



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Family 12-Step Groups

Family 12-Step groups are free, peer-led mutual aid programs for people who love or are close to someone with a substance use disorder. They apply the 12-Step framework to the experience of being a family member, partner, or friend, on the recognition that addiction reshapes the whole family system, not only the person using. Al-Anon serves families affected by alcohol; Nar-Anon by drugs; Alateen for teens; Gam-Anon for gambling; Co-Anon for cocaine. All run on the same steps and traditions as their partner programs.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A strong fit if you want peer community and a spiritual framework for your own recovery.
- Uncomfortable with 12-Step language? Try SMART Family & Friends or CRAFT-informed support.
- Domestic violence needs crisis and professional support. In crisis? Call or text 988.

What it's for

Anyone significantly affected by another's substance use: partners, parents, adult children, friends.

You don't need a loved one currently using. Many attend during their recovery.

Alateen serves adolescents affected by a family member's drinking.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Meetings run 60 to 90 minutes: readings, a topic or step, sharing in turn, closing.

2 Members share their own experience without advising or commenting on others.

3 Sponsorship and step work are available but not required. In person and online.

Family and caregiver support reliably improves wellbeing and coping.

- A review of caregiver support found psychoeducation **reduced burden and improved mental health**, with group formats notable.¹
- Mutual-help groups show consistent benefit across **wellbeing, coping, and social support**.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Keep the focus on you. This is your recovery, not a way to fix them.

Keep coming back. It can take a few meetings to feel at home.

Try more than one. Each group has its own feel; find your fit.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Which program fits: Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, Alateen, Gam-Anon, or Co-Anon?
- 2** Is it in person or online?
- 3** Am I comfortable with the 12-Step, spiritual framing?

Ready to find a group?

Browse 2,000+ therapy and support groups in all 50 states.

Free to browse · No account needed · thegroupguide.com



If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Family 12-Step Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Yesufu-Udechuku, A., Harrison, B., Mayo-Wilson, E., et al. Interventions to improve the experience of caring for people with severe mental illness: systematic review and meta-analysis. *British Journal of Psychiatry* (2015), 206(4), 268–274.
- 2 Pistrang, N., Barker, C., & Humphreys, K. Mutual help groups for mental health problems: a review of effectiveness studies. *American Journal of Community Psychology* (2008), 42(1–2), 110–121.

If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact.