

## **A.A. TWELVE STEP HOT LINE MANUAL**

(District 21 of Alcoholics Anonymous)

*“When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there and for that I am responsible.”*

### **How the 24 Hour Hotline works:**

District 21 uses Auburn Area Answering Service. We have two phone numbers (916-624-6807 and 530-888-3607) that are posted on the first page of our schedules as well as placed in phone books, county literature, and other places to reach the suffering alcoholic. When someone calls one of these numbers, they reach an operator at Auburn Area Answering Service.

We provide the Answering Service with a volunteer list which includes names, phone numbers and times of availability of AA members willing to take Twelve Step calls. We also provide the operators with current meeting schedules and a copy of this manual.

When a “hot line call” comes in, the operator answers the phone “Alcoholics Anonymous, how may we help you?” If they need meeting times and locations, the operator gives them that information. If the caller is looking for Al-Anon information they are referred to another number (530-888-3645). If the caller wants to speak to someone about Alcoholics Anonymous, then the operator determines their gender, gets their first name, and places them on hold. They then attempt to reach a volunteer on the list.

The AA volunteer list is always rotating. It doesn’t necessarily always begin at the top of the list with the letter A. Women talk with women and men talk with men. When the answering service operator gets a volunteer on the line they ask, “This is the AA Answering Service, can you take a call?” When the volunteer agrees, the answering service connects him/her with the caller. The caller does not have the volunteer’s name or phone number. It is his/her privilege to give out their name and number, if desired.

As the volunteer, you should try to keep the calls fairly brief because it is important to keep the Hot Line open to others in need, and we only have one line. It is best to try to get their phone number and call them back. Explain to the caller that you would like to call him/her back so as not to tie up the A.A. line.

If you are unable to take a call or to go on a Twelve Step call, please let the answering service know. Please remember that being on the Hot Line is a great commitment. If you can’t be available, please take your name off the list. It is the A.A. volunteer’s responsibility to inform the District 21 Hot Line contact person of any changes in phone numbers or availability times. This is best done through your GSR. We can’t stress this enough. Please do not call the answering service with these changes. This is extremely important for the caller that might be put on hold too long and gives up, and then hangs up.

### **Hot Line Suggestions:**

One of the suggested requirements for Hot Line volunteers is that they be “*active members of A.A.*” which means it is very important to attend meetings. It becomes increasingly difficult to share with the newcomer the benefits of the A.A. Fellowship if you are out of touch with the Fellowship yourself.

The second requirement is that you have one year or more of continuous sobriety.

Make sure the information you give is accurate: Take time to check the current schedules for new information. It is better to give no information than to give wrong information. If you find it necessary, get the caller's phone number and then check with someone else first if you are unsure of your information.

In relation to suicide calls, drugs, etc., we are only qualified to talk about the A.A. Program and what it has done for us. (Regardless of your training, we are not doctors, psychiatrists, drug counselors, or marriage counselors.) Feel the person out and use your own discretion on an individual basis. If the need arises, refer the caller to Placer County Mental Health Suicide Crisis Hot Line. The number is 530-886-5401.

When advising callers of recovery homes or other references, be sure to state that we cooperate but do not affiliate. These facilities are not sponsored by Alcoholics Anonymous.

At all times we should maintain the dignity of A.A. Our public relations work is extremely important to our growth and the lives of suffering alcoholics. It is important that we be courteous at all times and never slam down the receiver. We need not respond to or accept abuse, but calmly hang up.

Often, the best way to handle a call is to listen, and to suggest you take the caller to a meeting as soon as possible.

The caller may want to talk to someone in person right away. If you feel that a Twelve Step Call is in order, take the caller's name and telephone number and tell them you will get back to them right away.

### **Suggestions for Making Twelve Step Calls:**

Do Not Go Alone! It is suggested that men work with men and women work with women. Twelve Step Calls should always be made by 2 people, preferably someone with Twelve Step experience and a newer person who would like to learn what is involved. Try to find out the following information before making the Twelve Step Call. Knowing certain details before going out will better equip you for a safer call.

1. Ask the caller how much he/she has had to drink; how long they have been drinking. Ask if a family member is there and if they are drinking also.
2. Try to make sure the caller really wants help and not just to B.S. with someone.
3. Make sure you get good directions to the caller's home. You don't want to get lost.
4. Get the caller's phone number. Don't wait for the newcomer to call you.
5. Take them to another meeting. Maybe appoint yourself as their temporary sponsor. As long as the person seems to be willing and wanting help, we should try to be available as much as possible. BUT ALSO REMEMBER we can't carry the drunk, the person has to want help.

### **Anonymity:**

We never give out telephone numbers, names or addresses of our members. Simply state it is A.A.'s policy not to divulge this information. Take the caller's number and tell them you will try to have the person contact them. We do not ever say that a person is a member of A.A. Be careful to preserve anonymity; avoid discussions of calls at meetings and elsewhere.

*(Revised & Edited – July, 2010)*