

An Al-Anon Group for Parents Meets in Bedford

Shared by an Anonymous Member of the Group

It's 7:15 on a Tuesday evening, and I am walking into First Parish on Bedford Common to attend the "Bedford Parents Al-Anon Group". I like to get there a little early for the 7:30 meeting so I have time to talk with other early arrivals. This meeting is the one place where I can take a deep breath, be honest with myself, and others, listen to their stories, and share my own experiences and feelings of living with the drug addiction and or alcoholism of a loved one.

Opioid addiction is finally being talked about in the media, by the politicians, by health professionals, and by many of those affected by it. It was not that way 18 years ago when my son came home from college addicted to heroin. I was beyond shocked. Feeling totally alone and alienated from family, friends and neighbors, I dragged myself to a parents Al-Anon meeting.

Al-Anon is about me. Through the 12 steps, slogans, literature, and other members, I am learning how to navigate the insanity that is addiction. Learning about my part in this family illness, and how to manage a good life for myself, is the goal. Faced with the shame, fear, guilt, anger, worry, despair, disappointment and other overwhelming emotions, I found a home and a place to heal.

Al-Anon members do not give advice. We try to keep the focus on ourselves when we speak, though it can be challenging not to tell our loved ones story instead of our own. They are so intertwined. In these rooms I learn about what addiction really is. I learn about denial, enabling, caretaking, and attempts at controlling this insidious disease.

By reaching out to other members, attending meetings, reading the literature, and trying to apply the principles of the program to my life, I learn acceptance, forgiveness, and gratitude on so many levels.

If you think addiction and alcoholism can't happen to your family, think again. It is everywhere in our society. Before you jump to any judgment or conclusions about who or what these folks are, remember that they are the children, fathers, mothers and family of your friends and neighbors. They are loved by their families just as much as any healthy person, but they can be extremely difficult to live with. Even in sobriety the challenges can be daunting.

I found an Al-Anon parents group that helps me to change my attitude, my behavior, my thinking, and my actions. I am on a path to my own recovery, no matter what my son's path might be.

Maybe I will see you some Tuesday night at 7:30 at First Parish in room 204. You will be greeted and welcomed, and meet some of the kindest, wisest, and most understanding people.

Editor's Note: A new coalition of Chiefs of Police in Bedford and nearby communities has secured a grant for a Mental Health and Jail Diversion program. [Click here to read about it.](#)