

(Continued from other side)

each participant assembles a meaningful mosaic that constitutes the individual's personal recovery program. The teaching is practically all by example. You will hear little lecturing and probably a great deal of laughing.

The LifeRing approach is thoroughly positive. LifeRing works by giving encouragement and support to your sober qualities and efforts. Your sober presence at the meeting entitles you to respect. Your desire to be clean and sober brought you there. Your best thinking made you stop drinking/drugging. Your efforts to stay clean and sober not only validate you as a person, they are a valuable resource for the group. From Day One, you are not only a pupil but a teacher. You are reinventing yourself as a person who has a life without drinking or using, and in that process you are supporting others in doing the same. What you are doing is immensely worthwhile and important, not only for yourself, but for the group and for the whole community.

At the end of the typical LifeRing meeting, members will give each other a round of applause for staying clean and sober. Just as the responsibility and the work are yours, the credit is yours also. The LifeRing group process helps you feel good about yourself as a clean and sober person, to rebuild your self-esteem, and to discover and bring out your sober potentialities.

Welcome to Day One of your clean and sober life!



About LifeRing

LifeRing is a self-help recovery network for individuals who seek group support to achieve abstinence from alcohol and other addictive drugs, or who are in relationships where chemical dependency is a problem.

LifeRing is a poly-abstinence group that welcomes everyone without distinction based on "drug of choice."

LifeRing includes people of all religious faiths and none. Meetings are free of religious observances.

LifeRing supports participants in working out their own personal recovery programs, and requires no particular steps other than abstinence from alcohol and other addictive drugs.

LifeRing meetings are autonomous except in matters affecting other meetings. A basket may be passed for voluntary donations but there is no charge for participation.

LifeRing is a free-standing, self-supporting organization and is not affiliated with any other.

LifeRing meetings are conducted by peer volunteers called convenors.

For more information about the LifeRing approach, organization, and philosophy, and to connect with LifeRing participants, visit www.lifering.org. You can get LifeRing books and other literature online at www.lifering.com.

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If This Is Day One



What to expect
at a LifeRing
support group

You can find a LifeRing meeting at:

LifeRing Service Center
Oakland CA
1-800-811-4142
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If This Is Day One

If this is Day One for you -- or if Day One is in your near future -- you may want to know what to expect if you choose to get clean and sober the LifeRing way.

The LifeRing approach works mainly by bringing people together. Although some people can stop drinking and drugging in isolation, many people find it more interesting, more fun, and more effective to do it together with others in self-help groups. In face-to-face meetings and in online chats and email lists, you will find other people who used to drink and/or use drugs, and have now stopped. You may be surprised how perfectly ordinary most of the people you meet appear, and how diverse a group of people is bound together by this common denominator.

The main purpose of our meetings is to reinforce the desire to get clean and sober that lives within each of us. You will observe this desire in the others, and they will recognize it in you. You will probably hear participants talk about the challenges to their sobriety that they faced during the past week. If you listen, you may find useful information that helps you face similar challenges. You may hear people talk about a great variety of topics and how they re-

late to staying clean and sober. Possibly you may hear something that stimulates your own thinking. You may have experiences and ideas of your own to contribute. Please share them; people often learn more from what they say than from what they hear. The session is successful if at the end your resolve to stay clean and sober feels a little stronger and better armed than it was when you came in.

People in the group will respect your privacy and confidentiality. Please respect theirs. It is up to you what you share in meetings and to whom you disclose the fact of your participation. Whatever you heard and whom you saw in a meeting stays in the meeting.

People in LifeRing groups tend to have a matter-of-fact attitude about substance addiction. Chemical dependency is not a sin that you have to confess and atone for. Science does not yet have all the answers about what causes addiction, but the most likely reason why most people became hooked is that they drank or drugged too much. Heredity often has something to do with it, but it can also happen to people with no family history of substance use. It happens to people with all kinds of personalities, including people who are warm and caring, brilliant and generous. It does no good to punish or psychoanalyze yourself. LifeRing recovery meetings exist not to judge you or shame you or guilt you for your drugged/drunken past, but to support you in building your sober present and future. The point is to make a fresh start and learn how to live sober.

Although you may count your sober time as a rebirth and celebrate sober baby birthdays, you are an adult and need to understand some adult truths. The tooth fairy will not come in the night and take your problems away. Only you can get you sober. The group cannot get you sober. Its purpose is to support

you in getting *yourself* sober. Treatment professionals and amateur therapists can be very helpful, but they cannot get you sober. The most they can do is point you to tools, ask you good questions, and give you encouragement to get yourself sober. The bottom line is that your recovery is always your responsibility and your work, and yours alone.

The LifeRing approach represents a reform movement in recovery and a return to fundamentals. You will be asked to take only one step: don't drink or use, no matter what. Your religious beliefs or disbeliefs will not be disturbed; they have no more to do with learning to live sober than with learning to ride a bicycle. You will not be told to submit your sobriety to the control of another member, nor to take charge of any member's recovery program other than your own. You will be encouraged to make sobriety your priority in life, and to make any changes that may be necessary toward that end.

LifeRing is uncompromising about the need for abstinence, but very flexible about how you get there and stay there. Every program has some good ideas; none has a magic formula. The secret is for you to become active in the cause of your recovery, choosing and using what works for you. You are the author and the judge of your own recovery.

You will find in the average LifeRing meeting little in the way of abstract discussion, and much in the way of narrating and analyzing specific events that people were involved in each week. Gradually, bit by bit,

