

# Alcoholics Anonymous & Narcotics Anonymous



## Contact Us

Please contact us for further information.

Centre for Student Development and Counselling

416-979-5195

[www.ryerson.ca/counselling](http://www.ryerson.ca/counselling)

**Authors:** Aziz Shafqat, Samir Panchbhaya, Albert Kim,  
Monica Samuels

**Series editors:** Kelly McShane, Amy Brown-Bowers, Amelia Usher

**Consultants:** Reena Tandon, Diana Brecher



Community Engaged  
Learning & Teaching  
Student Experience Centre  
Faculty of Arts

Faculty of Arts

Faculty of Arts  
Department of Psychology

Front cover image credit: © Edvard Molnar | Dreamstime.com

RYERSON  
UNIVERSITY

Everyone Makes a Mark

# What is AA/NA?

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a nonprofit organization that was founded in the US in 1935 by Bill Wilson and Bob Smith. Both men were trying to recover from alcoholic addiction and realized that self-control was not enough to keep them abstained from alcohol. They discovered that through mutual support they were able to remain sober. Two years after Wilson and Smith started their program, they had helped 100 members become sober. To help promote their work, Wilson and other members wrote the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How More than One Hundred Men Have Recovered from Alcoholism*. The 12-step program created by Alcoholics Anonymous spawned the creation of many other 12-step programs, such as Narcotics Anonymous, that follow the same principles.

## Core Principles of AA/NA

- The aim of the AA/NA program is to provide a positive and supportive space for men and women to share their problems and experiences with alcoholism.
- The AA/NA program involves volunteering for AA/NA, attending AA/NA meetings regularly, and finding a sponsor.
- A sponsor is an experienced AA/NA member who helps the alcoholic/narcotic follow the program and provides guidance.
- AA/NA meetings are run informally, and usually involve members telling their struggles and successes with alcoholism/narcotics.

## What about youth?

- AA/NA programs are able to provide specific social networks for youth that they can use on demand such as calling a sponsor at high-risk times such as evenings and weekends.
- Primary treatment of youths (15-24) using the 12-step program mainly focuses on the first five steps, which are modified specifically for them.

## Does it work?

- Research shows alcohol abstinence is more successful with regular AA meeting attendance and having an AA sponsor.
- Even minimal attendance, little as once a week, at AA/NA meetings has been associated with substantial abstinence.
- AA/NA organizations provide the necessary social support for youths, and provide an opportunity for alternative social activities suitable for youths.

## But...

- AA/NA assumes a disease model for all members. Members must endorse complete abstinence from drugs and alcohol.
- Not everyone is comfortable with the spiritual components of this organization.