

Area 68, AA-SWTA District 2 Newsletter

April 2023

Hello Fellow Service Junkies!

I do not know who knows this about me, but I am a beekeeper. Springtime is fairly exciting for most people, anyway, but for us beekeepers it is magical. To just stand and watch as the bees leave the hive and return with their tiny pockets stuffed full of pollen, by the hundreds, every few minutes it brings into focus the term, busy as a bee. Each bee starts life as a homemaker/ cleaner or nurse of the queen because they cannot fly yet. They then become guards and help to protect their colony from unwelcome intruders. They then become foragers, which fly out into the area and return with nectar and pollen to feed the rest of the colony through the winter. Don't get me started on bees because I could go on forever about them, but what I wanted to talk about here is how much I have learned about service from bee colonies. Many think that the queen rules the colony, like in the game of chess where the queen is the most powerful piece. In the bee colony she cannot even feed herself. She must be fed and pampered constantly if she is to continue to lay 1000 plus eggs per day that she must, this time of year. The point I am making is that each honeybee works diligently, from daylight to dark, for the benefit of the colony as a whole.

Obviously, even those most diligent in service do not work like bees. Since we do not live in a commune, we must expend considerable effort to feed, clothe and house ourselves so it is impossible to put that much energy forth in service, but as evidenced by all of you reading or listening to this simple message, many hands make light work. All of us are working together to ensure that AA's message will be available to anyone who reaches out for help and that the words laid down by our AA pioneers will endure through the ages. I am deeply honored and humbled to be a part of this organization and to work alongside each of you to make sure that when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, the hand of AA will always be there.

I would like to talk about the pre-voting assembly that many of us recently attended in Marble Falls. District 2 was well represented there. Thank you to all that showed up. It was a wonderful and informative gathering that gave me, and I believe many others, new insight into the future of area assemblies. Going to my room for a nap was not a convenient option, since my room was across town. I attended ALL the assembly and am a better person for it and it is my belief that the whole assembly benefited as participation was much better since more people were there in attendance. The cost of this venue was considerably cheaper than a hotel conference center, thereby saving more of the money entrusted to us by our fellow AA's.

As trusted servants of AA this fiduciary responsibility has become ever more important considering continuous price increases across the board. For every dollar that is saved in one area can be used in another to further carry the lifesaving message to the still suffering alcoholic. There are some outspoken members in business meetings that have not served in this capacity that feel that assemblies are just a "free for all" where we just come to congregate and party for the weekend on AA's dime. The service structure of AA is such that each group has a vote in each decision that effects AA as a whole, so it is the responsibility of each GSR to offer accurate and concise reports to our group so it can voice its preference to us, and we can share that preference with our Delegate. She is now headed to New York where she will share the sense of Area 68 that she acquired at the pre voting assembly. Every group/vote counts and as trusted servants it is our responsibility to vote the conscience of our group/district. That is why we do this. An uninformed group conscience is an ignorant conscience and that is the same as a ship with no rudder.

Humbly Yours in Love and Service
George Thomas
Area 68 District 2 DCM

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PART 3 ON UNDERSTANDING ALCHOLISM

The Role of the Family in Alcohol Use Disorder Recovery for Adults

It is almost axiomatic that alcohol use disorder (AUD) and the family are inextricably bound. AUD harms individual family members and the functioning of the family as a whole, and family members' actions may exacerbate problematic drinking. Conversely, families play a key role in recovery from AUD, and recovery has a positive impact on family members and family functioning. Scientific research to understand the interrelationships between drinking and family functioning began in the early 1900s, and treatment models that address both drinking and family functioning have been developed and tested for close to 75 years. This article reviews the conceptual and empirical literature on the impact of AUD on families, the role of the family in recovery from AUD, the role of family-involved treatment in fostering recovery, and issues related to specific populations. The review concludes with suggested future directions for research. When discussing families, we are using the term broadly to refer to a broad range of kinship relationships. When discussing couples, we are referring to couples in intimate relationships regardless of marital or co-habiting status, and using the term "partner" to refer to either individual in the intimate relationship. However, where research findings apply to a more limited group (e.g., spouse versus partner) we use the correct term to delimit the population studied. Given the limitations of current research findings, we are referring to different-sex couples unless otherwise specified.

The Impact of AUD on Families

AUD affects the functioning of families: Family members take on additional household and

childcare responsibilities, social events are disrupted, and families may experience significant financial difficulties.¹ Individual members of these families suffer as well. Spouses and children of adults with AUD or other substance use disorder (SUD) experience psychological distress as well as health and behavioral problems. For example, women with a male partner who has AUD and is actively drinking reported elevated levels of depression, anxiety and psychosomatic complaints, and disruptions to work and social/leisure activities, and they utilize more health care resources. Similarly, children who have a parent with AUD experience a variety of psychological, behavioral, and school problems.

Research also has demonstrated a reciprocal relationship between drinking, AUD, and the quality of intimate relationships. For example, longitudinal studies of engaged different-sex couples have found that the husband's drinking prior to marriage is a strong predictor of the wife's drinking a year into marriage, that the female partner's drinking influences the male partner's drinking in the next year, and that relationship distress and AUD are strongly related. A recent meta-analysis of 17 studies ($N = 10,553$ couples) focused on different-sex couples found that partners influence one another's drinking, although the magnitude of effects was modest. The extent to which women influenced men's drinking ($\beta = .19$) was slightly greater than the extent to which men influenced women's drinking ($\beta = .12$). Results from clinical and nonclinical samples also reveal a close association between heavy drinking and the perpetration of intimate partner violence. Couples with at least one partner with AUD have high rates of intimate partner violence, regardless of the sex of the partner with AUD, and drinking is common during episodes of interpersonal violence. Most typically,

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interpersonal violence is bidirectional in these couples.

Orford and his colleagues have proposed that the functioning of family members of those with AUD is best understood within a stress-strain-coping-support (SSCS) framework. The SSCS model assumes that living with a family member with AUD is a stressful circumstance, putting family members at risk of a variety of psychological and physical health problems. Within this model, families are seen as engaging in a variety of behaviors to cope with this chronic stressor, some of which are more effective in helping families to cope with and to influence the drinker's behavior, and others that are less effective. The SSCS framework has informed much of contemporary research on AUD and the family.

The Role of the Family in Recovery From AUD

There are strong connections between family functioning and drinking outcomes. Family behaviors can contribute to changes in drinking, and, conversely, changes in drinking can contribute to more positive family functioning. For example, in early studies, Moos and colleagues examined the longitudinal course of functioning in families of men receiving treatment for AUD. At 2-year follow-up, they compared family functioning for men who were in recovery to men who had relapsed. Wives of men in recovery, compared to wives of men who relapsed, drank less, were less depressed and anxious, had fewer negative life events, and had higher family incomes. Similarly, the children of the men in recovery showed fewer symptoms of emotional distress. As a whole, families of men in recovery had greater family cohesion, greater expressiveness, a higher orientation toward recreational activities, and greater agreement in how they viewed the overall environment of their families, compared to families of men who had relapsed. These studies

highlight the positive impact of recovery on families.

Families may play a key role in fostering the initiation of recovery. Although popular literature and 12-step mutual help groups for families, such as Al-Anon (<https://al-anon.org/>), emphasize detachment for family members and empirically supported interventions for families, such as Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT), it has been found that family behavior can increase the probability that an individual will seek help for AUD. Key family behaviors that support the initiation of change include ignoring behaviors associated with using alcohol or drugs, reinforcing positive or desirable behaviors related to sobriety or help-seeking, allowing the drinker to experience the naturally occurring negative consequences of drinking, and making specific and positive requests for changes in behavior related to drinking, such as reducing consumption or seeking help.

Families and other members of the social network of persons with AUD also play an important role in supporting successful changes in drinking. Although the scientific literature is limited on specific family behaviors that facilitate and support successful recovery from AUD, there is evidence that active partner coping predicts positive outcomes. Specific types of active partner coping that support successful change include (a) decreasing negative or controlling behaviors that serve as antecedents to drinking; (b) increasing supportive and problem-solving communication; (c) reinforcing positive behavior change by the partner with an alcohol problem; (d) increasing shared positive activities; and (e) reducing family member drinking behavior to support changes in the drinking of the person with AUD.

Families also may make recovery more difficult. For example, individuals with AUD perceive relationship problems as significant relapse

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precipitants, and believing that one's partner also has AUD predicts poorer drinking outcomes compared to individuals who did not believe that their partners have AUD. Specific family behaviors associated with relapse include negative attitudes, emotional responding, and low levels of distress tolerance.

For more information on this topic, see:

<https://arcr.niaaa.nih.gov/volume/41/1/role-family-alcohol-use-disorder-recovery-adults>

AA EVENTS:

Spring Assembly Marble Falls Spring Assembly, March 31st – April 2nd

“For on unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.”

Lakeside Pavilion, 305 Buena Vista Dr Marble Falls TX 78654 Quality Inn – 1206 HWY 281 N. Marble Falls
\$139.99 Group Code: SWTA68
(830) 693-7531

Other Surrounding Hotels located In Marble Falls: Hill Country Inn, La Quinta & Suites and Motel 6

76th Annual Texas State AA Convention San Antonio, Texas, June 9 – 11, 2023

The Westin San Antonio North
9821 Colonnade Boulevard
San Antonio 78230
210-691-8888

<https://txaaconvention.org/>

July 21 - July 23 2023 Summer Workshop

Adams Street Community Center, 511 E Adams Street, Brownwood, TX 76801

2025 International Convention July 3, 2025 - July 6, 2025

The 90th anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous will be celebrated at the 2025 International Convention in Vancouver, BC, Canada, July 3 – 6, 2025. The theme of the 2025 International Convention is “90 Years – Language of the Heart.”

More information will be available in August/September 2024.

<https://www.aa.org/international-convention>

Please see our page for news releases:
<https://www.aa-swta.org/2025intconvention>

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*Before you give into temptation remember
where it took you last time.*

Sober Motivation

LOCAL INFORMATION:

District 2 Picnic

Food, fellowship and fun! 5/6/23 from 10am-2pm Cypress Bend Park, 503 Peace Avenue NB

Guest Speaker: Vanessa S, Area CFC Chair

Pulled Park Sandwiches, Sides and Hot Dogs provided. Bring a snack to share!

River access, restrooms and playground

Birthday Night

Is the first Saturday of every month for the previous month. Please put your name on the whiteboard if you have a birthday this month so you can be recognized.

Movie Night

April 21st at 8:15. Movie will be held outside the 2-4 Club, so please bring a lawn chair and a snack to share. Possible camp fire meeting after.

Online 12 Step Meetings

Go to <https://12steppers.org/online-virtual-12-step-meetings-for-each-12-step-program/> for a list of meetings.

PICPC Assembly

Public Information Cooperation with Professional Communities, August 4-5 2023 at the McKenna Center in New Braunfels. Doors will open at 11. Professional Luncheon \$25, Conference registration is \$10. For registration and more information go to www.area68district2.org.

To be helpful is our only aim. p89 BB

Zoom Meetings

New Braunfels Group Zoom meeting is at noon every day except Saturday.

ID: 86494683219

Passcode: 24Eikel (case sensitive)

Grapevine and La Vina

2023 Carry the Message Project: Give a gift subscription to an alcoholic who needs it. Great for sponsees, newcomers, prisons or detoxes.

Go to aagrapevine.org/carry-the-message or www.youtube.com/c/aagrapevine

If you have any information about local groups, or if there is something you would like to see in the newsletter, please let us know by texting to Judy H at 830-388-1652!

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