

Cooperation With the  
Professional Community  
WORKBOOK

# Cooperation With the Professional Community WORKBOOK

This workbook is service material, reflecting A.A. experience shared at the General Service Office. A.A. workbooks are compiled from the practical experience of A.A. members in the various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. & Canada).

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## **A.A. Preamble**

*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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## Introduction

Your service committee can bring the A.A. message to professionals and to students at professional schools in your community, helping them to understand how and why A.A. works.

A.A. has always valued friends in all professional fields. These associations have been mutually beneficial and completely in keeping with the A.A. Traditions.

## Origin and Purpose of C.P.C.

“Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society for alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die.”

*The A.A. Service Manual*, “A.A.’s Legacy of Service” p. S1

C.P.C. came into being as a distinct entity in 1970 when the trustees’ committee was formed as an outgrowth of the Public Information Committee. In 1971, the Conference C.P.C. Committee was established. Today, many local communities, areas, and regions consider C.P.C. an activity separate from public information, treatment or corrections work. In some places, though, there is overlap.

Members of C.P.C. committees inform professionals and future professionals about A.A.— what we are, where we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do. They attempt to establish better communication between A.A.s and professionals, and to find simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating.

## **C.P.C. Work and Why A.A.s Do It**

Cooperating with nonalcoholic professionals is an effective way to carry the message to the sick alcoholic. Such people often meet the alcoholic in places where A.A. is not present. Through professionals, alcoholics may be reached who might otherwise never find the program, or they may be reached sooner with the help of informed non-A.A.s.

A professional can be anyone who deals with problem drinkers in the course of their work. Many of these people often encounter the suffering alcoholic, and in spite of public awareness, many of them simply don't know what to do with a drunk.

Here is a list of professions that C.P.C. committees have approached. Your committee may think of others: alcoholism or other counselor; armed forces officer; athletic coach; corrections officer; court official; educator; employers or employee assistance professionals; health care professional (doctor, nurse, psychiatrist, psychologist, etc.); clergyman; judge; juvenile services professional; law enforcement officer; lawyer (prosecutor, defense attorney); probation or parole professional; professional student; public health official; senior services professional; social worker; union official.

A professional can be a family doctor or other health care professional, a member of the clergy, a law enforcement or court official, an educator, a social worker, an alcoholism or other counselor, or anyone who deals with problem drinkers in the course of their work. Many of these people often encounter the suffering alcoholic, and in spite of public awareness, many of them simply don't know what to do with a drunk.

C.P.C. work can begin when individual A.A.s reveal their membership to their doctors or drop a quiet word in the ear of a pastor, priest or rabbi that an A.A. member is available to the congregation. Some A.A. members, A.A. groups, or committees share a single issue of the A.A. Grapevine, La Viña or La Vigne with the professionals, explaining how our meeting in print paints a picture of the Fellowship in action through members' stories and letters. Groups can further participate in C.P.C. by welcoming professionals and future professionals to open meetings and offering a subscription to the A.A. Grapevine, La Viña or La Vigne.

Committees on the area or local level actively seek ways to make contact with professional people and set up programs to increase knowledge and understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The aim of this Workbook is to serve as a guide through the C.P.C. process, from formation of a C.P.C. committee to discussion of the work and activities such committees can perform. It is important to remember that cooperation with professionals—like everything else in A.A.—is based on personal contact.

What a committee decides to do will be dictated by local needs and experience. The

suggestions here are just that—suggestions. It is hoped they will spark thinking and provide leads on new ways to approach professional people locally.

A look at our history shows clearly that cooperation with professionals has been an integral part of the Fellowship since our beginnings. A.A. might never have gotten off the ground, or progress would have been much slower, without the help of nonalcoholics such as Dr. Silkworth, Sister Ignatia, and the Reverend Sam Shoemaker.

It is important that C.P.C. workers understand the importance of A.A.'s Traditions and learn how to explain them to nonalcoholics. The cardinal fact is that the Traditions are *our* Traditions, and there is no reason non-A.A.s should be expected to understand them unless we take the initiative and explain them.

### ***Singleness of Purpose***

This Singleness of Purpose statement has been added to pamphlets intended to share information about A.A. with professionals:

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as “substance abuse” or “chemical dependency.” Nonalcoholics 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* meetings.

This is in keeping with the Long Form of A.A.'s Third and Fifth Traditions:

***Third Tradition:*** Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

***Fifth Tradition:*** Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity *having but one primary purpose* — that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

### ***Working Within the Traditions***

Let's take a look at some other A.A. Traditions and their relationship to cooperation with the professional community.

***Tradition One:*** “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

We can all keep this Tradition in mind when, for example, an influx of new members from a local rehab causes controversy within a group.

***Tradition Two:*** “For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

This Tradition is helpful when we're tempted to impose the “right” way of working the program on seemingly unwilling newcomers.

***Tradition Six:*** “An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to



any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”

This Tradition reminds us never to give the impression that A.A. itself, or any A.A. group, endorses (or opposes) or finances any other enterprise, no matter what our individual opinions may be. It also points out that seeking prestige always creates problems for us.

**Tradition Seven:** “Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

**Tradition Eight:** “Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.” We do not accept payment for A.A. service work.

**Tradition Ten:** “Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never to be drawn into public controversy.”

**Tradition Eleven:** “Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.”

This Tradition informs us that A.A.s always respect each other’s anonymity.

**Tradition Twelve:** “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”

## Anonymity

Bill W., our co-founder, wrote extensively about anonymity, and this section of the C.P.C. Workbook is made up primarily of his words. It is divided into three sections. The first distinguishes between the practical and spiritual significance of anonymity. The second cites the relevance of anonymity at individual and group levels, the third section takes up the questions of anonymity breaks and their consequences.

### *The Practical and Spiritual Significance of Anonymity*

**Anonymity—the need:** “In my belief, the entire future of our fellowship hangs upon this vital principle. If we continue to be filled with the spirit and practice of anonymity, no shoal or reef can wreck us. If we forget this principle, the lid to Pandora’s box will be off and the spirits of Money, Power, and Prestige will be loosed among us. Obsessed by these evil genii, we might well founder and break up. I devoutly believe this will never happen. No A.A. principle merits more study and application than this one. I am positive that A.A.’s anonymity is the key to long-time survival.”

*A.A. Comes of Age*, pp. 131-32

**“Bill’s Last Message”:** “Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical.

“On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes.”

**Anonymity as a spiritual message:** “We are sure that humility, expressed by anonymity, is the greatest safeguard that Alcoholics Anonymous can ever have.

“. . . anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which today keynotes A.A. life everywhere. Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as A.A. members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these very human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole Society and under which we may grow and work in unity.”

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 187

**Sacrifice and survival:** “The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Because A.A.’s Twelve Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realize that the sacrificial spirit, well symbolized by anonymity, is the founda-

tion of all these Traditions. It is A.A.'s proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people high confidence in our future."

*A.A. Comes of Age*, p. 132

### ***The Importance of Anonymity For Each Member and Group***

**Anonymity as a personal choice:** "... While it is quite evident that most of us believe in anonymity, our practice of the principle does vary a great deal.

"Of course, it should be the privilege, even the right, of each individual or group to handle anonymity as they wish. But to do that intelligently we shall need to be convinced that the principle is a good one for practically all of us; indeed we must realize that the future safety and effectiveness of Alcoholics Anonymous may depend upon its preservation."

*The Language of the Heart*, p. 15

**Anonymity at the group level:** "In practice then, the principle of anonymity seems to come down to this: with one very important exception, the question of how far each individual or group shall go in dropping anonymity is left strictly to the individual or group concerned. The exception is: that all groups or individuals, when writing or speaking for publication as members of Alcoholics Anonymous, feel bound never to disclose their true names. It is at this point of publication that we feel we should draw the line on anonymity. *We ought not disclose ourselves to the general public through the media of the press, in pictures or on the radio.*"

"A.A. Tradition—How It Developed," p. 41

### ***Why A.A.s Are Anonymous at the Public Level***

**Consequences of anonymity breaks:** "Any who would drop their anonymity must reflect that they may set a precedent which could eventually destroy a valuable principle. We must never let any immediate advantage shake us in our determination to keep intact such a really vital tradition." *ibid*

**Anonymity at the public level:** "Great modesty and humility are needed by every A.A. member for his own permanent recovery. If these virtues are such vital needs to the individual, so must they be to A.A. as a whole. This principle of anonymity before the general public can, if we take it seriously enough, guarantee the Alcoholics Anonymous movement these sterling attributes forever. Our public relations policy should mainly rest upon the principle of attraction and seldom, if ever, upon promotion." *ibid*

"... we alcoholics are the biggest rationalizers in the world; that fortified with the excuse we are doing great things for A.A. we can, through broken anonymity, resume our old and disastrous pursuit of personal power and prestige, public honors, and money—the same implacable urges that when frustrated once caused us to drink; ... Moreover, they make clear that enough spectacular anonymity breakers could someday carry our whole society down into the ruinous dead end with them."

*Best of the Grapevine*, Vol. 1, p. 278

## How To Get Started

C.P.C. committees are started with the agreement of local groups to support this Twelfth Step service work. Today, most areas have working C.P.C. committees (in some cases, the committee also serves “public information” functions). Typically, a C.P.C. committee is aligned with and funded by one or more service bodies—area, intergroup/central office, district, etc.

### *A Few Suggestions on Getting Started*

- When the need for a C.P.C. committee is apparent, notify local groups through G.S.R.s or other contacts that any interested A.A. member is welcome to participate. Area, district or central office newsletters can be utilized to do this. Include the D.C.M. or other area officers as well.

If practical, invite one or more A.A.s experienced in C.P.C. service in nearby communities to attend the meeting for the purpose of sharing how they got started.

- In addition to this Workbook, study the basic material listed below. Have extra copies for those attending the start-up meeting.

“Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings”

“How A. A. Members Cooperate With Professionals”

“A Member’s-Eye View of A.A.”

A.A. Fact File

A.A. Guidelines: Cooperation With the Professional Community; Cooperating With Courts, D.W.I. . . .; For A.A. Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field

- At the first meeting, after everyone has been introduced, ask an experienced A.A. guest(s) to briefly share.
- Develop a committee membership list from those attending the meeting. One of the basic activities of committee members is to read and discuss the relevant pamphlets and other literature.
- C.P.C. committees find that regular meetings help to keep their services moving forward, and provide opportunities to iron out any difficulties. It is important to have scheduled dates and times for these meetings.
- Once the new committee has met and become comfortable with the basic C.P.C. literature, determine which committee members are available during daytime hours, as well as those who are willing to participate in evening functions. This is important because much C.P.C. work takes place during business hours at the professional person’s work place or during classes at professional schools.

- Next, the committee could discuss which group of professionals to contact first. Established C.P.C. committees have found that focusing on one profession at a time, such as a visiting nurse association or home health care agency, or school of nursing, prevents a scattering of A.A. resources.
- Some committees find it helpful to prepare a list of local open A.A. meetings to provide to professionals.
- A telephone call to such an agency will lead to identification of the person responsible for information and training or curriculum. A conversation with that person might include an offer to meet and provide A.A. information. It might also be appropriate at this time to set a date for an A.A. presentation.
- Once a date is set, several committee members volunteer to take on this assignment. (see Preparing for a C.P.C. Presentation, p. 13).
- Communication with the various professional communities is very important. Identify professional entities, including schools and faculties, that would benefit by knowing more about A.A. and develop a list of people to telephone for preliminary meetings. Arrange to attend meetings of professional societies as an observer. Develop personal face-to-face relationships within the professional community.
- Local C.P.C. committees sometimes provide G.S.O. with copies of locally developed C.P.C. pieces, such as flyers for those who have been court ordered and suggestions for approaching an individual's doctor to share about Alcoholics Anonymous. Contact the C.P.C. desk to see what is available.

## Committee Services

One of the best resources for C.P.C. work is A.A. literature. Sample literature is usually enclosed in letters of introduction to professionals, and a variety of pamphlets and books are a part of any C.P.C. presentation.

*About A.A.* is a newsletter for professionals published twice a year. The mailing list includes professionals who request this service, and local C.P.C. chairpersons, who are free to make copies of each issue for use during presentations and A.A. exhibits at professional meetings. *About A.A.* can also be read on G.S.O.'s Web site. Names of professionals who wish to be on the *About A.A.* mailing list are sent to G.S.O., attention: C.P.C. Desk.

It's a good idea to keep a supply of literature on hand for unanticipated opportunities (see C.P.C. Discount Order Form in pockets of folder for low-cost bulk purchases).

### ***Presentations***

**Preparing for a C.P.C. presentation:** Presentations can take place at the invitation of an outside organization, possibly as part of one of its regular meetings. Often, the C.P.C. committee takes the initiative through a letter, phone call, or face-to-face, offering to make information on A.A. available. The pamphlet "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings" is essential reading for those planning such a presentation.

**Basic guidelines for C.P.C. presentations:** Here are two suggested formats for presentations: first, with a speaker and one or two supporting members; and second, with a panel of two to four people.

A.A. participants include a moderator, and one or two A.A. members experienced in speaking about A.A. Sometimes, a knowledgeable, nonalcoholic friend of A.A. may also be invited to take part.

In either case, the points listed below can be useful:

- Introduce yourself and ask other A.A.s to follow suit; read or summarize the Anonymity card for public meetings; read or paraphrase the A.A. Preamble, emphasizing relation to Traditions.
- Discuss A.A. history. Cover our beginning with Bill and Dr. Bob's meeting in Akron (1935), emphasizing the empathy that was present between these men. As the result of this first meeting, A.A. has grown throughout the world. Mention estimated number of members and groups in your locality.
- Briefly explain A.A.'s Twelve Steps, and briefly summarize their application in your own experience.

- Consider showing the videos “Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous” or “A.A. Videos for Young People” at this point, depending on the audience.
- Explain that A.A. meetings may follow a variety of formats—speaker, discussion, etc., but that there are two basic types:

*Open:* Guests are welcome; if practical, mention that individual members are available to take a professional friend to a meeting.

*Closed:* For A.A. members or those with a desire to stop drinking.

- It’s important to have information on local meetings available, whether the central office A.A. meeting directory or a listing of local “open” meetings. Be prepared to offer the names and phone numbers of one or two committee members to the guests.
- Discuss what A.A. does and does not do (refer to “Fact Sheet,” p. 27).
- Give a brief version of your story, emphasizing recovery in A.A.
- Allow time for a Question and Answer period:

Our credibility is determined by the way we respond to questions. “I don’t know” is often the best answer. If you are uncertain of an answer, research the question and contact the person later.

Avoid commenting on issues outside of A.A., including remedies or treatments for alcoholism used by others.

- After the meeting, handle literature requests promptly. Requests from professionals to be added to the *About A.A.* mailing list are sent to G.S.O. A letter expressing appreciation for the visit is sent to the host.

### ***Working with Students Attending Professional Schools***

Many local, area, and intergroup committees have gotten a jump start on informing professionals about A.A. by working with students in various professional disciplines. Most of the information that follows concerns working with medical students, but the same ideas may be used with students in such other areas as social work, law, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, education, law enforcement, and theology.

**Typical programs:** C.P.C. committees have contacted medical schools offering to send speakers and give presentations at the school, take students to meetings, and meet with them on a one-to-one basis.

The experience of a local central office is typical: The central office wrote to the deans of medical schools in the area, inviting students to learn more about the A.A. program by attending meetings or having an A.A. speaker come to the school. Students interested in attending open meetings were given a meeting list to select the groups they wanted to attend, and in turn the groups were notified to make sure they would welcome students and have members available to answer questions.

At a local hospital, an A.A. speaker is scheduled to talk to third-year students every five to six weeks. The format is a three-member presentation using “Information on Alcoholics Anonymous” as a guideline, distributing pamphlets and a current meeting list, and leaving time for a short version of each panelist’s story and for questions and answers.

**Shared experience on building relationships with students one-to-one:** Many staff physicians who treat alcoholics in rehabs and elsewhere have never been to a meeting other than those held at the hospital. Doctors in one area wanted to get a truer idea of what A.A. meetings really are, and the local intergroup set up a program of one-to-one sponsorship, which has since served as a model for other programs. The goal is to eradicate stereotypes about A.A. by giving a student first-hand experience of A.A. meetings and the chance to get to know an individual A.A. member.

The intergroup obtained a list of students, with names, addresses, and phone numbers, from the medical school’s administrative office, and at an orientation meeting, collected the same information from A.A. members who volunteered to serve as sponsors.

They assigned a team of A.A. callers to phone the volunteer members, asking them to take a student to a meeting within two weeks. Once committed, the A.A. member was given the student’s name and other information and asked to get in touch. Before attending a meeting, the student was given an envelope containing five or six pieces of A.A. literature, a meeting list, and a cover letter explaining the mechanics and purpose of the meeting. Afterwards, the member notified the intergroup office that the student had been to the meeting, and agreed to attend future orientation meetings for volunteers to share experience.

- The A.A. member should have a minimum of one or two years of sobriety, knowledge of the Traditions and service structure, and some service experience (group, intergroup or general service).
- Volunteers should contact the student promptly and let intergroup know of any difficulty.
- Since students have little free time, the meeting should be scheduled at their convenience.
- Students should attend open meetings only, preferably those the member is familiar with and where he or she is known. Avoid hospital, rehab or institution meetings.
- In order to help students experience a typical meeting, introduce them as medical students to the entire group after the meeting rather than before.
- One-to-one contact is important. Do not travel to the meeting with other A.A. friends.
- Let the students ask the questions; don’t tell them everything.
- When sharing a personal opinion, make it clear that you do not speak for A.A. as a whole.



## ***Approaching Professionals***

Many areas encourage individual A.A. members to approach professionals and share information about A.A. Some areas provide a packet for local members to help them. The packet often includes a guide letter directed to the A.A. member offering information on how to approach a professional as well as a letter to the professional, and a few pieces of A.A. literature. Samples of some of these are available from the C.P.C. desk at G.S.O.

Below are some pieces of A.A. literature that might be included in a packet directed to a specific profession. As committees become familiar with C.P.C. literature, they may make changes or additions that are more appropriate for professionals in their community.

**For Medical Professionals:** “A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional”; “Problems Other than Alcohol”; “The A.A. Member—Medications and Other Drugs”; “Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W., Co-founder of A.A.”

**For Legal Professionals:** “Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community”; “If You Are a Professional”; “Information on Alcoholics Anonymous.”

**For Clergy:** “A Member’s-Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous”; “Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community”; “Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous.”

**For Employers or Employee Assistance Professionals:** “Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community”; “Information on Alcoholics Anonymous”; “Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?”

As you conclude your visit with the professional, let them know that your committee would like to know how it could be more helpful, and ask if the professional would fill out this stamped and addressed postcard after you leave. Fill in the date of the meeting before handing over this card, which can be already stamped and addressed to your local C.P.C. Committee chair.

## ***Sample contact assessment postcard for professionals***

Date: _____	
<b>Thank you for meeting with us today!</b>	
1. Was the length of time we spent with you about right?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES or <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____
2. Will you be able to use the A.A. information and literature we provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
3. Do you now have a clearer understanding of what A.A. does and does not do?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
4. Overall, was meeting with the A.A. member valuable to your work?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
5. Based on today’s meeting, is there anything we can do better explain about A.A. to members of your profession?	
_____	
_____	
For CPC Committee Use:	
Contact was to doctor(s)/staff, Association, other: _____	

## ***Workshops***

**For A.A. members:** Often workshops are held during state or regional A.A. conventions, area assemblies, district or central office meetings, for the purpose of explaining the ways in which C.P.C. services enhance our ability to carry the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic. This type of workshop provides an opportunity to encourage A.A. members to share their sobriety and basic A.A. information with their doctor, lawyer, clergy person, former bartender, etc.

**For professional friends:** To explain how A.A. may be helpful to the people served by professionals, the C.P.C. Presentation Guidelines, page 13, can be used.

Sometimes C.P.C.s arrange gatherings of professional people, such as a breakfast or buffet luncheon with one or two speakers.

## ***Newsletters***

Some C.P.C.s publish regular newsletters to inform local A.A.s of their activities. Many committees distribute reports of their meetings to the district, area committee and delegate, and often send a copy to the C.P.C. desk at G.S.O. Area C.P.C. chairpersons often exchange information and progress reports with each other.

## ***Exhibits***

**Exhibits at national or international meetings of professional groups:** Exhibits at national or international sites are coordinated through the C.P.C. desk at G.S.O. Invitations arrive at the C.P.C. desk, and are reviewed by the trustees' C.P.C. Committee, which approves A.A.'s participation in specific national meetings.

With the agreement of the local C.P.C. committee, keeping the area delegate informed, A.A. members staff these exhibits. All costs and advance arrangements are handled by G.S.O., including shipping the C.P.C. traveling exhibit to the chairperson or responsible committee member.

Well ahead of the opening date, two outlines of "Suggestions for the Chairperson" and "Helpful Hints for A.A. Volunteers" staffing the booth are sent by G.S.O.

**At local, state or regional professional meetings:** Area or local C.P.C. committees learn of opportunities to staff a booth through contacts with professionals and "meeting planners," people who handle advance arrangements for larger meetings. Other resources for information on upcoming professional conferences or meetings are convention bureaus, chambers of commerce, and offices of professional societies.

When G.S.O. receives information on local or regional professional conferences, the details are sent to the local C.P.C. chairperson, along with a reminder that G.S.O. will ship appropriate literature to the committee, provided the request is received well in advance.

As with all committee services, the purpose is to carry the A.A. message to professionals who may be in contact with the still-suffering alcoholic. When staffing an A.A. exhibit or booth, this is done by displaying and distributing A.A. information; offering a "welcome" to people attending the meeting, and through open communications with other exhibitors. This often leads to other C.P.C. opportunities.

C.P.C. committee people also answer questions and assist visitors interested in filling out free subscription cards (from G.S.O.) for *About A.A.* Blue and white “Public Information” mailing labels (also from G.S.O.) may be filled out by interested visitors. When G.S.O. receives a completed label, the addressee is sent a letter of appreciation and a packet of basic A.A. literature.

**Advance planning:** Select the professional events the committee hopes to attend well in advance, then contact the meeting planner to learn location, dates, and possible exhibitor fees. Customarily, a table—sometimes with skirt, chairs, etc.—is supplied by the exhibit host. If there is a fee for exhibit space, you might inquire if there is a lower fee for non-profit groups such as A.A.

Exhibits are usually held in hotels or in large areas that allow for many booths to be set up side by side. The committee is assigned a booth in advance and the event planner sends details as to time for set up and dismantling, and the hours that the exhibit area will be open. Questions go to the meeting planner or contact person.

**Exhibit costs:** If possible, the committee’s budget should include funds for exhibit space fees for these events, literature for professional meetings, and small, unanticipated opportunities throughout the year.

**Portable exhibits:** A number of areas have built or purchased simple, professional—appearing exhibits for use by the C.P.C. (and often, P.I. and C.F.) committees. A set of four display panels may be purchased from G.S.O. (M-68, \$195.00). Contact other C.P.C. committees or G.S.O. for more information.

**Enlisting A.A. Volunteers:** Attend area assembly, district and intergroup meetings and announce C.P.C. commitment to exhibit, asking for A.A. volunteers for the dates of the event. Get names and phone numbers from prospective volunteers, and give your phone number to each.

Some C.P.C. committees find that a smooth-functioning exhibit staff is assured by getting all the A.A. participants together before the event and reminding them to dress neatly and to follow the basic examples in the “Fact Sheet” and the A.A. Traditions. A.A.’s presence at these meetings is often the first contact a professional may have with a recovering alcoholic. Because of this, some care must be given as to how we present ourselves. Familiarity with the pamphlet “Speaking At Non-A.A. Meetings,” as well as with the Traditions, is essential.

- The shifts of volunteers should be scheduled well in advance. Two at a time is often best so that no one A.A. is overburdened. A woman and man together works well, as does putting an experienced member with someone new to C.P.C.
- Send “reminder” notes to each A.A. who agreed to participate. Follow up with a phone call one or two days before the event.
- Transport and set up the exhibit and literature during hours designated by the host organization.
- Arrange literature (pamphlets, books, copies of *About A.A.*, meeting lists, Grapevine, La Viña and/or La Vigne copies) in an appealing manner for easy access by exhibit visitors. Literature racks are available through G.S.O.’s Conference-approved Literature

catalog. Keep additional supplies under the table to replenish the display.

- Be on time. Introduce yourselves to other exhibitors. Open communications with these friends often leads to other C.P.C. opportunities.
- Don't push. Remember: a cheerful smile and welcoming hand put most people at ease, and leaves a positive impression of our Fellowship.
- It's suggested that A.A. volunteers minimize obstacles between themselves and attendees. For instance, it's best to be near the front of the A.A. exhibit space and not allow the booth furnishings to be a barrier.
- When the event closes pack up exhibit supplies and literature. Send P.I. labels, *About A.A.* cards, and any special requests to G.S.O., attention C.P.C. desk.
- Leave the A.A. space in good order, looking as you would want the Fellowship to be remembered.
- Give feedback to the A.A. community the committee serves (area, district or intergroup).
- Be open to the next opportunity to carry our message through a professional person.

## **Guide Letters**

Many C.P.C. committees initiate contact with professionals through letters. The following is a summary of suggested content and enclosures for these mailings.

Most effective C.P.C. letters include some or all of the following elements:

- Information about A.A. in the form of the Preamble, summary paragraph or “Fact Sheet,” and appropriate literature samples;
- An offer to cooperate with the professional person or organization in carrying the message, accompanied by the name and/or address of an appropriate contact within the Fellowship;
- Information on the Traditions, especially those dealing with anonymity and cooperation without affiliation.

Depending on local needs, C.P.C. letters may be written to individuals, to professional schools and faculties or to groups such as doctors, clergy, correctional and treatment, professionals, educators, lawyers, and counselors of all types.

Guide Letters are available from G.S.O. electronically upon request. E-mail [cpc@aa.org](mailto:cpc@aa.org)

***Sample guide letters to various professionals***

June 10, 2004

Dr. John Doe (or other appropriate title)  
Box 954  
Any Town, State or Province (zip or postal code)

Dear Dr. Doe:

You may be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as A.A. It is possible you have (patients, students, clients, members of your congregation, etc.) with a drinking problem who could benefit from A.A., if they knew it could help them. Perhaps the Cooperation With the Professional Community program can help you get some of this information to them.

The attached Fact Sheet explains briefly what A.A. is and what it does. It points up the extraordinary influence professional people can bring to bear on the problem drinker. Should you have questions about A.A. you might like to ask of a recovering alcoholic, we can supply an A.A. contact who would be glad to answer your questions about A.A. personally. He or she is also available to introduce your alcoholic (patient, student, etc.) to our Fellowship.

If you are interested in receiving a packet of information, or being contacted by an A.A. member, please complete the enclosed card and mail it in the self-addressed envelope.

We just want you to know that we are available to you and those with whom you work.

Sincerely,

Jane S., Chairperson  
Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee

Enclosures: A.A. Fact Sheet  
Response Form and self-addressed envelope

### ***To Prosecutors and Police Departments***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

We of the \_\_\_\_\_ Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous request your permission to visit your headquarters to provide information about our program of recovery from alcoholism.

Alcoholics Anonymous has cooperated for many years with local DWI and other programs. Many members of A.A. were once in trouble with the law because of alcoholism. Today they are useful, productive citizens and safe drivers.

Alcoholics Anonymous is not affiliated with any other organization or institution. We want you to know that we are available to be of help to you.

Sincerely,

### ***To the Clergy***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

We of the \_\_\_\_\_ Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous would like to offer information about A.A., through you, to members of your congregation who may have a drinking problem. We know that you are in a unique position to have contact with and help the active alcoholic.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide fellowship of men and women who help each other to maintain sobriety through sharing their recovery experience with others.

The enclosed postcard returned to us with any or all of the boxes checked will be answered promptly with a phone call to arrange an answer to your request in the manner most convenient to you.

Sincerely,

## ***To Physicians***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

You may be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, and have patients with alcoholism problem, whom you may want to send to A.A. Perhaps we can help you help our fellow alcoholics. The attached Fact Sheet explains briefly what A.A. is and what it is not.

If you have questions about A.A., an A.A. member would be glad to talk with you. He or she is also available to introduce your alcoholic patient to our Fellowship.

For any of the pamphlets listed below, please check and return the list in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. We want you to know that the \_\_\_\_\_ Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous is here to be of service to you.

Sincerely.

## ***Postcard***

1. Would you be interested in having an A.A. member(s) speak to any of your individual members or groups? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Would you be interested in accompanying an A.A. member to an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous? (Open meetings are for alcoholics and nonalcoholics) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Would you like us to provide you with a schedule of A.A. meetings, dates, times, and locations? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Would you like us to provide you with an order form for A.A. literature? (We do have some no charge flyers for distribution.) \_\_\_\_\_



## ***To the Legal Community***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

As an attorney (judge), you may be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as A.A. You may also have clients (people who appear before you) who have a drinking problem and who could benefit from A.A.

This letter comes to you from the Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee of A.A., not as a request for anything, but as an offer of A.A.'s services to your clients who may have a drinking problem. You are in a unique position to have contact with and influence on what we call the "still-suffering alcoholic."

A.A. is composed of recovered alcoholics, and the primary purpose of our Fellowship is to help other alcoholics who wish to find and maintain sobriety. We have enclosed an "A.A. Fact Sheet" that will briefly explain what A.A. is, what it does, and what it does not do.

Much more information about A.A. is available through our literature. If you are interested in receiving a packet of information or being contacted by an A.A. member, please return the enclosed card by mail in the self-addressed envelope.

Should you have questions about A.A. that you might like to ask of an A.A. member, we can supply a contact who would be glad to respond to them. That person is also available to introduce your client to our Fellowship.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information and for letting us know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, Chair  
Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee

***Guide Letter Inviting Professional  
to Take Part in a Workshop***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_ Area/District/Central Office/Intergroup Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous will hold a workshop for A.A. members and others who are interested in helping alcoholics maintain sobriety through the A.A. program of recovery.

We would be delighted if you agreed to take part in a panel discussion on the subject of \_\_\_\_\_. This panel will be held from \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. on \_\_\_\_\_. Some of the other panelists will be \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. A preliminary program for this workshop is enclosed.

It is only through the kind cooperation of so many of our nonalcoholic friends like you that A.A. now has well over two million members in over 180 countries worldwide.

The \_\_\_\_\_ panel of our workshop would be greatly enhanced by the addition of your insight and professional expertise.

Please let us know by \_\_\_\_\_ if you will join us.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure: Preliminary program

***Using a slightly different approach, the body of another letter might contain the following wording:***

This letter comes to you from Alcoholics Anonymous, not as a request for anything, but as an offer of A.A. services through you to (your patients, clients, students, congregation members, etc.) who may have a drinking problem. Because of your involvement, you are in a unique position to have contact with what we call the “still-suffering alcoholic.”

The purpose of our A.A. Committee for Cooperation With the Professional Community is to be “friendly with our friends” in all walks of life, so that the A.A. message of personal recovery can reach more of those who need and desire our help.

Simply stated, Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide Fellowship of more than two million men and women who help each other maintain sobriety and who offer to share their recovery experience with others. Anyone who thinks he or she has a drinking problem is welcome at an A.A. meeting.

Much more information about A.A. is available in A.A. literature. The enclosed postcard lists a few of the available services in which you may be interested. This card, returned to us with any or all of the boxes checked, will be answered promptly with a phone call to arrange an answer to your request in the manner most convenient to you.

(This language may be tailored to meet the needs of a particular audience.)

The “Fact Sheet,” reproduced on the next page, clearly explains what A.A. does and does not do, and might be included with all mailings. Information in the “Fact Sheet” has successfully answered many questions about our Fellowship.

## **A.A. Fact Sheet**

### ***The Preamble of Alcoholics Anonymous***

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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### ***What A.A. Does***

Nonalcoholic guests are welcome at “open” A.A. meetings. Attendance at “closed” meetings is limited to those who are alcoholic or think they may have a drinking problem.

At meetings A.A. members share their recovery experience with anyone seeking help with a drinking problem, and give person-to-person services or “sponsorship” to the alcoholics coming to A.A.

The A.A. program, as set forth in the Twelve Steps to recovery, offers the alcoholic an opportunity to develop a satisfying way of life free from alcohol.

### ***What A.A. Does NOT Do***

1. Make medical or psychiatric diagnoses or prognoses, or offer advice.
2. Provide drying out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, housing, jobs, money or other welfare services.
3. Accept any money for its services or contributions from outside sources.
4. Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.
5. Engage in or support education, research, or professional treatment.

*Our recovery is based on sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other, that we may solve our common problem; more importantly, our continued sobriety depends upon helping others to recover from alcoholism.*

## **A.A. Web Site**

G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site, at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), is available in English, French and Spanish. We hope you will visit our home page and include information about it in your presentations to professionals.

The contents of the Web site include the following:

- The A.A. General Service Conference-approved A.A. Fact File.
- The Conference-approved pamphlets “A Message to Teenagers,” “A Newcomer Asks” and “Is A.A. for You?”
- List of Central Offices/Intergroups/Answering Services in U.S./Canada.
- List of international general service offices.
- Anonymity letter to the media.
- Information on A.A. (service piece).
- *About A.A.*, newsletter for professionals.
- A letter directed to professionals, which includes an e-mail response form for requesting additional information.
- A link to the A.A. Grapevine Web site where there is a special section for professionals.

The General Service Office contacts C.P.C. committees to act as a local resource to professionals who request additional information. A.A. experience indicates that this provides a valuable opportunity for C.P.C. committees to reach the sick alcoholic through cooperation with the professional community.

## Literature Guide

The front and back pockets of the C.P.C. Kit have samples of material especially useful for C.P.C. committee members. Here is an expanded list of A.A. information in three categories: basic guidance for members of C.P.C. committees; information useful for professionals; and literature for the people professionals serve. This material is available in English, French and Spanish.

### For C.P.C. Committee Members

Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings (P-40)	How A.A. Members Cooperate. . . (P-29)
C.P.C. Workbook (M-41)	A Member's-Eye View of A.A. (P-4)
Understanding Anonymity (P-47)	Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends (P-34)
Information on Alcoholics Anonymous (F-2)	Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W. (P-6)
A.A. Membership Survey (P-48)	

**A.A. Guidelines on:** C.P.C. Committees; Cooperating With Courts, D.W.I. & Similar Programs; Relationship Between A.A. and Al-Anon; For A.A. Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field; Public Information Committees; Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs.

### For Professionals

Understanding Anonymity (P-47)	Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends (P-34)
If You Are a Professional. . . (P-46)	A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional (P-23)
Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A. (P-25)	A.A. Membership Survey (P-48)
Problems Other Than Alcohol (P-35)	A Message to Corrections Professionals (P-20)
Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace? (P-54)	Information on Alcoholics Anonymous (F-2)
This Is A.A. (P-1)	
A.A. In Your Community (P-31)	

### For the People Professionals Serve

A.A. at a Glance (F-1)	Frequently Asked Questions About A.A. (P-2)
This Is A.A. (P-1)	A.A. for the Older Alcoholic— Never Too Late (P-22)
Is A.A. For Me? (P-36)	A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic (P-51)
A Brief Guide to A.A. (P-42)	A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic (P-32)
Too Young? (P-37)	A.A. for the Native North American (P-21)
Do You Think You're Different? (P-13)	The A.A. Grapevine, La Viña and La Vigne
Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life? (P-30)	
Problems Other than Alcohol (P-35)	
A Message to Teenagers (F-9)	
Is A.A. For You? (P-3)	

**Videos:** Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous; It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell; Carrying the Message Behind These Walls; Your A.A. General Service Office, the Grapevine, and the General Service Structure.

These publications are all listed, with brief descriptions and prices, in the Conference-approved Literature and Other Service Material catalog, which also includes literature for those with special needs. There is also a catalog of Grapevine material, including La Viña.

Most C.P.C. committees have found it helpful for each member to have a personal copy of this Cooperation With the Professional Community Workbook. G.S.O. furnishes a C.P.C. Kit to the area committee chairperson at no charge. Additional Kits and Workbooks may be purchased.







