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 Orange vertical lines indicate changes made to v3.

 Green vertical lines indicate changes made to v4.

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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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 “Al-Anon as It Relates to Others”: “Dilution of the Al-Anon Program”: “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 the “Alateen” Policy.)

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 Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome 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 the “Alateen” Policy 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 (GR).

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

Choosing a Group’s Name

When choosing an Al-Anon or Alateen group name, consider the welcoming and comforting focus of Tradition Five. Anyone affected by someone else’s drinking is welcome at an Al-Anon meeting. It is vital that group names are inviting and attractive and that they avoid public controversy. Our spiritual growth has its roots in the principle of anonymity to enhance the sense of belonging and unity.

A group’s name may be a person’s first impression of Al-Anon. Consider the lasting impact the group name can have on newcomers, members, the public, and professionals. The group’s name and meeting information may appear on local meeting lists, printed materials, websites, and other venues

for sharing public information (see “Publicizing Meeting Locations” in the “Policies” section of this *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*).

Members weigh the guidance of the spiritual principles found in the Twelve Traditions when choosing a group name:

- Common welfare for the greatest number in Al-Anon depends upon unity.
- Al-Anon does not affiliate with or endorse any outside enterprise, such as other Twelve Step groups, self-help groups, religious groups, rehabilitation facilities, or commercial businesses.
- The only requirement for membership in Al-Anon is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
- The name does not affect another group or affect Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole.
- Al-Anon has no opinion on outside issues.

The Policy Committee and the World Service Conference have delegated authority and responsibility to the WSO to review proposed group names for adherence to Al-Anon policies and principles.

(See additional guidance found in the “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” section.)

Assembly Representation

Each Al-Anon/Alateen group elects a Group Representative (GR). (See the “World Service Handbook” section of this *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.) 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.

Service Participation by 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 center 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 Volunteer.

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

Al-Anon Family Groups and Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) share a common spiritual legacy in A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Before Al-Anon was founded, family groups met with, and beside, A.A. groups. In 1951, various family groups banded together and agreed to organize Al-Anon Family Groups, a program dedicated to helping the friends and families of alcoholics. Over the years, Al-Anon developed its own service structure, based on the model provided by A.A.'s experience and guided by the Twelve Traditions.

Tradition Five defines Al-Anon's single purpose. Tradition Six encourages cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous, maintaining that Al-Anon is a separate entity that ought never affiliate or create the appearance of affiliation with any outside enterprise. Putting these principles into practice maintains a separation between the service structures of Al-Anon and A.A. This separation helps avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and safeguards Al-Anon's singleness of purpose. Accordingly, Al-Anon's policy is that members who are also members of A.A. do not serve as Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Area Delegate, World Service Conference member, alternate to any of these service positions, or on any committee of the World Service Office.

Filling service positions is a matter of District and Area autonomy within this policy and the spiritual principles that form its basis. Tradition Four grants autonomy to local service arms, except in matters affecting Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole. Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. participate fully in all group activities, including group conscience decisions. However, they do not hold Al-Anon service positions that vote in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole.

Participating in Al-Anon service is integral to recovery for every member. Step Twelve, carrying our message to others, is a very important part of Al-Anon service. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of A.A. are often in a position to carry our message to those who are not aware of the benefits of attending Al-Anon Family Groups. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of A.A. may serve Al-Anon in ways that include being an Alateen Group Sponsor (see the "Alateen" Policy) or they may be invited by local/Area service arms, the Board of Trustees, or the World Service Office to participate in projects, in keeping with the spirit of this policy.

This policy on service participation by members of Al-Anon who are also A.A. members, protects Al-Anon's viability as a program dedicated to helping the families and friends of alcoholics. It ensures that Al-Anon's service structure represents the unique perspective of families and friends of alcoholics, recognizing that the alcoholic's perspective is represented in A.A.'s service structure. Members honor this policy out of respect for Al-Anon unity and the group conscience process, in accordance with Tradition One and Tradition Two.

Donations to Outside Agencies

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

Local Services

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.

