

## MUTUAL SUPPORT MEETINGS FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER RECOVERY

Mutual aid organizations provide peer-based, non-clinical, non-professional support meetings to people in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD). They focus on socially supportive communication and the exchange of skills through shared experience. Mutual aid meetings based on the 12-steps such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are some of the most widely available psychosocial supports for people seeking recovery from SUD. Numerous 12-step alternative meetings have emerged over the years based upon individual and cultural needs. Follow the links to find meetings near you.

### 12-Step

Description: Twelve-step programs are mutual aid organizations for the purpose of recovery from substance addictions, behavioral addictions and compulsions. Developed in the 1930s, the first twelve-step program, Alcoholics Anonymous, aided its membership to overcome alcohol use disorder. Since that time, dozens of organizations have been formed from the AA program that utilizes a version of AA's suggested twelve steps first published in 1939, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, commonly known as the Big Book. Steps are put forth as suggestions and the only requirement for membership is a desire to seek abstinence or an end to harmful behaviors.

Over 200 self-help organizations – fellowships – with a worldwide membership in the millions – now employ the twelve-step principles of recovery. Fundamentals of the program include acceptance of the disease model of addiction, developing belief in a higher power to give strength, examining past errors, making amends, sponsorship (mentoring others) and service. Meetings are available in person, telephone, and online.

#### [Alcoholics Anonymous \(AA\)](#)

Description: AA is focused primarily on supporting people who identify as having a significant issue resolving problematic alcohol use.

#### [Narcotics Anonymous \(NA\)](#)

Description: NA is focused on supporting people who identify as having a significant issue resolving problematic drug use—including alcohol.

#### [Cocaine Anonymous \(CA\)](#)

Description: CA emerged to provide affiliational support for former cocaine users. While the name implies a drug-specific focus, today's CA is for anyone wishing to resolve cocaine and all other problematic drug and alcohol use but may more culturally identify among former cocaine users.

#### [Crystal Meth Anonymous](#)

Description: The Twelve Steps of CMA were adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous – founded on the belief that they relate best to others seeking recovery from crystal meth addiction because they understand the darkness, paranoia and compulsions of this particular addiction.



### [Drug Addicts Anonymous \(DAA\)](#)

DAA is a fellowship of individuals who have resolved problematic drug use using the twelve steps as outlined in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). It provides support for individuals experiencing problematic drug use who may have greater affiliation with AA than with Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

### [Marijuana Anonymous](#)

Marijuana Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other to recovery from problematic marijuana use. It is based on the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

### [Wellbriety](#)

These mutual support circles follow Red Road, Medicine Wheel Journey to Wellbriety - to become sober and well in a Native American cultural way. The indigenous experience adds a dimension of acknowledging sociopolitical causes of addiction without removing an individual's need to do the hard work it takes to heal.

### **Non-Secular**

These mutual aid meetings often broadly focus on individual concerns or problems using a spiritual or religious framework. Some may be structured more formally (e.g., format, readings, step work), or they may be less formal. Some are aligned with a specific religion while others may be more holistic or non-denominational.

### [Celebrate Recovery](#)

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered 12 step program focused on supporting people experiencing substance use disorders, process addictions, anger, codependency, and more. General meetings involve worship, testimonies and lessons connected to the steps, and often feature co-ed fellowship meals and gender and issue specific groups. Meetings are offered both in person and online.

### [Recovery Dharma](#)

Recovery Dharma uses the Buddhist practices of meditation, self-inquiry, wisdom, compassion, and community as tools for recovery and healing. Program is based on Buddhist teachings and practices with the belief that anyone can benefit from this wisdom regardless of whether one identifies as a Buddhist. Meetings include readings, guided meditation and discussion based on topics. Both online and in person meetings are available.

### [Refuge Recovery](#)

The main inspiration for the Refuge Recovery program is the guiding principles of Buddhism. Buddhism recognizes a non-theistic approach to spiritual practice. The program of recovery consists of the *Four Noble Truths* and the *Eightfold Path*. Refuge Recovery groups provide help from others in recovery and offer ongoing support network. Meetings are structured to include readings of guiding principles, 20-minute guided meditation, and open shares. Meetings are available in person and online.



## Secular

These mutual aid meetings embrace a clear separation from any religious or spiritual framework. They are largely based on self-awareness and modification of thoughts, actions, and behaviors.

### [SMART](#)

Description: Self-Management And Recovery Training (SMART) is a global community of mutual-support groups. At meetings, participants help one another resolve problems with any addiction (to drugs or alcohol or to activities such as gambling or over-eating). Its mutual support meetings are free and open to anyone seeking science-based, self-empowered addiction recovery.

### [LifeRing Secular Recovery](#)

LifeRing Secular Recovery is an organization of people who share practical experiences and sobriety support. Many LifeRing members attend other kinds of meetings or recovery programs, and members honor those decisions. LifeRing respectfully embraces what works for each individual.

## Harm Reduction, Moderation, & Medications for Opioid Use Disorder

People who use drugs, practice moderation in their recovery, or use medications for opioid use disorder, (e.g., methadone & buprenorphine) benefit from the community aspect of mutual aid meetings but may not always feel welcome. Though not always widely available, there are some support group opportunities – some in-person but mainly digitally.

### [Harm Reduction Works \(HRW\)](#)

Everyone is welcome in these meetings, especially people who aren't sure what harm reduction is or whether it can help them. People who embrace abstinence or choose moderation or take medications for opioid use disorder or are just beginning to wonder if alcohol and drugs is a problem are welcome. Friends, families, and allies are welcome.

### [Moderation Management \(MM\)](#)

Moderation Management is a lay-led non-profit dedicated to reducing the harm caused by alcohol misuse. MM provides support through face-to-face meetings, video and phone meetings, chats, and its private online support communities, the MM Forum, the MM Listserv, and the MM Private Facebook Group.

### [HAMS: Harm Reduction for Alcohol](#)

HAMS is a peer-led and free-of-charge support and informational group for anyone who wants to change their drinking habits for the better. The acronym HAMS stands for Harm reduction, Abstinence, and Moderation Support. HAMS Harm Reduction strategies are defined in the 17 elements of HAMS. HAMS offers support via an online forum, a chat room, an email group, a Facebook group, and live meetings. Participants choose their own goal—safe drinking, reduced drinking, or quitting alcohol altogether.



### [Medication-Assisted Recovery Anonymous \(MARA\)](#)

Many people who utilize prescribed medications for opioid use disorder, (e.g., methadone & buprenorphine) sometimes feel unwelcome at traditional recovery meetings. MARA believes that recovery is simply to recover from an unsafe lifestyle, and it believes in the value of medications as a means to recovery.

### **Family Recovery**

Families, friends, and allies are impacted by their loved ones' substance use whether their person seeks recovery or not or after their passing. These mutual aid meetings provide free, psychosocial supports in many communities, in-person and digitally.

### [Al-Anon and Alateen](#)

Al-Anon is a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. By sharing common experiences and applying the Al-Anon principles (based on the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous) families and friends of people with alcohol problems can bring positive changes to their individual situations, whether or not their person admits the existence of a drinking problem or seeks help.

### [Nar-Anon and Narateen](#)

Nar-Anon is a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drug use. By sharing common experiences and applying the Al-Anon principles (based on the 12 steps of Narcotics Anonymous) families and friends of people with drug problems can bring positive changes to their individual situations, whether or not their person admits the existence of a drug problem or seeks help.

### [Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing \(GRASP\)](#)

GRASP was created to offer understanding, compassion, and support for those who have lost someone they love through addiction and overdose. GRASP provides a directory of free, in-person support meetings and tools for coping with loss.

### **Other**

The numbers and types of mutual support meetings and the platforms on which they can be accessed continues to grow. Check out these additional meetings.

### [All Recovery Meetings](#)

All Recovery Meetings are discussion groups based on universal recovery topics. They are open to anyone who is challenged by addiction, affected by someone else's addiction, and to supporters of recovery in general. All Recovery Meetings embrace all pathways of recovery. These inclusive mutual support meetings often are available in-person at your local [Recovery Community Organization](#). A full calendar of digital meetings is also available through a partnership between Unity Recovery, WEconnect, SOS Recovery, and Alano Club.



### [SeekHealing](#)

SeekHealing provides social health programs to rebuild disconnected communities – healing loneliness, systemic shame, trauma, and addiction. It believes that connection is medicine. Along with in-person mutual support based in western NC, SeekHealing also offers a full calendar of digital meetings, focused on active listening and free from advice.

### [The Phoenix](#)

The Phoenix takes an innovative approach to recovery by fostering healing through fitness and personal connection. Phoenix offerings include activities for everyone – from weightlifting and boxing to running, hiking, and yoga. The mission of The Phoenix is to help people grow stronger together, overcome stigma of addiction and rise to rise to their full potential. The program is free, and the only requirement for membership is 48 hours of sobriety.

### [In the Rooms](#)

In the Rooms (ITR) is a free, membership-based platform designed to give people in recovery access to a diverse menu of live digital mutual support meetings.

### [YANA](#)

YANA is a free, membership-based platform providing 24/7 access to digital 12-Step Meetings and a directory of vetted in-person meetings around the country.

### [GAY & SOBER](#)

Gay & Sober's mission is simple – to provide a safe, fun, and enriching experience to the sober LGBTQ+ community. The primary purpose is to encourage unity and enhance sobriety. Site includes online and in-person meetings, events in all U.S. states as well as international meetings and events.

