

Hints and Suggestions for 12th Steppers

DRAFT OF REVISED TEXT for 55th General Service Conference / revised December 2020

The following hints and suggestions for 12th Step calls are based on AA's collective experience, and the Big Book, Chapter 7, 'Working with Others'.

AA has a responsibility to ensure the safety of all its members. AA Great Britain regularly updates safeguarding guidelines, which are published on our website.

1. For safeguarding, it is recommended that two or more AA members go on 12th Step calls together. We cannot know what we may find. It is usually best for men to twelve-step men and women to twelve-step women.
2. Involving a newer member can help with identification, and give them valuable 12th Step experience.
3. Where possible, it is best to meet the person requesting help in a discreet public place, so we can share our experience, strength and hope.
4. If we cannot deal with a request promptly (e.g., if no other AA member is available) we phone the alcoholic with an explanation, making it clear that we do care and understand their need for help.
5. When taking someone to their first meeting, we introduce them to other members, help them get contact information, and let them know that there are many different meetings.
6. After the initial contact, we maintain contact with newcomers, answer questions, talk about the benefits of sponsorship where appropriate, and above all, share our experience, strength and hope.
7. We provide newcomers with appropriate literature (Starter Pack, Big Book, etc.), and with resources such as local and national website addresses, 'Chat Now' details, and local 'Where to Finds'. These can help them learn more about AA.
8. AA does not advise about medication.
9. When making contact, particularly by phone, we practise anonymity and avoid leaving indiscreet messages on family phones or leaving our family's phone number with a prospect we have not yet met.
10. When we speak to the still-suffering alcoholic, we 'continue to speak of alcoholism as an illness, a fatal malady'. (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p.92)
11. Not every person who contacts AA is ready for help. If someone does not wish to meet or come to a meeting, we let them know that 'the hand of AA' is always there if they want help in the future.
12. Remember that there is no such thing as an unsuccessful 12th Step Call. You have both planted a seed, and helped your own recovery.

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ORIGINAL TEXT:

The group is responsible for sponsoring members into 12th Step Service. The Big Book, in Chapter 7, has much to say on this topic and the following suggestions have been prepared to assist groups with that responsibility, and are based on the collective experience of the Fellowship in Britain.

1. The suffering alcoholic should be visited at home preferably, after an initial contact, unless he/she specifically asks not to be so visited. They need to see you and hear your experiences. It is not enough to meet at a meeting.
2. Always try to take another member with you, as you do not know what you may find, introducing newer members of the Fellowship helps them to gain experience.
3. Ideally men should 12th Step men and women should 12th Step women, or, as a reasonable alternative, a man and a woman might go together.
4. If you are unable to deal with a request quickly, telephone the caller, explain the delay, and offer assurance that you do care. Remember your own first call, and need for immediate help.
5. If the suffering alcoholic is not on the telephone, and there has been no pre-arranged time for a visit, take a note in an envelope, confirming that you have called, and asking them to contact you again.
6. Make sure that the new member at their first meeting is introduced to other people, and is offered telephone numbers, local 'Where to Find', 12th Step pack etc.
7. Newcomers should be taken to several different meetings, so that they may be introduced to as many local members as possible.
8. Experience shows that some people do not want to be visited, or go to a meeting. In this situation, contact may be maintained for a short period. If there is no response, we need to detach and let go.
9. Do not advise about medication. It has absolutely nothing to do with us.
10. 12th Steppers should be prepared to look after the newcomers until they feel at home in meetings. Contact on a regular basis, and an explanation of AA Sponsorship would also be helpful.
11. There is no such thing as unsuccessful 12th Step Call; you are bound to have planted a seed and reinforced your own sobriety.
12. REMEMBER - 'Continue to speak of alcoholism as an illness, a fatal malady'
(*Alcoholics Anonymous, p.92*)