

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN DO SOME SIMPLE BRIDGE-THE-GAP WORK

* * * * *

"The GAP" is between the door of any facility (when someone is released) and the doors of AA. Too many people FALL THROUGH THE GAP!!!

You can HELP.

* * * * *

The following is information from the A.A. General Service Conference approved pamphlet P-49:

"Part of Bridging the Gap between a treatment program", a prison, halfway house, detox center or any other type of facility "and A.A. is the Temporary Contact Program, which is designed to help the alcoholic in an alcoholism treatment program" or any other program "make that transition". (THE GAP)

"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" or other facility, " 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 to introduce newcomers to Alcoholics Anonymous."...

"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" or the facility he or she is being released from. "Your qualifications are experience as an alcoholic and recovery in A.A." ...
- Remember, the goal of both A.A. and the ... facility is the same -- the recovery of the alcoholic.
- Be familiar with the paper 'Information on Alcoholics Anonymous', particularly the section of what A.A. *does* and *does not* do.
- In all contacts or activities with ... 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 differences 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 of social services.
- *The professional 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 their rules. We are there to carry to 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." (See back page). "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!"
- 1) If you know of a facility where there is currently an A.A. meeting being taken in, but no BTG program, and you would like to set one up, please contact the Area BTG Chair.
 - 2) If you know of a facility where there is NO A.A. meeting being taken in and people are leaving there to go to A.A. but there is no BTG program and you would like to help get one set up, please contact the Area BTG Chair.
 - 3) And ... if you would like to volunteer to take someone to their first meeting, call the NE Central Service Office in Tulsa or the OKC Intergroup Office at the numbers below and tell them you would like to sign up for the BTG 12th Step List, or contact the State A.A. Office.

Area Bridge-the-Gap Chair

Bruce G.

bridge_the_gap@aaoklahoma.org

NE Central Service Office
(918) 627-2224

OKC Intergroup Office
(405) 524-1100

State A.A. Office
(405) 842-1200
secretary@aaoklahoma.org