

# Area 93 Bridging the Gap

## Volunteer Training Guidelines for Temporary Contact Volunteers

### Suggestions for Being a Temporary Contact

1. Be an AA member with at least one year of comfortable, stable sobriety, having worked the Steps and with the guidance of a sponsor.
2. Whenever possible, make direct contact with the newcomer while they are still at the facility—by phone, by visiting, or by attending a meeting with them inside.
3. Make every effort to attend at least one AA meeting together on the day of their release.
4. Accompany the newcomer to several meetings over the first one to two weeks, introducing them to other AA members, especially those with similar backgrounds or interests.
5. Share AA Conference-approved books, pamphlets, and a local meeting schedule.
6. Explain sponsorship and its importance. Share your own experience so the newcomer can identify with it. The AA pamphlet *“Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”* is a helpful reference.

### Purpose of a Temporary Contact

A Temporary Contact is an AA member who helps alcoholics leaving facilities—treatment centers, hospitals, or correctional institutions—make the transition to AA meetings in their local community.

This service benefits both the newcomer and the volunteer, keeping us close to our primary purpose: *“When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”*

**The goal is simple:** to introduce the newcomer to local AA meetings, making it easier for them to connect and feel welcomed.

### Guidelines for Service

#### Before Discharge

- You’ll receive the newcomer’s request for help from the Area or District Contact Coordinator.
- Reach out as soon as possible (phone, mail, or as permitted). Introduce yourself and arrange to meet.
- If working with an inmate, review the facility’s rules and the AA pamphlet *Corrections Correspondence (F-26)*.

#### Day of Discharge

- Whenever possible, meet the newcomer and attend an AA meeting with them that same day. This greatly increases the chance they’ll continue attending meetings.

#### Scheduling the Meeting

- Call the newcomer (guarding anonymity) to set a time.
- Picking them up at home is often more successful than meeting at the door of the meeting.

#### Pick Up

- Bring another AA member with you whenever possible, just as with other 12th Step calls.
- Carry literature—pamphlets like *“Information on Alcoholics Anonymous,” “AA at a Glance,”* or *“A Message to Teenagers”*—plus a local meeting schedule.

- Be on time.

### **En Route**

- Keep the conversation focused on recovery.
- Clarify that you are a Temporary Contact, not a sponsor, and explain the difference.

### **Before the Meeting**

- Introduce the newcomer to as many AA members as you can.
- Encourage them to get phone numbers.
- Make sure they receive a meeting schedule and explain what a “home group” is.

### **During the Meeting**

- Explain that there are no dues or fees in AA—though voluntary contributions are welcome.
- Remind them that sharing is optional, but it can help them connect with the group.

### **After the Meeting**

- If there's fellowship after the meeting, invite them along and help them feel included.
- Return Home
- Keep it simple: remind them of “**One Day at a Time.**”
- Offer a ride to another meeting soon—ideally within the next few days.

## **Helpful Hints**

- Confidentiality rules may limit contact before discharge. If possible, attend a facility meeting where the newcomer may be present.
- When calling a newcomer's home, protect anonymity. Do not identify yourself as an AA member unless you are speaking directly to them.
- If the newcomer declines or avoids contact after three attempts, your responsibility ends. Leave your number in case they decide to call later.
- If a nonalcoholic is mistakenly referred, gently explain what AA is—and is not. If appropriate, take them to an open meeting and suggest other sources of help.

## **Hazards – What A.A. Does Not Do**

- Do not solicit or pressure anyone to join AA
- Do not diagnose, provide medical advice, or counsel on medications.
- Do not provide food, housing, jobs, or money.
- Do not accept money for your service.
- Do not become a long-term chauffeur unless you freely choose to.
- Do not confuse this service with long-term sponsorship.
- Do not discuss treatment details—we have no opinion on outside issues.

**Remember:** the goal of both the treatment facility and AA is the same—*the recovery of the alcoholic.*

## **Follow-Up**

To strengthen the program, a Follow-Up Coordinator from the Area 93 Treatment/Bridging the Gap Committee may contact you for feedback. Your experience helps improve the program and ensures we continue carrying the message effectively.

**Adapted from Area 9 and Area 40 Bridging the Gap Workbooks.**