

## District 43 Answering Service

### How the Answering Service Works

- Answering Service Volunteer should have 6 months of continuous sobriety.
- Our 24/7 Answering Service will have a Live Agent to direct the call.
- The Answering Service number is 815-459-5757. You will be receiving the initial call from this number. So, please add this number to your contact list.
- As a volunteer, the 24/7 Answering Service will need your personal cell phone or home phone number. Your number will be kept confidential from the caller. If you wish not to or feel uncomfortable to use your personal phone number, then this may not be the volunteer opportunity for you.
- If the caller only wishes only to find a meeting, our Live Agent has an AA meeting directory and will direct the caller to the appropriate meeting.
- If the caller needs immediate attention, our Live Agent will have a list of emergency numbers, and refer the caller or take action by calling the appropriate agency, such as, fire, police, suicide hotline, hospital, etc.
- If the caller wishes to speak to an AA member:
  - The Live Agent will get the caller's phone number; request the caller to keep the line open; and assure the caller that an AA member will call them back shortly.
  - The Live Agent will call either a male or female volunteer; give the volunteer the caller's name and phone number; and give a brief description of the caller's need for assistance.
  - As an Answering Service volunteer, it is your responsibility to answer all calls from the 24/7 Answering Service Agent and immediately callback the person reaching out for help.

### Guidelines

1. Be Brief – our effort is to provide information and offer hope. We are not counselors, nor are we medical professionals or religious advocates.
2. Be Courteous – Callers may at times be demanding, impatient, angry, confused, or drunk. We may be the only “Big Book” available to the caller at that time. Accordingly, we must seek to be patient and courteous to the very best of our ability.
3. Be Tolerant – Some callers may be difficult to deal with. If you are having trouble, or just not “clicking” with a caller, then passing them onto another volunteer will help. They may be more objective and able to deal with the person, or at least close the call with less emotion. Discuss it with your sponsor.
4. Be Neutral – For the most part, it is not desirable to express our personal opinions – “Principles Before Personalities” is a good maxim to keep in mind.
5. Be Prepared – Offer that someone from AA is willing to meet them at a meeting, their home, or other location as soon as possible.
6. Be Patient – It takes some of us longer than other to take that first step. However, do not listen to the caller's drunk-a-log. If the caller does not want a 12-step call or a meeting, end the call tactfully.

### Answering Service Protocol

- When we answer the phone, we represent Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole – and in particular, AA District 43
- We all are sometimes tempted to relay knowledge we have acquired outside of AA. However, in the spirit of singleness of purpose, we need only share our AA experience, strength and hope
- Accept All Calls – It is our responsibility to do so as an AA Answering Service volunteer.
- AA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never to be drawn into public controversy.
- Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all of traditions, ever remaining us to place principles before personalities

### 3 Ways Most People Come Into AA

- They are ordered, or it is highly suggested by a judge, spouse, counselor etc.
- It is part of their treatment plan when they are release from a treatment center
- They have become hopeless or desperate enough to pick up the phone and ask for help

### How AA Members Cooperate

- We cannot discriminate against any prospective AA member, even if he or she comes to us under pressure from a court, an employer, or any other agency.
- Many of us first attended meetings because we were forced to. Who made the referral is not what AA is interested in. We cannot predict who will recover, nor do we have the authority to decide how recovery should be sought by any other alcoholic.

## District 43 Answering Service

### What We Have To Share

- Our Experience
- Our Strength
- Our Hope

### Our Book Is Meant To Be Suggestive Only

- We realize we know only a little...read Chapter 7, pages 89-103, "Working With Others" from our Big Book!

### Attraction, Not Promotion

- If you have been properly understanding as a result of what you have learned about alcoholism, chances are that this person will remember to turn to AA when they decide to do something about their trouble.
- Some callers just want to talk. Others want you to "hold their hand". We do not have to do either. Help is at the next meeting and that meeting is not far away.

### We Admitted We Were Powerless

- Bottom line, it is up to the caller to follow through with the decision to take the "Frist Step"!

### Thank You!

- For the generous gift of your time.
- Taking the Action to help the alcoholic in need!