

Early AA Recovery Rates

Of alcoholics who came to A.A. (from 1935 to 1955) and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way, 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement. (Big Book, page xx.)

Dr. G. Kirby Collier, psychiatrist: "I have felt that A.A. is a group unto themselves and their best results can be had under their own guidance, as a result of their philosophy. Any therapeutic or philosophic procedure which can prove a recovery rate of 50% to 60% must merit our consideration." (Big Book, page 569.)

Records in Cleveland show that 93 percent of those who came to us (in the early days) never had a drink again. (Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, page 261.)

It is probably fair to say that 3 out of 4 who came during that period, and who have since remained with the groups, have recovered from their alcoholism. (Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Vol. 6, No. 2. A talk given by Bill Wilson, September 1945.)

About two thousand recoveries now take place each month. Of those alcoholics who wish to get well and are emotionally capable of trying our method, 50 percent recover immediately, 25 percent after a few backslides. The remainder are improved if they continue active in A.A. Of the total who approach us, it is probable that only 25 per cent become A.A. members on the first contact. A list of seventy-five of our early failures today discloses that 70 returned to A.A. after one to ten years. We did not bring them back; they came of their own accord. (N.Y. State Journal of Medicine Vol. 50. A talk given by Bill Wilson, July 1950.)

This is from the August 1946 AA Grapevine: "MINNEAPOLIS RECORD INDICATED THAT 75% ARE SUCCESSFUL IN A.A." The Minneapolis Group, in March 1943, inaugurated a system for keeping a record of the sobriety of members from three months on up. As a result, the following exact percentages have been arrived at:

For the Year 1945 -

5 year members - 100% successful, 0% slipped
4 year members - 100% successful, 0% slipped
3 year members - 100% successful, 0% slipped
2 year members - 89% successful, 11% slipped
18 month members - 90% successful, 10% slipped
1 year members - 80% successful, 20% slipped
9 month members - 82% successful, 18% slipped
6 month members - 70% successful, 30% slipped
3 month members - 48% successful, 52% slipped

(Of those who slipped in 1945, only 16½ % have worked back to any degree of sobriety.)

Overall Percentages -

1943 - 78% successful, 22% slipped
1944 - 83% successful, 17% slipped
1945 - 77% successful, 23% slipped

We now have an active membership of one hundred and thirteen alcoholics, eighty-three of whom have not had a drink since their first A. A. meeting. Five of these have been dry from two to four years, twenty-seven dry from one to two years, forty-one dry from six to twelve months and twenty-six dry three to six months. (From a letter dated 9/29/41 from Drs. A. Weise Hammer and C. Dudley Saul, who were Medical Directors at Philadelphia General Hospital. Philadelphia's first AA meeting was on 2/28/40.)