

12 Guidelines and Reminders for visiting Treatment Centers

1. Share your experience strength and hope. Do not give personal advice or direct comments at patients.
2. Dress appropriately. No shorts or sleeveless shirts.
3. Do not take any medications into facilities, even aspirin or prescriptions. Be mindful of possible impressions or misunderstandings.
4. Stay in the solution. Recommendation: if speaking for 30 minutes, 20 of it should be solution. Tell enough of your story to enable patients to relate, then speak of how you stay sober, working the steps, sponsorship, meetings, relationship with your H.P., how much your life has changed positively, etc.
5. Speak of your Higher Power in general terms. Although some of us have religious beliefs, we are not allied with any religion.
6. Do not break patients' anonymity. If you have seen them in meetings before, do not bring attention to this or shame them regarding relapse.
7. Be mindful of the time and do not go over. Try to save the last five to 10 minutes for questions the clients may have.
8. We simply put the message in front of the alcoholic in treatment. What the alcoholic does with it is not our business. He or she may ignore it or use it. The alcoholic needs to be free to choose without our getting vain if the message is used, or angry or discouraged if it is ignored.
9. The professional treatment center is in charge of its patients or clients and is responsible for them. If A.A. members do not conform to the rules and regulations of the facility, they may not be asked to return. So, carrying the message into such places calls for patience and self-discipline, keeping in mind that we need not compromise our Traditions.
10. Be dependable. Once an A.A. commitment is made to any institution or organization, we cannot let our Fellowship down by not fully living up to the agreement. We go to any lengths to perform faithfully the services promised in the name of A.A. We try not to let anything interfere with keeping our word. What people think of A.A. depends on us. If we are reliable, then A.A. seems so. If we are not, it makes A.A. look bad. Since A.A.'s public relations policy is based on attraction, not promotion, that leaves it up to each of us to reflect the attractiveness of the A.A. way of life.
11. Do not brag on AA, in humility let your faithfulness and results speak for themselves.
12. Have fun and tell others about your experience so more will carry the message!

Typical meeting format:

Open with Serenity prayer

Read the AA Preamble

Introduce yourself and have clients introduce themselves if you like

Tell them you are there to share your experience strength and hope and that we share what we were like, what happened, and what we are like now.

Close with the Lord's Prayer for all who would like to join

Note: 8, 9, 10, 11 are taken from the Pamphlet "AA in Treatment Settings"