

Chapter One: Public Information

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Public Information is the Third Legacy of Service in action. Along with Recovery and Unity we have inherited this legacy from the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. One of the co-founders, Bill W, has this to say:

“To reach more alcoholics, understanding of AA and public goodwill toward AA must go on growing everywhere. We need to be on still better terms with medicine, religions, employers, government, courts, prisons, mental hospitals and all enterprises in the alcoholism field.”

Concept XI – Twelve Concepts for World Service

AA needs effective communication with the general public and professional communities involved with the alcoholic

1:1 Introduction

Public Information (PI) in AA means carrying the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the AA programme. We do this by getting in touch with the media managers, Welfare Officers in industry and the Trades’ Unions, Schools and indeed any organisation of a public nature whether it be organised or voluntary, which is in a position to pass on the knowledge of the existence of AA and what it can do for the still suffering alcoholic.

The aim of this chapter is to guide you through the PI process, from formation of a committee through the functions such a committee can perform. What follows suggest ways individuals can do PI work as well as activities that have been planned by local PI committees.

The amount of knowledge of PI work varies from place to place but over the years this has built up into a wealth of practical experience which this chapter is designed to share. Those undertaking PI work for the first time, whether it is at group, intergroup or at regional level, are encouraged to read this Handbook and take guidance from the information contained.

There is no mystique about PI work. It is, however, acknowledged that particularly newcomers to service, when faced with the possibility of breaking their anonymity, may be wary of undertaking PI service.

Again this chapter hopes to remove this fear by explaining simply what is involved and how service work of this nature can not only carry the message of AA to where it is needed but by doing so, help the member who undertakes the work.

All PI work should be carried out with the sole objective of seeing that the still suffering alcoholic receives the AA message, and in so doing, it is important to remember that the Traditions of AA should be strictly observed. We should, for instance, remain strictly

anonymous at the level of press, radio and TV on a personal basis, but that does not mean that we cannot identify ourselves fully when dealing with the staff of newspapers, radio or TV stations; it would not make sense to try to do business with people if anonymity was carried to this length. After all, anonymity, being the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship, is aimed at personal anonymity, i.e. public appearance and/or identification as an “AA spokesperson” in the media. We are however not secret – those doing PI service work must be accessible by name and address to those with whom we wish to conduct our business.

Many people in the media have great respect for AA although some may not know much about it. Because we are not seeking publicity for ourselves as individuals, they are usually more willing to co-operate with us and observe our personal anonymity requirements once these are explained to them. PI work is for members who are willing to make the contacts we need to make. It is not necessary to be an expert in communications. What is required is a willingness to spread the message by making contact with the right people to pass that message on. All that is needed is to say who you are and what you hope to do. Our basic task is to tell the public through as many organisations as possible what AA is, how it works, and where contact can be made. First of all we should make clear that it has worked for us.

Sponsorship into service and working with other PIs at committee level provide the experience for this type of service.

This Handbook should be retained by the PI member of each intergroup and should be passed on when their term of service expires. Any group or intergroup member who shows interest in PI work should be encouraged to read it and PI members should from time to time draw attention to its existence thus keeping alive interest in the work.

1:2 What is PI?

PI work is sometimes referred to as “Carrying the message to the general public”. This includes giving talks to doctors, nurses, social services, police, magistrates, community groups, business groups, schools, colleges and trade and professional unions and associations. Open and public meetings, exhibitions, displays, posters, newspapers, magazines, radio and television also come under the heading of PI.

It is often said that the best example of Alcoholics Anonymous is its own sober members, particularly when a sober AA member is speaking to the general public or a group of professional people. We are the face of the Fellowship. For this reason, it is important that members carrying out PI work should have solid continuous sobriety, regular attendance at home group meetings, be conversant with the service structure and have a full working knowledge of the Twelve Traditions.

Experience has shown that intergroup and regions are the bodies that can most usefully discuss PI matters and from which one or more PI committees can be formed. Depending on the geography of an intergroup area and the number of large towns or cities within it, an intergroup may form a committee within itself, or, with the initiative of local members, form two or more committees. Local PI Committees are usually informal with at least one member attending intergroup. **PI is a co-operative venture and there is no place in it for single isolated acts.** In this way, communication with other parts of intergroup is maintained and the sharing of service experience is commonplace. Before going ahead with the formation of a local PI Committee in a large town or urban area, it is as well to check Health Authority and Social Service boundaries, so that the work of one Committee does not overlap another. Here again, a discussion at intergroup will be most valuable. The service structure of AA also allows for the appointment of a regional PI Officer.

Internal communications are complete when each intergroup in a region shares its PI experience at a regional meeting.

The drawing of formal boundaries for service work should be avoided and positive steps should be taken to keep the Health, Prison, Probation\Courts and Criminal Justice Service in Scotland and all other Liaison Officers informed of PI developments, with the Liaison Officers becoming members of the Committee whenever possible, particularly in overlapping geographical areas.

1:3 Contacting Professionals

The first contact with a professional body is by telephone or e-mail. Members should ask for the name of the relevant manager/professional who deals with alcoholism in the organisation. If it is not possible to speak to that person a typewritten letter, on headed intergroup paper should be sent, giving a name and address for a reply. The objectives of the letter or telephone call are threefold and should be stated clearly:

- to establish formal contact between the organisation and AA
- to ask for an appointment with a representative of the organisation
- to provide speakers to give talks about AA

It is important to involve as many members as possible when giving talks, from as wide a range of age groups and backgrounds as appropriate, e.g. young people giving talks to schools and colleges. The PI Officer acts as a clearing-house for talks and these should be allocated to local AA members, always remembering that those selected are ambassadors of the Fellowship.

Ideally, two members should share a talk – a man and a woman when possible. It is advisable to invite newer members of AA, who are young in sobriety, to sit in the audience and listen. Sponsors may wish to invite sponsees and, in the practice of sponsoring into service, attendance at a talk provides a valuable learning experience. On some occasions it may be convenient to play an AA Conference approved DVD when giving the talk. This will depend on the time allotted and the type of audience.

Some members prefer to provide AA published literature at a talk and it is suggested that an AA telephone number should be given out. It has been found that most people at a non-AA members meeting want to know what AA is and what it does, rather than hear a drinking story; although some such incidents may be related in order to illustrate a point. A short history of AA can be mentioned, if desired, and it is important to mention the Traditions. Flexibility is always a useful attribute on these occasions.

We should all bear in mind the statement of PI adopted by the Fellowship in 1956. It stated:

“In all public relations, AA’s sole objective is to help the still suffering alcoholic. Always mindful of the importance of personal anonymity, we believe this can be done by making known to him, and those who may be interested in his problems, our own experience as individuals and as a Fellowship in learning to live without alcohol. We believe that our experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest. We further believe that all efforts in this field should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety and our awareness that many outside of AA are equally concerned with the serious problem of alcoholism.”

There are many ways a Public Information Committee can carry the AA message to the general public and the professional, but this chapter tries to set out some of the most popular methods together with the experience of others in this field.

In all cases of PI it is just as important to communicate with others in the Fellowship whether in our intergroup or region. Many of our boundaries do not coincide with other organisations, either politically or socially. This communication enables ideas to be shared as well as showing consideration to others in the Fellowship.

PI members at any level are always encouraged to develop new approaches to any authority or organisation they may come into contact with. Any new development or ideas should always be passed to the appropriate Trustee who will be pleased to pass the information on to other regions.

Many intergroups and regions consider co-operating with professionals and Employment Liaison activities separate from public information or prison and hospital work. Accepting that there is a good deal of overlap they consider it is an advantage to have two separate committees or sub-committees liaising when necessary. Others prefer one overall PI committee to co-ordinate the various activities of public information, professional information, hospitals, industry and any other specific area of service, believing this will help to avoid duplication of activity and confusion. The decision will be influenced by local conditions, but it is intended that this document should be helpful whatever the structure chosen.

Professional people often meet the alcoholic in places where AA is not present. Through professional people, we reach alcoholics who might otherwise never find the programme, or reach them years earlier with the help of an informed non-AA member. Co-operation with professionals means informing them about AA, what we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do. A professional can be a family doctor, a member of the clergy, a policeman or magistrate, a nurse, a teacher, a social worker, an alcoholism counsellor or other counsellor, anyone who deals with alcoholics in the course of their work. Many of these people encounter daily the suffering alcoholic and in spite of rising public awareness, some of them simply do not know what to do with a drunk.

That is where an active PI committee can contribute – by letting professionals know about AA and by being available to co-operate in any way we can when they call on us. PI work can begin when individual AAs reveal their membership to their doctors, or drop a quiet word in the ear of a pastor, priest, rabbi or spiritual leader that an AA member is available to the congregation. Groups participate in PI by welcoming professionals to open meetings. Committees at regional level or local level actively seek ways to make contact with professional people and set up programmes to increase understanding of AA.

What your committee decides to do will be dictated by your own needs and experience. The suggestions here are just that – suggestions. It is hoped they will spark your thinking and give you leads on new ways to approach professional people where you are.

A look at our history shows clearly that co-operation with professionals has been an integral part of the Fellowship since our beginnings. In fact, some AA's think it is ironic that a movement that might never have got off the ground without the help of non-alcoholics (e.g. Dr. Silkworth, Sister Ignatia and the Rev. Sam Shoemaker) should have taken so long to set up committees to do formally what AA members have been doing informally all along.

Sometimes it seems that, even now, understanding of alcoholism and of AA is the exception rather than the rule. As more and more alcoholism programmes and agencies come into the field, AAs who for years have worked quietly – whether on AA committees or as individual concerned citizens – rejoice that they have contributed to public awareness.

Inevitably though, problems accompany success. Sometimes, professionals who are eager to use AA as a resource do not understand our Traditions and unwittingly cause problems for groups. New members, coming to AA from units, hostels etc. or “sentenced” to AA by courts, expect from us services we cannot or should not provide.

Experienced PI workers learn quickly the importance of understanding the Traditions and explaining them to non-AA members. They discover too, the cardinal fact that the Traditions are our Traditions, and there is no reason non-AA members should be expected to understand them unless we take the initiative. Most PI committees find that one of their first and important functions is finding ways to clarify the Traditions for professionals. One of the aims of PI work is to let non-AA members know that we can be effective and helpful to them when we operate within our own vital Traditions.

1:4 The PI Committee

There are several different ways of organising a PI committee and local needs and practices will guide your decision. Ideally, the committee should be a direct function of intergroup, formed of elected intergroup liaison members and chaired by the PI Officer. They should meet as often as is required, taking their guidance on “targets” etc. from intergroups. They should then co-opt through GSRs direct aid or action through the groups themselves. Good simple organisation, which is well publicised and explained from intergroup right through to all group members, is essential. Thus good two-way communications are maintained and confusion avoided.

Forming a PI Committee

For many years local Public Information committees also carried the message to the professional community and in many places still do. Professional information and Employment Liaison have been considered a separate activity from PI for a relatively short time. Where there is still confusion over who does what the following extract may be useful:

“In keeping with our Traditions of placing principles before personalities, who or what committee carries the AA message is not important as long as our message is carried to the still suffering alcoholic.”

Another thought to keep in mind is “Easy does it.” Once you decide to do it, and get started with the formation of a committee, it is a good idea to take it easy at first until you are sure just what the needs are, and how many people you have available to get the job done. For some committees the first task is to inform AA members about co-operating with professionals, sometimes to correct misconceptions about whether AAs should be taking the initiative in going out to non-AA members. A few budding PI committees have reported resistance from members who fear they will be doing “promotion” by letting professionals know about AA but whether or not misconceptions exist, it is always a good idea to make sure there are workers available and eager to start before setting up ambitious projects.

Communication within AA about PI work is important for ongoing work. Some PI committees share with one another by exchanging minutes of their meetings. Remember to share your activities and ideas with GSO for possible inclusion in *PI News* or *AA Service News*. It is

suggested that PI committee members be visible to other AAs through regular attendance and participation at group and other business meetings. Members could also share their service experience to encourage sponsorship into service. Let the telephone answering service or intergroup know whom to approach when there is a need for a PI contact.

Often the AA programme works when an active alcoholic wants help, and an AA is on hand to give that help. However, somewhere in the background, there has been the help of a doctor, or an alcoholism agency or facility, or a relative, or an employer – someone who knew about AA and where to find it.

1:5 Working within the Traditions

The role of a doctor or a member of the clergy in relation to an alcoholic is far different from the AA custom of sharing experience. Professionals necessarily work on different assumptions from ours. It is helpful to non-alcoholics – and more important, vital to our health as a Fellowship – that others understand our assumptions.

Our guiding principles as a Fellowship are contained in the Twelve Traditions. The responsibility for preserving our Traditions rests with AAs and with us alone, and in order to preserve them, we must understand them. We cannot expect non-AA members to comprehend and observe the Traditions unless we are well informed about them ourselves.

Thoughtful reading of AA literature (*Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* and the pamphlets *AA Tradition – How it Developed* and *The Twelve Traditions Illustrated*) is essential for anyone who works with non-AA members. In addition, the first few pages of *How AA Members Co-operate* point out some ways all the Traditions are relevant for PI as well as the particular Traditions that apply most directly.

Let us take a look at a few Traditions that on the face of it seem unrelated to PI work. The First points out that personal recovery depends on unity – something we can all keep in mind when, for example, an influx of new members from a local hospital causes controversy within the group. The Second reminds us that a loving God as expressed in the group conscience is our ultimate authority and is a help when we are tempted to impose the “right” way of working the programme to seemingly unwilling newcomers. The Third, the only requirement for membership, tells us that we cannot judge whether another alcoholic has a desire to stop drinking. And the Fifth Tradition brings us back to the primary purpose of any AA group – to carry the message.

The Traditions most directly connected with PI are Six (co-operation without affiliation), Seven (self-support), Eight (AAs should always remain non-professional), Ten (no opinion on outside issues), Eleven and Twelve (anonymity).

Tradition Six: “An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”

Many alcoholism programmes co-operate closely with AA and their representatives speak glowingly of the programme. To what extent should AA members participate in the programmes of these agencies?

Today alcoholism is a major concern of many local and national agencies. Many speak glowingly of the AA programme and co-operate with AA groups and committees – but to what extent should AA members participate in the programmes of these agencies?

Experience has given us a simple guiding principle: we do co-operate, but we do not affiliate. We want to work with other alcoholic organisations, but not be merged with them in the public mind. We should be careful to make it clear that AA is available as a resource for other agencies, but public linking of the AA name can give the impression of affiliation. To avoid public linking of the AA name with that of other organisations, we should always be careful to make it clear that we are always available purely through co-operating and not affiliating.

Tradition Seven: “Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

As active alcoholics, many of us were always looking for a handout, and part of personal recovery lies in making ourselves responsible human beings. The same principle applies to the Fellowship, and much of the respect of AA accorded by non-AA members results from this Tradition. In *The Twelve Traditions Illustrated* it says: “In Tradition Seven there is a note of realism: handsome gifts may have strings attached.” Our effectiveness as a Fellowship and our usefulness to other organisations that call on us is greatly enhanced by the fact that we are free to do what we do best – share a programme of recovery with no outside obligations.

Tradition Eight: “Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.”

Most AAs have had the experience of explaining to a cynical newcomer: “No, I don’t get paid for talking to you. I do it because it helps me stay sober.” Just as professionals because of their position and training can reach people AA might never encounter, we can get through to active alcoholics in a unique way that a professional cannot offer.

Tradition Eight asks AA members to stick to what they know best, personal recovery and Twelfth Step work, not to become authorities on the whole field of alcoholism and recovery. We share only our individual recovery programme, but we are not professionals. We have no official definition of alcoholism. Although we are the victims of the illness, we have no profound knowledge of either its cause or “cure”. We should also never comment on the practices of other alcohol treatment agencies just because they vary from our own beliefs.

Tradition Ten: “Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

Here again, a Tradition reminds us to do what we know best and not be diverted from our primary purpose. By staying away from public controversy, we strengthen AA’s unity within and its reputation in the public eye.

Tradition Eleven: “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.”

Tradition Twelve: “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”

The anonymity Traditions remind us that our responsibility is to make the AA way of life look attractive to alcoholic and non-alcoholic alike. They alert us, too, to the dangers of pushing AA on professionals rather than providing information for others to use in the most appropriate way. The assurance of anonymity for the newcomer is also crucial, and a professional who refers an alcoholic to AA appreciates being given that assurance.

We find it helpful to emphasise that our anonymity Traditions mean we are a Fellowship of peers, and that we learn to help others without expecting credit or reward.

This subject has already been touched upon in the introduction to this document. It is worth repeating, however, that there is an important distinction between person to person anonymity and anonymity at the media level. It is strongly suggested that the book “*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*” is read by all those who seek to understand this and, of course, other Traditions.

When a PI Committee finds itself in trouble, it is usually because its members do not fully understand the Traditions and thus cannot adequately explain them to non-AA members.

The Traditions are *our* Traditions and the responsibility for preserving them is ours. Many PI Committees place fundamental importance on informing their working members about these Traditions – what they are and why they came into being. Only with this groundwork can PI committees effectively communicate AA principles to the general public and to representatives of the media. We cannot expect others to understand and observe the Traditions if we are too poorly informed of them ourselves. Sadly also we have found that lack of information can lead to intolerance. For example, if an AA member’s anonymity is broken at the media level, it is often quite simply the result of a misunderstanding. Members who jump to the conclusion that the media (or an inefficient PI committee) is at fault, and who write indignant letters or make hasty phone calls, would do well to think twice. A courteous note explaining the Traditions, either to the member involved or to the media, is helpful; a snap judgement is not. The same principle applies when other Traditions are broken by AA members or non-AA members. Politeness and quiet explanation are the AA way.

1:6 Ways to Proceed

The following are some of the ways AA members in your area can tell others about AA and to keep the friends of AA working with us.

1:6.1 Public Information Meeting

A public information meeting can do a lot to strengthen relationships with non-alcoholic friends and help make new friends. Such meetings can be set up by the PI Committee and sometimes groups hold public meetings (to celebrate the group anniversary, for example). Many groups regularly invite to their open meetings: doctors, ministers, police officers, employers, public service workers and others who deal with active alcoholics.

It is a good idea to send invitations well in advance to professionals before a meeting is planned. Many such meetings benefit from being in the day time as most professionals find this more convenient in their schedule. Post them to all the groups in the area, to friends of AA and to all who are interested in the problem: doctors, judges, alcoholism agencies, clergy/spiritual leaders, personnel directors, social workers and of course the media. Many groups have found that reply slips enable them to plan the meeting with regard to numbers, refreshments and topics to be covered.

Meeting format

There are all kinds of successful meeting programmes. Here is one that is frequently followed.

1. Short introduction by AA Chair who should try to cover the following:
 - Welcoming remarks: AA's willingness to help whenever it can
 - Anonymity: A request that the press and all present respect the anonymity of AA members present (e.g. "There may be some of you here who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity at the media level. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. We need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press and broadcast reports of this meeting")
 - What AA is and what AAs have discovered about their problem
 - AA is not a religious programme but a spiritual way of life
 - AA is for men and women of all ages and backgrounds
 - Speakers' opinions are their own. Keep an open mind
 - AA's Traditions of self-support, no collection at meeting
 - AA can be found in most cities and towns. Many have their own telephone service

Many non-AA members have helped us
Perhaps introduce a non-AA speaker at this point

2. A non-AA guest speaker discusses AA from his or her point of view and experience
3. An AA who speaks briefly about their drinking experience, the AA programme and especially their recovery
4. A short time for questions from visiting professionals
5. Concluding remarks from the Chair thanking all those present, reminding them of how AA can help and where it can be found, and asking those attending to encourage other professionals they know to come to future open or public meetings

It is not always necessary to include non-AA speakers but experience shows that many PI Committees have had larger attendance and support from other professionals when a non-AA speaks well of our Fellowship. Many PI Committees use the public meeting as an introduction to professionals and other interested parties. Those attending such meetings are then followed up by members offering literature, telephone service numbers and lists of local meetings, as well as giving further talks about how AA can co-operate.

1:6.2 AA Speakers at non-AA Meetings

Talks to outside groups are perhaps the most widely used and popular method of PI. Detailed suggestions on this means of communication will be found in the pamphlet *Speaking at non-AA Meetings*. *AA at a Glance* is often used as a give-away item when members speak to non-AA member's groups.

1:6.3 Participation in non-AA Member's Events

In observance of the Tradition Six (co-operation but not affiliation) many AA Public Information Committees participate in events sponsored by non-AA organisations.

One kind of event in which PIs are often asked to participate is the Community Health Fair or Voluntary Organisation Open-Day, sponsored by local colleges, public health organisations etc. Members of the local PI committee frequently staff the AA booth or stand at such events, to answer questions and provide any information requested. Some Area

Health Authorities organise such events as Alcohol Awareness days and, again, AA is able to co-operate together with other agencies.

Display units and literature can be obtained from GSO for these events. Experience shows that by attending such events the message is not only carried to those visiting but also to other voluntary or professional organisations attending the sponsored event. This sometimes creates follow up for the PI committee.

1:6.4 A Public Information Workshop

Many committees have found that workshops taking a hard look at local needs, opportunities and attitudes as well as the service structure, the Traditions etc. are a fine tool for exploring ideas and settling on methods. Here is what was done in one area:

An all-day workshop was planned. It was opened with the Serenity Prayer, followed by a reading of the short form of the Twelve Concepts. The Fifth Tradition was also read and related to the First Concept. The Tradition says that each group has one primary purpose – to carry the message; the Concept states that ultimate responsibility and authority belong to the groups.

The bulk of the day was devoted to discussion, with the full group breaking up into small groups. Before the discussion began, a brief presentation on Public Information was given. Discussion topics were assigned to each table, and a recorder was appointed to take notes and report on the whole group. Topics were:

1. What is the best way to form a PI Committee?
How do we form a working plan for the committee?
2. What is the best way to reach professionals?
What is the best way to sponsor professionals?
3. How can we sponsor members in service?
How can we sponsor doctors, clergy, and police?
4. How can we bridge the gap between professionals and AA?
What types of presentations are appropriate for professionals?
5. What are the best AA attitudes towards professionals?
What is AA's attitude towards professionals?
6. How can we make contact with professionals?

Brief summaries of the discussion were reported from each table and general discussion took place.

1:6.5 A Public Information Newsletter

One innovative PI Chair started a PI newsletter, sharing news of what was going on in the area and urging members to get involved and find others who wanted to get involved. A sample issue suggested use of literature as a training tool for new committee members and as handouts to professionals where appropriate. The Chair included lists of literature appropriate for these purposes and also offered to work with local committees and stressed the use of Conference approved literature for all PI work. Circulation of the newsletter to all GSRs, until a working PI committee list was compiled, was suggested as was attendance at the intergroup meeting and participation in PI committee meetings there.

1:7 Personal Identification

Conference 1998 decided: In today's society there is an ever-increasing requirement for security and personal identification. It is important that members of Alcoholics Anonymous remember that they are guests and co-operate fully.

Members of the Fellowship visiting outside agencies should conform to their procedures remembering that each agency, whether prison, hospital, school or other, is autonomous.

Notification of the arrangements made for visits or talks including, where appropriate, the sponsoring PI Officer, should provide the names of members attending to the host organisation.

The host may require personal identification, such as a letter from intergroup or region, passport, ID card, driving licence or letter of invitation from the host.

It is important that Alcoholics Anonymous does not become invisible – some loss of anonymity is inherent in PI work.

1:8 Suggested Professional Contacts and Helping Agencies

You can provide information and help for:

- Alcohol Treatment Units, Alcohol Advisory Services, Alcohol services in the community
- ATOS – delivering work related assessments to health benefit claimants
- Carers e.g. Carers UK
- Chambers of Commerce
- Citizens' Advice Bureaux – a source of a wide range of organizations
- Civil Service – www.direct.gov.uk, follow 'contact' links
- Deafness – e.g. Deafness Support Network. (The Big Book is available in BSL on DVD)
- Dentists
- Elderly e.g. Age UK
- Ethnic Community Groups
- GPs – also Practice Nurses and Practice Manager within the surgery
- Health and Safety Officers
- Health Service e.g. Therapy Outreach Department, District Nurses, Community Psychiatric Nurses, Health Visitors, Nursing Tutors, Health Education Service to name a few
- Hospitals e.g. Accident and Emergency, Medical and Surgical wards, substance misuse
- Homeless hostels
- Housing Aid and Advice Centres
- Housing Department of Local Authority
- Jobcentreplus – e.g. Personal Advisors, Employment Engagement Team, Disability Employment Advisor, all of whom may welcome greater awareness
- Libraries – may be willing to display posters, literature, videos etc.

- Magistrates – The Clerk to the Court can be very helpful e.g. by displaying posters and passing on literature to the Magistrates
- Mediation service – divorce and separation specialists
- Police e.g. Police Community Support Officers, Community Liaison Officers and Domestic Violence Units
- Probation Services – besides dealing with offenders, they can provide help and support with severe family problems. May also use the CHIT system
- Public Health and Health Planning Councils
- Relate – relationship advice
- Rotary
- Round Table
- Samaritans
- Schools and colleges – e.g. Head of Personal Development, Education Welfare Managers
- Social Workers
- Spiritual Leaders
- Trades Unions
- Visually impaired – e.g. Vision support (Literature is available in Braille and Spoken Word Big Book on CD. There is also a soundtrack on the Big Book BSL DVD)
- Volunteer Bureaux – Many publish newsletters and may help with distribution of material
- Welfare Rights
- Youth and Community Service e.g. National Youth Agency, local organizations, Princes Trust and many, many more. Remember to maintain regular contact – staff may change frequently

Check all local press to ensure that the AA telephone number and website details are listed in the Helpline Services.

Ensure posters and contact cards are displayed in doctors' surgeries, police stations, CABs, churches etc. Make sure Volunteer Bureaux, CABs, Samaritans etc. have AA telephone numbers and details of the AA Website on file.

1.9 Recommended literature (available from GSO)

- *AA Service and Structure Handbooks of GB*
- *AA Comes of Age*
- *Twelve Traditions Illustrated*
- *Speaking at non-AA Meetings*
- *A Message for Professionals*
- *How AA Members Co-operate with Professionals*
- *A Member's Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous.*