

Families Anonymous

For Relatives and Friends Concerned About the Use of Drugs or Related Behavioral Problems

TO THE NEWCOMER,

Welcome! At one time or another, all of us have been in your shoes. We came to our first meeting angry, confused, frustrated, hopeless, and fed up. But then, as we continued to attend Families Anonymous meetings, we gradually found a way to cope with our circumstances and learned a better way to live—a way that permits us to live comfortably in spite of the actions of the people who brought us here.

Those of us who have been in the program for a while realize that it took us a number of weeks to decide that this was the right place for us. Had we made a rash decision after just one meeting, some of us might not have returned. By coming back, though, we discovered that we learn something new each week, because meetings vary, leaders change, and different members attend.

Since this is a Twelve Step program, with much literature to read and new options to consider, we encourage you to make a six-week commitment to attend meetings. That way, you can become comfortable with the meeting format, decide whether and when to take advantage of opportunities to talk about your difficulties and challenges, and begin learning ways to apply the Twelve Steps of FA to your life. FA meetings will provide you with a “safe” environment where you can share your feelings with people who will not judge you as being right or wrong.

Many people find it helpful to seek out a particular FA member with whom they feel they can talk. You’ll notice a telephone list being passed around at each meeting; this list is primarily for you, the newcomer. If hearing a member share his or her experiences makes you want to speak with that person, we encourage you to write down the phone number, or take a phone list if it is available, or talk with the person after the meeting. You’ll find that having FA members’ names and phone numbers is especially helpful during a crisis, when you have a difficult decision to make, or when you just need to hear the voice of someone who understands and cares. Eventually you may form a comfortable relationship with a particular long-time member and may want to ask him or her to be your “sponsor.” A sponsor will help you focus on the Steps and guide you through them.

During the initial six-week period, we encourage you to study the FA literature, ask questions about the meaning of “program,” and share your experiences when you are ready. If other FA meetings are available in your area, attend them too. Get to know FA. We are here to support you by offering you our presence, our understanding, and our sharing of experiences. You may not know it, but *your* presence has already helped *us* in *our* recovery!

With love in the fellowship,

Families Anonymous

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