

Introduction to the Women for Sobriety New Life Program



Women for Sobriety, Inc.

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Introduction

Women for Sobriety, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization which administers the WFS New Life Program, often referred to as the Women for Sobriety Program, the New Life Acceptance Program, or simply WFS. The program is based on 13 affirmations, referred to as the Acceptance Statements, or simply “the Statements.” The WFS New Life Program promotes behavioral change through positive reinforcement, cognitive strategies, supporting physical healing, and dynamic group involvement. Women have been using the WFS New Life Program for over 40 years to achieve lasting and happy sobriety.

WFS New Life Program

- 13 Acceptance Statements
- 6 Levels of Growth
- Peer-facilitated online and in-person meetings
- Online peer-support forum
- Full catalog of program literature, media, and workbooks

Women for Sobriety, Inc.

- 501(c)(3) charitable organization
- Administers online bookstore and annual national conference
- Screening and training of peer facilitators
- Ensures fidelity to mission in meetings and outreach

Vision/Mission/Values

Vision

WFS envisions a world where individuals live mindful lives and take responsibility for their thoughts and actions.

Mission

Through the New Life Program, WFS supports women seeking a sober life in recovery from problematic substance use.

Values

Compassion: WFS promotes empathy and caring for self and others.

Connection: WFS creates safe spaces where women support the expression of thoughts, feelings, and needs.

Empowerment: WFS encourages and celebrates women and their right to be their own unique individuals.

Love: WFS commits to authentic relationships defined by mutual value and worth.

Respect: WFS acts with integrity, honoring every woman’s experiences and ideas.

WFS Acceptance Statements

1. I have a life-threatening problem that once had me.
I now take charge of my life and my well-being. I accept the responsibility.
2. Negative thoughts destroy only myself.
My first conscious sober act is to reduce negativity in my life.
3. Happiness is a habit I am developing.
Happiness is created, not waited for.
4. Problems bother me only to the degree I permit.
I now better understand my problems. I do not permit problems to overwhelm me.
5. I am what I think.
I am a capable, competent, caring, compassionate woman.
6. Life can be ordinary or it can be great.
Greatness is mine by a conscious effort.
7. Love can change the course of my world.
Caring is all-important.
8. The fundamental object of life is emotional and spiritual growth.
Daily I put my life into a proper order, knowing which are the priorities.
9. The past is gone forever.
No longer am I victimized by the past. I am a new woman.
10. All love given returns.
I am learning to know that I am loved.
11. Enthusiasm is my daily exercise.
I treasure all moments of my New Life.
12. I am a competent woman, and I have much to give life.
This is what I am, and I shall know it always.
13. I am responsible for myself and for my actions.
I am in charge of my mind, my thoughts, and my life.

To make the Program effective for you, arise each morning fifteen minutes earlier than usual and go over the Thirteen Affirmations. Then begin to think about each one by itself. Take one Statement and use it consciously all day. At the end of the day review the use of it and what effects it had that day for you and your actions.

Levels of Recovery

As the New Life Program grew, women began to ask Dr. Kirkpatrick for a more chronological guide to help them identify areas to focus on as they progressed in recovery. The Levels of Recovery were conceived to meet this need, and each Statement was assigned to a level. Women are also encouraged to remember that life is a fluid process that ebbs and flows, as are the Levels. There will always be times, such as during periods of great change or severe stress, when we may need to revisit a Level.

Level 1: Acceptance of substance use disorder (*Statement 1*)

This is the very foundation of the Program. We must accept our addiction with the knowledge that we have a Substance Use Disorder and that abstinence is necessary to provide the most fertile ground for cultivating recovery. We recognize that our addiction has damaged our minds and bodies, and special care and time are required for recovery.

Level 2: Releasing negativity (*Statements 2, 4, and 9*)

We are now ready to examine our attitudes and approach to life by writing down in detail our concepts, experiences, difficulties, and feelings with total honesty. We may believe that we are aware of our thinking and attitudes, but only after we have written these with total honesty do we discover what they really are. At this stage, we must also recognize the distorted, negative, and self-destructive patterns we have developed and resolve to change.

Level 3: Practicing a new self-image (*Statements 5 and 12*)

We are now ready to exchange our irrational, negative attitudes for realistic, positive thoughts about ourselves and our lives. We realize that our thoughts are responsible for our feelings and not the events, people, or situations themselves. We make our environment pleasant, uncluttered, and attractive and know that we alone create the world around us.

Level 4: Positive new attitudes (*Statements 3, 6, and 11*)

We now become aware that we do not need to wait for or to seek enthusiasm and happiness – all we need do is reach out and grasp them. We can accept a happy and enthusiastic outlook on life. This level leads us to the next stage; much of the joy in life depends on sharing with others – happiness and enthusiasm are reinforced by those to whom we are close.

Level 5: Improving relationships (*Statements 7 and 10*)

We have begun to be open about our feelings, be vulnerable, and learn to balance giving and receiving with the women in our WFS group. Now is the time to expand these skills to other relationships. With our foundation of self-respect and self-love, we are ready to develop mature, loving relationships with others.

Level 6: A New Self, Continued growth (*Statements 8 and 13*)

As we gain in knowledge and understanding of ourselves, our connection to others, and our place in the world, we find a spiritual home that is both unique and personal to us. We nurture our spiritual growth and reach out to encourage self-responsibility and self-worth not just for ourselves, but also for others.

Accessing the Program

The WFS New Life Program was designed to be equally effective for the solitary participant as well as the woman who is fortunate enough to have access to group support. With the advent of the internet, accessibility to WFS peer support has improved dramatically. These are just some of the ways to access the New Life Program. Check our website often as we are continuously finding ways to expand our services.

Main Website – womenforsobriety.org

Information about the WFS organization and the New Life Program, as well as free articles by founder Dr. Kirkpatrick. [Sign up](#) for our email distribution list here to receive the weekly inspirational Monday Message and other email updates directly in your inbox. Purchase program literature through our online shop, including the *Program Booklet* and the *Beginner's Special Bundle*. *Assistance may be available for women who cannot afford to purchase literature - simply email staff2@womenforsobriety.org to inquire.*

In-Person Meetings – womenforsobriety.org/meetings

In-person WFS meetings are available throughout the United States and in some parts of Canada. Visit our online Meeting Finder to see if one is available in your area.

Online Meetings & Support – wfsonline.org

The WFS Online site is a vibrant, peer-led support community. Women can access an active message board 24 hours a day. There are also facilitated text chat and video meetings available every day of the week.

Private Facebook Group – facebook.com/groups/WFSConnection

Only members can see the posts in this private group on Facebook. A great tool for integrating recovery information and support right into the news feed you already visit daily.

Social Media – Inspirational messages are posted daily to these social media sights:

Facebook – facebook.com/womenforsobriety

Twitter - [@WFS4C](https://twitter.com/WFS4C)

Instagram - instagram.com/womenforsobriety

Pinterest - pinterest.com/Women4Sobriety/

Phone Support Volunteers – 215-536-8026 or contact@womenforsobriety.org

Volunteers who report having a minimum of one year of continuous sobriety and thorough knowledge of the New Life Program are available to be phone contacts for women who don't have meetings in their area. Not on-call or crisis specialists, Phone Support Volunteers provide a friendly voice to help you get started in the program.

Annual Weekend Conference – womenforsobriety.org/conference

Women from around the globe gather every June for the WFS Annual Weekend Conference. This retreat-style weekend offers workshops, presentations, and WFS meetings from Friday evening to mid-day Sunday, with pre-conference activities on Thursday and Friday day. Lodging and meals are typically included in the affordable registration fee and work scholarships are available each year.

WFS New Life Program

Adapted from "The Program" by Jean Kirkpatrick, PhD, March 1977

What is meant by "The Program"? How do we view it? How is it to be used?

The Women for Sobriety New Life Program is comprised of thirteen acceptance statements that, when accepted and used, will provide each woman with a new way of life through a new way of thinking.

As women with substance use disorders, we must learn about ourselves and how to avoid the pitfalls of faulty thinking and destructive behavior that used to lead us to taking that first drink or drug, even though we sometimes did not want to.

Since we had a faulty approach to life and living, we must turn our attention to finding new ways of overcoming. This starts with coping first but then moving onto overcoming and a whole change in our approach to each day.

To make the program effective for you, arise each morning fifteen minutes earlier than usual and go over the thirteen Acceptance Statements. Then begin to think about each one by itself. Take one Statement and use it consciously all day. At the end of the day, just before sleeping, review the use of it and what affects it had that day for you and your actions.

For some, it has proven helpful to use a notebook for recording the sequences of the day and the statement's effects upon you. (*The Program Booklet* is available, and also *The Beginner's Collection*, which are both helpful to those new in the program. These are available on our website.)

For the program to be effective, it must be consciously used each day. Never forget that our faulty thinking is a result of many years. It cannot be corrected overnight. It takes a long time to realize that most of what we thought was cast in the negative view.

The philosophy of the Women for Sobriety New Life Program is that the image precedes our actions. Whatever we think, we eventually act out. If our thoughts are always negative, our

actions will also be negative. If our thoughts are positive, so are our actions. One writer once said a garden of weeds cannot produce a beautiful flower. This is also true of our minds. If we have upsetting thoughts, we cannot have a serene life.

We used to think that life was upsetting and our problems followed but it is usually the other way around. Our thoughts were confused and negative, and life's actions came to be that way also. We create our own world. No one else does. We are responsible for ourselves and our choices. What we are, we made ourselves become.

We have the power of changing our way of thinking. We live in the atmosphere created by our mind and our thoughts.

We are now beginning to create a new woman, the woman we always wanted to be but never thought possible. The Women for Sobriety New Life Program helps you to change your thinking and shows you how to be the dynamic woman you have the capability of becoming. We begin by being in charge of our actions through our thoughts. We no longer react but, now, begin to act the way we want to act. We end game playing. We become our whole person by learning independent thinking.

Negative thoughts, so much a part of an addicted woman's life, are often carried into sobriety. These negative thoughts frequently make the sober woman unhappy and depressed. She begins to wonder if sobriety is really worth it.

We used substances to cover pain, emotional pain. When we remove the substance, we must then learn a way to remove the emotional pain, which requires a new way of thinking about life.

Our program makes sobriety a happy existence by helping us to understand ourselves better. Our sobriety is more than simply a period of time in which we are not drinking; it becomes a happy learning experience.

Learn to know yourself and your addiction. This is how to overcome.

WFS Founder

Born in a small, rural Pennsylvania town, Dr. Jean Kirkpatrick was the only child of a prominent local family. Despite multiple academic successes, including obtaining her doctorate degree in Sociology, Dr. Kirkpatrick struggled with feelings of inadequacy, depression, and severe Alcohol Use Disorder. She found sobriety for three years through another program but returned to drinking for an additional thirteen years thereafter, unable to cope with the pressures of her success.

After trying to return to the other program and no longer finding it helpful, Dr. Kirkpatrick began to explore other sources of inspiration. She began to write key phrases on small scraps of paper for herself and read them often as she persevered on her recovery journey. Once sobriety had been re-established, she compiled these phrases into the first version of what is now known as the WFS Acceptance Statements.

Dr. Kirkpatrick used the Statements, as well as knowledge gained from current research in the biological underpinnings of addictions, to start the New Life Program in 1975. She established the non-profit corporation Women for Sobriety, Inc., and began reaching out to other women in recovery, establishing weekly peer-support groups across the nation. Her first book, *Turnabout: New Help for the Woman Alcoholic*, published in 1977, told her story and laid the foundation for women to use the New Life Program in their own recoveries.

Dr. Kirkpatrick passed away in 2000 but her legacy lives on in the countless women who have successfully used the New Life Program to overcome their problems with alcohol and other drugs and found happy, healthy, joyful New Lives.

WFS Founding Principles

Women for Sobriety (WFS) is an organization whose purpose is to help all women find their individual path to recovery through discovery of self. We share experiences, hopes, and encouragement with other women in similar circumstances. We are an abstinence-based, self-help program for women overcoming challenges with alcohol and other drug use. The New Life Program acknowledges the needs women have in recovery – the need to nurture feelings of self-value and self-worth, and the desire to discard feelings of guilt, shame, and humiliation.

WFS is unique in that it is an organization of women for women. We are not affiliated with any other recovery organization and stand on our own principles and philosophies. The New Life Program offers a variety of recovery tools to guide a woman in developing coping skills which focus on emotional growth, spiritual growth, self-esteem, and a healthy lifestyle. We encourage all women to engage in lifelong personal development through our 13 Acceptance Statements.

WFS believes that addiction began to overcome stress, loneliness, frustration, or emotional deprivation in daily life – dependence often resulted. The physical, mental, and emotional components of addiction are overcome with abstinence from all substances and the self-awareness gained by practicing the program. Participation in WFS requires a sincere desire for a New Life. We live by the philosophy: “Release the past – plan for tomorrow – live for today.”