

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

The article is about self-help groups, which are made up of people sharing a particular problem who meet together to offer mutual support and guidance. They are spreading through the whole United States. The participants talk about their experiences, thoughts and feelings.

There are two broad categories of self-help groups: the normal, secular kind, which is more loosely structured; and the groups which follow the method pioneered by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous and are centered around the famous "12 steps" to recovery. The latter are more spiritual in nature: there is an order imposed on the behaviour of the participants, who admit their helplessness before their problems and give themselves up to a higher power.

The variety of such groups is mind-bogling. There is the Chronic-Fatigue Syndrome Support Group, for those who are always tired. For those with an eating disorder there is Overeaters Anonymous. In the area of family relationships there are the Grandparents in Divided Families and Mothers of Twins clubs. If you are Catholic, divorced and have remarried there is the Separated/Divorced, Remarried Catholics (SDRC) group.

So I guess the message one gets from the rising number of self-help (support) groups is that Americans desperately need help.

- **to spring up** - to appear or come into existence quickly - pojaviti se, prikazati se
- **mutual** - something that you give to someone when it is also something which they give to you - vzajemen, medsebojen
- **secular** - something which has no connection with religion or churches - posveten, laičen
- **debilitating** - something that causes your body or mind to become gradually weaker - oslabiti, izčrpati
- **to procrastinate** - to be very slow to do something, because you keep leaving it until later - odlašati, obotavljati se
- **bereaved** - someone with a close relative or friend who has recently died - oropan, prikrajšan