

To be a Group member

- Be there every week
- Arrive early
- Leave late
- Be useful - get yourself a job within the Group like bringing the milk or putting out the chairs or helping with packing up the meeting. That sounds trivial, but it works (We know from our own experience).

Give 'meetings' your highest priority

- Except concerning court ordered or similar mandatory commitments.

It sounds 'extreme' - but "It works".

Work your sponsor

If you haven't an AA sponsor before you leave the facility, then, in the same way you choose your favourite meeting, look and listen around at meetings and ask someone with the kind of sobriety and serenity both in and out of AA rooms that you would like to have to be your sponsor. Try also to choose someone with a similar drinking story to you.

Your sponsor is your first 'go-to' person/mentor.

- If they say, 'phone me daily', do that
- Call them, call other AA members that you have phone numbers for calling (You are not interrupting their lives, you are contributing to their recovery program and their sobriety)
- A good sponsor will be aware of the many pitfalls of early sobriety and of the abrupt 'freedom' from constricting rules.

Other AA Resources

There is also the AA 'Helpline'.

1300 22 22 22 or
1300 AA AA AA

This phone number will connect you to AA locally wherever you are in Australia. Ask if you can speak to an alcoholic and give your own phone number and shortly you will be called back by a recovered alcoholic willing to talk to you.

www.aa.org.au

Not only is there a meetings locator for anywhere in Australia but also useful recovery information including short video stories on AA member's recoveries.



Bridging the Gap

Once you have left your facility and you have to face life on life's terms, everything might seem just a little too much. Things might not go how you thought or hoped they would and people might seem to look at you differently.

What can you do to keep your recovery from your problems with drinking momentum in full swing?

Don't pick up that first Drink!

This brochure has several suggestions from recovered alcoholics to help any with problems with alcohol whilst inside and on leaving correctional or treatment facilities to keep their recovery from alcoholism active and lasting.

Whilst still in your facility

Attend any Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in your facility that you are permitted to. Get to know and/or speak to any AA visitors attending meetings. If sponsorship is an available option, take advantage of this and ask an AA visitor to be your sponsor guiding you through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is recognised by sober, recovered alcoholics world wide, as an invaluable suggestion on how to make a solid start to your recovery journey.

Before your first day out of the facility

- Ensure that the AA 'visitors' that you know are aware of your exit date (This makes a lot of difference) and
- That you have their phone numbers
- It is possible for the person to collect you when you are released to be an AA visitor - able to take you to 'that first meeting' and then to your friends/family
- Make sure that you have a meetings list (In your pocket).

When you leave the facility

Don't break the record for going out the door of the facility and being put back in. It's so easy to fall for that first drink and be in serious trouble again a short time later.

What can you do?

Don't pick up that first Drink!

This suggestion is in big red writing because it is the most important.

Try to remember the HALTS

Don't get too: -

Hungry - Eat something, something sweet.

Angry - Try saying the Serenity Prayer, call your sponsor.

Lonely - Go to a meeting or call someone in the Fellowship.

Tired/Thirsty - Don't get over tired, drink water or a milkshake.

Serious - How important is it? Keep it simple.

If we let any one of those things happen to us in our early days, then how we view the world might seem to change.

The first day is the most dangerous.

Well-meaning friends will be saying things like, "So glad you are out mate; let's celebrate - here, have this one on me!"

This is a friend whose friendship might kill you.

Instead of having one more drink on the outside before you genuinely try to stop, don't give in and try these suggestions: -

- Get to a meeting on that first day - if possible, within hours (If you are out in the morning, get to a lunchtime meeting)
- Start as if you mean to continue
- If you have not had the opportunity to share, at the end of the meeting during the 'Any AA announcements' segment, announce - "I'm new to meetings and I'm committing to AA - I'm seeking phone numbers and support."
- Make sure you add AA phone numbers to your phone or get them down on paper.
- Always remember, you only have to be sober just for today!

What should you do next?

In the first few weeks

- Do 'lots of meetings' - at least one a day - until you're safer within yourself (Many AAs that are sober today started this way - or more - for the first year)
- Shop around these meetings and choose one you feel comfortable at that has a recovery message you appreciate and join it.

How do you 'Join a Group'?

You join an AA Group by saying to a Group member "I want to join the Group" or "I want to be in this Group".

- There's no paperwork!