

# 12-Step Programs – Duarehab House

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## 12-Step Programs

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Hailed as the standard for recovery from nearly any type of addiction, the Alcoholics Anonymous model of 12 steps and 12 traditions is one of the oldest treatment programs around.

## The Purpose of the 12 Steps

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The 12 Steps were created by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous to establish guidelines for the best way to overcome an addiction to alcohol. The program gained enough success in its early years for other addiction support groups to adapt the steps to their own needs.

There are many 12-step programs for various addictions and compulsive behaviors, ranging from Cocaine Anonymous to Debtors Anonymous—all using the same 12 Step methods.

Although the 12 Steps are heavy on spirituality, many nonreligious people have found the program immensely helpful. The language emphasizes the presence of God as each participant understands him, allowing for different interpretations and religious beliefs.

## The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

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Because recovery is a lifelong process, there's no wrong way to approach the 12 Steps as the participant tries to figure out what works best for their individual needs. In fact, most participants find that they will need to revisit some steps or even tackle more than one of the steps at a time.

Here are the 12 Steps as defined by Alcoholics Anonymous:

- We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
- Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
- Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- Made a list of persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

- Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 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.
- 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.

## The 12 Traditions

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The 12 Traditions speak to the members of Alcoholics Anonymous as a group, unlike the steps, which are focused on the individual. The traditions are defined in the Big Book, the main governing literature of Alcoholics Anonymous. Most 12-step groups have also adapted the 12 traditions for their own recovery plans.

- Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.
- 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.
- The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
- Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
- Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
- An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
- Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
- AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 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.
- Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.