is NOT a moral failing . . . it is a progressive illness.

● **Three-fold illness:**

- 1) Mind – Mental obsession – to keep on drinking, willpower not enough to stop,
- 2) Body – Physical allergy to alcohol – triggers the phenomenon of craving
- 3) Spirit – Sense of isolation, lack of purpose, disruption of relationships

## **ANONYMITY: The reason for and importance of:**

“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principals before personalities.” This is our 12<sup>th</sup> Tradition—the 12 Traditions of AA provide guidelines for its members, groups and the society at large.

- At the personal level, **anonymity** provides personal protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers.
- At the public level, **anonymity** stresses equality of the fellowship of all members by putting the brake on those in the fellowship who might otherwise exploit AA affiliation to achieve recognition, power or personal gain.
- When using digital media, **anonymity** is the responsibility of individual members. When we post, text or blog, we assume we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may break the anonymity of others.

## **12 STEPS OF RECOVERY:**

The steps are *suggested* as a way for the AA member to grow and change in order to achieve or maintain sobriety. The steps provide a *spiritual solution* in which AA members come to believe in a power greater than themselves; this is a power of their *own* understanding. AA is NOT a religious program.

## **SPONSORSHIP:**

- AA began with one alcoholic sharing with another alcoholic. (Bill W. and Dr. Bob)
- Members often ask someone with whom they feel fairly comfortable or have confidence in, whether they know each other well or not, someone with experience in AA.

## **PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL:**

- The sole purpose of an AA group is to help alcoholics to achieve recovery.  
We confine our AA groups to that singleness of purpose.
- Drug addicts are welcome to attend Open AA meetings.
- Many AA members identify themselves as “alcoholic and addict”.
- AA has no opinion about prescribed medications – we are not professionals

**TYPES OF MEETINGS** (Check meeting list or local website for accessibility concerns and other specifics for each meeting)

**Open** – All members of public welcome

**Closed** – For those who have a desire to stop drinking

**Two-Speaker**

**Speaker/Discussion**

**Beginner’s Meeting**

**Step Meeting, etc.**

**PANDEMIC** AA meetings are being held in-person and remotely, including the telephone and on-line platforms. They remain completely anonymous. Visit: <https://bit.ly/Area31calendar>  
Telephone Hotline/Meeting information: 413-532-2111. Or visit <http://westernmassaa.org>