

Dear Professional

Drug abuse and dependency are pervasive in today's society, often devastating the life of the dependent person as well as the lives of families and friends. Those with children or loved ones involved in drugs or alcohol suffer mental, emotional, and often physical pain while they watch hopelessly as addiction consumes their loved ones. You may find it difficult to deal with these hurting people. In **Families Anonymous**, there is help for parents, partners, relatives and friends.

Families Anonymous (FA) is a self-help fellowship of families of drug users and those with behavioural problems. Based on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, FA was founded in the USA in 1971 by a group of Los Angeles families. The first group in this country started in London in 1980 and there are now some 40 groups in various parts of the UK. The programme's focus is on the family and supporting them in coping with the addict. It provides a way for these individuals to put *their* lives back together and to find a sense of serenity.

Families Anonymous works in many ways. Its basic strength comes from the sharing of common problems. There are no fees required for meetings or membership. FA does not solicit or accept any funding from outside bodies. The office is staffed by volunteers and is funded by voluntary contributions given at meetings and by the sale of FA literature. FA is an anonymous programme where only first names are used.

In the FA groups, members learn to come to terms with the problem that is disrupting their lives. Attending meetings helps members to adopt an honest and consistent approach towards the addict. This in turn often brings the addict to realise that he/she needs help to live without drugs. Experience has shown that help for the family and friends means important help for the drug-dependent person.

Copies of any enclosures are available in quantity at minimum charges to professionals like you, who are in a position to reach people in pain who might not otherwise hear about FA. Please liaise with the FA UK office for your literature requests.

- **GPs:**

FA can be a good source of support for patients and clients dealing with the trauma of drug addiction in someone close to them.

- **Counsellors and Clergy:**

When counselling parents, family members and friends of drug users, you may encounter questions of doubt and low self-worth. FA is a spiritual programme, open to all, regardless of whether the individual has a religious affiliation or not. It offers family members an effective self-help support system *that works!* People learn that many of their efforts to control or change the situation, or protect the addict from

the consequences of addiction, are often unintentionally enabling or encouraging the addict to continue a self-destructive pattern. Participation in FA can be a beneficial way of coping with the situation, while at the same time offering peace of mind, hope and help for a better way to live.

- **Health Care Providers, Hospitals and Treatment Centres:**

Truly successful treatment can occur only when the chemically dependent person is able to arrest this illness and when family members find help and support for themselves. Even the best treatment programme or facility cannot always provide this support on a continuing basis. A group such as FA provides support 52 weeks of the year.

- **Law Enforcement Officials and Probation Officers:**

Let's be honest. One of the biggest problems you face with drug abuse is with the parents, partners and friends of the addict. The *grief* and *denial* they experience when faced with behavioural problems associated with substance abuse is sometimes manifested by hostility and disrespect for the legal system. Referring families to FA provides them with a means to relieve these anxieties. The support of the fellowship helps to release guilt and other negative emotions and allows clearer thinking in dealing with legal problems.

- **Community Leaders:**

It is very difficult to address friends, neighbours and community members who suffer the pain and embarrassment of having a family member involved with addiction. Classic advice, fault-finding or sympathy without remedy can alienate relationships or, at best, offer little support while the problems continue. One positive alternative for you is to suggest FA as a means of help, recovery and social integration back into the community.

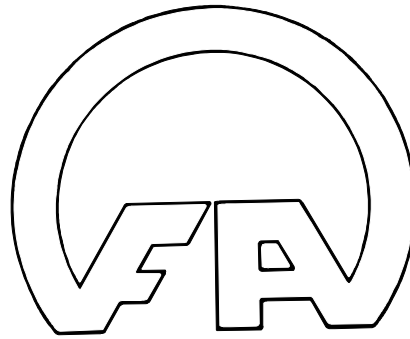
- **Librarians & Advice Centres:**

When you display **Families Anonymous** literature, you provide a resource for parents, partners and friends who need help for themselves. When concerned people get help, their afflicted loved ones frequently benefit as well.

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The FA UK helpline is manned daily 1-4pm and 6-9pm.

For general information, to locate a group meeting or to order literature, please contact:



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Stroud GL5 4AD

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website: www.famanon.org.uk

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Introducing Families Anonymous

TO THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

- *General Practitioners*
- *Counsellors*
- *Treatment Centres*
- *Health Care Providers*
- *Hospitals*
- *Law Professionals*
- *Probation Officers*
- *Law Enforcement Officials*
- *Community Leaders*
- *Librarians & Advice Centres*
- *Clergy*
- *Government Agencies*