

Fellowship Centre Newsletter: January 2025



9122 34A Avenue NW, Edmonton, T6E 5P4

Telephone: 780-220-7811

Email: info@fellowship-centre.org

Website: <https://fellowship-centre.org>
facebook.com/SEFellowshipcentre

Message from the Board of Directors

Greetings and Happy New Year. Before it is “out with the old and in with the new,” let’s review some of the Fellowship Centre highlights for 2024:

- A new AA meeting opened in January, *Serenity by Candlelight*, at 7:00 PM on Friday.
- Started in February, the *Fellowship Library* has proven popular in transmitting addiction recovery experience, strength and hope, as well as information and strategies on clean and sober living.
- In March, the *Awakening Men’s Group* held a silent auction of donated items. Such fundraising built a sense of community as well as helping to ensure that the doors of the Centre remain open.
- In May, the *Sunrise Group* held a silent auction of several donated hockey jerseys. Such a fundraiser built a sense of fun in recovery since the Oilers were in the playoffs at that time and helped to ensure that the doors of the Centre remain open.
- In August, the Fellowship Centre appeared on the Canadian Mental Health Association (Edmonton) List of Resources for People with Addictions. This has resulted in more calls to the Fellowship Centre phonenumber as well as a greater variety of people attending meetings at the Centre.
- In September, the *Girlfriend Hour* collected and redistributed used clothing. All clothing which was not taken by someone in the Fellowship Centre recovery community was donated to a non-profit thrift store that supports an Edmonton addiction recovery centre for women and their children.
- In November, the first weekly addiction recovery meeting not based on the 12-Steps was opened at the Centre. *Mental Health and Addiction Support* focuses on common mental health concerns for those trying to recovery from addiction.
- At the end of December, approximately 25 dedicated individuals volunteered to work a casino. This was a major fundraiser which is expected to finally give the Fellowship Centre reserve funds.

In 2025, the Board of Directors, with the support of Members, will work toward improved and expanded community and volunteer-based addiction recovery services including:

- Support for families and friends of those who suffer from addiction
- Increased variety of 12-Step meetings such as Narcotics Anonymous and Crystal Meth Anonymous
- Videoconferencing equipment purchase, installation and volunteer training in effective use for delivering addiction support
- Increased focus on mental health and addiction support
- Offering SMART Recovery Meetings
- Applying for grants from organizations such as the Mental Health Foundation and the Community Initiatives Program
- Building Fellowship Centre Membership and strengthening the Board of Directors

Yours in service,
Wayne W., President

SMART Recovery at the Fellowship Centre on Starting January 10th all Fridays from 1:30 to 2:30 PM

Someone phoned the Fellowship Centre recently begging for help with his alcoholism. Attempting to describe to him the benefits of attending AA meetings, he interrupted and cried out: “I’ve been to three different AA meetings and all they talked about with prayer and God! I’m an atheist. I need something else! Please help me!”

SMART Recovery was established in 1994 in the USA to meet the increasing demand of those seeking an alternative to the 12-Step addiction recovery program. Such was its popularity that SMART Recovery grew from 42 meetings at the beginning to more than 1,500 in North America alone and now proliferating worldwide in 23 countries and counting. SMART Recovery is a transformative method of moving from use of addictive substances and/or engaging in negative behaviors to a life of positive self-regard and willingness to change. Online and in-person meetings are run by trained facilitators who have recovered from addiction to a substance (alcohol or drugs) or an activity (gambling or shopping).

Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART) is an evidenced-informed recovery method grounded in Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) that supports people with substance dependencies or problem behaviors to:

1. Build and maintain motivation
2. Cope with urges and cravings
3. Manage thoughts, feelings and behaviors
4. Live a balanced life

SMART Recovery General Principles

- Self-Management - People can manage their own behaviors
- Mutual Support - There is great value in connecting with and learning from peers with similar experience
- Choice - People choose their own goals, skills and tools
- Evidence Led – All programs are based on scientific evidence and encourage on-going program evaluation
- Person Centred - People with lived experience are central in guiding meetings

SMART Recovery Meeting Guiding Principles

- Respect
- Inclusivity
- Confidentiality
- Nonjudgmental
- Avoid *war stories*, or glorifying past behaviors with details that could trigger others

SMART Recovery Family and Friends meetings are a dedicated space for those with loved ones who are struggling with addiction. Being in a close relationship with someone struggling with addiction or problematic behaviours is very stressful. Smart Recovery for Family and Friends can help improve your understanding the problem, the support available, and help you form a plan to regain control of your life. Online and in-person meetings are run by trained facilitators who often have their own experiences as a family member affected by a loved one’s relationship with alcohol, drugs, gambling or other problematic substances and behaviors.

A.A. Meeting Change on Thursdays at 6:30 PM

The Steps We Took is replaced by Plain Language Big Book Study

The book, Alcoholics Anonymous, first published in 1939, was printed on thick paper and, consequently, appeared to be a very big book. At that time, it was affectionately referred to as the Big Book. Except for the stories in the second half of the book, in each of the three subsequent editions of the Big Book (1955, 1976, and 2001), AA New York Central Office maintained the original 1939 wording. AA New York Central Office, however, increasingly recognized that many individuals struggle with the antiquated language of the Big Book. Consequently, in November 2024, a tool for reading the Big Book was published.

The original Big Book states on page 25: *When therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into the fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.* The new Plain Language Big Book communicates this same quote on page 40 as follows: *It is a kind of spiritual toolkit. And when we began to use that toolkit, we found true happiness and a miraculous new way to be in the world.* At first glance we might only see what was missing, how our beloved quote was taken, discarded and abandoned. Then we thought about others, how a suffering alcoholic may walk into a meeting just looking for a *new way to be in the world*. As we thought of the other, this simple invitation of a *new way to be* held an attraction that doesn't need our input.



If you are struggling and are honestly looking for **a new way to be**, come join us on Thursday evenings 6:30 pm at the Fellowship Centre for the Plain Language Big Book Study. This AA General Service Conference-approved literature is a new tool for reading the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Presented in a way that brings application of the AA program of recovery, we will unpack the beauty of the original text with the highlighted use of this new material. Copies of the Plain Language Big Book are available for use at this meeting but please bring your own copy of the original Big Book as the Plain Language Big Book is not intended to replace the original Big Book but, rather, to enhance our experience of that original text.

Rev. David Burhan's Principles for Living a Rich Spiritual Life

1. Look at the world with a sense of wonder and awe.

Rabbi Abraham Heschel used the term *radical amazement* to describe the practice of remaining present and aware of the small miracles that abound in every moment.

2. Answer three important spiritual questions.

Who am I? Why am I here? What difference can I make? Answering these questions instills in us a sense of meaning and purpose.

3. Find a welcoming place to discuss life's meaning and purpose.

Find a spiritual community that fosters an atmosphere of openness, acceptance, and a free exchange of ideas. Such a place encourages people to discuss personal issues, celebrate joys and achievements, and strengthen one's own spiritual perspective.

4. A loving higher power guides us on the journey toward becoming our best selves.

The God of our understanding is a Living God of love, compassion, and healing. Everyone's higher power, whether God or Nature, requires justice, love kindness and to walk humbly.

5. Engage in practices that improve our conscious contact with our higher power.

Moments of profound gratitude, insight, guidance, and wonder mediate and reflect our relationship with our higher power.

6. Remember that gratitude, compassion, and humility are the greatest of virtues.

Life is a gift: handle this journey with gratitude, compassion, and humility. The ancient Roman philosopher Cicero wrote that "Gratitude is not only the greatest of all virtues but the parent of all others."

7. Treat all people with congruence, empathy, and respect.

Congruence is being genuine and honest with others; empathy is the ability to feel what others feel; respect is positive and supportive feelings for all people.

8. Relationships with others is the key to a vibrant spiritual life.

All relationships are sacred. Listen attentively and make human relationships the top priority.

9. An open mind and an open heart will heal and unify us all.

Our greatest heroes direct their energies toward healing and unifying people. A priority is to break down barriers that divide us, to broaden our worldview, reaching beyond our own kind, our own country, our own religious creed.

10. The higher power of our understanding loves and affirms us.

There is a presence of something far greater than we can comprehend which loves and affirms us. Have faith that this Living God is a central part of each person's life, whether they know it or not.

11. A sense of humor can enrich life and build bonds.

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people. Humor brings people together and acts as a social glue that builds loving, trustful bonds.

12. Wonder is in pursuit of us.

Anyone who is seeing, listening and paying attention will likely understand that wonder just might be another name for God. If human beings seek the transcendent, the transcendent is seeking us. The ultimate truth is not just that we pursue wonder, but that wonder is in pursuit of us!

PROPOSED AMENDED CENTRE BYLAWS: ARTICLE 4 – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

4.1 Composition of the Board of Directors

There shall be a minimum of three and a maximum of seven Directors, all of whom are Members of the Centre.

4.2 Directors' Terms of Office

Directors shall hold office for three years unless removed earlier (Article 4.8). Directors may be reelected for additional three-year terms.

4.3 Election of Directors

At the first AGM following the enactment of the Bylaws and at successive AGMs thereafter, the Members shall elect Directors as specified in Article 4.2.

4.4 Eligibility of Candidates

Any individual who is a Member and is active in maintaining and advancing the Objectives of the Centre is eligible for nomination and election as a Director unless that person is ineligible by reason of the Societies Act or the Bylaws.

4.5 Vacancies

If there is a vacancy, or if there has been a failure to elect the number of Directors required by Article 4.1, the Directors then in office shall forthwith appoint additional Director(s) to fill the vacancy until the next meeting of Members.

4.6 Authority of the Board

The management and administration of the affairs of the Centre shall be vested in the Directors. In addition to the powers and authorities given by the Bylaws, or otherwise expressly conferred upon them, the Directors may exercise all such powers of the Centre and do all such acts and things on its behalf as are not prohibited by the Societies Act, the Articles of Incorporation, or the Bylaws. The Directors shall have full power to make such rules and regulations for the conduct of their business as they think fit, provided that such rules and regulations are consistent with the Societies Act, the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws.

4.7 Duties of Directors

The Board must ensure that:

- a) throughout the Centre's structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" prevails, so that minority opinion is heard;
- b) every service responsibility is matched by an equal service authority and that the scope of each authority is well defined;
- c) sufficient operating funds and reserves be its prudent financial principle;
- d) written and accessible policies and procedures are in place;
- e) it reaches all important decisions by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;
- f) none of its actions will be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
- g) it remains democratic in thought and action;
- h) all Centre business conforms to all regulatory and legislative authorities (including the Societies Act, the Articles of Incorporation, and the Bylaws) and in accordance with Operational Policies and Procedures;
- i) one Director is appointed to act as a Chairperson of each ad hoc and/or standing committee; and
- j) Membership is maintained, promoted and recruited as may be necessary to advance the Objectives of the Centre.

4.8 Removal of Directors

A Director shall be automatically removed if:

- a) the Director submits written resignation to the President of the Centre or, in the case of the resignation of the President, to the Vice-President of the Centre. In such cases the Director may or may not continue to be a Member as specified in his/her letter of resignation.
- b) resignation of the Director is requested by Resolution of the Members. That Director may or may not continue to be a Member as specified in the Resolution of the Members;
- c) the Director becomes bankrupt or is convicted of a criminal offence negatively affecting the welfare or reputation of the Centre. In such cases, the Director will no longer be a Member;
- d) the Board unanimously votes, excluding the said Director, to remove a Director. The removed Director may or may not continue to be a Member as specified in the Resolution of the Board; or
- e) the Director dies.

4.9 Remuneration of Directors

No Director shall be paid for services as a Director, but expenses incurred by a Director on behalf of the Centre may be defrayed by the Centre with the approval of the Board.

4.10 Conduct of Business

The Directors may meet for the dispatch of business, adjourn, and otherwise regulate their meetings as they think fit. Resolutions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a majority of votes. In the case of equality of votes, the Resolution is not passed. Meetings of the Directors may be held at regular intervals at such place within the geographic boundaries of Alberta, at such time, and upon such notice (if any) as the Directors may by Resolution from time to time determine, provided that no notice of the meeting is required if it is held immediately after the AGM.

4.11 Quorum

A meeting of the Board is valid if at least 50% of the Directors are present.

4.12 Notice of Meetings

- a) The President or his/her delegate must send written notice of the date, time, place and business to be conducted at the meeting at least seven days before the meeting. In the event of an emergency, Board meetings can be called on three days notice.
- b) Notice of a Board meeting is not required if:
 - i. the Board has decided on a regular schedule of meetings;
 - ii. the meeting takes place immediately following the AGM;
 - iii. all Directors are present at the meeting; or
 - iv. all Directors have consented to the calling of a meeting without notice.

4.13 Frequency of Meetings

The Board must meet at least three times a year. It can decide to meet more frequently or at scheduled intervals.

4.14 Indemnity

Every Director shall, subject to the provisions of the Societies Act, be deemed to have assumed office on the express understanding and agreement and condition that every Director of the Centre and his/her/their executors, administrators, estate and effects respectively shall from time to time and at all times be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of the Centre from and against all costs, charges and expenses whatsoever which such Director sustains or incurs or in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever made, done or permitted by him or any other Director or Directors in or about the execution of the duties of their office, and also from and against all other costs, charges and expenses which they sustain or incur in or about or in relation to the affairs thereof except such costs, charges or expenses as are occasioned by their own willful act or default.

4.15 Director Involvement in Contracts

A Director cannot have a business arrangement with the Centre unless the Board unanimously votes by Resolution that the arrangement directly furthers the Objectives of the Centre.

4.16 Conduct of Directors

Directors will carry out their duties honestly, fairly and to the best of their abilities in a manner that lawfully advances and protects the Centre. An individual Director has no power to bind the Centre or the Board.

4.17 Voting

At all meetings of the Directors:

- a) each Director present has one vote on each Resolution;
- b) in the event of equality of votes, the Resolution is defeated;
- c) Directors will usually vote openly in a manner that clearly demonstrates their position on a Resolution;
- d) if a Director asks for a ballot vote, voting on the Resolution will take place by ballot and after voting is complete:
 - i. the Chairperson counts the votes;
 - ii. a Director appointed by the Board confirms the count; and
 - iii. the Chairperson announces to those present at the meeting the passage or failure of the Resolution without providing the numerical results which ends the process.

The Organization of the 12 Steps

The 12 Steps are numbered for a good reason. The benefits of working the Steps occur when they are worked in order because the Steps are interdependent. Each Step builds on the one that preceded it to create a powerful transformative experience. What happens in Step One creates an experience that readies us for what happens in Step Two. Step Two leads to what happens in Step Three, and so on. This is how change unfolds across all 12 Steps. The 12 Steps create a momentum that motivates us to honestly face ourselves and others as we have never done before.

The 12 Steps can be organized into four groups. Steps 1-3 form the first group. These Steps demolish the foundation of our self-destructive life, the one that didn't work, and build a stronger and more resilient foundation for a new life that works under any conditions whatsoever. Steps 4-7 form the second

grouping. These Steps help us develop a positive self-concept by encouraging authenticity and promoting self-awareness and personal accountability. They help us to become our best possible selves. The third grouping, which consists of Steps 8 and 9, helps us become trustworthy by righting the wrongs we have done to others. They teach us the nature of healthy relationships and to aim at having the best possible attitude toward human relations. The last three Steps, Steps 10-12, form the final cluster. These Steps help us maintain our new way of life. They continue to promote self-awareness, self-realization, and emotional maturation through serving others and maintaining an ongoing program of personal and spiritual growth.



Group	Steps	Purpose
1	1-3	Build the foundation for our personal transformation for recovery.
2	4-7	Help us develop a positive self-concept by encouraging authenticity, increasing our self-awareness, and promoting responsibility and accountability.
3	8-9	Help us become trustworthy by righting the things we have done wrong to others and teach us about the nature of healthy relationships.
4	10-12	Help us maintain and deepen our humility and the connection to our true-self or higher power, as well as expand and enrich our lives through serving others.

The process of working the Steps is like constructing a building from the ground up. You would work in intervals and wouldn't move on until the previous job was complete. First, you demolish the old foundation because it is faulty, weak, and unable to support the new structure you hope to build. Next, you would dig a foundation and strengthen it with mortar and steel, and then you would build the frame. In the meantime, you would constantly provide necessary maintenance to keep what you have already built in good shape. In construction, it is essential to use the best talent and materials available. You would not build something half-heartedly. And so it is with working the Steps. The Steps must be worked to the best of our abilities if we are to gain their full benefit. (by Allen Berger, an expert on the science of recovery)

The Transformational Value of Step One

The first three Steps help us demolish the foundation on which we built a life that ultimately led to our demise. These Steps help us begin to build a healthier foundation. They give us hope that a better life is possible, that we can become our best possible self, and that we can build a stronger and more resilient foundation for a new life that works under any conditions.

Step I: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.

Transformational Value: Shatters the illusion of control, undermines our reliance on our false-self, and induces a personal crisis.

Our false-self (or ego) was adopted to resolve the anxiety stemming from our concern that we wouldn't be loved or accepted for our true-self (or higher-self). This anxiety created a powerful force that shaped our personality, drove the formation of the false-self: a self that was based on an idealized version of who we should be. Our idealized self was shaped by many different factors, but primarily by our family dynamics and by our culture. Our culture values success, having power, having control, having things, and having independence. It has been described as a culture based on "having."

It is ironic that we try to take control of our lives by adopting a false-self as a solution to our anxiety, when in reality we lost control of our lives – of our true-self (or higher-self). This is especially ironic for alcoholics and addicts who process a defiant self-reliance. We hate being told what to do by anyone or anything, and yet we lost complete control of ourselves and gave that control to the false-self (or ego).

No wonder we had so much difficulty getting clean and sober. Our false-self defines needing help as being defective and inferior. It is a spiritual truth that the more we try to control our lives, the more we lose control. This is at the heart of Step One. Bill W. described it accurately when he wrote: "Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness" (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 21).

Recovery begins when the personal myth of control is shattered. We give up trying to control our lives and stop trying to control others; we stop trying to control our drinking or drug use or whatever we are trying to control. We accept and surrender to the reality that we were out of control. This is the crack that begins the deconstruction of the false-self. Bill W. described this process as "deflation at depth." It has also been referred to as "hitting bottom."

When we surrender, our reliance on our false-self is weakened. This is critical to the foundation of our recovery, and it is what is meant in the line: "Little good can come to any alcoholic who joins A.A. unless he has first accepted his devastating weakness and all its consequences" (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 21). We need to surrender to win; and ultimately, we need to admit and accept our powerlessness to discover a better source of power - a higher power, a true-self - a power greater than the false-self.

Surrender is critical to recovery. It becomes the "firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built" (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 21). The crisis of letting go of the false-self creates a desperation that fuels the process of change. Don't run from this crisis and the pain that it engenders. It is the key that opens the door to recovery and opens our heart and our mind to a new way of life.

Remember, the 12 Steps are interdependent. This is why it is necessary to enter recovery through a personal crisis, through this crisis of surrender. This crisis creates an emotional state of hopelessness that prepares us for Step Two. It opens our hearts and minds to this powerful transformation process we call recovery. (by Allen Berger, an expert on the science of recovery)

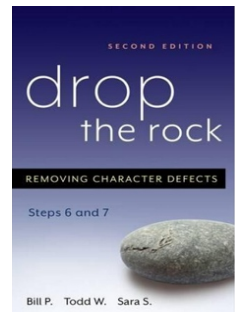
News from the Fellowship Library

Thank you to the anonymous and generous people who donate books to the Fellowship Library. The Library has proven popular with many books frequently on loan. To encourage use of the library and to guarantee anonymity, there is no formal sign out procedure for borrowing library material. Feel free to take a book or CD and return it when you are finished. More books are always needed so please consider donating any sort of recovery material to the Fellowship Library. Simply leave donated material on the library shelves, and the librarian will process your much appreciated and valued contribution to carrying the message of recovery.

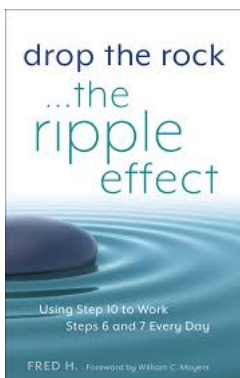
The Fellowship Library now has donated copies of:

1) Drop the Rock: Removing Character Defects with Steps Six and Seven

A practical guide to letting go of the character defects that get in the way of true and joyful recovery. Resentment. Fear. Self-Pity. Intolerance. Anger. As Bill P. explains, these are the "rocks" that can sink recovery -- or at the least, block further progress. Based on the principles behind Steps Six and Seven, Drop the Rock combines personal stories, practical advice, and powerful insights to help readers move forward in recovery.



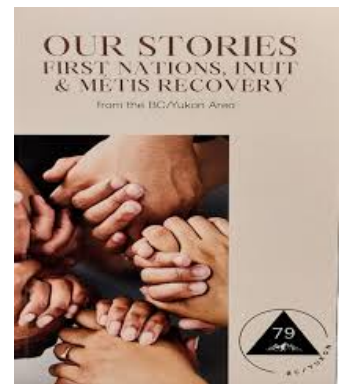
2) Drop The Rock – The Ripple Effect: Using Step Ten to Work Steps Six and Seven Every Day



In this follow-up to Drop the Rock: Removing Character Defects, Fred H. explores "the ripple effect" that can be created by using Step 10 to practice Steps 6 and 7 every day to avoid picking up "the rock"-- also known as resentment, fear, and self-pity -- again. Drawing on his years of lecturing on the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Fred H. reveals Step 10 as the natural culmination of working the previous Steps, providing a crash course on renewing your recovery program through the daily practice of Twelve Step principles. Drop the Rock -- The Ripple Effect provides multiple perspectives from people successfully working a Twelve Step Program and shows Step 10 as a key to a sober life free of fear and resentment and filled with serenity and gratitude.

3) Our Stories: First Nations, Inuit and Metis Recovery from the BC/Yukon Area (2 Copies)

The collection of stories shared in this booklet are from First Nations, Inuit, and Metis A.A. members living in the BC/Yukon area, describing how they found recovery from alcoholism through the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. The book is intended to share their life-saving message of recovery, one alcoholic to another. An ad hoc committee for Area 79 was formed in April 2023 to commence work on this book. The ad hoc committee discovered that almost 3% of A.A. members in Canada identify as First Nations, Metis, and Inuit.



January 2025 South Edmonton Fellowship Centre

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
AA = Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting CA = Cocaine Anonymous Meeting SMART = Self-Management and Recovery Training			1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 7:00 PM There is a Solution (CA) 	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 2:30 PM Overeaters Anonymous 6:30 PM Plain Language Big Book Study (AA) 	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 7:00 PM Serenity by Candlelight (AA) 	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:00 AM Fellowship Breakfast Group (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 2:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous 7:00 PM Sex Addicts Anonymous
5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:30 AM Girlfriend Hour (Women Only AA) 12:00 PM Nooner (AA) 1:30 PM Meditation (AA) 3:00 PM Mental Health and Addiction Support 6:00 PM Step Group (CA) 	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 6:30 PM Our Basic Text (AA) 8:00 PM Awakenings Men's Meeting (AA) 	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise (AA) 10:30 AM Sunshine (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 7:00 PM ISMs (AA) 	8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 7:00 PM There is a Solution (CA) 	9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 2:30 PM Overeaters Anonymous 6:30 PM Plain Language Big Book Study (AA) 	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 AM Sunrise (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 1:30 PM SMART Recovery 7:00 PM Serenity by Candlelight (AA) 	11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:00 AM Fellowship Breakfast Group (AA) 12:00 PM Fellowship Nooner (AA) 2:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous 7:00 PM Sex Addicts Anonymous
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