

NORTH CAROLINA TRI-COUNTY INTERGROUP HOTLINE PHONE VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

updated 9/26/2013

****Please read before your shift begins****

First and foremost, *thank you* for signing up to do the incredible commitment of answering the phone when an alcoholic in need reaches out for help! It is one of the most rewarding ways to “give back what has been so freely given to us.”

As a local Intergroup Hotline Phone Volunteer, your commitment is very important. Please read all the instructions below and call your Group Hotline Coordinator or your Captain if you have any questions or concerns.

There are seven Captains, one for each day of the week. Your group’s designated Captain will call you about three days before your shift to confirm your availability and desired phone number to be used for the shift.

******If you miss your Captain’s or Call Forwarder’s confirmation phone call, they will leave you a message. Please return their phone call to confirm or cancel as promptly as possible.******

When it is time for your shift to begin:

1. Your Call Forwarding Person will call you 15 minutes before your shift to confirm you are still available and at the given phone number. They will then transfer the calls to you, and call you again to confirm the successful transfer.
At the end of your shift, they will have already confirmed with the next shift volunteer and then transferred calls away from your phone - at which point they will notify you to confirm your relief from duty.
2. If for some reason you have started your shift and cannot complete it, do your best to find a replacement on your own. Once you have found a willing sober member of AA, call the Call Forwarding Person so they can transfer the calls away from you to your replacement. If you cannot find someone to cover you, call the Call Forwarding Person and they will utilize the Back Up List to find someone to finish your shift. Please try your best to not abandon the phones!

Tips for answering calls and questions:

1. **Have a current meeting schedule** on hand.
2. **Have a Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous** on hand.
3. **Have internet access available** if at all possible. The Intergroup website is extremely resourceful and easy to use. The web address is www.raleighaa.com.
4. **If someone is calling about an issue other than alcoholism**, use the phone numbers in this packet to refer callers to the appropriate resource.

Example: Calling about drug abuse – refer them to Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

AA gets a lot of calls about everything because the general public knows we know everything...hahaha.....but we, as a fellowship, can really only help them with one problem – alcoholism. Refrain from giving advice about anything other than how to not drink. Remember the Tenth Tradition, “*Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*” You are representing AA with this commitment. AA cannot truly help anyone other than the fellow alcoholic; however, we do not want to turn our backs on other sufferers either. Please use the reference phone numbers in this packet to direct callers to the appropriate resource.

5. **Your primary purpose with this commitment** is to answer all local AA phone calls. Because you only have one phone line, depending on the time and day of your shift you will need to limit the amount of time you spend talking with each caller. If they need someone to talk with longer or a ride to a meeting, ask them for their name and number, then have someone from the 12 step list call them back. (***Never give out another member's phone number!!!***) Do not wait until your phone is ringing off the hook to do this. If you are unable to contact a willing member to call them back within 20 mins, call them back yourself; tell them you have not forgotten about them and you are still trying. Continue this every 20 mins until you reach someone on the 12 step list willing to call them back. Depending on the time and day of your shift it may take a while to find someone, but please don't give up - the newcomer is counting on you!

Please remember that if you are on a Hotline call, another Hotline call will not be able to come through. If someone dials your number directly they will show up on your Call Waiting, but a Hotline call will get a busy signal because the Call Forwarding feature does not allow Call Waiting. If you chose to continue speaking with the caller, please hang up and either call them back directly or have them call you back directly. This way a Hotline call will be allowed through to your phone on Call Waiting.

6. **If you need to utilize the 12 Step list**, call a woman for a woman & a man for a man. (**Never give out another member's phone number**) Please remind all 12 steppers - if the call results in a personal meeting directly with the caller (coffee, ride to a meeting, etc) that they should always bring a sober buddy from AA. *Do not* go alone!!!
7. **What if someone calls and is intoxicated?** Do not be afraid to call 911 if you think the caller is going to bring physical harm to themselves or is in need of immediate medical attention. If the caller is intoxicated and the situation is not that urgent, try to keep the call short. You will know when someone genuinely wants help. If they do not, compassionately cut to the chase and end the call - we cannot tie up the phones because someone else may be trying to get through. Remember, there is a difference between carrying the message and carrying the drunk!
8. **Overnight Volunteers:** At the beginning of your shift, make sure you find the earliest available meeting in each city listed in the Meeting Directory for the morning after your shift. You will need this information readily available.
9. **Spanish speaking callers:** If you are not bilingual yourself, write down the caller's name and number and have one of the members on the 12 step list who have noted they can speak Spanish call them back. The Spanish Intergroup Office of North Carolina is located in Siler City and has an Office phone number: 919-663-1777. The www.aa.org website can also be read in Spanish.
10. **Intergroup Office Info:** Tell them to call the office during regular office hours.
- Direct office line: 919-783-8214
 - Sun & Mon closed / Tues 10a-2p / Wed 4p-8p / Thurs, Fri, & Sat 10a-2p

What to do if you need to cancel your commitment:

1. **If your Captain has not yet called you and you need to cancel**, do your best to find your own replacement and contact your Group Hotline Coordinator. Your Group Hotline Coordinator will pass the replacement info along to the Captain. If you do not know who the Group Hotline Coordinator is, give the replacement info to the Captain when they call you to confirm.
2. **If your Captain has already called and confirmed with you and suddenly you are unavailable for your shift**, do your best to find your own replacement then call your Captain with the new information ASAP. If you are unable to find a replacement yourself, contact your Captain anyway. They will find a replacement for you.

3. **If you are merely running late**, but can still fulfill most of your commitment, either call your Call Forwarder if you have their number or call the Hotline number directly (919)783-6144 and talk to the current volunteer on duty. Be nice; they may be willing to extend their shift while you make yourself available.

Summary of Basic Guidelines

- 1) **Return your Captain's confirmation phone call if you miss it.**
- 2) **Be available, on time, and sober for your entire shift.**
- 3) **Work with a current meeting directory.**
- 4) ***Never give out any AA member's phone number.***
- 5) **Leave a voice message when calling the 12 Step List.**
- 6) **Get the caller the help they need and keep calls short.**

Here is a breakdown of members involved:

1. **You!!! ☺ ☺ ☺**
 - a. Signs up and stay available and sober for your entire hotline shift.
2. **Your Group Intergruop Rep**
 - a. Attends monthly Intergroup Council meetings to listen to Hotline Report & get group Sign Up Sheet from Hotline Chair.
 - b. Passes along Hotline Report and Sign Up Sheet to your Group Hotline Coordinator.
3. **Your Group Hotline Coordinator (home group member of your group)**
 - a. Collects group volunteers to fill time shifts on Sign Up Sheet each month, also distributes & explains Hotline Packet to new Hotline volunteers in group.
 - b. When all time shifts are full, passes along volunteer info to Captain (contact info on top of Sign Up Sheet).
4. **Seven Hotline Committee Captains (one for each day of the week)**
 - a. Collects group Volunteer info from each of their Group Hotline Coordinators.
 - b. Provides info to the Intergroup Hotline Chair.
 - c. Calls each group Volunteer 3 days before shift to confirm commitment.
5. **Call Forwarders**
 - a. Calls incoming group volunteer 15 mins before shift to reconfirm availability.
 - b. Completes call forwarding transfer to incoming volunteer at beginning of each shift.
 - c. Confirms successful transfer with test phone call to incoming volunteer.
 - d. Calls outgoing volunteer to confirm release from duty.
6. **Intergroup Hotline Committee Alternate Chair**
 - a. Collects group volunteer info from the Captains.
 - b. Assembles and distributes Group and Master Calendars to all Captains and Call Forwarding Persons each month.
7. **Intergroup Hotline Committee Chair**
 - a. Facilitates Hotline Committee meetings;
 - b. Reports to Intergroup; attends all Steering Committee meetings; gives Hotline Committee report at monthly Intergroup Council Meetings; facilitates annual Hotline Group Raffle/Lottery.

THANK YOU for your commitment and service in keeping AA alive and strong for the next suffering alcoholic!!!!!!!