

Familiarize the newcomer with General Service Conference-Approved literature, the A.A. Grapevine, local meeting schedules, meeting directories, and A.A. pamphlets, especially: "The A.A. Group, Where It All Begins" and "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."

Some Things to Avoid

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

Avoid statements or situations that may be interpreted as medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses. Do not take issue with prescribed medications; nor attempt to diagnose alcoholism. Leave the A.A. membership decision to the client.

Avoid challenging the teachings of the facility or expressing negative opinions about other A.A. groups, meetings, or members. Simply invite and guide the newcomer to A.A. and the A.A. way of life.

Some of these suggestions may be strongly stated. Remember, the Temporary Contact may be the only example of Alcoholics Anonymous that the treatment centers and clients may see. In many cases, months of hard work have gone into establishing a relationship that enables us to be invited into a facility. A careless action could destroy that trust and interfere with carrying the message.

Treatment Facilities Committee

Email: treatment@area35.org

Please email for additional information on
Alcoholics Anonymous, Bridging the
Gap/Temporary Contact Program,
and how we can help.

HELPFUL READING:

- "If You Are a Professional"
- "Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community"
- "A.A. In Treatment Facilities"

(Published by A.A. World Services, Inc.)



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



TEMPORARY CONTACT PROGRAM

A BRIDGE BETWEEN ALCOHOLISM TREATMENT AND A.A.

A 12 Step Service
Sponsored by:
Alcoholics Anonymous
Northern Minnesota
Area Assembly

What is Bridging the Gap/Temporary Contact Program?

Bridging the Gap/Temporary Contact Program provides an opportunity for alcoholics in a treatment program who wish to attend Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) after their discharge. It is designed to assist in making the transition from the facility to A.A. The most "slippery" place in the journey to lifelong sobriety is between the doors of the facility and the nearest A.A. group or meeting. This program is designed to help with that transition.

Singleness Of Purpose:

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as "substance abuse" or "chemical dependency." Non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Anyone may attend *open* A.A. meetings, but only those with a *drinking* problem may attend closed A.A. meetings.

Why an A.A. Temporary Contact?

Many A.A. members can tell you that, even though they were aware of A.A. they were too fearful to go alone. To bridge the gap between the facility and A.A., individual members have volunteered to be Temporary Contacts for thirty to ninety days to introduce the client to Alcoholics Anonymous.

What to Expect from the Temporary Contact

The Temporary Contact/A.A. member may:

- Take the client to a variety of meetings after leaving the facility (especially their first day back in the community).
- Provide the client with A.A. literature and a local meeting list.
- Introduce the client to other A.A. members.
- Talk with the client about sponsorship and possibly guide the client in selecting a sponsor.
- Visit the client in the treatment center before they leave the facility, if possible (at the client's request).

How to Obtain an A.A. Temporary Contact

To arrange for a Temporary Contact, the client or staff member can fill out the enclosed form and email it to the Area 35 Treatment Chair (treatment@area35.org). The treatment chair will then contact a volunteer temporary contact who matches as close as possible with the client using the following criteria:

- Birth year so we can match similar age.
- Same Sex – The treatment chair will match the volunteer and client of the same sex.
- Zip Code — The treatment chair will match a client and volunteer in the same zip code to make meeting attendance easier.

Temporary Contact Volunteer Guidelines

Temporary Contacts need not have any experience with treatment facilities. The qualifications are alcoholism and recovery in A.A. Keep in mind this is basic Twelve Step work. The intent is to provide the newcomer with help for 30 to 90 days to bring them into A.A. membership. The Temporary Contact will:

Keep the Temporary Contact Volunteer list up to date with their current name, address, zip code, and phone number.

Be familiar with the memo, "Information on Alcoholics Anonymous", particularly the sections on what A.A. does and does not do.

If possible, make direct personal contact with the prospect while they are still in treatment in one of the following ways:

- By telephone.
- Visiting or attending a meeting together.

To avoid any misunderstanding, explain clearly that this is a temporary arrangement.

Attend at least one meeting with the newcomer on the day of their release from treatment. If chosen, pick the client up when they are released.

Review the many different meeting formats — cover the difference between open and closed A.A. meetings. Introduce them to as many A.A. members as possible.