

What is Public Information? As our co-founder, Bill, wrote: "Public Information takes on many forms—the simple sign outside a meeting place that says: 'A.A. Meeting tonight'; listings in local phone directories, distribution of A.A. literature; and radio and TV shows using sophisticated media techniques. What-ever the form, it comes down to 'one drunk carrying the message to another drunk,' whether through personal contact or through the use of third parties and the media. "

What is Cooperation with the Professional Community? CPC is carrying the message to the sick alcoholic, through third parties. Professionals often meet the alcoholic in places where A.A. is not present. Through professional people, we reach alcoholics who might otherwise never find the Program.

What is a "professional"? A family doctor, clergy, a law enforcement or court official, a nurse, an educator, a social worker, an alcoholism or other counselor—anyone who deals with alcoholics in the course of work. Many of these people are in daily contact with the active alcoholic and do not know what to do about it. Cooperating with professional's means informing them about A.A.-what we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do.

The goal of Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community service work is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is achieved by informing the general public about the A.A. program, by reaching "the third person," whose work is or may be involved with the active alcoholic, and by keeping the Fellowship well-informed, so that members and groups may carry the message more effectively.

Professional persons, almost without exception, consider A.A. to be the number one resource for alcoholics who want help. When there is a good working relationship between A.A. members in the community, it creates a win-win situation. The professional wins, we win and most of all the sick alcoholic wins---he or she gets the help needed from both.

We who do *PI/CPC* work are not in competition with these non-A.A.'s, and vice-versa; we have our separate functions. A.A. is not in the business of education, research, medicine, counseling, treatment, prevention, or funding. We simply have a message to carry about a program of recovery for alcoholics—a program that has worked for hundreds of thousands who wanted it. A recent A.A. membership survey showed that almost half of A.A.'s credited the professional community for getting them to the Fellowship.

The first qualification for doing *PI/CPC*, or any other service work is, of course, sound sobriety. All committee members do need to be thoroughly familiar with the A.A. program and to be able to provide accurate information about the Fellowship. :

Additionally, an understanding of all the Traditions, and a firm grasp of the anonymity Traditions are especially vital. The pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity" and the Anonymity Wallet Card are useful in making the A.A. anonymity principle clear to the public. (Remember, it is not a break of Tradition Eleven when you privately identify yourself as an A.A. member with non-A.A.'s encountered in the 1 course of *PI/CPC* work.).

How to Get Started: Whether you are a *PI/ j CPC* Representative for your Group, District, or a committee trying to get started, do not get discouraged

if you find it to be a slow process. Study your workbook and the pamphlets that are included in it. It contains a host of information and suggestions. Then set some goals and list projects you would like to work on in the next few months. Many in this type of service work have found it very helpful to try to complete one project before moving on to the next. Especially, when it's just you or your committee is very small.

If you are a group representative, find out from your GSR if there is a district *PI/CPC* Representative who may be able to help you. Attend your district or zone meetings. Make contact with other group *PI/CPC* Representatives in your area and share experience, as well as, work on local, and district projects, together.

This could be the beginning of a *PI/CPC* Committee in

your area. If you are the District or Zone *PI/CPC* Representative, encourage your groups to send a *PI/ CPC* Representative to your monthly meetings. A committee can be formed from these representatives.

Once a committee is formed, it is a good idea to decide in advance who's going to do what, in order to avoid duplication of effort or friction. Meetings provide a chance for continuous sharing. Try to meet once a month. It promotes consistency. Also, coordination between *PI/CPC*, Treatment and Correctional committees is important to all in carrying the A.A. message effectively, and avoiding duplications.

Phone Book: All schools, employers, and social workers know to do when they want to get hold of A.A. is to call the number listed in the phone book. The people who answer the A.A. hot line (or other A.A. # listed in the phone book) should know that you and your committee are there to help do health fairs, talks or any other *PI/CPC* requests. Some committees have their own phone number, mail box or Post Office Box. It is important for consistency to have this as opposed to using someone's home address in case that person drops out but continues to get mail or phone calls.

History: The first *PI* project was done by Bill who wrote the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* in 1939. In 1956, the Public Information committee of the General Service Board was formed. The *CPC* committee was spun from the *PI* committee in 1970. The progress over the last 25 years in *CPC* has been slow but gradual. Understanding of alcoholism and of A.A. is the exception rather than the rule. But the key is that public awareness is growing.

Inevitably, though, problems accompany success. Sometimes professionals who are eager to use A.A. as a resource don't understand our Traditions, and unknowingly cause problems for groups.

Traditions: People doing PI/CPC work quickly learn the importance of the Traditions and explaining them to the non-alcoholic. They also learn quickly that these traditions are our traditions and not those of the people we are contacting. It is important to remember that the way a professional handles and talks to an alcoholic is different from the way we talk to the still suffering alcoholic. You may find it helpful to study the pamphlet “Speaking to non-Alcoholics”.

One way we found to explain the traditions is by reviewing the Preamble sentence by sentence.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. (Traditions 1 and 5) The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. (Tradition 3) There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self supporting through our own contributions. (Tradition 7) A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any outside causes. (Traditions 6 and 10) Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. (Tradition 5).

Tradition 6: An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. Experience has given us a simple guiding principle: We do cooperate, but we do not affiliate. We want to work with other alcoholism organizations, but not to be merged with them in the public mind. We have to make it clear that A.A. is available as a resource for other agencies; but public linking of the A.A. name can give the impression of affiliation.

Tradition 10: Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy. This tradition reminds us to do our own thing, and not be diverted from our primary purpose. By staying away from public controversy we strengthen A.A.’s unity within and its reputation in the public eye.

Tradition 11: 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 12: 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 A.A. way of life look attractive, to alcoholic and nonalcoholic alike. They alert us to the dangers of pushing A.A. 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 A.A. appreciates being given that assurance.

PI/CPC Projects:

- Meeting Schedules in local newspapers, Church Bulletins and/or Hotels
- Big Books, pamphlets at Libraries
- Literature such as “ AA at a Glance” and meeting schedules at Doctors’ Offices, li Mental Health Offices, DUI Attorneys’ Offices, Probation Offices
- Providing literature and/or talking to local schools
- Talking to DUI schools and Alcohol and Drug Awareness classes.
- Setting up displays at Health Fairs and professional conventions.
- Listing club phone numbers under A.A.

CARRYING THE A.A. MESSAGE OUTSIDE THE FELLOWSHIP

