

## PPG-09

### Families Anonymous Inc. WSO (World Service Office) Telephone Policy

Adopted 1-21-2012 Reviewed March 2014  
Next Review March 2016

**When someone is hurting and reaches out for help, it is very important for the hands and hearts of FA to serve and assist in offering hope to those in desperation.**

**You are performing a very important service when handling the many and varied phone calls that reach FA throughout the world. Without you, the word would not get out to the hurting members in our communities.**

**Following are procedures that you should follow when receiving calls on behalf of Families Anonymous.**

#### How the process works

The WSO has two telephone numbers:

Des Plaines, IL office number is **847-294-5877**

800 Service Number is **800-736-9805**

(These numbers are posted on the website at [familiesanonymous.org](http://familiesanonymous.org))

A phone list is kept in the World Service Office next to the phone, as well as the Phone Policy. The phone list contains **current** names, phone numbers and times of availability of FA volunteer members who are willing to answer Twelve Step calls.

A list of groups and the cities/states in which they are located is also kept by the phone for your reference at all times, and is available on our website as well.

## 1 TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION – GENERAL

- 1.1 Families Anonymous receives many unusual calls, and there are many questions from staff and volunteers who answer the calls. It is the intention of the Board of Directors that this policy will answer any questions that may arise, inform those who take calls of his/her responsibilities, and alert you of instances where caution should be taken. Remember, **you represent FA each time you answer a call.** The public perceives FA by how you conduct yourself on the phone and how you treat the caller.

- 1.2 Please remember that being on the phone line is a great commitment. If you can't be available, please take your name off the list. It is the volunteer's responsibility to inform the World Service Office Administrator or WSO Committee Chair of any changes in phone numbers or availability times.
- 1.3 We can't stress this enough! Be sensitive to the person that is calling and avoid leaving him/her on hold. This is extremely important for the caller that might be put on hold too long, then gives up and decides to hang up. **Always remember, when someone is calling it is because there is an immediate need or crisis. You are their lifeline to hope.**
- 1.4 One of the requirements for telephone volunteers is that you are an "*active member of FA,*" which means it is very important to attend meetings.
- 1.5 When possible, women should talk with women and men should talk with men.
- 1.6 Calls from *seriously impaired* individuals (i.e., a threatened suicide) are outside the scope of the FA program and our responsibility. Personal advice must be avoided. FA representatives are not trained to handle calls of this nature. Remember you are representing FA and not yourself.

## 2 PROCEDURE FOR AN INCOMING CALL

- 2.1 A copy of the Phone Policy is kept by the phone at all times and should be reviewed by the call taker on duty.
- 2.2 When an "inquiry call" comes into FA, the FA call taker answers the phone with the following greeting: **"Thank you for calling Families Anonymous; how may I help you?"**
- 2.3 If the caller is requesting meeting information (i.e. times, locations, etc.), the FA call taker gives him/her the requested information.
- 2.4 The FA call taker provides complete and accurate information requested by the caller regarding meeting information, such as times and locations.
- 2.5 The FA call taker may give a brief overview of the FA Twelve-Step program, as well as share personal experiences when the caller requests information about the Families Anonymous Program. Keep in mind the call taker is not there to give advice.
- 2.6 The FA call taker should suggest the caller visit the website (**familiesanonymous.org**) for additional information about the program.
- 2.7 The FA call taker may find it necessary to get the caller's phone number and then check with someone else first if he or she is unsure of any information.

- 2.8 Each FA call taker should be certain that all information given to the caller is accurate. **Take time to check the current schedules for new information prior to your scheduled phone duty.** It is better to give no information than to give incorrect information.
- 2.9 Because it is important to keep the phone line open to others in need, the FA call taker should keep the calls fairly brief.

### 3 **PROCEDURE FOR CRISIS CALLS**

- 3.1 If the FA call taker receives a call where someone is threatening suicide or in a state of mind that is difficult to handle, this must be taken seriously. **For liability purposes, all threats of suicide must be taken as real.**
- 3.2 Anyone receiving a suicide threat call and having a phone number from the caller ID should call **911** on another line immediately. 911 will instruct you what to do. You can direct the caller to dial **911** also.
- 3.3 Should the FA call taker feel he or she is unable to handle the call, request the person's first name, phone number and inform the caller that someone call them back. Then call a seasoned volunteer and request his or her assistance with the call.
- 3.4 If the caller is in crisis and not threatening suicide, the call taker should continue to talk to the caller. If you are disconnected, **call trace by dialing \*57 from the same line, prior to making another call.**
- 3.5 At all times you should maintain the dignity of FA. It is important that you be courteous and never slam down the receiver. You need not respond to or accept abuse, but you can always thank the caller and calmly hang up.

### 4 **WHAT NOT TO DO**

- 4.1 Never give out telephone numbers, names or addresses of our callers. Simply state it is FA's policy not to divulge this information.
- 4.2 Callers may be referred to the group contact for the group closest to them. (Note: The new software will assist call takers in determining the nearest meetings to the callers.)
- 4.3 It is not FA's policy to provide individual counseling, nor give professional referrals, hospital referrals, treatment referrals, or give advice (Regardless of your training, you are not a doctor, psychiatrist, drug counselor, or marriage counselor.)
- 4.4 Do not divulge your anonymity; avoid discussions of calls at meetings and elsewhere.