

Comparing Family Support Groups

You can seek support for yourself even while someone else is deciding about treatment. Compare the approach and practical fit of a meeting, then give yourself room to decide whether it helps.

Four Places to Start [1] [2] [3] [4]

Organization	Who it is for / approach	Where to check
Al-Anon	People affected by someone else's drinking; a mutual-support fellowship.	al-anon.org/newcomers/
Nar-Anon	People affected by someone else's addiction; a 12-step program. Narateen is for teens.	nar-anon.org/what-is-nar-anon/
SMART Recovery Family & Friends	Family and friends seeking support and practical tools while a loved one faces addiction.	smartrecovery.org/family
Families Anonymous	Relatives and friends concerned about drug use or related behavioral problems; a 12-step fellowship.	familiesanonymous.org

Ask Before the First Meeting

- Is this meeting for family/friends, and does it fit my age and situation?
- Is it online or in person? What is the current time, time zone and access process?
- Can a newcomer listen first? How is discussion handled?
- What approach does the group use, including any spiritual language?
- What are the privacy expectations? Are contributions optional or materials sold separately?

What to Notice Afterward

Did you feel heard and respected? Did the approach make sense to you? Was there something practical you want to try? One meeting does not have to determine your long-term choice. You can ask about a different group or format.

These organizations offer peer or mutual support; the descriptions are not ratings or proof that one approach works best for everyone. A support meeting does not provide emergency care or replace a clinician when medical or mental health treatment is needed. [1] [2] [3] [4]

Keep notes private. Write or type short notes. Use another copy if you need more room. Save and reopen the PDF to check your answers.

Compare Your Experience

Meeting and access details

Organization, meeting name, format, time zone and contact.

What fit and what did not

Approach, welcome, privacy questions and something useful you heard.

Your next support step

Try again, contact another group or ask a professional about your own needs.

Sources and Further Reading

- [1] [Al-Anon Family Groups: Newcomers](http://al-anon.org) (al-anon.org)
- [2] [Nar-Anon: What Is Nar-Anon?](http://nar-anon.org) (nar-anon.org)
- [3] [SMART Recovery Family & Friends](http://smartrecovery.org) (smartrecovery.org)
- [4] [Families Anonymous](http://familiesanonymous.org) (familiesanonymous.org)