

Welcome to LifeRing!

This brochure contains a summary of basic information about LifeRing.

LifeRing is a network of people who support one another in living free of alcohol and other non-medically indicated addictive drugs.

LifeRing meetings, in person and online, are friendly, confidential, non-judgmental gatherings of peers. The atmosphere is relaxed, practical, and positive.

LifeRing members believe that complete abstinence from alcohol and other non-medically indicated drugs is the necessary foundation for us to lead a better life. The desire to stop drinking/using is the only requirement for membership in LifeRing.

In LifeRing meetings, your religious and spiritual beliefs, or lack of them, remain a private matter. There is no religious or anti-religious content in the meeting process.

LifeRing does not require participants to follow any particular steps or guidelines, other than staying clean and sober. Each participant builds a personal recovery program tailored to their individual needs. Our meeting format and literature provide a structure for this project.

More details about LifeRing are inside this brochure. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them at the LifeRing meeting.

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To find out more about LifeRing:

Browse to **www.unhooked.com**, the Internet voice of LifeRing Secular Recovery. Join LifeRing **email lists** and **chats**.

Read ***Recovery By Choice: Living and Enjoying Life Free of Alcohol and Drugs, A Workbook***. A 300-p. self-help workbook that helps you build your personal recovery program.

Read ***How Was Your Week?*** A handbook for LifeRing meeting facilitators and others wanting an in-depth look at the LifeRing approach.

Read ***Presenting LifeRing Secular Recovery (3rd ed)***. *Articles about LifeRing written for treatment professionals, in magazine format.*

Read ***Keepers: Voices of Secular Recovery***, a paperback with motivational anecdotes, stories and poems.

Read ***The LifeRing Bylaws***. How LifeRing is organized and self-governed.

Buy these books at LifeRing meetings or online from **www.lifering.com**, the website of LifeRing Press.

LifeRing will be happy to send a speaker or speakers to address your audience.

Contact LifeRing:

LifeRing Service Center
1440 Broadway #312
Oakland CA 94612-2023
Tel 1 800 811 4142
Fax 510-763-1513
service@lifering.org
www.unhooked.com

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You can find a LifeRing meeting at:



Welcome to LifeRing

LifeRing
in a Nutshell

LifeRing Service Center
Oakland, CA
www.unhooked.com
1-800-811-4142

LifeRing is a network of support groups for people who want to live free of alcohol and other “drugs.”

The Usual Meeting Format

At most LifeRing meetings, people sit in a circle. The meeting is small enough so that everyone can participate. After a short opening statement, the meeting facilitator (we call them “convenors”) asks “How Was Your Week?” People take turns talking about what has been going on in their recoveries since the last meeting, and what lies ahead for them in the coming week. The focus will be on current events in the participants’ lives.

You are not required to label yourself as an “alcoholic” or “addict” to participate. A desire to be clean and sober is the only requirement for being there. You need to be clean and sober at the time of the meeting in order to speak.

LifeRing meetings encourage questions, comments, and other feedback throughout the hour. If you have a question, feel free to ask the person right then. If you have something to say, say it while it’s fresh in your mind. As people become comfortable with one another, the meeting atmosphere becomes like a living room filled with sober friends having a relaxed, free conversation. Laughter is a common ingredient.

There are some limits. Please, no extended “war stories” about your drinking/using past. No attack therapy or confrontation. Please avoid giving unsolicited advice. No religion or politics. No trashing of other recovery approaches. Keep it civil and keep it positive.

Meetings usually end with a mutual round of applause for staying clean and sober.

Meetings are confidential. You may disclose to your friends that you participated, but you may not disclose who else was present or what they said.

Participation is free. A basket may be passed to defray expenses, but contributions are voluntary. The convenor will sign your attendance sheet on request. Most courts and most treatment programs credit LifeRing attendance on a par with other support groups.

Study meetings where people work the *Recovery by Choice* workbook together may also be available in your area. Ask the convenor or check the schedule on www.unhooked.com.

LifeRing offers a wide array of online support options, including chat rooms, email lists, and a bulletin board, all accessible through www.unhooked.com.

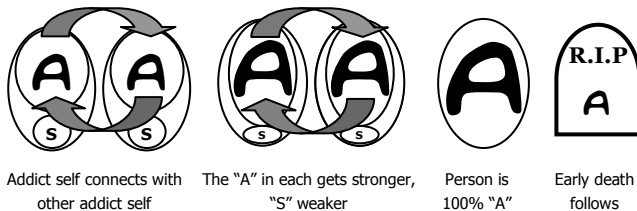
The meeting convenor is a person in recovery like yourself. No professional training is required. If you stay clean and sober and want to be useful to others doing the same, in a few months you could become a LifeRing meeting convenor yourself.

How It Works

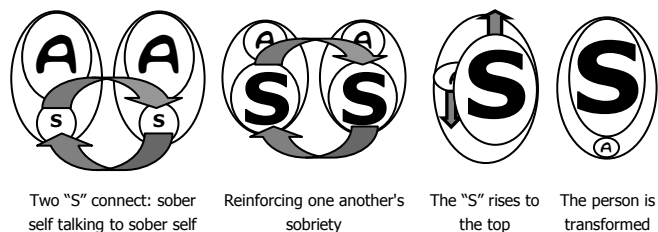
Underneath the informal atmosphere of LifeRing meetings, serious recovery work is going on. One way to visualize it is to imagine that inside of each person who is struggling with drug and/or alcohol issues, there is a conflict between a voice that wants to keep drinking/using, and another voice that wants to be free of the drug and lead a better life. We abbreviate these voices as the “A” (the addict self) and the “S” (the sober self).



When two or more people get together who have this inner conflict, two outcomes are possible. Too often, the “A” in one reaches out and connects with the “A” in the other. “Let me buy you a drink!” “Sure, and I’ll get the next one.” They set up a feedback loop that reinforces the “A” in both of them and suppresses the “S.” This is a vicious cycle with harmful consequences ultimately leading to premature death.



But if the “S” in one person connects with the “S” in the other, they reinforce one another’s sobriety. “I’m fed up with my drinking/-drugging life. I want something more.” “That’s my feeling too.” “I didn’t think I could do it but I stayed sober today.” “If you can do it, I guess I can too.” “Last week I celebrated a birthday without drinking – I’m so pleased!” “Good for you!” After each meeting, the “S” in each person is stronger than before. At some point, the person experiences a transformation. The “S” grows stronger than the “A” and rises to the top. Sobriety stops being an uphill battle and becomes almost second nature. So long as people avoid putting alcohol/drugs into their body, they can realize whatever potential lies within them and live full, productive lives.



This “S-to-S” connection is the engine of the LifeRing recovery process as we practice it in our meetings. We call it “Empowering Your Sober Self.”

The Basic Philosophy

The basic LifeRing philosophy is summarized in three words: Sobriety, Secularity, and Self-Help.

Sobriety means abstinence from alcohol and other medically non-indicated addictive drugs. In LifeRing, people struggling with a variety of drugs – alcohol, marijuana, methamphetamines, cocaine, heroin,

prescription drugs, to name a few – work side by side as members of one family. It is OK to still use tobacco in LifeRing, but you will get warm support from the group when you quit. LifeRing respects the doctor-patient relationship. If you have been honest with your doctor and your doctor is knowledgeable about addictions, we will support you in taking your medications as prescribed.

Secularity means that your religion or lack of it remains your private business in LifeRing. Our recovery process relies on “S-to-S” connections with other human beings. Whether you believe in a Supreme Being is not important in LifeRing. Meetings do not use prayer or discuss theology, pro or con. What is important is that each person takes responsibility for their own recovery and is available to give support to others.

Self-help means that we each develop a personal recovery program tailored to our particular background and needs. Other than “Don’t Drink or Use,” LifeRing does not believe in a prescribed set of steps that everyone needs to follow. In our meetings you may hear a diversity of approaches to sober living. It is up to you to pick and choose what works for you. Because we do not use a prescribed program, you do not need a special sponsor to guide you. We all sponsor one another. The *Recovery By Choice* workbook provides a structured framework for building your personal recovery program. You can use the workbook on your own or in a group, or not at all, as you choose. Self-help also means that meetings are led by peers, not by professionals; as soon as you have the requisite sober time, you can take a turn at convening.

All LifeRing meetings are based on these three points. On this common foundation you may see a considerable variety of formats and approaches. If you have an idea for a LifeRing meeting or activity, by all means put it forward. LifeRing grows because people like yourself see the value in it and take the initiative to make it available to others.

How LifeRing Is Organized

LifeRing is a free-standing, self-supporting, democratically run organization. We are not affiliated with any other group. We adopted the LifeRing name in 1999 and held our national founding congress in 2001. At this time there are LifeRing meetings in about 20 states and four countries. Each meeting elects a delegate to the annual LifeRing Congress, which decides all major issues of policy and elects the Board of Directors. There is a Service Center and a Press. All directors and officers are unpaid volunteers. We meet expenses by passing the basket at meetings and through literature sales.

The LifeRing approach is compatible with a wide variety of abstinence-based treatment programs. We have letters of reference from treatment professionals. Although our approach is different from 12-step, we operate side by side with 12-step groups without friction.

If you are interested in knowing more, visit the LifeRing web site at www.unhooked.com, read the books and pamphlets listed in this brochure, or contact the LifeRing Service Center: toll-free 1-800-811-4142 or service@lifering.org.