

Accessibilities
WORKBOOK

Accessibilities 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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*Some committees refer to themselves as Special Needs Committees. Although we may refer at times only to Accessibilities Committees, this Workbook is for any committee that serves A.A. members who may have personal barriers to receiving the A.A. message.

Introduction

*I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out
for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible.*

In line with A.A.'s Responsibility Declaration, this Workbook is designed to help Accessibilities Committees explore, develop and offer resources to make the Alcoholics Anonymous message and participation in our program of recovery available to everyone who reaches out for it.

While we all need to access, receive and carry the message of recovery and wish to have the same measure of privileges and responsibilities with regard to Twelfth Step work, sponsorship, and speaking at A.A. and non-A.A. meetings as other members, for some there are significant barriers that must be overcome to insure full participation in A.A.

For some A.A. members, a six-inch step can be an insurmountable obstacle. A locked access door, a blocked ramp or parking problem can make it impossible to get to a meeting. Some members are ill, homebound or living in retirement or convalescent homes; others have hearing or vision loss, learning, reading or information processing challenges; and still others are elderly, use wheelchairs, canes or have other mobility concerns. Literature may be hard to understand. Childcare issues may make it impossible to attend regular meetings. Remote geography or cultural differences may hinder contact with other members.

Accessibility issues apply to all alcoholics who have difficulties participating in Alcoholics Anonymous, whether those difficulties are mental, physical, geographic, cultural, ethnic, spiritual, or emotional.

Whatever the particular challenge to receiving the A.A. message may be, it is hoped that such barriers would never keep anyone from A.A. meetings, Twelve Step work or A.A. service.

So, what can be done to make A.A. readily accessible to all?

The following information is meant to assist those Accessibilities Committees interested in reaching out to remove the obstacles to participation that many members face and to insure that A.A. remains as inclusive as possible.

A wide variety of Accessibilities material is available that can help in this effort, including literature in Braille, American Sign Language (ASL), and easy-to-read pamphlets in English, as well as in other languages, in regular and large print. For a detailed list, information is provided at the end of this guide titled "A.A. Literature and Audio Visual Material for Accessibilities" with instructions for placing orders.

How To Get Started

A Few Suggestions on Getting Started

- When the need for an Accessibilities 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 or meetings can be utilized to do this. Extend a welcome to the D.C.M. or other area officers as well.

If practical, invite one or more A.A.s experienced in Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.), Public Information (P.I.) or Treatment service in nearby communities to attend early meetings to share how they got started.

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

- *Service Pamphlet:* “Serving All Alcoholics.”
- *A.A. Guidelines:* “Accessibility for All Alcoholics,” “Sharing the A.A. Message with the Alcoholic Who Is Deaf.”
- *Large-Print Recovery Pamphlets:* “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic,” “This is A.A.,” “Is A.A. For Me?,” “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.,” “The Twelve Steps Illustrated.”
- *Illustrated Recovery Pamphlets:* “Too Young?,” “What Happened to Joe,” “It Happened to Alice.”
- *Accessibilities Kit:* “Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs.”

- At the first meeting, after everyone has been introduced, ask experienced A.A. members to briefly share their suggestions for working together as a committee.
- Develop a committee membership list from those attending the meeting.
- A.A. 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 regularly scheduled dates and times for these meetings.
- Once the new committee members are comfortable with the basic Accessibilities literature, the committee can decide what activity is a priority for their A.A. community.

Note: Experience indicates that committee members respond enthusiastically to the success of a single project. Your first committee meetings may be devoted to choosing and completing a single project. Once the committee has positive experience with one activity, the committee’s group conscience is ready to consider additional service activities. “Keep it Simple” and “Good Orderly Direction” are slogans that are invaluable to service committees.

- Local Accessibilities Committees sometimes provide G.S.O. with copies of locally developed Accessibilities flyers, pamphlets, etc. G.S.O. is always interested in gathering local experience to be shared as a resource to other Accessibilities Committees.

Forming an Accessibilities Committee

Once you decide to form an Accessibilities Committee, it is a good idea to prioritize what the needs are in your A.A. community and identify A.A. members who are available to get the job done. It is also important for the committee to share with the Fellowship at as many levels as possible. In some instances, the first task for a committee is to inform the A.A. members in their area or district about what the Accessibilities Committee does and doesn't do. Some Accessibilities Committees share with one another by exchanging minutes of their meetings.

It is also helpful to share your activities and ideas with the General Service Office for possible inclusion in G.S.O.'s newsletter, *Box 4-5-9*. Accessibilities Committee members can reach out to other A.A.s through participation in their group's and other business meetings. Let the telephone answering service or intergroup/central office know how to reach the committee if they receive a request for an Accessibilities contact.

The A.A. program works when an alcoholic wants help and A.A. is on hand to give that help.

Qualifications for Committee Members

Experience suggests that solid sobriety, a knowledge of A.A. Traditions and dependability are the qualifications most needed to serve on Accessibilities Committees. The committee may include at least one A.A. member who acts as a liaison with the local intergroup/central office. Committee procedures and qualifications vary with each area and district.

It is always beneficial to include committee members who have accessibility concerns themselves and provide information for them and others in accessible formats. We all have a responsibility to carry the message to still-suffering alcoholics, and who better to reach underserved alcoholics than people who have lived with those same obstacles challenges while maintaining sobriety?

Qualifications for Area Chairpersons

In some areas the Accessibilities chairperson is appointed by the chairperson of the area general service committee; in other areas the chairperson is elected by assembly members. The chairperson generally serves a two-year term. Candidates for this office are usually required to have at least several years of current and continuous sobriety and experience in active committee work at the area and local levels.

Keeping Committee Members Informed

Regularly scheduled committee meetings help keep everyone informed of activities and commitments and also provide opportunities to share problems and solutions.

1. A notice to committee members about a forthcoming Accessibilities Committee meeting will improve attendance.

2. Minutes are an important record of the committee's discussions and group conscience decisions and also allow new members to become familiar with past committee actions and ideas. Such minutes should always be in accessible formats.
3. Area Accessibilities Committees may periodically distribute a newsletter as a means of sharing ideas with district and intergroup/central office Accessibilities Committees. Such newsletters should always be in accessible formats.

Working With Other Accessibilities Committees

There is a definite need for good communication between Accessibilities Committees, not only within general service areas and districts but throughout our service structure. Many areas, states, provinces and regions hold conventions, conferences and round-ups in addition to their assemblies. These are ideal times to plan special meetings or workshops for members of Accessibilities Committees.

Getting on the General Service Office's Mailing List for Accessibilities Committee Chairpersons

The General Service Office maintains a mailing list of committee chairpersons. G.S.O.'s Accessibilities desk distributes this list to new committee chairs in a welcome packet so new chairs are able to contact other committees to ask for experience, suggestions, etc. Also, G.S.O.'s Accessibilities desk sends reports to committee chairpersons with information about G.S.O.'s Accessibilities activities, as well as collected experience from local Accessibilities Committees.

It is the responsibility of the committee chairperson to pass along information received from G.S.O. to committee members. Once your committee has been formed and elections held, please send the following chairperson contact information to your area registrar or area secretary as well as to the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, 11th floor, New York, New York 10115; or email: access@aa.org.

- the chairperson's name and postal address
- telephone number and cell phone number (if available)
- e-mail address (if available)
- area and district number (or intergroup/central office).

Suggested Activities for Accessibilities Committees

In order to insure that the hand of A.A. is extended to all who reach out for it, here are some suggested activities that can help Accessibilities Committees carry the message effectively to A.A. groups, districts, area assemblies, etc.

- Create a list of the Accessibilities Committee's Twelve Step service priorities — pick one or two project ideas and focus on those goals.
- Coordinate Accessibilities workshops at the group, district or area level.

- Hold regular Accessibilities Committee meetings and prepare minutes of these meetings.
- Submit a request for an Accessibilities Committee budget from a group, district or area to support these Twelve Step service priorities.
- Conduct a survey of meetings that are accessible to people in wheelchairs and add this information to local meeting lists/“Where and Whens” (wheelchair accessibility includes both the entrance to the meeting and access to bathroom facilities).
- Conduct a survey of local, district or area meetings with American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation.
- Help arrange for American Sign Language interpreters at A.A. meetings.
- Videotape professional interpreters signing A.A. meetings, for posting on social media, local A.A. websites, or sharing with members who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing.
- Make A.A./Accessibilities informational presentations at schools for the Blind, the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, rehabilitation centers for people with brain damage and centers and schools for those with developmental disabilities.
- Work closely with Public Information (P.I.), Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.) and Cooperation With the Elder Community (C.E.C.) to inform the public and appropriate agencies that A.A. is accessible to alcoholics with physical, emotional and mental challenges.
- Arrange meetings for A.A. members who do not have access to regular A.A. meetings, e.g. in hospitals, rehabilitation centers for those with physical disabilities or challenges, residences for people with developmental disabilities.
- Compile and maintain a list of members who are willing to provide transportation to and from meetings and other A.A. functions.
- Have members of your committee or other volunteers read and record an A.A. book on tape for a member who is Blind or may no longer be able to hold a book.
- Take a meeting to homebound A.A. members along with two or more members of the Fellowship.
- Provide Accessibilities workshops and assistance to people with disabilities at conventions, conferences, service weekends, service meetings, special events, etc.
- Gather local information and identify outside local resources regarding accessibility requirements and options.
- Provide literature/information in formats that help people with emotional, mental or physical challenges to engage in carrying the A.A. message.
- Provide lists of local meetings that offer babysitting or other services, such as transportation, for single parents or other caregivers.

Suggestions for Working With an A.A. Member or Newcomer Who Is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

The following is sharing from a longtime A.A. member who is also an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter:

“In conversations with A.A. members who are interested in helping a Deaf person it is vital to treat the Deaf person with the same warmth as you would any other person who is new to A.A. or a visitor to your group. For example:

- Greet the person with a handshake.
- Escort the person to the coffee service area and offer them coffee or a soft drink if available.
- Write a note telling them that you and the group are happy they are here.
- When the meeting is finished give the person a newcomer packet, if available, or some literature and a meeting schedule.

“I also suggest becoming familiar with our literature on accessibilities and making sure that the group keeps such literature on-hand, and in a format that a person who is Deaf can use.

“I have recently asked several A.A. members if they would like to learn more about helping the Deaf person and learning some ASL. They are enthusiastic about the idea so I have been listing some items to cover in a future workshop:

1. Discuss the literature available for Deaf alcoholics, including service material and recent Grapevine issues featuring Accessibilities articles.
2. Show a portion of the ASL video, ‘Alcoholics Anonymous.’
3. Learn signs such as: A.A., sober, alcohol, problem, love, better, improve, serenity prayer, number signs 1 through 12, sobriety date, happiness-joy-sober, jail, hospital, time, one day, pay attention, hope, sponsor, meeting leader, peace, ask, etc.
4. Ask a Deaf person to share their experience, strength, and hope regarding any obstacles they may have faced in receiving the A.A. message.
5. Suggest using 3x5 cards for the Steps and prayers from *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
6. Include Deaf people on the workshop committee.”

Another member who is Hard-of-Hearing shared additional suggestions to facilitate communication that can help at both service and recovery meetings:

“Members can arrange meeting room chairs in a circle, not in straight lines. The more faces I can see, the better I can ‘hear’ the speakers. The better the lighting is in the room, the better I can see lips to read them. You can tap me lightly on the shoulder before you start to talk to me. In a group setting, you can occasionally tell me who is talking, or what the topic of conversation is. You can signal me if I start to speak while someone else is talking. You can turn off the fans to eliminate background noise.”

[AA Grapevine, September 2010]

Shared Experience From an A.A. Member/ Volunteer American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter

“My experience is that, although I am interpreting our A.A. program of recovery into American Sign Language, my service to a recovering Deaf person is the same as the help I provide to other recovering individuals. I explain the difference between closed and open meetings in case they want to bring another person to interpret that is not a member of A.A., a person bound by the professional confidentiality code.

“I have revealed my membership in A.A. to a local minister who is an active supporter of the Deaf community (his church provides special services to the Deaf). I keep him informed of local A.A. functions, such as A.A. group or individual anniversaries that are open to anyone interested in A.A. He and Deaf persons have attended these A.A. functions, where he has assisted me in interpreting. I also stay in touch with the local State office that assists Deaf people.

“I own a copy of the American Sign Language video *Alcoholics Anonymous* and found it very helpful in learning to properly interpret the contents in American Sign Language. I have loaned my copy to a Deaf person who has found it very helpful. Several other Deaf persons in my home state have found the video helpful as well.”

Suggestions for Working With the Elder Community

Extending the hand of A.A. to older alcoholics can offer hope to a population that is all too frequently isolated and fearful. The support and recovery that membership in A.A. brings can be the doorway to a new life — regardless of one’s age.

Alcoholism in older adults has been called the “invisible epidemic.” It has been estimated that up to 10 percent of the elderly adult population meet the criteria for alcohol abuse or dependence, but healthcare providers often mistake symptoms of alcoholism for dementia, depression or other problems.

Even when they ask for help, many older adults have difficulty getting to A.A. meetings; they may have trouble driving or walking, and shrinking social networks can sometimes mean that fewer friends are available to help them.

This is why elderly outreach programs have become so important within Alcoholics Anonymous.

The A.A. message can also be carried to professionals at social service agencies assisting elders, as well as elder care facilities, including retirement and convalescent homes. Many A.A. members reach out to elder alcoholics within one’s group, including those who need assistance getting to the meeting and participating in the meeting as well as those who become homebound. And remember, some of those elder alcoholics who need assistance may have long-term sobriety and can serve as valuable resources for the group – as sponsors and keepers of A.A. tradition and experience.

Shared Experience From an A.A. Member Working with Elder Alcoholics

“Reaching out to elderly alcoholics has been a passion of mine for a number of years. Partly it’s because of my own age — I’m 75 and I understand the challenges of staying sober while you are aging. In particular things like loss of health and mobility, financial insecurity, the death of loved ones. It isn’t easy.

“Forming an Accessibilities Committee is a good start. The committee can send out letters to health fairs and geriatric physicians and assisted living centers. I decided to focus on senior centers. Senior citizen centers are generally pretty easy to approach. Most of the staff let us put literature, Big Books and Grapevines in their libraries. We took panels into senior centers, for seniors and staff alike — sometimes they weren’t alcoholics, but knew that so-and-so was at home drinking too much.

“Another approach people can use is to start a Seniors in Sobriety (SIS) meeting, or at least designate certain meetings Senior Friendly (SF). Seniors isolate themselves, they don’t identify, they retreat, they decline. They need to know they are welcome. When I got sober it was the ‘meeting after the meeting’ that was so important, one alcoholic talking to another. This is what seniors need — another person to talk with about sobriety and these special challenges older people face.”

[Box 4-5-9, Winter 2015]

Whether extending the hand of A.A. to elders already sober in A.A. or to elder newcomers, Accessibilities Committees help insure A.A.’s program of recovery is available to anyone who has a desire to stop drinking, regardless of their age. Such service could include the following:

- Coordinating schedules and member participation to provide home meetings — in person, by phone, or over the Internet — for elderly or homebound members of A.A.
- Providing assistance and information to support transportation of the elderly to meetings, whether door-to-door or from the parking spot to a chair.
- Gathering and passing on local, shared experience for types of meeting formats used in elder care facilities, community senior centers, and home settings.
- Gathering and passing on local, shared experience for guidelines and suggestions for working within elder care facilities.
- Conducting workshops on any of the various topics that relate to this service area.
- Having a contact person who calls if someone has missed a few meetings, whether they are elderly or not. If they are sick or incapacitated in some way, the liaison can offer help to get them to meetings or have a meeting brought to them.

It is always beneficial to include committee members who have accessibility challenges and provide information for them and others in accessible formats.

Suggestions for Working With Parents or Other Caregivers

Getting to meetings and participating in other service-related A.A. activities can be difficult for parents with primary childcare responsibilities or those who have other caregiving responsibilities, such as taking care of a sick parent or family member. Accessibilities Committees can support such A.A. members in a number of ways:

- Organize and conduct local workshops on childcare at meetings;
- Research any legal issue that might be involved in setting up child-friendly meetings;
- Work with the local intergroup/central office to develop a list of meetings where kids are welcome or childcare is available;
- Develop a list of A.A. members willing to participate in phone meetings with parents/caregivers who cannot attend meetings in person;
- Provide single parents or other caregivers with a list of internet meetings.

Shared Experience From an A.A. Member on Childcare at Meetings

“As a newcomer, I was showered with love, attention, and mottos about ‘keep coming back, *no matter what!*’ I grew, matured, leveled out, and loved back while becoming a devoted member of my home group...

“When my baby was born, and my need for meetings was even greater, I began to run into a problem: children aren’t always welcome in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. That includes women’s groups!

“Financially and practically speaking, there are conditions to being a parent that are not unique to me that can challenge a meeting schedule. Childcare, for one, is very expensive. Many newly sober mothers have husbands who are in the program as well and have meeting schedule problems of their own. Still others are single parents with tight budgets...

“I decided to take positive action! I began a meeting we call Mothers in Sobriety. It is a closed, nonsmoking meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. We have everything every other meeting has, including the Twelve Steps, Traditions, coffee, and lots of love. We also have anywhere from two to twelve kids running around the room at any given time...

“Our format is simple. After the Steps are read, prayers prayed, announcements made, we pass out a basket of toys, paper, coloring books, crayons, cookies, and kisses for all. If things get too loud or crazy during the meeting someone takes the offending party for a walk, a hug, a visit to the powder room...

“We even have a rather special meeting time: 10:00 AM. We found that this is a good time for mothers and children alike. We are fresher and calmer at this time than at the usual meeting times.”

[AA Grapevine, September 1987]

Suggestions for Working With Underserved or Remote Communities

Many A.A. members live in underserved or remote communities — communities that are difficult to reach because of the geography, language or culture. It might be a community that is far away, or one that is right around the corner; one that is comfortable using English-language resources or one that is not. It could be any number of groups of people who have frequently been underserved.

In areas where these populations are not being reached, Accessibilities Committees may support such A.A. members in a number of ways:

- Organize regular telephone/teleconferencing/video conferencing meetings with members in remote communities for both recovery and service meetings;
- Coordinate with C.P.C./P.I. committees to develop and access communication vehicles in these communities, such as radio and television services, which can help carry the message to underserved communities or remote locations;
- Identify familiar community resources within specific ethnic and cultural communities (such as local media outlets, places of worship, medical providers, social clubs, schools) and coordinate with C.P.C./P.I. committees to provide such culturally-significant targets with PSAs, A.A. literature and information;
- Identify individual community leaders in ethnic/cultural communities and coordinate with C.P.C./P.I. efforts to provide them with basic information about A.A. and establish ongoing communication;
- Make sure there is an A.A. presence in underserved areas — consider starting meetings in communities where none exist;
- Work directly with existing members in underserved communities to take regular A.A. meetings onto Native American reservations, into inner city communities, special language enclaves, remote areas, or help set up online meetings and mobile collaborations;
- Insure that A.A. members in remote areas are aware of the *Loners/Internationalist Meeting (LIM)*, which prints correspondence from A.A. members in isolated areas, at sea, or home- or hospital-bound;
- Keep local members informed regarding Regional or Local Forums or other A.A. service events that may be occurring in their areas;
- Provide regular reports — in accessible formats — of service workshops, district meetings, and other service information that will help keep these areas connected to the whole of A.A.

Shared Experience From an A.A. Member On Working with Remote Communities

“Inspired by a suggestion brought forth at our latest Eastern Canada Regional Forum, our committee is now adopting groups in these communities by sending them A.A. books and pamphlets, old speaker tapes, and past issues of the Grapevine as well as new subscriptions. We also send them flyers of upcoming events in our area and give them the names of A.A.s who are willing to be telephone buddies (and sometimes even temporary sponsors), so they can have someone else to talk to outside of their small group. I’m being told by these members that they no longer feel isolated — they feel very much a part of our area.”

[AA Grapevine, February 2002]

Other challenges in carrying the message to underserved populations can relate to culture and language.

According to a local Native American newsletter, Native Americans are dying at twice the average rate from the spiritual malady known as alcoholism. “Every vision, every hope, every new beginning needs to be held on to and nurtured in order to bring recovery into the grasp of the people dying out there,” the newsletter said. “Every one of us who has experienced that vision of recovery, unity, and service has a responsibility to carry it to the next suffering alcoholic, whether they live on a remote reservation or in the middle of the big city.”

Another member shared additional experience regarding language and cultural challenges.

“First, sometimes newcomers think that they must choose between A.A.’s program of recovery and their native cultural and spiritual practices.

“Second, because communities are small and everyone knows one another, maintaining privacy is, at times, a problem. When confidences are broken, people are less likely to support the group and attend A.A. meetings on the reservation.

“Finally, A.A.’s newness on some reservations results in a shortage of experienced sponsorship for newcomers. Alcoholics Anonymous on many reservations is young in years of recovery, as well as in years of service. This can contribute to a lack of experienced, strong sponsorship for newcomers arriving from treatment centers. Meetings can tend to become open discussion meetings because of lack of knowledge about A.A.’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Reservation groups and meetings need support from A.A.s from outside the reservation.”

[AA Grapevine, September 2006]

Workshops and Presentations

Many Accessibilities Committees have found that workshops — taking a hard look at local needs, opportunities and attitudes, as well as the Traditions and service structure—are fine tools for exploring ideas and settling on methods for carrying the A.A. message to alcoholics with physical, emotional and mental challenges.

Other kinds of brief presentations on Accessibilities could serve the same purpose. For example, sharing excerpts from the A.A. Guidelines, material from this Workbook, from *Box 4-5-9* or the Grapevine, might spark ideas for a question and answer session.

A discussion period, in which the entire group breaks up into smaller groups, could focus on the following topics (or topics of your own choosing):

1. Discuss forming an Accessibilities Committee.
2. Review ways of reaching professionals who work with people who have physical, emotional and mental challenges.
3. Share ideas on connecting alcoholics in local facilities for those with physical or developmental disabilities with local A.A. groups.
4. List ways of attracting members to this type of Twelfth Step service.
5. Discuss appropriate A.A. literature and audio/visual resources.
6. Discuss the Grapevine as a tool for carrying the A.A. message into local facilities that serve clients with physical or developmental disabilities or other challenges that keep them from receiving the A.A. message.

Presentations to Professionals or Those With Emotional, Mental or Physical Challenges

Presentations by A.A. members generally follow an outline that explains what A.A. is and is not, where you can find A.A., and what to expect. For example, many people have seen an A.A. meeting portrayed on television and they assume that attendees must stand up and speak. It is helpful to reassure a potential newcomer or to help a professional understand that newcomers speak only if they want to and that it is possible to sit quietly in an A.A. meeting with no pressure to participate.

In addition to a response to a specific request, regularly scheduled presentations may be set up for either clients or staff at a facility. A recurring presentation is usually coordinated through a local or area Accessibilities Committee. Such presentations are adapted to meet the needs of the attendees. The goal of a presentation to professionals is to impart knowledge about A.A., as well as to foster a cooperative attitude between the facility administration, staff and A.A. The pamphlet “Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings” may be a helpful resource. If this type of presentation is new to you, you may wish to consult with your local Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.) or Public Information (P.I.) Committee.

Some basic guidelines:

1. Familiarize yourself with the A.A. literature that relates to accessibilities especially the Accessibilities Workbook and a service piece (F-107) “Serving Alcoholics with Special Needs.”

2. Make brief notes on the topics to be covered. Talk about A.A., not your personal problems and experiences. Never comment on facility policies or practices!
3. Allocate a certain amount of time to each segment of your presentation. Then... trim it down! Allow time for questions and answers. It's better to finish early than to try to convey too much information too quickly in the presentation. You can always come back to a topic or discussion of interest to your listeners. Just as in A.A. meetings, it is helpful to encourage sharing from participants.
4. Work with other members of the Accessibilities Committee or your group in preparing for this presentation. It may be helpful for you to run through or even "rehearse" this presentation a few times.

Suggestions from successful presentations to medical and healthcare professionals:

1. Work with members of the Accessibilities Committee or with your group. It may be helpful for you to run through or even rehearse the presentation the first few times.
2. Be on time, well-groomed, and courteous.
3. Introduce A.A. and yourself as a resource with a desire to help the alcoholic with physical, emotional and mental challenges, but with no opinion on the facility's policies.
4. Distribute appropriate literature.
5. Invite the facility staff to attend open A.A. meetings. Your local C.P.C. committee may have a program in place for this purpose.
6. Offer to come back for other presentations/discussions to help meet their goals.
7. Remember that this, too, is basic Twelfth Step work. The professionals you are sharing with touch the lives of many alcoholics with different challenges. You can help them to inform their patients about A.A. as a resource.

And if you have any helpful comments or suggestions, please contact the Accessibilities Coordinator at G.S.O. (access@aa.org).

Presentations to people with physical, emotional or mental challenges who are in a facility

Some basic guidelines:

1. Remember that this is basic Twelfth Step work. The goal of A.A. is the *recovery of the alcoholic*.
2. Avoid drunkalogues. Keep comments strictly to A.A.-related matters. Do not comment on the facility's policies or practices!
3. Familiarize yourself with the appropriate literature before your presentation.
4. Work with members of the Accessibilities Committee or with your group. Maybe even rehearse the presentation the first few times.

5. Provide copies of the following Conference-approved pamphlets if appropriate: “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship,” “Where Do I Go from Here?,” “A.A. at a Glance,” and the large-print pamphlets: “Do You Think You’re Different?,” “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic,” “This is A.A.,” “Is A.A. for Me?,” and “The Twelve Steps Illustrated.” You should also provide copies of a local A.A. meeting list or directory that has information about accessibilities.
6. Always remember that you are representing Alcoholics Anonymous. For many in your audience, this will be their first impression of Alcoholics Anonymous. Make it a good one!

A suggested presentation outline:

1. **Introduction:** Why you’re there (to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous; explain what A.A. is and what it is not).
2. Read and explain the A.A. Preamble.
3. Mention the local A.A. meeting list (with information about accessibilities) and the worldwide availability of A.A.
4. Share about what a newcomer may expect in A.A. — anonymity, the home group, sponsorship, fellowship, and service.
5. Share about relevant A.A. literature: books, pamphlets, videos, tapes, the Grapevine, La Viña, etc., and where they may be obtained.
6. Always try to leave time for a general question and answer session. Stick to A.A. and your own experience. Steer discussion away from legal or any other outside issues.
7. Thank you and close.

Suggested card or flyer:

You may want to leave the following information on a card or flyer so that attendees can easily contact your committee:

For additional information on Alcoholics Anonymous and how we can help:

Contact Your Local or Area Accessibilities Committee or Local Intergroup or Central Office at:

Or: General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459
New York, NY 10163
Phone: (212) 870-3400
E-mail: access@aa.org
Fax: 212-870-3003

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS ACCESSIBILITIES WORKSHOP



SERVICE IN MOTION



**Saturday November 17, 2007
2:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

- 2:00 p.m. Chairman Bill S. Opens the meeting with a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer. Read “Why we need a Conference.”**
- 2:15 p.m. History of the Accessibilities Committee in Northeast Texas and the Service Structure — Louis P.**
- 2:35 p.m. How the Traditions relate to Accessibilities — Lois W.**
- 2:50 p.m. The Needs of Members who are Blind or visually impaired — Paul**
- 3:10 p.m. Snacks/Smoke and Fellowship**
- 3:30 p.m. The Needs of Members who are Hard of Hearing — Olga R.**
- 3:50 p.m. The Needs of Members who have Physical Challenges — Kathy F.**
- 4:10 p.m. What About the A.A. member who cannot read or write? — Randy R.**
- 4:30 p.m. Snacks/Smoke and Fellowship**
- 4:50 p.m. Ask it Basket with questions and answers — Bill S.**
- 6:00 - 6:30 p.m. Close with Lord’s Prayer, Clean up group, go home**

****All meetings will have Sign Language translation provided****

OUR 12TH STEP RESPONSIBILITY— ARE WE GOING TO ANY LENGTH?

Accessibilities Share-A-Day 2016 ASL Interpreted

**Saturday October 20th, 2016
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
(9:30 a.m Registration, Breakfast)**

Wheelchair accessible facility and entire program ASL interpreted.

Program

Time	Item	Presenter
9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Registration & Hospitality	Naomi D. & Susan F.
10:00 – 10:10 a.m.	Welcome Reading of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions	Janine Marilyn P.
10:10 – 11:00 a.m.	1st Panel Workshop “Going to Any Lengths to Get Sober” (ESH of Those Who Came Into the Program with Accessibility Challenges)	Speaker: Ray, Nassau Speaker: Cecil— We Can Group Sharing from the floor/ and/or Q&A
	BREAK	
11:10 – 12:00 p.m.	2nd Panel Workshop: “Going to Any Lengths to Stay Sober” (ESH of Those Who later Developed Accessibility Challenges In Sobriety)	Moderator: David Speaker: Louise, Man. Speaker: Louis, Nassau Sharing/Q&A
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH	
1:00 – 1:10 p.m.	Brief recapturing of an experience Cookie had with a Deaf Member at Convention 20 years ago where 1st ASL interpreters were hired	Speaker: Cookie S.
1:10 – 2:00 p.m.	General Service Office (GSO) Speaker — Liaison for Accessibilities	Moderator: Janine Speaker: Valerie Sharing/Q&A
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Big Meeting & Sobriety Countdown	Countdown: Janine W. Main Speaker: Susan F.

Sample Letter Inviting Professional to Attend a Workshop

Dear _____,

The _____ Area/District/Central Office/Intergroup Accessibilities Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous will hold a workshop for A.A. members and others who are interested in helping alcoholics with mental, physical or emotional challenges maintain sobriety through A.A.'s program of recovery.

We would be delighted if you join us on _____ from _____ a.m. to _____ a.m. A preliminary program for this workshop is enclosed.

It is only through the kind support of so many of our nonalcoholic friends like you that A.A. now has well over two million members in over 180 countries worldwide. We look forward to this opportunity to meet you and share information about A.A.

Please let us know by _____ if you will join us.

Sincerely yours,

Jane S., Chairperson
A.A. Accessibilities Committee

Enclosures: Preliminary program
Response Form and self-addressed envelope

Sample Letter to Various Facilities

Dear _____,

You may be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as A.A. It is possible you have patients or clients with a drinking problem who might be interested in learning about A.A. Our A.A. Accessibilities Committee members are available to provide information about A.A. at your convenience.

The enclosed flyer, "A.A. at a Glance," explains briefly what A.A. is and what it does. We can arrange for an A.A. contact to answer your questions about A.A. or to introduce your alcoholic patient or client to our fellowship. We are also available to make presentations about A.A. to your staff, patients or clients.

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

We just want you to know that we are available as a resource to you and to those whom you serve.

Sincerely,

Jane S., Chairperson
A.A. Accessibilities Committee

Enclosures: "A.A. at a Glance"
Response Form and self-addressed envelope

**Sample Letter to Professionals,
Administrators at Schools for the Blind, Deaf,
Hard-of-Hearing or Developmentally Disabled**

Dear _____,

You may be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as A.A. We of the _____ A.A. Accessibilities Committee recognize that there are some alcoholics who face physical challenges on a daily basis. It is possible you have students (patients or clients), etc. with a drinking problem who might benefit from A.A.'s program of recovery. We would welcome the opportunity to provide information about A.A. or about how our committee is available to try to help alcoholics have access to A.A. in our community regardless of physical challenges.

The attached flyer, "A.A. at a Glance," explains briefly what A.A. is and what it does. We can arrange for an A.A. contact to answer your questions about A.A. or to introduce your alcoholic student, patient, client, etc. to our fellowship. We are also available to make presentations about A.A. to your students, staff, patients or clients.

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

We just want you to know that we are available as a resource to you and to those whom you serve.

Sincerely,

Jane S., Chairperson
A.A. Accessibilities Committee

Enclosures: "A.A. at a Glance"
Response Form and self-addressed envelope

Accessibilities Kit Enclosures

(Literature, Guidelines, Collected Experience)

The Accessibilities Kit is available to area chairs and the Accessibilities Workbook is available to district chairs. G.S.O. mails the Kit or Workbook, with a welcome letter, when a committee chair or local contact is added to G.S.O.'s mailing list.

1. *Service Piece*: "Serving All Alcoholics."
2. *A.A. Guidelines*: Sharing the A.A. Message with the Alcoholic Who Is Deaf; Accessibility for All Alcoholics.
3. *Suggested Accessibilities Committee Activities*
4. *Large-Print Pamphlets*: "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic," "This is A.A.," "Is A.A. For Me?," "44 Questions," "The Twelve Steps Illustrated."
5. *Illustrated Pamphlets*: "Too Young?," "What Happened to Joe?," "It Happened To Alice."
6. *About A.A.* newsletter, recent article.
7. "How It Works."
8. *Loners-Internationalist Meeting (LIM)* Correspondence Service information sheet.
9. *Box 4-5-9* and Grapevine recent related articles.
10. A.A. material translated for American Sign Language (ASL) signing purposes.
11. A.A. Conference-Approved Literature catalog.
12. Accessibilities Checklist.

Literature for Accessibilities Committees

A.A. Guidelines

Accessibility for All Alcoholics (MG-16)

Sharing the A.A. Message with the Alcoholic Who Is Deaf (MG-13)

Braille

Alcoholics Anonymous (M-34)

Fourth Edition of the Big Book, A.A.'s basic text.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (M-35)

Bill W.'s 24 essays on the Steps and the Traditions.

Daily Reflections: A Book of Reflections by A.A. Members for A.A. Members (M-50)

A.A.s reflect on favorite quotations from A.A. literature.

A reading for each day of the year.

"This is A.A." (M-63)

Introductory pamphlet describing people in A.A. and what they have learned about alcoholism.

"Is A.A. For You?" (M-64)

Symptoms of alcoholism are summed up in 12 questions most A.A.s had to answer to identify themselves as alcoholics.

"Frequently Asked Questions About A.A." (M-65)

Answers the questions most frequently asked about A.A. by alcoholics seeking help, as well as by their families.

Audio Cassettes and CD-ROMS

Alcoholics Anonymous (M-81)

Audio version of the Big Book on 16 CDs in case. Includes Fourth Edition stories.

Alcoholics Anonymous (M-81A)

Abridged version of Big Book on CD-ROM.

Alcoholics Anonymous (MB-1A)

Complete Fourth Edition on 14 cassette tapes.

Alcoholics Anonymous (MB-1)

A reading of the first 11 chapters and the first two stories.

A series of seven cassette tapes in a book-like binder.

Alcoholics Anonymous (M-70)

Text version of the Big Book on CD-ROM. 3 CDs in case.

Fourth Edition stories included.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions on CDs (M-83)

The Twelve and Twelve on six CDs, containing all the material found in the book version of the Twelve and Twelve. Comes with table of contents booklet.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (M-83B)

Same as M-83, but with booklet in Braille and with Braille tabs on CD sleeves.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (MB-2)

Five cassette tapes in a book-like binder.

A.A. for the Alcoholic With Special Needs (M-93)

Audio CD of stories from A.A.s who are hearing and visually impaired, housebound for various illnesses or other disabilities.

A.A. Comes of Age on CD (M-84)

Bill W. tells how A.A. started, how the Steps and Traditions evolved, and how the A.A. Fellowship grew and spread overseas.

Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions on CD (M-89)

Soundtrack of video VS-20.

Three Legacies, By Bill on CD (M-87)

Co-founder's talk on Recovery, Unity and Service.

Voices of our Co-Founders on CD (M-88)

Five excerpts from different talks given by Dr. Bob and Bill W. 28 mins.

Living Sober (MB-7)

Four cassette tapes on methods A.A. members have used to stay sober. CD (M-85)

Pioneers of A.A. (MB-4)

Three audio cassette tapes of the Pioneers' Stories in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Third Edition. CD (M-90)

"A Brief Guide to A.A." on CD (M-91)

Recording of several Conference-approved pamphlets, such as A Brief Guide to A.A.; Is A.A. for Me?; This is A.A.; plus the A.A. Preamble; Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions; and recovery stories taken from Young People and A.A. and the Third Edition of the Big Book. 90 mins.

Large Print

Alcoholics Anonymous (B-16)

Soft-cover, 7" x 10¼", in type size recommended as suitable for the visually handicapped.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (B-14)

Soft-cover, 7" x 10¼", in type size recommended as suitable for the visually handicapped.

Living Sober (B-25)

Came to Believe (B-26)

As Bill Sees It (B-27)

“This is A.A.” (P-56)

“Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.” (P-57)

“A.A. for the Older Alcoholic—Never Too Late” (P-22)

Addresses the older alcoholic, with eight stories of men and women who came to A.A. after the age of 60.

“How it Works” (P-10)

An excerpt in large type from Chapter 5 of the Big Book.

The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service (BM-33)

Both in a single booklet. The Manual opens with a history of A.A. services; explains the Conference structure and its year-round importance; includes the Conference Charter and General Service Board Bylaws. The Concepts—principles of service that have emerged from A.A.’s service accomplishments and mistakes since its beginning—are set forth by Bill W.

Daily Reflections (B-19)

A reading for each day of the year.

American Sign Language

Alcoholics Anonymous (VS-1)

Five volume ½" VHS video for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. Contains the first 11 chapters, “Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,” the Forwards, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” and the Appendices. Packaged in attractive blue slipcase.

Alcoholics Anonymous DVD (DV-11)

Three-volume DVD (see description of contents above).

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (VS-3)

Five volume ½" video (in slipcase) for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions DVD (DV-12)

A.A. for the Alcoholic With Special Needs (DV-17)

This DVD includes the experience of A.A. members who are hearing and visually impaired, housebound, chronically ill or disabled due to brain damage or stroke. Their stories tell how they found A.A. and are living new and productive lives free from alcohol.

Videos

Bill’s Own Story (VS-21)

½" VHS. (For use within A.A. only). Co-founder Bill W. tells of his drinking and recovery. 60 mins. DVD (DV-04)

Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions (VS-20)

½" VHS. (For use within A.A. only). Bill W. tells how the principles safeguarding A.A. unity developed. 60 mins. DVD (DV-05)

Videos (subtitled)

Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous (DV-09)

DVD, English only. Explains the principles of A.A.: what A.A. is and isn't, primary purpose, sponsorship, home group, the Steps and Traditions and basic recovery tools. 15 mins.

A.A. Videos for Young People (DV-10)

A collection of four videos, by A.A. members in their teens and early twenties, discussing their experiences in A.A.

*Your A.A. General Service Office, The Grapevine and
The General Service Structure* (VS-24)

½" VHS. 22 mins. DVD (DV-07)

Illustrated, Easy-To-Read Literature

"Is A.A. for Me?" (P-36)

Based on the 12 questions in "Is A.A. For You?", this 32-page pamphlet is an illustrated, easy-to-read version.

"Twelve Steps Illustrated" (P-55)

An easy-to-read version of A.A.'s Twelve Steps. Steps appear at top of each page with simplified text under illustration.

"What Happened to Joe" (P-38)

Story of a young construction worker and his drinking problem, told in brightly colored "comic book" style.

"It Happened to Alice" (P-39)

Easy-to-read "comic book" style pamphlet for women alcoholics.

"Too Young?" (P-37)

With a full-color cover, this cartoon-format pamphlet speaks to teenagers in their own language, telling the varied drinking stories of six young people (13 to 18) and showing their welcome to A.A.

"A Message to Teenagers" (F-9)

Flyer adapted from the pamphlet "Too Young?"; for P.I. in schools.

"It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" (P-33)

An illustrated pamphlet which presents the experience of seven inmates who found A.A. while in prison. It also offers suggested do's and don'ts for staying sober after release.

Miscellaneous

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (M-67)

One 3.5" diskette that runs in Microsoft Windows® with four megabytes hard-disk space. Fully word searchable and hyperlinked.

“Directory of Central Offices, Intergroups and Answering Services
for the United States and Canada” (F-25)
Indicating the offices with TTY/TDD equipment.

“Serving All Alcoholics” (F-107)

A service piece in leaflet format for members interested in carrying the message
to alcoholics who have physical, emotional and mental barriers to accessing the
program of A.A.

Note: The following A.A. Conference-approved literature has been revised so that it can
be easily read by people who have been Deaf since birth or early childhood or for signing
purposes:

The Serenity Prayer

“The Twelve Steps”

“The Twelve Traditions” (short form)

“The Twelve Traditions” (long form)

“How It Works”

“A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous”

“Is A.A. For You?”

“A Deaf Newcomer Asks”

Note: To obtain a list of resources which provide A.A. Conference-approved literature in
Braille, American Sign Language (ASL) and on audio or for further information write
to:

General Service Office
Attn: Accessibilities
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Or:

Phone: (212) 870-3400
E-mail: access@aa.org
G.S.O.'s website: aa.org

A.A. Grapevine and La Viña

A.A.'s magazines, the Grapevine and La Viña, are excellent tools of recovery and support for alcoholics with diverse needs. Often called A.A.'s "meetings in print," they bring sharing about all stages of recovery, including staying sober through tough times, to alcoholics' homes every month, which can be helpful to those who cannot go to meetings. The Grapevine's large-print and audio editions of *The Language of the Heart* and *Best of Bill* and Spanish and English-language CDs on topics such as emotional sobriety and spiritual awakenings can be useful to those who have difficulty reading. Each issue of the Grapevine is recorded every month and is available online at www.aagrapevine.org.

To order A.A. Grapevine material, contact A.A. Grapevine customer service at 800-631-6025 (toll-free) from U.S. or at 818-487-2091 from non-U.S. locations. Email: customerservice@aagrapevine.org.

