

# BRIDGING THE GAP

BETWEEN TREATMENT & A.A.  
THROUGH TEMPORARY  
CONTACT PROGRAMS

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



service

*ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*<sup>®</sup> 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 facilities. 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 facilities committees.
- Remember, the goal of both A.A. and the treatment facility 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 facilities, 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 the A.A. 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 facility 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 facilities representative, general service representative (G.S.R.), or mail it to the chairperson of your area or district treatment facilities 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 Facilities Desk, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, so that G.S.O. can forward the information to your area, district or other Treatment Facilities 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

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**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

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**BOOKLETS**

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

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**PAMPHLETS**

44 QUESTIONS  
A.A. TRADITION—HOW IT DEVELOPED  
MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY ASK ABOUT A.A.  
THREE TALKS TO MEDICAL SOCIETIES BY BILL W.  
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.  
IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN THE WORKPLACE?  
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DIFFERENT?  
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  
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 FACILITIES  
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.  
A NEWCOMER ASKS  
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*)

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**VIDEOS**

A.A.—AN INSIDE VIEW  
A.A.—RAP WITH US  
HOPE: ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL  
CARRYING THE MESSAGE BEHIND THESE WALLS  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND A.A.  
YOUR A.A. GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE,  
THE GRAPEVINE AND THE GENERAL SERVICE STRUCTURE

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**PERIODICALS**

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

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.