

Conference 2025

DRAFT

Text for the:

a) Service Handbook - Appendix TBA

b) requested 'AA members employed in the alcoholism field' leaflet

Appendix TBA: For AA Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field

Experience has shown that a member well-informed about AA, combined with a professional responsibility, can be invaluable to both roles.

AA contributors to this guidance overwhelmingly agreed that it is professional skill and experience, not AA membership, which qualify one for professional positions. Understanding the Twelve Traditions and how they developed out of experience is beneficial, especially Traditions Six, Eight, Ten and Eleven. Familiarity with any healthcare initiatives currently being addressed in AA would also be helpful.

An individual working in the alcoholism field may well be the only AA member that his or her colleagues have ever met and consequently a good and sober example should be set. It should be made clear from the start that they do not represent AA as a whole.

It is important to remember that members working within other agencies should try to ensure that neither the institution nor any of its promotional literature uses the AA name or any language that implies endorsement by AA.

AA does not recommend people for jobs in the alcoholism field. Individuals may recommend another member, but on the clear understanding that the reference is strictly personal.

Anonymity

The value of the Traditions for individual recovery as well as the protection of the Fellowship has been clearly spelt out.

Whether or not we disclose AA membership is up to the individual, remembering that it is important not to violate Tradition Eleven. Saying publicly or in print, on television or anywhere else "I am an alcoholic" or "a recovering alcoholic" does not break an AA Tradition provided AA membership is not included in that statement. It is vital to remember never to reveal another member's identity.

Secrets of success

Previous experience suggests the following:

- Personal recovery comes first
- Stick to one role at a time, clearly recognising the difference between AA and the job
- Approaching every situation on its own merits, watching your language carefully and remembering that humility is the foundation of each of AA's Steps
- Using the term 'Alcoholism Counsellor' not 'AA Counsellor'
- Recognising that criticism from working in a 'harm reduction' framework as opposed to 'total abstinence' may be unjustifiably given by others
- It is better not to sponsor a client
- If possible, avoid going to the same meeting as your clients, remembering that the client might also feel uncomfortable
- If, however, you encounter a client at a meeting, you should not give AA advice, but direct them to another member of AA

Common sense should always apply!

History has shown

For many years AA members have been working professionally in the field of alcoholism and many of these members have made remarkable contributions to the world's knowledge and understanding of the illness of alcoholism. All this work has been carried out by AA members acting fully within both the letter and spirit of the AA Traditions.

(Revised 2024)