RAGEAHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Rageaholics Anonymous Newcomer Packet

A guide to meetings, sponsorship and recovery

You do not have to understand everything today.
You are welcome to listen and take your time.

www.rageaholicsanonymous.org

MEETINGS RECOVERY FELLOWSHIP SERVICE

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START HERE

Welcome to RA

Many of us arrived at Rageaholics Anonymous feeling ashamed, frightened, confused, defensive or desperate.

You do not have to understand everything today. You do not have to speak before you are ready. You do not have to decide today whether RA is for you.

We suggest that you keep coming back, listen for similarities rather than differences, and give yourself a chance to experience the fellowship.

Newcomers are encouraged to try at least six meetings before deciding whether RA is right for them.

About Rageaholics Anonymous

Rageaholics Anonymous is a Twelve Step fellowship for people seeking recovery from compulsive and destructive anger and rage.

We share our experience, strength and hope with one another to help solve our common problem and help other Rageaholics recover from acting out in rage.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop raging.

Some meetings may also welcome people who are affected by rage in another person. Where this applies, it will be stated in the meeting description.

There are no dues or fees for RA membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions.

RA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay abstinent from rage and help other Rageaholics achieve abstinence.

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YOUR FIRST MEETING

What to expect at an RA meeting

Coming to your first meeting can feel uncomfortable. You are welcome to come in, listen and take your time.

You do not have to speak.
You do not have to identify yourself as a Rageaholic.
You are welcome to simply listen.

Although individual meetings differ, you can usually expect:

- an opening, which may include the Serenity Prayer and RA readings
- introductions, usually using first names only
- a reading, topic or Step-related discussion
- members sharing their own experience, strength and hope
- a structured closing
- an opportunity for informal fellowship afterwards

RA meetings are places for members to share their own experience rather than give advice, diagnose one another or tell another person what they should do.

The parking lot

Many meetings offer an informal period after the structured meeting, known as the parking lot. Newcomers are especially encouraged to stay if they would like to ask questions, meet other members or learn more about RA, sponsorship, the Steps and the tools of recovery.

Protecting anonymity

Anonymity helps members feel able to speak openly and honestly. Please do not record meetings, take screenshots or repeat another member's personal story outside the meeting.

> *What you hear here, who you see here, let it stay here.*

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NEXT STEPS

Getting started

There is no single perfect way to begin recovery. Many members have found the following suggestions helpful.

Keep coming to meetings. Give yourself time to become familiar with the fellowship.

Listen for similarities. Our stories may differ, but many of us recognise the feelings, behaviours and consequences described by other members.

Connect with other members. Stay for the parking lot, take part in fellowship and consider exchanging contact details with members you feel comfortable with.

Explore the tools of recovery. Meetings are important, but recovery continues outside meetings too.

Learn about the Twelve Steps. RA uses the Twelve Steps as the spiritual foundation of its programme of recovery.

Consider sponsorship. A sponsor can help guide you through the Steps and share their own experience of recovery.

You do not have to do everything at once. One day at a time.

Finding a meeting

RA meetings take place seven days a week at various times of the day. Meetings are held online using Zoom, with the option to join some meetings by telephone. Meetings are generally scheduled for one hour.

For the current meeting schedule, visit www.rageaholicsanonymous.org/meetings.

A note for international members

Meeting times are listed according to the location shown on the RA meeting schedule. Please check the current listing when converting the time to your own time zone, particularly around daylight-saving changes.

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RECOVERY TOGETHER

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is an important part of recovery in RA. A sponsor is a recovering Rageaholic who shares their experience, strength and hope and helps guide another member through the Twelve Steps.

We encourage newcomers to attend a variety of RA meetings and get to know members of the fellowship before choosing a sponsor. Attending several meetings can help you identify someone whose recovery and approach to the programme you respect and relate to.

Some members choose to attend 90 meetings in 90 days as a way of becoming connected to the fellowship and establishing a strong foundation in recovery. Many members encourage this practice, but it does not mean that you need to wait 90 days before asking someone about sponsorship.

Looking for a sponsor

If you are looking for a sponsor, you can mention this during a meeting, use the Zoom chat where appropriate, or talk with members during the parking lot.

Finding a sponsor can sometimes take time, particularly where someone is seeking a sponsor of the same gender. Women may find it helpful to attend RA's women's meeting and talk with other women about sponsorship, Step work and other ways of staying connected while looking for a sponsor.

You do not need to find the perfect sponsor. Sponsorship is a relationship between two members in recovery, and arrangements may change as recovery develops.

Stay connected. Keep attending meetings. Continue taking steps towards recovery.

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DAILY PRACTICE

The tools of RA recovery

Compulsive rage is destructive anger that leads to incomprehensible demoralisation. We attain a daily reprieve from compulsive raging by practising the Twelve Steps and using the following tools.

01 MEETINGS

We attend meetings where we share our experience, strength and hope with one another. Unless we give to newcomers what we have received from RA, we cannot keep it ourselves.

02 SPONSORSHIP

We have found it essential to our recovery to have a sponsor and to be a sponsor. A sponsor is a recovering Rageaholic who guides us through the Twelve Steps and shares their own experience, strength and recovery.

03 OUTREACH

We maintain frequent contact with other RA members using the telephone, email and other forms of communication.

We make a point of talking to other RA members before and after taking difficult steps in our recovery.

04 CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH A HIGHER POWER

We maintain conscious contact with a Higher Power. We consistently and regularly seek understanding of a Higher Power's will and direction for our lives.

05 ABSTINENCE

We practise abstinence from rage. Abstinence may differ among RA members depending on how each person defines their bottom-line behaviours.

Bottom-line behaviours are self-destructive rageful acts which, once engaged in, result in worsening destructive consequences for ourselves and/or others. Staying away from our bottom-line behaviours defines each person's abstinence.

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06 SAFE RELEASE

We practise the safe release of negative emotions. This may take the form of healthy physical, mental, emotional and/or spiritual actions which enhance our sense of serenity and do not harm others.

07 AWARENESS

We become aware of our rage triggers, our thoughts about those triggers and the feelings beneath our rage. We do so to seek recovery and willingness to surrender our disease.

08 BOUNDARIES

We become aware of our limits and take action to maintain healthy boundaries.

We can discover our verbal and physical boundaries when we distinguish our own needs, feelings, roles, responsibilities and issues from those of others. As we recover, we clarify and own where our responsibilities to ourselves begin and end before clarifying where other people's responsibilities begin.

09 RA AND AA LITERATURE

We study the literature of Rageaholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous to strengthen our understanding of compulsive disease and recovery from compulsive raging.

10 FELLOWSHIP-WIDE SERVICE AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

We attend Fellowship-Wide Service meetings and business meetings in the programme.

Many of us have long harboured feelings that service and business were not part of our lives and were for others who were more qualified. Participation in running our own programme teaches us how our organisation operates and helps us become responsible for our own recovery.

11 SERVICE

We perform service at every level: personal, meeting, Intergroup and World Service. Service is vital to our recovery. Through service, we give to others what has so generously been given to us.

12 ANONYMITY

We practise anonymity. Anonymity gives us greater freedom to express ourselves by helping assure us that what we say at meetings or privately to other RA members will not be repeated.

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READING AND REFLECTION

Literature

Literature can help us understand both the problem of compulsive rage and the spiritual principles of Twelve Step recovery.

RA endorsed literature

- Alcoholics Anonymous, known as the Big Book
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

The literature of Alcoholics Anonymous provides a spiritual foundation for our programme of recovery.

Other literature used by some members or meetings

The following books are not endorsed by RA, but have been used by some members or meetings as additional recovery resources:

- Anger Busting 101: New ABCs for Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them by Newton Hightower
- A Woman's Way Through the Twelve Steps by Stephanie S Covington
- The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children by Shefali Tsabary

Use of outside literature does not imply endorsement by Rageaholics Anonymous.

RA is peer support

RA is a peer-support fellowship. Members share their own experience, strength and hope with one another.

RA is not a substitute for professional medical, mental-health, legal, safeguarding or emergency support.

If you or another person is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services or an appropriate crisis service in the country where you are located.

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MEMBER EXPERIENCES

Voices from the fellowship

People arrive at RA for many different reasons. Some have lost relationships, employment or freedom because of their rage. Others recognise that anger is damaging the people they love or know that they cannot continue living in the same way.

These are individual members' experiences. They speak only for themselves.

Zak

Harmful incidences of rage against my wife led me to find the program. I felt it would put me on a path to deserve the right and privilege to be with my family again. It has been very beneficial to participate in various functions (Host, Co-Host, Sponsor, Sponsee, FWSC Secretary, Fellow Traveler), but I am still a long way from being where I want to be with my life. I hope to one day earn the respect of my children by being a kinder, gentler role model to each of them. I hope to be the husband and friend that my wife has always wanted and deserved.

It has provided many insights to the human problem. We are all flawed, yet beautiful. We all want to be better people, or else we wouldn't attend a voluntary program. Sharing with one another and seeing through an alternative lens allows us the ability to look into our own struggles with rage. Hearing others failures and triumphs has allowed me to gain a new perspective on my own flawed approach to life. This brings hope and inspiration.

James

What brought me to RA was a feeling that I needed help with my anger. Trying to control it by myself had cost me my marriage and my freedom.

My experience with RA has been life changing. Having a supportive collective of people who have struggled with rage has given hope when I thought I had none. When you're in RA, you're never alone. When things feel insurmountable, this group is here for me to keep me walking the rage free path.

Julia

I came into RA being confused about my rage. I knew I had outbursts, but they were really limited to family members/people I considered family. I felt a lot of shame about that, but the rage incidences mostly felt contained. It's wasn't until I raged every day for 4 months at a former boyfriend, that it finally clicked for me. I definitely needed outside help!

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My experience in RA has been great so far. Despite not working the steps yet, practicing humility and relating (rather than comparing) has helped me a lot. I use the tools available to me like the meetings, doing service work at meetings, talking to members outside of meetings, and the readings to help me emotionally regulate. Regularly pausing has been a life saver. Turning things over [to my Higher Power] and lessening my self-serving ego has been very helpful too. I now recognize that I have been displaying anger in many ways in my everyday life. I also have support for that today!

Tom

I was brought to RA from my 12-step work that I did in Nar Anon. As I took my inventory, I found I was hurt from a bad divorce and having a child with addiction issues. The hurts had been buried and I had tried to live as 'superman'... nothing could hurt me and I could handle everything. I was hardly superman and my hurt became bitterness and self-pity. Of course, before I came to RA, my hurt was all caused by others, I had every right to be angry and was just defending myself from those bad people and circumstances. I had lost friendships, lived with guilt and shame, and my life was just too hard. I could tell people were not comfortable around me and my friend's patience was running out.

In RA, I found hope from the readings such as... "no matter how far down we had gone, we never were so low that others could not experience from our experience". I listened and shared actively, I read the AA big book, I joined chats. I read Anger Buster 101 and took the survey and had my wife take it. It was brutal—I was all 5's on intensity and frequency was ALWAYS... I attended 90 meetings in 90 days; I dug inside and chased each bitter feeling until I found the source. During these times, I would often feel depressed for days... but on the other side I was not feeling shame. I learned that I had to find the root source of hurts and feelings and become aware of them, with awareness, I could let go and acknowledge my helplessness. However, the awareness and letting go somehow made me feel I had some power to choose.

I continue to slip and rage and I have a life time of work. I am finding lots of progress and I do work each day to let go. I find myself much more meek, not needing to win or argue. I can express myself firmly and kindly at the same time - most of the time, not always. I am grateful for my RA friends and their support. My recovery is not perfect, but I have a good life and am very pleased with the progress with my HP [Higher Power] and RA fellowship.

Sal

I came to RA after losing my job due to raging at work. It had been happening more frequently in recent years. My experience with RA has helped give me guidance for managing my rage tendencies and a community of people to work towards healing.

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Anonymous member

While I tried to talk to one of my dogs in a calm voice, I noticed that he was trembling and his eyes were full of fear. I had been raging so much that my dog was afraid of me, even when I wasn't angry. It truly broke my heart, enough to have an emotional breakdown. After processing my own faults, I admitted that rage controlled my life. I sought help and found Rageaholics Anonymous.

I was hesitant when I started RA. I wasn't sure if this was for me. I didn't consider myself an "addict" - I don't use recreational drugs and I don't drink. I decided to start hearing the shares and I got to the point where I was hearing my stories in someone else's voice. I had such a big connection to the group that I questioned if the members were my long-lost family! The fellowship is so full of love, support, understanding, and encouragement. I had found a place where I could be safe and vulnerable for the first time in my life. As a woman, sponsorship is difficult to find, but we do have women that work together in the meantime. I'm incredibly grateful to have found a support system where I can heal and have unconditional support.

Anonymous member

I was looking for a group counseling or anger management program and couldn't find anything local. In the process of searching, I came across RA. I was given an ultimatum that I need to participate in an anger management program by my partner after having an episode over a holiday season in 2024, and I spent the week at my friend's place (I was given an opportunity to spend a couple of hours with my then 1 year old child each day).

Initially, I was questioning the higher power (God) aspects of the RA program, but as I learned and participated more, I've understood more of the importance of the supportive community that pushed me to take a deeper look into my behaviors.

Andrew

I had a big blowup at my girlfriend, and I knew that I needed to take the bull by the horns and do something about it.

It's [RA] been a very good experience. Very good for me.

Keep coming back

A few words to those who have not been with us long: whatever your problems, there are people among us who have experienced many of them too.

Keep an open mind. Talk to one another. Reason things out. Let there be no gossip or criticism. Allow the understanding, peace and love of the programme to grow in you.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

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