

GETTING HELP



Quitting alcohol can lead to painful withdrawal symptoms which are the main cause of relapse in recovering alcoholics. There are many organizations available to assist in the controlled recovery of alcoholism e.g. NHS, private and charitable detoxification clinics.

Admittance to detox. clinics is for the most part voluntary however a G.P. or court can refer patients for treatment if they are deemed to be a danger to themselves or others.

Assisted detoxification usually involves isolation from outside influences for a month or more and treatment of the withdrawal symptoms with drugs (including benzodiazepines) and counselling sessions to promote abstinence and prevent relapse.

Once recovered, patients are free to return to normal life. Friends and family are usually recruited to offer continued support and help prevent relapse.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



Alcoholics Anonymous is an internationally recognized organization whose primary purpose is for its members to maintain sobriety and to offer help and support to those seeking sobriety.

Alcoholics Anonymous, or AA meetings, are held weekly and attended anonymously (hence its name) and offer a program which aims to change a person's 'relationship' with alcohol, the first step is admitting to having a problem. Members are encouraged to introduce themselves and their problem e.g. "my name is Bob and I am an alcoholic".

Before enrolling its members, support groups will determine to what extent alcohol has become a problem and use a series of carefully worded questions to establish this information. Some are shown here, to the right.

If a person answers yes to 4 or more of the questions they are considered to have a serious problem with alcohol and would benefit from the assistance and support offered by alcoholism recovery services of this nature.

Drinkline is the national alcohol help line. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free help line, in complete confidence, 24 hours a day.

Call 0800 917 8282

1. Have you ever decided to stop drinking for a week or so, but only lasted for a couple of days?

Most of us in A.A. made all kinds of promises to ourselves and to our families. We could not keep them. Then we came to A.A. said: "Just try not to drink today." (If you do not drink today, you cannot get drunk today.)

2. Do you wish people would mind their own business about your drinking- stop telling you what to do?

In A.A. we do not tell anyone to do anything. We just talk about our own drinking, the trouble we got into, and how we stopped. We will be glad to help you if you want us to.

3. Have you ever switched from one kind of drink to another in the hope that this would keep you from getting drunk?

We tried all kinds of ways. We made our drinks weak. Or just drank beer. Or we did not drink cocktails. Or only drank on weekends. You name it, we tried it. But if we drank anything with alcohol in it, we usually got drunk eventually.

4. Have you had to have an 'eye-opener' upon awakening during the past year?

Do you need a drink to get started, or to stop shaking? This is a pretty sure sign that you are not drinking "socially."

5. Do you envy people who can drink without getting into trouble?

At one time or another, most of us have wondered why we were not like most people, who really can take it or leave it.

6. Have you had problems connected with drinking during the past year?

Be honest! Doctors say that if you have a problem with alcohol and keep on drinking, it will get worse -- never better. Eventually, you will die, or end up in an institution for the rest of your life. The only hope is to stop drinking.

7. Has your drinking caused trouble at home?

Before we came into A.A. most of us said that it was the people or problems at home that made us drink. We could not see that our drinking just made everything worse. It never solved problems anywhere or anytime.

8. Do you ever try to get "extra" drinks at a party because you do not get enough?

Most of us used to have a "few" before we started out if we thought it was going to be that kind of party. And if drinks were not served fast enough, we would go some place else to get more.

9. Do you tell yourself you can stop drinking any time you want to, even though you keep getting drunk when you don't mean to?

Many of us kidded ourselves into thinking that we drank because we wanted to. After we came into A.A. we found out that once we started to drink, we couldn't stop.

10. Have you missed days of work or school because of drinking?

Many of us admit now that we "called in sick" lots of times when the truth was that we were hung-over or even drunk.

11. Do you have "blackouts"?

A "blackout" is when we have been drinking hours or days which we cannot remember. When we came to A.A., we found out that this is a pretty sure sign of alcoholic drinking.

12. Have you ever felt that your life would be better if you did not drink?

Many of us started to drink because drinking made life seem better, at least for a while. By the time we got into A.A., we felt trapped. We were drinking to live and living to drink. We were sick and tired of being sick and tired.