

AA in Colorado Long timer Interview Questions

Here is a list of questions to guide you in conducting your long timer interview. Feel free to add questions of your own, allow the interview to take on a life of its own, and most importantly, to have fun! Nevertheless, before you begin taping, explain that our primary interest is in *AA's* role in the story. The focus is on our *AA history in Colorado*, how we were, what happened, and what we are like now. As always, the emphasis is on sobriety, rather than drinking. Perhaps the member can begin his/her story with his/her initial contact with the program.

Begin the tape by identifying yourself, and providing the date of the taping. Then introduce the member.

- How and when did you get started in AA? When and where did you sober up? Where did you go to your first meeting?
- How did you first learn about AA?
- Did you have a sponsor when you first came in? What type of sponsorship did you have?
- How many groups or meetings were in existence?
- Can you recall the formats used at some of these early meetings? How were they run?
- When was AA started in your town or area? How often were meetings held? Who were some of the people playing important roles in the formation of new groups? What else do you know about the growth of AA during that period of time?
- What contributions did you yourself make to the growth of the Fellowship? (Don't be unnecessarily modest!)
- We say sometimes that all that's needed to form an AA meeting is two drunks, a resentment and a coffeepot. Can you talk at all about the differences that led to new groups being formed in your area?
- In *AA Comes of Age* Bill Wilson writes about numerous issues over which anger and contention arose and threatened the undoing of our Fellowship. The groups nationwide, for example, did not immediately accept spiritual principles we know today as the Twelve Traditions. What controversies over issues addressed in the Traditions can you recall people wrestling? (How were meeting spaces acquired? Was rent or other funding obtained by gambling sessions? Bingo games? How did the membership resolve these affairs?)
- What individuals were especially prominent in your sobriety?
- How were new members contacted? What kinds of Twelfth Step work were going on? Are there any Twelfth Step anecdotes that stick out in your mind you'd care to share?
- Today, AA is well known to and supported by police officers, judges, and corrections officials. What kind of relationship did AA in your area have with local authorities? How has that changed since you sobered up?

- In 1970, a need was identified in Area 10: doctors were in want of information about alcoholism, recovery, and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. That was when we first developed the Adopt a Doctor Program, which consists of a short AA FAQ sheet, which is distributed to physicians by members as they go in for check-ups and other appointments. This *was* actually being done informally during AA's earliest years – in fact, the first people we contacted were doctors and preachers. But here's the question; in the early years, was *more* outreach being done towards physicians than today? Can you see a need to increase the outreach effort now? Did doctors, in your experience, feel AA was encroaching upon their territory?
- Treatment facilities in this millennium frequently host AA and other Twelve Step meetings. Did treatment centers exist in your area when you sobered up? Did any of them use a Twelve Step format or incorporate meetings into their structure?
- Did you seek the cooperation of other local community or professional agencies?
- Can you remember the Ask an Alcoholic radio show that aired weekly during the 1950s? Today, radio and television public service announcements for AA as well as Internet web sites are becoming commonplace. How did AAs when you first got sober interact with the media? Have you had any profound experiences sharing your relationship with alcohol with the public? What cautions might you have for young AAs today regarding media exposure?
- During the early years of your recovery, how did the community receive Alcoholics Anonymous?
- Do you think your group(s) has had an influence in your community? If so, how?
- What do you remember of early conferences, assemblies, and conventions? Can you recall opening intergroup or central offices?
- Have you had any contact with G.S.O.?
- Today, Conference-approved literature is available to help AA members deal with a wide variety of challenging questions. Back in the day, all you had was the book Alcoholics Anonymous, common sense, and your compassion. How did early AAs treat newcomers? How did your group(s) treat constant slippers? Thirteenth steppers? How were people wishing to talk about multiple addictions during your meetings addressed? How about non-alcoholic drug addicts walking in off the street for their first meeting?
- In what ways has AA changed over the years?

Thanks, everyone, for your involvement, your energy, and your time. You guys rock!

In love and service,