

Physically Distanced but Digitally Connected The Alcoholics Anonymous Message Carries On Amid Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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A.A. in the digital age has certainly taken on a new meaning in these challenging times. Alcoholics Anonymous is not a place or an event; it exists in the hearts, minds and help freely offered by its members.

Most recently, Coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected many A.A. groups that normally would meet in- person. The General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous U.S./Canada, which functions as a repository for A.A. members and groups who are looking for shared experience from the A.A. Fellowship, has some general experience to share regarding this issue.

Some A.A. members have shared that meeting online has been an adjustment and has at times had its challenges. Adhering to state/provincial and federal guidelines, many A.A. members have switched from “in-person” meetings to digital meetings, on platforms such as *Zoom*, *Google Hangouts*, *Conference Calls*, *GoToMeeting* and *What's App*, allowing the group to continue to focus on A.A.’s primary purpose: to carry its message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers.

In a sense, however, this current experience is not necessarily new for A.A. From its earliest beginnings, the A.A. founders recognized the need to reach beyond the face-to-face transmission of the A.A. message, giving rise to the development of A.A.’s basic text, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. This book and other A.A. materials which are widely available on multiple platforms – digital, audio and video – has literally circled the globe and opened the door to recovery for thousands of alcoholics looking for help. Even prior to this pandemic many A.A. members around the world – whether homebound, living in remote areas, or service members stationed in far-flung places – have counted on participating in A.A. remotely through [A.A. literature](#), phone calls with other members, correspondence by letter or email and meetings online.

While many A.A. members are for the first time reporting the shift from in-person meetings to digital platforms, for many alcoholics around the world, remote connections and digital platforms are how they initially encountered and maintain their recovery in A.A. even prior to the pandemic.

Many A.A. groups have shared with G.S.O. that they are now finding great connection in digital meetings and want to offer that same experience to anyone who has yet to attend their first meeting.

There are a number of other A.A. resources as well and those seeking help with a drinking problem can get local A.A. information through G.S.O.'s website

https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources or download G.S.O.'s free of charge A.A.W.S. [Meeting Guide App](#).

Another resource is AA Grapevine, the publisher of the International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Its purpose is to provide A.A. member sharing through its magazines (in English and Spanish), websites, audios, and e-books. Members share on topics related to recovery, including recovery on digital platforms. Often referred to as A.A.'s "meeting in print," AA Grapevine communicates the experience, strength and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current A.A. experience. *For more information visit:* <https://www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help>

For information on the A.A. Online Intergroup <https://www.aa-intergroup.org/>

Understanding Anonymity: https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/understanding-anonymity

Note: G.S.O. is not an authoritative body over A.A. groups, nor does it initiate rules or directives, as each A.A. group and entity is autonomous and decisions are made through an individual group conscience. Providing guidance on health issues is outside the scope of the A.A. sharing that G.S.O. offers.

What Is A.A.?

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship of people who have had a drinking problem. It is non-professional, self-supporting, all gender, multiracial and apolitical. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about their drinking problem. For additional information visit the [Press/Media](#) page at www.aa.org.