

Public Information Survey Summary

In the 2022 General Service Office Membership Survey, and true for previous surveys overall, the #1 route the alcoholic took to arrive at AA, was through an AA member, and that, by a substantial margin over all other methods. Apparently, the AA member is the most powerful tool in Public Information's toolbox. What then, can we do to take advantage of that fact? The answer came when looking back to 1935, and that, in a nutshell, is "Word of Mouth."

This "Word-of-Mouth" practice was, and is, the cornerstone of AA's growth. We, as the VAC Public Information Committee, recognized that the best possible thing we can do, is to bring back to mind an awareness, and to encourage the active use of this powerful tool. What better way can we embrace this tool, than to encourage a proactive outreach to our peers – our family, friends, acquaintances, etc., letting them know that we, as a recovering alcoholic, are available to anyone that they encounter in their daily life who want help with a drinking problem.

We received an impressive total of 378 surveys with an average of 350 of that number, completing the survey in its entirety. The survey was initially intended to identify a basic comfort level with sharing AA recovery information, and the impact on comfort levels that the use of "Word of Mouth" methodology has on the member whose sharing AA with an alcoholic. The original hypothesis was that the referral of a person who is wanting help with their alcoholism, would result in an increased level of comfort for the AA member. This has indeed, been supported by the survey results with up to a 22% increase in comfort levels with a median increase of 14%, over a solely personal approach of a prospective AA member.

In the development phase of the survey, we stumbled across the realization that we also wanted to know of any apprehension(s) common to our membership, in sharing AA recovery. In this arena, we had mixed results. Thankfully, of 409 apprehension responses, 196 had absolutely no apprehensions whatsoever. That's 48% of the total responses! On the converse, 52% of the responses indicated that they were experiencing one or more prohibitive apprehension(s) that interfered with their ability to share AA recovery.

Via the survey, we found opportunities for growth in our members as it pertains to extending our hand to those who are reaching for help. We found that the majority of those surveyed were completely comfortable reaching out to an alcoholic that is reaching for us, and wants our help (Avg 53%). We further discovered that 47% could use help with their growth in this area overall, with 26% not at all comfortable. Most importantly, 241 expressed an interest in receiving more information.

One of the most popular side notes on the survey was that the raising of Twelfth Steppers is a function of sponsorship. I could not agree more! There is no doubt whatsoever, that we have many members that are quite capable of passing it on. The question therefore becomes, "Will we!" Will we pass it on to the less comfortable? Will we take a proactive approach to aiding these members? Sure, we will...

The "Word of Mouth" approach is a suggestion that may bring more seeking alcoholics to the Sponsor/Sponsee, and in touch with our lifesaving program. It's not a new concept by any means. In fact, it is as old as this fellowship itself! Your Virginia Area Public Information committee simply wants to pass on a reminder to the fellowship, that is all; that's the sum total of the Survey Results' message. In short, like Roland Hazard, Ebby Thatcher, Bill Wilson, Dr Bob Smith, and so many more have attested, reaching out to our peers for referrals will expose us to many more opportunities to take out insurance against the first drink, to grow spiritually, to know the unspeakable joy that comes with helping another alcoholic and quite possibly, add a new member to our ranks...