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Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies

The “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” reflects policy statements that grew out of questions and experiences from the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide. They are interpretations of our basic guides, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service.

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Introduction

These policy statements grew out of questions and experiences from the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide. They are interpretations of our basic guides, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service.

The questions and shared experiences came from many sources—Al-Anon and Alateen members, regional and national conferences, Delegates to the World Service Conference—and from all over the United States, Canada, and many other countries.

When an individual or a group seeks clarification of any matter relating to the Al-Anon fellowship, it is the responsibility of the World Service Office (WSO) Policy Committee to make statements that interpret and encourage use of the Traditions and Concepts. After approval by the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference, these statements are set forth in the Policy Digest. To arrive at answers that are consistent, loving, and helpful takes time and patience, both on the part of the individual or unit seeking the clarification and on the part of the WSO Policy Committee.

As our fellowship grows and many more ideas and questions are raised, let us strive to live with and by what we have here, secure in the knowledge that changes and additions will be made as circumstances and our growth require.

Channel for Arriving at Policies

The WSO Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all members of the Board of Trustees, at-large members of the Executive Committee, the Chairpersons of all WSO Committees, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff.

The WSO Policy Committee is often asked to help when there is confusion about how a specific Tradition applies to a new or controversial situation in Al-Anon or Alateen. The Committee meets regularly during the year to review and discuss each problem or issue in light of the Traditions and determines an appropriate policy recommendation. The proposed policies are then brought to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

The Chairperson of the Policy Committee reports the interim policies passed by the Board of Trustees to the World Service Con-

ference (WSC) each year for its review. If the wording or intent of these policies is to be changed, it is done at the Conference. Action on each policy requires a majority of no less than a two-thirds vote for approval or disapproval by the entire Conference. The same procedure is required for major revisions and amendments to existing policies.

Policies approved by the World Service Conference are reported in many WSO publications, including *The Forum* and the *World Service Conference Summary*. Appropriate adjustments are made in updating this *Service Manual* and other Conference Approved Literature.

The World Service Conference (WSC)

See also "World Service Handbook"

The WSC is the permanent body for the expression of the conscience of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship in the light of our Traditions. It usually meets annually during April. Its membership is composed of the elected World Service Delegates from each Assembly Area in the United States and Canada, the Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Chairpersons and WSO staff of all selected committees, and the members of the Executive Committee. Representatives from countries other than the United States and Canada may participate but not vote.

To keep the conscience of the fellowship alive, Delegates serve on the WSO's selected committees or subcommittees. For the sake of continuity and unity, each selected committee has its Chairperson plus "in-town" members who meet regularly throughout the year at the World Service Office.

The World Service Office

See also "World Service Handbook"

The WSO is composed of executives, staff members, and selected committees supervised by the legally empowered Board of Trustees and its Executive Committee. It functions as a clearinghouse, providing service to the fellowship and spreading Al-Anon's message worldwide.

Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions

Membership and Groups

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. (See “Families with Related Problems.”)

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. (See “Alateen Policy” section.)

Who Can Start a Group

The actual founding of the group and its functions is the responsibility of those qualified for membership. Occasionally a minister, doctor, social worker, or A.A. member initiates the formation of an Al-Anon/Alateen group. However, after the group has started, professional or A.A. participation should be limited to open meetings.

Registration of Groups

The WSO 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 “Alateen Policy” section for information on registering an Alateen group.)

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

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.

Choosing a Group’s Name

Having an appropriate group name is very important because it is included in local and on-line 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 WSO will review proposed group names for adherence to Al-Anon principles. (See “Group Names” in “Groups at Work.”)

Assembly Representation

Each Al-Anon/Alateen group elects a Group Representative (GR). (See “World Service Handbook.”) Assembly Areas should encourage the attendance of Alateen 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. Most members, however, consider one group their home group.

Membership entitles a person to vote and hold office. Whether members may hold office in more than one group is a matter of group autonomy, although it does deprive other members of the privilege of serving and growing. No member may, however, be Group Representative (GR) of more than one group at the same time.

Dual Membership in Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A.

Al-Anon/Alateen members who are also members of A.A. are eligible to hold office within their Al-Anon or Alateen groups. Active members of Al-Anon who are also A.A.s may serve as the Sponsor of Alateen groups by virtue of their Al-Anon membership. These are vital group services, and at all times emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program.

Because of the unique nature of both programs, Al-Anon/Alateen members who are also A.A. members do not hold office beyond the group level, as these positions could lead to membership in the World Service Conference (WSC). The need to focus on the Al-Anon program and the possibility of a conflict of interest at Assembly and world service levels led the WSC to its decision not to seat Al-Anon/Alateen members who are also members of A.A..

For these reasons A.A. members do not serve as Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives (DRs), Area Coordinators, Newsletter Editors, Delegates and/or any of their alternates, nor do they sit on the WSO selected committees, whose Chairpersons can be Conference members.

Group Problems

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 WSO or the respective national 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.

Meetings

Locating Meetings

Al-Anon and Alateen meeting information can be obtained by contacting Al-Anon Information Services listed in local telephone directories and on the WSO Web Site, www.al-anon.alateen.org. The WSO toll-free meeting line number, 1-888-4 AL-ANON (888-425-2666), is available between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Eastern Time.

A printed list of Al-Anon Information Services and offices worldwide is found in *Getting in Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen* (S-23). Many Areas and Information Services post meeting information on their local Web sites, which are listed on the WSO site. (See “*Getting in Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen*,” and “World Directories of Al-Anon Family Groups.”)

Open/Closed Meetings

Closed meetings are for all Al-Anon members, anyone whose personal life is or has been deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker. Open meetings may be attended by anyone interested in Al-Anon/Alateen.

Introductory Meetings

Introductory meetings can be held at institutions, such as hospitals, treatment centers, and shelters, or any other location where families and friends of alcoholics gather. Attendance changes fre-

quently. Such a meeting is not considered an Al-Anon group and does not have its own Group Representative. Experienced Al-Anon members share the responsibilities for conducting introductory meetings and for inviting those in attendance to try a regular Al-Anon/Alateen meeting. Al-Anon groups, directly or through their district, are encouraged to help with the cost of literature and other expenses for introductory meetings. Members must comply with the security requirements of the meeting location.

Electronic Meetings

The Internet and other electronic telecommunication media are tools for carrying and sharing the Al-Anon program of hope and recovery around the world. These electronic meetings occur globally as well as locally without geographic restrictions. Consequently, electronic meetings do not have a Group Representative and are not part of any structure. They do, however, have a meeting contact.

When electronic meetings form, they register with the World Service Office (WSO) in order to use the Al-Anon name. Upon registration, they receive support from and have their voices heard and represented through the WSO. Registered meetings may request a license from the WSO to use in text format the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, Suggested Welcome, Suggested Closing, and excerpts from Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

Audio Tape Recordings*

Occasionally, Al-Anon/Alateen meetings are audio taped by members, but as a matter of courtesy, the person doing the taping should receive permission. Al-Anon/Alateen meetings may be taped with the following suggestions:

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

Videotaping/Filming

In keeping with Tradition Eleven, videotaping/filming at meetings is not recommended.

Films

The use of films at closed meetings is not appropriate; experience shows such use lessens the opportunity and desire for personal

** WSO has no responsibility in the matter of tape enthusiasts who realize a profit from the sale of taped talks of Al-Anon members.*

exchange between members. This sharing is basic to our program of recovery.

Although it is not suggested as an alternative to having members speak, the occasional use of films at open meetings may be helpful. It is not, however, the most effective way to carry the Al-Anon message. The explanation under “Speakers from the Helping Professions,” applies equally to the use of films.

Members sometimes plan special meetings to show the five films approved by the World Service Conference: *Lois’ Story*; *Al-Anon Speaks for Itself**; *Alateen Tells It Like It Is**; *Walk This Path of Hope**; and *Lois W. and the Pioneers*. These special meetings are held in addition to a group’s regular meeting.

Conventions

Al-Anon/Alateen Area-wide Conventions, Rallies, Reunions, Roundups (or Any Other Large Get-Together)

Conventions attract many members, drawing them to celebrate and share their experiences. Where possible, members planning Area or Region-wide Conventions work closely with the local Area World Service Committee(s). Good communication assures better attendance as well as goodwill. In many Areas, the Convention Chairperson is appointed or elected at the Area Assembly. The Chairperson or another convention committee liaison member has a voice and may have a vote on the Area World Service Committee.

Distribution of Proceeds

Surplus funds derived from conventions are usually contributed to the Area treasury and WSO, with a reasonable sum held in reserve to seed the next convention. (See “Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions.”)

Mini Conventions, Share-a-Thons, Workshops or Other Get-Togethers

Members may choose to plan get-togethers for public information, service, or other sharing purposes. Chairpersons of these events are not necessarily chosen by, or members of, their Area World Service Committee (AWSC); to avoid calendar conflicts and encourage unity, they can alert the District Representative, the Area

* No longer available from the WSO, but may be available in your Area.

Delegate, or some other member of the AWSC, making known their dates, purposes, etc.

Alateen Participation

Since Alateen is part of the Al-Anon fellowship, its members are to be included in Al-Anon activities wherever possible. It is within the autonomy of the Planning Committee to make the decision whether or not the Alateens have a separate agenda.

Films

Sometimes films are used at large meetings and conventions for entertainment between meetings and workshops. Because of the Sixth Tradition of nonendorsement, the use of Conference Approved films is suggested.

Videotaping or Filming

In keeping with Tradition Eleven, videotaping or filming at conventions is not recommended.

Alateen Policy

Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements

Note: *World Service Conference Alateen policies that are approved for the World Service Conference structure must adhere to the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. The 2003 Alateen Motion is a legal resolution of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and cannot be changed by a World Service Conference Motion. Just as our Al-Anon/Alateen policies and procedures must be in keeping with our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, and the World Service Conference Charter, Alateen policies and procedures for the World Service Conference structure must also comply with the 2003 Alateen Motion. Only the Board of Trustees can amend or alter the 2003 Alateen Motion.*

Each Al-Anon Area in the World Service Conference Structure has Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements in place which meet or exceed the minimum requirements set by the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees (available from the WSO). The Area's Requirements include minimum requirements for Al-Anon Members Involved In Alateen Service (AMIAS), Alateen meetings, and Alateen participation in conferences, conventions, and other events. In order to use the Alateen name, the Area, all Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service, all Alateen members, and all meetings and events with Alateen participation must be in compliance with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Each Area's Alateen process details the steps that must be taken to meet its requirements.

An Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) is an Al-Anon member who is currently certified through their Area's Alateen process and is therefore eligible to be directly responsible for Alateens while being of service to Alateen. AMIAS may be certified by more than one Area; however, they must first be certified by the Area in which they reside. AMIAS may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors, chaperones, drivers, or other roles as outlined in their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Area Alateen

Coordinators are required to be certified AMIAS; the Area determines which other service roles require certification.

Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. may be certified as AMIAS and serve as Alateen Group Sponsors by virtue of their Al-Anon membership, in accordance with their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program at all times.

Area Alateen Process

Each Area has its own process to implement and maintain its Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, including the paperwork required for certification of AMIAS, registration of Alateen groups, and events with Alateen participation.

Details on an Area's Alateen process are available from the Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP), another Area trusted servant, or your District Representative (DR). To connect with Area trusted servants, contact your Group Representative (GR), DR, or the World Service Office.

Starting an Alateen Group

In order to use the Alateen name, groups must register with the World Service Office through their Area's Alateen process. Each meeting must have an Alateen Group Sponsor (two are recommended) in order to keep the focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program. Every Alateen Group Sponsor is a minimum of 21 years old, currently attending Al-Anon meetings and an active Al-Anon member for at least two years in addition to any time spent in Alateen. (Additional requirements may be set by the Al-Anon Area.)

Once registered, every Alateen group abides by the Alateen Traditions and is open to all Alateen members.

Alateen Group Sponsors

An Alateen Group Sponsor is an adult member of Al-Anon who attends Al-Anon meetings regularly, is currently certified as an Al-Anon Member Involved In Alateen Service through their Area's Alateen process, and has made a commitment to be of service to an Alateen meeting on a regular basis. Alateen Group Sponsors encourage the Alateens to take responsibility for their own meetings and to share their experience, strength, and hope with each other.

Alateen Group Sponsor(s) must be present to hold an Alateen meeting, as outlined in the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. When a regular Sponsor is not available, another Al-Anon member who is certified through the Area's Alateen process can serve as an Alateen Group Sponsor. When there are no certified Al-Anon members available to be of service to the Alateen group, the Alateens are welcome to attend an Al-Anon meeting. Whenever young people (minors) attend an Al-Anon meeting, the Al-Anon group would be responsible for prudent safety measures for them just as it is for the safety of Al-Anon members attending (e.g. making sure no one is left alone at the facility, etc.).

Alateen Personal Sponsors

Alateen Group Sponsors and other Al-Anon members do not serve as personal Sponsors to individual Alateens. Alateen members are encouraged to sponsor each other in a peer-to-peer relationship.

Who Attends Alateen Meetings

Alateen meetings are closed meetings; ordinarily only Alateen members, prospective members, and the Area-certified Alateen Group Sponsors affiliated with the group attend. However, designated Area trusted servants may occasionally attend the meeting as a resource to the group per the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Any potential Alateen Group Sponsor must go through the Area's certification process prior to visiting an Alateen group.

An Alateen group may hold an occasional (annual, biannual, or quarterly) public outreach open meeting for the purpose of introducing Alateen to Al-Anon members, A.A., professionals, teachers, and other members of the community.

Alateen Membership/Age Range

As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. Family members below teen years might not be ready for the Alateen program. Such children may have to depend on others to choose what they learn. This could lead to the development of a teaching program. "Teaching" is not compatible with the Al-Anon principle of sharing. There are, however, younger children who can benefit from the Alateen program, which requires the ability to participate in a shared learning experience.

It is within the autonomy of each Alateen group to lower the age limit or divide into groups according to age. Whatever the decision, all such groups will be registered as “Alateen” at the World Service Office. Members in their teen years who are legally adults agree to abide by the same requirements as minor Alateens when they attend Alateen meetings and events. Alateen members in the upper teen years are encouraged to begin attending Al-Anon as well as Alateen meetings; young people beyond the teen years attend Al-Anon meetings.

Funding/Seventh Tradition

It may be difficult for a new Alateen group to meet all its expenses and needs. The local Al-Anon group(s) or district may provide literature or funds to help the group get started, with the goal of the Alateen group becoming fully self-supporting as soon as possible.

Alateen in Schools and other Facilities

Alateen meetings in schools, hospitals, juvenile centers, and other professional settings can give children and teens access to Alateen who might not otherwise be able to attend. Such meetings are often only open to the young people in those schools or facilities. Generally, members will meet with the facility staff to explain Al-Anon/Alateen principles of anonymity and confidentiality and learn about the facility’s requirements. The goal is to reach a mutually beneficial arrangement in keeping with the Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements and the Traditions. Some facilities require that a counselor or other staff member sit in the meeting; in such cases, the meeting can be considered open only to required personnel in a limited access setting. (See the guideline *Alateen Meetings in Schools* [G-5].)

Events with Alateen Participation

In order to use the Alateen name, any event or gathering with Alateen participation (including Alateen conferences, Al-Anon/Alateen conventions, Area Assemblies, multi-Area events, and A.A. events with Al-Anon and Alateen participation) must be in compliance with the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Area in which it is held. (See “Area Alateen Process.”)

Areas, districts, groups, or conferences may have fundraising events to provide full or partial scholarships for Alateens or Alateen Group Sponsors who may not otherwise be able to attend.

In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, contributions for attending the conference should be solicited only from within Al-Anon. (See “Financial Matters/Fundraising.”) (See guidelines *Alateen Conferences* [G-16], *Area Conventions* [G-20], and *Participation in Area A.A. Conventions* [G-7].)

Anonymity

The experience of our groups suggests that the principle of anonymity—summed up in Tradition Twelve as “the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions”—has three elements: There is anonymity as it applies outside Al-Anon/Alateen, governing our contacts with general public, the media, and professionals; anonymity within the fellowship; and anonymity as it contributes to our personal growth.

Anonymity Outside Al-Anon/Alateen

Anonymity and the General Public

When dealing with the general public it is important to use discretion in revealing one’s Al-Anon/Alateen membership. In settings where there is no media involved (health fairs, speaking to community groups or schools, etc.), members are free to use their full names, if they are comfortable doing so.

Anonymity and the Media

Tradition Eleven gives a specific guideline: “we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV.” It is Al-Anon/Alateen policy to interpret Tradition Eleven to include the Internet as well as all forms of evolving public media. Personal anonymity in the media guards the fellowship from the Al-Anon/Alateen member who may be tempted to seek public recognition.

When speaking or writing as an Al-Anon/Alateen member in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet, or other evolving public media, members use only their first names and last initial or pseudonyms. Members can also speak without identifying themselves or sign articles “Anonymous.”

Photographs, video, film, or Web postings in published or broadcast media should not reveal full face images of those identified as members.

On any Web site accessible to the public, whether an Al-Anon site or not, members’ full names and faces are not posted if they are identified as Al-Anon/Alateen members.

Anonymity and Professionals

It is important to make Al-Anon/Alateen known through our public outreach work with the many types of professionals who come into contact with families suffering from the effects of some-

one else's drinking. When working with professionals, Al-Anon and Alateen members are more credible and effective when they give their full names and contact information. While personal anonymity is not required in outreach to professionals, it is helpful to inform the professionals of the importance of anonymity and confidentiality in Al-Anon/Alateen.

Note: Alateen members must comply with local laws and their Area Alateen requirements regarding personal anonymity in all public outreach work.

Electronic Communication outside of Al-Anon

E-mail provides a quick and easy way to communicate the Al-Anon/Alateen message to the media and professionals. Members' business e-mail addresses should not be used for Al-Anon/Alateen outreach, as they could imply affiliation, and may not be confidential to the member.

Web-based communication, such as on-line audio/visual materials (e.g., Web casts or podcasts), social networking sites, and blogs, provides members with easy access to distribute information about Al-Anon/Alateen recovery to a large audience. In keeping with Tradition Eleven ("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."), members who use this type of communication outlet must maintain their personal anonymity and that of any Al-Anon/Alateen or A.A. member, as the Internet is a form of media.

Anonymity Within Al-Anon/Alateen

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 A.A. 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.

At open Al-Anon meetings, group anniversaries, conventions, or workshops where nonmembers may be present, Al-Anon and Alateen members are free to decide how much anonymity they prefer. It is well to begin these meetings with a brief explanation of the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. One suggestion is as follows:

There may be some who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet, and other electronic media.

If so, we respectfully ask that no Al-Anon, Alateen or A.A. speaker or member be identified by full name or picture in published, broadcast, or Web-posted reports of our meeting.

The assurance of anonymity is essential to our efforts to help other families of alcoholics, and our Tradition of anonymity reminds us to place Al-Anon and Alateen principles above personalities.

At any function that records its speakers, members need to be aware that some recorders have Web sites that are open to the public. If speakers use full names, their sharings including full names could be posted.

In Al-Anon/Alateen service positions (Group Representatives, District Representatives, Coordinators, World Service Conference members, etc.) it is practical to use full names and addresses to facilitate communication. However, anonymity and our Tradition of non-endorsement could be compromised in electronic communication with e-mail lists and methods of forwarding messages, as well as on public Web sites. Posting material originally meant for members only (such as printed flyers, reports, letters, e-mail messages, and newsletters) on Web sites could result in posting a member's full name, which violates the principle of anonymity.

Service communication via e-mail is expedient and efficient, but care and common sense must be taken in its use, particularly in forwarding messages. Use of blind copies protects members' anonymity. Members should select with care the e-mail address(es) they use to conduct Al-Anon/Alateen business. It is recommended not to use members' full names in them. Business e-mail addresses might not provide privacy and could imply affiliation.

Letters (including the return address) to an Al-Anon or Alateen member should *never* have the name Al-Anon or Alateen on the envelope. The WSO uses “AFG, Inc.” on envelopes sent to members in order to maintain anonymity. Care should also be taken in the wording of e-mail subject lines, as the e-mail address may not be private.

Submissions to *The Forum* should include full names, addresses and phone numbers. Material that is published will be signed any way the writer wishes: first name and initial, initials only, “Anonymous”—either with or without geographical location. Because *The Forum* is a publication available to the general public, personal anonymity is maintained. Service arm publications usually follow this procedure if distributed outside the fellowship.

Anonymity in Our Personal Growth

In Al-Anon/Alateen we share as equals, regardless of social, educational or financial position. Common sense in the use of anonymity provides freedom and the security each member is assured in Al-Anon/Alateen. Our spiritual growth has its roots in the principle of anonymity. Each member has the right of decision regarding personal anonymity within the fellowship, which we respect whether the member is attending meetings, not attending meetings, or deceased. (See “Public Relations Anonymity.”)

Financial Matters

Contributions to WSO

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, Al-Anon is supported by members' contributions and from the sale of our literature. All contributions are used to meet expenses for worldwide services, including a portion of the operating expense of the World Service Conference. All income from contributions and literature sales is allocated to the General Fund. Contributions to the WSO cannot be earmarked for special purposes unless recommended by the World Service Conference. (Also see "Outside Contributions.")

By Individual Members

Direct Contributions

In any calendar year, an Al-Anon member may contribute to the WSO any amount up to one percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit. (Also see *"Incorporation/Taxes, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc."* regarding charitable deductions.)

Members may authorize a monthly deduction from their bank account. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Combined Giving Campaigns. Members may contribute to the WSO via a combined giving campaign. Matching funds from non-members cannot be accepted (contact the WSO for details).

Birthday Plan. In honor of their Al-Anon/Alateen birthday, members may express their gratitude by contributing an amount for each year's membership (contact the WSO for details).

Memorial Contributions. Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased (contact the WSO for details).

Quarterly Appeal. The quarterly appeal gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level. Since the WSO does not maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon, quarterly appeal letters are mailed to the groups. It is requested that the letters be read at two successive meetings, followed by a special collection in addition to the regular group collection.

The 1966 World Service Conference voted that three letters of appeal for individual contributions be sent annu-

ally from the WSO to Al-Anon/Alateen members in the United States and Canada. In 1998, the World Service Conference voted to increase the appeal frequency to quarterly (February, May, August, and November). In November the appeal is extended to members of groups worldwide.

Bequests

The WSO may accept a *one-time* bequest from an Al-Anon member in any amount, provided its use is not restricted by the donor. Bequest amounts, up to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit will be placed in the General Fund. Members may give more than the ten percent; however, the portion of the bequest above ten percent will be reported separately on the financial statements. The World Service Conference will authorize the use of these excess amounts and the authorized expenditures will be administered by the Board of Trustees. These excess amounts are not available for general purposes, unless further authorized by the Conference. (Contact the WSO for details.)

By Groups and Other Service Entities

Al-Anon/Alateen Groups

Groups may make donations to the WSO on a regular basis without limit.

Al-Anon Service Arms

Districts, Al-Anon Information Services (Intergroups), Literature Distribution Centers, Areas, General Service Offices, and other Al-Anon service entities may also contribute directly to the WSO without limit.

Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions

A portion of the funds derived from Al-Anon and Alateen conventions may be contributed to the WSO. (See "Conventions," "Distribution of Proceeds.")

A.A. Conferences/Conventions

Contributions received from A.A. conferences/conventions that are offered to Al-Anon as acknowledgment of its participation in these functions may be accepted by the WSO or its service arms.

Reserve Fund

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. has the right and obligation to establish and maintain a Reserve Fund. This fund, established in 1970, has a two-fold purpose: ensuring the continuation

of Al-Anon’s essential services and the funding of special projects. (See *Reserve Fund Guideline* [G-41].)

Discounts and Services

WSO and other Al-Anon service entities may accept discounts or services that are routinely available to other non-profit organizations (e.g. non-profit postal rates, free placement for public service announcements, etc.). Discounts may not be accepted if the discount is given only to Al-Anon and not to other non-profit organizations.

Fund Raising

Many groups, districts, Areas, Information Services, Conventions, Conferences, Assemblies, or other gatherings of Al-Anon/Alateen members often raise funds to provide services.

Fund-raising activities such as potluck suppers, dances, or other social events are conducted only within the fellowship and in agreement with the groups directly involved. If, however, such events are open to the public, use of the name Al-Anon or Alateen would violate the spirit of our Traditions.

Outside Contributions

Al-Anon and Alateen groups do not accept contributions of money, goods, or services from outside the Al-Anon membership in order to adhere to the Seventh Tradition of full self-support.

Avoiding Commercialism

Raffling various articles at meetings or other gatherings is a matter of autonomy (see “Selling Products/Chances”), but to avoid commercialism in the fellowship, it is suggested that these items relate in some way to our spiritual principles. Items such as Al-Anon or Alateen books, subscriptions to *The Forum*, or the donated products of the creative efforts of individual members are suggested. (Also see “Raffle/Lottery Tickets.”)

Program-Related Jewelry and Trinkets

The WSO does not stock or offer program-related jewelry or trinkets for sale because these actions could divert our service office from our primary purpose.

In keeping with Tradition Six, the WSO does not provide lists of suppliers for articles associated with the fellowship, e.g., plaques, jewelry.

Selling Products/Chances

Selling Products at Meetings/Conventions/Conferences

Tradition Five states that the one purpose of each Al-Anon group is to help families of alcoholics. Therefore, it is inappropriate for an individual or outside entity to use Al-Anon meetings or other Al-Anon events as a marketplace before, during, or after these gatherings for the sale of services or products.

Selling Products at A.A. Meetings

In keeping with Tradition Seven, Al-Anon and Alateen members should refrain from soliciting or selling any products at A.A. meetings.

Raffles/Lottery Tickets

Raffles/lotteries are subject to national, state/provincial, and local laws.

U.S. federal law and Canadian federal law make it illegal to send lottery tickets through the mail.

Governmental regulations may prohibit solicitation of ticket money by letter or by the sales of chances on a prize. Similar restrictions may apply outside the United States and Canada.

There may also be other state or provincial laws which regulate the use of fund raising involving the sale of chances or tickets by charitable organizations. Since groups, districts, and many Areas are not registered as charities with state/provincial or federal authorities, these laws could prohibit such sales.

Local statutes must also be investigated and complied with in order to prevent individual members and Al-Anon as a whole from becoming involved in public controversy.

After determining that the proposed raffle and/or lottery is legally permitted within the Area where it is to be held, additional precautions need to be taken so that we are not diverted from our primary purpose and do not imply endorsement. Distribution and sale of raffle/lottery tickets should be limited to Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and events. (Also see "Fund Raising" and "Selling Products and Chances.")

Payment for Speaking

In keeping with the Eighth Tradition, Al-Anon speakers are reimbursed for expenses only. When a member is speaking to an

outside organization, the speaker may suggest funds in excess of expenses be used by the organization for the purchase of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) for distribution by the organization as an educational service.

Public Meetings

A basket may be passed at open meetings to which the public is invited. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, it is clear that the fellowship is dependent on its own voluntary contributions. Reading the Preamble and the Traditions clarifies this principle.

Use of Group Funds

Rent and Other Group Expenses

Our Tradition of self-support suggests that the expenses for the group's operation such as rent, literature, insurance, supplies, post office box rental, Group Representative, and Information Service Representative expenses be met first. Remaining funds may be used to support local and Area structures and the World Service Office.

At locations where rent may not be accepted, a supply of Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and local meeting schedules may be provided to the facility as an appropriate alternative.

Gifts to Members

Group funds are used for group purposes only, not for personal gifts to members.

Baby-Sitters

Some meetings are attended by members who must bring children. Using group funds or taking a special collection to pay for a baby-sitter at the meetings is within a group's autonomy. Paying for this type of service does not violate Traditions, since avoiding disruption of a meeting benefits the group as a whole.

Donations to Outside Agencies

In keeping with our Sixth Tradition, group funds are to be used for Al-Anon/Alateen purposes only. Groups may use their funds to purchase Al-Anon/Alateen literature to donate to outside agencies, activities, and programs for public outreach.

Local Services

Naming a Service

Al-Anon Information Services (AIS) call themselves Information Services, Service Centers, Information Centers, or Intergroups. The name “Literature Distribution Center” (LDC) is used for services that provide Al-Anon/Alateen members with access to Al-Anon/Alateen materials. A combined AIS and LDC will be given one registration number at the WSO.

The term “Al-Anon Central Services” is reserved for AIS/LDCs serving entire states, provinces, or Areas. Al-Anon General Services refers to structures serving countries other than the United States and Canada.

Answering Services

The term “answering service” is usually used for service entities that handle only Twelfth Step telephone calls. The decision to implement and support this service is within the autonomy of the groups it serves.

Information Services (Intergroups)

Requirements for Registration at the WSO

The WSO registers an Information Service (Intergroup) when it meets the following requirements:

- has a title indicative of the nature of its operation, e.g., “Al-Anon Information Service”
- acquires a post office box number or an office address
- maintains a listing in the local telephone directory
- conducts activities in addition to Twelve Step telephone calls, for example: works with local Al-Anon/Alateen service committees; arranges group exchange meetings; publishes meeting lists; and performs any other function as outlined in “Groups at Work.”

Getting in Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen (S-23)

Al-Anon Information Services and offices worldwide that meet the above requirements are listed in this publication. Since individuals’ names, addresses, or telephone numbers are not disclosed, this

listing can be used by the membership as well as the public and professional community. Each proposed and newly registered group receives a complimentary copy. Additional copies can be ordered. (See “Locating Meetings,” and “World Directories of Al-Anon Family Groups.”)

Cooperation

Chairpersons of local service committees should communicate with the respective Area Coordinator.

Employees in Al-Anon Services

Tradition Eight states that “Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever nonprofessional.” Therefore, any Al-Anon member who is gainfully employed in an Al-Anon service does not serve as a volunteer in a policy-making position, such as Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Area Assembly Officer or Coordinator, Delegate, or WSO Trustee.

Autonomy of Groups

In keeping with the Traditions and Warranty Five of Concept Twelve (see Concept Twelve in “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service”), local, Area, or WSO service entities have no authority to close a group or engage in other punitive actions against a group because they disapprove of the manner in which a group practices the Al-Anon program.

Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Materials

Conference Approval

What It Is

Conference Approval is the process for development of recovery literature (including recovery literature with a service focus) that reflects the group conscience of the Al-Anon Family Groups through actions taken by the World Service Conference. The conceptual ideas recommended by the World Service Conference are delegated to the WSO Literature Committees for implementation. Each item, when completed, bears the Conference Approval seal.



How Material Receives Conference Approval

Al-Anon Conference Approved material grows out of need. Whether the need is for recovery literature or for recovery literature with a service focus (hereafter both referred to as Conference Approved Literature), the process of Conference Approval ensures that designated Al-Anon members, Delegates, WSO staff, and volunteers will review the material before publication and/or production. Many members' participation in the Conference Approval process guarantees the fellowship that the material is an expression of Al-Anon principles. Proposals of new material and major revisions of existing material are brought to the World Service Conference for recommendation and approval. Service committees may propose material with a service focus. Proposed manuscripts and/or content of Conference Approved Literature are reviewed by a Literature Committee. As a final step, the Executive Director, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee, and four other members of that Committee review all new pieces and major revisions of existing material before they are approved. The Board of Trustees through the Executive Director authorizes minor revisions.

Material Written by Al-Anon/Alateen Members

The actual writing is done by Al-Anon/Alateen members. Material submitted is subsequently coordinated and edited for literary style by Al-Anon members who may be professional writers. In

keeping with the spirit of Al-Anon, the full name of any individual member does not appear in the title of Al-Anon/Alateen material, nor is authorship acknowledged. All published material becomes the sole property of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., on behalf of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship.

Material Written by Non-members

A few items were not developed in the above manner. Such exceptions were made when a booklet, talk, or article by a nonmember met a specific need, and then only with Conference Approval. As a necessary courtesy, credit was given to the author or the organization where the material originated

WSO Service Tools

Service tools and materials are created by a World Service Office service department, committee, or as the result of a Conference discussion. They are designed to assist members at meetings and in conducting Al-Anon/Alateen service. Service tools are developed by staff or committees and are subject to Executive Committee approval. As a final step, the Executive Director, the Chairpersons of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and designated Policy Committee members approve the text of service tools.

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual

“Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” is updated on a regular basis at the World Service Office. Approval for additions and revisions to other parts of this *Manual* is given by vote at the World Service Conference.

Authorization for Production

Production of new material to be added to the list of Conference Approved material that has been recommended and approved by the World Service Conference must be authorized by the Board of Trustees.

Identification of Al-Anon/Alateen Publications

The original seal, with the letters “AFG” in the circle and the words “World Service Conference” within the triangle, appears on, and is reserved for, all Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and material with the words “Approved by



World Service Conference.” Service tools carry the Al-Anon logo and indicate production by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (See “Symbols.”)



Use of Material at Al-Anon Meetings

To keep Al-Anon’s message in focus and encourage unity, only Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and Al-Anon/Alateen service tools are displayed, distributed, and used at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings, including meetings at conferences and conventions. These items reflect the informed group conscience of the Al-Anon Family Groups as expressed by its World Service Conference since 1961.

While individuals may use whatever they find helpful as part of their personal recovery outside of meetings, Al-Anon does not evaluate or recommend anything other than Al-Anon materials. When sharing at meetings, members limit any mention of outside material to a brief reference.

A.A. literature is not used at Al-Anon meetings because it is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other outside materials can distort the Al-Anon approach.

Conference Approved Literature provides a unified view of Al-Anon/Alateen to members, professionals, other individuals, and outside agencies. Service tools produced by the World Service Office reflect the Al-Anon/Alateen service structure and the shared experiences of our membership. (See *Al-Anon Spoken Here* [P-53], *Why Conference Approved Literature?* [P-35], and the “Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon,” as found in *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* [P-4].)

The Forum

The Forum is the monthly magazine in which Al-Anon and Alateen members share their experiences. It is “The Voice of the Fellowship,” a forum where individual members and groups can be heard. *The Forum* staff at the WSO, with assistance from a volunteer committee, edits the letters and articles sent from all over the world. This assures a publication that a broad-based international audience can understand and use for growth in the program. It also offers meeting ideas and materials for use in group discussions.

The Forum can be used, and is encouraged to be used, by all members and groups for meetings. *The Forum*, as a concept, is Conference Approved, but it is not possible for each issue to follow the full procedure for Conference Approved Literature. Sharings received for *The Forum* are reviewed for their fidelity to the Al-Anon program and principles by a volunteer committee and/or *The Forum* staff. Time-sensitive articles, such as editorials, interviews, “Inside Al-Anon,” etc., may be reviewed by *The Forum* staff.

Since it is copyrighted material, the WSO does not grant permission for substantial reprints from *The Forum* in Area, district, or other service arm newsletters in the U.S. and Canada. However, it is permissible for all newsletters to reprint any articles that appear in the “Inside Al-Anon” section of *The Forum*. Newsletters of other countries may, upon informing the WSO, use additional *Forum* material if they give proper credit line in their publication. *The Forum* is available by subscription.

Other WSO Publications

Timely Reprints

In 1977, the World Service Conference affirmed the continuation of the use by selected committees of articles and reprints of articles from major outside publications. The use of such timely pieces does not endanger Tradition Six regarding endorsement; rather it enhances the public’s view of the Al-Anon program of recovery and helps service committees spread the message of Al-Anon’s value as a community resource. These committees may also reprint articles from *The Forum*, WSO newsletters, or other WSO publications when interest in a particular subject is indicated. Such reprints can be proposed for development as a permanent piece of CAL if a strong interest in them is evidenced. Because of their timeliness, reprints are often distributed between Conferences. These items are reviewed for appropriateness, use, and distribution by the service committees of origin as well as appointed members of the Policy Committee. These reprints are identified by the Al-Anon/Alateen logo/and carry the words “reprinted and distributed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.”

Guidelines

All guidelines are a collection of shared experience and can be adapted by the membership. Guidelines can be identified by this

Al-Anon/Alateen logo and the words “compiled and distributed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.”



The Conference Summary

The Conference Summary is the annual report to the groups about the World Service Conference and World Service Office activities. It is distributed free to Area World Service Committees and to current and past Conference members. Groups and individuals may purchase copies at a nominal cost.

WSO Newsletters

All WSO newsletters and other materials are developed in response to the needs of our membership. WSO staff and committees review the content. “Inside Al-Anon” in *The Forum* keeps groups attuned to worldwide Al-Anon activities and the latest material available from the WSO. A free copy of *The Forum* is sent to each English-speaking registered group in the World Service Conference structure and to English-speaking groups worldwide that are not part of a national service structure. “Inside Al-Anon,” along with *Alateen Talk* and *Area Highlights*, is copyrighted. Portions of these newsletters, however, may be reproduced in Area newsletters provided proper credit information is given (for example, “From *Area Highlights*, Summer 2010; Reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.”).

World Directories

Members may obtain all information formerly published in the World Directories, including names of specific groups, group contact names and telephone numbers, and information regarding the World Service Office and Area trusted servants, from either the Area Delegate, Group Records Coordinator, or the WSO. (See “Locating Meetings.”)

Copyrights

Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL), *The Forum*, and most service materials/tools are copyrighted. The WSO does not grant permission for substantial reprints of CAL in Area, district, or other service arm newsletters, or to outside publications, in the U.S. and Canada. It is not necessary for Al-Anon/Alateen service arms to obtain permission to excerpt items of interest from

| *Area Highlights, Alateen Talk*, the “Inside Al-Anon” section of *The Forum*, or from service tools.

Whenever a violation of a copyright comes to the attention of the Board of Trustees, it is the responsibility of the Board, through its duly appointed representative, to notify the violator. This is necessary in order to avoid invalidation of the copyright.

Symbols/Logos

The three symbols shown below are registered as Al-Anon “marks” with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Use of these marks for other than Al-Anon/Alateen purposes or any alteration of these symbols endangers their legal status.

The Al-Anon/Alateen logo with AFG in the circle is a popular means of identification at conventions and joint fellowship affairs.



The logo without the AFG was adopted by the WSO for easy identification of stationery, service tools, and other Al-Anon/Alateen material. Al-Anon/Alateen service arms (such as Areas, districts, and Information Services) and conventions with Al-Anon/Alateen participation may use this logo without alteration for identification on printed materials.



The original logo, accompanied by the words “Approved by World Service Conference Al-Anon Family Groups,” identifies Conference Approved Literature (see “Identification of Material”).



Authorization to Publish and Reprint

Publishing

The World Service Conference has authorized Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., also known as WSO, to be the sole publishing agency for the fellowship worldwide. Therefore, no Al-Anon group, Information Service (Intergroup), Literature Distribution Center, or any other service arm may produce or publish its own literature or sell outside literature and/or materials. (The only exception is found under “Public Information Literature” in the “Public Relations” section.)

Requests to Reprint

| Permission to reprint extensively from our publications is not granted in the United States and Canada to any individuals, within

or outside of our membership, or to any outside agency. Forms to request reprint permission are available from the WSO. Each request received at the WSO to reprint limited excerpts will be evaluated on its merits and the circumstances. Requests for permission to reprint limited excerpts from copyrighted Al-Anon/Alateen material must include at least four paragraphs from the proposed new text. The new text should include the two paragraphs of the author's/writer's/editor's material immediately prior to the excerpt and the two paragraphs of the author's/writer's/editor's material immediately following the excerpt. When reprint permission is granted by the WSO the appropriate credit line must accompany the excerpt. Two copies of the published material/document must be sent to the WSO on or before publication. The WSO terminates permission to reprint if the volume is not published within two years from the date of the request.

Countries Outside United States and Canada

Permission to publish CAL is extended only to national Al-Anon General Service bodies in countries outside the United States and Canada. Occasionally such permission is extended to Al-Anon Central Service Committees, Centers, or even a single group, with the provision that the right to publish be relinquished when a general service body is formed.

Granting Permission to Translate CAL

All translations of Al-Anon CAL to other languages are to be submitted to the WSO for review and approval before permission to print or reprint is granted.

Service Tools/Material and Electronic Publishing

A listing of Al-Anon/Alateen service tools/materials that may be posted on Web sites is found on the WSO Members' Web site: www.al-anon.alateen.org/members. A credit line "Reprinted by permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc." is required. No other Al-Anon/Alateen copyrighted literature may be reprinted electronically without express written permission from the WSO.

Translations

Al-Anon literature in translation should conform to the spirit and meaning of the original English version. Application and under-

standing of the Al-Anon philosophy is naturally affected by varying local customs and culture in different areas of the world (see above, “Granting Permission”).

Literature Sales Outside the United States and Canada

The WSO cannot refuse to fill orders for literature from anyone—Al-Anon members, General Service Offices, or others. It is up to the Al-Anon General Service Offices to educate their groups to the advantage of purchasing literature from them. In this way, the groups strengthen their own national general service committees.

Public Relations

Attraction—Not Promotion

Our Traditions state that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. For clarification, the sixth World Service Conference (1966) adopted the following statement, which was reaffirmed at the 1971 WSC:

It is the consensus of the sixth World Service Conference that if Al-Anon is to continue to exist, it must continue to grow. There is no standing still without retrogression. Al-Anon must continue to grow if it is going to fulfill its primary purpose of reaching millions who need Al-Anon's help but who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.

We will fulfill this primary purpose most effectively by attraction and cooperation—not promotion or affiliation. For the guidance of our fellowship here are authoritative definitions of these sometimes controversial terms:

- to attract: to draw by other than physical influence; to invite; to draw to; to cause to approach
- to promote: to push forward; to further advance, as in a business venture (implies “hard sell,” advancement for profit)
- cooperation: joint operation or action (implies coming together of two or more people to work together for a common goal or benefit or on a common problem)
- affiliation: association or close connection; a uniting (implies lending one's name, endorsement, legal or financial association)

Al-Anon is *attracting* when it tells people why we are, what we are, what we do and how; we let them know that we are available *if* and *when* help is needed. We state the facts, which are communicated via the press, radio, TV, and films, always stressing anonymity at the public level.

Al-Anon is *cooperating* when it works with others,* rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened and we reach many more of those in need.

*Examples are federal, state, provincial, and municipal alcoholism agencies; private health agencies; law enforcement, judicial, and correctional agencies and institutions; general hospitals and state, county, or city mental hospitals; councils of churches, doctors, nurses, clergymen, social workers, educators.

Anonymity

Tradition Eleven is sustained if, when appearing on a television program as an Al-Anon or Alateen member, you maintain anonymity and take precautions to avoid recognition of the participants, e.g., back to camera or silhouette.

In either of the above cases a pseudonym or first name only should be used. This policy applies equally to visual tapes for closed-circuit TV (schools, etc.).

When appearing on a TV program as the relative of an alcoholic, a member can face the camera and give his full name, providing he does not reveal his membership in Al-Anon or Alateen.

Any Al-Anon/Alateen member may write an article about the fellowship for local or national publications and may be financially remunerated. The personal anonymity of someone writing as a member is maintained by signing anonymously or using a pseudonym.

National Publicity

Whenever national publicity on Al-Anon/Alateen may be of interest to local groups, they are, if possible, notified in advance by the WSO.

Criticism of the Fellowship

In accordance with Tradition Ten, the Al-Anon fellowship does not officially respond to adverse publicity and therefore attempts to avoid public controversy. As individuals, members may take any action they wish.

Public Information

Paid Ads

A group may pay for an ad in a newspaper or magazine to make the community aware of Al-Anon and Alateen. In accordance with our Traditions an individual member may pay for such space with group approval. This can be considered a member's personal contribution.

Posters

The Al-Anon/Alateen posters may be displayed in any public place or conveyance with the permission of the respective facility/organization. For referral, a local Al-Anon service phone number, P.O. Box, Web site, e-mail, and/or office address, may be used.

Information Services and Area World Service Committees may have a need for posters that can be produced inexpensively and distributed within their area of service. Although the Conference has designated Al-Anon's WSO as the sole publishing agent for the fellowship, the WSO extends permission for the production of such posters, reserving the right to review these items before they are printed and distributed in order to protect our public image. Such permission is not required when posters are made up for single local events.

Public Information Literature

Although the Conference has designated Al-Anon's WSO as the sole publishing agent for the fellowship, the WSO extends permission to Information Services or Area World Service Committees to publish only one Public Information piece, which can be produced inexpensively and distributed within their area of service. This often is incorporated with the local meeting schedule. The WSO reserves the right to review such items before publication.

Each general service structure working in countries outside the United States and Canada may reprint WSO material and is not limited to printing one PI piece. There are public information needs based on cultural differences and tradition. The WSO also reserves the right to review such items before publication.

Public Service Announcements

The media (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) offer free air time or print space for public service announcements (PSAs) to not-for-profit organizations.

The World Service Conference (WSC) has authorized the WSO to produce PSAs which inform the general public about Al-Anon and Alateen.

Incorporation/Taxes

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Tax-exempt status was granted to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., our World Service Office, in 1956 under Sec. 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code as a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York and operated exclusively for educational purposes. When New York State law was amended subsequently, WSO registered as a not-for-profit corporation. Tax-exempt status was similarly granted to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. in 1999 as a registered charity under paragraph 149(1) of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada. While a separate corporation, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. has the same Board of Trustees as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Contributions to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. or Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. may qualify as a charitable deduction, but the World Service Office makes no judgment as to the specific deductibility of a contribution by any member.

U.S. and Canadian regulations do not contain provisions under which Al-Anon could apply for blanket exemption for its Area committees or local groups, now or hereafter formed. Only central organizations that effectively control their chapters or local units (churches, Boy Scouts, fraternal organizations) can apply for group exemption. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. have no knowledge or control over Assembly or group funds; neither is therefore in a position to furnish the financial statements required to be filed annually with the tax authorities in order to maintain tax-exempt status for groups.

National General Services

Incorporation as a nonprofit organization relates to the tax laws of the United States, which stipulate that any excess of income at the end of the year is nontaxable. Most other countries have some equivalent of the U.S. regulations governing nonprofit corporations. At the suggestion of the WSO, the General Service Boards of U.K. and Eire, Finland, Germany, and other countries have made comparable registration for such legal status with their governments.

General Service Boards should consult with local legal counsel when considering nonprofit incorporation for their organizations outside the United States and Canada. Advantages and disadvantages may vary from structure to structure.

Traditionally, organization within a group should be kept to a minimum, but worldwide unity of our fellowship depends upon creation of national Al-Anon service boards outside the United States and Canada, which should obtain legal recognition as nonprofit membership corporations or the equivalent.

Incorporation is not only for legal reasons; experience has shown it to be the best possible way of ensuring the efficiency and continuity needed to maintain Al-Anon functions throughout the country. For one thing, a corporation does not die even though Al-Anon members do. Thus, incorporation provides vital continuity.

Another advantage is the objectivity of a corporation. There is greater willingness to rotate Trustees than there is to rotate the members of a small personalized committee or working team.

Other advantages are:

- tax exemption on literature (produced with the permission of Al-Anon's WSO), resulting in greater revenue to be used for fostering the growth of Al-Anon in the country
- protection of physical assets, including office equipment
- protection against personal liability in all business transactions

Assemblies (United States)*

The 1972 WSC recommended the following:

- All Area Treasurers be alerted to the importance of keeping accurate records that can be passed along to their successors.
- Areas seeking favorable determination of tax exemption by the Internal Revenue Service secure advice from a competent lawyer or accountant familiar with federal law. If successful, this would also enable them to obtain a nonprofit bulk-mailing permit for the Area Newsletter.
- All Areas learn what the laws in their respective states require of nonprofit organizations.
- Each Area Assembly may want to review the shared experience of other Assemblies before considering incorporation. Because state and local laws vary, all final decisions need to be

**The suggestions for Assemblies and local Service Centers in the United States may be adopted by the service units in other countries in accordance with the laws of their respective national and local governments.*

reviewed by local legal and financial experts. WSO is neither equipped nor qualified to advise or aid individual Assembly Areas in incorporating or obtaining tax exemption.

Al-Anon Information Services (Intergroups), Literature Distribution Centers (United States)**

Local Al-Anon Service Committees that perform business functions—sign contracts, rent an office, buy equipment, employ staff, print meeting lists and bulletins, or sell Al-Anon material, etc.—may want to explore incorporation in accordance with the nonprofit laws of their state. They may also need to check state and local laws regarding the collection of sales tax.

These suggestions are primarily to protect individual members, volunteers, and employees from possible personal liability. Incorporation would not give local services authority over the groups they serve.

***See previous footnote.*

Al-Anon As It Relates to Others

Alcoholics Anonymous—Cooperation

Local Service Centers

Although a separate entity, Al-Anon should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous. In relating to local A.A. Intergroups or central offices, Al-Anon may offer:

- to name one or two members to act as liaison and to provide current lists of group contacts for Twelfth Step referrals
- to submit Al-Anon/Alateen meeting information for inclusion in A.A.'s local meeting list if asked to do so
- to reimburse A.A. for any expenses incurred on Al-Anon's behalf, such as telephone calls, cost of printing meeting lists on which Al-Anon meetings are also listed, copying costs

Where Al-Anon has not grown sufficiently strong to support its own Al-Anon Information Service office or Intergroup, it may share facilities with A.A. when offered, provided that Al-Anon meets its portion of the financial expenses (desk space, telephone, etc.).

Newsletters

Where Al-Anon is relatively new, it may accept offers from A.A. to include an Al-Anon page in its newsletter. It is desirable for Al-Anon/Alateen to develop its own periodical when feasible.

Participating in A.A. Conventions

Al-Anon and Alateen are usually invited to share the program in A.A. conventions. Guidelines for Al-Anon and Alateen participation at A.A. conventions are available from the WSO upon request.

Twelfth Step Work

Al-Anon performs its own Twelfth Step work in alcohol treatment centers, hospitals, and other facilities, and with professionals that work with families and friends of alcoholics. Experience has shown that cooperation with A.A. can be mutually beneficial

Outside Agencies

Speakers from the Helping Professions

The purpose of Al-Anon is personal growth through applying the Twelve Steps and sharing our experience, strength, and hope. It is from Al-Anon and Alateen members that we hear the ideas and experiences that guide us in our personal recoveries. Outside speakers at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings may divert the focus from our own recovery to that of the alcoholic. Thus, the group tries to ensure that any occasional guest speaker be knowledgeable about the Al-Anon/Alateen program. Additionally, it is suggested that outside speakers be made aware of our Sixth Tradition in advance, and be asked to discuss an appropriate topic.

In any announcement of an Al-Anon and Alateen meeting with outside speakers, it is suggested that a statement such as the following be included: “Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization or institution.”

Shelters for Families

In keeping with our Traditions:

- Establishing shelters is not in accordance with our Sixth Tradition, “Our Al-Anon Family Group ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise . . .”
- Al-Anon members, as individuals, are free to manage such shelters and help to finance them.
- Al-Anon/Alateen institutions* or limited-access groups may hold meetings at such a facility.

Sharing Facilities

In some localities, Al-Anon may not be able to support its own answering service or Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup). If it is necessary to share space with another enterprise, using Al-Anon letterhead and renting a private post office box, for example, will prevent any appearance of affiliation.

Clubhouses

Operated by A.A. Members

Many groups use meeting facilities provided and operated by A.A. members. In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, the Al-Anon

* see also *Introductory Meetings*

and Alateen groups pay an agreed sum for rent and are maintained as separate entities at all times.

Operated by Al-Anon Members

Members, as individuals, may establish and operate clubhouses where Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are held. In keeping with Tradition Six, a clubhouse is not owned, operated, financed or endorsed by an Al-Anon group, district, Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup) office or Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. It is suggested that Al-Anon and Alateen groups meeting at such facilities be self-supporting and function as separate entities.

Restrictive Policies

Should any clubhouse policy be so restrictive as to exclude any Al-Anon member or include terms for the use of the facility that are contrary to Al-Anon/Alateen Traditions and principles, another meeting place may be more suitable.

Members' Outside Involvement

- When Al-Anon members serve on alcoholism boards or councils they do so as individuals, not as spokespersons for Al-Anon. Al-Anon membership may be disclosed to the board or council provided that anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, TV, and films, in accordance with Tradition Eleven.
- Al-Anon members who engage in legislation or support outside issues are free to do so as individuals. However, Tradition Ten suggests that the Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues. Thus, individuals do not discuss any such legislation or issues at meetings.
- Since Tradition Eight states that Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever nonprofessional, individuals who are professionals do not use their titles in conjunction with the Al-Anon name.

Commercial Enterprises

Filmmakers

Some private filmmakers have indicated interest in producing films concerning Al-Anon and Alateen to sell to public agencies. In the interest of worldwide unity, it is recommended that prospective filmmakers be asked to write to the WSO to explain the proposed project and its probable audience. No commitments should be made

to such producers by either groups or individuals. The Al-Anon name may not appear among the film's credits even though technical assistance has been provided.

Magazines

Mail for Al-Anon/Alateen should not be directed to a post office box obtained by a publishing company—e.g., in a magazine printing an article about the fellowship. Members cooperating with the author of such an article should encourage the inclusion of an Al-Anon address for responses. For magazines with national coverage, the appropriate national address or P.O. box should be used.

Religion/Philosophies

Meetings

Al-Anon is a spiritual program; thus the discussion of specific religious beliefs at meetings may divert members from Al-Anon's primary purpose. Our meetings are open to all those who are affected by alcoholism whether the member has a religious belief or not.

Retreats

Al-Anon/Alateen Spiritual Meetings

It has been suggested that the name "retreat" often has religious connotations and could imply affiliation if used in connection with an Al-Anon/Alateen event.

Outside the Fellowship

Al-Anon does not affiliate with other organizations; neither endorses nor opposes any other philosophies or spiritual programs. The Al-Anon/Alateen name, therefore, cannot properly be used to identify or publicize retreats or activities sponsored by others. This applies when most or even all of the participants are members of Al-Anon/Alateen. Otherwise there could be a misunderstanding of Al-Anon's purpose and function. In order to avoid any appearance of Al-Anon/Alateen affiliation, it is important to keep promotion of such events outside of Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and meeting locations. Our experience suggests that confusion arises when such events are announced in Area newsletters, Al-Anon/Alateen local bulletins and at group meetings.

Within the Fellowship

Area Newsletters or local Al-Anon/Alateen bulletins should not be used as a means of promoting or announcing retreats of any kind to the Al-Anon/Alateen membership, nor should retreats be promoted before, during, or after Al-Anon/Alateen meetings by use of leaflets or announcements.

Conventions

Religious services and announcements of them are not a part of an Al-Anon/Alateen event.

Dilution of the Al-Anon Program

Outside Therapies

Our Al-Anon experience helps us understand we are powerless over another person's drinking. This makes us aware at a meeting of the danger of being diverted from our own recovery by techniques that are focused on the recovery of the alcoholic.

Further, the Sixth Tradition suggests that there be no promotion or endorsement of any outside therapies. At an Al-Anon/Alateen meeting, in keeping with the Al-Anon/Alateen focus, the groups do not announce or discuss activities of other anonymous Twelve Step programs. Al-Anon/Alateen Area newsletters and local bulletins may publicize activities of Al-Anon/Alateen groups and those A.A. activities with Al-Anon participation. Publicizing other organizations' activities creates an appearance of affiliation.

Labels

Focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of our program is strengthened when we avoid using professional terms and labels since they may confuse members by implying affiliation with certain persons or specific therapies.

Professional Involvement

Professionals may initiate the formation of an Al-Anon/Alateen group provided that the meetings are *then* conducted by Al-Anon/Alateen members. Professionals who are not Al-Anon members may want to invite an existing Al-Anon or Alateen group to provide a brief on-site meeting to demonstrate how group meetings function.

Drugs/Narcotics/Prescription Medications

A symptom of alcoholism in the home may be the abuse of drugs by family members. Occasional discussion of this topic is acceptable at an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting as it may be one of the results of living with alcoholism. However, our responsibility is to ensure Al-Anon's survival as a resource for families and friends of alcoholics. By focusing on these drug-related problems, we risk being diverted from Al-Anon's primary aim. Referral to appropriate sources of help may be suggested to those in need.

Families with Related Problems

Many individuals come to Al-Anon seeking help. If these individuals determine they have not been affected by a problem drinker, they may be informed of our Third Tradition, which states in part, "the only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend." They may also be informed of other sources of help.

Notes and Updates

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