

What are “open” and “closed” meetings?

“Closed” NA meetings are only for addicts or those who think they might have a drug problem. Closed meetings provide an atmosphere in which addicts can feel more certain that those attending will be able to identify with them. Newcomers may feel more comfortable at a closed meeting for the same reason. At the beginning of a closed meeting, the leader or chairperson often reads a statement explaining why the meeting is closed and offering to direct nonaddicts who may be attending to an open meeting.

“Open” NA meetings are just that open to anyone who wants to attend. Some groups have open meetings once a month to allow nonaddict friends and relatives of NA members to celebrate recovery anniversaries with them. Groups that have open meetings may structure their format in such a way that opportunities for participation by nonaddicts are limited only to short birthday or anniversary presentations. Such a format allows the meeting to retain its focus on recovery shared one addict to another. It should be made clear during the meeting that NA groups do not accept monetary contributions from nonaddicts.

Some groups use carefully planned open meetings, particularly open speaker meetings, as an opportunity to let members of the community-at-large see for themselves what Narcotics Anonymous is all about and ask questions. At such public meetings, a statement regarding our tradition of anonymity is often read, asking visitors not to use full-face photographs, last names, or personal details when they describe the meeting to others. For more information on public meetings, see *Public Relations Handbook*, available through your group service representative or by writing the World Service Office