

# Mar-Anon Family Groups

SUPPORT AND HOPE FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY ANOTHER'S MARIJUANA USE



## Suggested Meeting Format

Frequency: Monthly, Bi-monthly, Weekly

Time: 1 hour - 1.5 hours

- 1) Select a person the chair the meeting. Share announcements. Mention that those who are interested in starting a local Mar-Anon meeting should contact [outreach@mar-anon.com](mailto:outreach@mar-anon.com)
- 2) Group holds a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer (for all those who care to): "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."
- 3) Starting with the person chairing the meeting, each person introduces themselves by their first name, and the group responds, "Hello, <name>."
- 4) Chair reminds people to mute their phones while others are talking (ex. for FreeConferenceCall they can press \*6 to mute/unmute)
- 5) Chair asks if there are any newcomers (their first, second, or third Mar-Anon meeting). Group says hello and welcomes any newcomers.
- 6) Chair reads aloud "Welcome to Mar-Anon" (page 2 below)
- 7) Chair reads aloud "Preamble" and "Twelve Steps" (page 3 below)
- 8) Chair reads aloud "Twelve Traditions" (page 4 below)
- 9) Chair reads aloud "Obstacles to Success" (page 5 below)
- 10) Chair reads aloud "Cross-Talk" (page 6 below)
- 11) Chair reminds group importance of anonymity, "whom you hear here, what you hear here, let it stay here."
- 12) Chair asks if there is anyone who would like to share a story of hope.
- 13) Chair introduces topic for the meeting. This could be a reading, a step, a tradition, or anything that fits the group's purpose.
- 14) Open the floor for sharing: Chair reminds group to keep shares to 3-5 minutes to allow time for everyone.
- 15) Five minutes before the end of the meeting, chair asks if there are any more shares. If not, read "Closing" (page 7 below)
- 16) Chair closes the meeting and mentions that everyone is welcome to remain on the line to exchange phone numbers, ask questions, for general discussions, etc.

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## Welcome to Mar-Anon

Many times, we have heard: "It's just pot - what's the problem?"

Confusion and self-doubt ensue. We spin between the belief that marijuana is harmless and our own conviction that something is wrong in our relationship with a habitual user. We can feel isolated. We can even feel like we are going crazy.

We in Mar-Anon understand. Although many think it less serious than other drugs or alcohol, marijuana is a mind and mood altering drug that can be addictive for some people. For those who seek recovery from marijuana abuse, there is a 12-Step program - Marijuana Anonymous. For friends and families whose lives are affected by a loved one's marijuana use, there is Mar-Anon.

Like any addictive behavior, habitual marijuana use has an impact that extends beyond the user. In Mar-Anon, we seek to recover from the effects of this family disease by learning about addiction and co-dependency; taking responsibility for our own lives; and by sharing experience, strength and hope with one another. The only requirement for membership in Mar-Anon is that a person be affected by another's marijuana use.

Dealing with someone's addiction can be a painful struggle but it also creates opportunity. While we have found that we cannot change others, we can transform ourselves and create more serenity, clarity, and happiness in our lives.



## Preamble

Mar-Anon Family Groups are fellowships of those affected by another person's marijuana use. We share our experience, strength, and hope so that we may solve our common problem. We believe marijuana addiction is a family illness, and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Mar-Anon is not affiliated with any religious or secular institution, political entity, or organization. Mar-Anon does not engage in any controversy, and likewise has no opinion on any outside issues or causes. There are no dues for membership in Mar-Anon; we are self-supporting through our own voluntary contributions.

Mar-Anon's primary purpose is to help those affected by another person's marijuana use. We can do this by practicing the Twelve Steps; by welcoming, comforting, and supporting other group members; and by offering empathy and encouragement to the addict.

## Twelve Steps

These Twelve Steps, adapted from Marijuana Anonymous, can be a powerful, life-changing tool for those who work them. Opening our hearts and minds, and having a willingness to work towards a spiritual awakening are a key to recovery. We've found that our old way of life no longer works for us. We must let go and turn to our Higher Power. Here are the suggested Twelve Steps for Mar-Anon:

- 1) We admitted we were powerless over marijuana, that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a Higher Power.
- 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5) Admitted to this Higher Power, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6) Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.
- 7) Humbly asked to have our shortcomings removed.
- 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
- 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with our program, our lives and our Higher Power.
- 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



## The Twelve Traditions of Mar-Anon

These guidelines have been the means of promoting harmony and growth in many Twelve Step programs. Experience suggests that unity of the group depends upon adherence to these Traditions. (Adapted from Marijuana Anonymous)

- 1) Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon Mar-Anon unity.
- 2) For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving Higher Power whose expression may come through in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
- 3) The only requirement for membership is to be affected by another's marijuana use.
- 4) Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Mar-Anon as a whole.
- 5) Each group has but one primary purpose, to those affected by another's marijuana use.
- 6) Mar-Anon groups ought never endorse, finance, or lend the Mar-Anon name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
- 7) Every Mar-Anon group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- 8) Mar-Anon should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
- 9) Mar-Anon, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- 10) Mar-Anon has no opinion on outside issues; hence the Mar-Anon name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11) Our public relations policy is based upon attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow Mar-Anon members.
- 12) Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



## Obstacles to Success (adapted from Al-Anon)

All Mar-Anon discussions should be constructive, helpful, loving and understanding. In striving toward these ideals, we avoid topics that can lead to dissension and distract us from our goals.

Three obstacles to success are:

### Discussion of Religion

Mar-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, or creed. It is a spiritual program, based on no particular form of religion. Everyone is welcome, no matter of what affiliation or none. Let us not defeat our purpose by entering into discussions concerning specific religious tenets.

### Gossip

Our goal is to help ourselves and others learn to use the Mar-Anon philosophy. Gossip has no part in our program. We do not discuss other members or the addicts; our dedication to anonymity gives people confidence in Mar-Anon. Careless repeating of matters heard at meetings can defeat the very purpose for which we are joined together.

### Dominance

Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. Therefore, no member of Mar-Anon should direct, assume authority or give advice. Our program is based on suggestion, interchange of experience, and rotation of leadership. Each person makes progress in his or her own way and pace. Any attempt to manage or direct is likely to have disastrous consequences for group harmony.

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## Cross-Talk

Mar-Anon meetings are different from that of group therapy sessions or open discussion. To keep Mar-Anon a safe place to share, we ask that you follow a few guidelines:

- Please avoid cross-talk (talking directly to, or giving advice to another member)
- Please do not interrupt or talk over someone
- Address the group as a whole, rather than creating dialogue with individual members
- If you wish to respond personally to what someone has said, we suggest that you speak with them after the meeting has closed

Feel free to ask questions about the format or structure of the meeting. Your cooperation in keeping this meeting safe is appreciated. It helps protect the unity and survival of the group. If this is new to you, try to keep an open mind.

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## Closing

Our time is up – thank you to everyone for joining us. Please remember that the things you heard spoken here are confidential. Any opinions shared, belong to those who shared them. Whatever your challenges are, know that you are not alone, and others who share your story have discovered hope and serenity. And, most of all, **KEEP COMING BACK! IT WORKS!**

Will all those who care to, join me in the Serenity prayer, “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.”

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## Dos and Don'ts (adapted from Al-Anon)

Don't take an addict's choices or behavior personally  
Don't try to manipulate or control the marijuana addict  
Don't allow yourself to get stuck in a contemptuous or bitter mindset

Do keep the focus on yourself  
Do take care of yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually  
Do try to understand the nature of addiction as a disease  
Do attend open Marijuana Anonymous meetings and read their literature  
Do attend Mar-Anon meetings and read their literature  
Do contact Mar-Anon!



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*\*The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have been reprinted and adapted with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ("AAWS"). Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that Alcoholics Anonymous is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only - use of A.A.'s Steps or an adapted version in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, or use in any other non-A.A. context, does not imply otherwise.*

## THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.