

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Screeners should not return a call by initially identifying themselves as a member of AA. They should ask, by name, for the person who placed the call, then provide identification.

Don't insist on making the caller give his or her full name (we are anonymous).

Try to determine the caller's condition and/or needs.

Don't argue with the caller, if you are criticized, tell the caller you are acting on the instruction of the screener committee, which makes policy for handling calls.

Don't give the caller your personal telephone number.

Remember that alcoholics and their families are sick people and dealing with them can often be frustrating (remember when).

If it is determined that the caller is serious about getting help, find a volunteer from the 12th step list as quickly as possible and give them the caller's phone number or other details as necessary.

It may be advisable to have another AA member to talk to the caller while help is being sought from 12th step volunteers so the prospect isn't "lost" in waiting.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact your local intergroup or central office.

12 Step Suggestions

Be available to carry the message. Call back promptly to arrange your visit. Get directions.

Never go alone. Always call and get someone else to go with you.

Women generally call on women. Men on men. Look neat and presentable. You represent recovery in AA.

Be patient, compassionate and listen. Share your experiences and your feelings of loneliness, hopelessness, worthlessness and confusion before coming to AA.

Explain the 3-fold disease. Emphasize that alcoholism is a terminal illness.

Determine the willingness of the person to do something about the problem.

Suggest doing something today. Suggest a time to take the newcomer to their 1st meeting.

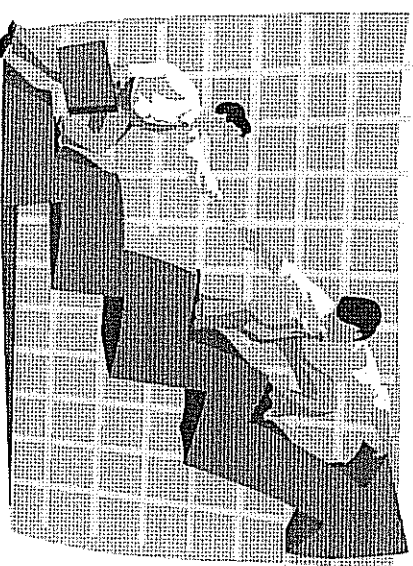
Discuss with the family what AA has to offer and suggest Alanon or Alateen. Leave literature and a meeting list.

If you are willing to leave your phone number and encourage calling.

Don't make promises you can't keep.

In case of suicide threats or violence call 911.

A SPECIAL KIND OF SERVICE SCREENERS AND 12 STEPPING



SCREENERS

Screeners are AA members who are the initial point of contact for anyone calling the local AA phone number when our Central Office is closed. During non-business hours, we have contracted with an Answering Service to transfer incoming calls to people who are serving as screeners each night until 10 PM; 10 AM to 10 PM on weekends and holidays.

Screeners are organized by their preferred times of availability. They are encouraged to check in with the Answering Service during their chosen hours of services rather than sit at home waiting for the phone to ring. Screeners may also contact the others, who are scheduled for the same hours, to let them know when they will not be available to take calls making sure that there is someone doing the job that night.

As the name implies, screeners “screen” the telephone calls coming into our local number to determine how the caller might best be assisted. Calls can generally be categorized. Some are made by out-of-town AA’s who want to know where the local meetings are. Some are made by those who, for various reasons are seeking information about what AA does and how it functions. Other calls (a possible majority) are made by friends or family members of persons perceived to be “alcoholic” and who want to know what can be done for them. As odd as it may NOT seem, the rarest sort of call is made by the actual suffering alcoholic him or herself.

Screeners should have sufficient experience in their sobriety to understand no one calls AA for fun, although some obvious prank calls have been logged. It is up to the screener to determine the caller’s needs and

how best to fulfill them. The Answering Service itself should forward common information calls to the Central Office during normal business hours. Some callers would be better served by calling Al-anon, Narcotics Anonymous, 911, or some other social or community service numbers. Remembering our “primary purpose” as members of AA is very helpful in determining just what and how much we can do for the caller.

When a screener gets a call made by someone who has a “desire to stop drinking”, the spiritual wheels of our fellowship can be set in motion. At this point, the screener will refer to the “12-Step list” of names of members who are available to directly assist the caller.

TWELFTH STEPPER

Local AA members who volunteer for service on the 12th step list are organized geographically. Some are known to respond to the call for help anytime and anywhere. Screeners attempt to contact 12th Steppers who are geographically near the caller. Men for men – women for women.

In this most fundamental functions of AA, we are reminded that “I am responsible” when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, but it is indeed a “we” proposition. Just as Bill and Dr. Bob traveled together to make a call on AA #3 in the hospital, we are strongly advised to make our local 12th Step calls in the company of another recovered member of AA. Sponsors and sponsees are known to team up on such calls.

While it is vital to remember we only “carry the message” of recovery and the newcomer’s attendance at meetings is crucial,

first time 12th Step calls have been made to motel rooms, private homes and hospitals. If the callers “want what we have” he or she must be willing to recover the AA way. In no case are 12th Step calls to be made in bars, since we lose more recovered members than we gain in such settings. The basic principle should be that the suffering drunk be motivated to come to us, on our terms for help. Twelfth Step work is a serious and potentially life and death business. The alcoholic must be made to know we are not a lonely-hearts club, soup kitchen, taxi service or financial institution.

Twelve Step service is so vital to our fellowship that entire chapters have been devoted to it in the Big Book. Chapters 6-11 are most helpful to those who are trying to carry the message of recovery.

Although screener volunteers may be of either sex, “men with men and women with women” is a guiding principle for 12th Steppers. It is important that enough members of either sex be available in all geographic areas served by our Central Office.

Screeners and 12th Stepper volunteers work together to try to achieve our common purpose with God, as we understand him, guiding our efforts which will ensure our continued spiritual success as we reach out in availability to our community.