

# *Fellowship Recovery Compass: August 2025*



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## **Fellowship Centre News and Information**

*Our Basic Text* (Mondays at 6:30 pm) closed at the end of July. Thank you to all those who carried the message of recovery at that meeting since it opened in June 2022.

The *Spenders Anonymous* meeting scheduled to open in August at the Fellowship Centre has been postponed indefinitely.

Starting this month, the *Awakenings Men's Group* will meet at 7:30 PM (rather than 8:00 PM).

There are time slots available at the Fellowship Centre for those seeking to offer weekly addiction recovery meetings and meetings that support family and friends of those with addictions. Contact Genevieve at 780-220-7811 and consult the calendar on page 10 for available times. Some meetings are willing to change their time to accommodate other weekly meetings.



Nine weekly meetings held at the Centre are available online as well as in-person. See page 10 for Zoom Meeting IDs and Passcodes to access these meetings online. For more information on the benefits and procedures for offering meetings both in-person and online, contact Bruce at 587-858-3340.

**Thanks to the generous and thoughtful person who donated the outdoor cigarette receptacle.**

Thanks to an active and effective Fellowship Centre Social Committee, the Centre is hosting two social events in August. See page 8 for detailed information about these upcoming social events. For more information or to help the Social Committee contact Scott at 780-974-3631.



At the A.A. pre-conference Assembly in April 2025, a motion was passed for the Area to proceed with providing insurance that will cover all A.A. groups/meetings/events in Area 78. The new blanket policy covers all groups in Area 78. This includes Alberta, Northwest Territories, western Nunavut, southeast and northeast corners of BC, and Maidstone SK. To obtain a certificate of insurance email [insurance@area78.org](mailto:insurance@area78.org). Provide the following information:

- Name of group, meeting or event
- Day of the week and time of meeting
- Name and complete address of the facility

## Shifting Trends in Substance Use

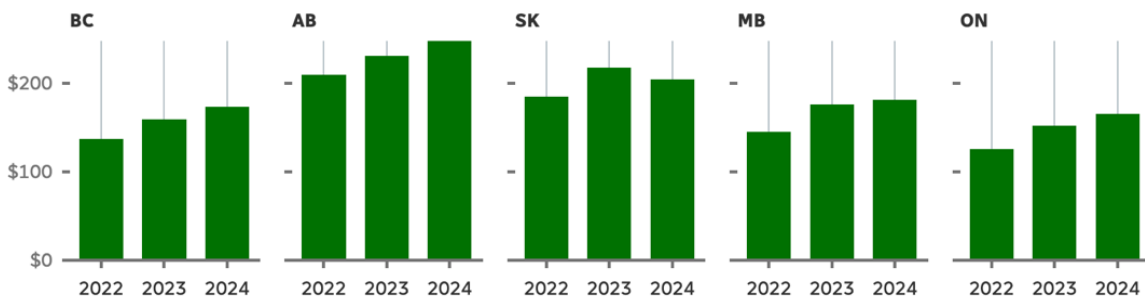
A recent article from CBC News reveals a notable transformation in substance use patterns among Albertans, indicating a significant decrease in alcohol consumption alongside a surge in cannabis sales. This shift reflects broader societal changes regarding health, wellness, and substance use.

In 2022, the average alcohol consumption in Alberta was reported at 7.6 liters of pure alcohol per person, a substantial decrease from 9.7 liters in 2008. This decline positions Alberta alongside Saskatchewan as the province with the largest reduction in alcohol consumption in Canada. To put this in perspective, the decrease equates to approximately 107 fewer beers consumed per person annually. This trend raises questions about the factors contributing to such a significant shift in drinking habits.

Interestingly, while alcohol consumption has decreased, cannabis sales have experienced a remarkable increase. Alberta stands out as a leader in cannabis sales, with an average expenditure of \$248 per person in 2022, surpassing Saskatchewan's \$205 and Quebec's \$96. This burgeoning cannabis market can be attributed to several factors, including the high density of cannabis retail outlets across the province. At one point, Alberta boasted more cannabis stores than all other provinces combined, indicating a robust market presence and accessibility for consumers.

### Value of cannabis sales per capita: 2022 to 2024

Dollar value of sales per person of legal age to buy, use, possess, and grow recreational cannabis



Several societal factors appear to be influencing the decline in alcohol consumption. Firstly, the rising cost of alcohol may deter individuals from purchasing it as frequently. Economic considerations often play a significant role in consumer behavior, and as the price of alcohol rises, many individuals may seek more cost-effective alternatives, such as cannabis or non-alcoholic beverages.

Moreover, changing social norms surrounding alcohol consumption are also evident. Increasing awareness of the health implications associated with excessive drinking has led many individuals to reevaluate their drinking habits. There is a growing movement towards healthier lifestyles, and as more individuals prioritize their health and well-being, the appeal of alcohol diminishes in favor of alternatives that are perceived as healthier or more socially acceptable.

The availability and popularity of non-alcoholic beverages have further contributed to this trend. As consumers become more health-conscious, the demand for non-alcoholic options has surged, providing alternatives that allow individuals to enjoy social settings without the effects of alcohol. This shift reflects a broader cultural change, where the stigma associated with not drinking alcohol is diminishing, and individuals feel more empowered to choose non-alcoholic options.

Unfortunately, cannabis can be addictive for some people, and its long-term use may lead to cannabis use disorder. This condition can affect personal relationships, work, and daily functioning. Smoking cannabis may lead to respiratory problems, similar to those caused by smoking tobacco, although some argue that vaporizing or consuming edibles may mitigate these risks. More research is needed to fully understand the long-term effects of cannabis use, especially with the increasing trend of legalization and recreational use.

## Recovery Humor: We are Not a Glum Lot

- Before recovery I ran the world. Now, I just manage my sock drawer -- and even that's with a sponsor.
- They say my ego isn't my amigo. I said, 'Well then, he better move out -- this is a one-bedroom recovery.'
- I didn't hit rock bottom. I furnished it -- and invited guests.
- I did a fearless and searching moral inventory. Turns out I'm not a terrible person -- I'm just a terrible driver, friend, employee, neighbor, and ex.
- The 13th step is Step 1 plus Step 12. My life is unmanageable, and I'd like to share it with you.
- You know you're an addict when you misplace things like ... a decade.
- I told my therapist I'm addicted to social media. She unfollowed me.
- I came for the coffee and stayed for the miracles. Now I bring the donuts, so God owes me.



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An old ex-druggie is visiting his doctor. After a life of drinking and drugging, it's taken a toll on his health.

"Well, Mr. Barton, you made it to 85, but I'm afraid I have bad news."

"Tell it to me straight doc. I survived the booze and the cocaine; I can take it."

"Your pancreas and kidneys are shot. Worse, you've got liver cancer. And the tests show early onset Alzheimer's."

"Geez, doc... Alzheimer's — that's the one that affects your memory, right?"

"I'm afraid so."

Well, at least I don't have cancer."



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Jim C. is told by his sponsor that he needs to participate more in service work. So, he applies for the position of treasurer. They hold a group conscience and ask him "What is nine multiplied by four?" He thinks quickly and says "Thirty-three." After the interview, he realizes his mistake. He was surprised when they informed him that he got the job, despite there being four other candidates.

"But I got the wrong answer," he protests.

"Yeah, we know. But you were closest."



Johnny B. is struggling with recovery and, as luck would have it, he is pulled over by a policeman the one time he slips up.

"Sir, I smell alcohol on your breath. Have you been drinking today?"

"Well, officer, you'd be drinking too if you'd just killed your wife."

"WHAT!? Are you confessing to murder?"

"The handgun is hidden under the seat. In the glove box, I stashed the heroin and a syringe I used to knock her out. Her body, bless her soul, is wrapped in a sheet in the trunk of the car."

The officer, stunned, handcuffs Johnny B. and calls for his sergeant. The sergeant arrives, takes the car keys and opens the trunk.

"There's no body in here," he says to the patrolman. "I thought you said there was a homicide?"

The sergeant then looks in the glove box.

"There isn't any heroin and there's no syringe," he says. He then searches under the seat. "And no gun either."

The sergeant turns to Johnny B. for an explanation.

"Gee, I bet he said I was drinking too."

## The Transformational Value of Steps Eight

The work we have done in Steps 1-7 has set us firmly on the road to self-acceptance and has broken the trance induced by our culture and our false-self. We see that our false-self was the problem, not the solution. We have found a power greater than our false-self that has helped us achieve a new self-understanding. Steps 1-7 gave us a better relationship with ourselves. Now we shift our focus to developing better relationships with others.

We cannot have healthy relationships without a persistent effort to keep our side of the street clean. We are going to need to face our mistakes and keep a solid alliance with ourselves as we sail into uncharted waters. There are many dangerous currents (such as false-pride) and riptides (such as self-hate) that lie ahead, and if we don't support ourselves on this journey we will end up sinking, drowning, or relapsing. Our efforts in working Steps 8, 9 and 10 provide tangible evidence of our serenity and the depth of our commitment to this new way of life.

**Step 8:** Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

**Transformational Value:** Being accountable for our actions increases our trustworthiness and self-esteem.

In Step 8 we are being asked to break a basic rule of the false-self, which once demanded that we had to be perfect, that we had to be superhuman to be OK. By listing everyone we have harmed, we are facing our faults. The list we create needs to be inclusive, rather than selective or exclusive. This is important because we can't trust our false-pride. It will rationalize some of our inappropriate behaviours as justified or conclude that we shouldn't include a certain person on our list for one reason or another. After all, weren't we the injured party? Weren't we the ones who were betrayed or hurt? But we must resist the part of us that wants to make wrongs seem right. We don't want to deprive ourselves and others of this opportunity to find true peace of mind. Our list must be based on reality, on what we have done to others that harm them, regardless of what they have done to us.

In Step 8 we are moving toward forgiving ourselves and others. We are moving to a place beyond right and wrong, where we take responsibility for ourselves and our actions. We have made our false-pride more important than integrity. We have made winning more important than connecting, and we have made being right more important than being real. Our priorities are out of sync with our best-self. Fortunately, as we seek forgiveness will become more forgiving.

We have harmed people in many ways with our insatiable need for power and control. Some of us have been physically and verbally abusive or neglectful. We have unmercifully manipulated family and friends to bend to our desires. We were relentless in demanding our way. We may have embezzled money to support our addiction or used money that our family needed. We betrayed the trust of everyone close to us and took advantage of relationships to cover our tracks. We controlled others with our emotional tirades, our anxiety, or our depression. We wrestled with others to get what we thought we needed without caring about what we were doing to them. Our actions or attitudes may have hurt people in more than one way. List them all.

To become willing to make amends to those we have harmed, we remind ourselves that we are aiming for the best possible relationships with our fellows. This requires that we become trustworthy, something we haven't been. If we aren't willing to own up to our mistakes or take responsibility when we do something wrong, we will never be trustworthy. Instead of taking responsibility, we tried to make our victims believe that it was their fault that we abuse them or lied to them. We covered up our mistakes with justification, rationalization, and excuses.

If you are thorough in making the list and rigorously honest about what you did, then the best in you is in charge. It's a paradox that facing the worst in us can bring out the best in us. Step 8 prepares us for the next Step toward emotional recovery and healthy human relations. Now we need to take thoughtful action and, when appropriate, make amends to those we have hurt. This is what Step 9 is all about. (Allen Berger, expert on the science of recovery).

## Depression and Mindfulness

Depression is a complex illness. It can be caused by genetics, upbringing, and negative life events, but each case is unique. However, despite their differences, people diagnosed with depression seem to think in similar ways. Their thought patterns are unhelpful and destructive, keeping them locked in a cycle of misery. Depressed people tend to have negative thoughts about themselves about the world and the future. Treatment of depression often includes replacing these negative thoughts with more accurate and positive thoughts.

When you're depressed, the world is a bleak place. You might find that you focus on the suffering you see around you or the upsetting stories you hear on the news. Mindfulness exercises on gratitude, acceptance and self-compassion affirm that there is still hope and kindness, even when everything feels unbearable. You can inspire moments of peace and even joy, however, fleeting.

### Mindfulness Exercise: Gratitude

Start by reflecting on the positive things in your life. Think small. Give thanks for the clean water in your glass, the shoes on your feet and so on. Next reflect on things that are not necessarily good but that may offer you opportunities for growth. For example, you may have been facing problems at work, but your difficulties might encourage you to search for a new, more satisfying position. You may be encouraged to know that research shows gratitude exercises can make a big difference. Gratitude reduces feelings of depression, boosts overall well-being, and improve sleep quality. You will feel the benefits within a couple of sessions.

### Mindfulness, Acceptance and Releasing Guilt

If you've ever had depression, you're probably all too familiar with the following phrases:

“What have you got to be depressed about?”

“Count your blessings!”

“There are people out there with real problems. Get over yourself.”

This kind of *advice* doesn't help. It worsens the situation, because it makes you feel guilty for feeling depressed in the first place. Depression can also make you feel guilty because it encourages you to think about the past. You quickly find yourself getting mad at your past-self. Mindfulness teaches you to accept your depression for what it is. Having depression doesn't make you a bad or an ungrateful person. It means you are struggling with a mental health problem that effects millions of people. Through mindfulness, you can gain insight into your thought processes and come to acknowledge that they have no bearing on your worth as a person.

### Mindful Exercise: Self-Compassion

This is a quick simple practice for those times you are tempted to judge yourself harshly.

1. When you catch yourself thinking self-critical thoughts, make a conscious decision to pause.
2. Decide that you are going to take a few moments to be mindful.
3. Gently place your hands over your heart.
4. Slowly take a few breaths. Watch your breathing. If your mind continues to chatter away, just watch it. Avoid arguing with it.
5. Let yourself feel emotional pain. Acknowledge that you are suffering.

When you are in the depths of depression, trying to do this exercise whenever you judge yourself isn't realistic because depressed people put themselves down with alarming frequency. Just try your best. Aim to do it a few times per day.

### Mindfulness Exercise: “I’m having the thought that...”

The next time you notice a self-deprecating thought, add “I’m having the thought that...” in front of it. For instance, if you catch yourself thinking, “I’m so lazy, I’ll never get anything done,” tell yourself “I’m having the thought that I’m so lazy and I’ll never get anything done.” The thought may or may not disappear, but you’ll have achieved your objective -- it won’t feel quite so personal. Remember, don’t try to argue with the thought. Your mission is to notice, reframe and sit with it.

(Adapted from *Cognitive behavioural Therapy and Mindfulness* by Olivia Telford, 2021)

## **The Effectiveness of SMART Recovery: Sundays at the Centre at 1:30 PM**

SMART Recovery, which stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training, is a global initiative designed to help people overcome addiction through mutual support. Unlike traditional recovery programs that often focus on abstinence and spiritual concepts, SMART Recovery takes a more scientific approach, emphasizing self-empowerment and practical techniques. Recent studies have started to reveal how effective SMART Recovery can be for individuals dealing with substance use disorders (SUDs).

One of the key strengths of SMART Recovery is its reliance on evidence-based methods. The program incorporates strategies from cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), motivational interviewing, and rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT). These approaches aim to help individuals understand and change their thoughts and behaviors related to addiction. Numerous studies have shown that CBT is effective in reducing substance use and supporting long-term recovery. For instance, a comprehensive review published in the Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment found that CBT not only helps decrease substance use but also boosts individuals' coping skills, which aligns closely with SMART Recovery's core principles.

Research focused specifically on SMART Recovery has produced promising results. A notable study looked at how the program affects substance use and overall well-being. The findings revealed that participants who engaged in SMART Recovery experienced significant reductions in substance use and improvements in their mental health, social connections, and job situations. These outcomes highlight the program's ability to promote not just sobriety but also a more satisfying and stable life.

Another interesting study published in the Substance Use and Misuse journal examined the long-term effects of participating in SMART Recovery. This research indicated that participants reported higher levels of self-confidence and greater satisfaction with their recovery experience compared to those involved in traditional 12-Step programs. The focus on self-management and personal responsibility within SMART Recovery seems to resonate well with individuals seeking control over their recovery journey.

Additionally, the flexibility of SMART Recovery makes it appealing to many people. The program offers various resources like online meetings, workshops, and a wealth of supportive literature that participants can access whenever they need. This adaptability allows individuals to engage with the program at their own pace, which can enhance their commitment to recovery.

The increasing amount of research on SMART Recovery underscores its effectiveness as a strong alternative to traditional addiction recovery programs. By incorporating evidence-based practices and promoting self-empowerment, SMART Recovery provides individuals with the tools they need to manage the challenges of addiction. As more studies continue to affirm its approach, SMART Recovery is proving to be a valuable option for those looking to reclaim their lives from substance use disorders. The program's emphasis on personal growth, combined with its scientific foundation, positions it as a significant contender in the world of addiction recovery.





## Anonymity in 12-Step Recovery Programs

Anonymity is a cornerstone of 12-Step recovery programs, providing a safe haven for individuals seeking to overcome addiction. The principle of anonymity allows individuals to share their experiences without fear of judgment or repercussions, fostering an environment of trust, openness, and support.

The founders of 12-Step recovery recognized the need for a supportive environment where individuals could discuss their struggles without the fear of stigma or discrimination. Anonymity serves as a protective barrier, allowing individuals to openly share their experiences and feelings without worrying about potential consequences in their personal or professional lives.

The principle of anonymity is encapsulated in the famous phrase, “Who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.” This statement underscores the importance of confidentiality and mutual respect among members. By creating a space where individuals can share their stories without the fear of exposure, 12-Step programs encourage honesty and vulnerability, which are essential for healing and recovery. The act of sharing personal experiences can be cathartic and allows individuals to recognize that they are not alone in their struggles.

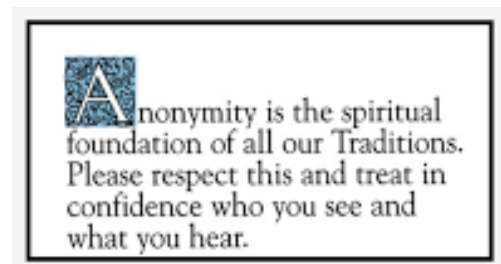
Moreover, anonymity promotes equality among members. In a 12-Step meeting, titles, professions, and social statuses are stripped away, allowing individuals to connect on a human level. This leveling effect fosters a sense of belonging and community, reducing feelings of isolation that often accompany addiction. Members are encouraged to focus on their shared struggle rather than their differences, helping to build a supportive network that is essential for recovery. Anonymity not only protects individuals but also nurtures a collective identity that is vital for group cohesion.

The emphasis on anonymity can be traced back to the early days of A.A. The founders, Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, recognized that many individuals were hesitant to seek help due to the societal stigma associated with alcoholism. They believed that anonymity would help alleviate these concerns, allowing more people to access the support they needed. Over time, this principle has been adopted by various 12-Step programs, reinforcing the idea that recovery is a communal journey rather than an individual battle.

While anonymity is primarily concerned with the individual’s right to privacy, it also has broader implications for the recovery community. It encourages members to maintain a level of humility and reduces the likelihood of ego-driven behavior. By remaining anonymous, individuals are reminded that recovery is not about personal glory but about helping others and giving back to the community. This collective responsibility is vital for sustaining recovery and fostering a culture of mutual support.

However, the concept of anonymity is not without its challenges. In the digital age, where social media plays a significant role in communication, the line between anonymity and public identity can blur. Some individuals may feel compelled to share their recovery journey online, leading to debates about the appropriateness of such actions within the context of 12-Step principles. While sharing one’s story can inspire others, it is essential to consider the potential impact on personal anonymity and the collective identity of the recovery community.

In conclusion, anonymity is a fundamental principle of 12-Step recovery programs, providing individuals with a safe and supportive environment to share their experiences and challenges. By fostering a sense of trust, equality, and community, anonymity allows members to focus on their recovery while protecting their privacy. As society continues to evolve, it is crucial to uphold the value of anonymity in recovery, ensuring that individuals can seek help without fear of judgment or stigma. Ultimately, the essence of 12-Step programs lies in the collective journey towards healing, and anonymity remains a vital aspect of that journey.



# **Fellowship Centre August Social Events**

**The Social Committee hosts events to foster connection and shared enjoyment among those in recovery and their friends and family.**

## **Friday Games Night on August 8<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 PM**

Expect a friendly and welcoming environment where people bond over games and share snacks and refreshments. It's a great opportunity to meet new friends and enjoy clean and sober fun. Bring your favorite games.



## **Friday Karaoke Night on August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8:30 PM**

This event will have a lively vibe, where attendees sing, cheer each other on, enjoy a range of musical genres and share snacks and refreshments. Song requests keep things exciting as you showcase your clean and sober singing.



**Purchase a ticket for \$5 to cover the cost of snacks and refreshments. Family and friends are most welcome.**

**Scott 780-974-3631 or Kim 780-299-8045 for information**

**TICKETS SOLD AT MOST MEETINGS**





## **Common Addiction Thought Inaccuracies**

### **All-or-Nothing Thinking**

*Thought:* Either I am perfect or I'm a failure. Either I'm good or I am bad. Either I'm wonderful or I'm completely terrible.

*Truth:* People are naturally imperfect, which is why thinking these thoughts sets you up for failure. Those with this mindset often go on a binge when they make the tiniest mistake. Realize that success comes in degrees and that you can always pull back from the edge, even if (and especially when) you've stepped over the line.

### **Need for Distraction or Comfort**

*Thought:* If I have a drink or a hit, I'll feel better.

*Truth:* Addictive behavior only masks trouble and is a poor substitute for dealing with life directly. Not only does it distract you from what you should be focusing on, it destroys your mental and physical health, relationships, career, and financial status.

### **Need for Instant Gratification**

*Thought:* I must change the way I feel right now. I can't wait another second.

*Truth:* Drinking, drugging or acting out may be a short-term solution to feeling bad, but the bad feelings it causes are much worse in the long run. Waiting out an urge or craving is the best way to weaken the power of future cravings and urges.

### **Overgeneralizing**

*Thought:* I really tied one on last night. I'll never be able to control my addiction.

*Truth:* This is a broad conclusion based on a single incident. One event doesn't predict all future outcomes.

### **Catastrophizing**

*Thought:* I got drunk/high/gambled last night and yelled at my kids. Now they'll hate me forever.

*Truth:* You're focusing on the worst-case scenario. The chances of this happening are less than zero, so don't automatically assume the worst.

### **Rationalizing**

*Thought:* I use drugs/booze/shopping because I was an abused child.

*Truth:* Your background may have something to do with the reason you developed an addiction, but it is no excuse for keeping the addiction in play.

### **Personal Ineffectiveness**

*Thought:* I know I should give up drinking/drugging/overeating. I just can't make myself do it.

*Truth:* You can do more than you think you can. Up your program and congratulate yourself for each tiny success.

### **Confusing Your Behavior with Your Worth**

*Thought:* I use drugs/booze because I'm a worthless scum.

*Truth:* Your actions and your worth as a human being are two different things. You are not what you do. However, you can change your behavior and your life for the better.

(adapter from *Healing the Addicted Brain* by H. C. Urschel, 2009)

# South Edmonton Fellowship Centre

<https://fellowship-centre.org> 9122 34A Avenue NW, Edmonton 780-220-7811

## WEEKLY IN-PERSON MEETINGS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	
10:30 AM Alcoholics Anonymous (Women)		10:30 AM Alcoholics Anonymous				10:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous
12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous
1:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous					1:30 PM SMART Recovery	2:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous
3:00 PM Mental Health and Addiction				2:30 PM Overeaters Anonymous		
6:00 PM Cocaine Anonymous		7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 PM Cocaine Anonymous	6:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 PM Sex Addicts Anonymous
	7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Men)					

## WEEKLY ONLINE MEETINGS

<b>SUNDAY 1:30 PM</b>	<b>Sunday Afternoon Meditation</b> is a 60-minute online meeting focused on guided meditation and meditation training. <b>ZOOM MEETING ID 862 5658 4606 PASSCODE 899182</b>
<b>SUNDAY 3:00 PM</b>	<b>Mental Health Support for Addiction</b> is a 60-minute online meeting facilitated by a Canadian Certified Counsellor. <b>ZOOM MEETING ID 895 8810 8041 PASSCODE 577206</b>
<b>WEEKDAYS 7:00 AM</b>	<b>Sunrise Weekdays Group</b> offers online A.A. meetings Monday through Friday. Start your workday with the program. <b>ZOOM MEETING ID 899 6946 5894 PASSCODE 912107</b>
<b>THURSDAY 6:30 PM</b>	<b>Plain Language Big Book Study</b> is a 60-minute online meeting that helps make the book <u>Alcoholics Anonymous</u> (first published in 1939) more easily understood and accessible to all those seeking 12-Step addiction recovery. <b>ZOOM MEETING ID 841 7534 0136 PASSCODE 881616</b>
<b>FRIDAY 1:30 PM</b>	<b>Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART Recovery)</b> is a 60-minute online meeting based on psychological approaches for those seeking an alternative to 12-Step addiction recovery support. <b>ZOOM MEETING ID 815 5962 9907 PASSCODE 357546</b>