

BRIDGING THE GAP PRERELEASE CONTACT PROGRAM

Connecting
Inside A.A. Members
To The A.A. Community

Dear A.A. Member,
The A.A. Bridging The Gap Prerelease Contact Program connects the A.A. member being released from prison with Alcoholics Anonymous in their community. You are being asked to be that Prerelease Contact.

When a soon-to-be-released A.A. inmate writes us, we match that person to a Prerelease Contact in their community. If you are interested in this form of service, we will call you, get the okay, and then send you the information.

Your job is simple. You contact the A.A. inmate and arrange to take them to an A.A. meeting within 48 hours of their release. Your commitment is taking them to from three to six meetings.

During this time, you help them get acquainted, get phone numbers, and perhaps locate a sponsor or home group. Please note, it is not intended that you become their sponsor, even temporarily. In fact, it is best if the word "Sponsor" is not used in any way to describe your service. Prerelease Contacts are simply connections to the local A.A. community. You introduce them to others in A.A. so they have a broad, healthy base; then you are available to serve as a Prerelease Contact for another person.

If you are willing to be the hand of A.A. when an inmate reaches out for help, complete the attached Prerelease Contact's Application, cut off, and mail it to the address on the form.

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as "substance abuse" or "chemical dependency." Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Anyone may attend *open* A.A. meetings, but only those with a *drinking* problem may attend *closed* meetings.

Responsibilities of the Prerelease Contact

1. Contact the inside A.A. member by letter within two weeks of being matched and remain in touch with them as their release date approaches.
2. Take the former inmate to an A.A. meeting within 24 to 48 hours of their release.
3. It is suggested that the first meeting be viewed as a regular Twelfth Step call and that you take another A.A. member with you. Use the same guidelines you would with any newcomer, even though the former inmate may have been regularly attending A.A. meetings inside.
4. Review the A.A. Prerelease Contact Program with former inmate so there are no misunderstandings as to what this program does or does not do.
5. Remind the former inmate as often as is necessary that you are but a temporary connection to their new A.A. community.
6. Remember that your job is finished after six meetings, or soon as a sponsor has been found. Do your best to encourage that relationship.
7. Make sure the newly released A.A. receives meeting schedules, phone numbers and A.A. literature.
8. Encourage the newly released A.A. to attend meetings as often as possible, to find a home group and, most important, encourage them to get a sponsor as soon as possible. Let them know that even a temporary sponsor who has time for them now would be acceptable.
9. Share your experience, strength and hope with the newly released A.A., just as you would with another person new to A.A. in your community.
10. Upon completion of your service, inform the Bridging The Gap Prerelease Contact coordinator as to the results of your experience. Let us know what works and what doesn't.

A.A. Bridging The Gap Prerelease Contact Program Procedures

1. Inside A.A. members (those held in correctional facilities) are eligible for this program if they have less than six months to serve of their sentence.

2. The inmate fills out the attached application and mails it to the Bridging The Gap Prerelease coordinator, which is responsible for processing and coordinating all Prerelease Contacts.

3. The Prerelease Contact coordinator will notify the inside member that the application has been received and is being processed.

4. The coordinator finds a Prerelease Contact and then informs the inmate.

5. The Prerelease Contact then writes to the inside A.A. member within two weeks to confirm contact. If the Prerelease Contact fails to make contact, the inside A.A. member should inform the coordinator. Prerelease Contacts may, if they wish, use the Prerelease Contact coordinators P.O. Box as their return address. Letters will be forwarded to the Prerelease Contact.

6. The inside A.A. member and the Prerelease Contact set up a meeting at the time of the inmate's release. The inside A.A. provides such information as their date of release, their arrival time in the local area, and an address and phone number.

7. The Prerelease Contact will meet the newly released A.A. at an agreed upon time and place to help them adjust to attending their first few meetings in the local community.

8. The Prerelease Contact is asked to let the newly released A.A. know that after a maximum of six meetings, their work together will be done, and that the Prerelease Contact will be rotating on to help someone new.

9. After a connection has been completed, the Prerelease Contact will inform the coordinator of the results.

Remember that:

* It is vital that former inmates attend their first A.A. meeting as soon as they are released.

* Our primary purpose is to carry the message.

* You are not responsible for the member's attitude or actions in or out of meetings.

* It is suggested that you do not loan money or anything of value, or become a personal taxi service.

* Introduce the former inmate to other A.A. members, just as you would any newcomer.

* We are not to act in any reporting or communication capacity regarding the A.A. member and the justice system.

Suggested Reading

"Carrying the Message into Correctional Facilities"

"Where Do I Go From Here?"

A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate

"A.A. in Correctional Facilities"

"It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell"

"Memo to an Inmate Who May be an Alcoholic"

"A Message to Correctional Administrators"

A.A. BRIDGING THE GAP CONTACT APPLICATION

Name: _____

Sex: Male ____ Female ____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip
Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Home
Group: _____

Location: _____

District: _____

I have read and agree to follow the intent and guidelines of the Bridging The Gap A.A. Prerelease Contact Program as described in this pamphlet.

Signature Date

District Bridging Gap Coordinator
P.O. Box ?
Sandy, UT

or if BTG Coordinator fails to make contact

Area Corrections Committee
P.O. Box 4
Milford, UT 84751