



GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

Approved by General Service Conference
of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland

Carrying the Message

Introduction to Public Information (PI) Kit

This PI Kit is intended to inspire, inform and empower members of AA on Public Information. It is hoped that it will assist them to set up an Area Public Information made up of representatives of the groups in that Area. These in their turn can then set up Public Information Committees at Group level. When this structure is set up it is most desirable that ideas for Public Information projects are generated at Group level and sent down the Structure, from group to Area to Intergroup rather than the other way around.

Anyone who has been involved in Public Information for some time will recognise that there is nothing new in this folder.

What you will find in this PI Kit are hints, tips and templates which have been designed by and are in use by AA Members who are or have been directly involved in practical through the Public Information work. It attempts to delve into the "nuts and bolts", the "how to" of carrying out PI through the Public Information work within AA.

(2017)

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SECTION 1

Public Information

- What is PI and why do AAs do it?
- What is Cooperation with the Professional Community?
- Setting up a PI Committee?
- Brief History of Public Information
- Public Information Projects

Public Information Work at AA Group, Area & Intergroup

- AA Group Public Information Committee
- AA Group Public Information Chair
- AA Area Public Information Committee
- AA Area Public Information Chair
- AA Intergroup Public Information Committee
- AA Intergroup Public Information Chair

Public Information

What is Public Information Work and Why Should AAs do it?

“In all public relationships, AA’s sole objective is to help the still suffering alcoholic. We believe that our experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest”.

The AA Programme works when an active alcoholic wants help and an AA member is available to give that help. Somewhere in the background there has probably been the help of a doctor, an alcoholism agency or facility, a relative or an employer. Someone who knew about AA and how to find us.

From the beginning AA has depended on good community relations to keep those “helping hands” informed and ready. These guidelines suggest some steps that AA can take to keep the public working with us.

The General Service Board will deal with national bodies only i.e. National newspapers, media, tourist boards etc. The Intergroup, Area and Group P.I. Committees will deal with all the provincial/local newspapers, independent radios, etc.

The Statement of PI adopted by the Fellowship in 1956 states:

“In all public relations, AA’s sole objective is to help the still-suffering alcoholic. Always mindful of the importance of personal anonymity, we believe this can be done by making known to him, and to those who may be interested in his problems, our own experience as individuals and as a Fellowship in learning to live without alcohol. We believe that our experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest. We further believe that all efforts in this field should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety and our awareness that many outside of AA are equally concerned with the serious problem of alcoholism.”

As our co-founder, Bill, wrote: “Public Information takes on many forms - the simple sign outside a meeting place that says: ‘AA Meeting tonight’; listings in local phone

directories, distribution of AA literature; and radio and TV shows using sophisticated media techniques. Whatever 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?

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 AA is not present. Through professional people, we reach alcoholics who might otherwise never find the Programme.

What is a “Professional”?

A family doctor, clergy, a law enforcement or court official, a nurse, an educator, a social worker, an addiction counsellor - 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.

Many professionals consider AA to be a vital resource for alcoholics who want help. Cooperating with professionals means informing them about AA, what it is, what it can do and what it cannot do. When there is a good working relationship between AA members and the community, everyone benefits especially the still-suffering alcoholic.

Those AA members who do PI/CPC service cooperate but are not affiliated with these professionals; we have our separate functions. AA simply has a message to carry about the AA programme of recovery for alcoholics, a programme that has worked for hundreds of thousands who wanted it.

Committee members need to be thoroughly familiar with the AA programme 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 AA anonymity principle clear to the public. (Remember, it is not a break of Tradition 11 when you privately identify yourself as an AA member with non-AA members encountered in the course of PI/CPC work).

Setting Up a PI Committee

“A Public Information Committee shall be elected by the Group Conscience of the relevant Group, Area, or Intergroup and the Committee shall always be accountable to the conscience of the Group, Area or Intergroup that elected them, and report to them on a regular basis. It is recommended that the members of the Public Information Committee should have at least two years continuous sobriety in AA. For this very important and sensitive area of AA activity it is vital that we utilise the best available people from amongst the AA Groups in the Area or Intergroups. Sound sobriety, a good understanding of the AA Traditions, a good AA judgement, willingness to accept Group Conscience and a record of dedicated service in AA are qualities we should look for when selecting PI Committee members.” (Service Handbook)

Whether you are a PI/CPC representative for your Group, Area, or a member of a Committee trying to get started, do not get discouraged if you find it to be a slow process. Study your Service Handbook and the pamphlets suggested for use in PI. 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 is just you or your committee is very small.

Enquire from your GSR if there is an Area PI/CPC Committee representative who may be able to help you get started. Make contact with other group PI/CPC Representatives in your area and share experience, as well as, work on local, and area projects, together. This could be the beginning of a PI/CPC Committee in your area. If you are the Area 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 is going to do what, in order to avoid friction or duplication of effort. Meetings provide a chance for continuous sharing. Try to meet once a month as this promotes consistency. Coordination between PI/CPC and Hospitals, Treatment Centres and other related facilities is important.

Brief History of Public Information

The first PI project was done by Bill W. who, in 1939 co-wrote the book 'Alcoholics Anonymous'. In 1956 the first Public Information Committee of the General Service Board was formed. In 1970 the CPC Committee was created from the PI Committee. The progress since has been slow but gradual. An understanding of alcoholism and of AA is the exception rather than the rule, but the point is that public awareness is growing.

Public Information Projects

- Be sure every library has at least one Conference approved book, e.g. the Big Book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, or Living Sober.
- Hold an Open Public meeting.
- Let the Fellowship know how to reach out to the hearing impaired.
- Contact schools, colleges, Garda/Police PSNI stations, doctors' surgeries, hospitals, convalescent homes etc.
- List Open AA meetings in the newspapers in the area.
- Respond to non-AA speaking requests in the area.
- Place Public Service Announcements with radio, newspaper and other local media.



Public Information Work

AA Group, Area & Intergroup

AA Group Level

AA Group Public Information Committee

The group PI Committee is made up of the chairperson and other interested group members.

Responsibilities include:

- Meet regularly, usually monthly, if numbers permit.
- Organise Open Meetings
- Provide Garda/Police PSNI Stations, doctors' surgeries, libraries, churches and other public areas with AA posters.
- Learn all they can about the PI literature.
- Share the lessons learned with other groups in the area.
- Identify professional bodies, including schools and colleges that would benefit by learning more about AA.
- Provide information about AA to those who have contact with alcoholics through their profession such as health care professionals, educators, members of the clergy, lawyers, social workers, as well as those working in the field of alcoholism.
- Assist PI Committees in other groups by supplying speakers for Open Meetings.

AA Group Public Information Chair

- We suggest a two year commitment.
- Attend Area PI Committee meetings. This helps with coordination and ensures that you are not duplicating work done by other groups.
- Supply a PI report to their own group conscience meeting.

- The chair should have some experience in PI work and strong knowledge of the Traditions and in particular what anonymity means in relation to AA. Provide the group treasurer with a rough estimate of annual expenses for budgeting purposes and provide Treasurer with copies of all receipts related to group PI work.
- Prior approval of Group Conscience is required before incurring any expenses and receipts for same ought to be returned to the Treasurer.
- Attends Area PI Workshops and Committee Meetings.
- Strives to inform and encourage members who may be the next Group PI Chair. This provides continuity.
- We suggest that the chairperson has no other service obligations, as this commitment is very time-consuming.



AA Area Level

AA Area Public Information Committee

The Area PI Committee is made up of the PI representative of each group in the area.

Responsibilities include:

- Meet regularly if numbers permit.
- Coordinate the rotation between groups of Open Meetings and other PI work.
- Supply an Area PI report to their own area meeting for circulation to the groups with the Area minutes.
- Hold PI workshops.
- Be familiar with PI literature.
- Share experiences with other groups.

AA Area Public Information Chair

- The position is a two-year commitment.
- The chair should have experience in group level PI work.
- The chair should have some experience in PI work and strong knowledge of the Traditions and in particular what anonymity means in relation to AA.
- Should be comfortable working with media.
- Inform groups who have not yet got someone to carry out the PI function about how to do this within their own group.
- Should create and maintain a list of speakers who have experience in PI work.
- Prior approval of Group Conscience is required before incurring any expenses and receipts for same ought to be returned to the Treasurer.
- Serves as a resource for Group PI Committees in carrying the AA message to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public, media, schools, industry, doctors, clergy, judges and social workers, etc. about what the programme has to offer.

- Distribute AA posters (posters should include the venue, date and time of the PI Meeting) and other PI literature to the groups.
- Attends all Area and Intergroup Workshops and Committee Meetings related to PI work.
- It is suggested that the chairperson has no other service obligations.



AA Intergroup Level

AA Intergroup Public Information Committee

The Intergroup Public Information Committee is made up of the PI Chair, PI Treasurer, PI Secretary, and the PI Chairpersons of other areas within your Intergroup.

Responsibilities include:

- Attending Intergroup PI Committee meetings which are responsible for the coordinating PI within the Intergroup.
- Be familiar with PI literature.
- Agree the structure of the PI workshops, which inform members about Public Information and how it is implemented.
- Assist areas to establish PI committees.
- Area and Intergroup PI reports ought to be collated for distribution among Committee members.

AA Intergroup Public Information Chair

- The position is a two year commitment.
- The chair should have experience in PI work and service structure. Responsible for allocating PI requests from GSO to relevant areas. Responsible for media relations at regional level.
- Communicates with PI chairs from other Intergroups.
- The Chairperson should have experience in PI work and strong knowledge of the Traditions and in particular what anonymity means in relation to AA.
- Prior approval of Group Conscience is required before incurring any expenses and receipts for same ought to be returned to the Treasurer.
- Serves as a resource for Area PI Committees.
- Attends PI workshops where possible.

- Inform and encourage Public Information Committee members who may be interested the being available for the next Intergroup PI Chair. This provides continuity.
- Itis suggested that the chairperson has no other service obligations.



SECTION 2

Sponsoring AA Members into Service

- Purpose of PIService
- Why should PIVolunteers attend an Orientation Session?
OrientationSessions
- Points for PIVolunteer to remember

An Understanding the 12 Traditions is essential for PI Volunteers

- AA Traditions and Public Information
- Tradition 6
- Tradition 8
- Tradition 11
- Tradition 12

Sponsoring AA Members into Service

Express gratitude to volunteers for doing this service and encourage volunteers to tell fellow AAs about this service. Make an AA related announcement at a meeting they attend.

Purpose of PI Service

The purpose of Public Information Service is to provide accurate AA information to the public and, when requested, visit schools, businesses and community meetings etc.

Why must PI Volunteers attend an Orientation Session?

PI volunteers are AA members who have specific responsibility for keeping the public informed about AA.

It is essential that participating AA members agree on the basic outline for the visit, and are familiar with details in the pamphlets 'Speaking at Non-AA Meetings' and 'Understanding Anonymity'

Be sure that the person who represents AA is knowledgeable about the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. It is important that the representative is able to accurately answer questions on AA.

Orientation Sessions ought to

- Assist PI volunteers by informing them of what is expected of them and give them the information to complete the service.
- Substantially increase the number of AA members available for PI service in their Area.
- Provide consistency to Area/Intergroup PI presentations.

Points for a PI Volunteer to remember

- AA is concerned solely with the personal recovery and continued sobriety of individual alcoholics.
- “Like all of AA, the primary purpose of members involved with public information service is to carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Working together, members of local PI committees convey AA information to the general public, including the media.” **(Reprinted from AA Guidelines Public Information, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.).**
- The Fellowship has adopted a policy of ‘cooperation but not affiliation’ with other organisations concerned with the problem of alcoholism.
- Traditionally, AA does not accept or seek financial support from outside sources, and members preserve personal anonymity in print and broadcast media and otherwise at the public level.
- AA experience has always been made freely available to all who sought it.
- “We are not authorities on the whole field of alcoholism. We share our recovery programme, but we are not professionals. We have no official definition of alcoholism. Although we are victims of the illness, we have no profound knowledge of its cause or ‘cure’.”
- Open by describing the need for personal anonymity at the public level; give your first name and declare your AA membership.
- Avoid drunkalogs, keep your AA story general and brief.
- Use humour with good taste, what is funny to AAs may not be amusing to non-members.
- Confine your comments to AA information; remember that we are not experts when speaking as AA members. We do not speak for AA as a whole.
- As non-professionals, we do not give our opinions concerning the general subject of alcoholism.
- You may be the only AA member that somebody in the audience may ever meet. Therefore, it is up to the PI volunteer to present as attractive a picture of our Fellowship as possible.
- Avoid using bad language or swear words.
- Dress neatly and be early, not just on time.

An Understanding of the 12 Traditions is essential for PI Volunteers

AA Traditions and Public Information

People doing PI/CPC service should have an understanding of the Traditions and be able to explain them to the professionals. It is important to remember 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 at Non-AA Meetings.

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 AA anonymity principle clear to the public.

Tradition 6

"An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose." **(12 Steps & 12 Traditions)**

Tradition 8

"Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers." **(12 Steps & 12 Traditions)**

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." **(12 Steps & 12 Traditions)**

Tradition 12

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." **(12 Steps & 12 Traditions)**

SECTION 3

Public Information Workshops and Events

- Purpose
- Planning a PI Workshop
- Format for a PI Workshop
- Planning a PI Event

Public Information Workshops and Events

Purpose

Public Information (PI) in AA means carrying the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the AA programme. We do this by getting in touch with any organisation of a public nature whether it be organised or voluntary, which is in a position to make known the existence of AA and what it can do for the still-suffering alcoholic.

Planning a PI Workshop

- At your group conscience meeting announce the idea to set up a PI Committee and get their support.
- Explain to the group the meaning of Public Information and be clear on role of the PI Committee and the role of PI Chairperson.
- Set up a Committee from interested group members.
 - Agree a PI Chairperson.
- Choose a suitable date for the Committee to meet to discuss suitable PI work in their area.
- Have relevant PI literature.
- PI Chair needs to attend Area Public Information to learn what other groups in the Area are doing and report on your group's progress.

The PI Chair is a leadership role requiring initiative to bring PI projects to completion, always with the participation of the PI Committee.

- The Committee should be mindful of the individual talents of Committee members and their availability when allocating roles.
- Prior approval of Group Conscience is required before incurring any PI expenses and receipts for same ought to be returned to the Group Treasurer.
- Gather a team of enthusiastic volunteers together and hold a meeting, or several meetings to prepare.

- It is suggested that three to four months preparation is required when planning to hold a PI workshop.
- Ensure that you have the support of the Area and local groups.
- Firstly decide on a date for the Workshop. Check with Area/Intergroup to ensure that you will not clash with another AA event.
- Check the availability of local venues and choose the most appropriate for your Workshop.
- Design and produce leaflets advertising the Workshop. Ensure the relevant details are included.
- Ensure that your leaflet is distributed through the Structure as required.
- Ensure there is an adequate budget to host the Workshop including the cost of the venue, literature, printing, photocopying, refreshments etc.
- Confirm the booking closer to the time and make sure the venue understands the layout required for the Workshop.

Format for a PI Workshop

In order to get all attendees participating and involved, breaking into groups to discuss topics related to PI is recommended, so you need to decide on topics and assign facilitators to each topic.

The room should display the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, and wall banners of slogans where available. The top table should have the Big Book and 12 Steps and 12 Traditions displayed and AA pamphlets/leaflets should be available.

The Workshop should commence with the Preamble or the Serenity Prayer and end with the Serenity Prayer.

The bulk of the day should be devoted to discussion, with the full group dividing into several small groups. Before the discussion begins, a brief presentation on PI should be given (15 minutes). A PowerPoint presentation can be used if required. Two discussion topics can be assigned to each table, and one member should be appointed to take notes in each group. The Chairperson at each table will introduce the topic for discussion ensuring maximum participation of all members. Each Chair stays at their table and covers the two topics with participating members who move

from table to table. This method allows participation in all topics. Refreshments breaks are required and should be available. It is important keep to the schedule.

Some suggested topics:

- What is the best way to form a PI Committee?
- How do we form a working plan for the Committee?
- What is the best way to reach professionals?
- How can we sponsor members into service?
- How can we encourage cooperation between professionals and AA?
- What types of presentations are appropriate for professionals?
- How best can AA present itself to professionals?
- What literature is most suitable for professionals?

Following the individual discussions the Groups reassemble to share their experience of the Workshop. This is followed by an open forum discussion.



Planning a PI Event

Once a suitable project has been agreed by the Committee, it is worth considering the following points:

- It is suggested that three to four months preparation is required when planning to hold a PI Event.
Ensure that you have the support of the Area and local groups.
Choose a date for the PI Event, ensure that you will not clash with another AA event.
- Estimated costs of the PI Event ought to be agreed by your group conscience before you proceed with the PI Event.
- Choose a suitable venue depending on the type of the event and budget accordingly. Remember always be prudent with AA funds.
- Once an accurate cost has been established seek the approval of your group conscience before proceeding.
- At this point book the venue.
- Depending on the PI Event, agree a format for the PI Event.
- Send invitations to the relevant professionals and keep a record of replies.
- Inform groups in your Area of the PI Event if relevant.
- The Committee follow up with reminders nearer the time.
- At this confirm the venue.
- Choose your speakers carefully, be mindful of your target audience.

On the day of the event:

- Arrive in plenty of time to set up for the event.
- Have sufficient AA literature on display for attendees to take with them.
- Allow time for Q&A and feedback.
- Prepare a written report to bring back to your Group and Area.
- Begin planning your next PI Event.

SECTION 4

AA Open Meetings and AA Open Public Meetings

AA Open Meeting

- Description AA Open Meeting
- Format for Open Meeting
- What AA Does Not Do

AA Open Public Meetings

- Description AA Open Public Meeting
- Format for Open Public Meeting
- What AA Does Not Do

AA Open Meetings & AA Open Public Meetings

The main difference between an AA Open Meeting and an AA Open Public Meeting is that Open Meetings have AA speakers only. Open Public Meetings typically include an Al-Anon speaker and/or a professional with some experience working with AA.

AA Open Meetings

“These meetings are open to ALL who may or may not have an alcoholic problem and they are arranged and publicised by AA. The meeting is chaired by an AA person and it is usual to have two AA members speak of their experiences and recovery.

The purpose of the meeting is to carry the message through the AA programme of recovery” (Service Handbook 2014/01)

The following is a suggested format for an Open Meeting that is run as a speaker meeting. The meeting usually has one AA member chairing the meeting and two AA speakers.

Open Meeting Format

Hello everyone

On behalf of the (your Area or Group) I welcome you to this Open Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

My name is _____ and I am an alcoholic.

We begin all our meetings by reading the following Preamble - a short statement of what AA is.

“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 recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any

controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety.”

The format for tonight’s meeting will be as follows: -

Two members of the Alcoholics Anonymous _____ and _____ will share their experience of finding AA, getting sober, and what AA is like for them today.

There may be some here who are not familiar with our tradition of personal anonymity at the media level. Our Public Relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need to always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, broadcasting and television.

Therefore, we ask that the anonymity of those present be respected.

After our speakers have finished we would welcome any questions you may have regarding AA and we will do our best to answer them. Except when quoting from AA literature, any opinions expressed are entirely the speakers own.

I would also like to say at this point that the views expressed by all the speakers here are their own and none of us are spokespersons for AA.

Let me tell you a little of the history of AA.

AA had its beginnings in 1935 in Akron Ohio as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics. Following what they both considered a spiritual awakening they realised that one sober alcoholic could help another alcoholic to achieve sobriety.

AA came to Ireland In 1946 when Conor F, and Irishman who got sober in America came to Dublin on holiday. An AA group was formed in Dublin that year. Since then AA has spread throughout the island of Ireland and now hold approximately 900 AA groups nationwide.

I would now like to introduce you to the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. It is our basic text and affectionately known by members as the “The Big Book.” I will read an extract from Chapter 3 which is entitled ***More about Alcoholism (page 30)***.

I would now like to introduce our first speaker _____, who is going to share with you his/her experience, strength and hope on recovery in AA.

(Member shares for 15-20 minutes)

Thank you _____ for sharing your experience with us.

In Alcoholics Anonymous we have a 12 Step recovery programme and this is set out in Chapter 5 of our Big Book. _____ will now read it for you.

(Read first part chapter 5, page 58)

There may be some misunderstandings about what AA does and does not do.

What AA does not do:

- Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover
- Solicit members
- Engage in or sponsor research
- Keep attendance records or case histories
- Join “councils” or social agencies
- Follow up or try to control its members
- Make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses
- Provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment
- Offer religious services or host/sponsor retreats.
- Engage in education about alcohol
- Provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or any other welfare or social services
- Provide domestic or vocational counselling
- Accept any money for its services, or any contributions from non-AA.

Sources

- Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

I would now like to introduce our second speaker _____ who is going to share his/her experience strength and hope on recovery in AA.

(Member shares for 15-20 minutes)

Thank you _____ for sharing with us your journey and how AA has changed your life.

Members of the public are very welcome at AA Open Meetings, details of these meetings can be found on our website at www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie.

If you think you have a problem with alcohol or are concerned about a family member or friend, please refer to our website for details of our nationwide contact numbers. General Service Office at 01-8420700 or our Central Service Office at 028- 90351222 (NI) 048-90351222 (ROI).

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us after the meeting, we are glad to help.

Before we close the meeting, I would like to thank our speakers tonight and all of you for attending.

AA Open Public Meetings

“Primarily the same format as the Open Meeting, but AA may invite members from Al-Anon and/or medical specialists etc. to participate. An AA Chairperson conducts the meeting.” (Service Handbook 2014/01)

The following is a suggested format for an Open Public Meeting.

Open Public Meeting Format

Hello everyone

On behalf of the (your Area or Group) I welcome you to this Open Public Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

My name is _____ and I am an alcoholic.

We begin all our meetings by reading the following Preamble which is a short statement of what AA is.

“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 recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes .Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. “

The format for tonight’s meeting will be as follows:

We have four speakers here

- A speaker from the medical profession (if present).
- A member of the Fellowship of Al-Anon. Al-Anon is a Fellowship for families and friends who are affected by a loved one’s drinking.
- Two members of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

There may be some here who are not familiar with our tradition of personal anonymity at the media level. Our Public Relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need to always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, broadcasting and television.

Therefore, we ask that the anonymity of those present be respected.

The speakers are:

1. _____ a member of the medical profession who will speak on his/her view of alcoholism and how he/she sees Alcoholics Anonymous.
2. _____ a member of the fellowship of Al-Anon who will relate his/her experiences and tell you about Al-Anon.
3. _____ and _____ both members of Alcoholics Anonymous who will share their experiences with you and tell you about our programme of recovery.

After our speakers have finished we would welcome any questions you may have regarding AA and we will do our best to answer them. Except when quoting from AA literature, any opinions expressed are entirely the speakers own.

Let me tell you a little of the history of AA.

AA had its beginnings in 1935 in Akron Ohio as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics. Following what they both considered a spiritual awakening they realised that one sober alcoholic could help another alcoholic to achieve sobriety.

AA came to Ireland In 1946 when Conor F, and Irishman who got sober in America came to Dublin on holiday. An AA group was formed in Dublin that year. Since then AA has spread throughout the island of Ireland and now hold approximately 900 AA groups nationwide.

Here are some examples of what AA does not do:

What AA does not do:

- Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover
- Solicit members
- Engage in or sponsor research
- Keep attendance records or case histories
- Join “councils” of social agencies
- Follow up or try to control its members
- Make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses
- Provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment
- Offer religious services or host/sponsor retreats.
- Engage in education about alcohol
- Provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or any other welfare or social services
- Provide domestic or vocational counselling
- Accept any money for its services, or any contributions from non-AA.
- Sources
- Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

(Introduce the Medical Speaker)

Our first speaker this evening is _____ who is (state the profession of the speaker)

(Speaker talks)

Thank you _____ for giving us your view of alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous.

I would now like to introduce you to the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. It is our basic text and affectionately known by members as the “The Big Book.” It was written and

based on the experiences of the first 100 members; I will now read an extract from Chapter 3 which is entitled **More about Alcoholism. (page 30).**

(Introduce 1st AA Speaker)

Thank you very much _____. This speaker has told us of their experiences and the suffering of the alcoholic and how the disease has affected them.

But the alcoholic is not the only one to suffer as a result of alcoholism. The family of the alcoholic suffers also and many of them feel they too need help and have come together in a separate fellowship called Al-Anon.

I am now going to introduce you now to _____ who is a member of the Al-Anon Family Groups.

(Al-Anon speaker talks)

Thank you very much _____.

In Alcoholics Anonymous we have a 12 Step recovery programme and this is set out in Chapter 5 of our Big Book. I will now read it for you. (read first part chapter 5, page 58)

I am now going to introduce you to our second AA speaker, _____ I'll hand the meeting over to you.

(Introduce 2nd AA Speaker)

Thank you _____ for sharing your experience with us.

Now that you have heard from all our speakers, if anyone would like to ask any questions please do so now of if you would prefer, the speakers will be available for a short time after the meeting.

(Allow time for Q&A Session)

Members of the public are very welcome at AA Open Public Meetings, details of these meetings can be found on our website at www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie.

If you think you have a problem with alcohol or are concerned about a family member or friend, please refer to our website for details of our nationwide contact numbers.

General Service Office at 01-8420700

Before we close the meeting, I would like to thank our speakers tonight and to you all for attending.



SECTION 5

PI Meetings for Schools and Groups of Young People

- Format

Garda Vetting

- Reply from Garda Vetting Office

PI Meetings for Schools and Groups of Young People

Format

Hello everyone.

My name is _____ and I am an alcoholic and this is _____ and we are both members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

(Read Preamble slowly)

“Alcoholics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that at they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA Membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.”

We are here to tell you about our Fellowship and how our programme of recovery works. We would like to thank you and your teachers for giving us an opportunity to do so.

We would like to point out that Alcoholics Anonymous is not against alcohol and we are not here to tell you to stop drinking or to stay away from alcohol. That is your own choice. However, if you or any of your family or friends ever gets into trouble with alcohol, you can get help in Alcoholics Anonymous.

We will now watch the ‘Road Back’ which is a Public Information film on Alcoholics Anonymous.

(Member relates personal experience for about 15 minutes)

We hope that you have found this interesting and informative and we will now try and answer any questions which you have.

(Allow time for Q&A Session)

At the end of the meeting thank all concerned once again and point out that there is literature available for people to take away if they wish.

(Ensure you bring stock of AA literature e.g. AA at a Lance. Is AA for you?, official AA business cards etc. All are available through your PI Convenor or GSO/CSO

OPTION A



OPTION B



Garda Vetting

Reply from Garda Vetting Office

The following is the reply from the Garda Vetting Office in response to a query from AAGSB.

This was received in July 2017 and may be updated from time to time as legal requirements change.

"I have endeavoured to address your queries in blue hereunder.

(a) May we inquire of you what the official Garda attitude to the process, as outlined above, would be?

The advice of the Department of Justice in the circumstances outlined by you are schools vetting persons who are not employees of the school only arises where the person's activity/work has a "necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to or contact with children." (Schedule 1 Part 1 section 1 of the Act). There would therefore be no obligation on a school to require vetting of a guest speaker, musician, etc. who is giving a talk or demonstration at a school on a once-off or very irregular basis. The Act does not create any vetting obligation in such cases and in fact the school does not have a legal power to request vetting details in regard to any person unless the person has "necessary and regular" access to or contact with children.

(b) Given that the PI members concerned are never under any circumstances alone with any unsupervised minors, do the said PI members in the above circumstances require to be Garda vetted?

As outlined above, the Act does not create any vetting obligation in such cases and in fact the school does not have a legal power to request vetting details in regard to

any person unless the person has "necessary and regular" access to or contact with children.

(c) Are the above circumstances, as outlined, acceptable to An Garda Síochána?

The advice at (a) is the view of the National Vetting Bureau.

(d) Are there any alterations to the above process that an Garda Síochána would require?

The procedure outlined in your correspondence does not appear to be contrary to the legislation.

(e) Is there any method whereby the above-mentioned process or procedure could be approved, formalised and notified to schools?

The Department of Justice have advised the Department of Education of their advice in respect of this legislation.

I trust this clarifies the matter for you.

Regards"

James Gould,
Sergeant
National Vetting Bureau,
Racecourse Road,
Thurles,
Co Tipperary
Tel: [\(0504\) 27300](tel:050427300) e-Mail: vetting@garda.ie Website: vetting.garda.ie



The National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána

SECTION 6

- **Suggested Literature for PI/CPC Work**
- **Sample Press Release for Open Public Meeting**

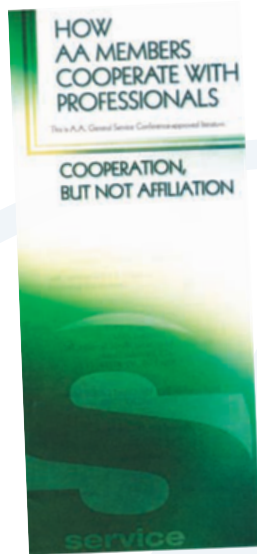
Suggested Literature for PI/CPC Work

- The Road Back (film for use In PI)
- 12 Traditions Illustrated
- How AA members cooperate with Professionals
- Speaking at Non-AA Meetings
- A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous
- Let's be Friendly with our Friends
- Frequently asked questions about AA
- AA as a Resource for the Health Care Professional
- Faith Leaders asks about AA
- Anonymity Wallet Card
- Service Handbook for Ireland
- AA at a Glance

All AA Conference approved literature available from:

General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, Dublin.

Order online on www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie





Sample Press Release

Alcoholics Anonymous Open Public Meeting

The _____ Group of Alcoholics Anonymous will hold an Open Public Meeting for all those interested in the problem of alcoholism.

(Venue): _____

(Date & Time): _____

Scheduled speakers include AA members who will share their experience of alcoholism and of their recovery through Alcoholics Anonymous. A speaker from the professional community will speak on their interaction with AA.

“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.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.”

Meetings are open to those who have a problem with alcohol, as well as their relatives and friends.

Those needing help are encouraged to contact AA at:

Tel: 01-8420700 (ROI) or 028-90351222 (NI)

Email: gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Website: www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Carrying the Message

The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland,
Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park,
Swords Road, Dublin 9, D09 H584 Ireland.

 (01) 842 0700

 gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie

 www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie