

## **“How To” Reach Out to Schools**

### **How to Make Contact:**

Determine what you want to accomplish in reaching school personnel. In most cases this will help you to reach the best staff member (counselor, health education teacher, etc.). Sometimes you may want to contact all personnel, that is fine as long as you have clearly thought out your presentation.

Is your purpose:

- to teach those working with adult staff members who may need Al-Anon?
- to reach children and teens?
- to provide support and resources for those working with children and teens?
- to reach those professionals who can assist parents?

### **Getting to the Right Staff Member:**

Schools and school districts range widely in size and number of staff members. Your best start is to contact the school district central office to help you determine who the appropriate school official might be.

In most school districts, a call to the secretary of Superintendent of Schools will probably give you the best start. You may then be referred to the individual school principal, human resources director, guidance counselor, pupil personnel director, or social worker.

If you are clear about why you are calling, it will help the secretary to direct you. Ask yourself-

- Am I calling to share information about Al-Anon and Alateen in general?
- Do I want permission to hang a poster, leave literature for children or adults?
- Do I want to talk about the possibility of having an Alateen meeting in the school?

### **Making an Initial Contact for an Appointment**

Briefly provide your name and why you are calling:

For example: "My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am calling on behalf of the local Al-Anon and Alateen groups for the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_. I would like to meet with someone to explain how our program is a resource for families and friends of problem drinkers and to drop off some literature. Could you direct me to the appropriate person on your staff so that I could make an appointment? What is the best time of day for me to make contact? Can that person provide direction in reaching all of the schools or is a call to each of the schools warranted? Thank you so much for your help."

## **The Appointment**

- Bring an informational fact sheet with you. (if it has been prepared locally, make sure the spelling is correct and it has a professional look).
- Share the facts about the program and why you have come. Avoid telling your personal story.
- Be ready to share how the program can assist students who might be showing signs of living with alcoholism: attendance problems, lethargy and depression, anger or fighting, unreasonableness, perfectionism, frequent visits to the nurse, nervousness, etc...
- Leave some literature, a local meeting list with phone numbers for contacts about meetings, the WSO Web site, and local Web site information.
- Leave your own name and phone number making clear how you want it to be used.
- Stay no more than 10 to 15 minutes.
- Express your thanks for the meeting and clarify whether any further meetings or contacts will be welcome.

## **Follow-Up**

In a day or two, if possible, you can send a thank you note and an additional piece of literature. It doesn't hurt to do this every year. Personnel changes or new needs may have occurred.