

Bridging the GAP

Between
treatment and A.A.
through
contact programs



This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS[®] is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

- The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.
- A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.
- Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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Bridging the Gap

Part of Bridging the Gap between a treatment program and A.A. is the Temporary Contact Program, which is designed to help the alcoholic in an alcoholism treatment program make that transition.

As you know, one of the more “slippery” places in the journey to sobriety is between the door of the facility and the nearest A.A. group or meeting. Some of us can tell you that, even though we heard of A.A. in treatment, we were too fearful to go.

A.A. experience suggests that attending meetings regularly is critical. In order to bridge the gap, A.A. members have volunteered to be temporary contacts and introduce newcomers to Alcoholics Anonymous.

The video “Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous,” shown to patients in treatment, emphasizes the importance of having a *temporary contact* as the essential link between treatment and recovery.

It is suggested that the temporary contact take the newcomer to a variety of A.A. meetings; introduce him or her to other A.A.s; insure that he or she has the phone numbers of several A.A. members, and share the experience of sponsorship and a home group.

Temporary Contact guidelines

- Keep in mind that this is basic Twelfth Step work.
- Experience suggests that it is best to be accompanied by another A.A. member when meeting our newcomer. One of the two temporary contacts should have at least a year of sobriety.
- Experience also suggests that men work with men and women work with women.
- The intent is to provide the newcomer with your help for a limited time. You need not have experience with treatment settings. Your qualifications are experience as an alcoholic and recovery in A.A.
- It may be helpful for you as a temporary contact to attend workshops on bridging the gap and attend meetings of your area's hospital and/or treatment committees.
- Remember, the goal of both A.A. and the treatment settings is the same — the recovery of the alcoholic.
- Be familiar with the paper "Information on Alcoholics Anonymous," particularly the section on what A.A. *does* and *does not* do.
- In all contacts or activities with treatment settings, it is extremely important to be punctual and to look your best.

Try to do the following:

- Make contact with the newcomer while he or she is still in treatment. To avoid any misunderstandings, explain clearly that this is a *temporary* arrangement.
- Review the many different meeting formats — cover the difference between open and closed A.A. meetings and accompany the newcomer to a variety of meetings. Give the newcomer an A.A. meeting schedule.
- Introduce the newcomer to A.A. Conference-approved books (particularly the Big Book), pamphlets and AA Grapevine.

- Explain group membership and the value of having a home group.
- Explain sponsorship to the newcomer, referring to the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship,” and perhaps help the newcomer find a sponsor.

Points to remember

A.A. does not provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money or other welfare or social services.

The professional treatment setting is in charge of its patients or clients and is responsible for them. While we cannot compromise our A.A. Traditions, we should remember that we are there as guests of the facility, and must abide by its rules. We are there to carry the A.A. message to the newcomer, and to answer any questions regarding the A.A. program of recovery and the A.A. way of life. Statements that may be interpreted as medical or psychological diagnosis or advice on medication should be avoided. We are there only to share our experience of staying away from one drink, one day at a time, through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In many cases, months of hard work have gone into establishing a relationship which enables us to be invited into a facility. A careless action could destroy that trust and interfere with carrying the message. If problems arise, inform the local service committee. They may wish to present an A.A. informational meeting.

No one speaks for A.A. as a whole. When we carry the A.A. message to those in treatment, we are just one drunk talking with another. How we look, act and talk may be all they are going to know about Alcoholics Anonymous. Since we may be seen as part of A.A., let our new friends see, hear and talk to a winner!

If you would like to help...

If you would like to help in this very important Twelfth Step work and have at least one year of continuous sobriety in the A.A. program, please complete the following information and give it to your group's treatment representative, general service representative (G.S.R.), or mail it to the chairperson of your area or district treatment committee or your general service delegate. In some areas, service committees and temporary contact programs are organized through the local intergroup or central office. Or send it to the Treatment Desk, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, www.aa.org, so that G.S.O. can forward the information to your area, district or other Treatment Committee.

DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE OR PROVINCE _____

ZIP OR MAIL CODE _____

PHONE: DAY _____

EVENINGS _____

A.A. PUBLICATIONS Complete order forms available from
General Service Office of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS,
Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.
Website: aa.org.

BOOKS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
(regular, portable, large-print and abridged pocket editions)
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE
TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS
(regular, soft-cover, large-print, pocket and gift editions)
EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE
AS BILL SEES IT *(regular & soft cover editions)*
DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS
'PASS IT ON'
DAILY REFLECTIONS

BOOKLETS

CAME TO BELIEVE
LIVING SOBER
A.A. IN PRISON: INMATE TO INMATE

PAMPHLETS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A.A.
A.A. TRADITION—HOW IT DEVELOPED
MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY ASK ABOUT A.A.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AS A RESOURCE FOR
THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL
A.A. IN YOUR COMMUNITY
IS A.A. FOR YOU?
IS A.A. FOR ME?
THIS IS A.A.
A NEWCOMER ASKS
IS THERE A PROBLEM DRINKER IN THE WORKPLACE?
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DIFFERENT?
MANY PATHS TO SPIRITUALITY
A.A. FOR THE BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ALCOHOLIC
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SPONSORSHIP
A.A. FOR THE WOMAN
A.A. FOR THE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN
A.A. AND THE GAY/LESBIAN ALCOHOLIC
ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL ALCOHOLICS
A.A. FOR THE OLDER ALCOHOLIC—NEVER TOO LATE
THE JACK ALEXANDER ARTICLE
YOUNG PEOPLE AND A.A.
A.A. AND THE ARMED SERVICES
THE A.A. MEMBER—MEDICATIONS AND OTHER DRUGS
IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN YOUR LIFE?
INSIDE A.A.
THE A.A. GROUP
G.S.R.
MEMO TO AN INMATE
THE TWELVE CONCEPTS ILLUSTRATED
THE TWELVE TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATED
LET'S BE FRIENDLY WITH OUR FRIENDS
HOW A.A. MEMBERS COOPERATE
A.A. IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
A MESSAGE TO CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS
A.A. IN TREATMENT SETTINGS
BRIDGING THE GAP
IF YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL
A.A. MEMBERSHIP SURVEY
A MEMBER'S-EYE VIEW OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL
UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY
THE CO-FOUNDERS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
SPEAKING AT NON-A.A. MEETINGS
A BRIEF GUIDE TO A.A.
WHAT HAPPENED TO JOE; IT HAPPENED TO ALICE
(Two full-color, comic-book style pamphlets)
TOO YOUNG? *(A cartoon pamphlet for teenagers)*
IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL
(An illustrated pamphlet for inmates)

VIDEOS

A.A. — AN INSIDE VIEW
A.A. VIDEOS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
HOPE: ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
A NEW FREEDOM
CARRYING THE MESSAGE BEHIND THESE WALLS
YOUR A.A. GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE,
THE GRAPEVINE AND THE GENERAL SERVICE STRUCTURE

PERIODICALS

A.A. GRAPEVINE (monthly)
LA VIÑA (bimonthly)

A DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.

I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.

And for that: **I am responsible.**