

# Secular AA / 12-Step Resources for Treatment Center Non-Believers

*Belief in God is NOT a requirement to AA membership, and it is not a requirement to achieving successful and sustainable sobriety. Thousands of people are active in 12-Step recovery using Agnostic / Atheist versions of 12-Step Resources. It works! (“Secular”= without religious or spiritual basis; humanist.)*

**SECULAR ZOOM MEETINGS:** We have **HUNDREDS** of Secular AA meetings each week, around the clock (and, if you are an addict, please know that sharing about drugs is also welcome in these meetings).

Compilation Site: <http://aadistrict1.com/seczoommeetings.htm> **NOTE: all times shown in EASTERN.**

**In-Person Secular Meetings:** the Houston region *usually* has several regular “secular” AA meetings in person, but many are stopped for COVID. In addition, the Lambda Center in Montrose (<https://lambdahouston.com/>) is quite progressive and has probably the highest number of open atheists / agnostics in attendance in their meetings. Personally, I attend mostly “normal” AA meetings but also at least 1-2 “Secular” Zoom meetings each week, just to remind myself that I am not alone. When I was new, I attended two meetings each day I had off work, and at least one meeting each day that I did work. We also have Secular conventions! (These also will resume post-COVID.)

## Other Helpful Resources

- *Waiting: A Non-Believer’s Higher Power* by Mayra Hornbacher. This book is for sale in our Bookstore. Finding this book saved my life. I usually buy several copies each year to distribute to secular newcomers. Each chapter = 1 Step = 1 month, her experience in AA and in sobriety as a non-believer.
- <https://aaagnostica.org/> -- This is a wonderful site/group. It compiles tons of resources for AA secular / non-believers. I subscribe to the site via email, and they send articles and updates. Other sites also worth checking out: <https://secularaa.org/>, <https://Aasecular.org>, and <https://aabeeyondbelief.org>.
- Several Secular Recovery groups on Facebook that I enjoy. (All of these are “private” and require a request to join.): AA Beyond Belief; Secular Coffee Shop; Secular Buddhist Recovery; Secular Recovery & Wellness; Sober She Devils (Women); Belligerent Savages (Men). There are many more!
- *Beyond Belief: Agnostic Musings for 12 Step Life*: a daily reflection book for nonbelievers, freethinkers, and everyone. This is a good way to incorporate **meditation**, which is proven very helpful to recovery. There are a number of these Secular books to help in your recovery.
- *Above All: Please know that you are not alone*. There are thousands of us doing “recovery” in a 100% Secular way. I can introduce you to many of them, both Treatment Center Alumni and out in the Houston-area AA community. We NEED you to help us – let’s reach out to help the next suffering secular addict or alcoholic.

Sincerely,

Lisa F.  
Houston, TX  
[TexasLisa2@gmail.com](mailto:TexasLisa2@gmail.com)

Some relevant quotes from Bill Wilson, AA’s writer of the “Big Book.” In later years, old Bill seemed to have “mellowed out” on all the God talk (emphasis mine):

“It must never be forgotten that the purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous is to sober up alcoholics. **There is no religious or spiritual requirement for membership.** No demands should be made on anyone.”

“We even have a Tradition that guarantees the right of any group or member to vary all of them (the 12 Steps), if they want to. Let’s remember, we are talking about *suggested* steps and traditions.”

“To some of us, the idea of substituting ‘good’ for ‘God’ in the Twelve Steps will seem like a watering down of AA’s message. We must remember that AA’s Steps are suggestions only. A belief in them as they stand is not at all a requirement for membership among us. This liberty has made AA available to thousands who never would have tried at all, had we insisted on the Twelve Steps just as written.”

“In AA’s first years, I all but ruined the whole undertaking with this sort of unconscious arrogance. God as I understood Him had to be for everybody. Sometimes my aggression was subtle and sometimes it was crude. But either way it was damaging – perhaps fatally so – to numbers of non-believers.”

In-person Secular AA meetings in the Houston area (some of these may be currently suspended). Even in non-COVID times, there aren't many, which is why I like to do Zoom for Secular meetings:

**Secular AA Group**

Saturdays, 1-2 PM, Bay Area Club  
2111 Webster St  
77004  
League City, TX 77573 (Clear Lake – Galveston)

**Houston Midtown Secular Group**

Tuesdays, 7:30 pm, First Unitarian Universalists,  
200 Fannin St, Houston, TX  
Medical Center South

**Atheists & Agnostics in AA**

Wednesday, 8 PM, Lambda Center  
1201 W Clay St  
Houston, TX 77019

**“Without a Prayer” Group**

Monday, 8 PM, Bellaire Group  
5625A Beechnut  
Houston TX 77096



## What Else, Besides AA?

I always stress the value of having an individual counselor and continued treatment from a psychiatrist – both of whom understand the nature of addiction, in addition to “Sober Living,” if recommended. I would not have stayed sober in my first two years without my counselor and psychiatrist. The 12 Step stuff helped, certainly, but the counseling and psychiatrist were of EQUAL importance. Recovery, for me, needed more than just “Get a sponsor, work the Steps.”

Besides 12-Step groups, other Houston organizations help support recovery. However, my experience has been that these resources are **not available or easy-to-find on a regular basis**. So, for people interested in “something besides AA,” I found that *they work well “in addition to” rather than as a “replacement of”* standard AA. All of the organizations below do have at least SOME in-person meetings in the Houston area. Although I personally do not attend these meetings anymore, they were helpful additions to my early sobriety journey.

**SMART Recovery:** <https://www.smartrecovery.org/>

Self-Management And Recovery Training (SMART) is a global community of mutual-support groups. At meetings, participants help one another resolve problems with any addiction (to drugs or alcohol or to activities such as gambling or over-eating). Participants find and develop the power within themselves to change and lead fulfilling and balanced lives guided by our science-based and sensible 4-Point Program.

**Refuge Recovery:** <https://refugerecovery.org/>

Refuge Recovery is a practice, a process, a set of tools, a treatment, and a path to healing addiction and the suffering caused by addiction: aka, “Buddhist Recovery.” The main inspiration and guiding philosophy for the Refuge Recovery program are the teachings of Siddharta Gautama, a man who lived in India 2,500 years ago (i.e., Buddhism). Refuge Recovery recognizes a non-theistic approach to spiritual practice. The program does not ask anyone to believe anything, only to trust the process and to do the hard work of recovery.

**LifeRing:** <https://lifering.org/>

LifeRing Secular Recovery is an abstinence-based, anonymous organization dedicated to providing a safe meeting space where you can experience a non-judgmental recovery conversation with your peers. They do this through the lens of LifeRing’s “3-S” philosophy of Sobriety, Secularity, and Self-Help.