A healthier life is on the line for you!

Mutual support programs gather people in fellowship to help one another recover from addiction. They provide a safe setting in which you can learn to change your thinking, beliefs, and actions.

Experts highly recommend these programs. They provide support through the sharing of experiences, strength, and hope.

Most communities offer programs in neighborhood locations at no cost.

**About 12-step programs**

In 12-step programs you:
- Work through 12 suggested steps for recovery.
- Receive help from a sponsor (a seasoned member who helps you one on one).
- Learn some sayings (slogans) that may help you to change how you think and to stay grounded in the program.
- Read about recovery.
- Attend social events to get to know others in recovery.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) was the first 12-step program. It began in the 1930s to help those with drinking problems. Other programs grew out of AA:
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Dual Recovery Anonymous
- Gamblers Anonymous
- Sexaholics Anonymous
- Spenders Anonymous

(continued on next page)
Here are some tips to help you get the most from 12-step programs:

• Attend at least 12 meetings before you decide if a group is right for you. Also try various types of meetings.
• Take what you can from meetings and the program. Don’t expect to like everything.
• Go to meetings when you feel like it and when you don’t feel like it. By going often, you get more from what the program has to offer.
• Share something about yourself with at least one person before or after each meeting. The more often you do this, the easier it becomes.
• Get a sponsor and talk with this person daily. Open up, trust, and take your sponsor’s advice, even if you don’t like it. Ask a friend in the program or the chairperson at a meeting to help you find a sponsor. Ask for help in working the 12 steps.
• Help set up before meetings and clean up after. Use this time to get to know others.
• Read the program literature.
• Use the slogans to coach yourself into a new way of thinking. Follow the advice to approach recovery “one day at a time.”

Other mutual support programs

Ask your therapist or doctor about other mutual support programs. Or look them up on the Internet. Here are some examples:

• Rational Recovery
• SMART Recovery
• Women/Men for Sobriety
• Alcoholics Victorious

Mutual support programs have helped countless people in recovery. Take time to think about whether they might help you.
Take Action

Answer the questions below. Talk with your therapist or doctor about your answers.

1. How **involved** were you in mutual support programs in the past?
   - [ ] Not at all involved
   - [ ] A little involved
   - [ ] Somewhat involved
   - [ ] Very involved

2. How **helpful** were those programs to you in the past?
   - [ ] Not at all helpful
   - [ ] A little helpful
   - [ ] Somewhat helpful
   - [ ] Very helpful

3. How **important** to you are the following at this time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going to meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a sponsor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling or meeting with peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working the 12 steps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA or NA literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA or NA events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the slogans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What do you **not like** about mutual support programs? What prevents you from using them?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

5. What do you **like** about mutual support programs? How might they help you?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________