

COURT REFERRAL INFORMATION PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET
DALLAS INTERGROUP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Court Referral Information Program or CRIP has been formed in response to AA Groups' problems with people assigned or "sentenced" to attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings as part of their probation. The problems being encountered by the Groups include people aggressively not interested in getting sober. These individuals are often disruptive by coming in late, bringing guests to closed meetings, or being verbally abusive. Some of those who are forced to attend are not alcoholic. In addition, the papers ask for names and phone numbers of AA members for the purpose of checking up on the probationer. As the court system seeks a way to avoid adding to the overcrowded situation in the jails and at the same time provide help for people who break the law because of alcohol, the number of probationers coming to AA meetings with attendance papers have increased significantly. Groups have consented over the past several years to sign these papers, and the judicial system logically has taken this action as an indication of a willingness to participate. However, with the escalating demands by the growing numbers of probationers and the accompanying problems with their attendance, it is diverting time and attention from the alcoholic who truly desires help, and thus violates several AA Traditions. Other entities besides the Court, such as treatment facilities and individual counselors and therapists, have also latched onto the idea of proof of attendance which compounds the problem.

Alcoholics Anonymous does not wish to turn anyone away who truly has a problem with alcohol. Because of this desire, groups are reluctant, at this point, to refuse to sign court papers. Many groups have members who sobered up through court assignment; however, the problems of anonymity, affiliation, and fulfilling our primary purpose have increased to an alarming degree. AA members cannot police attendance, answer questions about probation, or allow probation officers who are not alcoholic to attend closed meetings. Of even greater importance, we cannot give out our names and telephone numbers for verification by the judicial system. All of this is in direct violation of Tradition 12. Anyone who attends an AA meeting should have the confidence that their anonymity will be preserved nor should anyone be required to divulge that information because of problems of affiliation with an outside entity.

The source of most of the AA Groups' problem is attendance by nonalcoholics or angry probationers at closed meetings. These meetings are for people who have a problem with alcohol and show at least some understanding that this is true. When adults are "sentenced" to attend an AA meeting, much of the effect is lost since AA is a program of attraction not promotion. Alcoholics Anonymous becomes affiliated in the minds of the probationers with the judicial system. In signing the papers, we underscore that affiliation. We are violating both Traditions 3 and 6. Closed meetings are for alcoholics only and do not include drug addicts, wives, girl friends, boy friends, husbands, or those who have no interest in sobriety. Those who do not have an alcohol problem but classify themselves as drug addicts cannot find the help they need in most closed meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. If someone is primarily a drug addict, then they need to be directed to Narcotics Anonymous. Anyone in doubt may attend an open meeting. Open meetings welcome family members, friends, and in fact any person who wishes to come.

From this setting, CRIP was born. The intent is to provide an alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for adults on probation, and bring our participation back into the realm of cooperation rather than affiliation. The program began in Chicago and Dallas is using the same format. Instead of being sentenced to AA, the probationers are sentenced to CRIP. Since CRIP is a court program, probation officers are present to sign all papers, monitor attendance and answer questions. It is simply the duty of AA volunteers to present the program outlined as follows. The probationers attend for six weeks and must experience six DIFFERENT sessions. The volunteers meet every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 7:00 PM at the George Allen Court House, Central Jury Room, 600 Commerce St. in downtown Dallas. The same program is shown Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the probationers can choose which night of the week to attend. However, it is not up to the AA volunteers to "police" that attendance or even to answer questions about it. That task belongs to the attending probation officer.