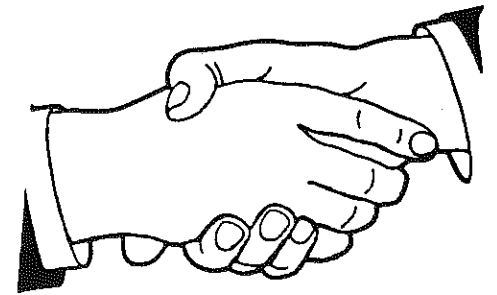


# The AA Corrections Bridge Program



An AA Service  
Opportunity  
Connecting Inside  
AA Members  
to the AA  
Community

## BRIDGE VOLUNTEER'S "DON'T" DO LIST

- DON'T forget the importance of the ex-inmate's first meeting being as soon as possible after release.
- DON'T become responsible for the member's attitude or actions in or out of meetings.
- DON'T "Carry the Alcoholic -- Carry the message" (Tradition 5).
- DON'T become a personal taxi service for miscellaneous errands.
- DON'T loan money or anything of value.
- DON'T sponsor the ex-inmate, even temporarily.
- DON'T allow an emotional or romantic relationship to develop between you.
- DON'T exceed a maximum of six meetings.
- DON'T act in any reporting or communicating capacity regarding the AA member and the justice system. Tradition Twelve is vital!
- DON'T forget yourself or your own personal program of recovery while giving time and energy to others.
- DON'T forget that you are not GOD or in control of anyone or anything.
- DON'T let the ex-inmate dictate where to go for meetings.

## SUGGESTED READING

- Carry the Message into Correctional Facilities
- Where do I go from here?
- AA in Prison: Inmate to Inmate
- AA in Correctional Facilities: It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell
- Memo to an Inmate who may be an Alcoholic
- A message to Correctional Facility's Administrators

## BRIDGE VOLUNTEER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Contact the inside AA member by letter within two weeks of being matched. Remain in communication with the inside AA member until released.
- Take the ex-inmate to an AA meeting within 24 to 48 hours of release.
- It is suggested that the first meeting be viewed as a regular twelve step call and that you take another person with you.
- Use the same guidelines you would with any newcomer, even though they will have been attending AA meetings inside.
- Review the Bridge Program with the ex-inmate so that there are no misconceptions as to what this program does or does not do.
- Remind them as often as is necessary that you are only a temporary bridge to their new AA community.
- Remember that your job is finished after six meetings. Do your best to encourage them to find a sponsor in this time period.
- Make sure they receive schedules, phone numbers, literature and their own Big Book.
- Encourage them to attend meetings as often as possible, find a group and most important, encourage them to get a sponsor as soon as possible (not yourself). Even a temporary sponsor who has time for them NOW would be acceptable.
- Share your experience, strength and hope with them as you would with any other member new to AA in your community.
- Upon completion, inform the Bridge Coordinator as to the results of your "bridge". Let us know what works and what doesn't.
- Most important of all, keep in touch with your sponsor, your Higher Power and maintain your program.

## BRIDGE VOLUNTEER'S APPLICATION

NAME		SEX M F	
ADDRESS			
CITY		STATE	
DAYTIME PHONE		NIGHTIME PHONE	
HOME GROUP		LOCATION	
		ZIP CODE	
SIGNATURE		DATE	

I Have read and agree to follow the intent and guidelines of the AA Bridge Program as described in this pamphlet. I meet the minimum requirements (at least 1 year sober and use a sponsor) to be an AA Contact.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
CORRECTIONS BRIDGE PROGRAM  
3640 SOUTH CEDAR STREET, SUITE S  
TACOMA, WA 98409  
(253) 474-8897

Dear Potential AA Volunteer,

The purpose of the AA Bridge Program is to connect the inmate AA member with Alcoholics Anonymous in their community upon release. When a soon-to-be released AA inmate contacts us, we match them to a Bridge Volunteer residing in their release community. The volunteer is sent information about how to contact the inmate AA member. And, the inmate AA member is notified that a contact is being set-up.

You are being asked to be that AA Bridge Volunteer. Your job is simple. Contact the AA inmate and arrange to meet upon release, contact should be made within the first 24 hours and the newly released AA member should be taken to a meeting within the first 48 hours. Your commitment is to take the ex-inmate to a minimum of three and a maximum of six meetings. During this time, help them to get acquainted, get phone numbers, and perhaps locate a sponsor and a home group. Bridge Volunteers are "bridges" to the community AA. They introduce them to other winners so they have a broad healthy start.

Please note that it is not intended that you become the ex-inmate's sponsor -- even temporarily. It is best if that word is not used in any way to describe your service. After six meetings, the Bridge Volunteer is asked to "Let Go and Let God!", so they may again function as a "bridge" for another member.

Lastly, we request that Bridge Volunteers have an active relationship with their own sponsor and a minimum of one year sober and clean. If you meet these requirements and are willing to be the hand of AA when an inmate reaches out for help, please complete the attached "Bridge Volunteer's Application," cut it off and mail it to the address on the form. Keep the balance of this pamphlet for future reference.

### BRIDGE PROCEDURE

1. The application form is part of this pamphlet. Inside AA members are eligible for this program if they have less than six months left to serve and have a desire not to drink (Tradition 3).
2. The inmate fills in the application completely. It is very important to have the DOC number and address (including unit and floor) so that there is no problem receiving our correspondence. Then, mail the application to the address on the form.
3. The Bridge Coordinator will notify the inside member that the application has been received and the process has been started.
4. The Bridge Coordinator is responsible for contact of a Bridge Volunteer to match the request. This is achieved either by sending a copy of the application directly to a volunteer, to a coordinator for the area where the inmate will be released, or to the Corrections Chair for the area if no formal bridge program exists.
5. Upon receiving the inmate information, the Bridge Volunteer should write the inside AA member within two weeks, confirming contact and a willingness to act as a "bridge". (If the volunteer wishes to use the address on the form, all letters received for them will be forwarded as long as the Bridges Coordinator has been notified of the correct address.)
6. The inside AA member will then correspond with the volunteer and, between them, arrange for a place and time to meet when the release occurs.
7. If the inside AA member does not receive a volunteer's letter within a few weeks after the hearing from the Bridge Coordinator, then the Bridge Coordinator should be notified.

Dear Inmate AA Member,

AA, in this area, has a transition program called "Bridge". This means that you can sign up to be matched to an AA member on the outside in your home community upon release. This AA member, called a Bridge Volunteer will take you to up to six meetings, introduce you around to help you get acquainted and comfortable among your new friends in AA. During this time, you will learn about sponsors, home groups, working the steps, and service. Your Bridge Volunteer is temporary only and will not follow-up or try to control you. Nor will they provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or other such services.

Past experience has shown that attending an AA meeting on the outside as soon after release as possible is one of the most effective tools in making a sober transition into the free world. Many of us have been where you are and know what the program of AA and it's fellowship can do for you by what it has done for us and countless others.

If you are within three months of release and wish to participate in the Bridge, please complete the attached "Inmate's Application", cut it off, and mail it to the address on the application. Keep the balance of this pamphlet for future reference. When the Bridge Coordinator has received your letter and processed it, a notification will be sent to you. If your bridge has not contacted you within three or four weeks, notify the Bridge Coordinator, otherwise, begin correspondence to set up a time and place to meet when released.

As they say in the Big Book, "We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny."

"May God bless you and keep you -- until then."

### INMATE'S APPLICATION

I am within six months of my release date. I'm requesting an AA Contact who will provide a "bridge" for me to the AA community through transportation to meetings and introductions to other AA's.

INMATE'S NAME		DOC NUMBER	
		SEX	M F
DOC MAILING ADDRESS (Unit & Floor, Facility, Street Address, Box Number)			
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	DATE OF RELEASE
RELEASING TO: (City, Zip Code)		PHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
STREET ADDRESS AFTER RELEASE			

I would like to make a commitment to attend an AA meeting within 48 hours of my release. I understand that the AA Contact is NOT an AA Sponsor, even temporarily.

SIGNATURE	DATE