

# Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

## Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.

G-3

This guideline, and a similar guideline distributed by the Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) General Service Office, was developed through discussions between Al-Anon and A.A. staff.

The fellowships of Al-Anon (which includes Alateen for its younger members) and A.A. have a unique relationship. They were closely allied in their origins and are naturally drawn together by their family ties. Yet the Twelve Traditions emphasize that each works more effectively if it remains separate.

Tradition Six specifically states that Al-Anon and A.A. are separate entities. Therefore, in keeping with this Tradition, there can be no combining, joining, or uniting which would result in the loss of identity of either fellowship. Separateness rules out affiliation or merging, but it does not exclude cooperation with A.A. or acting together for mutual benefit. Al-Anon acknowledges with gratitude the spiritual contribution of A.A. and there can continue to be cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A. even while there are many Al-Anon members who have no contact with A.A. or A.A. members.

In order to differentiate between affiliation and cooperation, the Policy Committee of Al-Anon has prepared answers to some of the questions that frequently arise.

### Can there be a combined Al-Anon and A.A. group?

Each fellowship has a specific and separate purpose, and to remain so and abide by their respective Twelve Traditions, groups must be either A.A. or Al-Anon. The Al-Anon World Service Office (WSO) will not register a combined meeting, nor will the A.A. General Service Office (GSO) list a combined meeting.

### Can A.A. and Al-Anon exchange speakers?

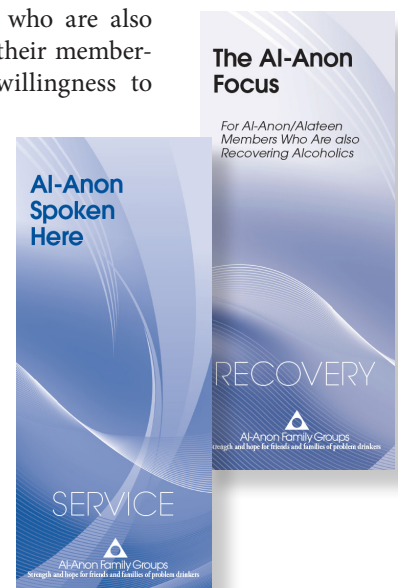
An occasional talk by an A.A. member at an open Al-Anon meeting can be interesting and helpful. When the program includes Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. speakers, it may help to keep the focus on Al-Anon by scheduling the Al-Anon speaker last. Likewise, if invited to do so, Al-Anon members may tell their story at an A.A. meeting. Al-Anon members tell their own stories, not the alcoholics', and emphasize how Al-Anon has helped in their recovery.

### Should Al-Anon/Alateen members participate or share at A.A. meetings?

Only A.A. members or those who have a drinking problem and have a desire to stop drinking may attend closed A.A. meetings. Open A.A. meetings welcome all those interested, including Al-Anon members, to attend and observe. Nonalcoholics should not participate in any A.A. meeting discussion unless specifically invited to do so.

### What is the role of the Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A.?

The primary purpose of an Al-Anon group is to help families and friends of alcoholics. A.A. members are welcome to join Al-Anon if they feel their lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. At Al-Anon meetings, members should not discuss their membership in A.A. or any other anonymous fellowship. Attendance at Al-Anon or Alateen meetings by Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. indicates their membership eligibility and their willingness to focus their attention on the help only Al-Anon can offer. See *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-45) and *Al-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53).



## What offices can Al-Anon/A.A. members hold in Al-Anon?

Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. are, by virtue of their Al-Anon membership, eligible to hold office in their Al-Anon or Alateen group. Active Al-Anon members who also belong to A.A. may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors by virtue of their Al-Anon membership (subject to the certification requirements in their Area). Because of the separateness of the Al-Anon and A.A. fellowships as stated in Tradition Six, Al-Anon policy is that world service offices beyond the group level, such as Group Representative (GR), should not be filled by Al-Anon/A.A. members. The need to focus at all times on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program could produce a conflict of interest or erode the separate singleness of purpose of each of the fellowships at Assembly and world service levels.

## Should Al-Anon and A.A. have combined Information Services/Intergroups?

Where Al-Anon has not grown sufficiently to support its own Al-Anon Information Service or Intergroup, it may share facilities with A.A. provided that Al-Anon meets its portion of the financial obligations toward desk space, use of telephone, etc. When Al-Anon is able to support its own Information Service, facilities separate from A.A. are desirable. Though facilities may be shared, it is important that Al-Anon members be responsible for handling all Al-Anon Twelfth Step calls. It is also suggested that Al-Anon establish its own committee to oversee Al-Anon's operation within the office, publish its own bulletin and meeting schedule, and provide liaison with A.A.'s committee.

## Should Al-Anon and A.A. have combined clubhouses? Should Al-Anon groups meet at such clubhouses?

According to our Traditions, clubhouses are projects outside of the Al-Anon fellowship. Members, as individuals, may join with others to establish such facilities, but their operation is not affiliated with or financed by any Al-Anon or Alateen group. Although some Al-Anon groups use these meeting facilities, each group maintains its separate identity and is responsible for the payment of rent, purchase of literature, refreshments, and other group expenses. A group should not give all of its collection to an outside entity, such as a clubhouse, even as a condition of using the meeting room.

## What procedures can be taken to assure cooperation when both fellowships are participating in an Area or region-wide convention?

When Al-Anon invites A.A. participation, the Al-Anon/Alateen hosts can: provide ample meeting space; ask an A.A. liaison member to attend the planning sessions; request that A.A. members choose their own speakers and plan their own agenda. Al-Anon is responsible for its own agenda, its own speakers, and the overall convention plans and activities. When Al-Anon is asked to participate in an A.A. convention, members do well to remember they are present by invitation. The overall plans are A.A.'s responsibility;

however, traditionally Al-Anon is a separate entity and responsible for its own speakers and meetings, including Alateen speakers, meetings, and activities.

A.A. conventions must have Al-Anon participation in order to have Alateen participation. All conventions and events that include Alateen participation must comply with the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Al-Anon Area in which the convention/event is held. Only those Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service who are currently certified through the Area's Alateen process may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors, chaperones, or hold other positions of service that include direct responsibility and care for Alateens at the conventions/events.

## Can Al-Anon accept a portion of the proceeds from an A.A. convention in which Al-Anon/Alateen has participated?

Yes. A survey conducted by the WSO indicated that Al-Anon and Alateen participation contributes substantially to the success of A.A. conventions. In acknowledgment of Al-Anon and Alateen participation, many A.A. convention planning committees do offer a portion of the registration proceeds to Al-Anon. The World Service Conference has determined that such contributions may be accepted. The financial details should be cleared in advance by the trusted servants of both the A.A. and Al-Anon/Alateen Convention Committees in accordance with each fellowship's Seventh Tradition.

## Can A.A. members sponsor Alateen groups?

Alateen is part of Al-Anon, and Alateen meetings require at least one Alateen Group Sponsor, preferably two. All Alateen Group Sponsors must be members of Al-Anon who meet their Area's Alateen requirements and are currently certified as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) through their Area process. A.A. members who are also members of Al-Anon and meet the Area's certification requirements may also serve, keeping in mind that in service to Alateen, all members serve as Al-Anon members, maintain their anonymity in regards to other programs, and keep the Al-Anon focus at the Alateen meeting.

## Should Al-Anon stock and/or use A.A. literature?

No. In general, neither fellowship stocks nor uses the other's literature at meetings. When Al-Anon members use A.A. literature for their meetings, there is a tendency to concentrate on the alcoholic and his/her behavior rather than the family experience and our own recovery. There is, of course, a great deal of reading value in literature other than that which is Al-Anon Conference Approved. But it is not the purpose of Al-Anon to make its members familiar with all the approaches—only the Al-Anon approach. Those who wish to acquaint themselves with A.A. reading material can readily find it at an A.A. open meeting.

**Note:** The following resources provide additional information regarding cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.:

- *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" Section
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an Area A.A. Convention* (G-7)
- *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-45)
- *Al-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53)