



Staying Sober Though The COVID Holidays

As the holidays approach and you are still adjusting to the new normal, it's best to have a plan in place and to practice being aware and mindful to help you stay on the right track to avoid a relapse. Here are some tips to keep in mind to help stay sober during these triggering times, and continue your recovery journey successfully. Newcomers, Old-timers and All in between.

One thing I have found about a shift from in-person to virtual AA meetings is the fact that you have access to your home group from absolutely anywhere. You have access to any meeting you are used to attending so long as you have a laptop, phone or tablet handy. You should share your number with your home group member. This way people will be able to easily get in touch should you not show up to a meeting one day.

Establish a Support System. If you do not have a sponsor, get a temporary one until you do. You will have someone that can answer questions if you are new and it will keep you accountable. Listen to people share their experience, strength and hope at meetings to find a one. At the end of some meetings have members make themselves known if they are able to sponsor, and offer their phone number. I think having a strong support system in place is one of the most important things you can do to help yourself stay sober over the holidays. Make a list too of five or more people you can call if you're struggling and feel tempted to relapse.

If you are attending social events, plan ahead. Try to go with a friend or family member who is supportive of your recovery and willing to help you. Bring your own car so that you do not have to rely on anyone else for transportation. This allows you to leave whenever you need to, which can be reassuring. If

you do not feel comfortable attending, you can always say some like, "I appreciate the invite, but I'm still practicing social distancing," no one will ask questions. You have the option to easily "get out of" any event you feel might be triggering, uncomfortable or unsafe. The good news is you will not have to avoid attending your office Christmas party this year. Most were cancelled before they were planned.

Make time for Self-Care. Celebrate the holiday season by taking care of your body, mind, and soul. We cannot be our very best if we are worn-out. Regular physical activity strengthens your body, boosts your immune system, and releases endorphins that help balance your mood. Also, eat well. The holidays don't give us a green light to overindulge. There is nothing worse than stuffing ourselves with too much sugar, carbs, and fat-laden foods that make us feel bad. So be proactive and choose healthy foods that will make you want to celebrate, not feel guilty. A healthy diet helps repair some of the damage to your body caused by alcohol abuse, while giving you the energy you need to get through your daily routine. It is fine to indulge in a few Christmas sweets, but make sure you are still getting the fuel your body needs, make sure you're getting enough sleep, even if it means turning in earlier at night or making time for a short 20-minute nap during the day.

Service gets me out of myself. When I can focus on others, I find more joy and gratitude. Helping others during the holiday season lets you make a positive change in the world while providing a welcome distraction from your own struggles. Once you see how wonderful it can be to do something kind for people in need, volunteering might become a regular part of your routine. So, look for ways to think about and serve others. Make a special family recipe and deliver to friends. Donate your time at a homeless shelter, food pantry, or soup kitchen. Spend time with a neighbor who is confined. These spiritual opportunities allow us to spread happiness and cheer to others. Treat it as one of the benefits of staying clean and sober; being able to have a clear mind and body to help others.

Maintain your spirituality. Our commercial world wants us to believe that joy can come from tinsel, booze, and shopping. It sells us the lie that happiness can be found in these. Instead, focus on the true spirit of the season

DISTRICT 6 AT A GLANCE



District 6 held their monthly business meeting on November 14th via zoom. There were technical difficulties with the meeting ID causing people to be unable to log in using the link initially sent to committee members. A second link was sent out, so the meeting was able to take place but attendance was lower than previous zoom business meetings with only eight people in attendance, and only six voting members. Of those six, three were committee members and three were GSR's.

Once the meeting started, the committee read tradition 11 before moving on to accepting the meeting minutes from October. The motion to accept those minutes passed without issue and it was time for the treasurer's report. October's report was reviewed, as well as the proposed budget for 2021. The copy reviewed this meeting was the 5th draft, and reflected changes to include an amount for Zoom membership and a total expenses of \$5,411.00 which is reportedly \$1,000.00 over projected income. Discussion included points like the budget being used as guidance as opposed to specific instruction, spending being down through the budget due to the pandemic as well as the idea that the budget is a financial picture of a spiritual practice. While there was concern voiced about moving forward with an unbalanced budget the motion to accept this budget passed with five yes votes and one no vote. Minority opinion was heard but swayed no votes and the motion passed.

GSR reports were given from three meetings before moving on to committee reports for those represented. Our Newsletter chair reported that we have reached the UK, and some sneak peeks of this addition of our newsletter. Our Bridging the Gap and Corrections chair reported that volunteers from the Friday night meeting with the jail had dwindled, and that meetings with an IOP in Brunswick on Tuesdays and Thursdays are going well. If there was any interest in volunteering to speak there is contact information for committee chairs on our website. Our website chair reported no changes to the website this month and asked that we remind all meetings to update any changes of information for remote meetings with them so that they can be adjusted on the website. No other committees were represented at this meeting.

After reports the meetings turned to old business. There was a motion to open a PayPal account to create a digital basket for the district but the discussion was tabled until next month when the committee hopes to have more people in the meeting. The second motion discussed was a change to the prudent reserve which is currently \$350.00 to increase it two options were voted on and neither passed so prudent reserve was not increased. This concluded the business meeting, the next meeting will occur on December 11 via Zoom.

HELP WANTED

The following positions are open at the District level:

ARCHIVES

The right person for this position would be willing and able to

maintain files and documents that are historic for the district and the districts meetings, as well as attend the monthly business meetings for district six and area. There is a recommended guideline of 2 or more years of sobriety and proficiency with computers. Information can be found at the District Six Website or the monthly Business Meeting.

FUNCTIONS CHAIR

Looking for self-motivated person, willing and able to serve a 2 year term running a committee responsible for planning and throwing events for AA's in district 6. The role includes managing seed money, proposing events to the District Committee and working with a team to throw each event, as well as attending the monthly District Meeting. More information can be found on the District Website or the at the monthly business meeting.

HOTLINE

The hotline coordinator is responsible for attending monthly business meetings, maintaining and updating the phone list as well as connecting with CSO to share information. This will include reaching out to meetings and AA's in our District to get contact information so that we can continue to be actively involved in supporting those AA's in need who turn to the hotline for support. More Information is available on district six's website and at the Business Meeting.

MEETING LIST

This position is a two-year commitment to maintain a list of all meetings, times and locations in the district and to share said list with district secretary and webmaster so that it may be printed and distributed in the district. This position also updates this information with CSO. Further information can be found at the business meeting and on the district six website.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Many of these positions are held with the intention of working with a larger committee. Current Chairs seeking Committee Members include The Website, The Grapevine and The Newsletter. If interested in pursuing more work in service at the district level this might be an excellent way to dive in without the commitment of a chair position. Please seek more information at the District Business Meeting..

FINANCES:

Beginning balance: \$2,170.54

Deposits:

Haven't got a clue group: \$100.00

Bath Group: \$125.00

Sunrise Serenity: \$217.96

The We Group: \$70.00

Total: \$512.00

Ending Balance: \$2,638.00

Prudent reserve: \$1,100.00

Surplus: \$1,538.50

Expenses:

Zoom: \$45.00

Total: \$45.00

Ending Balance: \$2,638.00

Prudent reserve: \$1,100.00

At-A-Glance



ALY

Alcoholics Anonymous

Most Effective Path To Alcohol Abstinence

A Stanford researcher and two collaborators conducted an extensive review of Alcoholics Anonymous studies and found that the fellowship helps more people achieve sobriety than therapy does :

Alcoholics Anonymous, the worldwide fellowship of sobriety seekers, is the most effective path to abstinence, according to a comprehensive analysis conducted by a Stanford School of Medicine researcher and his collaborators.

After evaluating 35 studies — involving the work of 145 scientists and the outcomes of 10,080 participants — Keith Humphreys, PhD, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, and his fellow investigators determined that AA was nearly always found to be more effective than psychotherapy in achieving abstinence. In addition, most studies showed that AA participation lowered health care costs.

AA works because it's based on social interaction, Humphreys said, noting that members give one another emotional support as well as practical tips to refrain from drinking. "If you want to change your behavior, find some other people who are trying to make the same change," he said.

The review was published March 11, 2020 in Cochrane Database of Systematic Review. Cochrane requires its authors to undertake a rigorous process that ensures the studies represented in its summaries are high-quality and the review of evidence is unbiased.

"Cochrane Reviews are the gold standard in medicine for integration of all the research about a particular intervention," Humphreys said. "We wanted to do this work through Cochrane because of its rigor and reputation. "The other co-authors are a researcher from Harvard Medical School and a researcher from the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction.

Though well-known, AA faces skepticism

Although AA is well-known and used by millions around the world, mental health professionals are sometimes skeptical of its effectiveness, Humphreys said. Psychologists and psychiatrists, trained to provide cognitive behavioral therapy and motivational enhancement therapy to treat patients with alcohol-use disorder, can have a hard time admitting that the lay people who run AA groups do a better job of keeping people on the wagon.

Early in his career, Humphreys said, he dismissed AA, thinking, "How dare these people do things that I have all these degrees to do?"

Humphreys noted that counseling can be designed to facilitate engagement with AA — what he described as "an extended, warm handoff into the fellowship." For the review article, Humphreys and his colleagues evaluated both AA and 12-step facilitation counseling.

AA began in 1935 when two men in Akron, Ohio, were searching for a way to stay sober; they found it by forming a support

group. They later developed the 12 steps, the first being accepting one's inability to control drinking; the last, helping others sustain sobriety by becoming a sponsor of a new member. The AA model — open to all and free — has spread around the globe, and AA now boasts over 2 million members in 180 nations and more than 118,000 groups.

Though the fellowship has been around for more than eight decades, researchers have only recently developed good methods to measure its effectiveness, Humphreys said.

For the Cochrane review, the researchers found 57 studies on AA; of those, 35 passed their rigorous criteria for quality. The studies used various methods to measure AA's effectiveness on alcohol use disorder: the length of time participants abstained from alcohol; the amount they reduced their drinking, if they continued drinking; the consequences of their drinking; and health care costs.

AA Shines

Most of the studies that measured abstinence found AA was significantly better than other interventions or no intervention. In one study, it was found to be 60% more effective. None of the studies found AA to be less effective.

In the studies that measured outcomes other than complete abstinence, AA was found to be at least as effective. For the studies that considered costs, most showed significant savings associated with AA participation: One found that AA and 12-step facilitation counseling reduced mental health costs by \$10,000 per person.

The researchers looked only at studies of AA; they excluded Narcotics Anonymous and organizations focused on addiction to other substances. While it was beyond the scope of their study, Humphreys said the AA review is "certainly suggestive that these methods work for people who use heroin or cocaine."

Humphreys noted that the findings were consistent whether the study participants were young, elderly, male, female, veterans or civilians; the studies in the review were also conducted in five different countries. "It absolutely does work," he said of AA's method. He added that he feels validated in giving advice to so many patients to try AA: "That was really good advice, and that continues to be good advice," he said.

Keith Humphreys is a member of the Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute at Stanford. The research was not funded.

Stanford's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences supported the work .

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The purpose of this page is to offer information that may further readers' understanding of the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism; the severity and international scope of the illness; and the worldwide efforts being made to combat it. Publication here does not imply endorsement or affiliation. AA does not conduct or participate in research, nor does it hold any opinion on research conducted by others.





Regardless of your faith or spiritual beliefs, the holidays are about two things: giving and gratitude. When we focus on these, the other things such as resentment, disappointment, anger, worry, self-loathing show up far less often and cannot find a foothold in our hearts.

Staying sober is possible during the holiday season. It can be quite fun if we direct our attention towards people and activities that can help strengthen us on our road to recovery. Go, have fun, and enjoy your sobriety with those that matter. Tell them how you are staying sober and ask them what they are doing to stay sober. Remember this is a “We” program.

In love and service,

Linda T.



The Emmet Fox Corner
With Michael J

Understanding Its Rich Symbolism.

In Act I of the play, God allows Job's three daughters to be killed. Dr. Fox explains that this horrifying Act by God is simply the author's way of telling us that we are reading a parable rather than a historical account. It would be appalling to think that any God, who is all just, all good and who loves us as children, would slaughter Job's daughters just to teach their father a lesson. The death of the daughters is a mechanism in the play that is used to introduce the number “three” – a representation in many different Biblical contexts as the three principal aspects of humans: spirit, mind, and body. Later, we will learn that it was Job's mind or, more specifically, his way of thinking that was the key to his difficulties. This is hinted when Job declares: "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me."

As the play continues, Job is stricken again (this time in his body) despite the fact that he has remained faithful. The body is often used in to represent both the conscious and subconscious parts of our mentality. Job is in utter misery, and he goes out and sits on an ash heap. “Sitting among ashes” is a metaphor for subconsciously wallowing in self-pity; feeling terribly sorry for you. Job did not understand that the principal function of the subconscious is to bring into reality those things the conscious mind accepts as true.

Self-pity can only bring about even more suffering and in the next scene, Job's wife becomes fed up with his self-preoccupation and calls him a fool for still believing in God. She tells him “Curse God and die”. In the Bible, a wife is often representative of the feeling nature of the human personality. When things go wrong, it is usually our feelings that let us down, our feelings of fear and discouragement. "What's the use of prayer, it doesn't work?"

At the lowest point in the play, friends visit Job. Job's “friends” tell him that they have pity for him, but they also thoughtlessly suggest that he must have been doing something bad in order

to receive this kind of punishment from God. Pity, often a disguised feeling of superiority, is always a poor substitute for compassion. Compassion consists in giving a person the right thought, praying for them and, if there is some practical thing that can be done, doing it. When we offer compassion we are giving both ourselves and the person we are helping true peace of mind.

The play introduces a fourth friend, Elihu, who is described as young man. “Youth” represents a spiritual readiness to receive understanding. Young people are ready to hear and do something new. Elihu says to Job, "I don't think God is punishing you. God is testing you for your own good." Although Elihu is more compassionate than the others, he is still wrong. God does not need to test us -- He already knows everything. It is we who need to learn, not God. Our temptations, our misfortunes, do test us, but God does not send them.

Job comes to realize that his erroneous beliefs were the cause of all those things that happened to him. He had he had been living a life driven by the tyranny of self will. He was a slave to the cruelest master of all - the lower self. Freedom is found only by recognizing how powerless we truly are and that, as long as we insist upon telling God His business, nothing very much can come of our prayers.

The way to un-worry and put things right is to give up your belief in the appearance of things, no matter how distressing or unwelcome. Of course, this is hard to do. In the final act of the play, Job is given a gold earring. The ear symbolizes understanding, something that Job had lacked. To decorate the ear means to unfold the understanding. When you pray you get your inspiration and when you accept and use this inspiration, you find your peace.

Good things come out of pain and difficulty. Wrong things become right. Whatever happens to you, lift up your heart, because if you can hold on to your faith your liberation is very near. When we do a good job of living one day at a time, even though tomorrow might bring trouble, the chances are we will do a good job when it arrives—so why worry about it. Bill W. displayed his genius in his ability to distill (pardon the pun!) complex ideas into readily understood text, when he wrote:

“We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day ‘Thy will be done.’ We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves.”

(Reprinted from The Big Book, Pages 67 and 68 with the permission of AA, World services, Inc.)



AREA 28 CHIRSTMAS ALCOOTHON



HOSTED BY THE AREA 28 DISTRICTS

All are welcome!
December 24th 9 PM thru Dec 25th 9pm.
Meetings are 45 Minutes long,
With a 15-minute break between Meetings.

Zoom ID: 890 7941 0511 PW: 167737



Want to help? email:
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