

AA MEETING

Abbie Horatschki

At AA meetings, members share their experience with anyone seeking help with a drinking problem; they give person-to-person service or “sponsorship” to the alcoholic coming to AA from any source. The AA program, set forth in the Twelve Steps, offers the alcoholic a way to develop a satisfying life without alcohol. At speaker meetings, AA members “tell their stories.” They describe their experiences with alcohol, how they came to AA, and how their lives have changed as a result of Alcoholics Anonymous.

At open discussion meetings one member speaks briefly about his or her drinking experience, and then leads a discussion on AA recovery or any drinking-related problem anyone brings up. At step meetings there is a discussion of one of the Twelve Steps. Open meetings are open to the public and anyone is allowed to attend. Closed meetings are for alcoholics only (at AA meetings) that have an actual desire to get sober and stay sober. Many people are referred to AA by their therapists or counselors, but anyone can join an open group.

In the AA video, Gerry discussed what the meetings he has been to are like. He stated that meetings usually begin with a reading or a prayer. Then the leaders begin to tell how the meeting works and if there are any rules. In one group that he has attended they used books. If there are any newcomers, they then introduce themselves. Although there are many different types of meetings, he talked most about speaker meetings. Chips are given out, and to Gerry, the white chip means “surrender”, meaning that the person wants to know what life is like if they were to be sober.

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According to Jexi, Narcotics Anonymous is a twelve step program that is based off of Alcoholics Anonymous. In the Narcotics Anonymous meetings, Jexi stated that all meetings are different, but all the standards are similar. There are door greeters at meetings that hug everyone that come in. She says that there is a lot of hugging that goes on in the meetings, because people really care about other's recovery. NA meetings are really focused on making a person feel "okay". At the meetings Jexi has gone to, a bin or basket is usually passed around at some point for people to give a dollar or two if they have the money to donate. Giving money is not required at all. This money is used for the group to support itself. The groups buy their own literature, pay their own rent, and buy their own coffee. Like AA meetings, there are speaker meetings where people share their thoughts and experiences. Sometimes only one person shares, other times many people do. There are different varieties of speaker meetings.

There are people assigned to positions such as the door greeters, and speakers. Some meetings are educational with a featured speaker. Most times there is a leader of the group who will start off the meeting, let everyone know the rules and explain how the meeting will go. At open groups there are people who are there simply for support. The members of AA meetings tend to support one another, they all have the same goals. The attendance shows that staying sober is a priority to others. It is easier to go through something if you know that others are on the journey with you, it is easier knowing that even though you are struggling, you are not struggling alone.

Having an issue such as addiction, an eating disorder, or grief play a huge part in an individual's mental health. These issues take a toll on mental health. If a person is dealing with

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one of these issues, it usually consumes their mind, as in it is all they can think about. They can begin to not care about normal everyday activities and can only think about their disorder.

I have gained a lot of knowledge while learning about AA meetings. Having this newfound knowledge about AA meetings is very useful because I did not know much about them to begin with. This would be a helpful insight to others because it may not be public information that some meetings are closed and some are open.

I also was unaware that there are different type of meetings such as speaker meetings, discussion meetings, and step meetings. It may be important for future clients to know this information because the different types of meetings have different set ups. If they are more prepared they may be more willing to participate in the group. Attending an AA meeting is a big step for alcoholics, so it is important that they feel prepared and are as comfortable as they can be.

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REFERENCES

According to Jexi. (2019). Narcotics Anonymous Meetings: What to Expect [YouTube Video]. In YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnlIenRksU8&feature=youtu.be>

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