

# A Primer on Alcoholics

## Anonymous

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Research Society on Alcoholism  
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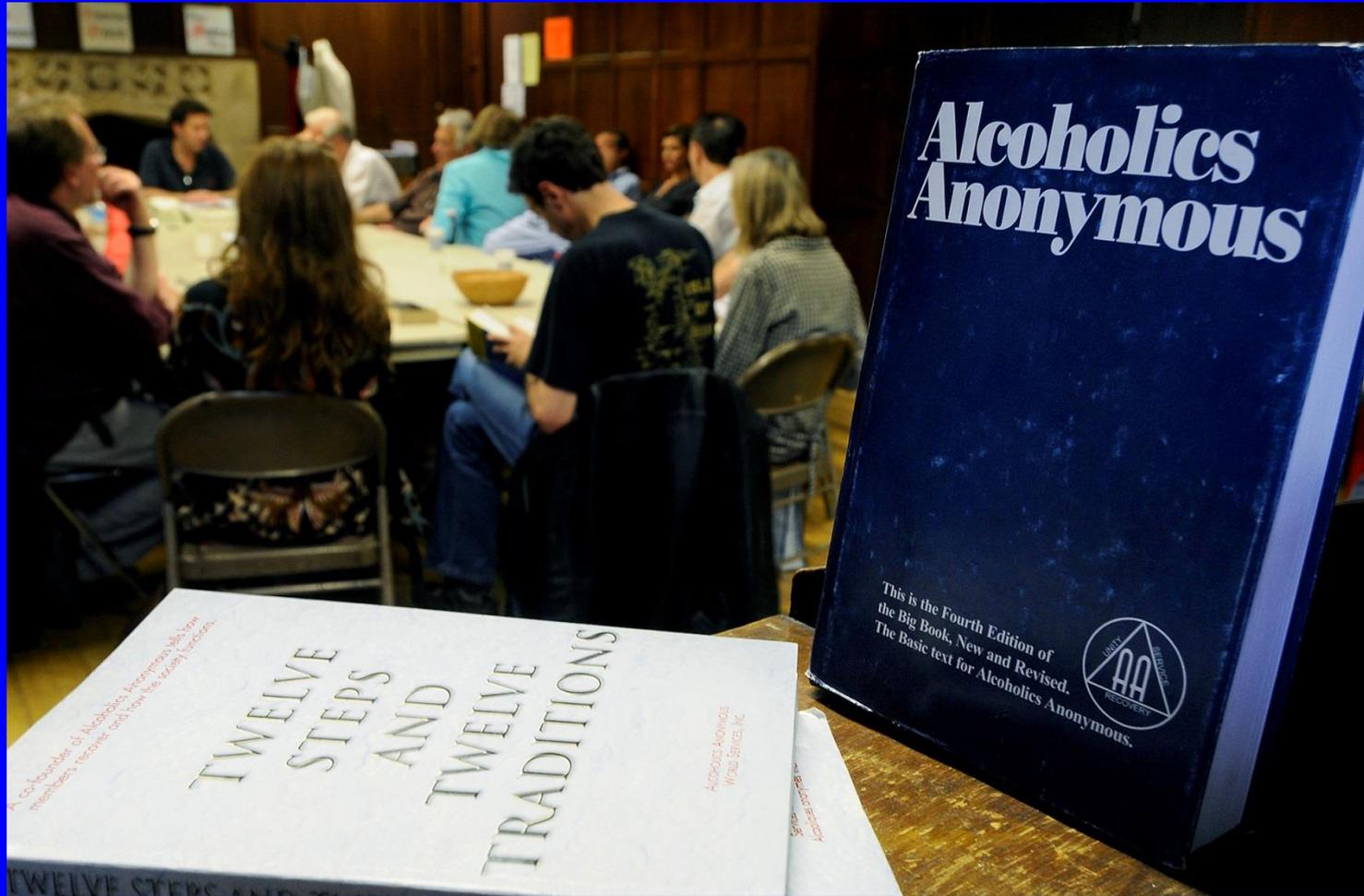
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# Alcoholics Anonymous, the prototypic 12-step organization

- Non-professional, peer organization founded in 1934
- Sole purpose: To help alcoholics become sober
- Explosive growth in U.S. and world
- Free of charge, widely available, no “length of stay”

# What does AA actually do?



# Does AA Really Help People?

- Instrumental variables analysis of over 2,300 patients in six NIAAA TSF trials
- Used randomization as instrument to test impact of AA free of selection bias
- AA reduced drinking in 5 of 6 trials

Humphreys, K., Blodgett, J. C. & Wagner, T.H. (2014). Estimating the efficacy of Alcoholics Anonymous without self-selection bias: An instrumental variables re-analysis of randomized clinical trials. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 38, 2688-2694.

# Conclusions

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- Alcoholics Anonymous is a popular, long-standing, peer-led resource for problem drinkers
- AA offers meetings, sponsorship, helpful behavior and life change advice/strategies
- On average, AA benefits members about as much as professional outpatient therapies