Reaching Out To The Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Cocaine Anonymous' preamble states that "Our primary purpose is to stay free from cocaine and all other mind-altering substances, and to help others achieve the same freedom." C.A.'s Twelfth Step tells us that we, as a Fellowship, have a responsibility to reach out to carry this message to addicts. The First and Fifth Traditions remind us that our common welfare comes first, that personal recovery DEPENDS upon C.A. unity and that "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the addict who still suffers."

So just how does one reach out to the deaf or hard of hearing? There are many ways! Like everything else, reaching out to the deaf or hard of hearing addict requires willingness and open-mindedness. In this pamphlet, we present some ways to help you get started.

A) Bring the message of C.A. recovery to the hard of hearing:
• Start a meeting at a local school for the deaf. These schools can be located in your local phone book and/or by contacting local agencies for the deaf and hard of hearing.
• Bring literature and leave extra copies behind.
• Welcome those present with hugs or handshakes.
• Be willing to stay after the meeting and talk with those present (with the help of an interpreter).
• Bring writing pads and pens to aid communication.
• Invite members and interpreters out to coffee, if school rules allow. Remember, we are guests! Their rules must be respected.

B) Establish at least one meeting per month at which an interpreter is present:
• Include this information in meeting schedules.
• Advise Helpline(s), local newspapers, concerned agencies and schools, and clergy of the meeting.
• Have special seating reserved in the front of the room.
• Welcome newcomers with hugs or handshakes.
• Speak slowly to allow for lip-reading.
• Ask newcomers and interpreters out to coffee.
• Ensure the meeting budget can afford an interpreter and include this in the prudent reserve.
• If transportation is a problem, have members of the meeting volunteer to pick up and drive new members home.

C. Events/conventions:
• Arrange for an interpreter to be present well in advance.
• Distribute flyers announcing the event/convention to local schools, agencies and social clubs for the deaf.
• Arrange reserved seating in the front row.
• Have all C.A. literature available.
• Remember our First Tradition!

D) General ways to reach out and touch deaf addicts:
• Send all current C.A. literature (via Public Information and Hospitals & Institutions Committees) to schools for the deaf, social agencies that help this community, and treatment centers in your area.
• Establish contact with local interpreters (via agencies for the deaf and hard of hearing). Answer any questions they may have on recovery and C.A. Invite interpreters to open meetings (advise them of our anonymity statements).
• Be WILLING to reach out your hand in C.A. service and/or on Twelfth-Step calls to deaf/hard of hearing addicts still suffering. (Remember, never go on a Twelfth-Step call alone!)
• Find out if your community has a telephone relay service (this is often free) to enable communication—computer, fax, TTY.
• IDENTIFY ... DON'T COMPARE!
• Share your EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH & HOPE. That's why they're coming to Cocaine Anonymous.

For the full C.A pamphlet see the link below:

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