

Singleness of Purpose:

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as “substance abuse” or “chemical dependency.” Non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Anyone may attend open AA meetings, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings.

A renowned psychiatrist, who served as a nonalcoholic trustee of the AA General Service Board, made the following statement: “Singleness of purpose is essential to the effective treatment of alcoholism. The reason for such exaggerated focus is to overcome denial. The denial associated with alcoholism is cunning, baffling, and powerful and affects the patient, helper, and the community. Unless alcoholism is kept relentlessly in the foreground, other issues will usurp everybody’s attention.”

Here is what AA says about AA:

“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 help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.”

The Alcoholics Anonymous Preamble - Printed with permission of The AA Grapevine®, Inc.

Millions of people have found recovery through AA, including many who were sent by courts or their employers. There are AA meetings in virtually every country in the world, from Australia to Zambia, and from Ireland to Russia. While some who are sent to AA attend the required number of meetings and never return, others keep coming back because they find that AA helps them live comfortably without alcohol.

What is AA’s role in the process?

Alcoholics Anonymous is not part of the judicial system. We do not work with the courts or the police department. We do not ask the courts to send people to us. When people do show up with court papers, we are not responsible for making sure the people are sober.

If a judge, court, school, or employer has sent you to AA meetings, it is because they believe there is evidence that you have a drinking problem. We had nothing to do with their decision - in fact, AA has no opinion as to whether you have a drinking problem or not.

If, however, you want to stop drinking, AA has a solution.

Here are a few points to remember:

- If you have a desire to stop drinking, you may consider yourself an AA member. Otherwise, you will be a welcome guest at Open meetings. Please do not attend Closed meetings if you don’t consider yourself a member or have a desire to stop drinking. In our printed Meeting Directory and on our website (aadallas.org) all meetings are clearly marked as to whether they

are Open or Closed. While most groups will sign court papers, this is for each individual group to decide. Since AA is not allied with the court system, AA is not required to do the court’s work.

- If a chairperson or other group member agrees to sign your papers, they will probably sign with their first name or initials. We are personally anonymous. We are not court employees.
- If you have questions, please ask them before or after the meeting. You can always find someone willing to talk to you and answer your questions.
- The people who voluntarily attend AA meetings are alcoholics. We come from all walks of life. We treat each other with respect.
- In AA we honor all members’ anonymity. While you are free to talk about or use any ideas that you hear at a meeting, please do not ever identify any person you hear or see there.
- There are no dues or fees for AA membership. We are totally self-supporting through the voluntary contributions of our members. If you do not consider yourself a member, please refrain from contributing.
- No one in AA can tell you that you are an alcoholic. Some people can point out indications that are symptomatic of a drinking problem: loss of control, drunk driving, arrests, lost jobs, broken marriages or relationships, blackouts, etc. But only you can decide if you actually are an alcoholic, and if that’s your decision, we invite you to keep coming back.

