

Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention

G-7

When Al-Anon and Alateen members are planning to participate in an A.A. convention, whether at the district, Area, or A.A. regional level, it is well to remember that Al-Anon is present at the convention by invitation. Our spiritual principles, expressed in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service, are practiced in all aspects of Al-Anon's participation in the convention.

Al-Anon, almost from its beginning, has participated in A.A. events. Such participation often led to the growth of Al-Anon, the added success of the A.A. convention, and an enhanced spirit of cooperation between both fellowships.

It is through the application of our Traditions that this spirit of cooperation is encouraged. Tradition Six states that: ". . . Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous." The basic ingredients for a successful convention, as in all our service work, can be found in the application of all our Traditions: unity, reliance on our Higher Power, and the need to place principles above personalities.

Preliminary Procedures

When A.A. invites Al-Anon and Alateen members to participate in an A.A. event, the members bring the proposal to the Al-Anon district meeting or Area World Service Committee for consideration of whether Al-Anon will participate in the event. An Area-wide event should be approved as an Al-Anon event by the Al-Anon Area Assembly.

When A.A. invites Al-Anon to participate with its own program, A.A. provides Al-Anon with meeting space and a budgeted amount for specific expenses (speakers, publicity, volunteer sign-up, etc.). A.A. keeps all income from registrations. A.A. retains any excess income and is responsible for any losses that may occur. When A.A. offers to share a portion of any excess income with Al-Anon, it is within the Traditions for Al-Anon to accept the funds as long as it is in proportion to the Al-Anon participation.

When A.A. invites Al-Anon to hold their own convention at the same time and location as an A.A. convention, Al-Anon pays its own direct expenses for the convention, keeps any excess income, and is responsible for any losses that may occur for the Al-Anon convention. Al-Anon may have a separate registration form.

Make certain there is an agreement, preferably in writing early in the planning process, concerning Al-Anon's participation and fiscal responsibilities. A procedure for submitting expenses is needed if A.A. is providing reimbursement.

Note Regarding Alateen Participation in A.A. Events

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. Contact the Area Alateen Coordinator or Area Alateen Process Person for Area information and process.

Getting Started

Select an Al-Anon Committee Chairperson. The Area World Service Committee or district meeting may appoint the Chairperson. See "Conventions/Other Events" in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). A committee should be formed from among the Al-Anon and Alateen members in the Area. The Chairperson arranges for a meeting of the members interested in becoming a part of the committee. A Treasurer and a Secretary are chosen.

In collaboration with the Treasurer and Secretary, the Chairperson appoints Subcommittee Chairpersons as needed who, after selecting their own committee members, are entrusted with the responsibility of handling all the duties of the subcommittee to which they have been assigned in accordance with the Al-Anon committee policies. Subcommittees report their plans and activities to the Al-Anon Committee Chairperson on a regular basis.

The subcommittees may include: literature and displays, publicity, hospitality, special fund-raising, program, and any other committees deemed necessary by the Al-Anon committee. The size of the event will determine the number of committee members and subcommittees needed.

Suggested Committee Duties

Al-Anon Committee Chairperson

- Is responsible for the smooth running of Al-Anon and Alateen participation. This member should have a sound understanding of the Traditions as well as the ability to work with others. It is helpful to have prior Al-Anon convention experience.
- Meets with the subcommittees on a regular basis and is available to assist the Subcommittee Chairpersons whenever possible.
- Considers the translation and interpretation needs of members and plans accordingly.
- Considers providing accommodations at meetings for special needs attendees such as the hearing impaired and the handicapped.
- Attends Area World Service Committee meetings to make periodic reports of the committee's progress.
- Attends the A.A. convention planning committee meetings to coordinate efforts with the Al-Anon committee; informs A.A. of meeting room and sound system needs when applicable.
- Reviews the agreement with A.A. regarding Al-Anon's participation and financial responsibilities and seeks immediate clarification if needed.
- Relays information from A.A. to the Al-Anon committee and the various subcommittees.
- Writes letters of thanks when the convention is over to the A.A. Convention Planning Committee Chairperson and to the speakers who took part in the Al-Anon/Alateen sessions.
- Larger conventions may also have a Co-Chair position. The Chairperson may assign specific duties to the Co-Chair.

Al-Anon Committee Secretary

- Records minutes of Al-Anon committee meetings and maintains them for succeeding committees.
- Distributes the committee minutes to the Committee Chairs, Subcommittee Chairs, and others as assigned by the Chairperson.
- Handles correspondence relating to the overall concerns of the convention.
- Submits regular reports to the Chairperson.

Al-Anon Committee Treasurer

- Oversees the Al-Anon budget and administers funds accordingly.
- Provides regular reports to the Chairperson.
- Submits proceeds and expense statements to the A.A. convention committee as previously agreed.
- Works with subcommittees in planning fund-raising projects deemed necessary by the committee.
- Determines if a petty cash fund is needed to pay for small expenses.

Program Committee

- Schedules Al-Anon/Alateen participation in the convention using A.A.'s schedule of activities as a guide in planning the program.
- Consults with the Al-Anon Committee Chairperson when coordinating activities with A.A.
- Consults the Treasurer for budget information if speakers are being given complimentary rooms and/or being reimbursed for transportation expenses.
- Uses the convention committee's speaker selection criteria to invite speakers whose message is in keeping with

Al-Anon principles. Generally speakers are selected from among those registered for the convention.

- Places a time limit on talks and lets speakers know their allotted time and topic, keeping in mind that a program that has a theme has more impact than a collection of unrelated talks. Speakers are given ample time to plan their talks.
- Includes an Alateen speaker on the main program (see note re: Alateen participation).
- Consults with speakers on how they wish to be listed in programs and flyers.
- Provides space for Alateen meetings and workshops (see note re: Alateen participation).
- Informs Committee Chairperson of AV needs.

Publicity Committee

- Informs Al-Anon/Alateen groups in the Area about the convention (if approved by the Area).
- Works with the Al-Anon Committee Chairperson and cooperates with A.A. in publicizing the convention within the Al-Anon fellowship. Al-Anon and Alateen participation can also be announced on flyers printed by A.A.
- Submits a schedule of Al-Anon/Alateen activities to A.A. in time for inclusion in their printed program. Al-Anon may decide to print its own flyer and program in addition to A.A.'s.

Literature and Display Committee

- Considers providing an ample supply of inexpensive Conference Approved Literature to give away at a literature table.
- Displays a copy of each Al-Anon/Alateen book, other Al-Anon/Alateen material, catalogs, and order forms if space permits.
- Large quantities of books and pamphlets to be sold at a convention can be purchased from a Literature Distribution Center (LDC) or the World Service Office (WSO). Orders should be placed at least six weeks in advance of the event. Contact the WSO to order a supply of descriptive catalogs and order forms for distribution at the convention.

Hospitality Committee

- Arranges for a hospitality room or other available space where Al-Anon and Alateen members can meet (see note re: Alateen participation).
- Serves refreshments in the hospitality room, when applicable. It is suggested that the hotel or other facility be contacted regarding their policy on providing food and beverages not purchased from the facility.

Special Fund-raising Committee

It is inadvisable to use Assembly funds to defray expenses not being paid by A.A. Therefore, with the approval of the A.A. convention planning committee, a special event may be arranged to raise money. If desired, the Al-Anon Committee Treasurer can administer these funds, but they should be kept separate from the Area treasury.

Tickets may be sold in advance to Al-Anon, Alateen, A.A. members, and other guests. The Al-Anon committee arranges for facilities, tickets, menus, flyers, etc.

Because A.A. usually receives all the revenue from convention registrations, they may be willing to pay Al-Anon speakers' expenses, thereby making such special fund-raising projects for Al-Anon and Alateen unnecessary.

Proceeds of the Convention

A survey conducted by the WSO indicated that Al-Anon's participation contributes substantially to the success of A.A. conventions. In acknowledgement of Al-Anon and Alateen support, many A.A. convention-planning committees offer a portion of the registration proceeds to Al-Anon. The World Service Conference has determined that the WSO may accept such contributions, in proportion to the Al-Anon participation.

Tips for Selection of Speakers

- Keep in mind that speakers are invited to carry the Al-Anon/Alateen message of recovery by sharing their experience, strength, and hope. Speakers describe how they have changed by applying the principles of the program to their lives.
- Speakers keep the Al-Anon focus and maintain their anonymity regarding other Twelve Step programs.
- Speakers from other Areas or the WSO may be invited. Current and Past Area Delegates are a good resource for helping the committee find speakers.

Tips about Audio Recording

- Conventions often record speakers. Ask the A.A. committee if they will be recording the Al-Anon meetings.
- Depending on the terms of the contract with the taper, the recordings may be distributed via multi-media outlets, including the Internet, and sold on the taper's Web site, unless the speaker specifically prohibits this when signing the release.
- Provide speakers with information about ways the recordings may be distributed and tips on how to maintain anonymity. It is up to the speakers when they consent to having their talk recorded to protect their anonymity by using their first name only or a pseudonym and to maintain the anonymity of other Al-Anon and A.A. members in their talk.

Anonymity

Having an anonymity statement available for meeting leaders to read is important if the meetings are open and non-members may be present. (See the Tradition Eleven sub-section in the "Anonymity" section of *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* [P-24] for suggested wording.)

If photos are permitted at the convention, consider a statement at meetings reminding members about anonymity on-line and not to post photos that break anonymity. It is important to keep in mind that some attendees may not want their photograph taken and to seek permission first.

Helpful Hints

1. Some Areas find it useful to assign subcommittees by district. For example, if all the members of the publicity committee are in one district, it will result in closer communication.
2. A program that has a theme has more impact than a collection of unrelated talks.
3. Maintain a separate registration desk or table for Al-Anon and Alateen members (see note re: Alateen participation).
4. Provide distinct identification, such as a ribbon on badges, for the Al-Anon committee members.
5. See the guidelines *Al-Anon/Alateen Area Conventions* (G-20) and *Alateen Conferences* (G-16).

After the Convention

A final meeting should be held to evaluate the convention. Helpful suggestions can then be recorded in the convention file for the next Al-Anon committee.