

# Temporary Contact Program

A Temporary Contact is an A.A. member who assists alcoholic patients “Bridge the Gap” between the treatment facility and “outside” A.A. meetings. Assisting the newcomer aids the Contacts own sobriety and demonstrates A.A.’s Singleness of Purpose. ***The Contact’s primary purpose is to introduce the newcomer to A.A. meetings near the newcomer’s home.***

The Temporary Contact Program is 100% successful simply by virtue of its existence and availability to the newcomer. Always, the guideline should be: “...When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that I am responsible.”

The following paragraphs are suggestions to guide the Contact through events as they might happen. Other Hints and Hazards are also outlined.

- ❖ **BEFORE DISCHARGE:** A newcomer’s request for help will be funneled, from a Treatment Facility Committee member to you as a Contact. Consider the possibility of visiting the newcomer before discharge. This greatly increases the chance of later attending an “outside” meeting together.
- ❖ **SCHEDULE THE MEETING:** Guarding anonymity, telephone the newcomer’s home on the day of discharge and make an effort to attend a meeting together, preferably the same day. Agreeing to pick the newcomer up at his or her residence is always more successful than arranging to get together at the meeting place.
- ❖ **PICK-UP:** Take another A.A. member with you whenever possible, as with all 12<sup>th</sup> step calls. Carry some free beginner literature with you in case there is none at the meeting. Newcomer Packets (which include meeting schedules) can be obtained from any member of the Treatment Facility Committee. **Be on time for whatever appointment is made.**
- ❖ **EN ROUTE TO THE MEETING:** Keep the general conversation to A.A. related matters. *Explain your role as a Temporary Contact*, rather than a sponsor. *Explain both temporary and permanent sponsorship*, and that members feel honored and usually accept when asked, unless they are sponsoring too many already.
- ❖ **BEFORE THE MEETING:** Take time to introduce the newcomer to as many A.A. members as possible. Encourage the newcomer to get

phone numbers and make sure he/she has your number. If displayed, pick up other free literature and a Newcomer Packet, and draw attention to any A.A. books for sale. Explain **Home Groups** and make sure the newcomer receives a schedule of local meetings. Circle recommended meetings, including meetings you attend.

- ❖ **DURING THE MEETING:** Discreetly mention that there are no dues or fees, but if desired, a contribution to the basket can be given. Also, sharing is not a requirement and members are glad to see newcomers.
- ❖ **AFTER THE MEETING:** Ask the newcomer if he/she wants to join the group going out for coffee and a “meeting after the meeting”. While there, try to include them in the conversations.
- ❖ **RETURN TO THE RESIDENCE:** Assume the newcomer is confused about most of what has been seen and heard. State that we try to keep it simple and take from the meetings what we need, leaving the rest. Offer a ride to another meeting, preferably one within the next few days.

**HINTS:** Due to confidentiality policies and schedules, visiting a newcomer in a facility may prove impossible. If feasible, and before discharge, attend the A.A. meetings where the newcomer may be sharing.

When calling a newcomer’s home, remember that someone else may answer the phone, who may not know about the newcomer’s desire to attend an A.A. meeting. Protect his/her anonymity by not disclosing your own association with A.A. of your purpose for calling.

After discharge, the newcomer may have changed his/her mind about further aid. Consider your responsibility ended after three attempts to telephone over several days has negative results (no direct phone connection with the newcomer, he/she has plausible excuses, is hesitant, or declines help). Leaving your phone number may prove helpful later.

If you discover that inadvertently a non – alcoholic has been referred to the Temporary Contact Program, explain what A.A. is and is not. If already en – route to a meeting, an open meeting might be appropriate. Suggest other possible sources of help.

## **HAZARDS:**

- ❖ **Don’t solicit members, try to persuade anyone to join A.A., or furnish initial motivation for newcomers to recove**

- ❖ Don't take medical or psychological diagnoses, judgment about medications, engage in education or propaganda about alcohol, or provide domestic or vocational counseling.
- ❖ Don't provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or other welfare or social services.
- ❖ Don't accept any money for services.
- ❖ Don't offer, or imply the offer, of any other service unless you personally want to perform that service.
- ❖ Don't become a long – term taxi service, unless you want to.
- ❖ Don't confuse the act of service with long – term sponsorship.
- ❖ Don't become involved in discussions about the newcomer's treatment or confinement. We have no opinion on outside issues. It may help to bear in mind that both the goals of A.A. and the treatment facility is the same – the recovery of the alcoholic

**CONCLUSION:** As a measure to strengthen the Temporary Contact Program, call the person on the Treatment Facility Committee that contacted you with the results of your efforts. Your comments and ideas help to evaluate the health of the contact program and aid in presenting it to other areas. By initiating the call, you help the coordinator gather comments and complete the circle of service.