

Bridge the Gap

By
**Extending the Hand of
Alcoholics Anonymous**



Group GSR Kit
Bridging the Gap - Utah, Area 69

Visit the Utah, Area 69 Web Site at www.utahaa.org

A Subcommittee of the Treatment and Corrections Standing Committees

Introduction to Bridging the Gap - Utah, Area 69

The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous offers a program designed to assist *new members* after their release from treatment and correctional facilities. This service is commonly referred to as the “*Bridging the Gap*” or “*Temporary Contact*” program. It is currently administered in Utah through the statewide Alcoholics Anonymous service structure known as Area 69. This Area is a member of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in the United States and Canada. It is comprised of eleven geographical and one linguistic district which coordinate “*Bridging the Gap*” collectively. These districts respond to the needs of the members in facilities within their vicinity and cooperate with each other to accommodate requests outside of their boundaries.

Simply put, a *temporary contact* is an A.A. member who works with clients/inmates after they are discharged from treatment or correctional facilities. The *temporary contact* helps the *new member* “*Bridge the Gap*” between the facility and Alcoholics Anonymous in their community. This arrangement is meant to be temporary only. The volunteer has agreed to accompany the *new member* to as many as six meetings after their release in order to acquaint them with A.A. members and meetings in the area where they live.

Experience has shown that attending an A.A. meeting as soon as possible after release is vital to making a sober transition to life on the outside. During this time the *new member* will learn more about sponsors, home groups, working A.A.’s twelve steps and doing service work. The *temporary contact* volunteer is available to answer questions and explain the A.A. program of recovery. They **will not** provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or other such services. The *new member* will most likely hear five basic suggestions for sobriety that the Fellowship shares with all its members:

- 1) Don't drink.
- 2) Go to meetings.
- 3) Work the steps.
- 4) Call your sponsor.
- 5) Read the “Big Book,” Alcoholics Anonymous.

Bridging the Gap - Basic Program Procedures:

1. As a *new member* on the inside, they are eligible for this program when they are within three months of their release date.
2. They are asked to fill out a form giving their age, sex, and release date with a phone number and address where they will be released to if possible; a general location if not.
3. The local A.A. Bridging the Gap coordinator will notify the *new member* after receiving their application and then match them with a suitable *temporary contact*, taking into consideration their age, sex, and destination.
4. After selection, the *temporary contact* will confirm the request with the *new member*.
5. The *new member* and the *temporary contact* will then make arrangements to meet after the release date and attend their first A.A. meeting together.

Preface to Bridging the Gap Guidelines - Utah Area 69

In order to better understand how Bridging the Gap is administered in Utah, Area 69 the following is a brief outline of the basic elements of the program and who holds responsibility.

Responsibilities of Area 69

1) Database. Area 69 will maintain a BTG volunteer database archive for the Area according to information supplied by the Districts. The Communications Committee will administer the web site file. The Districts will periodically review their own information on the web site and submit necessary changes to the Communications Committee.

2) Program. A uniform Bridging the Gap program will be available from Area 69 as a guide the Districts may follow. Information sharing and supporting documents will be provided by the joint efforts of the Corrections and Treatment Standing Chairs and their committees. The Standing Chairs will offer their support helping the Districts to set up and maintain a Bridging the Gap program within their District.

3) Workshop. It is the joint responsibility of the Treatment and Corrections Standing Chairs to set the agenda for the annual Area 69 BTG Workshop. The workshop is a one day event hosted by the Districts on a rotating basis each year beginning at 9:00 am. on the third Saturday in June.

Responsibilities of the Districts

1) Presentation. Make the program available. Contact Treatment and Corrections facilities and present the BTG Program to the staff. After gaining permission from the facility offer the program to the potential *New Members* of A.A. In the absence of a BTG committee, the District Corrections and Treatment volunteers are usually the ones best positioned to do this.

2) Volunteers. The Districts find, organize, and prepare enough BTG volunteers to meet their current needs. Volunteers may be signed up at A.A. meetings and other appropriate A.A. events. It is best if they are given BTG information and briefed on the *Temporary Contact* program. GSRs and District Officers may distribute and collect volunteer sign-up sheets.

3) Volunteer database and Temporary Contact Requests. Each District is requested to organize volunteer contact information and maintain its own database. The Districts are responsible to develop methods for receiving requests from *New Members* and matching them with *Temporary Contacts* within the District. It is helpful to gather information from the efforts of the volunteers and rotate their assignments. If possible, these tasks are best done by one individual, a Bridging the Gap Coordinator; someone dedicated to watching the mailbox and/or phone who will also make the *Temporary Contact* assignments. Requests for "*Bridges*" outside of the District should be referred to the appropriate District or Area Chairperson or processed through the National Bridging the Gap Database (www.btgww.org) if out of state.

Suggestions for Bridging the Gap Volunteers

What A.A. and Bridging the Gap Does:

1. Helps people with a desire to stop drinking to find a solution to their problem.
2. Helps the new member adjust to the A.A. Fellowship outside of institutions.

What A.A. and Bridging the Gap Do Not Do:

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| 1. Furnish initial motivation. | 10. Hold classes. |
| 2. Solicit members. | 11. Practice medicine, psychiatry, or nursing |
| 3. Charge dues or fees. | 12. Offer religious services. |
| 4. Operate clinics or drying-out facilities. | 13. Offer professional counseling. |
| 5. Operate clubs. | 14. Accept money from non-members. |
| 6. Provide housing, meals or transportation. | 15. Do research. |
| 7. Keep membership records. | 16. Join councils or social agencies. |
| 8. Follow-up on errant members. | 17. Loan money. |
| 9. Control members. | |

“Do” List

1. Take the new member to a meeting within the first Twenty-four hours of release.
2. Take another member of the fellowship on this Twelfth Step Call.
3. Explain to the new member that this is a temporary commitment, usually limited to six visits.
4. Make sure the new members receive meeting schedules, phone numbers, literature, and Big Book.
5. Encourage them to attend meetings as often as possible, emphasize the importance of the home group.
6. Explain the important of sponsorship; share how you got your sponsor.
7. Refrain from profanity, off-color jokes, prolonged drunk-a-logs and other types of self indulgence.
8. Respect full anonymity of new members at all times.
9. Keep in touch with your sponsor and your High Power.

“Don’t” List

1. Don’t become responsible for the members attitude or actions in or out of the meetings.
2. Don’t become a personal taxi service.
3. Don’t let the new member dictate where to go for the meetings.
4. Don’t allow any emotional or romantic relationship to develop.
5. Don’t act in any reporting or communicating capacity regarding the new member and the justice system or treatment facilities.
6. Don’t intercede in behalf of any individual affected by decisions of the administration.
7. Don’t forget you are not in control, you are not GOD.

Bridging the Gap Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet

(For members willing to be a Temporary Contact)

Bridging the Gap is the hand of Alcoholics Anonymous reaching out to the new member. This is basic 12-Step work. When a newcomer leaves a corrections or treatment facility, the Bridging the Gap program can arrange a temporary contact in their home town. The temporary contact volunteer accompanies them to meetings, introduces them to others in recovery and helps them start their life of sobriety in the outside world. You may sign up for corrections, treatment or both.

If you are willing to be a temporary contact, fill out your personal information in the form below. It is suggested that you have at least one year of sobriety to be a temporary contact. Please note if you speak other languages. **It is important to check the appropriate boxes below right for corrections, treatment or both.**

Full Name	Address & Zip Code	District	Age & Gender	Phone	Email	Sobriety Date	C	T

Return to the: District BTG, Corrections, or Treatment Coordinator

Or: Area 69 Corrections or Treatment Committee
P.O. Box 648
Sandy, Utah 84091 - 648
area69corrections@utahaa.org
area69treatment@utahaa.org

UTAH DELEGATE AREA 69 - DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

