

# AL-ANON GROUPS AT WORK

# INDIA

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The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps

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Al-Anon is supported by members' voluntary contributions

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# Introduction

The message of the Al-Anon Family Groups reflects experience, strength and hope based on the stories of men, women, and children who once felt helpless and lonely because of another's alcoholism. Al-Anon offer help and hope to friends and families of alcoholics, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

Al-Anon is a unique fellowship where members from different backgrounds, culture, and religion share a platform of equality in an inspiring endeavor: helping one another to lead purposeful lives by overcoming the frustration and helplessness caused by alcoholism.

(Al-Anon for teenage members) is a vital part of Al-Anon Family Groups. Here young people seek help when a parent, a relative, or a friend suffers from alcoholism and meet to exchange experiences and gain an understanding of themselves and the alcoholic. This helps their own personal development and stabilizes their troubled thinking.

This book bears the suggested guidelines relating to structure and policies of Al-Anon/Alateen India. Al-Anon suggests that an orderly service-structure will make it possible to carry its message with maximum effectiveness where this book can be a helpful guide.

# Al-Anon's Three Legacies

Al-Anon's logo is a triangle with a circle inside.

The three sides of the triangle symbolize our three legacies.



## Recovery

through acceptance of  
the Steps

## Unity

through acceptance of  
the Traditions

## Service

through acceptance of  
the Concepts

## Twelve Steps

Because of their proven power and worth, A A's Twelve Steps have been adopted almost word for word by Al-Anon. They represent a way of life appealing to all people of goodwill, of any religious faith or of none. Note the power of the very words...

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of *God as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with *God as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## Twelve Traditions

The Traditions that follow bind us together in unity. They guide the groups in their relations with other groups, with AA, and the outside world. They recommend group attitudes toward leadership, membership, money, property, public relations, and anonymity.

The Traditions evolved from the experience of AA groups in trying to solve their problems of living and working together. Al-Anon adopted these group guidelines and over the years has found them sound and wise. Although they are only suggestions, Al-Anon's unity and perhaps even its survival are dependent on adherence to these principles.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.
3. The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
5. Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
6. Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

## **Twelve Concepts of Service**

Carrying the message, as suggested in the Twelfth Step, is Service—Al-Anon’s third legacy. Service, a vital purpose of Al-Anon, is action. Members strive to *do* as well as to *be*.

Anything done to help a relative or friend of an alcoholic is service: a telephone call to a despairing member; sponsoring a newcomer; telling one’s story at meetings; forming groups; arranging for public outreach; distributing literature; and financially supporting groups, local services, and the World Service Office.

1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.
2. The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.
3. The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.
4. Participation is the key to harmony.
5. The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and assure that they be heard.
6. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.
7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.
8. The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.

9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service, the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.
10. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
11. The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.
12. The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

### **General Warranties of the Conference**

In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions:

- 1) that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
- 2) that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;
- 3) that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;
- 4) that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
- 5) that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

# Al-Anon Groups at Work

## Procedure for starting an Al-Anon Group

Any two or more relatives or friends of alcoholics who meet to solve their common problems may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided they have no other affiliation as a group. (For more information refer Guideline G-12)

## Benefits of registering Groups with the GSO

- The GSO provides meeting information like day, time and physical location or electronic platform of registered groups and also helpline numbers through GSO India website: [al-anonateenindia.org](http://al-anonateenindia.org) to newcomers, professionals and others.
- The group conscience of registered groups is heard through General Service Conference, a link to nationwide Al-Anon that assures unity of purpose and a common bond of love and friendship available to each member.
- Registration is required before groups are granted permission to share or display any copyrighted materials during their meeting.

## Considerations When starting an Al-Anon Group

### Selecting a Day and Time to Hold the Meeting

Before choosing a meeting time, it may be helpful to consider when other Al-Anon meetings are being held, to minimize conflicting days and times.

### Finding a Location to Hold Group Meetings

Al-Anon group meetings are usually held weekly in an accessible location that is welcoming to all, such as a community room, library, educational institutions or electronic platform.

### Naming the Group

#### *Tradition Four*

***Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.***

An Al-Anon group's name reflects the spirit of Al-Anon's primary purpose of welcoming and giving comfort to families and friends of alcoholics. Group names can include the topic of the meeting such as a Step or slogan or a phrase reflective of Al-Anon principles. When choosing a group name, care is taken to avoid the appearance of affiliation and/or endorsement of other

organizations, other Twelve Step programs, religious beliefs, and meeting facilities.

The name of an Al-Anon group is a reflection of Step Twelve in action. Since nicknames or attempts at humorous names could confuse potential members and prevent them from attending the meeting, it is suggested they not be used in the group name.

In the spirit of unity, the GSO reviews new group names and may ask a group to choose another name if it is not in keeping with Al-Anon principles. All Al-Anon groups are registered with the letters AFG (for Al-Anon Family Group) to ensure members' anonymity.

### **Choosing a Group's Name**

Having an appropriate group name is very important because it is included in local and online meeting directories and may be a potential member's first impression of Al-Anon. The group's name should be inviting to all and reflect Al-Anon principles. A group's name should not imply affiliation with any other Twelve Step group, self-help group, commercial venture, agency, religious group, rehabilitation facility, or other outside enterprise even if the name is associated with its location—e.g., “the \_\_\_ Church AFG” or “the \_\_\_ Hospital AFG.”

To help avoid confusion with other entities, it is suggested that groups spell out their full name and include the letters “AFG” for Al-Anon Family Group.

The GSO will review proposed group names for adherence to Al-Anon principles. (See “Considerations When Starting Either an Al-Anon Group”: “Naming the Group” in the “Groups at Work” section of this Al-Anon India Service Manual.)

### **Group Contact Information**

Groups are encouraged to create and fill group contact positions as quickly as possible to ensure its primary purpose.

### **Current Mailing Address (CMA)**

The **CMA** is a member of the group who attends the group's meeting regularly, agrees to accept and deliver the group's mail, and anticipates keeping the same contact information for a number of years. The CMA may be, but does not have to be, the Group Representative (GR) or another group officer.

The CMA's email address will be used for GSO mailings unless the group has a group email address.

Up-to-date CMA information assures the group of promptly receiving all communication. The GSO and the local service arms are to be notified immediately when the CMA changes, so there will be no disruption of service to the group.

### **Group Email Address**

A group has the option to create a **group email address** to receive electronic mailings.

### **Phone Contact for the Public**

Phone contacts are members of the group who are willing to receive phone calls and extend a warm welcome to newcomers, travelers, professionals, and others seeking information about their Al-Anon group. They provide a personal invitation to newcomers to attend the next meeting, including details about how to attend the group's meeting. Serving as the group's phone contact for the public is Step Twelve in action. A phone contact's first name and phone number may be provided to callers seeking information on the Al-Anon Helpline number. In keeping with Tradition Eleven, it is not appropriate to post members' names or phone numbers on public venues such as websites or posters.

### **Registering Multiple Meetings**

While the majority of new meetings are individual groups, some groups consist of more than one meeting. They are one group that meets on two or more days at the same location.

Prior to registering a group with multiple meetings, it is suggested that the members of the group discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being one group with multiple meetings in order to make an informed group conscience decision.

Meetings that register as separate groups are each eligible to have their own Group Representative to serve them above the group level; Current Mailing Address (CMA) to receive GSO, Area, and local mailings; and phone contacts for the public.

Groups that register with multiple meetings share the same name, GSO ID number, CMA, phone contacts, and share one Group Representative. District, Area, and GSO mailings (postal and email) are sent to one CMA to share with all the meetings in the group. Multiple meetings of one group have

only one voice and one vote at District meetings and Area Assemblies. Groups with multiple meetings may need to consider how and when to hold business meetings so members from all the meetings can share information and participate in making group decisions. (See “Group Business”: “Group Business Meetings and Group Conscience”: “Group Business Meetings.”)

### **Communication with the GSO**

Al-Anon groups are asked to provide a postal address and an email address, so they can receive news and information from the GSO.

### **GSO Registration Process**

The GSO will register a group with the understanding that the group will abide by the Al-Anon Traditions and not affiliate with or endorse any outside entity or practice.

Joint meetings for Al-Anon and AA members, meetings comprised of only AA members, and groups that practice specific therapies, such as guided meditation, are not in keeping with Al-Anon principles and do not qualify to be registered as an Al-Anon group.

- Decide the meeting format (i.e. Steps, Traditions, Concepts, Literature, Topic/Discussion, etc. [See “Meeting Ideas”]).
- Contact your District Representative or Area Group Records Coordinator to obtain information on the Area and/or Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) group registration process.
- Complete the New Al-Anon Group Registration Form and submit it to GSO through your Area delegate. Both the GSO point person and the Area Group Records Coordinator are notified once the form is submitted. A group may choose to submit the New Al-Anon Group Registration Form directly to GSO. The GSO point person then promptly notifies the same to the respective Area Delegate and/ or Area Group Records Coordinator. (Instructions and a printable version of the form are available on [al-anonlateenindia.org](http://al-anonlateenindia.org))

Once the GSO reviews the completed form, a group ID number is assigned and the information is sent to the Group’s current mailing address (CMA). Prospective groups may contact the GSO for further information.

# Suggested Meeting Format

*This format is printed for your convenience. While not every group chooses to plan its meeting in this way, many find a general outline helpful.*

See also the pamphlet *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32).

## **Meeting Opening**

Most groups open with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

## **The Serenity Prayer**

Chairperson: Will you join me in a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer?

God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can, And  
wisdom to know the difference.

## **Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome**

(choose “Al-Anon” or “Alateen” as applicable)

We welcome you to the \_\_\_\_\_ Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

We who live, or have lived, with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can. We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon/Alateen we discover that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

We urge you to try our program. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes, and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.

The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon/Alateen ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with an alcoholic is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.

The Al-Anon/Alateen program is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous), which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives, along with our slogans and the Serenity Prayer. The loving interchange of help among members and daily reading of Al-Anon/Alateen literature thus make us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.

Anonymity is an important principle of the Al-Anon/Alateen program. Everything that is said here, in the group meeting and member-to-member, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in Al-Anon/Alateen.

*At this point in the meeting, many groups have the Chairperson say if the group meeting has a special format (Step-study, speakers, or discussion group), has a specific routine for calling on members, asks members of other anonymous fellowships to remain anonymous and focus on the Al-Anon program, and clarifies if the meeting is for Families, Friends, and Observers (Welcome) or for Families and Friends Only. Members are also told how they can obtain Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature.*

*This is a Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meeting; we welcome visitors seeking information about Al-Anon, as well as newcomers and members of Al-Anon. This is a Families and Friends Only meeting for Al-Anon members and prospective members only. Anyone who believes they have been affected by someone else's drinking is welcome.*

### **Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps**

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

*Many groups choose to have a member read one, or all, of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and/or Twelve Concepts of Service.*

### **Optional Readings**

At this point in the meeting, groups may choose to read one or more of the “Optional Readings” or other selections from Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature.

### **Introductions**

The Chairperson invites members to introduce themselves. Members may choose to use their first name according to their personal preference. The Chairperson may ask newcomers to identify themselves and welcomes them.

### **The Meeting Program**

The meeting program is decided by group conscience and typically involves one member introducing a speaker or topic for discussion.

Large groups may divide into smaller sessions for the meeting discussion and come back together at a given time for the “Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing.”

### **Announcements and Reports**

This is a time for announcements of local Al-Anon events, service meetings, and other group business, including day and time of business meetings, Treasurer’s report, and announcements from the District, Area, or General Service Office. Reports may include:

- Group Secretary, Treasurer, Group Representative, Intergroup Representative
- District, Area, General Service Office
- Other Al-Anon/Alateen-related announcements

### **Reports**

The Chairperson may call on the Secretary or another trusted servant to read announcements from other Al-Anon service arms, including those sent to the group’s CMA (Current Mailing Address) from the GSO. The Treasurer or another trusted servant is asked to read the GSO Appeal letter to Members.

Periodically, the Group Representative (GR) can update the group about District or Assembly meetings; the Treasurer or another trusted servant is asked to read the GSO Appeal

letter to Members and give the group a report on income and expenditures. The GR can also keep the group informed about Al-Anon activities nationwide and the *General Service Conference minutes*.

The Information Service Representative (ISR) can also report the activities of the local AIS or Intergroup back to the group.

## **Other Group Announcements**

### ***Tradition Six***

***Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.***

Generally, those events put on by or connected to Al-Anon service arms, are announced at meetings.

At an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting or meeting location, groups do not announce, publicize, or discuss activities of other Twelve Step programs, as this could create an appearance of affiliation or endorsement, even if the event or activity is composed primarily of Al-Anon or Alateen members.

While we remain a separate entity from AA, we cooperate whenever possible as a reflection of our special relationship with Alcoholics Anonymous. When Al-Anon participates in an AA event with speakers or workshops, these events may be announced at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings.

Note that in order to use the name “Alateen,” any event with Alateen participation must have a connection to the Al-Anon Area in which it is held and have event requirements that meet or exceed the Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

## **Passing the Basket**

***At some point during the program, voluntary contributions are made, following this statement by the Chairperson or Treasurer.***

“We have no dues or fees; according to our Seventh Tradition, ‘Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.’ We contribute in gratitude for what we have received from Al-Anon.”

Groups with expenses may also include this statement, “We do this through our own voluntary contributions by passing the basket (including electronic basket) to cover group expenses, including rent or platform fees, purchase of literature, and support of our service arms.”

Alternatively, groups without expenses may encourage their members to contribute to GSO and its service arms.

### **Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing**

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.

The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A few special words to those of you who haven’t been with us long: Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

We aren’t perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you. After a while, you’ll discover that though you may not like all of us, you’ll love us in a very special way—the same way we already love you.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.

Will all who care to, join me in closing with the serenity prayer?

### **Al-Anon Declaration**

*It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience. Many groups say the Al-Anon Declaration after the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing.*

***Let It Begin with Me***

***When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, let***

***the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen***

***always be there, and—Let It Begin with Me.***

## Optional Readings

The selections that follow are offered as suggestions for meeting topics or as optional readings in the group meeting format, as determined by the group conscience. They contain wisdom and information many members and groups have found helpful.

### A. Reading on Anonymity

When newcomers or visitors are present, the group may want to read an explanation of anonymity, such as:

“Members use their full names within the fellowship when they wish. The degree of anonymity a member chooses (first name, pseudonym, or full name) is not subject to criticism. Each member has the right to decide.

“Regardless of our personal choice, we guard the anonymity of everyone else in the fellowship, Al-Anon/Alateen, and AA. This means not revealing to anyone—even to relatives, friends, and other members—whom we see and what we hear at a meeting.

“Anonymity goes well beyond mere names. All of us need to feel secure in the knowledge that nothing seen or heard at a meeting will be revealed. We feel free to express ourselves among our fellow Al-Anons because we can be sure that what we say will be held in confidence.

### B. Four Primary Ideas

*The Twelve Steps suggest acceptance of four primary ideas:*

1. **We are powerless over the problem of alcoholism.** When we can honestly accept this truth, it brings us a feeling of release and hope. We can now turn our full attention to bringing our own lives into order. We can go forward to spiritual growth, to the comfort and peace to be gained from the entire program.
2. **We can turn our lives over to a Power greater than ourselves.** Now that our well-meant aid to the alcoholic has ended in failure and our own lives have become unmanageable, we realize we cannot deal with our problem objectively, perhaps not even sanely. In Al-Anon we find a Power greater than ourselves which can direct our lives into quiet, useful channels. At first this Power may seem to be the group, but as we grow in knowledge and spiritual understanding, many of us call it God, as we understand Him.

3. **We need to change both our attitude and our actions.** As we become willing to admit our defects, we begin to see how much of our thinking is distorted. We realize how unwise some of our actions have been, how unloving many of our attitudes. We try to recognize and correct these faults.
4. **We keep Al-Anon's gifts by sharing them with others.** This sharing makes Al-Anon the vital, forward-reaching fellowship it is. Our great obligation is to those still in need. Leading another person from despair to hope and love brings comfort to both the giver and receiver.

### **C. Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon\***

#### *This passage has helped many groups to resolve group problems*

All Al-Anon discussions should be constructive, helpful, loving, and understanding. In striving toward these ideals, we avoid topics that can lead to dissension and distract us from our goals.

1. **Discussions of religion:** Al-Anon is not allied with any sect or denomination. It is a spiritual program, based on no particular form of religion. Everyone is welcome, no matter what affiliation or none. Let us not defeat our purpose by entering into discussions concerning specific religious beliefs.
2. **Gossip:** We meet to help ourselves and others learn and use the Al-Anon philosophy. In such groups, gossip can have no part. We do not discuss members or others, and particularly not the alcoholic. Our dedication to anonymity gives people confidence in Al-Anon. Careless repeating of matters heard at meetings can defeat the very purposes for which we are joined together.
3. **Dominance:** Our leaders are trusted servants; they do not govern. No member of Al-Anon should direct, assume authority, or give advice. Our program is based on suggestion, interchange of experience, and rotation of leadership. We progress in our own way and pace. Any attempt to manage or direct is likely to have disastrous consequences for group harmony.

*(\*This text is from the pamphlet, Alcoholism, the Family Disease (P-4), © Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia, 2005)*

### **D. Pamphlet P-48 Understanding ourselves and alcoholism**

- E. **The group may choose to read a page from the daily readers or other selections from Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) as decided by the group conscience, with the source of the reading noted.**

# Group Service positions, Duties of Group Office bearers and Rotation of service positions

## *Tradition Two*

*For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.*

## **Duties of Group Office bearers**

Group officers rotate regularly. Rotation gives all members the privilege of serving. Officers/leaders are trusted servants; they do not govern the group. Groups may attain more participation by electing alternates to the group service positions. Depending on group size and format, the group may choose not to fill all positions listed. Groups may also choose to create additional positions to serve the group's needs.

## **Initial Group Service Positions**

The leadership of a group should be kept simple.

A **small group** needs a CMA (Current Mailing Address), Group Representative (GR), Chairperson, and a Secretary; the latter often acts as Treasurer until the group is large enough to elect one. One or two members agree to be listed as group contacts to take Twelfth Step calls from newcomers.

**As membership in the group grows**, additional service opportunities can be added such as Treasurer, Literature Chairperson, someone in charge of hospitality, greeters, and other positions as suggested by the group conscience.

**Large groups** may choose to have a Program Chairperson, Business or Steering Committee, and Information Service Representative (ISR) in addition to other positions as suggested by the group conscience. When possible, alternates are elected for all positions.

Group Office-bearers, such as, The Secretary, Treasurer, CMA (current mailing address), Phone Contact, Greeter, Hospitality, and Tech-Coordinator, may be elected for a term of three to six months, or as decided by the Group Autonomy. It is further suggested that the Chairperson of a newly-formed/small group may be elected on a day-to-day basis, or for a term of three months or more, as decided by the Group Autonomy.

**Chairperson:**

- Opens the meeting by reading the Preamble or the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome and leads the group in reciting the Serenity Prayer; follows the group's meeting format.
- Invites members to take part.
- Introduces topics chairperson for the meeting.

**Secretary:**

- Handles group correspondence.
- Notifies the Area Group Records Coordinator or the GSO of any changes to the group, GR, and/or CMA mailing address, as well as phone numbers of group contacts.
- May pick up the mail from the PO Box (if applicable), receive group emails, or serve as the CMA (Current Mailing Address).
- Makes necessary Al-Anon-related announcements at meetings.
- Orders Conference Approved Literature in sufficient quantities to supply the group's needs (if the group does not have a Literature Chairperson).
- Encourages support of Alateen by providing information regarding Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) certification until the group elects a Group Representative.

**Treasurer:**

- Maintains the group's financial records in a manner that reflects the group conscience. Many groups have an actual budget that includes periodic contributions to the District, local Al-Anon Information Service, Area Assembly, and the General Service Office. (See "Group Finances/Budget.")
- Requests voluntary contributions from members during each Al-Anon/Alateen meeting in accordance with Tradition Seven.
- Groups, in their autonomy, determine how to collect and record member contributions.

- Submits/reports a financial statement to the group at regular intervals.
- Reads the Appeal letter to Members to the group at two consecutive meetings and shares with members how to contribute.

**Program/ Topic Chairperson:**

- Chairs the topic meeting for the day. Plans meetings in advance.

**Current Mailing Address (CMA):**

- Receives postal and electronic group mail.
- Shares the mail with the group.

**Phone Contact:**

- Receives calls from newcomers seeking Al-Anon's help or others seeking directions or additional information about the meeting.

**Group Representative (GR):**

- Acts as liaison between the Group and the District, and between the Group and the Area Assembly.
- Becomes familiar with the current edition of the *Al-Anon/ Alateen Service Manual/handbook* and encourages its use among group members.
- Works through the District in helping to initiate public outreach projects.
- Encourages Alateen sponsorship in accordance with Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.
- Encouraging members to write articles on Al-Anon India website.
- Encourages the group to create a group email address to communicate with GSO.
- Group Representative is elected for a three-year term.

- Encourages election of an Alternate GR, who serves as the Alternate ISR/IGR.
- Informs the members about the usefulness of the Al-Anon/Alateen member magazine, the Forum, printed by WSO. The Forum can be subscribed online from the WSO website.

**Information Service Representative (ISR/IGR):**

- Attends meetings of the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup).
- Acts as liaison between the group and the AIS.
- Reports AIS activities to the group.
- The ISR/IGR serves as the Alternate GR.
- An ISR/IGR is elected for a three-year term.
- Al-Anon and Alateen members who are also members of AA may not serve as GR or Alternate GR.

**Greeter:**

- Makes sure that all attendees are welcomed, particularly those new to the group.
- Gives literature and meeting schedules to all newcomers in accordance with the group conscience. Many groups also provide or gifts newcomer's pamphlets which includes P-14, P- 19, P-48, P-53, P-67, S-4, M-12

**Hospitality:**

- Sets up refreshments if the group provides them.
- Makes sure meeting area is cleaned up after the meeting.

**Tech Coordinator:**

- Opens and closes the electronic meeting room, clearing meeting chats to ensure confidentiality.
- Supports newcomers and members overcome technical challenges during the meeting

# Electronic Al-Anon Meeting Guidelines

## Conducting Electronic Meetings

*These guidelines are being circulated in order to ensure that the Steps, Traditions and Concepts of the Al-Anon Program are adhered to by all and to ensure that the Al-Anon message is passed on in its undiluted form.*

- Every meeting needs to have a clear format/ structure, and this should be announced at the beginning of the meeting. A Chairperson or Secretary (even if a temporary one) needs to be present to conduct the meeting, to welcome members and address any special requirements (e.g. newcomers). He/she needs to ensure that Traditions are followed, particularly related to anonymity.
- The Group Treasurer can make the 7th Tradition announcement. The mode of online payment should be announced at an appropriate time during the meeting. A group conscience can be taken to send the excess amount to GSO. (after keeping a prudent reserve)
- The host/administrator is a member whose Id is used for conducting the meeting. This member keeps track of who enters the meeting and allows only those who identify themselves as Al-Anon members. It is advisable to have another member as a co-host to assist the host.
- For safety purposes it is important that the members disclose their identity. Since electronic platforms may be misused and data can be stolen, this is necessary. If someone refuses to disclose identity, the Host may remove the member. The meeting room can also be locked after a time limit or when a set number of members have arrived. This is as per group autonomy but ensures more protection. The Host may declare that members use headphones to protect the anonymity of members from other people in the house.
- When a newcomer joins the meeting, a designated member /temporary sponsor may telephonically meet him/her outside the meeting and give information required for a newcomer.

This may be done over 6 meetings. If there are special meetings for newcomers, he/she can be directed to those.

- Having a video on is a matter of personal choice. For smooth running it is recommended that members keep themselves muted when not sharing. It is helpful for the group to specify a sharing time and appoint someone as spiritual time keeper to keep track. This is

to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate.

- Business meetings of groups, AIS, District and Area committee meetings can also be conducted similarly.

(Reference: <https://al-anonlateenindia.org/guidelines-for-electronic-meetings>)

## Membership and Group

### Membership Eligibility

Anyone who feels his personal life is, or has been, deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon/Alateen.

As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. Alateens are members of the Al-Anon fellowship. Where there is no Alateen meeting available, young people are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings.

### Who Can Start a Group

The actual founding of the group and its functions is the responsibility of those qualified for membership. Occasionally Doctor, social worker, or AA member initiates the formation of an Al-Anon group. However, after the group has started, professional or AA participation should be limited to *Open meeting only (Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meetings)*. [refer the Alateen service manual for Who Can Start an Alateen Group group]

### Registration of Groups

The GSO will register any group designating itself as an Al-Anon Family Group with the understanding that it will abide by the Traditions and that meetings will be open to any Al-Anon member. (See the “Alateen” Policy for information on registering an Alateen group.)

The GSO cannot register any group that is solely for Al-Anon members who are also recovering alcoholics and members of AA, because it does not qualify to have a Group Representative (GR).

There are Al-Anon or Alateen groups where meeting access is limited due to the facility's entry restrictions. These groups meet at sites such as military bases, industrial plants, or schools.

### **Assembly Representation**

Each Al-Anon group elects a Group Representative (GR). Assembly Areas should encourage the attendance of GRs at District and Assembly meetings.

### **Multiple Group Membership and Office-Holding**

Al-Anon members who attend several groups *regularly* and *participate fully* in all of them, may consider themselves members of all those groups. Members, however consider one group as their home group. Members attending multiple meetings may have voice in these groups but no vote. Members vote only in their home group. No member may, however, be group representative (GR) of more than one group at the same time.

### **Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous**

Al-Anon Family Groups and Alcoholics Anonymous (A A) share a common spiritual legacy in A A's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Tradition Five defines Al-Anon's single purpose. Tradition Six encourages cooperation with A A, maintaining that Al-Anon is a separate entity that ought never affiliate or create the appearance of affiliation with any outside enterprise. Putting these principles into practice maintains a separation between the service structures of Al-Anon and AA that helps avoid any conflict of interest and safeguards Al-Anon's singleness of purpose. Accordingly, Al-Anon's policy is that members who are also members of AA can only serve as the office bearers within the group. And they do not serve as Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Area Delegate, General Service Conference member, alternate to any of these service positions, or on any committee of the General Service Office.

Al-Anon members who are also members of AA participate fully in all group activities, including group conscience decisions and doing Step Twelve which is carrying our message to others who are coping with alcoholism and unaware about our program. However, they do not hold Al-Anon service positions that vote in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole. They may also be invited by local/Area service arms, the Board of

Trustees, or the General Service Office to participate in projects, in keeping with the spirit of this policy.

## **Group Records**

Keeping group information up-to-date is vital to assuring that the most accurate meeting information is provided to persons seeking help in the Al-Anon and Alateen fellowship. Accurate records also keep communication flowing between the group and the GSO, and the group and local service arms. It is essential that groups promptly report changes in their meeting location, meeting day, time, Current Mailing Address (CMA), Group Representative (GR), or phone contacts to their Area office bearers and Area Delegate, by following the Area's established procedure of communication to submit group changes. In certain cases, groups may send the group information to the GSO directly. However, if the area is active, the group may send the information through the area to GSO.

## **Group Finances/Budget**

### ***Tradition Seven***

***Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.***

In keeping with Tradition Seven, a group's membership is the source of its funds. Assistance from sources outside of Al-Anon or Alateen violates this Tradition. There are no dues or fees to attend Al-Anon or Alateen meetings. Supporting Al-Anon and Alateen groups financially is a way for members to express their gratitude for the help they have received from the program, thus ensuring that Al-Anon and Alateen will be available when someone seeks recovery from living with the effects of alcoholism.

Group funds are used to support Al-Anon's purpose of carrying its message of help and hope to those who still suffer. Group contributions support all levels of Al-Anon service including the District, the local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup), the Area, and the General Service Office (GSO), World Service Office (WSO).

Groups are within their autonomy to create a financial budget to plan for the purchase of literature, refreshments, the group's trusted servants' expenses to attend business meetings, contributions to the service arms. Some groups take additional collections, for the expenses of

the volunteers, who participate in the special local projects/ public-information projects within the District or Area. If necessary, groups can add to the voluntary contributions by having fundraising events. (Refer updated Policies of Budget and Finance Committee, Al-Anon India)

### ***Warranty One***

***That only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle.***

The spiritual principle of prudence suggests that groups avoid accumulating money beyond current needs and a small but ample reserve, with just enough funds to pay the Group Representative (GR) expenses to Assembly and group expenses for a couple of months. This can be decided by making an informed group conscience decision. (See the *Reserve Fund* guideline [G-41].)

### **Group expenses may include:**

- Rent or platform fees for a meeting location.
- Group Representative's expenses to attend and participate at District and Area Assembly meetings.
- Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup) Representative's (ISR) expenses to attend and participate at AIS meetings.
- Conference Approved Literature, including Al-Anon and Alateen books and pamphlets, for contributing to members.
- Most groups meeting physically offer lower-priced pamphlets and leaflets to newcomers and members at no charge.
- Groups meeting electronically may gift electronic literature to newcomers. Information about electronic literature can be found under the Members menu on [al-anonlateenindia.org/literature](http://al-anonlateenindia.org/literature) or on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org).
- Miscellaneous expenses agreed to by the group conscience such as public outreach activities, refreshments, etc.
- The group supports Al-Anon/Alateen financially at all levels of service by contributing to:

Their District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup), Area, General Service Office and World Service Office which serves all groups.

## **Considerations regarding Group Finances**

In keeping with Traditions Six and Seven, the group does not provide financial aid to members in need or to any outside enterprise.

If a group is not able to support the service levels due to excessive meeting expenses, it may wish to reconsider its choice of meeting locations.

A group is discouraged from giving all of its funds to an outside entity, such as a meeting place.

Al-Anon groups are not responsible to support a meeting place, other than paying rent.

Likewise, Al-Anon groups meeting electronically pay for use of the platform that hosts them but are not otherwise responsible to support the platform.

A group may need to periodically review its budget as changes to meeting expenses occur, such as rent or platform fee increases, a change in attendance or an increase in member donations, funding a group public outreach activity, etc.

The Appeal for Members is sent to the groups from the GSO. It is requested the letter be read at two successive meetings. The appeal from the GSO provides individual members the opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work nationwide by sending their contribution in gratitude for what Al-Anon/Alateen has given them. Areas, Al-Anon Information Services and Districts may also send an appeal letter to the groups. Individual members may contribute directly to the GSO.

## **Group Bank Accounts**

Al-Anon groups are not required to have a bank account; however, based on their group conscience decision, some groups choose to have them. In order to make an informed group conscience decision, it is recommended that members be provided with all the information pertaining to the bank account, including fees and disclosure requirements.

It is important to note that individual Al-Anon and Alateen groups are part of Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship, and have no legal status.

They are not considered to be tax-exempt organizations as they are not branches or chapters of the Al-Anon India Trust.

The GSO cannot share its not-for-profit number with local groups because the GSO has no

authority over local group funds. Al-Anon and Alateen groups are autonomous in their financial matters.

The trusted servant applying for the bank account may be required to submit their personal information (full name, address, and identification documents). A member needs to be sure that he or she is comfortable with disclosing this information on behalf of an Al-Anon group. It is suggested that group bank accounts have at least two signatures on every check and that two to four members are authorized to access the account.

It is not recommended that group funds be deposited into a member's personal account (or a new personal account using a member's identification documents), as such accounts legally belong to the member, not the group, and accurate record-keeping could be difficult. If the member becomes incapacitated or ill, the group might not be able to access the account. In the event of the member's death, the account becomes part of the member's personal asset and the group could lose its funds.

## **When a Group Disbands**

If a group no longer meets, the procedure to disband the group is that a member of the group contacts their District Representative (DR), Area Office bearers, Area Delegate and/or the GSO to become informed of the steps to remove meeting information from local meeting lists, Area and GSO websites. The DR can also suggest ways of disbursing remaining group funds, literature and group belongings in keeping with our Traditions.

## **Group Business**

### **Group Business Meetings and Group Conscience**

#### ***Tradition Two***

***For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.***

Group business meetings are held to share information and to include all group members in the activities and concerns of the group. Decisions a group makes are determined by an informed

group conscience.

## **Group Business Meetings**

### ***Warranty Three***

***that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;***

The group business meeting is an opportunity for members to share their ideas to increase group membership, express concerns, plan special meetings or projects, and discuss other group business—such as changing the group name, Current Mailing Address (postal and/or Email addresses), group Phone Contacts, the meeting time and place, finances, meeting format, meeting designation, District and Area matters, and other topics suggested by members of the group.

Business meetings are also an opportunity to identify and discuss solutions to group problems such as: gossip; dominance; the need for additional group service positions; rotation of leadership; inappropriate behavior of a member, and any other matter that affects group unity. The guiding principles for business meetings are the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service.

Groups are within their autonomy to determine how to conduct their group business and how to reach an informed group conscience.

The manner in which a group business meeting is conducted, and how to keep track of the group conscience decisions, is as varied as the groups themselves.

### **Scheduling the Meeting**

Some groups schedule business meetings on a regular basis (monthly or bi-monthly) and as needed. Business meetings can be held before, after, or during the group meeting.

### **Planning the Meeting**

It is beneficial to the group when members are aware of how to bring up their concerns or ideas to discuss at a business meeting. Announcing the date and time of the business meeting and the

agenda topics, and distributing pertinent information two or three weeks prior to the discussion and voting, gives members of the group the opportunity to be informed, helps the group make better decisions, and promotes group unity.

### **Conducting the Meeting**

The group conscience decides who chairs the business meeting. The format for a group business meeting includes but is not limited to:

- an agenda
- length of time for discussion of each topic
- what percentage of the vote will reflect unanimity and/or a majority.
- how the group conscience decisions will be recorded, etc.

### **Discussion of the topic(s)**

Having a thorough discussion of the topic(s) in a principle-based manner, allowing all who choose to participate in the discussion to be heard, and applying the Traditions and Concepts to each topic, helps groups reach informed group conscience decisions.

If unanimity is not reached in the allotted timeframe of the meeting, discussions may continue at another time.

Many groups use the guideline *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b), the *Al-Anon/Alateen India Service Manual*, and the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts Kit* (K-70) as resources when conducting a business meeting.

### **Voting at the meeting**

It is suggested that only home group members who regularly attend the meeting vote at the group business meeting. Members who regularly attend more than one group meeting have voice in all the groups they attend but they can vote only in their home group. Keeping in mind that our principles are spiritual and voting on a matter related to district, AIS or area matters more than once could be viewed as trying to control or dominate the outcome.

## **Business or Steering Committee**

Some larger meetings have a business or steering committee that meets separately to prepare an agenda for the business meeting.

## **Group Conscience**

The group conscience is the result of the group's business meeting discussions. The group conscience is the will of the group. The guiding principles for the group conscience are always the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service. It may be helpful for the group to review these principles prior to any group discussions. Some simple group decisions may be decided quickly; however, others may take time. It is by taking the time necessary to hear from all members who want to participate that a group conscience evolves.

In order to make an informed group conscience decision, members need access to all the information about the issue they are being asked to discuss, they need clarity on what their discussions hope to accomplish, and they are asked to trust each other's motives and capabilities. By sharing information as equals, taking time for discussion, and maintaining principles above personalities during the discussions, groups are often able to reach unanimity in their decisions. If unanimity is not reached in the allotted timeframe of the meeting, discussions may continue at another time. Once a group conscience decision is made, the entire group supports the decision.

Concept Five tells us that members have the right of appeal. If a member disagrees with the outcome of a group conscience decision, they have the right to submit an appeal for reconsideration back to the body that made the decision. After an appeal is heard, regardless of whether the decision is maintained or altered, the individual accepts the group conscience.

## **Group Inventory**

Taking an inventory of the group helps to keep it healthy and invigorated. Groups are encouraged to make a periodic review using the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service as the guiding principles for the inventory. Members can use the inventory to discuss new service opportunities and address minor or major concerns before the group's unity is disrupted. The guideline *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b) is a useful service tool that can aid in this process. (All Al-Anon guidelines are available under the Members menu at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org). or [al-anonlateenindia.org](http://al-anonlateenindia.org))

## Group Problems and Solutions

Al-Anon and Alateen members expect a safe\* and pleasant environment when they attend a meeting, and when one member causes unrest due to inappropriate or intimidating behavior, the entire group could be affected. Groups are within their autonomy to establish group behavioral guidelines in a manner that reflects their group conscience and abides by the Traditions, as long as they do not impact another group, Al-Anon, or AA as a whole.

Some members may discuss specific religious tenets, forgetting that membership is open to all. One or two members may dominate the group, ignoring the principles of rotation in leadership. Some members may talk about what they hear in meetings, violating our principles of anonymity and confidentiality. The spiritual principle of anonymity suggests that each member should be able to feel confident that nothing said in the meeting will be repeated, by a Sponsor or other members\*\*—that every Al-Anon/Alateen member feels bound to keep in strict confidence any personal matter heard at a meeting or from an individual.

When the behavior of any member impacts the group, members apply the Traditions to the problem, and determine how best to approach the individual(s) involved, to ask the member to change the behavior in question. This can be an exercise in applying Al-Anon principles so that the message is not a personal attack, but rather a request based on what is best for the Al-Anon group. The *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts Kit* (K-70) is a service tool designed to aid members and groups to resolve conflict in a principle-based manner. The “Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon” are: discussion of religion, gossip, and dominance. Study of this passage from the pamphlet *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4) has helped many groups deal with these group problems.

The books *Al-Anon’s Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8), *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), and *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24), give detailed suggestions on the application of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service to solve group problems.

*\* See the document “Let’s Talk about Safety in Al-Anon Meetings!” on al-anon.org or al-anonalateenindia.org for more information. \*\* It is important to remember that Al-Anon/Alateen meetings are not above the law. Members need to exercise care in sharing information that could require outside reporting to local, state, provincial, and national authorities.*

Lack of money may handicap the group, or its excess cause disagreements. See the pamphlet *Seventh Tradition* (S-21) and the *Reserve Fund* guideline (G-41) for suggestions about handling group funds. Both are posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org. or al-anonlateenindia.org Participation of members in group activities is important. This creates real involvement with the group and solidifies the relationship of the individual member to the group. Since each group has only a limited number of officers, it is best to have a policy of rotation, rather than have one member hold office for long periods of time. Other assignments may involve public outreach, greeting newcomers, setting up, and cleaning up. Reimbursement for refreshments from group funds is made by the Treasurer. The more service opportunities available, the more members will participate and feel themselves to be an integral and important part of the group. Concept Four reminds us that “Participation is the key to harmony.”

Any group or service arm within a Conference Area that fails to resolve its disputes or misunderstandings by application of the Traditions and Concepts of Service, should seek guidance from its District or Area Assembly. If further guidance is needed, the matter can then be referred to the General Service Office (GSO). The WSO or GSO can only offer suggestions by relating the shared experiences of other groups or by providing the appropriate references in existing service material.

## **Al-Anon Meeting Ideas**

There is no rigid formula for an Al-Anon meeting. The general pattern is to have the Chairperson or leader open and close the meeting, announce the meeting topics, or introduce guest speakers or members who share their experience, strength, and hope as a result of working the Al-Anon program. Experience suggests that more can be accomplished when members share on a single topic during the meeting and as many members as possible have the opportunity to share.

### **Beginners’ Meetings**

Beginners’ meetings are an important part of our Al-Anon Family Groups. The purpose of a beginners’ meeting is to introduce newcomers to the Al-Anon program in a welcoming and comforting manner, where they have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss their feelings with long-time members. Experienced members share about the disease of alcoholism and inform the newcomers about various pieces of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature

(CAL). Newcomers are encouraged to attend regular Al-Anon meetings as well. Some Al-Anon groups host a special beginners' meeting in conjunction with the group meeting. The usual length of time for a special beginners' meeting is 30 minutes to one hour. These special beginners' meetings are registered as a part of the hosting Al-Anon group, which has a Group Representative (GR). The formats for these meetings range from one to six weeks; this is up to the autonomy of the hosting group.

Some Al-Anon groups register as beginners' meetings as a way to attract newer members. These groups may include "Beginner" as part of their group name. The group's format focuses on beginner topics, such as the first three Steps, in order to introduce newcomers to the Al-Anon program. These groups register as Al-Anon groups and have a Group Representative. [Also refer G2]

### **Introductory meetings**

These meetings can be held at institutions, such as hospitals, treatment centers or any other location where families and friends of alcoholics gather. Such a meeting is not considered as Al-Anon group and does not have its own group representative. Experienced Al-Anon members of group or district share the responsibilities for conducting introductory meetings and for inviting attendees to a regular Al-Anon / Alateen meeting. Al-Anon groups directly, or through their districts are encouraged to help with the cost of literature and other expenses for these meetings. Members must comply with the security requirements of the meeting location.

### **Families and Friends Only Meetings (Closed meeting)**

Families and Friends Only meetings are for all Al-Anon members and anyone whose personal life is, or has been, deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker.

### **Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome Meetings**

Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meetings may be attended by anyone interested in Al-Anon. A group conscience may be taken to assign a specific day for this meeting.

### **Discussion Meeting**

The Chairperson or leader presents an Al-Anon or Alateen topic to help members focus their thoughts and discuss the subject as it applies to them.

Topics may include:

- **Twelve Steps:** It is suggested that one of the Steps be covered in at least one meeting per

month. The Chairperson or leader usually reads the Step and may read a passage from the books *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8), *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), or *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24), and the accompanying *Paths to Recovery Workbook* (P-93), the workbook *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies* (P-92), or from an issue of *The Forum*. The Steps also appear in many other Al-Anon publications. Members may then comment on the Step and how it applies to their situation.

- **Twelve Traditions:** The group studies one or more of the Traditions and their value in maintaining group harmony and growth, keeping in mind the goal of Al-Anon unity worldwide. The procedure for a Tradition meeting and the sources of material, for the most part, are the same as those for a Step meeting.
- **Twelve Concepts of Service & Warranties :** A better understanding of Al-Anon General services and the application of these principles to our personal lives can be obtained by study of the Twelve Concepts of Service, found in the *Service Manual*, the books *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24), and the accompanying *Paths to Recovery Workbook* (P-93), the workbook *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies* (P-92), and the pamphlet *The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best Kept Secret?* (P-57).
- **Al-Anon Slogans:** One or more of the slogans may serve as the basis for a discussion regarding their value in daily living. They appear in the book *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), and throughout our books and literature as they also help us deal with our day-to-day personal situations.
- **Panel Discussions:** Members present are invited to submit questions, anonymously, if so desired, to a panel of two or three members chosen by the Chairperson or leader to share their experiences applying the Al-Anon program. This may also be followed by informal discussion by the entire group; the Chairperson, by limiting each person to one or two minutes, can make sure that no one monopolizes the discussion.
- **Literature Meetings:** An unlimited supply of topics can be found in Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. The chairperson or leader presents a topic to help members share the principles of the program and discuss the subject as it applies to them. Many groups allot one meeting a month to discuss a particularly interesting subject from CAL. Members may also discuss the optional readings in the “suggested meeting outline”.

## Speaker Meetings

- **Personal Stories Meetings:** Two or three Al-Anon or Alateen members may be asked to share how the Al-Anon program helps them in their daily living.
- **Exchange Meeting:** An individual or a team of speakers from another group, including Alateen, may be willing to exchange speakers between groups.

## Ideas for Occasional Meetings

- **Writing Meetings:** Some groups hold occasional writing meetings. These can be a rich source of material for Conference Approved Literature. Writing meetings are similar to discussion meetings in which the Chairperson or leader presents an Al-Anon or Alateen topic and helps members to focus their thoughts on the subject as it applies to them. Then, members take ten to 15 minutes to capture their thoughts in writing. In the remaining meeting time, members who feel comfortable doing so may share aloud with the group what they wrote on the topic.
- **Group Inventory Meeting:** A group inventory may be held during the regular meeting time or at a time convenient to most members. An inventory may be based on the guideline *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b), posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org and al-anonlateenindia.org (See also “Group Business.”)
- **Open Meeting:** The function and usefulness of Al-Anon can be explained to a wider audience if an open meeting is planned at which members, friends, AA member, students, and professionals are welcome. A meeting held to celebrate a special occasion is usually open.
- **Special Event:** Occasions such as Al-Anon group anniversaries may serve as an invitation to the Al-Anon program by featuring Al-Anon speakers whose personal stories of recovery through the Al-Anon program can give strength and hope to those who hear them.
- **Outside Speakers Meeting:** An occasional talk by an AA member or a meeting comprised of a husband, wife, and child team or Al-Anon and AA member often presents insights into the disease of alcoholism. Members of the clergy, doctors, social workers or other professionals in the field of alcoholism are another option. Care should be taken to select speakers familiar with the Al-Anon program in order to avoid diverting the focus from our own recovery to that of the alcoholic or from the Al-Anon program to that of treatment philosophy.

## Audio Recordings

Occasionally, Al-Anon meetings are audio recorded by members, but as a matter of courtesy, the person recording it should receive permission from the speaker. Al-Anon meetings may be recorded with the following suggestions:

- Every member is aware and approves of the recording
- Anonymity is carefully preserved

# Sponsorship

“**Sponsorship** is a mutual and confidential sharing between two Al-Anon or Alateen members. A Sponsor is someone with whom a member can discuss personal problems or questions; someone who willingly shares the experience, strength, and hope of the Al-Anon/Alateen program” (from *Sponsorship, What It’s All About* [P-31]).

- **Al-Anon Personal Sponsors**

After a period of time, Al-Anon members will want to choose a personal Sponsor with whom they can identify. Members can encourage newcomers to find a Sponsor by sharing that Sponsors provide guidance; however, Sponsors do not direct or give advice. The new member may have discussed problems with a contact before coming to meetings. This contact may or may not be asked to continue as a Sponsor; however, neither a contact nor a newly-chosen Sponsor should be used as a substitute for a meeting. Additional information is published in the pamphlet *Sponsorship, What It’s All About* (P-31), and in the bookmark *Sponsorship—Working Together to Recover* (M-78).

- **Service Sponsors**

Service sponsorship is a special relationship where one member shares his/her service experience with another member. This type of sponsorship can be a one-time situation, such as an outgoing trusted servant supporting his/her replacement, or an ongoing relationship. Service sponsorship helps both the Service Sponsor and the person who is sponsored acquire new skills while being an example of personal growth through service. Al-Anon Family Groups benefits when members are enthusiastic about service. For more information about service sponsorship, read the pamphlet *Service Sponsorship: Working Smarter, Not Harder* (P-88).

# Alateen

Alateen provides a safe place for young people affected by someone else's drinking to share their own experience, strength, and hope with each other, and to learn how to apply the principles of the Al-Anon/Alateen program to their lives. Al-Anon members who wish to serve Alateen in any capacity are required to participate in a certification process established in their Area. Once certified, the member becomes an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). Alateen Group Sponsors are certified AMIAS who give their time to ensure that the spiritual principles of the Al-Anon program are shared with the Alateen group. For further information use the resource available at <https://images.recoveryhq.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/20130259/Alateen-Service-Manual.pdf>

The Al-Anon fellowship should take all necessary steps to provide a safe environment for Alateens and the Al-Anons involved with Alateen service;

1. If an Area within the General Service Conference Structure uses the Al-Anon or Alateen name in conjunction with any meeting(s), group(s), convention(s), or any other gathering(s) in the Area where Alateen participation is offered, the Area must have Safety and Behavioural Requirements for all Alateen members and Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service. These safety and behavioural requirements must meet the minimum requirements of Al-Anon GSO India.
2. Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service and all Alateen members must adhere to the Area's Safety and Behavioural Requirements, or the Area will notify the GSO that those members are prohibited from participating in Alateen service.
3. Each Area must have a process to certify, and must so certify to the GSO annually, that each Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service has met the Area's safety and behavioural requirements and has agreed to abide by them.
4. The General Service Office will register only those Alateen groups whose registration it receives through the Area's registration process. The GSO will remove from its registration list any Alateen group that the Area determines does not comply with Area Safety and Behavioural Requirements. The Area's request for removal of an Alateen group must be stated in writing to the GSO. This applies to all Alateen groups, whether currently registered or not.
5. If the Area states in writing to the GSO that a group, meeting, convention, or gathering is failing to meet the Area's Safety and Behavioural Requirements, prior registration or interaction with the General Service Office shall not constitute any continuing right to use the Al-Anon or Alateen name.

# Resources for Members and Groups

## Literature and Service Materials

Al-Anon literature and service materials help members to continue their recovery between meetings and gain insight into themselves and the principles of the Al-Anon program. Conference Approved Literature (CAL) is written by and for our members and goes through a thorough review process by numerous Al-Anon members to assure that it conveys the program in a consistent and comprehensive manner. Samples from CAL are posted on India website [al-anonlateenindia.org](http://al-anonlateenindia.org).

Al-Anon service tools help members to conduct the business of Al-Anon in a healthy, productive way. Many service tools, including all of the Al-Anon Guidelines, the *Service Handbook*, and outreach materials are available under the Members menu at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) / [al-anonlateenindia.org](http://al-anonlateenindia.org) download and print as needed. Other outreach materials are available at very low cost.

Only Al-Anon materials including CAL are used in Al-Anon meetings. This ensures that our program message stays consistent with our principles.

Only groups which are registered with GSO are eligible to get the Conference Approved Literature.

## Guidelines that may be helpful to Groups

*Members Interested in Speaking (G-1) Beginners' Meeting (G-2)*

*Cooperation Between Al-Anon and A A (G-3) Taking a Group Inventory (G-8a & G-8b)*

*Public Outreach Service (G-10)*

*Group Representatives (G-11)*

*Starting an Al-Anon Group (G-12) Suggested Programs for Meetings (G-13) Starting an Alateen Group (G-19)*

*The Open Al-Anon Meeting (G-27)*

*Public Outreach to Professionals (G-29)*

*Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34)*

*Reserve Fund guideline (G-41) contains information about group budgets, etc.*

*Ordering Literature (G-31)*

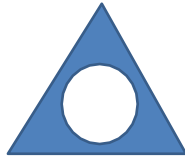
*Electronic meeting guidelines (G-39)*

*Seventh Tradition (S-21)*

*Fact sheets for electronic meeting (S-60)*

*Literature Translation and printing permission forms*

Notes and Updates



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