

# Understanding and Implementing the 12 Steps into Your Program

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# Why Bother?

- Old playgrounds
- Old playmates
- Lifestyle Change
- Breaking through Cognitive Defense Mechanisms (Denial)
  - Defense mechanism that people survive by using
- We won't be there forever
- Long-term recovery support

- *Professionals need to understand the 12-steps of AA and AA members need to understand what professional counseling are all about, because it is the interaction between these two programs that brings about the powerful result of recovery.*

*Terence Gorski*

# Is AA the only way?

- Absolutely not!
- Faith-based support groups such as Celebrate Recovery
- Secular Organization for Sobriety
- Rational Recovery
- Church/Religion
- External Support System needs to be developed

# Then why AA/NA?

- Prevalence
  - Number of available groups
  - Availability of ‘clubhouse’ settings
- Process
  - Addiction affects thinking and actions, 12-step focuses on action which changes thinking over time
  - 12-step is a blueprint for a selfless vs. selfish lifestyle (regardless of the false saying “it’s a selfish program” – it is not)
- “Psychic change at depth”

# Spirituality – outside of Religion

- Attitudes
  - Spiritual in nature
- Beliefs
  - Religious beliefs
  - Personal beliefs – esteem issues, Self Efficacy Scale scores
  - Core beliefs about life
- Value System
  - Morality set as chosen by the person
  - Effects Attitude/Belief sets
    - Enhances or detracts from recovery

# 12 Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

# 12 Steps

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

# How many times is Alcohol mentioned?

- Exactly ONE TIME
- Steps are about lifestyle change that supports recovery
- Steps are also about giving to others instead of keeping your recovery to yourself
- Selfish?

# Lifestyle Change

- 1 & 2 – Reflection
- 3 – Decision
- 4 thru 11 – Action
- 12 – True Faith
- 1 thru 9 – Process of Recovery
- 10 thru 12 – Daily Maintenance

***After looking at my past in Steps 4-9, I have looked at “The Victim” part of me. After that, I’m no longer a victim but a volunteer***

# So, why do some established groups struggle with court mandated programs?

- **Relations With Outside Agencies**

The Fellowship has adopted a policy of cooperation but not affiliation with other organizations concerned with the problem of alcoholism. We have no opinion on issues outside A.A. and neither endorse nor oppose any causes. —  
from *A.A. at a Glance*

- Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.  
— *4<sup>th</sup> Tradition*

# 12 Traditions

1. **Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.**
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. **The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.**
4. **Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.**
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. **An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**

# 12 Traditions

7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
- 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

# Implementing 12 Steps into your program

## Using the Steps in Treatment

- Step Work
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Step
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Step
  - 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Step
  - 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Step
  - 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Step
  - 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Step

# Principles behind the Steps

## Step 1: Honesty

After many years of denial, recovery can begin when with one simple admission of being powerless over alcohol -- for alcoholics and their friends and family.

## Step 2: Hope

It seems to be a spiritual truth, that before a higher power can begin to operate, you must first believe that it can.

## Step 3: Surrender/Faith

A lifetime of self-will run riot can come to a screeching halt, and change forever, by making a simple decision to turn it all over to a higher power.

## Step 4: Courage/Soul Searching

There is a saying in the 12-step programs that recovery is a process, not an event. The same can be said for this step -- more will surely be revealed.

## Step 5: Integrity

Probably the most difficult of all the steps to face, Step 5 is also the one that provides the greatest opportunity for growth.

## Step 6: Willingness/Acceptance

The key to Step 6 is acceptance -- accepting character defects exactly as they are and becoming entirely willing to let them go.

# Principles behind the Steps

## Step 7: Humility

The spiritual focus of Step 7 is humility, asking a higher power to do something that cannot be done by self-will or mere determination.

## Step 8: Justice/Brotherly Love

Making a list of those harmed before coming into recovery may sound simple. Becoming willing to actually make those amends is the difficult part.

## Step 9: Discipline/Forgiveness

Making amends may seem like a bitter pill to swallow, but for those serious about recovery it can be great medicine for the spirit and soul.

## Step 10: Perseverance/Maintenance

Nobody likes to admit to being wrong. But it is absolutely necessary to maintain spiritual progress in recovery.

## Step 11: Awareness

The purpose of Step 11 is to discover the plan God as you understand Him has for your life.

## Step 12: Love & Service

For those in recovery programs, practicing Step 12 is simply "how it works."

# Verification of Meeting Attendance

## Problems

- Falsification of documents
- Sheets must be signed by someone whose signature is verifiable
- Autonomy of Groups in AA/NA means that some groups may choose NOT to sign them
- Lack of details on specific meetings can lead to problems in verification

# Verification of Meeting Attendance

## Solutions

- Develop detailed sign-in form
  - Include date, time, meeting name
  - Choose a designated signer for your documents; i.e. – only meeting chairperson or meeting secretary
  - Include brief description by participant of meeting topic and what they learned
- Develop your own meetings in-house
  - Allows you to have a sign-in attendance sheet
  - Supervision can be done by staff
  - Supervision can be done by senior participants or alumni

# Discussion

The background is a solid teal color. In the lower half, there is a faint, semi-transparent image of two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or discussion. The hands are rendered in a lighter shade of teal, creating a subtle watermark effect.

## Suggested Reading:

Understanding the 12-Steps: A Guide for  
Counselors, Therapists, and Recovering People

Terence Gorski

12 Steps & 12 Traditions

Alcoholics Anonymous “The Big Book”