

# A.A.<sup>®</sup> Guidelines Cooperation with the Professional Community

from G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

A.A. Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members in various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). In keeping with our Tradition of autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an *informed* group conscience.

By action of the General Service Board, January 1970, the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) — a spin-off from the Public Information Committee — was developed. A similar Conference committee was formed the following year. Since that time, A.A. members in local areas have been responding to local need by establishing C.P.C. committees.

A.A. is considered by many professionals to be a valuable resource for alcoholics who want help. When there is a good working relationship between A.A. members in the community and paid alcoholism workers, the sick alcoholic is the winner — he or she gets the help needed from both.

We are not in competition with these non-A.A.s; we have our separate functions. A.A. is not in the business of education, research, medicine, counseling, treatment, prevention, or funding. We simply have a message to carry about a program of recovery for alcoholics — a program that works for hundreds of thousands who want it.

The professional can reach out to alcoholics — by education, counseling, and rehabilitative treatment — and can also be of aid through making the community aware of the millions still suffering from the progressive illness of alcoholism.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION, COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY, TREATMENT AND CORRECTIONS COMMITTEES**

The following descriptions of the responsibilities of P.I., C.P.C., Treatment and Corrections committees are given for purposes of clarification.

*P.I.* — The purpose of P.I. service work is to provide accurate A.A. information to the public when requested. P.I. committees visit schools, businesses and community meetings for this purpose. They also serve as resources for our friends in the local media, emphasizing our Traditions of anonymity, singleness of purpose and nonaffiliation, as well as offering A.A. public service announcements to radio and television stations.

*C.P.C.* — Members of these committees provide information about A.A. to those who have contact with alcoholics through their profession. This group includes healthcare, E.A.P. and H.R. professionals; educators; members of the clergy; lawyers; social workers; military professionals; government officials; and those working in the field of alcoholism. Information is provided about where we are, what we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do.

*Corrections and Treatment* — The purpose of Corrections, Treatment, or combined institutions committees, is to coordinate the work of individual members and groups who are interested in carrying our message of recovery to alcoholics in hospitals, alcoholism treatment

and rehabilitation centers, and correctional facilities.

In many areas, liaisons have been established among these committees — i.e., Corrections, Treatment, Accessibilities and P.I. committees send a liaison to C.P.C. committee meetings. There are many instances of overlapping responsibilities. It should be clearly established that A.A. committees are not in competition with each other. Local circumstances determine who does what.

## **GETTING STARTED**

One of the best ways to start your C.P.C. Twelfth Step work is to read the C.P.C. Workbook, which contains a bounty of information gathered from A.A.'s past experience in C.P.C. work. As an example, in many areas C.P.C. committees are organized as follows:

1. Area C.P.C. chairperson and co-chairperson elected or appointed by the area committee.
2. District C.P.C. chairperson and co-chairperson elected or selected in each district.
3. The P.I., Corrections, Treatment and C.P.C. committees each assign a member to attend meetings of the other three committees, thus maintaining communication and cooperation within A.A.
4. A budget figure from area committee funds is established and approved.
5. The chairperson of an area, district or intergroup (central office) C.P.C. committee is listed with the G.S.O. in New York.

Whether you work primarily through the area and district structure, through the local central office or intergroup, or your group, it is a good idea to have overall organization. If you don't, problems of communication, duplication of effort, and outright confusion will undoubtedly arise.

## **C.P.C. KIT AND PAMPHLETS**

The C.P.C. Kit contains information on all aspects of C.P.C. service, including the C.P.C. Workbook. The kit also includes guidelines, literature catalog, pamphlets, the DVD "A.A. Cooperation with the Professional Community" — which contains videos directed to H.R., E.A.P., Legal, Correctional and Healthcare professions — copies of *Box 4-5-9* (which may include a section on C.P.C. news) and *About A.A.*, our newsletter for professionals, along with a sign-up card. It is suggested that the basic "text" for C.P.C. committee members is the Conference-approved pamphlet "How A.A. Members Cooperate with Professionals."

Most C.P.C. committees have found it helpful for each member to have a personal copy of the 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.

The C.P.C. Workbook and C.P.C. Kit contents are available to read, download and print a single copy from G.S.O.'s A.A. website [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) through the "A.A. Service Committees" portal (click on "For A.A. Members" from the home page).

### **C.P.C. IN ACTION**

One suggestion is to work with one group of professionals at a time. When a list of professionals has been compiled, members of the C.P.C. committee make initial contact (by email, letter, phone or face-to-face), and offer to come and talk about what A.A. is and what it is not. Sample C.P.C. letters are available in the C.P.C. Workbook (pp. 25-35), which can be found on [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org). You might also offer to take a professional or student to an open A.A. meeting in your area or provide A.A. literature describing our A.A. program of recovery, stressing our eagerness to act as a resource to the recovering alcoholic. The *About A.A.* newsletter for professionals can be a great C.P.C. tool to have with you when meeting with professionals. Since back issues (1970–present) can be found online, it would be easy to select a few issues that the committee feels would be of interest to certain professionals, print them and have them copied. Some committees take a combination of: 1) issues that are targeted to the specific profession; and 2) those issues that might help the professional understand a certain aspect of A.A.

### **ANONYMITY IN C.P.C. SERVICE**

It is generally wise to clarify the A.A. Tradition of Anonymity with those arranging the meeting at which you are speaking, especially if you think a report of the meeting might be published, disseminated via social media or broadcast.

C.P.C. service workers frequently gain access to professional events and are sometimes asked to supply identification. This is not an anonymity break at a public level — you are simply following the rules of the particular facility you are entering. When staffing a booth, one's badge can read either "A.A. Volunteer" or "Sally — A.A. Volunteer," without any last names being used. The same holds true when C.P.C. committees give presentations on A.A. to professionals — only first names should be used.

When approaching C.P.C. service work, some A.A. members are concerned that revealing their identity to members of the professional community constitutes an anonymity break, since the Eleventh Tradition states that "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 of anonymity lies at the heart of A.A. and is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place in A.A. As the Twelfth Tradition states: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." Humility, expressed by anonymity, is the greatest safeguard that Alcoholics Anonymous can ever have.

However, the purpose of C.P.C. and Public Information (P.I.) service work is to share with the general public what A.A. is, what we do, and how to get in touch with us. Our hope is that an alcoholic, or a concerned friend or relative, who hears about A.A. will know that we offer a solution to alcoholism.

Our cofounder, Bill W., shared about anonymity in P.I. service in a

1946 Grapevine article (reprinted in the pamphlet "A.A. Tradition: How It Developed"): "In most places, but not all, it is customary for A.A.s to use their own names when speaking before public or semipublic gatherings. This is done to impress audiences that we no longer fear the stigma of alcoholism. If, however, newspaper reporters are present, they are earnestly requested not to use the names of any of the alcoholic speakers on the program." The general sense is that A.A. members remain anonymous at the public level involving all forms of media, but that the A.A. name itself (as well as phone numbers, websites, etc.) should be known, and that accurate and consistent information on A.A. needs to be made available.

### **PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES**

Area C.P.C. committees may request to be placed on the mailing list with community, state or area professional agencies. Specific suggestions and information about exhibiting at professional meetings is available from the General Service Office.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

See the C.P.C. Workbook for suggestions on presentations you might give in your community. Most C.P.C. committee members will be informed on A.A. and its history, and are able to give an accurate and positive impression of Alcoholics Anonymous. We stress our primary purpose and Traditions of nonaffiliation, self-support and anonymity. Please keep in touch with G.S.O. so that we may share your activities with others. The DVD "A.A. Cooperation with the Professional Community" — which contains videos directed to H.R., E.A.P., Legal, Correctional and Healthcare professions — could be shown at presentations to professionals. Professionals can also view or stream videos on their own digital devices from the G.S.O. website or acquire a DVD.

The C.P.C. desk has a PowerPoint presentation that can be adapted to local needs. A hardcopy of the slides with notes is included in the C.P.C. Kit. Email [cpc@aa.org](mailto:cpc@aa.org) to request an electronic copy.

### **STAFFING AN A.A. BOOTH**

Many C.P.C. committees are active in staffing "A.A. booths" at health fairs and other events in the communities they serve. The invitation to participate may come directly to the local C.P.C. committee or through the G.S.O. staff person on the C.P.C. desk. The local C.P.C. committee ascertains if taking part serves A.A.'s primary purpose. The invitation is acknowledged with appreciation whether or not the invitation can be accepted.

Many times, a simple table is provided by the organization hosting the function, and two or more committee members staff the booth. C.P.C. committees rotate this responsibility to assure that all have an opportunity to participate.

A.A. literature specifically for the public is set out on the table and offered to interested passersby, along with "C.P.C. mailing labels" from G.S.O. for those wishing more information. Soon after the event, completed mailing labels are sent to G.S.O., who sends information packets to each.

G.S.O. can help by sharing experience and by furnishing basic literature to the committee undertaking this service. It is vital that requests for special-event literature be received by G.S.O. in ample time to allow for packing and shipping — usually three weeks' notice is sufficient.

## LITERATURE

The Conference-approved Literature and Other Service Material catalog has a section on C.P.C. specific items. There is also a section of the catalog focused on Accessibilities, and much of the literature is also available in Spanish and French. When planning a meeting with professionals, committees carefully consider what literature to share. Some committees take a combination of literature targeted to the specific profession and literature that might help the professional understand certain aspects of A.A., along with general recovery literature oriented to the new member.

## BASIC C.P.C. LITERATURE

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

Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings	Many Paths to Spirituality
C.P.C. Workbook	A.A. Membership Survey
Understanding Anonymity	How A.A. Members Cooperate...
Information on Alcoholics Anonymous	A Member's-Eye View of A.A.

### For Professionals

Understanding Anonymity	A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional
If You Are a Professional...	A.A. as a Resource for Drug & Alcohol Court Professionals
Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A. Problems Other Than Alcohol	A.A. Membership Survey
Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace?	A Message to Corrections Professionals
This Is A.A.	Information on Alcoholics Anonymous
A.A. In Your Community	A.A. at a Glance
A.A. Fact File	AA Grapevine
A Brief Guide to A.A.	La Viña
The A.A. Member — Medications and Other Drugs	A.A. and the Armed Services

### For the People Professionals Serve

Young People and A.A.	A.A. for the Older Alcoholic
A.A. at a Glance	A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic
A Message to Teenagers	A Brief Guide to A.A.
This Is A.A.	Too Young?
Is A.A. for You?	Do You Think You're Different?
Women in A.A.	Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?
Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.	Problems Other Than Alcohol
LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.	A Newcomer Asks
A.A. for the Native North American	The "God" Word — Agnostic and Atheist Members in A.A.
A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues — and their sponsors	

*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; Accessibility for All Alcoholics.

*Videos:* *A.A. Cooperation with the Professional Community* — which contains segments directed to H.R., E.A.P., Legal, Correctional and Healthcare professions; and *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous*.

*Discount Packages:* G.S.O. has C.P.C. Discount Packages for sale to help C.P.C. committees with quantity purchases of basic A.A. information for the public. C.P.C. discount packages are available

in English, Spanish and French. For information about Discount Packages, please contact G.S.O., Grand Central Station, Box 459, New York, NY 10163, (212) 870-3400, or e-mail [cpc@aa.org](mailto:cpc@aa.org).

## A.A. WEBSITE

G.S.O.'s A.A. website ([www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)), which is available in English, Spanish and French, has been successful as a C.P.C. tool. We have received positive comments from many professionals interested in Alcoholics Anonymous. We invite you to visit the website and provide information about it in your C.P.C. presentations. Look for service material used in C.P.C. work in the portal labeled "Cooperation with the Professional Community Committees" in the "A.A. Service Committees" section (click on "For A.A. Members" from the home page.) Helpful contents of the website are:

- Link to "What Is A.A."
- A.A. Cooperation with the Professional Community videos directed to H.R., E.A.P., Legal, Correctional and Healthcare professions.
- The A.A. General Service Conference-approved A.A. Fact File.
- Conference-approved pamphlets and the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
- Link to search function to find closest A.A. office, answering service or website with meeting location information.
- List of Central Offices/Intergroups/Answering Services in U.S./Canada.
- List of international general service offices and intergroup/central offices.
- Anonymity letter and video to the media.
- Information on A.A. (service piece).
- The A.A. Guidelines.
- Link to AA Grapevine/La Viña website.
- "For Professionals" portal, which includes an email response form for requesting additional information.
- *About A.A.*, newsletter for professionals. Not only is the current issue available online, all issues since 1970 can be located at G.S.O.'s A.A. website organized by date or topic. Your committee is welcome to print copies of the newsletter from the website and make copies for C.P.C. events. Professionals and A.A. members can sign up to receive *About A.A.* (as well as other periodicals produced at this office) via email. Bringing a laptop or mobile device to presentations offers the opportunity for those interested to sign up on the spot. Go to G.S.O.'s A.A. website at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) and click the link on the homepage labeled "G.S.O. Newsletters" and follow directions.

The General Service Office contacts C.P.C. committees to act as a local resource to professionals who request additional information or help starting an A.A. meeting at their facility. A.A. experience indicates that this provides a valuable opportunity for C.P.C. committees to reach the still-suffering alcoholic through cooperation with the professional community.

