

Policy Committee Update

April 2026

Debbie P., Chairperson

Policy statements are interpretations of our basic guides: the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service. They help clarify how a Tradition or Concept might apply to a new or confusing situation that arises in Al-Anon or Alateen. Changes and additions to the Policy Digest are made only as our circumstances and growth require, since anticipating and including every specific situation would be impossible.

The purpose of the update sent each quarter by the Policy Committee Chairperson is to report progress and provide information on the following:

- Topics that are generated by the fellowship and discussed by the Policy Committee regarding issues or concerns that need clarification or interpretation in consideration of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service.
- Progress of work being completed by Policy Committee work groups and task and thought forces.
- Policy motions to be presented to the World Service Conference (WSC).
- Policy motions passed by the WSC.

The Policy Committee meeting occurs quarterly prior to the Board of Trustees meeting. The Policy Committee met in person on April 18th and 19th, 2026.

2025-2026 Concept Study Task Force

This year's Concept Task Force has been charged with creating and facilitating four one-hour study sessions on the first four Al-Anon Concepts of Service. These sessions are designed to foster the application of spiritual principles within our Policy Committee discussions. Committee members have shared how these studies help set a spiritual tone for Policy and Board conversations. In particular, reflecting on Concept Four was a wonderful way to lead into the WSC.

Appeal: Group name appeal request to the Policy Committee

At its January meeting, the Policy Committee received an appeal from a group of the decision on the group's name made by WSO Staff in their delegated authority and responsibility. Given time constraints, the Committee deferred discussion of the appeal until its April meeting.

Since the name submitted was unrelated to the upcoming group name "identifier" conversations at the 2026 WSC, the Policy Committee considered both the Staff's original thoughtful discussion and decision not to allow the group name and the group's appeal. After a spiritually grounded conversation and careful consideration of Al-Anon Legacies, the Policy Committee affirmed the original decision made by Staff.

Task Force: Interim Policies and Policy Revisions Process

This newly formed Task Force grew out of a Policy Thought Force's report to the Committee last quarter and the 2025 WSC conversation about the process for considering and approving Policy Digest text changes. Task Force members provided the Policy Committee with a written report on their plan to move forward following the April rotation of WSO Volunteers. The reformed Task Force will share their thoughts and progress at the 2026 July Policy Committee meeting.

“Choosing a Group’s Name” Policy Implementation Discussion

April Policy Committee Meeting

The Policy Committee was given an overview of the planned approach to this topic for the WSC discussion, and the Policy Committee members supported the suggestion. The plan reflected two sessions on the WSC agenda for this topic. Session One was designed to build Awareness by highlighting three major themes from the Delegate feedback survey and inviting selected Delegates to express the different perspectives identified on each of the themes.

- 1) Identifiers in Group Names: Helpful focus or risk of exclusion
- 2) Welcoming: Shaped by both group naming and member behavior
- 3) Policy Development: Requires clarity about future implementation

The design also included an opportunity for small breakout groups of all Conference members to explore the question: *“What different perspectives can we offer to expand the collective wisdom on how we, as World Service Conference members, can proceed on this topic?”* Reporters from each group would then reveal any additional perspectives discovered.

Since Session Two needed to reflect Session One outcomes, its details could not be fully planned. The Policy Committee nonetheless reviewed a plan to provide a brief recap of what had brought the Conference to the moment and to invite members to seek Acceptance on how to move forward into Action.

World Service Conference Discussion

During the WSC, the two sessions were held on separate days to allow Conference members time for reflection.

Session One unfolded as planned, providing opportunities for members to hear highlights of the identified survey themes and small group sharing to further explore the unidentified thoughts highlighted by the question. At the session close, WSC members were asked to reflect on all that they have read and heard and to bring these insights to their individual Higher Power to gain Acceptance and guidance on how to proceed.

Also as planned, Session Two began with a recap that captured the Conference's general sentiment regarding identifiers in group names and how to involve the Area in ensuring groups are welcoming to all. After thoughtful discussion, the Conference reached a consensus on an approach forward which was later formalized when Conference motion #4 was presented and carried with substantial unanimity:

To direct the Staff of the World Service Office to adhere to the following guidelines for implementing the "Choosing a Group's Name" Policy.

- *Allow community identifiers such as men, women, parents, adult children, young adults, other gender identification/sexual orientation, etc. in group names.*
- *Consistently notify the Area Delegate and Area Group Records Coordinator whenever a group submits a registration or name change containing a community identifier to request these trusted servant have a conversation with the group to ensure their group conscience is to welcome anyone affected by someone else's alcoholism in accordance with Tradition Three and advise the World Service Office of the result and decision regarding whether to register the group.*
- *Develop a plan to increase education opportunities to share experience, strength and hope with Area trusted servants on how to be welcoming to newcomers, especially those who do not match a group's community identifier, and to have conversations with group members regarding group names and welcoming.*

Task Force: Revise current text of the "Dilution of the Al-Anon Program" section of the Policy Digest

This Task Force provided the Policy Committee with an extensive background and history on the "Dilution of the Al-Anon Program" section of the Policy Digest, including consideration of whether portions of the text reflected policy or procedure. With the background provided ahead of the meeting, members were able to bring thoughtful and reflective insights into the discussion. As a result, the Policy Committee agreed that the charge needed to be clarified to support the Task Force recommending the placement of text in other sections if not considered policy or in its own section within the Policy Digest. We look forward to what future Task Force members will bring forward to the Committee on this text.

As always, the Policy Committee welcomes all questions and suggestions from any Al-Anon member, meeting, group, or Area regarding issues that might need further clarification or interpretation in light of our Legacies.