

**GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON TREATMENT/  
SPECIAL NEEDS-ACCESSIBILITIES**

**[Excepts from] F-74: HISTORY AND HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIONS**

[1976-2008 removed as not germane]

**2009**

It was recommended that:

1. The revised video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* be approved.
2. The committee's scope be expanded to include service to Special Needs/Accessibilities committees and that the name of the committee be changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities.

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The committee considered a proposal to include additional information on carrying A.A.'s message to treatment facilities with out-patient programs. The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities consider developing a section on carrying the A.A. message into out-patient treatment settings, using shared experience, for inclusion in the *Treatment Facilities Workbook* and the *A.A. Guidelines on Treatment Facilities*.

In addition, the committee suggested that staff continue to gather shared area experience regarding carrying the A.A. message into out-patient treatment settings and that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities continue to explore ways to carry the A.A. message to treatment professionals and patients in out-patient settings.

- The committee discussed possible uses of the *A.A. Grapevine* and *La Viña* in Treatment Facilities endeavors and suggested that the A.A. Grapevine consider developing an annual treatment facilities issue similar to its annual Corrections issue. In addition, it was suggested that if a new treatment facilities issue is published that it be placed in the Treatment Facilities Kit.

It was also suggested that groups be encouraged to adopt a treatment facility or center for the purpose of providing subscriptions and/or back issues of the *A.A. Grapevine* and *La Viña*.

- Upon review of the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook, the committee suggested that the *A.A. Grapevine* and *La Viña* as well as the DVD *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* be included in the kit.

It was also suggested that a one-page insert containing suggested uses/examples of the "Local Experiences" tab be added to the *Treatment*

*Facilities Kit.***2010**

## Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed and accepted the progress report from the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities regarding the proposed Special Needs recovery pamphlet and requested that:
  - In the first paragraph, second sentence under the proposed introduction "Do You Have a Drinking Problem?" other language be considered that is more special needs focused.
  - In all aspects of pamphlet development, the use of language that is inclusive of a wide variety of special needs be continued.
- The committee considered a suggestion to change the name of "Treatment Facilities" Committee to "Treatment" Committee and took no action. The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment Facilities/Special Needs-Accessibilities forward to the 2011 Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities background which would include details regarding the impact of such a name change on, among other things: titles of relevant A.A. literature; contents of relevant A.A. literature; and the focus of A.A. service committee work.
- The committee considered two locally created Bridging the Gap forms (one for treatment clients and one for A.A. members willing to serve as temporary contacts) and requested that the trustees develop and include sample forms in the Treatment Facilities Workbook, taking into consideration exemplars from other local committees.
- Upon review of the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook, the committee suggested that the following changes/additions be made where fiscally feasible:
  - The DVD *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* be added in a hole-punched vinyl sleeve instead of in the current jewel box casing.
  - The Young People's videos be included in the Kit as a suggested tool for use with young people in treatment.
  - That suggestions for use of the two DVDs and the A.A. Grapevine be included in the Kit.
  - That changes be made in the Treatment Facilities Workbook to reflect that the A.A. message is carried to alcoholics in a wide variety of treatment settings, including outpatient settings.
- Upon review of the Special Needs Kit and Workbook, the committee suggested that:

- The Kit be incorporated in a three-ring binder instead of the current pocket folder to achieve parity with other service Kits.
- Shared experience with carrying the A.A. message to those with less visible challenges such as illiteracy, autism, etc., be gathered and added to the Special Needs Workbook when feasible.

## **2011**

It was recommended that:

1. The recovery pamphlet “A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs” be approved.
2. The name of the committee be changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and that these changes be reflected in the committee’s Composition, Scope and Procedure.
3. The title of the pamphlet “A.A. in Treatment Facilities” be changed to “A.A. in Treatment Settings” and that the term “treatment facilities” be replaced with a more appropriate reference such as “Treatment Committees” or “treatment settings” wherever it appears in the pamphlet.

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The committee suggested that when the pamphlet for alcoholics with special needs is created, formats for alcoholics who are deaf, blind, or have learning challenges be produced as soon as fiscally possible.
- The committee requested that the term “treatment facilities” be replaced with a more appropriate reference such as “Treatment Committee,” “Treatment Committee Kit,” “A.A. Guidelines on Treatment Committees,” etc. wherever it appears in service material.
- The committee considered removing one line of dialog from the video “Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous” and took no action. The committee requested instead that the trustees’ Committee review the entire script of the video, taking into consideration concerns expressed by the Conference Committee, and return a progress report to the Committee at the 2012 Conference.
- The Committee reviewed the Treatment Facilities Kit and Workbook and:
  - Expressed appreciation for the slimmer, less fragile, DVD case to be used for the videos in the Kits in place of the current DVD casings at no additional cost.
  - Suggested that the section on “Carrying the Message Into Noncorrectional Youth Facilities” in the Workbook be reviewed by the trustees’ Committee for appropriate emphasis on the safety of the A.A. members and the youths involved.

- Reviewed the two suggested Bridging the Gap forms, one for A.A. members requesting a temporary contact to help them connect to A.A. on the outside, and one for A.A. members willing to serve as temporary contacts, and accepted them with minor editorial changes.
- The Committee reviewed the Special Needs Kit and Workbook and:
  - Hoped that there will continue to be A.A. Grapevine issues that include stories from A.A. members with special needs.
  - Expressed appreciation for the recent re-pricing of the American Sign Language (ASL) DVDs of the books *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and hoped that special needs formats will continue to be priced in accordance with their corresponding standard formats wherever fiscally possible.

## 2012

It was recommended that:

1. One line of dialog in the video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* “Uncle Sam is not gonna come in and bail us out” be removed the next time it is reprinted at a cost of approximately \$9,000.00. **NOTE: This committee recommendation did not receive the two thirds vote by the General Service Conference required to become an Advisory Action.**
2. The committee recommended that the pamphlet “A.A. for the Alcoholic With Special Needs” be expanded to include additional stories of alcoholics with mental illness collected from the Fellowship, and that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Need-Accessibilities bring a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2013 Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities. **NOTE: This committee recommendation did not receive the two thirds vote by the General Service Conference required to become an Advisory Action. In addition, an item similar to the original Conference Agenda Item, which was to create a pamphlet for the A.A. member with mental illness was brought to the Conference as a floor action and also failed to pass.**

Additional Committee Considerations:

- The committee expressed concerns about the French and Spanish translations of the video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* regarding the exact translation of the direct quotes read from the translated “Big Books” and for background distraction in the videos. The committee asked the Publications Department to review these items and report back to the 2013 Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities.
- The committee is hopeful that A.A.W.S. will format the pamphlet “A.A. For the Alcoholic With Special Needs” for alcoholics who are deaf, blind or have

learning challenges as soon as fiscally possible as requested in a 2011 Committee Consideration.

- The Committee reviewed the Treatment Kit and Workbook and:
  - Suggested minor editorial changes to the service piece “A.A. Temporary Contact/Bridging the Gap Request” and removed redundant information in the Kit. Following these minor changes the committee found the Workbook and Kit to be satisfactory for use by local committees.
- The Committee reviewed the Special Needs Kit and Workbook and:
  - Requested that a suggestion be added to page 10 of the Special Needs/Accessibilities Workbook under the section “Activities suggested for Special Needs-Accessibilities” for “committees to gather local information and identify outside local resources regarding accessibility requirements and options.”

## **2013**

### Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the report on Spanish and French translations of the video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* and expressed the need for translated versions of audio visual materials to have improved sound production in the future.
- The committee reviewed the report on the DVD version of the pamphlet “A.A. For the Alcoholic with Special Needs” formatted for alcoholics who are blind, deaf or learning challenged and expressed deep appreciation for the availability of the item. There was a concern expressed whether a DVD in American Sign Language (ASL) and with subtitles in English serves the needs of French and Spanish language-based members.
- The committee reviewed the contents of Special Needs/Accessibilities Workbook and Kit and requested the following:
  - That the staff secretary produce a memo with the following wording suggested by the 2012 Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities: “Committees gather local information and identify outside local resources regarding accessibility requirements and options.” This memo is to be a temporary insert in the section, “Activities Suggested for Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees,” of the current Special Needs-Accessibilities Workbook until the next printing of the workbook. The memo will be sent to Area, District, and Intergroup/Central Office Treatment, Special Needs-Accessibilities Chairs.
  - Add the service piece, “Online Meetings/Reunions a L’Internet/Reunions del Internet” (SM F-124), to the Special Needs/Accessibilities Kit.

- The committee had a wide-ranging discussion on how Special Needs-Accessibilities committees can communicate the various ways to make meeting places accessible to *all* alcoholics. Topics included starting Special Needs-Accessibilities committees and holding workshops on various topics to inform members about this service area; communicating in web-based and print meeting directories which meetings are handicapped equipped, wheelchair accessible, and ASL interpreted; considering ensuring that the entire meeting experience for those with special needs is accessible-friendly, e.g. assuring that the height of literature displays or coffee dispensers are accessible to those in wheelchairs; preparing meeting greeters to identify attendees with special needs and to help provide accommodation as best as possible; and providing local special needs contact information in meeting formats and event flyers.
- The committee also discussed ways that Special Needs-Accessibilities committees might help groups prepare in advance for the arrival of deaf/hard of hearing alcoholics. Topics included providing optimal seating arrangements; using a microphone, discouraging cross-talk, and asking those speaking to stand and avoid covering their faces with hand gestures; also, when economically possible, providing ASL interpreters or seeking out capable A.A. members who can sign (some Areas fund ASL interpreters); communicating with the hard of hearing in attendance that seating and other accommodations can be made; and encouraging cooperation with local professionals serving the deaf/hard of hearing community.

## **2014**

### Committee Considerations:

- The committee thoroughly considered a proposal to revise the pamphlet “Bridging the Gap” to expand its scope to include information on related corrections service activity and took no action. The committee acknowledged the desire in some areas for a generic Conference-approved pamphlet about bridging the gap. While some areas have combined corrections and treatment bridging the gap activities, they remain separate in many others. The sense of the committee was that revising the current pamphlet to include both treatment and corrections might not adequately address the variety of bridging the gap programs that areas throughout the U.S. and Canada have developed to address their specific needs. Some of these areas have developed service material tailored specifically to explain their local programs.
- The committee requested that the General Service Board consider whether there is a need to develop a Conference-approved pamphlet addressing bridging the gap activities for corrections.
- The committee reviewed the Treatment Committee Kit and Workbook and agreed that the current contents adequately serve the needs of local committees.
- The committee reviewed the Special Needs/Accessibilities Kit and Workbook and expressed appreciation for the service material that is available to assist

American Sign Language interpreters. They noted that the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are available in this format, and requested that a service piece be developed of the Twelve Concepts for World Service for signing purposes.

- The committee noted that the first line in Gloria's Story in the pamphlet "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" that says "I was 84 years old and 11 years sober (Although I've been in A.A. since 1962...)" might be confusing to newcomers. They requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities consider whether this language might be clarified and bring back any suggestion for revision to the 2015 Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities
- The committee asked that the staff member on the Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities assignment explore ways to provide electronic versions of the Workbooks and other materials in the Kits to committee chairs as an alternative to automatically mailing hard copies.

## **2015**

### Committee Considerations:

- The committee supported the trustees' committee's request for the A.A.W.S. Board to consider posting contents of A.A. literature items produced in audio formats on G.S.O.'s website, aa.org.
- The committee expressed appreciation for the A.A.W.S. Publishing Department's consideration to publish a service piece of the Twelve Concepts for World Service for signing purposes.
- The committee supported the efforts of the A.A.W.S. Board to explore ways to provide electronic versions of the Workbooks and other materials in the Kits to committee chairs as an alternative to automatically mailing hard copies and noted the following:
  - The committee strongly encouraged that postal mailing of printed Workbooks and other materials in the Kits be the primary means of delivery.
  - The committee noted that the "opt-in" measure in the welcome letter to new chairs did not reflect the intent of the 2014 Conference Committee's Consideration and resulted in incomplete data. They suggested that a survey be taken of new chairs from the "exploratory period" who did not respond to their welcome letter to attempt to better understand the effectiveness of the electronic service material and the exploratory approach in general.
- The committee reviewed the Treatment Committee Kit and Workbook and forwarded suggestions for updates to the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities.

- The committee reviewed the Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee Kit and Workbook and forwarded suggestions for updates to the trustees' committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities.
- The committee requested the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities consider how to better realize the commitment to make A.A. more readily available to all and suggested:
  - Focusing on the concept of overcoming barriers in accessing, receiving, and carrying the A.A. message, rather than the limiting concept of identifying "special needs" and to consider how this change might be reflected in the trustees' committee scope.
  - Changing all references to "Special Needs-Accessibilities" to "Accessibilities," including the trustees' and Conference Committee names.
  - Revising the Special Needs-Accessibilities Workbook with a particular focus on emphasizing solutions to overcoming barriers.
  - Reorganizing the Special Needs-Accessibilities Workbook to include the following sections: 1) Accessing the A.A. Message 2) Receiving the A.A. Message 3) Carrying the A.A. Message. Each section might include shared experience for overcoming barriers.

## **2016**

It was recommended that:

The committee recommended that the term "Special Needs" be removed from the name of the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and throughout the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure. The new name of the committee will be the Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities.

Committee Considerations:

- The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities consider creation of an Accessibility Checklist for inclusion in the Special Needs/Accessibilities Kit that groups could use to inventory their accessibility to all alcoholics.
- The committee noted that the A.A. Guidelines on Carrying the Message to the Deaf Alcoholic are appropriately available in the Special Needs/Accessibilities Kit. The committee asked that the inclusion of these Guidelines in the Treatment Kit be reviewed.

## **2017**

**It was recommended that:**

The pamphlet "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" be approved with suggested editorial changes and be retitled "Accessibility for All Alcoholics."

**Committee Considerations:**

- The committee considered the request to add text to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure regarding the option to meet by conference call prior to the Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference and took no action.
- The committee suggested that the Conference-approved pamphlet "A Message to Teenagers" be removed from the Treatment Service Kit.
- The committee suggested that staff review and revise service material in the Treatment Service Kit.
- The committee suggested that the title, menu and introduction to the DVD and CD currently titled "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" be revised to "Accessibility for All Alcoholics." The committee suggested that the DVD be available with subtitles in French and Spanish.
- The committee discussed ways of incorporating shared experience in carrying the A.A. message with members of the Armed Services. The committee suggested that Remote Communities committees encourage A.A. members carrying A.A.'s message within the context of military life to share their experience, strength and hope including at the pre-Conference Remote Communities meeting.
- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities forward the pamphlet "A.A. and the Armed Services," to the Publishing Department for translation into French and Spanish, and to add the pamphlet to the Accessibilities Kit.
- The committee requested that the General Service Office continue to explore strategies to provide more effective services to alcoholics who are veterans and active members of the Armed Services and provide a progress report to the 2018 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities.

Reviewed April 2017