

Bridge the Gap

By
**Extending the Hand of
Alcoholics Anonymous**



BTG Volunteer Presentation Kit
A guide for Making Presentations to Facility Administrators

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

A Subcommittee of the Treatment and Corrections Standing Committees

Volunteer Guide for Bridging the Gap Presentations to Administrators

When visiting with program administrators at treatment and correctional facilities, the most important thing to remember is we are representing the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Be sure to dress appropriately, be on time and be pleasant. Be brief and to the point but give as much information as necessary to help them understand the service we are providing. The staff may already be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous. We are simply there to inform them about “Bridging the Gap;” our program to assist the new A.A. member connect to Alcoholics Anonymous on the outside after they leave the facility. The presentation team should consist of at least two A.A. members, those familiar with how the program is carried out within the district represented. It might be helpful to emphasize from the beginning that the terms “Bridging the Gap” and “Temporary Contact” are sometimes used interchangeably when referring to this program.

Suggestions for making a Bridging the Gap presentation:

1. Introduce yourself and tell them you are there to explain the Alcoholics Anonymous program called “Bridging the Gap.” Hand out the *Facility Administrator Kit* folders. A list of materials for these folders is found on the next page.
2. If time permits, show them the video “Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous” from GSO, or the Area 69 Corrections Media Presentation. Explain that you would like to come into their facility to show this presentation to clients or inmates who are interested in A.A. and explain how “Bridging the Gap” can assist them in making the transition to Alcoholics Anonymous on the outside. This step is optional.
3. If presentation teams and videos are not used to introduce Bridging the Gap to *new members* in that facility or in your district, explain that the volunteers who lead the A.A. meetings would like to offer the “Bridging the Gap” program during the regularly scheduled meetings held there.
4. Review with them the Bridging the Gap pamphlets and other materials you would like to use when informing *new members* about the program and collecting contact information. While discussing the temporary contact request cards or other BTG forms, indicate that the information is needed in order to make arrangements for the new *member* to attend an outside A.A. meeting after the individual has been released.
5. Review our Traditions with particular emphasis on the **third** and **fifth** traditions. Our Traditions are based on our past experience. When the staff is informed ahead of time about what A.A. does and doesn’t do, later misunderstandings can be avoided. For example, the non-alcoholic can be referred to other twelve step programs. If an individual is unsure about being alcoholic, explain that we are happy to be *inclusive* and will accept anyone until they are able to decide for themselves. Point out the paper “Information on A.A.,” the “A.A. Fact Sheet,” the “Do’s and Don’ts” list and the “New Member” pamphlet. These materials emphasize what to expect and what not to expect from A.A. and the volunteers. It is helpful to be familiar with these items ahead of time.

6. After reviewing the BTG program and the handout materials, open the meeting for discussion. Encourage questions but don't make up answers. If you're not sure about something admit it and tell them you will find out and get back to them as soon as possible. There is a wealth of experience and guidance to draw from within the Fellowship. BTG has a variety of techniques to accomplish its necessary components.

7. Each facility has its own policies. Be sure to take notes about any procedural requirements the staff may discuss with you. We are there to be of service to them and their clients/inmates, not the other way around. *Always request and receive permission before bringing any printed materials into their facility.*

8. Leave your name, phone number and the best time for you to receive calls so they have a way to contact you. Making ourselves available is what the Bridging the Gap program is all about. It is important that A.A. volunteers be considered as reliable.

For additional information helpful in making BTG presentations, refer to the Corrections and Treatment workbooks and pamphlets relevant to those facilities published by GSO.

Suggested Materials for the Facility Administrator Kit:

Be sure to provide samples of all pamphlets and other handouts intended to be used by inmates and clients in your District's Bridging the Gap program. *Remember, all printed materials generally need to be cleared before they can be taken into any facility.*

Printed Pages from GSO & Area 69 recommended:

BTG - Utah, Area 69: "Introduction to Bridging the Gap - Utah, Area 69"
 BTG - Utah, Area 69: "Do's and Don'ts" page
 BTG - Utah, Area 69: Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Page
 BTG - Utah, Area 69: District Map - Area 69
 GSO: "A.A. Fact Sheet" aa.org (search box: "A.A. Fact Sheet") or utahaa.org - BTG

Pamphlets and materials from Area 69:

BTG - Utah, Area 69: "New Member" (AAs on the Inside) pamphlet
 BTG - Utah, Area 69: "Temporary Request Cards"
 BTG - Utah, Area 69: "White Cards" (optional)
 BTG - Utah, Area 69: Letter to the inmate and/or client (from the BTG workbook)
 Area 69 Pamphlet: "So You've Been Told to go to A.A."
 Local Meeting Lists: Check with local Central Offices and District Committees

Pamphlets and Materials from GSO:

P-2 Information on A.A.
 P-49 Bridging the Gap
 F-1 AA at a Glance
 F-4 Where Do I Go From Here?
 F-8 Problems Other Than Alcohol

Note: The Volunteer Kit for presentations should include all the materials used by the district in their BTG presentation, including a copy of the Facilities Administrator Kit.

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Facility Administrator Kit
Bridging the Gap - Utah, Area 69

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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 working 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.

A.A. FACT SHEET

The Preamble of Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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What A.A. Does

Nonalcoholic guests are welcome at "open" A.A. meetings. Attendance at "closed" meetings is limited to those who are alcoholic or think they may have a drinking problem.

At meetings A.A. members share their recovery experience with anyone seeking help with a drinking problem, and give person-to-person services or "sponsorship" to the alcoholics coming to A.A.

The A.A. program, as set forth in the Twelve Steps to recovery, offers the alcoholic an opportunity to develop a satisfying way of life free from alcohol.

What A.A. Does NOT Do

1. Make medical or psychiatric diagnoses or prognoses, or offer advice.
2. Provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, housing, jobs, money or other welfare services.
3. Accept any money for its services or contributions from outside sources.
4. Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.
5. Engage in or support education, research, or professional treatment.

Our recovery is based on sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other, that we may solve our common problem; more importantly, our continued sobriety depends upon helping others to recover from alcoholism.

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.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A. as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name out never be drawn into public controversy.
11. 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.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

UTAH DELEGATE AREA 69 - DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

