



September 2017

Alcoholics Anonymous Australia

Newsletter for Professionals

Alcoholics Anonymous 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 non-profit, 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 non-alcoholic (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” or 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 counselling; 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.

Singleness of Purpose and Problems Other Than Alcohol

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as “substance abuse” or “chemical dependency.” Non-alcoholic are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Non-alcoholic may attend open A.A. meetings as observers, 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 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 .au](http://www.aa.org.au) can aid in finding local resources.

Why Anonymous?

What is the purpose of anonymity in Alcoholics Anonymous? Why is it often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth?

If we look at the history of A.A., from its beginning in 1935 until now, it is clear that anonymity serves two different yet equally vital functions:

- At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers.
- At the public level of press, radio, TV, films and other media technologies such as the Internet, anonymity stresses the equality in the Fellowship of all members by putting the brake on those who might otherwise exploit their A.A. affiliation to achieve recognition, power, or personal gain.

When using digital media, A.A. members are responsible for their own anonymity and that of others. When we post, text, or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may

Meet the board: Class A Trustee Ruby Jones

AA has a Board of Trustees that are responsible for ensuring that all corporate and government requirements are maintained. They protect the trademarks and copyrights of AA and are the legal instrument of our spiritual fellowship. Early on AA decided that non-alcoholic trustees can bring great professional experience; much needed insight into the workings of government and business and an unique perspective to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. At age 24 Ruby Jones is on the verge of her professional career, has completed her Bachelor of Psychology, as well as a certificate in Criminology and is currently enrolled for a Master of Social Work. That, and a family member who is in AA makes her well-credentialed for a seat at the board table, broad experience on how AA works from personal observation and professional know how on how AA can be of benefit for others as well. Given AA's tradition of anonymity at the level of press, radio and film it's a great benefit to have someone who is able to speak knowledgably about AA to the media.

Ruby first came into contact with AA more than 10 years ago when a family member realised they were powerless over alcohol, went to AA for help and became actively involved in the AA community. Ruby not only saw the changes (she describes it as "getting to know a brand new person") but also came into contact with other AA members. She quickly saw that the AA program of recovery coupled with family support allowed a person to flourish.

From talking to members she was able to give an AA perspective to what she was currently studying. Ruby sees AA as well structured yet simple, "You have organisations that are so regimented, there are processes and policies for absolutely everything and AA is quite simple, there's the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions that guide people in recovery and how they can assist the community and when they get to a certain point in their lives where they feel they can carry the message. The development that people can have in the organisation is quite wonderful."

Ruby is aware that people often have misunderstandings about what AA is, what it does, and what it doesn't do, and she says that people often have the assumption that AA has a religious base with the references to God. "People come to AA from all walks of life and I've heard

that particular term (GOD) to mean Group Of Drunks."

Ruby has always had a passion for helping people and she sees joining the board as a way she can further that in an authentic way, being part of an organisation that does so much good for individuals and the community. In particular, she'd like



to use her time on the board to further her interest in Correctional Facilities and see how AA can be of benefit. She sees that starting conversations with other professionals that work in Correctional Facilities about how AA can be of assistance to them as a worthwhile venture.

"When it comes to recovery, there are fundamental concepts that have stood the test of time, they have waxed and they have waned, people have interpreted them in different ways. When they first came out they seemed quite revolutionary and now people look back on it and think they are quite outdated, but they have been the building blocks for the new thoughts, technologies and discourses that have come out to help people. Yes there's other ways to combat alcoholism, but many of them find their roots in AA"

How Can A.A. Help You?

Would you be interested in having an A.A. presentation at one of your professional gatherings? Or would you like information about recovery from alcoholism in A.A.? If so, please contact

General Service Office of AA

48 Firth St Arncliffe 2205

Ph: 02 95998866

Fax: 02 95998844

Email: gso@aa.org.au

Website: www.aa.org.au

If you would like to receive this publication via email twice yearly, please email gso@aa.org.au with "subscribe" in the subject line

