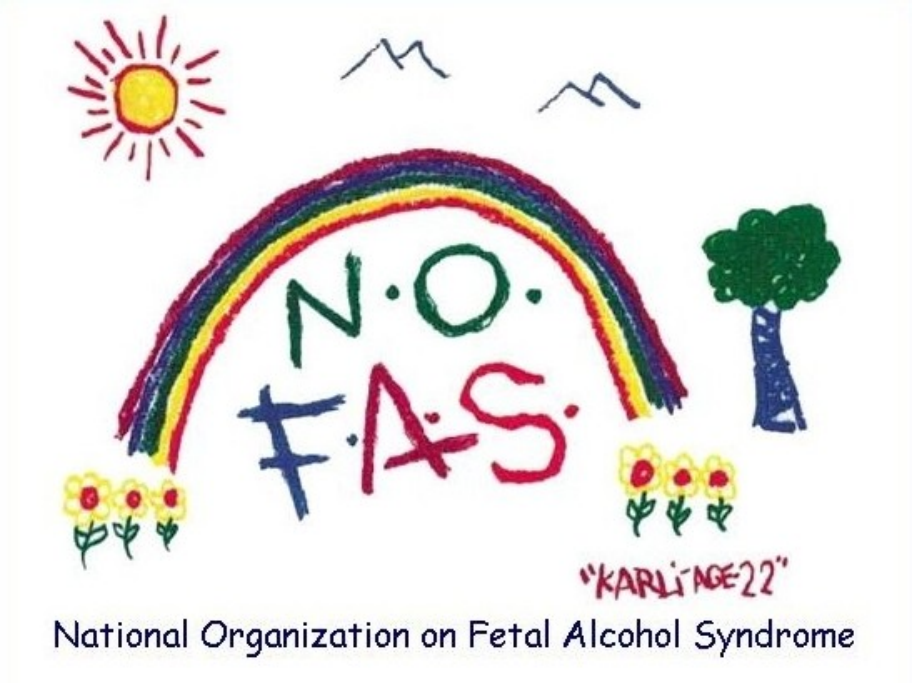
The 12 Steps Revisited for Individuals with FASD and Their Families



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Disclaimer:

- I do not speak for-nor represent AA, NA, Al-anon, or the Twelve Steps of AA

- Intent is to review the 12 steps in a way that might be helpful for families that are dealing with both FASD and possibly addiction, and to investigate a way of life that has helped millions live life one day at a time, happy, joyous, and free!

Twelve Steps of Recovery

- NOT trying to re-write or to re-interpret!
- Each person must decide what the steps mean to her/him.

- Investigate with an open mind how the 12 steps might be useful for a person (or a family member) with an FASD

Alcoholics Anonymous

- Bill Wilson & Dr. Bob, 1935
- Lois Wilson and Anne Smith founded AL anon, 1951

  - Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path

    - Chapter 5, The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous,1939

Facts About AA

- Oxford Movement
- Dr. Carl Jung
  - Synchronicity (*We are all connected and intertwine with perfect timing. There is a reason for everything.)*
- A Fellowship-Spiritual NOT Religious
- Members: 100 in 1939,
  - Today **millions** all over the world (it's gotta be working for our folks, how many of those people would you guess were exposed to alcohol?)

HOW Does it Work?

Just fine!

Honesty

Open-mindedness

Willingness

The Al-Anon Family Groups help people that are affected by someone else's drinking.

- The vision of NOFAS is *a global community free of alcohol-exposed pregnancies and a society supportive of individuals already living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).* Individuals with FASD and their families can and do find help and support in the rooms of Al-Anon. FASD occurs when a woman drinks while pregnant, and most individuals with FASD are born to women that suffer with alcoholism. Due to the unmanageability that goes hand in hand with alcoholism, it is not uncommon for children with FASD to end up in foster care or adoption. In birth families, many of the children are raised by their grandparents or other relatives. Adoptive families, foster families, grandparents and other caregivers can find comfort, understanding and encouragement in Al-Anon.

Detachment in Alan-on

- Detachment; not disinterest
- Detach from the problem
- Self care
- Stop trying to fix others

Slogans of AA & Al-anon

- One Day at a Time (Just for Today)
- Let Go & Let God
- Live & Let Live
- To Thine Own Self be True
- We can Start our Day Over at Anytime
- Misery is an Option
- Easy does it
- Keep it Simple (KISS)
- Think, Think, Think it Through

12 Step Recovery for individuals with an FASD:

- Hand select the sponsor (s)
- Weekly routine of meetings
- Home group
- Transportation available through intergroup networks
- Sober housing
- Sober activities-get involved
- Service work

Sponsor

- Mentor and teacher (external brain)
- Same gender
- Knows your story (strengths and weaknesses)
- Will be honest with you
- Supports you
- Daily contact
- Keeps the focus on today

Sponsors role is to prepare someone for the 12 step meetings:

- Important to know the level of understanding and provide support as needed
- Individual needs to be a part of the process of selecting meetings/times, etc.
- Consider individual needs of the person (smaller meetings, beginner meetings, men's/women's meetings, close to home environment, gay-lesbian, Spanish speaking, etc.)
- Help to break down abstract concepts as they arise
- Provide a small notebook to write down questions, and/or get others phone numbers (with guidance)

Sponsors role is to prepare someone for the 12 step meetings:

- They do not have to talk “share,” best to listen if they are new
- Practice how to state name and how they want to identify self-okay to introduce themselves to the group as a new member
- Hugs are common greetings (okay to say no)
- “Private” things are shared with a sponsor, not the group
- Holding hands at the end is a way of connecting to others and being a part of the group
- It’s okay to cry in a meeting
- Develop body language- Help them to not “overshare”
- If they don’t understand something discussed, write it in a notepad, and discuss after the meeting
- Make coffee-pick up chairs-go to the meeting after the meeting
- They do not have to read in a meeting, say “pass”
- They can just be themselves
- Celebrate anniversaries, pick up chips

STEP ONE

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable.

We admitted we were powerless over the alcoholic-that our lives had become unmanageable.

Who is an Alcoholic?

Stage 1 Tolerance	Stage 2 Physical Dependency	Stage 3 Major Organ Change
high tolerance with occasional use	increased tolerance/possible a.m. use	possible daily or maintenance use (reduced tolerance)
occasional hangovers	withdrawal: headaches/nausea (anorexia, high BP, loss of concentration, weakness)	migraines Vomiting rapid pulse, BP disorientation
disrupted sleep patterns	sleeplessness	insomnia
Colds/ infections	disease pathology developing	major organ damage
Irritability-mood swings-mild depression-isolation	MH diagnosis (depression, anxiety, panic) institutions and rx	suicidal ideation or attempts

K. Mitchell, 2004

Powerlessness

- **I Can't** Drink
- I Can't control myself when I drink
- When I drink, trouble follows
- I Can't Control another's behaviors

STEP ONE: I CAN’T

- “When I drink, I always end up in jail.”
- Do you like jail?
- “no”
- Then don’t drink one drink.

One Drink + More Drink = JAIL

Consequences (help to identify what's changed)

- My friends-family
- Hobbies
- Police
- My health
- Depression
- My church, synagogue
- School
- Accidents
- Loss of goals
- Money problems
- Abusive relationships
- Destructive behavior-hurt self or others/animals (cutting, slapping hitting)
- Suicide-Homicidal thoughts

Unmanageability

Trapped between intoxication & withdrawal

- Guilt, worry, anxiety, confusion, self-doubt, self-hatred
- legal, financial, sexual, work, school, relationship, emotional problems~ALL at the SAME TIME!
- Life managers:
  - Clergy, police, counselors, doctors, judges, attorneys, etc., etc.

For the Co-Addict

- Have I obsessed about the addicts behaviors?
- Do I live in constant fear and anxiety?
- Do I try to control, or support?
- Have I lied to cover up the addicts behaviors?
- Have I spent time focused on controlling, and not doing what I needed to do?
- Is my physical health suffering as a result?
- Has my social life suffered? Friends? Marriage? Family?
- My emotional health?
- Effects on my finances? Spirituality?
- Am I preoccupied with the addicts behaviors?
- Do I blame myself?
- Do I live my life full of blame? Am I a victim?
- Do I punish the addict (person with FASD)? How?
- Have I given up things I love to do?
- Do I keep secrets?

God grant me the serenity

To accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

STEP TWO

Came to believe that a Power greater then ourselves could restore us to sanity.

"When I drink, I get real crazy"

- There is a way out….I can get better.
- **He Can! Or She Can….or They Can!**
- Step of **HOPE-**yes…even for you!
- Not religion-Spirituality
- AA sought to **INCLUDE EVERYONE**!

God can do for us, what we cannot do for ourselves

GROUP of DRUNKS (GOD)

- You are Not Alone

GOD: Good Orderly Direction

- Just ask for help

Gentleness

- Homework:
  - Walk with a friend
  - Pick flowers for your home
  - Call an old friend
  - Watch a favorite movie
  - Tale a bubble bath
  - Doodle/color
  - Read a favorite magazine/book
  - Garden
  - Buy a new APP
  - Play a favorite video-game
  - Listen to a favorite song
  - Dance
  - Watch the sun set
  - Draw/paint/create

STEP THREE

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

- Let Him/Her/Them!

- ACTION Step
  - Decision-Go to my meetings
  - Get a sponsor (accept help in selecting)
  - Be a ROBOT….do as THEY do….

Step 3, *Turn it Ou*

Practice prayer

Give it to God

STEP FOUR

Made a searching & fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

I lied, I cheated, I stole

Sponsor directed

Secrets will keep me sick-write them

- Who makes me angry?
- List of things I don't like about myself
- Stuff I've done that make me upset
- Okay to draw, use bulleted notes, or tape recorder

List of things I like about myself-things I'm really good at…

STEP FIVE

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Tell someone about the things I do not like about myself list

- Sponsor, minister, rabbi, trusted friend, counselor
- Say a prayer-include HP

Concrete directions

- Top 10 secrets, top 10 people I am angry at, top 10 behaviors I do not like, top 10 things about me that I like
- Include person in a ritual to finalize (burn the list, rip the list, bury the list).

STEP SIX

Were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character.

- HOPE: I can change!
- I believe that HP can change me.
- I am not my mistakes.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked Him to remove these defects of character.

- Ask for help: ask God/HP to remove behaviors that make you sad, feel bad, or hurt.
- I am now willing to change, I am sick & tired of being sick & tired!
- I too, deserve to be HAPPY!

STEP EIGHT

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

I wish I did not hurt people and I want to say that I'm sorry.

- Assist them; list family members first.
- List secondary people.
- Transformation step – Cocoon to Butterfly

STEP NINE

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

I'm sorry….

- I am now doing what I need to do to change.

Sponsor assisted !

Bartholomew and the Oobleck

(or step 9 according to Dr. Seuss)

The king in the kingdom of Didd decided he was tired of the same 4 things: snow, rain, fog, and sunshine. He wanted something new to fall from the sky. He called his spooky magicians and with magic words they made it happen. It rained oobleck! Green, gooey, molassesy stuff that stuck to everyone and wouldn't let go. The entire kingdom was paralyzed. Birds stuck to their nests, magicians to their instruments, and the king sat on his throne, his royal crown stuck to his head. Bartholomew Cobbins shouted to the king, "its going to keep coming, you ought to be saying some plain simple words!" Simple words? "What do you mean, boy?" "This is all your fault, and the least you can do is say, I'm sorry." "What!" he bellowed. "Kings never say they are sorry!" "But you're sitting in oobleck up to your chin, and so is everyone else. If you can't say you're sorry, then you're no king at all!"

Bartholomew heard a great sob, the king was crying! "You're right! It's all my fault! I'm awfully, awfully sorry!" And the moment the king said those simple words, something magical happened. Maybe there was magic in those words, "I'm sorry, and it's all my fault." They say that as soon as the king spoke those words the sun began to shine and all of the oobleck that was stuck to the animals and the people of Didd quietly melted away.

STEP TEN

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Self Awareness:

- I make mistakes, I apologize when I know that I made a mistake.
- What keeps you up at night…you make to make right.

STEP ELEVEN

Sought through prayer & meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out.

Develop Spiritual Habits:

- Practice prayer-talk to God/HP
- Walk in nature-daily
- Write a letter to your HP-concrete actions to feel spiritual connection
- Practice meditation-listen to God/HP
    - meetings, church, nature, meditation, friends

Affirmations (paste them everywhere!)

- I am not my FASD, nor am I my addiction
- I choose not to live in blame
- I am perfect just as I am today
- I accept that I have struggles, I am not a victim to them
- God does not make junk
- I am right where I am supposed to be
- I am loved and I am lovable

Conscious Contact

- That feeling inside when you know you are not alone
- Get to know that feeling inside that you feel, when you know you are gonna be okay (lost child-sees parent)
  - Your GUT
  - Your instinct

God as we understood Him

- No one is gonna tell you who God is
- Who is God to you?
- Each person has their own relationship with God
- Whatever works

Knowledge of His WILL & the power to carry that out.

- What is His will?
  - For you to be happy, joyous & free!
  - What makes you happy in your life? That is His will.
- *God can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.*
- And the power to carry that out.
  - Believe, believe
  - Expect a miracle
  - You are not alone....

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these steps in all of our affairs.

- Spiritual Awakening?
  - I care about me…I do count!
  - I care about my family
  - I care about my dog

As a result of these steps

- I now care about myself and others, because I have been attending the meetings, using the 12 steps to help me change, and saying my prayers.

It’s working!

we tried to carry this message to alcoholics

- I attend meetings
- I get a service position
- I go to dances and fun events
- I share in meetings

To practice these steps in all of our affairs

- Everywhere I go, I use the 12 steps
  - I am kind to my parents
  - When I am wrong, and I know it, I apologize
  - I try to treat others kindly
  - I am honest in the store

Acceptance

Serenity,

Peace of Mind,

I fit into my world,

I have friends,

God does not make JUNK!

The Twelve Promises of A.A.

- 1. **We will attain** and maintain sobriety.
- 2. **We are going to know** a new freedom and a new happiness.
- 3. **We will not regret** the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
- 4. **We will comprehend** the word “serenity” and we will know peace.
- 5. **No matter** how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experiences can benefit others.
- 6. **The feeling** of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

The Twelve Promises of A.A.

- 7. **We will lose** interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.
- 8. **Self-seeking** will slip away.
- 9. **Our whole attitude** and outlook on life will change.
- 10. **Fear of people** and economic insecurity will leave us.
- 11. **We will intuitively know** how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
- 12. **We will suddenly realize** that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

The Twelve Promises of A.A.

Are these extravagant promises?

We think not. They are being fulfilled among us- sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

Thank you!

Thank you!

Thank you!

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