

Special Needs-  
Accessibilities  
**WORKBOOK**

# Special Needs- Accessibilities WORKBOOK

This workbook is service material, reflecting A.A. experience shared at the General Service Office. A.A. workbooks are compiled from the practical experience of A.A. members in the various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. & Canada).

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\*Some committees refer to themselves as Accessibilities Committees. Although we may refer at times only to Special Needs Committees, this workbook is for any committee that serves A.A. members with special needs.



## Introduction

*I am responsible...when anyone,  
anywhere reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of A.A. to always be there.  
And for that, I am responsible.*

While there are no special A.A. members there are many members who have special needs. This would include those who may be hearing-, visually-, or speech-impaired, those who are homebound, chronically ill, those who use wheelchairs, walkers or crutches, and those who are developmentally disabled or who suffer from brain damage, stroke, etc. Whatever their disability or particular challenge to receiving the A.A. message may be, it is hoped that they would never be excluded from A.A. meetings, Twelve Step work or A.A. service.

This workbook is designed to help Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees who are providing access to A.A. for those with special needs so that A.A. continues to be inclusive not exclusive.

Some Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees serve parents with young children who may have limited access to A.A. meetings. Many A.A. members do not have an issue in getting to a meeting and they have a wide choice of meetings on a daily basis. Imagine... there is only one meeting a day or a week that is open to you. Imagine if you are at this meeting and many A.A.s are reluctant to approach you. Or that there is only one meeting a week which has a wheelchair ramp, but it is snow-covered and inaccessible to you. You may be sober 30 or more years and eager to share in service and carrying the message, but you are stuck home because of some physical challenges. Or A.A. literature may be hard for you to understand because, for any number of reasons, you read at a third grade level. Or you may want to get involved in Twelfth Step work but you don't have access to the Area Service Office because of a few steps.

You may now have an idea of what it is like to be an A.A. member who is developmentally disabled, chronically ill, in a wheelchair, on crutches, elderly, homebound or speech-, hearing-, or visually-impaired. Like everyone else these A.A. members just want to be treated equally, yet a six-inch step can be an insurmountable obstacle. A locked access door, a blocked ramp or parking problem can make it impossible to get to a meeting. We may take for granted our physical and mental health but, if we were to experience the daily challenges of those with special needs, we might have a different point of view. We may not require Special Needs-Accessibilities Twelfth Step service today, but one woman describes herself as a "T.A.P.—a Temporarily Able-Bodied Person."

What can be done to make A.A. readily accessible to all? The following information is to assist those interested in reaching out to those with special needs. There is a wide variety of other Special Needs-Accessibilities material, including literature in Braille, American Sign Language (ASL), and easy-to-read pamphlets in English, as well as in

other languages, in regular and large print. For a detailed list, information is provided at the end of this guide titled “A.A. Literature and Audio Visual Material for Special Needs-Accessibilities” with instructions for placing orders.

Now that you have an idea of what special needs are, the question is—What can we do to help overcome obstacles which make access to A.A. difficult, if not impossible? As with any business, a good inventory may be helpful in assessing what you have or don’t have in place.

Please keep reading...

## How To Get Started

### *A Few Suggestions on Getting Started*

- When the need for a Special Needs-Accessibilities committee is apparent, notify local groups through G.S.R.s or other contacts that any interested A.A. member is welcome to participate. Area, district or central office newsletters or meetings can be utilized to do this. Extend a welcome to the D.C.M. or other area officers as well.

If practical, invite one or more A.A.s experienced in Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.), Public Information (P.I.) or Treatment service in nearby communities to attend early meetings to share how they got started.

- In addition to this Workbook, study the basic material listed below. Have extra copies for those attending the start-up meeting.

*Service Pamphlet:* “Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs.”

*A.A. Guidelines:* “Serving Alcoholics with Special Needs,” “Carrying the A.A. Message to the Deaf Alcoholic.”

*Large-Print Recovery Pamphlets:* “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic,” “This is A.A.,” “Is A.A. For Me?,” “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.,” “The Twelve Steps Illustrated.”

*Comic Book Recovery Pamphlets:* “Too Young?,” “What Happened to Joe,” “It Happened to Alice.”

*Special Needs-Accessibilities Kit:* “Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs.”

- At the first meeting, after everyone has been introduced, ask experienced A.A. guest(s) to briefly share their suggestions for working together as a committee.
- Develop a committee membership list from those attending the meeting.
- A.A. committees find that regular meetings help to keep their services moving forward, and provide opportunities to iron out any difficulties. It is important to have regularly scheduled dates and times for these meetings.
- Once the new committee members are comfortable with the basic Special Needs-Accessibilities literature, the committee can decide what activity is a priority for their A.A. community.

**Note:** Experience indicates that committee members respond enthusiastically to the success of a single project. Your first committee meetings may be devoted to choosing and completing a single project. Once the committee has positive experience with one activity, the committee’s group conscience is ready to consider additional service activities. “Keep it Simple” and “Good Orderly Direction” are slogans that are invaluable to service committees.

- Local Special Needs-Accessibilities committees sometimes provide G.S.O. with copies of locally developed Special Needs-Accessibilities flyers, pamphlets, etc. G.S.O. is always interested in gathering local experience to be shared as a resource to Special Needs-Accessibilities committees.

## **Forming a Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee**

Once you decide to form a Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee, it is a good idea to take it easy until you decide what the needs are in your A.A. community and how many A.A. members are available to get the job done. It is also important for the committee to share with the Fellowship at as many levels as possible. In some instances, the first task for a committee is to inform the A.A. members in their area or district about what the Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee does and doesn't do. Some Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees share with one another by exchanging minutes of their meetings.

It is also helpful to share your activities and ideas with the General Service Office for possible inclusion in G.S.O.'s newsletter, *Box 4-5-9*. Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee members can reach out to other A.A.s through participation in their group's and other business meetings. Let the telephone answering service or intergroup/central office know how to reach the committee if they receive a request for a Special Needs-Accessibilities contact.

The A.A. program works when an active alcoholic wants help and A.A. is on hand to give that help.

### ***Qualifications for Committee Members***

Experience suggests that solid sobriety, a knowledge of A.A. Traditions and absolute dependability are the qualifications needed to serve on Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees. The committee may include at least one A.A. member who acts as a liaison with the local intergroup/central office. Committee procedures and qualifications vary with each area and district.

### ***Qualifications for Area Chairpersons***

In some areas the Special Needs-Accessibilities chairperson is appointed by the chairperson of the area general service committee; in other areas the chairperson is elected by assembly members. The chairperson generally serves a two-year term. Candidates for this office are usually required to have at least several years of current and continuous sobriety and experience in active committee work at the area and local levels.

### ***Keeping Committee Members Informed***

Regularly scheduled committee meetings help keep everyone informed of activities and commitments and also provide opportunities to share problems and solutions.

1. A notice to committee members about a forthcoming Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee meeting will improve attendance.

2. Minutes are an important record of the committee's discussions and group conscience decisions and also allow new members to become familiar with past committee actions and ideas.
3. Area Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees may periodically distribute a newsletter as a means of sharing ideas with district, and intergroup/central office Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees.

### *Working With Other Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees*

There is a definite need for good communication between Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees, not only within general service areas and districts but throughout our service structure. Many areas, states, provinces and regions hold conventions, conferences and round-ups in addition to their assemblies. These are ideal times to plan special meetings or workshops for members of Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees.

### *Getting on the General Service Office's Mailing List for Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee Chairpersons*

The General Service Office maintains a mailing list of committee chairpersons. G.S.O.'s Special Needs-Accessibilities desk distributes this list to new committee chairs in a welcome packet so new chairs are able to contact other committees to ask for experience, suggestions, etc. Also, G.S.O.'s Special Needs-Accessibilities desk sends reports to committee chairpersons with information about G.S.O.'s Special Needs-Accessibilities activities, as well as collected experience from local Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees. It is the responsibility of the committee chairperson to pass along information received from G.S.O. to committee members. Once your committee has been formed and elections held, please send the following chairperson contact information to your area registrar or area secretary as well as to the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, 11th floor, New York, New York 10115; or email: specialneeds@aa.org.

- the chairperson's name and postal address
- telephone number and cell phone number (if available)
- e-mail address (if available)
- area and district number (or intergroup/central office).

### **Suggestions for Working With a Deaf/ Hard of Hearing A.A. Member or Newcomer**

The following is sharing from a longtime A.A. member who is also an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter:

In conversations with A.A. members who are interested in helping a deaf person I suggest that they treat the deaf person with the same warmth as you would treat any other person that is new to A.A. or a visitor to your group. For example:

- Greet the person with a handshake.

- Escort the person to the coffee service area and offer them coffee or a soft drink if available.
- Write a note telling them that you and the group are happy they are here.
- When the meeting is finished give the person a newcomer packet, if available, or some literature and a meeting schedule.

I also suggest that they become familiar with our literature on special needs and their group keeps that literature on-hand.

I have recently asked several A.A. members if they would like to learn more about helping the deaf person and learning some ASL. They are enthusiastic about the idea so I have been listing some items to cover in a future workshop:

1. Discuss the literature available for deaf special needs to including service material and recent Grapevine issues featuring Special Needs-Accessibilities articles.
2. Show a portion of the ASL video "Alcoholics Anonymous."
3. Learn signs such as: A.A., sober, alcohol, problem, love, better, improve, serenity prayer, number signs 1 through 12, sobriety date, happiness-joy-sober, jail, hospital, time, one day, pay attention, hope, sponsor, meeting leader, peace, ask, etc.
4. Ask a deaf person to share their experience, strength, and hope on deaf special needs.
5. Suggest using 3 x 5 cards for the Steps and prayers from *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

### **Shared Experience From an A.A. Member/ Volunteer American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter**

My experience is that, although I am interpreting our A.A. program of recovery into American Sign Language, my service to a recovering deaf person is the same as the help I provide to other recovering individuals. (Although extra prayers are made to my Higher Power for patience and guidance.) I explain the difference between closed and open meetings in case they want to bring another person to interpret that is not a member of A.A.

I have revealed my membership in A.A. to a local minister who is an active supporter of the deaf community (his church provides special services to the deaf). I keep him informed of local A.A. functions, such as A.A. group or individual anniversaries that are open to anyone interested in A.A. He and deaf persons have attended these A.A. functions, where he has assisted me in interpreting. I also stay in touch with the local State office that assists deaf people.

I own a copy of the American Sign Language video *Alcoholics Anonymous* and found it very helpful in learning to properly interpret the contents in American Sign Language. I have loaned my copy to a deaf person who has found it very helpful. He borrowed a VCR player. (DVD copy is now available.) Several other deaf persons in my home state have found the video very helpful.

## **Suggestions for Working With the Elder Community**

Whether extending the hand of A.A. to elders already sober in A.A. or to elder newcomers who have been touched by alcoholism later in life, Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees help insure A.A.'s program of recovery is available to anyone who has a desire to stop drinking, regardless of their age.

The A.A. message can be carried to professionals at social service agencies assisting elders, as well as elder care facilities, including retirement and convalescent homes. Many A.A. members reach out to elder alcoholics within one's group, including those who need assistance getting to the meeting and participating in the meeting as well as those who become homebound.

Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees can support A.A. groups and members with the vital service of working with the elder community, including in the following:

- Coordinating schedules and member participation to provide home meetings—in person, by phone, or over the Internet—for elderly or infirmed members of A.A.
- Providing assistance and information to support transportation of the elderly to meetings, whether door-to-door or from the parking spot to a chair.
- Gathering and passing on local, shared experience for types of meeting formats used in elder care facilities, community senior centers, and home settings.
- Gathering and passing on local, shared experience for guidelines and suggestions for working within elder care facilities.
- Conducting workshops on any of the various topics which relate to this service area.

## **Suggested Activities for Special Needs- Accessibilities Committees**

- Extend the hand of A.A. through Special Needs-Accessibilities Twelve Step service to A.A. groups, districts, area assemblies, etc.
- Create a list of the committee's Special Needs-Accessibilities Twelve Step service priorities – pick one or two project ideas and focus on those goals.
- Coordinate Special Needs-Accessibilities workshops at the group, district or area level.
- Hold regular Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee meetings and prepare minutes of these meetings.
- Submit a request for a Special Needs-Accessibilities committee budget from a group, district or area to support these Twelve Step service priorities.
- Conduct a survey of wheelchair accessible meetings and add this information to local meeting lists/"Where and Whens" (wheelchair accessibility includes both the entrance to the meeting and access to bathroom facilities).

- Conduct a survey of local, district or area meetings with American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation.
- Help arrange for American Sign Language interpreters at A.A. meetings.
- Make A.A./Special Needs-Accessibilities informational presentations at schools for the blind, the deaf and hard of hearing, rehabilitation centers for people with brain damage and centers and schools for the developmentally disabled.
- Work closely with Public Information (P.I.), Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.) and Cooperation With the Elder Community (C.E.C.) to inform the public and appropriate agencies that A.A. is accessible to alcoholics with special needs.
- Arrange meetings for A.A. members who do not have access to regular A.A. meetings, e.g. in hospitals, rehabilitation centers for the physically disabled or challenged, residences for the developmentally disabled.
- Compile and maintain a list of sighted members who are willing to provide transportation to and from meetings and other A.A. functions for blind A.A. members.
- Have members of your committee or other volunteers read and record an A.A. book on tape for a blind member or for an A.A. member who may no longer be able to hold a book.
- Take a meeting to homebound A.A. members along with two or more members of the Fellowship.
- Provide Special Needs-Accessibilities workshops and assistance to physically disabled at conventions, conferences, service weekends, service meetings, special events, etc.
- Gather local information and identify outside local resources regarding accessibility requirements and options.

## **Workshops and Presentations**

Many Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees have found that workshops—taking a hard look at local needs, opportunities and attitudes, as well as the Traditions and service structure—are fine tools for exploring ideas and settling on methods for carrying the A.A. message into special needs communities.

Other kinds of brief presentations on Special Needs-Accessibilities could serve the same purpose. For example, sharing excerpts from the A.A. Guidelines, material from this Workbook, from *Box 4-5-9* or the Grapevine, might spark ideas for a question and answer session.

A discussion period, in which the entire group breaks up into smaller groups, could focus on the following topics (or topics of your own choosing):

1. Discuss forming a Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee.
2. Review ways of reaching professionals who work with special needs populations.

3. Share ideas on connecting alcoholics in special needs facilities with local A.A. groups.
4. List ways of attracting members to this form of Twelfth Step service.
5. Discuss appropriate A.A. literature.
6. Discuss the Grapevine as a tool for carrying the A.A. message into local facilities that serve special needs clients.

### *Presentations to Special Needs Clients or Professionals*

Presentations by A.A. members generally follow an outline that explains what A.A. is and is not, where you can find A.A., and what to expect. For example, many people have seen an A.A. meeting portrayed on television and they assume that attendees must stand up and speak. It is helpful to reassure a potential newcomer or to help a professional understand that newcomers speak only if they want to and that it is possible to sit quietly in an A.A. meeting with no pressure to participate.

In addition to a response to a specific request, regularly scheduled presentations may be set up for either clients or staff at a facility. A recurring presentation is usually coordinated through a local or area Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee. Such presentations are adapted to meet the needs of the attendees. The goal of a presentation to professionals is to impart knowledge about A.A., as well as to foster a cooperative attitude between the facility administration, staff and A.A. The pamphlet "Speaking at Non-A.A. Meetings" may be a helpful resource. If this type of presentation is new to you, you may wish to consult with your local Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.) or Public Information (P.I.) Committee.

### **Some basic guidelines:**

1. Familiarize yourself with the A.A. literature that relates to special needs especially the Special Needs-Accessibilities Workbook and a service piece (F-107) "Serving Alcoholics with Special Needs."
2. Make brief notes on the topics to be covered. Talk about A.A., not your personal problems and experiences. Never comment on facility policies or practices!
3. Allocate a certain amount of time to each segment of your presentation. Then... trim it down! Allow time for questions and answers. It's better to finish early than to try to convey too much information too quickly in the presentation. You can always come back to a topic or discussion of interest to your listeners. Just as in A.A. meetings, it is helpful to encourage sharing from participants.
4. Work with other members of the Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee or your group in preparing for this presentation. It may be helpful for you to run through or even "rehearse" this presentation a few times.

### *Suggestions from successful presentations to special needs professionals:*

1. Work with members of the Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee or with your group. It may be helpful for you to run through or even rehearse the presentation the first few times.
2. Be on time, well groomed, and courteous.
3. Introduce A.A. and yourself as a resource with a desire to help the alcoholic with special needs, but with no opinion on the facility's policies.
4. Distribute appropriate literature.
5. Invite the facility staff to attend open A.A. meetings. Your local C.P.C. committee may have a program in place for this purpose.
6. Offer to come back for other presentations/discussions to help meet their goals.
7. Remember that this, too, is basic Twelfth Step work. The professionals you are sharing with touch the lives of many alcoholics with special needs. You can help them to inform their patients about A.A. as a resource.

And if you have any helpful comments or suggestions—please contact the Special Needs-Accessibilities Desk at G.S.O. ([specialneeds@aa.org](mailto:specialneeds@aa.org)).

### *Presentations to Special Needs Clients*

#### **Some basic guidelines:**

1. Remember that this is basic Twelfth Step work. The goal of A.A. is *the recovery of the alcoholic*.
2. Avoid drunkalogues. Keep comments strictly to A.A.-related matters. Do *not* comment on the facility's policies or practices!
3. Familiarize yourself with the appropriate literature before your presentation.
4. Work with members of the Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee or with your group, maybe even rehearse the presentation the first few times.
5. Provide copies of the following Conference-approved pamphlets if appropriate: "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship," "Where Do I Go from Here?," "A.A. at a Glance," and the large-print pamphlets: "Do You Think You're Different?," "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic," "This is A.A.," "Is A.A. for Me?," and "The Twelve Steps Illustrated." You should also provide copies of a local A.A. meeting list or directory.
6. Always remember that you are representing Alcoholics Anonymous. Once again, it is important to be on time, courteous, and well groomed. For many in your audience, this will be their first impression of Alcoholics Anonymous. Make it a good one!

*A suggested presentation outline:*

1. Introduction: Why you're there (to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous; explain what A.A. is and what it is not).
2. Read and explain the A.A. Preamble.
3. Mention the local A.A. meeting list and worldwide availability of A.A.
4. Share about what a newcomer may expect in A.A.—anonymity, the home group, sponsorship, fellowship, and service.
5. Share about relevant A.A. literature: books, pamphlets, videos, tapes, the Grapevine, La Viña, etc., and where they may be obtained.
6. Always try to leave time for a general question and answer session. Stick to A.A. and your *own* experience. Steer discussion away from legal or any other outside issues.
7. Thank you and close.

*Suggested card or flyer:*

You may want to leave the following information on a card or flyer so that attendees can easily contact your committee:

*For additional information on Alcoholics Anonymous and how we can help:*

Contact Your Local or Area Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee or Local Intergroup or Central Office at:

Or:     General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous  
          Grand Central Station  
          P.O. Box 459  
          New York, NY 10163  
          Phone: (212) 870-3400  
          E-mail: [specialneeds@aa.org](mailto:specialneeds@aa.org)  
          Fax: 212-870-3003

# ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SPECIAL NEEDS-ACCESSIBILITIES WORKSHOP



## SERVICE IN MOTION



**Saturday November 17, 2007  
2:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

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- 2:00 p.m. Chairman Bill S. Opens the meeting with a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer. Read “Why we need a Conference.”**
- 2:15 p.m. History of the Special Needs-Accessibilities in the Northeast Texas and the Service Structure — Louis P.**
- 2:35 p.m. How the Traditions relate to Special Needs-Accessibilities — Lois W.**
- 2:50 p.m. The Needs of the Blind or visually impaired — Paul**
- 3:10 p.m. Snacks/Smoke and Fellowship**
- 3:30 p.m. The Needs of the hearing impaired — Olga R.**
- 3:50 p.m. The Needs of the members of Physical Disabilities — Kathy F.**
- 4:10 p.m. What About the A.A. member who cannot read or write? — Randy R.**
- 4:30 p.m. Snacks/Smoke and Fellowship**
- 4:50 p.m. Ask it Basket with questions and answers — Bill S.**
- 6:00 - 6:30 p.m. Close with Lord’s Prayer, Clean up group, go home**

**\*\*All meetings will have Sign Language translation provided\*\***

# OUR 12TH STEP RESPONSIBILITY— ARE WE GOING TO ANY LENGTH?

## Special Needs-Accessibilities Share-A-Day 2007 ASL Interpreted

**Saturday October 20th, 2007  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
(9:30 a.m Registration, Breakfast)**

**Wheelchair accessible facility and entire program ASL interpreted.**

### Program

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Registration & Hospitality	Naomi D. & Susan F.
10:00 – 10:10 a.m.	Welcome Reading of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions	Janine Marilyn P.
10:10 – 11:00 a.m.	1st Panel Workshop “Going to Any Lengths to Get Sober” (ESH of Those Who Came Into the Program with Special Needs)	Speaker: Ray, Nassau Speaker: Cecil— We Can Group Sharing from the floor/ and/or Q&A
BREAK		
11:10 a.m. 12:00 p.m.	2nd Panel Workshop: “Going to Any Lengths to Stay Sober” (ESH of Those Who later Developed a Special Need or Needs In Sobriety)	Moderator: David Speaker: Louise, Man. Speaker: Louis, Nassau Sharing/Q&A
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH	
1:00 – 1:10 p.m.	Brief recapturing of an experience Cookie had with a Deaf Member at Convention 20 years ago where 1st ASL interpreters were hired	Speaker: Cookie S.
1:10 – 2:00 p.m.	General Service Office (GSO) Speaker — Liaison for Special Needs	Moderator: Janine Speaker: Valerie Sharing/Q&A
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Big Meeting & Sobriety Countdown	Countdown: Janine W. Main Speaker: Susan F.

## Sample Letter Inviting Professional to Attend a Workshop

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The \_\_\_\_\_ Area/District/Central Office/Intergroup Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous will hold a workshop for A.A. members and others who are interested in helping alcoholics with special needs maintain sobriety through A.A.'s program of recovery.

We would be delighted if you join us on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. A preliminary program for this workshop is enclosed.

It is only through the kind support of so many of our nonalcoholic friends like you that A.A. now has well over two million members in over 180 countries worldwide. We look forward to this opportunity to meet you and share information about A.A.

Please let us know by \_\_\_\_\_ if you will join us.

Sincerely yours,

Jane S., Chairperson  
A.A. Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee

Enclosures: Preliminary program  
Response Form and self-addressed envelope

## Sample Letter to Various Facilities

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You may be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as A.A. It is possible you have patients or clients, etc. with a drinking problem who might be interested in learning about A.A. Our A.A. Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee members are available to provide information about A.A. at your convenience.

The enclosed flyer, "A.A. at a Glance," explains briefly what A.A. is and what it does. We can arrange for an A.A. contact to answer your questions about A.A. or to introduce your alcoholic patient, client, etc. to our fellowship. We are also available to make presentations about A.A. to your staff, patients or clients.

If you are interested in receiving a packet of A.A. information or being contacted by an A.A. member, please complete the enclosed card and mail it to us in the self-addressed envelope.

We just want you to know that we are available as a resource to you and to those whom you serve.

Sincerely,

Jane S., Chairperson  
A.A. Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee

Enclosures: "A.A. at a Glance"  
Response Form and self-addressed envelope

**Sample Letter to Professionals,  
Administrators at Schools for the Blind, Deaf,  
Hard of Hearing or Developmentally Disabled**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You may be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as A.A. We of the \_\_\_\_\_ A.A. Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee recognize that there are some alcoholics who face physical challenges on a daily basis. It is possible you have students (patients or clients), etc. with a drinking problem who might benefit from A.A.'s program of recovery. We would welcome the opportunity to provide information about A.A. or about how our committee is available to try to help alcoholics have access to A.A. in our community regardless of physical challenges.

The attached flyer, "A.A. at a Glance," explains briefly what A.A. is and what it does. We can arrange for an A.A. contact to answer your questions about A.A. or to introduce your alcoholic student, patient, client, etc. to our fellowship. We are also available to make presentations about A.A. to your students, staff, patients or clients.

If you are interested in receiving a packet of information or being contacted by an A.A. member, please complete the enclosed card and return it to us in the self-addressed envelope.

We just want you to know that we are available as a resource to you and to those whom you serve.

Sincerely,

Jane S., Chairperson  
A.A. Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee

Enclosures: "A.A. at a Glance"  
Response Form and self-addressed envelope

## **Special Needs-Accessibilities Kit Enclosures**

(Literature, Guidelines, Collected Experience)

The Special Needs-Accessibilities Kit is available to area chairs and the Special Needs-Accessibilities Workbook is available to district chairs. G.S.O. mails the Kit or Workbook, with a welcome letter, when a committee chair or local contact is added to G.S.O.'s mailing list.

1. *Service Piece*: "Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs."
2. *A.A. Guidelines*: Carrying the A.A. Message to the Deaf Alcoholic; Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs.
3. *Suggested Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee Activities*
4. *Large-Print Pamphlets*: "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic," "This is A.A.," "Is A.A. For Me?," "44 Questions," "The Twelve Steps Illustrated."
5. *Comic Book Pamphlets*: "Too Young?," "What Happened to Joe?," "It Happened To Alice."
6. *About A.A.* newsletter, recent article.
7. "How It Works."
8. *Loners-Internationalist Meeting (LIM)* Correspondence Service information sheet.
9. *Box 4-5-9* and Grapevine recent related articles.
10. A.A. material translated for American Sign Language (ASL) signing purposes.
11. A.A. Conference-Approved Literature catalog.

## Literature Guide for Special Needs- Accessibilities Committees

### **A.A. Guidelines**

*Serving Alcoholics with Special Needs* (MG-16)

*Carrying the Message to the Deaf Alcoholic* (MG-13)

### **Braille**

*Alcoholics Anonymous* (M-34)

Fourth Edition of the Big Book, A.A.'s basic text.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (M-35)

Bill W.'s 24 essays on the Steps and the Traditions.

*Daily Reflections: A Book of Reflections by A.A. Members for A.A. Members* (M-50)

A.A.s reflect on favorite quotations from A.A. literature.

A reading for each day of the year.

"This is A.A." (M-63)

Introductory pamphlet describing people in A.A. and what they have learned about alcoholism.

"Is A.A. For You?" (M-64)

Symptoms of alcoholism are summed up in 12 questions most A.A.s had to answer to identify themselves as alcoholics.

"Frequently Asked Questions About A.A." (M-65)

Answers the questions most frequently asked about A.A. by alcoholics seeking help, as well as by their families.

### **Audio Cassettes And CD-ROMS**

*Alcoholics Anonymous* (M-81)

Audio version of the Big Book on 16 CDs in case. Includes Fourth Edition stories.

*Alcoholics Anonymous* (M-81A)

Abridged version of Big Book on CD-ROM.

*Alcoholics Anonymous* (MB-1A)

Complete Fourth Edition on 14 cassette tapes.

*Alcoholics Anonymous* (MB-1)

A reading of the first 11 chapters and the first two stories.

A series of seven tapes in a book-like binder.

*Alcoholics Anonymous* (M-70)

Text version of the Big Book on CD-ROM. 3 CDs in case.

Fourth Edition stories included.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* on CDs (M-83)

The Twelve and Twelve on six Cds, containing all the material found in the book version of the Twelve and Twelve. Comes with table of contents booklet.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (M-83B)

Same as M-83, but with booklet in Braille and with Braille tabs on CD sleeves.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (MB-2)

Five cassette tapes in a book-like binder.

*A.A. for the Alcoholic With Special Needs* (M-93)

Audio CD of stories from A.A.s who are hearing and visually impaired, housebound for various illnesses or other disabilities.

*A.A. Comes of Age* on CD (M-84)

Bill W. tells how A.A. started, how the Steps and Traditions evolved, and how the A.A. Fellowship grew and spread overseas.

*Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions* on CD (M-89)

Soundtrack of video VS-20.

*Three Legacies, By Bill* on CD (M-87)

Co-founder's talk on Recovery, Unity and Service.

*Voices of our Co-Founders* on CD (M-88)

Five excerpts from different talks given by Dr. Bob and Bill W. 28 mins.

*Living Sober* (MB-7)

Four cassette tapes on methods A.A. members have used to stay sober. CD (M-85)

*Pioneers of A.A.* (MB-4)

Three audio cassette tapes of the Pioneers' Stories in Alcoholics Anonymous, Third Edition. CD (M-90)

"A Brief Guide to A.A." on CD (M-91)

Recording of several Conference-approved pamphlets, such as A Brief Guide to A.A.; Is A.A. for Me?; This is A.A.; plus the A.A. Preamble; Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions; and recovery stories taken from Young People and A.A. and the Third Edition of the Big Book. 90 mins.

## **Large Print**

*Alcoholics Anonymous* (B-16)

Soft-cover, 7" x 10¼", in type size recommended as suitable for the visually handicapped.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (B-14)

Soft-cover, 7" x 10¼", in type size recommended as suitable for the visually handicapped.

*Living Sober* (B-25)

*Came to Believe* (B-26)

*As Bill Sees It* (B-27)

“This is A.A.” (P-56)

“Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.” (P-57)

“A.A. for the Older Alcoholic—Never Too Late” (P-22)

Addresses the older alcoholic, with eight stories of men and women who came to A.A. after the age of 60.

“How it Works” (P-10)

An excerpt in large type from Chapter 5 of the Big Book.

*The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* (BM-33)

Both in a single booklet. The Manual opens with a history of A.A. services; explains the Conference structure and its year-round importance; includes the Conference Charter and General Service Board Bylaws. The Concepts—principles of service that have emerged from A.A.’s service accomplishments and mistakes since its beginning—are set forth by Bill W.

*Daily Reflections* (B-19)

A reading for each day of the year.

## **American Sign Language**

*Alcoholics Anonymous* (VS-1)

Five volume ½” VHS video for the deaf and hearing-impaired.

Contains the first 11 chapters, “Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,” the Forwards, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” and the Appendices.

Packaged in attractive blue slipcase.

*Alcoholics Anonymous* DVD (DV-11)

Three-volume DVD (see description of contents above).

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (VS-3)

Five volume ½” video (in slipcase) for the deaf and hearing-impaired.

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* DVD (DV-12)

*A.A. for the Alcoholic With Special Needs* (DV-17)

This DVD includes the experience of A.A. members who are hearing and visually impaired, housebound, chronically ill or disabled due to brain damage or stroke. Their stories tell how they found A.A. and are living new and productive lives free from alcohol.

## **Closed-captioned videos**

*Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* (DV-09)

DVD, English only. Explains the principles of A.A.: what A.A. is and isn’t, primary purpose, sponsorship, home group, the Steps and Traditions and basic recovery tools. 15 mins.

*A.A. Videos for Young People* (DV-10)

A collection of four videos, by A.A. members in their teens and early twenties, discussing their experiences in A.A.

*Your A.A. General Service Office, The Grapevine and  
The General Service Structure* (VS-24)  
½" VHS. 22 mins. DVD (DV-07)

### **Videos (Not Closed-Captioned)**

*Bill's Own Story* (VS-21)

½" VHS. (For use within A.A. only). Co-founder Bill W. tells of his drinking and recovery. 60 mins. DVD (DV-04)

*Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions* (VS-20)

½" VHS. (For use within A.A. only). Bill W. tells how the principles safeguarding A.A. unity developed. 60 mins. DVD (DV-05)

### **Illustrated, Easy-To-Read Literature**

"Is A.A. for Me?" (P-36)

Based on the 12 questions in "Is A.A. For You?", this 32-page pamphlet is an illustrated, easy-to-read version.

"Twelve Steps Illustrated" (P-55)

An easy-to-read version of A.A.'s Twelve Steps. Steps appear at top of each page with simplified text under illustration.

"What Happened to Joe" (P-38)

Story of a young construction worker and his drinking problem, told in brightly colored "comic book" style.

"It Happened to Alice" (P-39)

Easy-to-read "comic book" style pamphlet for women alcoholics.

"Too Young?" (P-37)

With a full-color cover, this cartoon-format pamphlet speaks to teenagers in their own language, telling the varied drinking stories of six young people (13 to 18) and showing their welcome to A.A.

"A Message to Teenagers" (F-9)

Flyer adapted from the pamphlet "Too Young?"; for P.I. in schools.

"It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" (P-33)

An illustrated pamphlet which presents the experience of seven inmates who found A.A. while in prison. It also offers suggested do's and don'ts for staying sober after release.

## **Miscellaneous**

### *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (M-67)

One 3.5" diskette that runs in Microsoft Windows® with four megabytes hard-disk space. Fully word searchable and hyperlinked.

“Directory of Central Offices, Intergroups and Answering Services for the United States and Canada” (F-25)  
Indicating the offices with TTY/TDD equipment.

### “Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs” (F-107)

A service piece in leaflet format for members interested in carrying the message to alcoholics with special needs.

**Note:** The following A.A. Conference-approved literature has been revised so that it can be easily read by people who have been deaf since birth or early childhood or for signing purposes:

The Serenity Prayer

“The Twelve Steps”

“The Twelve Traditions” (short form)

“The Twelve Traditions” (long form)

“How It Works”

“A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous”

“Is A.A. For You?”

“A Deaf Newcomer Asks”

**Note:** To obtain a list of resources which provide A.A. Conference-approved literature in Braille, American Sign Language (ASL) and on audio. For further information write to:

General Service Office  
Attn: Special Needs-Accessibilities  
P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 1016

Or:

Phone: (212) 870-3400  
E-mail: [specialneeds@aa.org](mailto:specialneeds@aa.org)  
G.S.O.'s website: [aa.org](http://aa.org)

## **A.A. Grapevine and La Viña**

A.A.'s magazines, the Grapevine and La Viña, are excellent tools of recovery and support for alcoholics with special needs. Often called A.A.'s "meetings in print," they bring sharing about all stages of recovery, including staying sober through tough times, to alcoholics' homes every month, which can be helpful to those who cannot go to meetings. The Grapevine's large-print and audio editions of *The Language of the Heart* and *Best of Bill* and Spanish and English-language CDs on topics such as emotional sobriety and spiritual awakenings can be useful to those who have difficulty reading. Each issue of the Grapevine is recorded every month and is available online at [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org).

To order A.A. Grapevine material, contact A.A. Grapevine customer service at 800-631-6025 (toll-free) from U.S. or at 818-487-2091 from non-U.S. locations. Email: [customerservice@aagrapevine.org](mailto:customerservice@aagrapevine.org).

