

# **22nd IAGSM**

## **INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON**

### **GENERAL SERVICES MEETING**

**Nurturing Cooperation, Communication, and Connection Worldwide**

September 25-29, 2024  
Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA

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## TWELVE CONCEPTS OF SERVICE

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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 ensure 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

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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.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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The purpose of the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through its Delegates. It will attempt to encourage the growth of a sound service structure while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of Al-Anon Traditions. It can also represent an expression of a worldwide group conscience. Ultimately, this leads to the fulfillment of the Core Purpose of Al-Anon as a whole: to help families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives amidst cultural and language differences.

# ATTENDANCE

The following structures were represented at the 2024 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting:

Name	Service Structure	Name	Service Structure
Helen G.	Australia	Agnieszka S.	Poland
Tanya J.	Australia	Simeona R.	Slovenia
Jeanette T.	Denmark	Katja S.	Slovenia
Aino S.	Finland	Miriam M.	United Kingdom & Eire
Rayanne D.	France	Debbie P.	United States & Canada
Una S.	Iceland	Kathi M.	United States & Canada
Dagny D.	Iceland	Diane B.	International Coordination Committee
Poonam R.	India	David B.	International Coordination Committee
Irma A.	Mexico	Vali F.	International Coordination Committee
Martha A.	Mexico	Sarah S.	International Coordination Committee
Liz A.	New Zealand	Tracey S.	International Coordination Committee
Rana S.	New Zealand		

# OPENING SESSION

## Welcome from the International Coordination Committee

The 22<sup>nd</sup> International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) opened on September 25, 2024 at the World Service Office (WSO) in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Eighteen International Delegates from 12 countries were greeted with a “Welcome Home Line,” in which each Delegate had the chance to introduce themselves to WSO Staff and Volunteers, and an opening lunch for Delegates and their guests.

The official opening of the IAGSM began with a reading of the Serenity Prayer and the Al-Anon Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service. WSO Executive Director Vali F. then welcomed Delegates and guests with a short history of the WSO building and an introduction of the WSO Staff and International Coordination Committee (ICC) members present. The keynote speaker, International Services Manager Tracey S., shared about her Al-Anon service journey and her connection to international Al-Anon as a WSO Staff member. (For the full text of her talk, see page 5.) After ICC Co-Chairperson David B. led Delegates in a roll call and flag ceremony, Delegates and their guests had the opportunity to tour the WSO and learn more about the work performed at the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

## Roll Call and Flag Ceremony

For the first roll call of the 22<sup>nd</sup> IAGSM, the Co-Chairperson invited each Delegate to introduce themselves and the structure they were representing, then place their country’s flag on a table with the other structures present and mark the geographic location of their structure’s GSO with a pin on a world map. A row of flags on the other side of the table represented the GSOs that could not be in attendance.

## Voting Procedures

By consensus, IAGSM Delegates decided that voting on motions would be done by confidential ballot and that substantial unanimity would be defined as a two-thirds majority. The Co-Chairperson then explained the procedure for submitting motions: motions

would be submitted in written format, then read aloud by the Co-Chairperson, after which the floor would be open for discussion.

Delegates voted by consensus to allow still photos to be taken during the IAGSM, provided permission was given by those being photographed and the photographs would not be posted on social media or otherwise online.

## Keynote Speaker

*Tracey S., International Services Manager,  
World Service Office*

It is an honor and privilege to be here as the keynote speaker.

The enormity is evident to me.

We hear in Al-Anon stay until the miracles happen.

Well, this is a miracle for me.

I recall the time when I physically walked and mentally crawled in desperation from my house to my first Al-Anon meeting, because my life had become unmanageable. A glimpse of hope appeared from listening to others and from very gratefully having Conference Approved Literature to take home. I began to attend meetings consistently, serving as Group Representative, becoming a District Representative, doing service with different positions in the New York South Area, and ultimately picking up the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) along the way.

Despite hearing the words “worldwide” and “international” in groups and business meetings and hearing that Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship, it was in reading the *Service Manual* that I first became more consciously aware of international Al-Anon, reading about something called the International Coordination Committee and the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting, or IAGSM. This led me to ask the New York South Delegate, “What is this ICC? How does this IAGSM represent international Al-Anon?”

My curiosity about the international fellowship stemmed from not just the perspective of Al-Anon, but also from the fact that, in case you have not worked it out from my accent, I am from England! I can still recall the conversation with the Delegate, as my heart was already saying, “How can I be of service to the international structures?” The journey was not the



path I could have predicted. I am thankful my Service Sponsor said, “The crystal ball does not work, so do not go looking!” Now, standing in front of you all at the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Al-Anon General Services Meeting, I could never have imagined my journey would bring me to this moment. With a huge amount of support from members like you, my Sponsors, Staff here at the World Service Office, and a tremendous amount of trust in my Higher Power, I have stayed for this miracle, and my hope is to continue to stay for more miracles to come!

In *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), Lois is quoted as saying at the 1983 World Service Conference, “Al-Anon is a program of love, and love is the primary motive in all our activities.”

I can only imagine the energy that this brought to the room. It is with this thought, as we are all here in the lobby of the home of Al-Anon, that we can embrace the courage, strength, and love that our Cofounders Lois and Anne brought into the program. The love will remain and motivate us as we journey through the next few days, unfolding the collective wisdom, experience, strength, and hope you all bring for the theme of “Nurturing Communication, Cooperation, and Connection Worldwide.” As conversations evolve, we are likely to recognize that while we are all unique and we all have differences, varying perspectives, an array of cultures, and perhaps different miracles we hope to happen, it is what brings us together that is most important. Our primary purpose is to be there when anyone reaches out for help from the family disease of alcoholism.

As I considered the Big Question, “Does your GSO consider the IAGSM purpose still relevant to Al-Anon as a whole?” and the framing, which has been shared with you all, I was drawn to the words “talking it through and reasoning it out.” I wondered what our new daily reader *A Little Time for Myself* (B-34) says on the subject, the same way I would look up a topic when I am in need of reflection when facing different life situations. I looked in the index and found the topic “talk to each other,” thinking, how wonderful is that? Then I thought, how amazing it would be if one listing falls on one of the days of the 2024 IAGSM? Well, my Higher Power had something better than that. The page for September 25, the opening day here at the WSO, has a reading on the exact topic I was looking for! So I do believe I was meant to share it with you today.

Page 269 reads:

“I had been in Al-Anon several years when I lost my husband to suicide. Initially, I could only repeat the Serenity Prayer over and over and attempt to find solace in family and friends. I felt like withdrawing completely into my pain, but I believe the dedication I had to practicing my program prior to this crisis allowed me to persevere.

“I could not have envisioned growing from such an experience, but the gifts of the program—including lessons from that trauma—continue to unfold. I am learning more about forgiveness, guilt, and regret, and about building a deeper relationship with my Higher Power.

“Wittingly and unwittingly, I often connect with people who are mourning the loss of a loved one. Truly sharing with others allows me to process the “what-ifs” and “if onlys” and place them in their proper perspective.

“Today’s Reminder:

“I never know when I will need support and solace from others. Al-Anon’s tools can aid healing in even the direst of circumstances.

“Whatever loss we may be grieving, with Al-Anon we don’t have to face it alone.”

–*Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29)

We will say the Serenity Prayer many times together over the next few days. I remember finding my serenity in those words; I could not learn it quick enough at the time! Now I take my time, sometimes taking a deep breath between each word, and by taking my time and pondering on every word, I can find an even deeper serenity. Recently, I lost my dear beloved dad. Death can certainly heighten those unacceptable behaviors of others. I needed the recovery in Al-Anon and the peace of the serenity prayer even more at this time. Boundaries were crossed, and I almost gave up my serenity to others. Fortunately, my Higher Power had a sense of humor and did for me what I could not do for myself by taking my voice away. So, instead of

following the almost uncontrollable urge to shout at those who had crossed those boundaries and caused distress to my dad in his final days, I was able to find peace and serenity within myself and ignore those that had created disruption, bring the love that motivates us, hug my dad to calm him, and tell him it was okay and I that I loved him. To my amazement, those disruptive individuals left the room without me having to utter even one word to them!

The reading says, “I am learning more about forgiveness, guilt, and regret and deepening my relationship with my Higher Power.” The operative words in this sentence, for me, are “I am learning more”; not that I *have* learned, but that I *am* learning more. Al-Anon is a program of change, and it is through this change that I continue to learn more. It is the one thing in my life that I do not have to graduate from. I am confident that we will learn more from each other over the next few days. It is likely we will need those pauses to say the Serenity Prayer and reflect once again on our worldwide connection, giving us the opportunity to reflect on what-ifs and if-onlys and place perspective on how we learn from what has passed, moving toward the future, charting the unknown, and evolving into what is needed collectively.

For some, as change occurs, there can be a sense of loss, even when the change is for the better. I have grieved many times the relationships that have been lost and situations that have passed or changed; even though I know it is for the better, it can take time. We will take time during our considerations, and, as I have learned and experienced, we do not have to do this alone. We can do this together.

As I reflect on the historically significant events that have occurred at previous IAGSMs and especially in Al-Anon as a whole, I find tremendous comfort and reassurance that although we may charter new ways forward, others have navigated and made significant choices that bring us to this IAGSM. It’s very much like the recovery I have experienced; after those early days of thinking that my life only had one direction, I came to a better understanding and realized that, in fact, I had many choices that I had not even begun to imagine!

At the time of the first IAGSM in 1980, there were 19 General Service Offices (GSOs). Seventeen countries attended, and there were 22 participating attendees. The first IAGSM established that the Equalized

Expense would be \$410.00, which was 25 percent of the full amount, \$1,645.

The Secretary at the first IAGSM shared her thoughts: “I often get the feeling when you write to the WSO in trying to develop your structure, you are ‘re-inventing the wheel.’ You are attempting to figure out something that has already been worked through elsewhere. I think this meeting is not a meeting where the World Service Office (WSO) is here to help you with all the answers but rather a vehicle whereby you can help each other. If this meeting can serve to bring you together, the same growth and sharing you get in a personal recovery sense from Al-Anon meetings you can get here at the General Services Meeting in a structural sense.” (1980 IAGSM Summary, p. 1)

Today we have 40 GSOs, 12 countries attending, and 18 voting Delegates. Each structure is eligible to have two voting Delegates. For the first time, we will experience a hybrid business meeting, in which there will be another 21 Delegates from an additional nine countries joining the IAGSM.

Much of what was shared in that very first IAGSM held in St. Louis, Missouri, United States is applicable to us today.

I have been exceedingly privileged these last few months to meet with many of you and a number of other countries that are only now beginning their journey of building their own structure. The International team often exclaim at how much some of these structures do with so little. We can easily take for granted the Conference Approved Literature we have at hand or the seemingly simple act of connecting to the internet, either for a meeting or to find more information about the Al-Anon program. Another observation that has struck me is the tremendous willingness to do service—the desire to be there when anyone reaches out. As our founders and others have walked before us, today it is you and your structures that have inspired other countries as they hear about what has been accomplished and continue to grow. Just like when I first came to a meeting, the sense of wanting what others had led me to “Keep Coming Back.” I believe we can draw inspiration from those structures that have a willingness to do service. As Step Twelve tells us, in order to keep what we have, we need to give it away. As you all have given in service, many evolving structures have a willingness to give it away.

Back to “love”: it was the love of one alcoholic that brought me into Al-Anon; it is the love for myself that keeps me in Al-Anon. As my understanding of the family disease of alcoholism has grown, so has the number of alcoholics I know and how many of my family and loved ones have been affected by it. This has led to my story changing over the years from when I first came into Al-Anon. My understanding of the needs of international countries has also grown. Without a doubt, our understanding will grow together. Service is the rich ground in which we find so much recovery.

It is the common bond in meetings, and especially in service, that gives me the sense of belonging and being understood that I had not found elsewhere. There were no “English” groups, and often my accent seemed to create a barrier. You see, I could build the barriers and come up with the reasons why I did not belong. I now understand that what creates unity and harmony, no matter what our own barriers are, is focusing on our common bond. My sense of belonging is where I will find recovery.

I grew up in England, married, had three sons, and got divorced. I knew alcoholism existed on all sides of the family, but I did not recognize how it had affected me and those around me until many years in Al-Anon.

My mum’s brother was the first known and spoken about alcoholic in the family; he was a high-functioning alcoholic, so I knew there were many different kinds of alcoholics and thought I would be able to recognize one with no problem. Apparently not!

After divorcing—well, it was actually before I divorced—I found myself well and truly committed to the emotional rollercoaster and merry-go-round of being in a relationship with full-blown active alcoholism. I jumped right into all those behaviors we speak of so often; plenty of material to work on with a Sponsor and in a Fourth-Step inventory!

To get the alcoholic to stop drinking, I moved countries, sold my house, personally invested in a visa, and married (well, that made the visa easier for both of us). We were living and working together, and our families had met and we were very much in “love.” I knew when I got married that alcoholism was active, but I thought I had the power to change that!

I lost all sense of myself and did not know what I was doing or what I was going to do. I was sure that by going to Al-Anon meetings, I was going to find out how I could leave my husband and get on with my life.

I have come to understand that my attitude changes my behaviors, and I have more choices!

I like to consider the family tree of Al-Anon and find how I connect to the Cofounders of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Lois and Anne. I am so very grateful for those members who have gone before us; it is the knowledge that the Al-Anon program has worked for so many and the combined wisdom of sharing experience, strength, and hope that gives me so much strength in those moments of desperate need.

Some of the early meetings I attended in New York had members who worked in the office in New York with Lois, and my Sponsor had met Lois. It is in the connection and the sense of belonging to people in Al-Anon where I have found incredible strength to overcome situations I could never have imagined.

More recently, working at the WSO, I have had the privilege of meeting and being friends with so many who have given and continue to give service to Al-Anon Family

Groups, building on the legacies that began so many years ago. As I continue to grow in my own recovery, there are moments when I find myself saying, “What incredible wisdom—how did these members in the early days consider so much and be so wise?”

During the active alcoholism, my two youngest sons witnessed much of the crazy living. My youngest son has suffered the effects most of all. This has resulted in us having very little contact in the last six years, and I have only seen him once. Without the love and peace of this program, I do not know how I would have come to accept his choices and trust in his Higher Power to take care of him. It was his birthday recently. I find ways to remember the happy times we spent together and hold hope in my heart that he will find the grace to forgive me for bringing alcoholism into our immediate family home.

It was my oldest son who attempted to give comfort to me in these days of despair by telling me that alcoholism was a disease. It took some time to really accept this.

Over the years of active alcoholism, I had attempted to keep to my side of the street and set boundaries to protect my sanity. These have not always been met with enthusiasm, but that’s okay—the alcoholics do not have to like or approve of my boundaries.

When faced with situations where I am not in control but where I can be affected by the consequences and



actions of others, it is not the easiest process to make decisions and set boundaries, especially when, once again, this cunning and baffling disease has twists and turns we cannot predict. I see how painful it can be for others when there is no recovery, spiritually, physically, or mentally. My choices have changed over the years, and I can detach with love, knowing that not everyone finds recovery. I do know that I will be okay and that I can recognize my own behaviors and choose to no longer participate by jumping on that merry-go-round.

I have turned many pages over since joining Al-Anon. I have a family tree full of alcoholics, and I am okay with that! I can detach with love and make decisions to take care of myself, and the most wonderful part is that I am powerless over the rest of it. I am not responsible for the actions or choices of the alcoholics in my life, whether they are in my life or not. I am not responsible for those who have suffered from the family disease of alcoholism, but I can be there when anyone reaches out.

It is through this continued journey and further understanding that I know I am not alone. I am so grateful to those who have passed on so much to me, and I accept that I have a responsibility, together with all of you, to continue to pass on what Al-Anon has given to so many.

The Twelve Traditions, as quoted in the *Service Manual*: “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.”

These principles and the opportunity to participate in global Al-Anon truly inspire me. Working with established structures or meeting with just one person who sees the need to start Al-Anon in their country is in many ways a reflection of my own journey. It reminds me of the importance of autonomy for each structure; seeing our own independence when being fully self-supporting deepens compassion toward ourselves and others. Compassion allows us to take a searching and fearless moral inventory, and as we move forward both personally and with the IAGSM, we do so with compassion for ourselves and others.

It is my hope that we can consider the love that motivates, as Lois shared: “Al-Anon is a program of love, and love is the primary motive in all our activities.”

As I experienced that spiritual awakening telling me to be part of the International team, I am anticipating more spiritual moments over the next few days. We can trust in our Higher Powers to come together collectively as we grow in the recovery of doing service and embrace “Nurturing Communication, Cooperation, and Connection Worldwide.”

I have learned so much in these past few months, and I have so much more to learn; like my Al-Anon program, it is a marathon, not a sprint. As we charter the course for evolving international structures and Al-Anon as a whole...

We will do this together!

# GENERAL SESSIONS

## Envisioning the Future of Al-Anon

*Aino S., Finland*

The Delegate from Finland began her presentation with a brief history of Al-Anon in Finland. The first Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) group in Iceland was established in 1948 and included some spouses of alcoholics; in 1953, the first official Al-Anon Finland group, called “Alva,” was held, and by the end of the year there were three active groups in Finland. Al-Anon Finland celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023. Finland saw its highest number of groups in 1994, and since then the structure has experienced a steady decline in participation, leading the GSO to explore possible changes to the structure or new strategies for bringing the message of Al-Anon to families and friends of alcoholics in Finland.

As part of this process, the Delegate led a workshop on “remembering the future,” intended to stimulate new ways of thinking and changes in behavior. This workshop was first held at the European Zonal meeting in 2023 and subsequently brought to the 2024 World Service Conference (WSC) by members of the ICC (see the *2024 World Service Conference Summary*, p. 12). Based on the “What If” triangle used in future forecasting, the technique helps predict future scenarios using three key elements: hard empathy, or gaining an understanding of others’ perspectives, including those that may be vastly different from our own; remembering the future, or visualizing future possibilities as if they were already real and attainable; and predicting the past, or examining past events for lessons that can be used to understand the future and aid decision-making.

Participants were invited to envision a future scenario using three prompts: something Al-Anon-related you love to do, a person you like, and a place you have been at least once. While imagining these three elements together, they were asked to consider the following questions: What steps did you take to get to this place? What needed to change and how was it changed? What was familiar? What doubts or fears might you have had when you started and how did you overcome them? After the workshop, Delegates took time to share their imagined futures with the group and discuss the questions posed.

## World Service Office Updates

*Vali F., Sarah S., Tracey S.,  
International Coordination Committee*

### International Team

WSO Staff members provided the IAGSM Delegates with updates about their respective departments’ work supporting international Al-Anon. First, the International team shared about changes in Staff, beginning with Tracey S.’s promotion to International Services Manager and inclusion on the ICC. Two new Staff were assigned to support Regular Structure Meetings (RSMs) with international structures, and the WSO is currently seeking candidates to fill the International Specialist member position upon the retirement of Anne P. The International team continues to hold regular Global Gatherings for international structures to meet virtually with the WSO, which are attended by an average of 40-50 structures and sometimes up to 200 members. The WSO is currently planning the themes for the 2025 Global Gatherings; the next meeting topic will be part two of “Board Legal and Traditional Responsibilities.”

### WSO Updates

Vali F., WSO Executive Director, gave an update on the current Strategic Plan Strategies relevant to international structures. First, Staff have been exploring approaches to the eBooks Globally Strategy that could address international structures’ concerns that international sales of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) ebooks are affecting their revenue (see 2022 IAGSM Summary, page 16). After investigation by the Accounting, Publications, and Digital Communications teams, the final approach recommended was for the WSO to publish ebooks of CAL in English, French, and Spanish. When these sales occur in GSOs with mutually approved legal agreements, these structures would receive the net revenue of the sales. Strategies for the sale of ebooks globally in languages other than English, French, and Spanish are beyond the scope of the current project.

The next Strategy discussed was the Core Systems Overhaul, which was instigated by the discovery that the current information management and accounting systems used by the WSO do not support multilingual

needs and require replacement. This overhaul will involve updates to the technology used for group records, accounting, literature, inventory, and AFG Connects, among others; the WSO is currently seeking input from WSC and IAGSM members about their needs for the new system.

The CAL Globally Strategy is intended to increase international structures' affordable and timely access to translated CAL and to discourage pirating of CAL. To this end, the CAL Globally team identified two pilot project scenarios to support structures having the autonomy first to purchase CAL from other structures and second to print CAL in their own structures. Two structures have signed agreements for a one-year trial of the first scenario, and two structures have agreed to participate in a separate trial regarding the second scenario.

Finally, Sarah S., Director of Programs, discussed the Electronic Alateen Validation & Implementation Planning Strategy, for which two requirements have been created: the Global Electronic Alateen Safety Minimums (Global EASM) for international structures and the Electronic Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (EASBR) for WSC members. Following WSO attorney review, the next step for this Strategy is creating an international task force to review the Global EASM for international language accessibility; the Policy Committee will then review the EASM and EASBR, and an implementation phase will begin, including a certification tracking system, training modules, and communication plan. The *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* currently hosts five English-language and one Polish-language electronic Alateen meeting, all of which are open to Alateens anywhere in the world.

## 2024 WSC

The 2024 World Service Conference saw the release of *Healing within Our Alcoholic Relationships* (P-95) and voted to approve the creation of a new piece of CAL on finances in recovery. A writing guideline to collect sharings for this piece is being developed, and a writing guideline for the upcoming piece on sponsorship and service sponsorship is available on [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org). Sharings in languages other than English, French, and Spanish accompanied by an English translation are encouraged.

The Revitalizing Alateen Task Force presented their proposed Alateen public outreach campaign to the 2024 WSC, focusing on outreach to professionals and

including templates for flyers, public outreach guides and suggested activities, and a presentation with accompanying script, all adaptable to individual structure needs. As of September 2024, the materials were going through the approval process.

The Conference also approved proposed Policy Committee changes to the "Policy Handbook" in the *2022-2025 Al-Anon Service Manual* (P-24/27), including redistribution of the policies in the "Local Services" section and an update to the "Choosing a Group's Name" section, emphasizing the importance of inclusion and encouraging groups to select their participant focus on the group registration form rather than including specific designations such as "Parents" or "Men's/Women's" in their group name.

For more information on the 2024 WSC, see the *2024 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46).

## Events

The 2023 Al-Anon International Convention hosted over 4,000 participants, including 127 virtual attendees, from around the world. Registration for the 2025 Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention with Al-Anon Participation is currently open, to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of A.A.

## General Information

The WSO clarified the status of global licensing for images to use for social media posts. WSO social media posts may be reposted by international structures but not edited or altered in any way. The availability of editable images using globally licensed media is being investigated.

The WSO held its triennial membership survey in 2024. Four international structures participated by requesting materials the WSO made available to inform members about the survey. The largest international response included 172 completed surveys from members in France.

Guidelines the WSO is implementing around the use of artificial intelligence (AI) were also discussed. Structures were encouraged to research and consider the protection of anonymity when using AI transcription tools in Al-Anon-related meetings and the security of the web hosting services used by their structures so as to prevent AI scraping of confidential materials.



## Electronic Groups

*Agnieszka S., Poland*

The Delegate from Poland began her presentation with an overview of the GSO's Electronic Polish-speaking Region three-year trial, which began in May 2022. The Region currently consists of 11 registered groups, with nine videoconference groups, one phone group, and one group that runs continuously over instant message. Regions in the Poland GSO can have up to two representatives; the Electronic Region is still in the process of finding a representative for the Region.

The three-year trial has benefited the GSO by providing members in previously underserved areas of Poland with opportunities to attend meetings and do service, as well as reaching Polish-speaking members in countries outside of the GSO.

The Delegate also described some challenges faced by the Electronic Region, including difficulties in filling service positions, the increase of newcomers in electronic groups leading to misconceptions or lack of information about program principles, and financial trouble with groups without bank accounts who had difficulty covering expenses. To combat these challenges, the Poland GSO has begun running workshops for online groups to increase knowledge and encourage service, as well as facilitating outreach by more experienced members to electronic groups for the purposes of support and service sponsorship.

After her presentation, the Delegate led IAGSM members in a visualization exercise focused on possible avenues of support for electronic groups in Delegates' own structures, then had participants break up into small groups to discuss their ideas along with past wins and challenges in their structures. Delegates shared on their structures' approaches to electronic groups, including structures that linked their electronic groups to geographic Regions and to electronic Regions, GSOs that registered electronic groups to the WSO and those that registered to their own structures, and different approaches to registering independent online groups and hybrid or partially online groups.

## Conflict Resolution Panel

*Liz A. and Rana S., New Zealand*

*Una S. and Dagny D., Iceland*

*Jeanette T., Denmark*

The Conflict Resolution panel began with a presentation from the Delegates from New Zealand, who explained the conflict resolution tools adopted by their GSO when it experienced internal conflict and resignations within the Board and Conference in 2005. Based on the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts* kit (K-71), the structure instituted new practices for Board meetings and development as detailed below.

Board meetings in the New Zealand GSO begin by reading the Board purpose and holding a "catch-up" round to encourage connection between members. Displaying the Step, Traditions, and Concepts prominently during the meeting helps emphasize spiritual goals and can be used for reference. After a meeting, Board members ask themselves and each other what went well and what could have been done better and hold a group dinner. Outside of Board meetings, the GSO holds regular Board development workshops led by experienced members to develop shared knowledge and experience.

To ensure stability and longevity, the GSO also developed stronger qualifications for Board members, including experience in the structure and knowledge of the Legacies, and adopted in-depth processes for recruitment and succession planning. Another tool described by the New Zealand Delegates was a double-sided "stop sign" for members to hold up during meetings when discussion was getting off-track or when they had a potentially helpful suggestion.

Next, the Delegates from Iceland discussed their structure's approach to conflict resolution, which emphasizes open-mindedness and freedom of expression. They presented conflict resolution principles based on the Twelve Traditions:

- Everyone has an equal voice (Tradition One)
- Our fellow members also want the best for our program (Tradition Five)
- We need to work together to resolve our problems (Tradition Nine)
- We keep our focus on what unites us and avoid personality-related conflicts (Tradition Twelve)



Finally, the Delegate from Denmark shared three instances of conflict in the structure and the techniques used to resolve them. The first example concerned the Denmark Al-Anon hotline, which was out of service for six months after a service cancellation and confusion over management responsibilities. The Board turned to Concept Ten to resolve this issue and focused on carefully defining service responsibilities to avoid future problems with the hotline. Board members also worked the Steps in regard to their role in the conflict and made amends to Committee members.

The Board experienced another conflict relating to distribution of CAL within their structure when a trusted servant tasked with this responsibility could not fulfill their assigned role. Groups and members within the structure contacted the Board about this issue, and the Board sought experience, strength, and hope from the ICC and other structures at the 2023 European Zonal Meeting. After consideration, the Board was able to address the issue lovingly with the trusted servant and was able to transfer responsibility to a new member through service sponsorship.

The last conflict arose when the GSO became aware of a meeting using Alcoholics Anonymous's Big Book instead of Conference Approved Literature. Confusion over the right of decision led to conflict between the GSO's Information Service Committee and the Board of Trustees over which body was responsible for addressing the issue. The GSO turned to the Traditions and *Service Manual* for guidance and encouraged the group to use CAL so that the structure could continue including their group on meeting lists.

## Public Outreach: Engaging the Professional Community

*Helen G. and Tanya J., Australia*

This presentation detailed the work done by the Australian GSO to spread the message of Al-Anon through public outreach (referred to in Australia as public information). Public outreach is one of the three main focuses of the Australia GSO Board's Strategic Plan, and the approach to outreach is based in the principle of attraction, not promotion. One major public outreach project was the al-anon.org.au website, which was developed over three years to provide easily accessible and appealing information about the Al-Anon program, including a dedicated "Information

for Professionals" page, which includes multiple Community Service Announcement videos, frequently asked questions, membership survey data, and free downloads of *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37) and the *Families Facing Alcoholism* Australian public outreach magazine. The GSO also maintains a LinkedIn profile to connect professionals in different spheres to the message and purpose of Al-Anon.

Australia's Public Information Committee distributes a public information calendar to groups in their structure, coordinating public outreach efforts with different focuses each month and encouraging service in the area of public outreach, as well as a public information newsletter and "How to Do It" service tool for members. Members also participate in Alcoholics Anonymous conventions and other alcoholism-related webinars and events, such as the Australian and New Zealand Addiction Conference.

The Australian Delegates also discussed their approach to the issue of anonymity and Tradition Eleven in relation to public outreach. Speakers use pseudonyms and conceal faces and voices when identifying themselves as Al-Anon members, or they are introduced as representatives of or volunteers for Al-Anon rather than members and avoid discussing their personal connection to the program. The service tools *Guideline for Members Interested in Public Speaking* (G-1) and the *2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) provide guidance for members on maintaining anonymity in public outreach.

## Working with Boards within their Structure

*Rayanne D., France*

*Irma A. and Martha A., Mexico*

Delegates from France and Mexico both presented on the structure and workings of their GSO's Board of Trustees, based on questions from international structures. The Delegate from France began by describing the legal responsibilities of the French Board, which are based on the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and relate to the management of Al-Anon France as a nonprofit organization. A maximum of seven Trustees can serve on the Board; currently, it is made up of four Trustees and meets four times a year. As a small structure, France operates its GSO through a number of volunteer committees and has no Executive

Committee or salaried employees; each committee is overseen by a designated Trustee.

Some of the recent successes of the French Board included the revitalization of smaller, underserved Areas via reorganization of the structure's geographical divisions; strengthening national committees by reimagining the requirements for service on committees and emphasizing service sponsorship; and a successful public outreach campaign targeting national media outlets with a physical press kit, which garnered a 50 percent response rate. The Board has faced challenges increasing the visibility of Al-Anon in France, encouraging service in members, and retaining newcomers.

The Delegates from Mexico illustrated the work of Trustees within a larger structure; Mexico is made up of six Regions and contains over 3,000 groups. Their Board consists of six Regional Trustees, three Trustees at Large, and a manager. The Trustees meet quarterly, and an Executive Committee is responsible for routine management decisions between Board meetings. The structure is also served by a GSO with 16 paid staff, including financial, group services, and literature production departments.

## Seventh Tradition

*Simeona R., Katja S., Slovenia*

The Delegates from Slovenia began their presentation on the Seventh Tradition with an introduction to Al-Anon in Slovenia. Since Slovenia's first Al-Anon group formed in 1990, the structure has expanded to cover 35 groups, including 11 virtual groups, and became a GSO in 2016. Slovenia's meeting guidelines encourage groups to read from the *Seventh Tradition* pamphlet (S-21) before contributions are taken during meetings.

The Slovenia GSO emphasizes a transparent approach to finances and presents a thorough explanation of the structure's financial standings at each National Service Conference. Currently, the GSO's reserve fund covers three years of operating expenses.

The Delegates also presented their findings from a survey about the Seventh Tradition they conducted within their structure. The survey found that 76 percent of groups read CAL quotes about the Seventh Tradition during meetings and that members most commonly donated one to two euros each meeting. When asked about their personal experiences with the Seventh Tradition, members cited the feeling of belonging and gratitude, appreciation for autonomy, and practicing abundance as motivations for contributing financially during meetings.

# THE BIG QUESTION

*Does your GSO consider the IAGSM purpose still relevant to Al-Anon as a whole?*

Prior to the 2024 IAGSM, Delegates were provided with a framing and background for the Big Question: “Does your GSO consider the IAGSM purpose still relevant to Al-Anon as a whole?” The question was prompted by the low number of registrations for the 2024 IAGSM, which was attended by only 18 Delegates even after the reduction by nearly half of the Equalized Expense cost for Delegates to attend the meeting. The ICC recognized the need to investigate the reason for the decrease in registrations over recent years and to ask international structures whether the event was still meeting their needs. To ensure that all decisions were made using input from international structures, the ICC decided to focus both the Big Question workshop and the hybrid business meeting on generative discussion about the future of the IAGSM.

To prepare for these discussions, GSOs attending in person were asked to gather input from their structures to present at the Big Question workshop, and GSOs not attending the IAGSM or attending virtually were asked to complete a survey about the questions under discussion to maximize input from all international structures. Delegates were given five questions to take back to their structures, which were then discussed as a group during the first Big Question workshop.

## **What benefits/value is your GSO receiving by attending the IAGSM?**

Many Delegates expressed the feeling of participation and unity in the worldwide fellowship as a significant benefit of attending the IAGSM. The ability to communicate face-to-face with other international GSOs as well as with the WSO created a sense of equality and cooperation, allowed the voice of international Al-Anon to be heard, and provided a stronger network for all GSOs. Other Delegates in attendance shared that the IAGSM strengthened their commitment to service and was an example of Step Twelve in action.

## **What unmet needs has your GSO identified related to the IAGSM's purpose?**

Given the importance expressed by Delegates of the principle of participation as described by Concept Four, many felt that the voices and experience of

international structures could be integrated more deliberately into the World Service Conference. More diverse representation of GSOs, including those who have more difficulty finding IAGSM Delegates who can meet the requirement for English proficiency, was another unmet desire expressed by Delegates, along with increased communication from the WSO to international structures and vice-versa.

## **What ideas does your GSO have for meeting unmet needs from the IAGSM that would revitalize the event?**

To address the low attendance and lack of international representation, Delegates suggested providing translation or interpretation for GSOs with fewer English speakers; more consistently communicating the benefits and purpose of the IAGSM to international structures, including with a prompter release of the IAGSM Summary; increased opportunities for remote participation and participation from emerging structures; and more diversity in location, such as potentially holding an IAGSM in Latin America, which contains many GSOs but has had little representation at the most recent meetings.

## **Are there alternate ways your GSO is obtaining the benefits that you once received or are currently receiving by attending the IAGSM?**

Delegates mentioned events like the Global Gatherings and Zonal meetings as increasing opportunities for networking and communication between structures, which was one stated benefit of the IAGSM; however, many felt that the IAGSM still represented a unique opportunity for global participation that has not been replaced by other meetings.

## **Are there external commitments affecting your structure's decision to send a Delegate(s) to the IAGSM?**

The most common barrier to attendance was financial issues, including those related to the Equalized Expense, the cost of travel through booking agents, and visa and travel issues related to global current events. Though the reduced cost of the Equalized Expense did

not lead to more registrations in 2024, some structures expressed the feeling that the reduction may have increased participation if it had been announced earlier, with more time allowed for structures to plan for travel.

After this discussion and a break, the International Coordination Committee presented Delegates with a summary of key themes from the first workshop to bring to the hybrid business meeting and asked for input from Delegates about any issues they felt should be added, altered, or removed from the list. The Delegates present agreed to move forward with the following conclusions based on the first workshop:

- that the IAGSM is still relevant to worldwide Al-Anon;
- that the purpose and organization of the IAGSM needs to be refined; and
- that the IAGSM as a body should make decisions during the hybrid business meeting about actions to refine this purpose.

The Delegates passed a motion to approve this agenda (see Motion #1) and assigned the tasks of introducing each question and its key themes for those attending the business meeting virtually.



## HYBRID BUSINESS MEETING

Before the start of the business meeting, motions were passed to admit the GSOs from Russia and Austria into the IAGSM (see Motions #2 and #3).

The hybrid business meeting was attended in person by 18 Delegates and virtually by 15 Delegates, including eight structures with solely virtual attendance: Argentina, Austria, Guatemala, Italy, Peru, Russia, Spain, and South Africa. In addition to 33 Delegates, seven ICC members also attended the hybrid business meeting. To begin the meeting, Delegates and ICC members read a summary of the five questions and key themes discussed during the Big Question workshop, as well as the following intentions for the business meeting, as approved by the in-person attendees in the workshop:

- That the IAGSM in-person event is still relevant for GSOs attending and those who submitted feedback. The benefits from attending IAGSM outweigh the issues.
- That the IAGSM purpose and the way the IAGSM is planned needs to evolve. The unmet GSO needs in the IAGSM's purpose and planning process illustrate that changes of some sort are needed. Discuss what those changes might be and how to proceed.
- That the IAGSM passed a motion for IAGSM to make decisions during hybrid business meeting to take actions to achieve these intentions.

The in-person and virtual participants were given an opportunity to discuss the key themes of the workshop and suggest their own ideas for meeting unmet needs of international structures related to the IAGSM. One topic brought up by multiple Delegates was the possibility of fully virtual and/or hybrid IAGSMs, as opposed to in-person IAGSMs with some hybrid components;

some structures expressed that the only way they could send Delegates to future IAGSMs would be virtually, and others shared experience from their GSOs of hosting virtual or hybrid national service meetings.

In the second session, Delegates were asked to vote on which issues they felt were most important to the IAGSM going forward. The highest-voted issue was about possible alternative funding options for international Delegates to attend IAGSM; a motion was proposed to form a thought force of international Delegates and ICC members to explore this issue, including investigating the specific funding areas that caused the biggest strain for GSOs in attending the IAGSM. The second issue was to reimagine the IAGSM purpose to be a decision-making/recommendation body around international structure matters; a motion was proposed to form a thought force with ICC and IAGSM members to explore the relevant issues to international structures and possible options for achieving this intention. There was not sufficient time within the agenda to fully discuss and vote upon this motion.

In the final session, IAGSM members passed a motion to approve a two-thirds majority as substantial unanimity. A motion was proposed to change the voting procedures so that each international structure, rather than each Delegate, would receive one vote; after a brief discussion, this motion was tabled until the 2026 IAGSM. Motions were passed to develop thought forces to explore alternative funding options for IAGSM Delegates and to approve interim virtual meetings of the IAGSM to further explore the Big Question issues discussed above. For details of all the motions passed during the hybrid business meeting, see page 17.

## MOTIONS

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### In-Person IAGSM

Motion #1: To approve the Hybrid Business Meeting agenda as amended in the working proposal.

22 YES / 0 NO

MOTION PASSED

Motion #2: To admit Russia as a member of the IAGSM.

22 YES / 0 NO

MOTION PASSED

Motion #3: To admit Austria as a member of the IAGSM.

22 YES / 0 NO

MOTION PASSED

Motion #4: Each Al-Anon structure officially registered to and in attendance at the IAGSM has one vote.

The motion was tabled after discussion.

### Hybrid IAGSM Business Meeting

Motion #5: Develop a Thought Force including some ICC and GSO representatives to investigate alternate funding options for future IAGSMs.

37 YES / 0 NO

MOTION PASSED

Motion #6: That interim meetings of IAGSM members are held virtually before the 2026 IAGSM to further discuss the 'Big Question' matters raised at the 2024 IAGSM.

37 YES / 0 NO

MOTION PASSED

Motion #7: To allow an interim virtual meeting between the 2024 and 2026 IAGSM to select the host country for the 2026 IAGSM.

37 YES / 0 NO

MOTION PASSED

## SPIRITUAL SPEAKER

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*Agnieszka S., Poland*

My name is Agnieszka and I'm a grateful Al-Anon member. I'm happy to share my experience, strength, and hope with you. I have been in Al-Anon for almost six years. At the same time, I feel as if I have been a member for a decade longer, like 16 years, because from the very first moments in Al-Anon, I fully immersed myself in the Al-Anon program, its tools, and service.

I came to Al-Anon to recover from the effects of the alcoholism of a person dear to my heart. I found out about the Al-Anon program and the possibility of getting a Sponsor from two different A.A. members. I will forever be grateful to them and to Alcoholics Anonymous for spreading the word about Al-Anon's existence and the program.

When I came to my first Al-Anon meeting, my intention was clear. I wanted to find a Sponsor to work the program with her. I got my Sponsor after my first meeting. I immediately got the literature and became very engaged in the groups. For the first six months, I attended five, six meetings a week. Very soon, I started

serving as a host, making tea, coffee, preparing materials for the meeting, and greeting people, and eventually I started facilitating meetings. After a couple of months, I stepped up to serve as a Group Representative for one of the groups I attended. As a Group Rep, I regularly attended Region meetings for more than two years, learning about how the Region works and about the Al-Anon structure. Then, I started serving as Policy Committee Secretary, which helped me to learn even more about our program, the structure, and General Services, because I was writing protocols and summaries from every single meeting. Thanks to being Secretary, I was granted permission to record the meetings. So actually, I went through every meeting at least twice as I listened to the recordings. I've learned so much valuable information. I'm bringing it up as service in Al-Anon has always been fundamental to my recovery.

Today, I have the honor of sharing my experience regarding my relationship with Higher Power, which has been evolving over decades. In my childhood,

my grandma introduced me to the concept of Higher Power and told me that Higher Power was God. As a child I took it fully as a fact and didn't question it. And so, as far back as I remember, I was a believer. I was a person of faith. I believed that God existed. The next phase of my relationship with God was that He was threatening me and wanted to punish me. This feeling was due to the fact that my mum, my grandma, and other family members would often threaten me with God. They would say that God would punish me for everything: being imperfect, making a mistake, being naughty, not listening to them, doing anything wrong. And so, I was brought up with this idea that God is a strict judge and a punisher, and I got scared of God.

Then, I had a phase of my relationship with my Higher Power in which I was sad and angry at Him. I was asking questions like, "Why? Why aren't my parents loving me? Why do they punish me? Why do they beat me so severely every day?" Because it was like that in my household in my childhood. I kept crying and asking questions like, "Why is God punishing me like this? What wrong did I do as a child to deserve such punishment?" I felt devastated. And then, my relationship with God was different, because I stopped asking him these questions. Instead, I created a list of wishes and favors that I would like for Him to do for me. They were not just wishes but demands, like "I would like to get this and that and this and that." And I kept asking and asking and asking and asking and asking, and that was it.

Next, my relationship with God was that I started living a life of gratitude, because my first Sponsor suggested for me to step up for service. I did it eagerly, as I heard at my first meeting that when you share, you're going to recover faster, and I said, "Okay, so I'm going to share." And then someone said, "When you engage in service, you're going to create a fast track to recovery," and I was like, "Okay, so I'm going to really engage in service." And I did. Then, my Sponsor suggested for me to create a gratitude list and write down ten things, events, or people that I was grateful for each evening and read the list the next morning. She asked me to do it as long as we discussed the Steps together, which took us approximately six months. I found this tool so valuable that I decided to make this gratitude list for at least two years. I was consistent with it, and over those two years, every single day, I wrote down ten things that I was grateful for. It helped me to shift my focus and perspective to

become grateful and happy about what I had, avoiding being resentful and sad about the things I didn't have. From my experience, I found it very valuable. So my relationship with God started shifting, changing, and I was more thankful—thankful for my heart pumping blood, for the gift of life, and even for challenges, because they helped me to make progress even faster. I've learned so many valuable things about myself, about other people, about the world, and about life from my challenges that I started seeing them as opportunities. Therefore, I did my best to live the Al-Anon program and stay in touch with Al-Anon members on an every-day basis, not just at the meetings.

After finishing my service as Policy Committee Secretary, I applied for a recommendation from my Region to become the Alternate International Delegate. The International Delegate really needed support, and there was no one in this service in my country at the time. The Region didn't give me the recommendation, and it was a very challenging experience for me, because I didn't understand the decision as I met the necessary requirements. At the same time, I'm a person that doesn't give up. By serving on the Policy Committee, I learned the Al-Anon structure and services in practice even more. A year and a half later, I applied again, and this time I received the recommendation required for me to send my presentation to the Nomination Committee and become a candidate at the annual conference. So, I fulfilled the steps to becoming an International Delegate, and in 2023 I became one. I have been in service as the International Delegate for two and a half years, and I am beyond thankful for how much I've learned about myself, about Al-Anon, and about life through this service.

I treat my Al-Anon family like my second family, my family of choice. I'm so happy to be here and to know all of you. I just couldn't wait to come here. It was so important for me to meet you in person. This makes me reflect on how, with the help of my Higher Power and Al-Anon program tools, I shifted my perspective and my perception of events, life, and the world.

The Serenity Prayer is the key for me, as my goal every day, in every way, is to be serene and courageous and pray for the wisdom that I will be able to differentiate between the things that I can and cannot control.

The current relationship between me and my Higher Power is different. I feel that God is present in my life every day, in every way, and in every moment.

Everywhere I go, I'm constantly recalling, reminding myself that my Higher Power is with me, accompanying me wherever I go, whatever I do, in challenging times and in times of great opportunities and successes.

I will forever be grateful that a year ago, I was suddenly left by my alcoholic. I had no income, no savings, no money, and was undergoing three treatments. Today, I'm already divorced and wish him the best from the bottom of my heart, handing him over to his Higher Power. This is possible thanks to the Al-Anon

program, the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts that I had the opportunity to work on with Sponsors and do my best to apply in everyday life.

Thank you so much for letting me share this with you today. It might have been imperfect, but it was definitely progress. At the same time, I'm not a robot. I'm a human being, and that's what makes me imperfect. One of my favorite Al-Anon slogans is "Progress Not Perfection." So thank you so much once again. I feel so much love and gratitude for you. Thank you.

## REFLECTIONS

"We have to get more people in the room to experience what we've just experienced. Difficult conversations were had, but how amazing is it that we can have those conversations? We can talk about our frustrations and do it in an environment where we know we won't be criticized, that there won't be punitive action for speaking up. Al-Anon is the only place I know where that happens, and I'm incredibly grateful to be part of it. I feel very privileged to have been part of this very historic process."

"This is my first IAGSM, and it has been a great experience to feel equal and like I have something to offer, and I've been given so much in return. It feels like a demonstration of putting principles above personalities. No matter the flavor of the debate, we are safe to express ourselves and our opinions, and the debate is for our common welfare. Here, I'm learning that my voice does matter, and I don't have to win in order to feel heard."

"I was a very shy girl who would hide or sit in the last row in school. I am no longer in the dark. Al-Anon and God have brought me to the light and given me the opportunity to be here today and be privileged among many members to be with these beautiful people. Thank you all for being part of my life."

"I have so much gratitude to be part of this really amazing event. I told my son we were having sessions from 8 AM to 8 PM, and he said, 'Mom, are you crazy?' I said, 'This is the thing that helps me not be crazy.' I am so grateful to my Higher Power and all of you that I could be a part of this."

"It's been an amazing eight years as Delegate. I've always found love and care at the IAGSM, and I've always found that no matter how much I was disagreeing with someone, we could talk and reason things out, and we could stand with our arms around each other. That to me is Al-Anon at its best. I've never experienced anything in service like I experienced yesterday and today. As I leave this service, I feel that the IAGSM is in such safe hands."

"As much as I'm grateful to be here at this IAGSM today, I believe that it'll be in a few years when we look back at this meeting that we'll really understand its meaning for our community."

"When I got to the hotel 31 hours after leaving home, someone in the lobby told me, 'Thank you for your service. Your organization has helped my family enormously.' That's how this worldwide fellowship reaches so many people."

"We don't need more vitality; we just want more people to share in this amazing feeling of hope and not-aloneness. I don't feel like I do anything alone here. Al-Anon is in such kind, caring, supportive, optimistic hands, it can do nothing but grow."