

**BUFFALO  
INTERGROUP  
CORRECTIONS**

**“Every AA has been, in a sense, a prisoner. Each of us has walled himself out of society; each has known social stigma. The lot of you folks has been even more difficult: In your case, society has also built a wall around you. But there isn’t any real essential difference, a fact that practically all AA’s now know. “ ~Bill W.**

# PURPOSE OF CORRECTIONS COMMITTEE

- **“Coordinate the work of individual AA members and groups who are interested in carrying the AA message of recovery to alcoholics in correctional facilities, and to set up means of “bridging the gap’ from the facility into the AA community.”**

# OUR HISTORY

- **THE EARLY YEARS** — The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, founded in 1935, was into its seventh year with a growing membership of more than 8,000 when a progressive warden at San Quentin asked for nearby members of A.A. to carry the message to alcoholics behind the walls. The year was 1942, and the warden, who defied many skeptics, was the now-legendary Clinton Duffy. He said, “If the program will help just one man, I want to start it.”
- The first meeting had 20 inmates and several free-world guests in attendance
- By 1960 there were 356 prison groups with a total membership of 15,547 members.
- More importantly, immediate membership upon release from prison contributed to a more meaningful life with one’s family. Success in the community by men who found A.A. while in prison continued to give renewed hope to those who were still inside.
- In 2011, AA estimated that there are 1,559 groups in prisons and jail, with a membership of approximately 38.938.

# CLEARANCE PROCESS

\*ALL INFORMATION IS HIGHLY GUARDED

- County and State Applications can be downloaded from [www.buffaloany.org](http://www.buffaloany.org).
- Download and mail application to:
  - Alcoholics Anonymous Central Office, 681 Seneca St. Lower Buffalo, NY 14210.
  - Attn. AA Correction's chairman
- After the application is received it will be forwarded to the facility to be reviewed.
- Criminal history does not necessarily disqualify one from being cleared, in fact many of us have criminal backgrounds and have been cleared.
  - Clearance is up to the sole discretion of the facility.
- Next steps include (state facilities only):
  - Orientation
  - Proof of a TB inoculation
  - A photo ID picture and finger prints must be taken

# MEETING TIMES AND DATES

- **Erie County Holding center:**
  - Men: Thursday 7 pm
  - Women: Friday 7 pm
- **Alden Jail:**
  - Men: Wednesday 7 pm
  - Women: Saturday 10am
- **State Facilities:**
  - **Wende:**
    - Men: Friday 6pm
  - **Gowanda:**
    - Men: Monday-Thursday 7pm
  - **Collins:**
    - Men: Sunday and Tuesday 6pm

# QUALIFICATIONS

- “...having once been an inmate is not a requirement. A.A.s wishing to carry the message into correctional facilities are encouraged to attend corrections committee meetings.”
- First impressions are very important, so *look your best and be on time*, remember you are a representation of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- It is suggested that you have completed the 12 steps or in process of and are attending with someone who has.

# MEETING FORMAT

- Using the A.A. Preamble as your frame of reference, you should begin by stating what A.A. is and is not.
- Use a speakers meeting format, or a beginners meeting format, focusing on the first three Steps and providing information about the basic tools an A.A. member might use to stay away from the first drink.
- Explain and emphasize the importance of sponsorship and working the 12 Steps.
- Conference approved literature is provided to bring into facilities; check with corrections committee for available literature.
- Most inmates will want to know, why you? Briefly, talk about the way things were (e.g., your last drunk) and what things are like now that you are a member of A.A.



# OTHER CORRECTIONS SERVICE

## ■ Corrections Correspondence

- We are in need of A.A. members on the “outside” to correspond with A.A. members in correctional facilities.
- It is suggested that men correspond with men and women with women. Most of the inmates who want an outside correspondent are men, so we are appealing to men on the outside.
- If you would like to share your experience, strength and hope with A.A.s who are confined, e-mail the information on the Correctional Correspondence form to [corrections@aa.org](mailto:corrections@aa.org). The name of an inmate will be sent to you from your General Service Office and you will make the initial contact through the mail.
- Those who have participated in this service have found sharing with inmates a very gratifying form of Twelfth Step work. We are happy to know there are A.A. members like you willing to help make it possible for the A.A. message to be carried to those on the “inside.”

## ■ Prerelease/Bridging the Gap

- The A.A. Corrections Prerelease Contact Program connects the A.A. member being released from prison with Alcoholics Anonymous in their community.
- When the soon-to-be-released A.A. inmate writes us, we match that person to a Prerelease Contact in their community. If you are interested in this form of service, we will call you, get the okay, and then send you the name of a contact.
- Many A.A.s involved in this service stress the importance of getting the former inmate to a meeting as soon as possible, usually within the first 48 hours after release. During this time, you help them get acquainted, get phone numbers, perhaps locate a sponsor or home group, and become connected to the local A.A. community. You introduce the newly released inmate to others in A.A. so they have a broad, healthy base.