

Collaboration with researchers

Policy

Al-Anon cooperates with researchers who are studying the effects of alcoholism as a family disease. Under no circumstances will Al-Anon's Tradition of anonymity be compromised. Outside researchers will not have direct access to Al-Anon's membership information, databases, or mailing lists. Al-Anon will present to members the opportunity to cooperate with researchers, which will be entirely voluntary, at the individual member's discretion. Researchers will never directly solicit members of Al-Anon, either as individuals or members of an Al-Anon group or service arm. While Al-Anon can cooperate with researchers, Al-Anon can never endorse or affiliate with an outside enterprise, or appear to be doing so.

Procedures

The WSO's Information Analyst will act as Al-Anon's liaison with researchers. When researchers request Al-Anon cooperation, the Information Analyst will provide background and explain Al-Anon's approval process. If the researcher decides to request Al-Anon participation in the project, the Information Analyst and other staff will evaluate whether the request is appropriate for further consideration.

If the request is deemed appropriate, it will be forwarded to a work group of two staff and two volunteers, appointed by the Policy Chair. This work group will evaluate whether cooperation with the research project would benefit Al-Anon: scientific studies that document the effectiveness of Al-Anon as a recovery program could increase the credibility and perceived relevance of Al-Anon to a wider cross-section of people in need.

After approval by the work group, the staff will negotiate an agreement with the researcher to define boundaries and determine the scope of Al-Anon's participation in the project.

While Al-Anon respects the independence of the outside researcher, Al-Anon expects researchers to check with Al-Anon on the accuracy about any statement made about the program in general, to request copyright permissions when appropriate, and to share in advance of publication the results of the study. Al-Anon will respect embargo limitations prior to publication and copyright restrictions after publication.

In exchange for participation in the project, Al-Anon expects to cooperate with the researcher to make the results of the study widely available to Al-Anon members and potential members.