

## **PHONE VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES VENTURA COUNTY CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE**

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

Possibly, the most important job that Intergroup does is maintaining the 24 Hour Hotline. This phone line allows the hand of A.A. to always be there to anyone who needs Alcoholics Anonymous' critical help, meeting information or to speak with another alcoholic. It is Central Office's responsibility to make sure this service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week 365 days a year. We share experience, strength and hope and help others get on the road to recovery. You are our messenger and it is our wish your sobriety is enriched through your service.

We ask you to be patient and courteous, as many of the callers are newcomers and we are often the first contact they have with Alcoholics Anonymous. We are here to be of service to all callers and our standard of service is compassion, tolerance and kindness. Our experience has taught us sarcasm and argumentativeness profits neither callers nor volunteers.

AA gets a lot of calls on a variety of issues but, as a fellowship, can really only help them with one problem – alcoholism. Refrain from giving advice about anything other than how to not drink. Remember the Tenth Tradition, "Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy." You are representing AA with this commitment. AA cannot truly help anyone other than the fellow alcoholic; however, we do not want to turn our backs on other sufferers either. Please use the reference phone numbers in this packet to direct callers to the appropriate resource or have them contact 211.

Your primary purpose with this commitment is to answer all local AA phone calls. Because you only have one phone line, depending on the time and day of your shift you will need to limit the amount of time you spend talking with each caller. If they need someone to talk with longer or a ride to a meeting, ask them for their name and number, then have someone from the 12 step list call them back. (Never give out another member's phone number!!!) Do not wait until your phone is ringing off the hook to do this. If you are unable to contact a willing member to call them back within 20 mins, call them back yourself; tell them you have not forgotten about them and you are still trying. Continue this every 20 mins until you reach someone on the 12 step list willing to call them back. Depending on the time and day of your shift it may take a while to find someone, but please don't give up - the newcomer is counting on you!

If you need to utilize the 12 Step list, call a woman for a woman & a man for a man. (Never give out another member's phone number) Please remind all 12 steppers - if the call results in a personal meeting directly with the caller (coffee, ride to a meeting, etc) that they should always bring a sober buddy from AA. Do not go alone!!! **Men stick with the men and women with women, so under NO circumstances should someone on the 12 step call list agree to meet with a member of the opposite sex.**

What if someone calls and is intoxicated? Do not be afraid to call 911 if you think the caller is going to bring physical harm to themselves or is in need of immediate medical attention. If the caller is intoxicated and the situation is not that urgent, try to keep the call short. You will know when someone genuinely wants help. If they do not, compassionately cut to the chase and end the call - we cannot tie up the phones because someone else may be trying to get through. Remember, there is a difference between carrying the message and carrying the drunk!

When you answer the phone please do not just answer "HELLO." It is preferred to answer the call "Alcoholics Anonymous this is \_\_\_\_\_ how may I help you?" If you are unable to answer the phone Alcoholics Anonymous please answer "Hello this is \_\_\_\_\_ how may I help you?"

Your phone number is important and is not being given out to the world.

The phone call you will be receiving is being forwarded from the Central Office phone. The caller has no idea what your personal phone number is.

It is up to YOU whether or not YOU want to give YOUR personal phone number to the individual seeking help on the other end of the phone.

**YOU ARE NOT AUTHORIZED** to give out another member's personal information unless you have their specific approval.

The personal phone numbers of A.A.'s listed in this information packet are **CONFIDENTIAL** and are provided for you to use as a tool, not for you to give out to people looking for help.

## **Frequently Asked Questions From Callers**

### **How do I go to an AA class/meeting?**

*Were you sent to AA meetings by the legal system? You are welcome to attend any **OPEN** meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I will help you locate meetings near you or you can find them listed on our official website directory: **AAVENTURACOUNTY.ORG**. If you already identify as an alcoholic you may attend any meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Also if you are attending meetings just to satisfy the courts, we kindly ask you not to donate any money when the basket is passed around. Our traditions limit our donation to members only.*

### **I need a Spanish speaking meeting.**

*We don't list Spanish speaking meetings, but the nearby Spanish speaking office can help. Please call (805)525-6140 (OCHO – CERO-CINCO)CINCO-DOS-CINCO-SEIS-UNO-QUATRO-CERO*

### **Can I buy AA literature at Central Office?**

*Yes, bookstore hours are **Monday-Friday 9:30 AM-6:00 PM and on Saturday 10:00AM-2:00PM**. We are located at 32 N. Aviator St. Suite 115 in Camarillo*

### **When and where does H&I Meet?**

*The monthly H&I business meeting is scheduled on the second Sunday of the month at 5:30 and it starts at 5:30.*

### Requests for Non AA Services

#### **1. How do I help my loved one with a drinking problem?**

*I understand your concern. We do not offer help indirectly. AA is designed to help the alcoholic who wants to do something about their problem. Give this number to him or her, and tell them we are here to help. For you, Al-Anon may be beneficial. The Al-Anon program is for the family and friends of people who have a loved one with a drinking problem. I can give you their number if you so desire.*

#### **2. How do I find a “detox” center, rehab or sober living?**

*We take heed our Tradition 6 and are not affiliated with nor do we recommend outside facilities or businesses. For this information offer the suggestion they may call the **Ventura***

**County** general information number **211** and follow the prompts, or search online for the services they need.

**3. Can you take me to a meeting?**

*Central Office is not a resource for rides to and from meetings. We suggest you attend a meeting near you and ask other members to assist. Also, don't forget to check public transportation options for transportation to meetings.*

I have read, understand and will abide by these guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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