

## What is Alcoholics Anonymous?

Alcoholics Anonymous is an informal society of more than 2,000,000 recovered alcoholics in the United States, Canada, and other countries. These people meet in local groups, which range in size from a handful in some localities to many hundreds in larger communities whether in-person or virtually.



## Who we are

We are people who have discovered, and admitted, that we cannot control alcohol. We have but one primary purpose: to stay sober ourselves and to help others who may turn to us for help in achieving sobriety. We are not reformers, and we're not allied with any group, cause, or religious denomination. We have no wish to "dry up" the world. We don't recruit new members, but we do welcome them. We don't impose our experience with problem drinking on others, but we do share it when we're asked to do so. We don't think we are the only people who have the answer to problem drinking. We know that the A.A. program works for us, and we have seen it work for many who wanted to quit drinking. Through A.A., we've learned a number of things about alcoholism and about ourselves.



## Who are our members?

A.A. strives to be inclusive, and never exclusive. As a Fellowship we seek to support the wellbeing of all members as we evolve toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusivity. A.A. members include those with varying abilities, sexual identities, races, ethnicities, gender identities, religions, or no religion, languages, neighborhoods, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ages. Any person who is seeking help with a drinking problem can call themselves a member. A person is a member if they say they are a member. It's that simple.



## What we offer

- A.A. services supported through the voluntary contributions of its members
- Access to A.A.'s program of recovery in a variety of formats and languages
- A new way of living: Freedom from the pain and loneliness of active alcoholism
- In-person and online meetings at no cost for regular connection with fellow members
- A non-professional mutual aid environment of alcoholics sharing how they recovered with other alcoholics
- No costs, dues, or membership fees



## The 24-hour plan

We try to follow what we in A.A. call the “24-hour plan.” We concentrate on keeping sober just the current twenty-four hours through A.A.’s program of recovery.

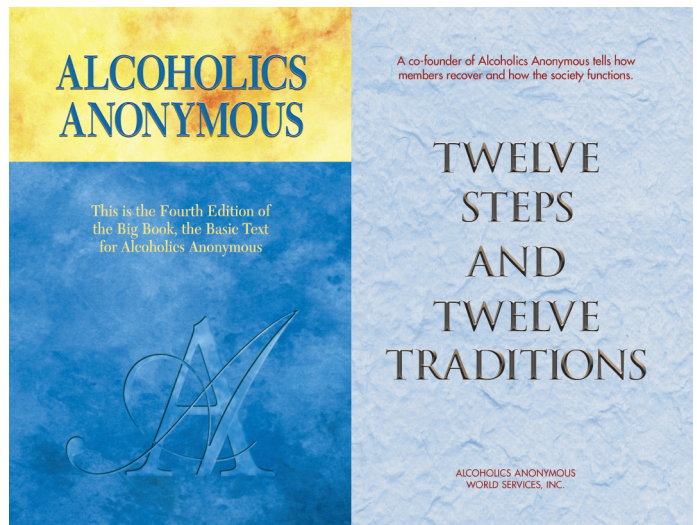
## A.A.’s Program of Recovery

### Twelve Steps

The “[Twelve Steps](#)” are the core of the A.A. program of personal recovery from alcoholism.

### Twelve Traditions

The “[Twelve Traditions](#)” of A.A. are suggested principles to ensure the survival and growth of the thousands of groups that make up the Fellowship.



For more information about A.A.’s program of recovery visit [aa.org](http://aa.org).

## Membership

We are aware of A.A. activity in approximately 180 countries, including 64 autonomous general service offices in other lands. Because A.A. has never attempted to keep formal membership lists, it is extremely difficult for A.A.’s General Service Office (G.S.O.) to obtain completely accurate figures on total membership at any given time.

In 2022, the General Service Office conducted a survey among 6,000 AA members within the U.S./Canada regions and obtained the following demographic data:

### Composition of Membership



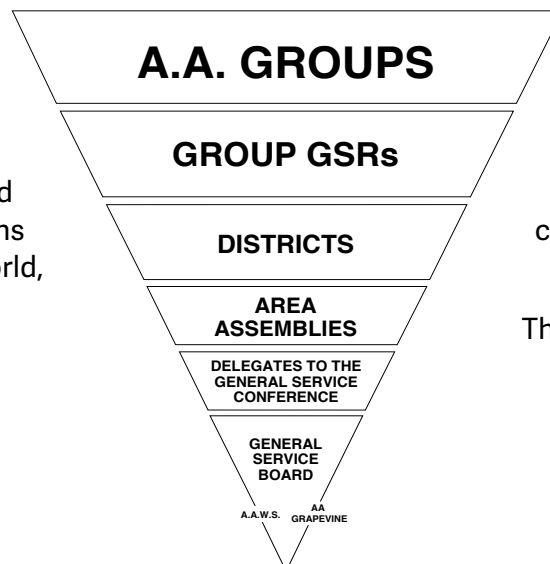
Asian	1.2%	Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native	0.3%
Black, African American, or African Canadian	3.6%	White, Caucasian, or European American	87.7%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	7.3%	Multi-racial	0.3%
Native American, Alaska Native, First Nations, Indigenous, Metis or Inuk (Inuit)	2.8%	Other	0.5%

\*These numbers do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to select more than one.

## The Structure

The General Service Office (U.S./Canada) is a repository for A.A.'s shared experience. It fulfills our primary purpose by: (1) providing service, information and experience to groups worldwide; (2) publishing literature; (3) supporting the activities of the General Service Board of A.A. G.S.O.'s history dates back to 1938, when the about-to-be-published book, Alcoholics Anonymous, provided a name for the small society known only as the Alcoholic Foundation.

### STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE (U.S. and Canada)



The Foundation's rapidly expanding office soon served as the focal point for questions about A.A. from around the world, and in time became the General Service Office as we know it today.

The former Alcoholic Foundation is now called the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The General Service Office (G.S.O.) is not an authoritative or governing body.

Each A.A. group is autonomous.

## Safety and A.A.

Please note: Anonymity in A.A. is not a cloak for unsafe and illegal behavior. Addressing such behavior and/or contacting the proper authorities when appropriate, does not go against any A.A. Traditions and is meant to ensure the safety of all in attendance.

A.A. does not provide medical advice or detox services; has no opinion on outside issues, including medication. Medical advice should come from a qualified physician.

Service entities, such as areas, districts and Intergroup/central offices, are available to help provide A.A. services and shared experience. All groups and entities in A.A. are autonomous.

There is no government within A.A. and no central authority to control or direct its members, but we do share our experience, strength and hope.



## Anonymity (Memo to the Media)

February 2023

From time to time, we reach out to our friends in the media to thank them for helping us observe our long-standing tradition of anonymity for members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

First, we'd like to express our thanks. From the beginning of A.A. over 85 years ago, we've recognized that word-of-mouth is not enough to carry the A.A. program's message of hope and recovery to the many people still suffering from alcoholism. We've needed help — and the media has been a vital part of this effort. Today we estimate that there are more than 2 million successfully recovering members of Alcoholics Anonymous in more than 180 countries, and much of this growth can be attributed to the willingness of journalists and media professionals around the world to take an interest in our Fellowship.

Second, we invite your ongoing cooperation in maintaining the anonymity of A.A. members. The principle of anonymity is at the core of our Fellowship. Those who are reluctant to seek our help often overcome their fear if they are confident that their anonymity will be respected. In addition, and perhaps less understood, our tradition of anonymity acts as a healthy guardrail for A.A. members, reminding us that we are a program of principles, not personalities, and that no individual A.A. member acts as a spokesperson of our Fellowship.

If an A.A. member is identified in the media, we ask that you please use first names only (e.g., Sofia M. or Ben T.) and that you not use images in which members' faces may be recognized. This helps to provide members with the security that anonymity can bring. Again, we thank you for your continued cooperation -- in helping to carry our message to those in need of it and for helping keep the focus on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous rather than any personalities.

If you would like to know more about A.A. you are welcome to visit the "[Press/Media](#)" section of [aa.org](http://aa.org). We hope you will take a moment to watch a [brief video](#) on why anonymity remains a vital principle in Alcoholics Anonymous. Our Fellowship does not comment on matters of public controversy, but we are happy to provide [information about A.A.](#) to anyone who seeks it.

Sincerely,

Public Information Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous

**For interview requests contact the Public Information Coordinator at [pressinfo@aa.org](mailto:pressinfo@aa.org).**



# Alcoholics Anonymous<sup>®</sup>

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)  
(212) 870-3119  
[pressinfo@aa.org](mailto:pressinfo@aa.org)

## Digital Resources

[Press Releases](#)

[About A.A.: Newsletter to Professionals](#)

[Meeting Guide App \(Google Play\)](#)

[Meeting Guide App \(App Store\)](#)

[A.A. World Services LinkedIn](#)

[A.A.W.S. YouTube](#)

[AA Grapevine YouTube](#)

[AA Grapevine Instagram](#)

[La Viña Instagram](#)

[A.A. Literature](#)

[Web Banners \(Coming Soon\)](#)

[PSAs](#)

