2022-2025
AL-ANON/ALATEEN
SERVICE MANUAL

- AL-ANON AND ALATEEN GROUPS AT WORK
- DIGEST OF AL-ANON AND ALATEEN POLICIES
- WORLD SERVICE HANDBOOK
- AL-ANON'S TWELVE CONCEPTS OF SERVICE
- AL-ANON WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE CHARTER
- 2003 ALATEEN MOTION FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES v4(a)

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Service Manual

The 2022-2025 edition of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) replaces any previous editions.

Changes to sections of the *Service Manual* sometimes occur between editions, as a result of World Service Office procedural changes and Conference motions. The most recent edits are then posted electronically as portions of the updated *Service Manual*. To keep track of these updates, a process for identifying subsequent versions of each edition and their changes has been adapted. The version number for each edition can be found on the back of the title page.

Every Al-Anon and Alateen member is encouraged to actively use and study this *Manual*. It gives a clear and concise picture of the Al-Anon fellowship, its purpose and functions, and how it helps us to resolve group problems and maintain unity. Additional copies may be ordered from the WSO or from your Literature Distribution Center. An electronic version is available at al-anon.org.

Those who wish to translate this *Manual* for use by Al-Anon and Alateen groups worldwide may obtain permission by writing to the address on the back of the title page.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.
Al-Anon/Alateen World Service Office, Virginia Beach, VA

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps

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AL-ANON AND ALATEEN GROUPS AT WORK
Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., 1964

DIGEST OF AL-ANON AND ALATEEN POLICIES
Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., 1975

WORLD SERVICE HANDBOOK
Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., 1973

AL-ANON'S TWELVE CONCEPTS OF SERVICE
Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., 1970

Al-Anon/Alateen is supported by members' voluntary contributions and from the sale of our Conference Approved Literature.

This *Manual* is available in Spanish and French.

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Preface

Questions pertaining to the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service continually arise within our fellowship. Over the years, four booklets were introduced to assist members in resolving specific situations. In 1992, the four booklets were combined into one and retitled *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). This *Manual* reflects the collective experience of our membership in its ongoing effort to interpret the Traditions and Concepts of Service in a spirit of unity and harmony.

Members seeking answers to specific questions of special situations may well find guidance within these pages. Each section has its own purpose, author, and Table of Contents. The Index lists the many topics addressed throughout the *Manual*.

To reflect new information and changing points of view, an online version of the *Manual* is updated between printings as changes are made. It can be found on the Members menu at al-anon.org.

Al-Anon/Alateen members may initiate revisions to the *Manual* at any time by making suggestions to their District Representative (DR), Area Delegate, or the World Service Office (WSO).

For this 2022-2025 edition, the "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" section is also being printed as a separate booklet (P-24) as a tool for groups in the hopes of making this important group information available to more members worldwide.

Al-Anon Declaration

Let It Begin with Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen
always be there, and—*Let It Begin with Me.*

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Note: Black vertical lines in outer margins indicate where changes were made to the content v1 and v2

Orange vertical lines indicate changes made to v3.

Green vertical lines indicate changes made to v4.

Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work

"Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" provides a framework within which each group can develop and grow. It offers basic information to all group members concerning the group structure and how it relates to other groups and Al-Anon as a whole.

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Introduction

The message of the Al-Anon Family Groups, Al-Anon and Alateen, is one of hope. It is the story of men, women, and children who once felt helpless, lost, and lonely because of another's alcoholism. Although Al-Anon grew from a need expressed by family members of Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and Alateen offer help and hope to friends and families of alcoholics, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not. While many of our members no longer maintain daily contact with an alcoholic, they seek the mutual support Al-Anon and Alateen groups offer.

Al-Anon is a unique fellowship that unites members of different backgrounds in an inspiring endeavor: helping themselves and others to lead purposeful, useful lives by overcoming the frustration and helplessness caused by close association with an alcoholic.

Alateen (Al-Anon for younger members) is a vital part of Al-Anon Family Groups. Young people seeking help with problems that arise when alcoholism afflicts a parent, another close relative, or a friend, meet to exchange experiences and to gain an understanding of themselves and the alcoholic. This helps their own personal development and can help stabilize troubled thinking resulting from close association with an alcoholic.

"Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" explains how to start a group, help it grow, and discover how other members have solved problems common to groups. (Note that in countries outside of the World Service Conference Structure, terms mentioned may vary according to need.) The harmony and success of each group depends on shared responsibility, a warm spirit of fellowship, and individual self-improvement.

Today these men, women, and teenaged children have courage and confidence. They have found understanding and learned what to do to help themselves—and this can indirectly help their alcoholic relatives, loved ones, and friends, whether sober or not. Al-Anon will always be what we, its members, make it. In Al-Anon, we believe that our benefits are measured by our willingness to share them with others, for we know we can never give as much as we receive.

Suggested Meeting Outline

This format is included for your convenience. While not every group chooses to plan its meeting in this way, many find a general outline helpful. Groups may use the blank spaces to insert information specific to the group.

Meeting Opening (page 10)

Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome (page 10)

Reading of Al-Anon/Alateen's Three Legacies (pages 13-17)

Introductions (page 17)

Al-Anon/Alateen-Related Announcements, Reports (page 17)

The Meeting Program (page 18)

Passing the Basket (page 18)

Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing (page 18)

Other readings selected by the group conscience (pages 19-24)

Suggested Meeting Readings

This format is printed for your convenience. While not every group chooses to plan its meeting in this way, many find a general outline helpful.

See also the pamphlet *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32).

Meeting Opening

Most groups open with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

The Serenity Prayer

Chairperson: Will you join me in a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer?

God grant me the serenity

To accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can,

And wisdom to know the difference.

Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome

(choose "Al-Anon" or "Alateen" as applicable)

We welcome you to the _____Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

We who live, or have lived, with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can. We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon/Alateen we discover that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

We urge you to try our program. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes, and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.

The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon/Alateen ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with an alcoholic is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.

The Al-Anon/Alateen program is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous), which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives, along with our slogans and the Serenity Prayer. The loving interchange of help among members and daily reading of Al-Anon/Alateen literature thus make us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.

Anonymity is an important principle of the Al-Anon/Alateen program. Everything that is said here, in the group meeting and member-to-member, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in Al-Anon/Alateen.

At this point in the meeting, many groups have the Chairperson say if the group meeting has a special format (Step-study, speakers, or discussion group), has a specific routine for calling on members, asks members of other anonymous fellowships to remain anonymous and focus on the Al-Anon program, and clarifies if the meeting is for Families, Friends, and Observers (Welcome) or for Families and Friends Only.** Members are also told how they can obtain Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature.*

* This is a Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meeting; we welcome visitors seeking information about Al-Anon, as well as newcomers and members of Al-Anon.

** This is a Families and Friends Only meeting for Al-Anon members and prospective members only. Anyone who believes they have been affected by someone else's drinking is welcome. See also "Meeting Attendees."

Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is for young people who have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or friend. We help each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope.

We believe alcoholism is a family disease affecting everyone emotionally and sometimes physically. Although we cannot change or control the alcoholics in our lives, we can detach from their problems while continuing to love them.

In Alateen we focus on our own program rather than outside issues such as religion, politics, social media, or other Twelve Step programs. There are no dues for membership. Alateen is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions. Alateen has one purpose: to help young people affected by someone else's drinking. We are careful to protect each other's anonymity as well as that of all Al-Anon and A.A. members.

By applying the Twelve Steps to ourselves, we begin to recover from the effects of the family disease of alcoholism mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. This allows us to encourage our alcoholic relatives and friends, and to give hope to other teens.

Many groups choose to have a member read one, or all, of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and/or Twelve Concepts of Service.

Our Three Legacies

RECOVERY	UNITY	SERVICE
THROUGH	THROUGH	THROUGH
THE	THE	THE
STEPS	TRADITIONS	CONCEPTS

The threefold guides of Al-Anon point the way to a normal, useful life for the individual. They are also a framework within which the groups can carry on their affairs in harmony.

Twelve Steps

Because of their proven power and worth, A.A.'s Twelve Steps have been adopted almost word for word by Al-Anon. They represent a way of life appealing to all people of goodwill, of any religious faith or of none. Note the power of the very words.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these prin- ciples in all our affairs.

Twelve Traditions—Al-Anon

The Traditions that follow bind us together in unity. They guide the groups in their relations with other groups, with A.A., and the outside world. They recommend group attitudes toward leadership, membership, money, property, public relations, and anonymity.

The Traditions evolved from the experience of A.A. groups in trying to solve their problems of living and working together. 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.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.
3. The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
5. Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
6. Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Twelve Traditions—Alateen

Our group experience suggests that the unity of the Alateen Groups depends upon our adherence to these Traditions.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. The teenage relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Alateen Group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Alateen and Al-Anon Family Groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each Alateen Group has but one purpose: to help other teenagers of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves* and by encouraging and understanding the members of our immediate families.
6. Alateens, being part of Al-Anon Family Groups, ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alateen Twelfth Step work should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Alateen Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Twelve Concepts of Service

Carrying the message, as suggested in the Twelfth Step, is Service—Al-Anon's third legacy. Service, a vital purpose of Al-Anon, is action. Members strive to *do* as well as to *be*.

Anything done to help a relative or friend of an alcoholic is service: a telephone call to a despairing member; sponsoring a newcomer; telling one's story at meetings; forming groups; arranging for public outreach; distributing literature; and financially supporting groups, local services, and the World Service Office.

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 insure 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

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.

Optional Readings

At this point in the meeting, groups may choose to read one or more of the "Optional Readings" (pages 21-25) or other selections from Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature.

Introductions

The Chairperson invites members to introduce themselves. Members may choose to use their first name only or their entire name, according to their personal preference. The Chairperson may ask newcomers to identify themselves and welcomes them. (See "Basics for Group Meetings": "Welcoming New Members.")

Announcements and Reports

This is a time for announcements of local Al-Anon events, service meetings, and other group business, including day and time of business meetings, Treasurer's report, and announcements from the District, Area, or World Service Office. Reports may include:

- Group Secretary, Treasurer, Group Representative, Intergroup Representative
- District, Area, World Service Office
- Other Al-Anon/Alateen-related announcements

The Meeting Program

The meeting program is decided by group conscience and typically involves one member introducing a speaker or topic for discussion. (See "Meeting Ideas.")

Large groups may divide into smaller sessions for the meeting discussion and come back together at a given time for the "Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing."

Passing the Basket

At some point during the program, voluntary contributions are made, following this statement by the Chairperson or Treasurer:

"We have no dues or fees; according to our Seventh Tradition, 'Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.' We contribute in gratitude for what we have received from Al-Anon."

Groups with expenses may also include this statement, "We do this through our own voluntary contributions by passing the (electronic) basket to cover group expenses, including rent or platform fees, purchase of literature, and support of our service arms."

Alternatively, groups without expenses may encourage their members to visit al-anon.org or other service arm websites to support their services to the worldwide fellowship directly.

Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.

The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A few special words to those of you who haven't been with us long: Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

We aren't perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you. After a while, you'll discover that though you may not like all of us, you'll love us in a very special way—the same way we already love you.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.

Will all who care to, join me in closing with the _____ prayer?

Al-Anon Declaration

It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience. Many groups say the Al-Anon Declaration after the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing.

Let It Begin with Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,

let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen

always be there, and—*Let It Begin with Me*.

Optional Readings

The selections that follow are offered as suggestions for meeting topics or as optional readings in the group meeting format, as determined by the group conscience. They contain wisdom and information many members and groups have found helpful.

Reading on Anonymity

When newcomers or visitors are present, the group may want to read an explanation of anonymity, such as:

"Members use their full names within the fellowship when they wish. The degree of anonymity a member chooses (first name, pseudonym, or full name) is not subject to criticism. Each member has the right to decide.

"Regardless of our personal choice, we guard the anonymity of everyone else in the fellowship, Al-Anon/Alateen, and A.A. This means not revealing to anyone—even to relatives, friends, and other members—whom we see and what we hear at a meeting.

"Anonymity goes well beyond mere names. All of us need to feel secure in the knowledge that nothing seen or heard at a meeting will be revealed. We feel free to express ourselves among our fellow Al-Anons because we can be sure that what we say will be held in confidence."

(From "Anonymity" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. More information on anonymity, both within and outside the fellowship, can be found in this portion.)

Four Primary Ideas

The Twelve Steps suggest acceptance of four primary ideas:

1. We are powerless over the problem of alcoholism. When we can honestly accept this truth, it brings us a feeling of release and hope. We can now turn our full attention to bringing our own lives into order. We can go forward to spiritual growth, to the comfort and peace to be gained from the entire program.

2. We can turn our lives over to a Power greater than ourselves. Now that our well-meant aid to the alcoholic has ended in failure and our own lives have become unmanageable, we realize we cannot deal with our problem objectively, perhaps not even sanely. In Al-Anon we find a Power greater than ourselves which can direct our lives into quiet, useful channels. At first this Power may seem to be the group, but as we grow in knowledge and spiritual understanding, many of us call it God, as we understand Him.

3. We need to change both our attitude and our actions. As we become willing to admit our defects, we begin to see how much of our thinking is distorted. We realize how unwise some of our actions have been, how unloving many of our attitudes. We try to recognize and correct these faults.

4. We keep Al-Anon's gifts by sharing them with others. This sharing makes Al-Anon the vital, forward-reaching fellowship it is. Our great obligation is to those still in need. Leading another person from despair to hope and love brings comfort to both the giver and receiver.

Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon*

This passage has helped many groups to resolve group problems:

All Al-Anon discussions should be constructive, helpful, loving, and understanding. In striving toward these ideals, we avoid topics that can lead to dissension and distract us from our goals.

*This text is from the pamphlet, *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4), © Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia, 2005.

1. Discussions of religion: Al-Anon is not allied with any sect or denomination. It is a spiritual program, based on no particular form of religion. Everyone is welcome, no matter what affiliation or none. Let us not defeat our purpose by entering into discussions concerning specific religious beliefs.

2. Gossip: We meet to help ourselves and others learn and use the Al-Anon philosophy. In such groups, gossip can have no part. We do not discuss members or others, and particularly not the alcoholic. Our dedication to anonymity gives people confidence in Al-Anon. Careless repeating of matters heard at meetings can defeat the very purposes for which we are joined together.

3. Dominance: Our leaders are trusted servants; they do not govern. No member of Al-Anon should direct, assume authority, or give advice. Our program is based on suggestion, interchange of experience, and rotation of leadership. We progress in our own way and pace. Any attempt to manage or direct is likely to have disastrous consequences for group harmony.

The following explanations have helped many newcomers and longtime members understand the disease as well as how they have been affected.

Understanding Alcoholism*

What Is Alcoholism?

The American Medical Association recognizes alcoholism as a disease that can be arrested but not cured. One of the symptoms is an uncontrollable desire to drink. Alcoholism is a progressive disease. As long as alcoholics continue to drink, their drive to drink will get worse. If not dealt with, the disease can result in insanity or death. The only method of arresting alcoholism is total abstinence. Most authorities agree that even after years of sobriety, alcoholics can never drink again, because alcoholism is a lifetime disease.

There are many successful treatments for alcoholism today. Alcoholics Anonymous is the best known, and widely regarded as the most effective. Alcoholism is no longer a hopeless condition, if it is recognized and treated.

*This text is from the Al-Anon pamphlet *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (P-48), © Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia, 2009.

Who Are Alcoholics?

All kinds of people are alcoholics—people from all walks of life. Only a small percentage of alcoholics fit the stereotype of "derelict" or "bum" panhandling on the street. Most alcoholics appear to be functioning fairly well, but their drinking affects some part of their lives. Their family life, their social life, or their work may suffer. It might be all three. Alcoholics are people whose drinking causes a continuing and growing problem in any area of their lives.

Why Do Alcoholics Drink?

Alcoholics drink because they think they have to. They use alcohol as a crutch and an escape. They are in emotional pain and use alcohol to kill that pain. Eventually they depend on alcohol so much that they become convinced they can't live without it. This is *obsession*.

When some alcoholics try to do without alcohol, the withdrawal symptoms are so overwhelming that they go back to drinking because drinking seems to be the only way to get rid of the agony. This is *addiction*.

Most alcoholics would like to be social drinkers. They spend a lot of time and effort trying to control their drinking so they will be able to drink like other people. They may try drinking on weekends or drinking only a certain drink. But they can never be sure of being able to stop drinking when they want. They end up getting drunk even when they promised themselves they wouldn't. This is *compulsion*.

It is the nature of this disease that alcoholics do not believe they are ill. This is *denial*. Hope for recovery lies in their ability to recognize a need for help, their desire to stop drinking, and their willingness to admit that they cannot cope with the problem by themselves.

Understanding Ourselves

Families and Friends Are Affected

Alcoholism is a family disease. Compulsive drinking affects the drinker and it affects the drinker's relationships. Friendships, employment, childhood, parenthood, love affairs, and marriages all suffer from the effects of alcoholism. Those special relationships in which a person is really close to an alcoholic are affected most, and we who care are the most caught up in the behavior of another person. We react to an alcoholic's behavior. Seeing that the drinking is out of hand, we try to control it. We are ashamed of the public

scenes but try to handle it in private. It isn't long before we feel we are to blame and take on the hurts, the fears, and the guilt of an alcoholic. We, too, can become ill.

Even well-meaning people often begin to count the number of drinks another person is having. We may pour expensive liquor down drains, search the house for hidden bottles, or listen for the sound of opening cans. All our thinking becomes directed at what the alcoholic is doing or not doing and how to get the drinker to stop drinking. This is our *obsession*.

Watching fellow human beings slowly kill themselves with alcohol is painful. While alcoholics don't seem to worry about the bills, the job, the children, or the condition of their health, the people around them usually begin to worry. We often make the mistake of covering up. We try to fix everything, make excuses, tell little lies to mend damaged relationships, and worry some more. This is our *anxiety*.

Sooner or later the alcoholic's behavior makes other people angry. As we realize that the alcoholic is telling lies, using us, and not taking care of responsibilities, we may begin to feel that the alcoholic doesn't love us. We often want to strike back, punish, and make the alcoholic pay for the hurt and frustration caused by uncontrolled drinking. This is our *anger*.

Sometimes those who are close to the alcoholic begin to pretend. We accept promises and trust the alcoholic. Each time there is a sober period, however brief, we want to believe the problem has gone away forever. When good sense tells us there is something wrong with the alcoholic's drinking and thinking, we still hide how we feel and what we know. This is our *denial*.

Perhaps the most severe damage to those of us who have shared some part of life with an alcoholic comes in the form of the nagging belief that we are somehow at fault. We may feel it was something we did or did not do—that we were not good enough, not attractive enough, or not clever enough to have solved this problem for the one we love. These are our *feelings of guilt*.

Help and Hope

We who have turned to Al-Anon have often done so in despair, unable to believe in the possibility of change and unable to go on as we have before. We feel cheated out of a loving companion, over-burdened with responsibilities, unwanted, unloved, and alone.

There are times when some of us can act arrogant, smug, self-righteous, and dominating. We come to Al-Anon, however, because we want and need help.

While we may have been driven to Al-Anon by the effects of someone else's drinking, we soon come to know that our own thinking has to change before we can make a new and successful approach to living. It is in Al-Anon that we learn to deal with our obsession, our anxiety, our anger, our denial, and our feelings of guilt. It is through the fellowship that we ease our emotional burdens by sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others. Little by little, we come to realize at our meetings that much of our discomfort comes from our attitudes. We begin to change these attitudes and learn about our responsibilities to ourselves. We discover feelings of self-worth and love, and we grow spiritually. The emphasis begins to be lifted from the alcoholic and placed where we do have some power—over our own lives.

The group may choose to read other selections from Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) as decided by the group conscience, with the source of the reading noted.

History: Al-Anon and Alateen

How Al-Anon Family Groups Came to Be

The Family Group idea is nearly as old as Alcoholics Anonymous. In A.A.'s pioneering days from 1935 to 1941, close relatives of recovering alcoholics realized that to solve their personal problems they needed to apply the same principles that helped alcoholics with their recovery.

As early A.A. members and their wives visited A.A. groups throughout the country, the visiting wives told the mates of the newer A.A.s about the personal help received when they themselves tried to live by A.A.'s Twelve Steps, and how this helped to improve family relationships that often remained difficult even after the alcoholic had become sober.

Thus, mates and relatives of A.A. members began to hold meetings to discuss *their* common problems.

By 1948, numbers of Family Groups had applied to the A.A. General Service Office for listing in the A.A. Directory, and scores of rela-

tives of alcoholics had asked them for help. But A.A. was designed to aid alcoholics only.

In 1951, two wives of A.A.s, Lois W. and Anne B., formed a Clearing House Committee to get in touch with these 87 inquirers and to coordinate, unify, and serve them; 56 groups responded. As a result of questionnaires, the name Al-Anon Family Groups was chosen. The Al-Anon name is simply a derivative of the first syllables of "Alcoholics Anonymous." The Twelve Steps of A.A., virtually unchanged, and later the Twelve Traditions were both adopted as guiding principles.

Soon the movement came to public attention. New groups and individuals here and abroad wrote to the Clearing House about their problems. By 1954, a small paid Staff became necessary. The Clearing House was incorporated as a nonprofit organization under the name Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

In 1955, Al-Anon's first book, *The Al-Anon Family Groups, A Guide for the Families of Problem Drinkers*, was published. Since then, many more books and pamphlets were added.

In 1961, Al-Anon initiated its annual World Service Conference of Delegates, WSO Staff, and Volunteers to act as the fellowship's overall conscience. In the quarter century from 1951 to 1976, over 12,000 groups in the United States, Canada, and many lands overseas were added to the original 56.

In 2001, the WSO started registering online meetings, in 2007, phone and other electronic meetings, and in 2020 the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* was launched. Electronic meetings offered Al-Anon members a means of connecting and sharing the Al-Anon program regardless of location.

By 2022 there were over 25,000 groups in 133 countries and 107 electronic (digital, social media, and phone) meetings.

How Alateen Came to Be a Part of Al-Anon Family Groups

Teenage children in the families of alcoholics soon realized that their problems differed from those of adult members. In 1957, Alateen grew out of this need. A 17-year-old boy, whose father was in A.A. and mother in Al-Anon, had been fairly successful in trying to solve his problems by applying the A.A. Steps and slogans.

With his parents' encouragement, he asked five other teenagers with alcoholic parents to join him in forming a group to help other

teenagers. The idea caught on, and the number of groups began to grow.

In response to articles distributed by the WSO, ten new Alateen groups were registered, and by 1958, the Board of Directors announced 31 new Alateen groups, with 39 more proposed, and its decision to establish an Alateen Committee.

In 1957, *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* was submitted by California Alateen groups for publication. Subsequently, several books and pamphlets were produced as well as a newsletter, *Alateen Talk*, and the video *Alateen Tells It like It Is* (no longer available).

By the end of 1962, there were 203 registered groups, and the Alateen program was spreading to other countries. In April of 1964, a Staff member was added to work for Alateen, to handle correspondence with members and groups, send free packets of literature to new groups, and respond to inquiries from concerned professionals.

In 2003, the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Board of Trustees took action to assure the safety of Alateens and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). The 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees required that all Al-Anon Areas in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure establish Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements and have a process for certification of AMIAS.

By 2022, there were numerous Alateen pamphlets and books; a quarterly newsletter, *Alateen Talk*; and service materials for Alateen Group Sponsors. There are over 1,600 Alateen groups worldwide, including six Alateen meetings taking place electronically on a trial basis in the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*.

Starting Al-Anon Family Groups

Spiritual Principles

Tradition Three

The relatives and friends of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

Any two or more relatives or friends of alcoholics who meet to solve their common problems may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided they have no other affiliation as a group. For more information see the guideline *Starting an Al-Anon Group* (G-12), and/or contact the World Service Office or national service structure.

In the World Service Conference Structure, all Alateen groups are registered through their Area's Alateen Process. (See "Starting an Alateen Group.") In other structures, members should contact their national office.

Benefits of Registering Groups with the WSO

- The WSO provides meeting information (to newcomers, professionals, and others) about registered groups, to carry out Al-Anon's one purpose: to help families and friends of alcoholics. The day, time, and physical location or electronic platform of registered groups is posted on the WSO website (al-anon.org) and provided to callers on the WSO toll-free meeting line, (888) 4AL-ANON.
- Registered groups are connected to the worldwide fellowship through communications sent via email and postal mail from the WSO.
- The group conscience of registered groups is heard through the World Service Conference, a link to worldwide Al-Anon and Alateen that assures unity of purpose and a common bond of love and friendship available to each member, no matter where they may travel.
- Registration is required before groups are granted permission to share or display any copyrighted materials during their meetings.

Considerations When Starting Either an Al-Anon or Alateen Group

Selecting a Day and Time to Hold the Meeting

Before choosing a meeting time, it may be helpful to consider when other Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are being held to minimize conflicting days and times.

Finding a Location to Hold Group Meetings

Al-Anon and Alateen group meetings are usually held weekly in an accessible location that is welcoming to all, such as a community room, library, or electronic platform. When meeting in a public place is not an option for a group, as it is in some countries, a group may temporarily meet at the home of a member. (See the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P-24/27] for descriptions of introductory meetings and limited-access facilities.)

Naming the Group

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

An Al-Anon or Alateen group's name reflects the spirit of Al-Anon's primary purpose of welcoming and giving comfort to families and friends of alcoholics and often appears on websites and local meeting lists. Group names can include the topic of the meeting such as a Step or slogan or a phrase reflective of Al-Anon principles. A group name can reference the area of the town where it meets. When choosing a group name, care is taken to avoid the appearance of affiliation and/or endorsement of other organizations, other Twelve Step programs, religious beliefs, and meeting facilities.

The name of an Al-Anon or Alateen group is a reflection of Step Twelve in action. Since nicknames or attempts at humorous names could confuse potential members and prevent them from attending the meeting, it is suggested they not be used in the group name.

The WSO will register groups with names that designate them as being for men, women, parents, adult children, young adults, other gender identification/sexual orientation, etc. with the understanding that, in keeping with Traditions Three and Five, the groups will welcome anyone affected by someone else's drinking.

In the spirit of unity, the WSO reviews new group names and may ask a group to choose another name if it is not in keeping with Al-Anon/Alateen principles. (See also "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Membership and Groups": "Choosing a Group's Name" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P-24/27].) All Al-Anon groups are

registered with the letters AFG (for Al-Anon Family Group) to ensure members' anonymity.

Designating Meeting Attendees

All Al-Anon Family Group meetings welcome anyone who believes that his/her life has been affected by someone else's drinking, either currently or in the past. By the consent of its participants, an Al-Anon group may choose to designate its meeting attendees as "Families, Friends, and Observers (Welcome)" or "Families and Friends Only."

Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome Al-Anon meetings allow attendance by people who are not families and friends of alcoholics, but who are interested in learning about Al-Anon Family Groups. Visitors to Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome Al-Anon meetings include students and professionals who work with alcoholics and their families.

Families and Friends Only Al-Anon meetings are limited to members and prospective members affected by someone else's drinking, affording them the freedom to share and listen to the experience, strength, and hope of one another on a confidential and anonymous basis.

A meeting registered as Families and Friends Only may choose to welcome observers occasionally to ensure those interested in Al-Anon can find a meeting. Should an observer show up at a Families and Friends Only meeting, members can take a quick group consensus on whether to allow the person to sit in. In the spirit of responsibility, groups may consider directing observers to a Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome Al-Anon meeting. Members are encouraged to treat visitors with courtesy and to appreciate their showing an interest in our fellowship.

Observers attending Al-Anon meetings are requested to abide by the principles that guide participation in all Al-Anon Family Group meetings, most especially the principle of confidentiality. Members are reminded to exercise care in what they share when observers are attending.

All Alateen groups are designated as Families and Friends Only meetings, with attendance limited to young people affected by someone else's drinking and the Area-certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) who are serving as the Alateen Group Sponsors. Designated Area

trusted servants may also occasionally attend an Alateen meeting as a resource to the group, in accordance with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. (See "Starting an Alateen Group": "Alateen Meetings" and "Alateen" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Considerations When Starting an Al-Anon Group

Holding Beginners' Meetings

Beginners' meetings offer newcomers the opportunity to discuss their feelings in a caring and comfortable environment and to learn from current Al-Anon members who share their experience, strength, and hope as a result of practicing the Al-Anon program. Experienced Al-Anon members conduct these meetings using Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. They discuss the first three Steps and share about the far-reaching effects of the family disease of alcoholism.

Some Al-Anon groups hold separate meetings for beginners at a designated time before, during, or after the regular Al-Anon meeting. These beginners' meetings are part of the Al-Anon group and *do not register separately*. They are served by the Group Representative of the Al-Anon group. There is a space on the New Al-Anon Group Registration Form to indicate if a group offers such a meeting format.

Registering Multiple Meetings

While the majority of new meetings are individual groups, some groups consist of more than one meeting. They are one group that meets on two or more days at the same location.

Prior to registering a group with multiple meetings, it is suggested that the members of the group discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being one group with multiple meetings in order to make an informed group conscience decision:

- Meetings that register as separate groups are each eligible to have their own Group Representative to serve them above the group level; Current Mailing Address (CMA) to receive WSO, Area, and local mailings; and phone contacts for the public.

- Groups that register with multiple meetings share the same name, WSO ID number, CMA, phone contacts, and share one Group Representative. District, Area, and WSO mailings (postal and email) are sent to one CMA to share with all the meetings in the group. Multiple meetings of one group have only one voice and one vote at District meetings and Area Assemblies. Groups with multiple meetings may need to consider how and when to hold business meetings so members from all the meetings can share information and participate in making group decisions. (See "Group Business": "Group Business Meetings and Group Conscience": "Group Business Meetings.")

Procedures for Starting an Al-Anon Group

Group Contact Information

With the primary purpose of Al-Anon Family Groups being to provide help and hope to the relatives and friends of alcoholics, groups are encouraged to create and fill group contact positions as quickly as possible.

Current Mailing Address (CMA)

The **CMA** is a member of the group who attends the group's meeting regularly, agrees to accept and deliver the group's mail, and anticipates keeping the same contact information for at least a year. The CMA may be, but does not have to be, the Group Representative (GR) or another group officer. Each group needs to have someone who is willing to receive communications and share them with the group, as it is essential to be able to contact the group.

Email is used for time-sensitive communications with the group and to notify the group when the monthly newsletter from the WSO is available. The CMA's email address will be used for WSO mailings unless the group has a group email address. (See "Group Email Address.")

Up-to-date CMA information assures the group of promptly receiving all communication. The WSO and the local service arms are to be notified immediately when the CMA changes, so there will be no disruption of service to the group.

Group Email Address

A group has the option to create a **group email address** to receive electronic mailings. (See "Anonymity" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for tips on maintaining personal anonymity when using email within the fellowship.)

Phone Contact for the Public

Phone contacts are members of the group who are willing to receive phone calls and extend a warm welcome to newcomers, travelers, professionals, and others seeking information about their Al-Anon group. They provide a personal invitation to newcomers to attend the next meeting, including details about how to attend the group's meeting. Serving as the group's phone contact for the public is Step Twelve in action. A phone contact's first name and phone number may be provided to callers seeking information on the Al-Anon toll-free meeting line. In keeping with Tradition Eleven, it is not appropriate to post members' names or phone numbers on public venues such as websites or posters.

Communication with the WSO

As part of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen, groups are asked to provide a postal address and an email address, so they can receive news and information from the WSO.

WSO Registration Process*

The WSO will register a group with the understanding that the group will abide by the Al-Anon Traditions and not affiliate with or endorse any outside entity or practice

Joint meetings for Al-Anon and A.A. members, meetings comprised of only A.A. members, and groups that practice specific therapies, such as guided meditation, are not in keeping with Al-Anon principles and do not qualify to be registered as an Al-Anon group.

The registration process is simple:

- Decide on a group meeting location, day, and time.
- Review the guideline *Starting an Al-Anon Group* (G-12).
- Designate meeting attendees (Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome or Families and Friends Only).

* In other countries outside the World Service Conference Structure, services to new groups vary.

- Decide the meeting format (i.e., Steps, Traditions, Concepts, Literature, Topic/Discussion, etc. [See "Meeting Ideas"]).
- (Optional) Choose a group type for a specific group of people (i.e., adult children, parents/grandparents, women, men, LGBTQIA+, and young adults) with the understanding that all Al-Anon groups welcome anyone seeking an Al-Anon meeting (Tradition Three).
- Contact your District Representative or Area Group Records Coordinator to obtain information on the Area and/or Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) group registration process.
- Complete the online New Al-Anon Group Registration Form posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org. Both the WSO and the Area Group Records Coordinator are notified once the online form is submitted. (Instructions and a printable version of the form are available in the same location.)

Once the WSO reviews the completed form, a group ID number is assigned and a packet containing introductory materials is sent to the group's Current Mailing Address (CMA). (See "Considerations When Starting an Al-Anon or Alateen Group.")

Prospective groups may contact the WSO for further information.

Initial Group Service Positions

The leadership of a group should be kept simple.

A **small group** needs a CMA (Current Mailing Address), Group Representative (GR), Chairperson, and a Secretary; the latter often acts as Treasurer until the group is large enough to elect one. One or two members agree to be listed as group contacts to take Twelfth Step calls from newcomers. (See "Phone Contact for the Public.")

As membership in the group grows, additional service opportunities can be added such as Treasurer, Literature Chairperson, someone in charge of hospitality, greeters, and other positions as suggested by the group conscience.

Large groups may choose to have a Program Chairperson, Business or Steering Committee, and Information Service Representative (ISR) in addition to other positions as suggested by the group conscience. When possible, alternates are elected for all positions.

(See details of these trusted servants' duties in "Suggested Duties of Group Officers/Leaders.")

Considerations When Starting an Alateen Group

Where Al-Anon is firmly established, groups may want to help the adolescent members of the Al-Anon family by starting an Alateen group through the Area's Alateen process. As of publication, for safety reasons the WSO does not currently register electronic Alateen meetings that are not also administered by the WSO.

Alateen groups are usually started at the suggestion of an Al-Anon or A.A. member, a professional, school personnel, or the teenagers themselves. Alateen groups require Alateen Group Sponsors who are Al-Anon members certified in accordance with their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements to become Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. may be certified as an AMIAS and serve Alateen in keeping with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Anonymity regarding other programs is maintained in the Alateen meeting, just as it would be in any Al-Anon meeting. Alateen is an integral part of Al-Anon, thus emphasis is placed at all times on the Al-Anon/Alateen interpretation of the program.

Parents/guardians who are currently certified through their Area Alateen process may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors; however, whenever possible, it is preferred that the Sponsor not be a relative of any of the Alateen members attending the Alateen group.

Suggestions on selecting a meeting location and naming the group can be found in "Considerations When Starting an Al-Anon or Alateen Group." Additional information can be found in the guidelines *Starting an Alateen Group* (G-19) and *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34) available under the Members menu at al-anon.org. (See also "Alateen" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Procedures for Starting an Alateen Group

When the World Service Office is contacted about starting an Alateen meeting, the WSO refers the caller to his/her Area Alateen Coordinator for information on the Area process for AMIAS certification and group registration.

Alateen Group Registration/Change forms and Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) forms are distributed by the Area and submitted to the WSO through the Area's Alateen process. When the WSO receives a new Alateen group registration form from the Area, the WSO registers the group and assigns a WSO group number. The group is added to the mailing list for complimentary WSO publications. These publications, including *Alateen Talk* and other WSO mailings, are sent to the group's Current Mailing Address (CMA) that is listed on the group registration form. (See "Group Service Positions": "CMA [Current Mailing Address].") Phone contacts and Alateen group CMAs are Area-certified AMIAS.

The WSO toll-free meeting line may refer prospective members to the group. Contact information may be given to callers who request specific information about the meeting such as directions, what door to use, age range of the Alateens, etc. It is important that the group keep its Area up-to-date on any changes in the group information. Alateen group changes are submitted to the WSO through the Area's Alateen process.

It may be difficult for an Alateen group to be financially fully self-supporting at first. Financial support for group expenses such as literature, refreshments, and rent may be provided by Al-Anon group(s), but only until the Alateen group is able to meet its own expenses. Some teens may not have a lot of money, but the spiritual act of contributing reinforces the idea of belonging as a member.

Some Alateen group meetings are held at schools during school hours and are attended only by students from the school. Alateen Group Sponsors at these limited-access meetings must also be certified through the Area Alateen process, as well as meet the school's safety requirements. More information on school meetings is available in the *Alateen Meetings in Schools* guideline (G-5), *Information for Educators: Alateen Meetings in Schools* leaflet (S-64), and the "Alateen" portion in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

Anyone wanting to start an Alateen meeting outside of the World Service Conference Structure is directed by the WSO to that country's national service committee or General Service Office (GSO) if one exists. (See also "Considerations When Starting Either an Al-Anon or Alateen Group.")

Alateen Meetings

Tradition Three—Alateen

The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. The teenage relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Alateen Group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

Alateen meetings are Families and Friends Only meetings intended only for young people affected by someone else's drinking. Only Alateens and the Area-certified AMIAS assigned as Alateen Group Sponsors attend. Designated Area trusted servants may occasionally attend the meeting as a resource to the group per the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

Groups that meet each week are apt to be more firmly established from the outset, particularly when the Alateen members communicate with one another between meetings. Weekly meetings give members more frequent opportunities to share how they are working the program and applying it to their daily lives.

All Alateen Group Sponsors, even temporary or substitute Sponsors, must be certified through their Area Alateen process before being of service to Alateen. When a regular Alateen Group Sponsor is not available, another Al-Anon member who has been certified through the Area's Alateen process can serve as an Alateen Group Sponsor.

Alateens are always welcome to attend an Al-Anon meeting. When there are no certified Al-Anon members available to be of service to the Alateen group, the Alateens are encouraged to attend the Al-Anon meeting. Certified AMIAS are not required to be in attendance when young people attend an Al-Anon meeting; the Al-Anon group is responsible for the safety of all in attendance. (See "Alateen " in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Alateen groups may hold an occasional (annual, bi-annual, or quarterly) Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meeting to celebrate the group anniversary, to inform professionals or others about Alateen, or for another special occasion. These meetings may have one or more speakers that explain how the Al-Anon/Alateen program works. The guidelines *The Open Al-Anon Meeting* (G-27) and *A Meeting on Wheels* (G-22) can offer valuable information.

Basics for Group Meetings

Membership

Tradition Three

The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

Al-Anon and Alateen membership is open to anyone who feels his or her life has been affected by someone else's drinking, either currently or in the past. In keeping with Tradition Three, all family members and friends of problem drinkers are welcome to attend Al-Anon meetings in order to decide for themselves whether Al-Anon can benefit them. New members are encouraged to attend different meetings, to find groups where they feel most comfortable.

Members join local groups where the Al-Anon/Alateen program is shared and where members participate in group service. Al-Anon and Alateen members usually consider one group as their "home group." A home group encourages personal and group growth by offering a variety of service opportunities within the group and connecting its members to the worldwide fellowship through service in the District, Area, and world services.

Sharing in Al-Anon/Alateen Meetings

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

In group meetings, we share our own experience, strength, and hope, keeping the focus on ourselves and how the Al-Anon/Alateen program has helped us change our attitudes and actions. Our discussions center on solutions for our own difficulties. We try not to tell other people's stories or repeat what we see or hear, always protecting one another's anonymity and the anonymity of Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. members, as well.

We concentrate on our own feelings and attitudes, rather than on the details of our situation. Members leave other affiliations (such as other Twelve Step programs or professional resources) outside our meetings.

It is suggested that Al-Anon/Alateen members avoid discussion of specific religious beliefs or ideas, criticism of one another or the alcoholic, gossip, or revealing intimate details of their problems. More detailed discussion may take place between meetings in private conversations with another member or a personal Sponsor. (See "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon" and "Personal and Group Sponsorship.")

Welcoming New Members

The newcomer to Al-Anon/Alateen is often nervous, lonely, and usually desperate. In addition to the help, guidance, and literature provided by the group, individual attention and the friendship of an established member can be of great help.

If a group has a beginners' meeting, newcomers to Al-Anon/Alateen are encouraged to attend. After the new members have attended a number of regular meetings, group members encourage them to express themselves, ask them to read aloud the Serenity Prayer, the Suggested Preamble, or in some small way take part in the group functions so they will feel they belong.

Where there is no beginners' meeting, members can briefly share their experience, strength, and hope; provide the newcomers with Conference Approved Literature (possibly a *Newcomer Packet* or *Welcome Newcomer!* [eK-10]); urge them to read the material; offer to talk or text between meetings; and share with them the value of using the program to cope with problems.

It is helpful to provide new members of the group with an explanation of the group's meeting format and method of sharing, and to advise them that in Al-Anon meetings, members refrain from discussing specific religious tenets, therapies, and other affiliations.

It is also helpful to keep in touch with the new members between meetings.

For more information, see the guideline *Beginners' Meetings* (G-2).

Anonymity

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Anonymity in Al-Anon is a sacred trust, basic to our fellowship and its survival.

The principle of anonymity is essential during meetings to assure the confidentiality of who is present and what is shared at the meetings. As time progresses, some members decide to let their membership in Al-Anon be known to professionals in the community so others can receive Al-Anon's help. Each member chooses when and why he or she lets others outside their meeting know he or she is attending Al-Anon. The principle of anonymity encourages each member to respect the reasons for this personal decision and make no judgments about them.

> **Special Note**: Anonymity is a spiritual principle and cannot be used as a legal basis to shield criminal behavior, past or current. It is wise to remember that Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are not above the law. Members need to exercise care in sharing information that could require reporting to local, state, provincial, or national authorities.

Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.

The principle of anonymity acts as a restraint on members at the public level, to assure that no one will use Al-Anon for profit, prestige, or power. This means that at the level of press, radio, films, TV and the internet, full names and faces of Al-Anon and Alateen members are not used. No Al-Anon member can speak as an authority on Al-Anon in the media. No one's story is more important than others. We are a fellowship of equals and Al-Anon is a program of principles, not personalities.

At Al-Anon meetings, group anniversaries, conventions, or workshops where non-members are present, Al-Anon and Alateen members are free to decide how much anonymity they prefer. It is suggested to open such meetings with a brief explanation of the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. One suggestion is as follows:

"There may be some who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity in any form of press, radio, films, TV, internet, and other electronic media.

"If so, we respectfully ask that no Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. speaker or member be identified by full name or picture in published, broadcast, or electronic reports of our meeting.

"The assurance of anonymity is essential to our efforts to help other families of alcoholics, and our Tradition of anonymity reminds us to place Al-Anon and Alateen principles above personalities."

Event planners may want to make a further note about anonymity and picture-taking. Here is one suggested statement:

"Out of respect for others, please do not take photographs during any of the meetings at this event. Please be considerate when taking photographs, using care that you do not capture images of Al-Anon, Alateen, A.A. members, or their guests who did not give their permission and may not wish to appear in your pictures. In the spirit of Tradition Eleven, please do not post recognizable photos of identifiable Al-Anon, Alateen, A.A. members, or their guests on websites accessible to the public, including unrestricted pages on social media sites."

See "Anonymity" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for more information on the principle of anonymity.

Meeting Ideas

There is no rigid formula for an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting. The general pattern is to have the Chairperson or leader open and close the meeting, announce the meeting topics, or introduce guest speakers or members who share their experience, strength, and hope as a result of working the Al-Anon program. Experience suggests that more can be accomplished when members share on a single topic during the meeting and as many members as possible have the opportunity to share.

Discussion Meetings

The Chairperson or leader presents an Al-Anon or Alateen topic to help members focus their thoughts and discuss the subject as it applies to them. Topics may include:

- **Twelve Steps:** It is suggested that one of the Steps be covered in at least one meeting per month. The Chairperson or leader usually reads the Step and may read a passage from the books *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8), *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), or *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24), and the accompanying *Paths to Recovery Workbook*

(P-93), the workbook *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies* (P-92), or from an issue of *The Forum*. The Steps also appear in many other Al-Anon publications. Members may then comment on the Step and how it applies to their situation.

- **Twelve Traditions:** The group studies one or more of the Traditions and their value in maintaining group harmony and growth, keeping in mind the goal of Al-Anon unity worldwide. The procedure for a Tradition meeting and the sources of material, for the most part, are the same as those for a Step meeting.
- **Twelve Concepts of Service:** A better understanding of Al-Anon world services and the application of these principles to our personal lives can be obtained by study of the Twelve Concepts of Service, found in the *Service Manual*, the books *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24), and the accompanying *Paths to Recovery Workbook* (P-93), the workbook *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies* (P-92), and the pamphlet *The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best Kept Secret?* (P-57).
- **Al-Anon Slogans:** One or more of the slogans may serve as the basis for a discussion regarding their value in daily living. They appear in the book *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), and throughout our books, literature, and *The Forum*, as they also help us deal with our day-to-day personal situations.
- **Panel Discussions:** Members present are invited to submit questions, anonymously, if so desired, to a panel of two or three members chosen by the Chairperson or leader to share their experiences applying the Al-Anon program. This may also be followed by informal discussion by the entire group; the Chairperson, by limiting each person to one or two minutes, can make sure that no one monopolizes the discussion.
- **Literature Meetings:** An unlimited supply of topics can be found in Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. Many groups allot one meeting a month to discuss a particularly interesting subject from the current issue of *The Forum*, Al-Anon/Alateen's monthly member magazine. *The Forum* is

a Conference approved publication for use in meetings, presenting meeting topics, and personal stories for group discussions; likewise, the magazines *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* and *Le lien* are available for Spanish- and French-speaking members. Members may also discuss the optional readings in the "Suggested Meeting Outline."

Speaker Meetings

- **Personal Stories:** Two or three Al-Anon or Alateen members may be asked to speak at the meeting, to tell how the Al-Anon program helps them in their daily living.
- **Exchange Meeting:** An individual or a team of speakers from another group, including Alateen, may be willing to exchange speakers between groups.
- **Special Event:** Occasions such as group anniversaries may serve as an invitation to the Al-Anon program by featuring Al-Anon or Alateen speakers whose personal stories of recovery through the Al-Anon program can give strength and hope to those who hear them.
- **Outside Speakers:** Individuals from the community may occasionally be invited to address an Al-Anon/Alateen meeting. Those selected should be knowledgeable about alcoholism; however, having professional speakers too often at Al-Anon/Alateen meetings may divert us from our own recovery program.
- **A.A. Speaker:** An occasional talk by an A.A. member often presents insights into the disease of alcoholism from the viewpoint of an alcoholic.

Ideas for Occasional Meetings

Writing Meetings

Some groups hold occasional writing meetings. These can be a rich source of material for Conference Approved Literature. Writing meetings are similar to discussion meetings in which the Chairperson or leader presents an Al-Anon or Alateen topic and helps members to focus their thoughts on the subject as it applies to them. Then, members take ten to 15 minutes to capture their thoughts in writing. In the remaining meeting time, members who feel comfortable doing so may share aloud with the group what they wrote on the topic.

Members are encouraged to submit their written sharings to the WSO for possible inclusion in a new piece of CAL, *The Forum*, *Alateen Talk,* or another publication. Sharing sheets and instructions can be found under the Members menu on al-anon.org. Members may submit sharings to the WSO in English, or in Spanish or French with an accompanying English translation.

Group Inventory Meeting

A group inventory may be held during the regular meeting time or at a time convenient to most members. An inventory may be based on the guideline *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b), posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org. See also "Group Business."

Public Outreach Meeting

The function and usefulness of Al-Anon/Alateen can be explained to a wider audience if a public outreach meeting is planned where members, their relatives and friends, A.A. members, students, professionals, and the general public are welcome to attend. A meeting held to celebrate a special occasion can also be considered a public outreach meeting. See the guidelines *The Open Al-Anon Meeting* (G-27) and *A Meeting on Wheels* (G-22).

Supporting Group Growth

No matter what the size of the group, carrying the message is essential to attracting new members. Groups can inform local professionals, including spiritual leaders, members of the medical and legal professions, and others in your community who have occasion to counsel families of alcoholics. Be sure to let those you contact know exactly when and where your meetings are held, and who their clients may call for a personal contact. Some groups announce meetings in a brief newspaper advertisement; some papers will include such listings without charge.

Within the fellowship, inform your District Representative and local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS or Intergroup) to request the new meeting be listed in the local meeting schedule and on the local website. Attending nearby Al-Anon groups and/or your District meeting will help spread the word. Additionally, A.A. groups are usually glad to cooperate with Al-Anon. They may be willing to announce the formation of a new group when they make their own announcements at open A.A. meetings.

Public Outreach in the Community

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Informing the public about Al-Anon and Alateen is vital to the growth of the fellowship. Good public relations are important to our groups as well as the community at large. It is important that members understand the principle of anonymity and how it applies when doing public outreach service. We always protect our members' anonymity, but the Al-Anon/Alateen *program* is not anonymous. (See "Anonymity" and "Public Outreach" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Groups can have members meet with spiritual leaders, healthcare providers, educators, or managers of local radio or television stations. Others may help bring the Al-Anon presence to a local hospital, rehabilitation center, or correctional facility. As long as members maintain personal anonymity when appearing in the media, as stated in Tradition Eleven, they can use their full names when contacting these professionals. Holding a public outreach meeting where community professionals are invited, and placing Al-Anon and Alateen posters in public places, are other ways to enhance Al-Anon's public relations.

Many groups participate in public outreach activities coordinated by their District, Area, and/or local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS). Local media outreach (TV, radio, print media, posters/other printed materials, and the internet) is handled by the District, Area, or AIS. Additional ideas for outreach projects are posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org.

Al-Anon and Alateen members can also share postings from the WSO social media pages, being certain when doing so that they do not add personal information to the share that would reveal their membership in the program.

See also "Public Outreach" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for information on outreach by individuals and groups.

Personal and Group Sponsorship

"**Sponsorship** is a mutual and confidential sharing between two Al-Anon or Alateen members. A Sponsor is someone with whom a member can discuss personal problems or questions; someone who willingly shares the experience, strength, and hope of the Al-Anon/Alateen program" (from *Sponsorship, What It's All About* [P-31]).

Al-Anon Personal Sponsors

After a period of time, Al-Anon members will want to choose a personal Sponsor with whom they can identify. Members can encourage newcomers to find a Sponsor by sharing that Sponsors provide guidance; however, Sponsors do not direct or give advice. The new member may have discussed problems with a contact before coming to meetings. This contact may or may not be asked to continue as a Sponsor; however, neither a contact nor a newly-chosen Sponsor should be used as a substitute for a meeting. Additional information is published in the pamphlet *Sponsorship, What It's All About* (P-31), and in the bookmark *Sponsorship–Working Together to Recover* (M-78).

Service Sponsors

Service sponsorship is a special relationship where one member shares his/her service experience with another member. This type of sponsorship can be a one-time situation, such as an outgoing trusted servant supporting his/her replacement, or an ongoing relationship. Service sponsorship helps both the Service Sponsor and the person who is sponsored acquire new skills while being an example of personal growth through service. Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide benefits when members are enthusiastic about service. For more information about service sponsorship, read the pamphlet *Service Sponsorship: Working Smarter, Not Harder* (P-88).

Alateen Group Sponsors

An Alateen Group Sponsor is an Al-Anon member who is currently certified by the Area process as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), meets all of the Area's Requirements for service as an Alateen Group Sponsor, and has made a commitment to be of service to an Alateen group on a regular basis. (See "Alateen" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Alateen Personal Sponsors

Just as Al-Anon members sponsor each other, Alateens sponsor each other. Alateen personal Sponsors are fellow Alateen members who can discuss personal problems or questions with those they sponsor. Personal Sponsors willingly share the experience, strength, and hope of the Alateen program. Al-Anon members do not sponsor individual Alateens.

Group Business

Group Records

Keeping group information up-to-date is vital to assuring that the most accurate meeting information is provided to persons seeking help in the Al-Anon and Alateen fellowship. Accurate records also keep communication flowing between the group and the WSO, and the group and local service arms. It is essential that groups promptly report changes in their meeting location, meeting day, time, Current Mailing Address (CMA), Group Representative (GR), or phone contacts to their Area Group Records Coordinator. Group members can contact their District Representative (DR) to inquire about their Area's procedure to submit group changes. The Area Group Records Coordinator can provide group reports to verify that the information on file is current. The WSO can be informed by the Area or the group.

Group Business Meetings and Group Conscience

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.

Group business meetings are held to share information and to include all group members in the activities and concerns of the group. Decisions a group makes are determined by an informed group conscience.

Group Business Meetings

Warranty Three
that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;

The group business meeting is an opportunity for members to share their ideas to increase group membership, express concerns, plan special meetings or projects, and discuss other group business—such as changing the group name, Current Mailing Address (CMA), group Phone Contacts, the meeting time and place, finances, meeting format, meeting designation, District and Area matters, and other topics suggested by members of the group.

Business meetings are also an opportunity to identify and discuss solutions to group problems such as: gossip; dominance; the need for additional group service positions; rotation of leadership; inappropriate behavior of a member, and any other matter that affects group unity. The guiding principles for business meetings are the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service.

Groups are within their autonomy to determine how to conduct their group business and how to reach an informed group conscience.

The manner in which a group business meeting is conducted, and how to keep track of the group conscience decisions, is as varied as the groups themselves.

Scheduling the Meeting

Some groups schedule business meetings on a regular basis (monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly) and others hold them as needed. Business meetings can be held before, after, or during the group meeting.

Planning the Meeting

It is beneficial to the group when members are aware of how to bring up their concerns or ideas to discuss at a business meeting. Announcing the date and time of the business meeting and the agenda topics, and distributing pertinent information two or three weeks prior to the discussion and voting, gives members of the group the opportunity to be informed, helps the group make better decisions, and promotes group unity.

Conducting the Meeting

The group conscience decides who chairs the business meeting. The format for a group business meeting includes but is not limited to:

- an agenda
- length of time for discussion of each topic
- what percentage of the vote will reflect unanimity and/or a majority
- how the group conscience decisions will be recorded, etc.

Discussion of the topic(s)

Having a thorough discussion of the topic(s) in a principle-based manner, allowing all who choose to participate in the discussion to be heard, and applying the Traditions and Concepts to each topic, helps groups reach informed group conscience decisions.

- If unanimity is not reached in the allotted timeframe of the meeting, discussions may continue at another time.
- Many groups use the guideline *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b), the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), and the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts Kit* (K-70) as resources when conducting a business meeting.

Voting at the meeting

Many groups request that only members who regularly attend the meeting vote at the group business meeting. Members who regularly attend more than one group may want to consider at which group to vote on District or Area matters, keeping in mind that our principles are spiritual and voting on an issue more than once could be viewed as trying to control or dominate the outcome.

Some larger meetings have a business or steering committee that meets separately to prepare an agenda for the business meeting.

Group Conscience

The group conscience is the result of the group's business meeting discussions. The group conscience is the will of the group. The

guiding principles for the group conscience are always the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service. It may be helpful for the group to review these principles prior to any group discussions. Some simple group decisions may be decided quickly; however, others may take time. It is by taking the time necessary to hear from all members who want to participate that a group conscience evolves.

In order to make an informed group conscience decision, members need access to all the information about the issue they are being asked to discuss, they need clarity on what their discussions hope to accomplish, and they are asked to trust each other's motives and capabilities. By sharing information as equals, taking time for discussion, and maintaining principles above personalities during the discussions, groups are often able to reach unanimity in their decisions. If unanimity is not reached in the allotted timeframe of the meeting, discussions may continue at another time. Once a group conscience decision is made, the entire group supports the decision.

Concept Five tells us that members have the right of appeal. If a member disagrees with the outcome of a group conscience decision, they have the right to submit an appeal for reconsideration back to the body that made the decision. After an appeal is heard, regardless of whether the decision is maintained or altered, the individual accepts the group conscience.

Group Inventory

Taking an inventory of the group helps to keep it healthy and invigorated. Groups are encouraged to make a periodic review using the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service as the guiding principles for the inventory. Members can use the inventory to discuss new service opportunities and address minor or major concerns before the group's unity is disrupted. The guideline *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b) is a useful service tool that can aid in this process. (All Al-Anon guidelines are available under the Members menu at al-anon.org.)

Group Problems and Solutions

The "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) is a compilation of the World Service Conference's group conscience on how to resolve many group questions or problems.

Al-Anon and Alateen members expect a safe* and pleasant environment when they attend a meeting, and when one member causes unrest due to inappropriate or intimidating behavior, the entire group could be affected. Groups are within their autonomy to establish group behavioral guidelines in a manner that reflects their group conscience and abides by the Traditions, as long as they do not impact another group, Al-Anon, or A.A. as a whole.

Some members may discuss specific religious tenets, forgetting that membership is open to all. One or two members may dominate the group, ignoring the principles of rotation in leadership. Some members may talk about what they hear in meetings, violating our principles of anonymity and confidentiality. The spiritual principle of anonymity suggests that each member should be able to feel confident that nothing said in the meeting will be repeated, by a Sponsor or other members**—that every Al-Anon/Alateen member feels bound to keep in strict confidence any personal matter heard at a meeting or from an individual.

When the behavior of any member impacts the group, members apply the Traditions to the problem, and determine how best to approach the individual(s) involved, to ask the member to change the behavior in question. This can be an exercise in applying Al-Anon principles so that the message is not a personal attack, but rather a request based on what is best for the Al-Anon group. The *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts Kit* (K-70) is a service tool designed to aid members and groups to resolve conflict in a principle-based manner. The "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon" are: discussion of religion, gossip, and dominance. Study of this passage from the pamphlet *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4) has helped many groups deal with these group problems. (The passage is reprinted under "Optional Readings" in the "Suggested Meeting Outline.")

The books *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8), *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), and *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24), give detailed suggestions on the application of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service to solve group problems.

* See the document "Let's Talk about Safety in Al-Anon Meetings!" on al-anon.org for more information.

** It is important to remember that Al-Anon/Alateen meetings are not above the law. Members need to exercise care in sharing information that could require outside reporting to local, state, provincial, and national authorities.

Lack of money may handicap the group, or its excess cause disagreements. See the pamphlet *Seventh Tradition* (S-21) and the *Reserve Fund* guideline (G-41) for suggestions about handling group funds. Both are posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org.

Taking a group inventory, rededicating the group to its primary purpose; studying the Traditions and Concepts of Service as they apply to the problem at hand; and seeking the experience, strength, and hope of other local groups, perhaps at District meetings, are all good methods of overcoming group difficulties. (See the *Taking a Group Inventory* guideline [G-8a & G-8b] that is posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org.)

Participation of members in group activities is important. This creates real involvement with the group and solidifies the relationship of the individual member to the group. Since each group has only a limited number of officers, it is best to have a policy of rotation, rather than have one member hold office for long periods of time. Other assignments may involve public outreach, greeting newcomers, setting up, and cleaning up. Reimbursement for refreshments from group funds is made by the Treasurer. The more service opportunities available, the more members will participate and feel themselves to be an integral and important part of the group. Concept Four reminds us that "Participation is the key to harmony."

Group Reports and Announcements

Trusted Servants' Reports

The Chairperson may call on the Secretary or another trusted servant to read announcements from other Al-Anon service arms, including those sent to the group's CMA (Current Mailing Address) from the WSO. The Treasurer or another trusted servant is asked to read the WSO Quarterly Appeal to Members and give the group a report on income and expenditures.

Periodically, the Group Representative (GR) can update the group about District or Assembly meetings; however, at each meeting, the GR can share an item of interest from *The Forum* or *In the Loop*. The GR can also keep the group informed about Al-Anon worldwide with interesting items from the *World Service Conference Summary* (P-46)*. The *Conference Summary* can be ordered from the Online Store at al-anon.org or downloaded/viewed under the Members

* Currently available in English only.

menu at al-anon.org. The Information Service Representative (ISR) can also report the activities of the local AIS or Intergroup back to the group.

Other Group Announcements

Tradition Six

Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Generally, those events put on by or connected to Al-Anon service arms, are announced at meetings, in our newsletters, and on local websites.

At an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting or meeting location, groups do not announce, publicize, or discuss activities of other Twelve Step programs, as this could create an appearance of affiliation or endorsement, even if the event or activity is composed primarily of Al-Anon or Alateen members.

While we remain a separate entity from A.A., we cooperate whenever possible as a reflection of our special relationship with Alcoholics Anonymous. When Al-Anon participates in an A.A. event with speakers or workshops, these events may be announced at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings. (See "Announcing Events" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P-24/27].)

Note that in order to use the name "Alateen," any event with Alateen participation must have a connection to the Al-Anon Area in which it is held and have event requirements that meet or exceed the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

Group Finances/Budget

Tradition Seven

Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

In keeping with Tradition Seven, a group's membership is the source of its funds. Assistance from sources outside of Al-Anon or Alateen violates this Tradition. There are no dues or fees to attend

Al-Anon or Alateen meetings. Supporting Al-Anon and Alateen groups financially is a way for members to express their gratitude for the help they have received from the program, thus ensuring that Al-Anon and Alateen will be available when someone seeks recovery from living with the effects of alcoholism.

Group funds are used to support Al-Anon's purpose of carrying its message of help and hope to those who still suffer. Group contributions support all levels of Al-Anon service including the District, the local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup), the Area, and the World Service Office (WSO).

Groups are within their autonomy to create a financial budget to plan for the purchase of literature, refreshments, the group's trusted servants' expenses to attend business meetings; purchase of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* as a public outreach project; and contributions to the service arms. Some groups take additional collections for special local projects within the District or Area. If necessary, groups can add to the voluntary contributions by having fundraising events. (See "Financial Matters" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Warranty One

That only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle.

The spiritual principle of prudence suggests that groups avoid accumulating money beyond current needs and a small but ample reserve, with just enough funds to pay the Group Representative (GR) expenses to Assembly and group expenses for a couple of months. This can be decided by making an informed group conscience decision. (See the *Reserve Fund* guideline [G-41].)

Group expenses may include:

- Rent (may include insurance) or platform fees for a meeting location.
- Group Representative's expenses to attend and participate at District and Area Assembly meetings.
- Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup) Representative's (ISR) expenses to attend and participate at AIS meetings.
- Conference Approved Literature, including Al-Anon and Alateen books and pamphlets, for sale to members. Most

groups meeting physically offer lower-priced pamphlets and leaflets to newcomers and members at no charge. Groups meeting electronically may gift electronic literature to newcomers. (Information about electronic literature can be found under the Members menu on al-anon.org.)

- Miscellaneous expenses agreed to by the group conscience such as babysitting, public outreach activities, refreshments, etc.

The group supports Al-Anon/Alateen financially at all levels of service by contributing to:

- Their District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup), and Area (state/province) structure that serves the group.
- The World Service Office, which serves all groups. (In keeping with Tradition Seven, support of the World Service Office is the responsibility of all Al-Anon members, groups, and service arms.)*

Considerations regarding Group Finances

- In keeping with Traditions Six and Seven, the group does not provide financial aid to members in need or to any outside enterprise. Individuals are free to help others in need as they choose; however, it is always without involving Al-Anon's name or other group members.
- If a group is not able to support the service levels due to excessive meeting expenses, it may wish to reconsider its choice of meeting locations. A group is discouraged from giving all of its funds to an outside entity, such as a clubhouse, even as a condition of using the meeting room. Al-Anon groups are not responsible to support a clubhouse, other than paying rent. Likewise, Al-Anon groups meeting electronically pay for use of the platform that hosts them but are not otherwise responsible to support the platform.
- A group may need to periodically review its budget as changes to meeting expenses occur, such as rent or platform fee increases, a change in attendance or an increase in member donations, funding a group public outreach activity, etc.

* In countries with a national office, groups support their General Service Office (GSO and the WSO).

The Quarterly Appeal for Members from the WSO provides individual members the opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work worldwide. The letter is sent to the CMA (Current Mailing Address) of the groups in the World Service Conference Structure in February, May, August, and November (and to groups worldwide in November). It is requested the letter be read at two successive meetings and followed by a special collection. This again is an opportunity for members to contribute in gratitude for what Al-Anon/Alateen has given them. Some Areas, Al-Anon Information Services, and Districts may also send an appeal letter to the groups.

Individual members may contribute directly to the WSO. (See "Financial Matters" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Group Bank Accounts

Al-Anon and Alateen groups are not required to have a bank account; however, based on their group conscience decision, some groups choose to have them. In order to make an informed group conscience decision, it is recommended that members be provided with all the information pertaining to the bank account, including fees and disclosure requirements.

It is important to note that individual Al-Anon and Alateen groups are part of Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship, and have no legal status. They are not considered to be tax-exempt organizations as they are not branches or chapters of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (the World Service Office). The WSO cannot share its not-for-profit number with local groups because the WSO has no authority over local group funds. Al-Anon and Alateen groups are autonomous in their financial matters. (See "Incorporation/ Taxes" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Al-Anon and Alateen groups in the United States (US) that choose to have a bank account are required to obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service for the bank to keep on file. The EIN does not give legal status to the group, it does not make them "tax-exempt," and it is not to be confused with the group's WSO ID number.

The trusted servant applying for the EIN and/or the bank account may be required to submit their personal information (full name, ad-

dress, and social security number). A member needs to be sure that he or she is comfortable with disclosing this information on behalf of an Al-Anon group. It is suggested that group bank accounts have at least two signatures on every check and that two to four members are authorized to access the account.

Canadian banks may require similar documentation from the Canadian Revenue Agency to obtain a community bank account.

It is not recommended that group funds be deposited into a member's personal account (or a new personal account using a member's social security number), as such accounts legally belong to the member, not the group, and accurate record-keeping could be difficult. If the member becomes incapacitated or ill, the group might not be able to access the account. In the event of the member's death, the account becomes part of the member's estate and the group could lose its funds.

Banking requirements may vary in other countries and groups must comply with local banking requirements and regulations. Groups meeting electronically may have members attending from across the globe and, therefore, need to consider banking requirements in one or more countries.

Please contact the WSO for additional information.

Insurance

Many physical meeting locations require liability insurance and/or "hold harmless" waivers from Al-Anon and Alateen groups. US and Canadian laws do not allow for the WSO to provide blanket insurance coverage for groups and service arms. Groups requiring this coverage are encouraged to first contact their District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), or Area as there are some that can provide liability coverage for groups. Where this is not the case, several groups that meet at one place might be able to combine their resources and obtain one policy. Laws differ from place to place, and it is suggested that groups contact someone in their locale regarding liability insurance. Paying for insurance should not jeopardize the group's ability to fulfill the spirit of the Traditions and support the Al-Anon and Alateen service arms. If a group is not able to take care of its immediate needs, it may need to reconsider its choice of meeting locations.

When a Group Disbands

If a group no longer meets, the procedure to disband the group is that a member of the group contacts their District Representative (DR), Area Group Records Coordinator, and/or the WSO to become informed of the steps to remove meeting information from local meeting lists and local, Area, and WSO websites. The DR can also suggest ways of disbursing remaining group funds and literature in keeping with our Traditions.

Group Service Positions

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.

Suggested Duties of Group Officers/Leaders

Group officers rotate regularly. Rotation gives all members the privilege of serving. Officers/leaders are trusted servants; they do not govern the group. Groups may attain more participation by electing alternates to the group service positions. Depending on group size and format, the group may choose not to fill all positions listed. Groups may also choose to create additional positions to serve the group's needs.

Chairperson/Leader:

- Opens the meeting by reading the Preamble or the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome and leads the group in reciting the Serenity Prayer; follows the group's meeting format.
- Introduces speakers or announces the subject of the meeting.
- Invites members to take part.

Program Chairperson:

- Asks a member to chair the meeting.
- Plans meetings. (See "Meeting Ideas.")

Secretary:

- Handles group correspondence.

- Notifies the Area Group Records Coordinator or the WSO of any changes to the group, GR, and/or CMA mailing address, as well as phone numbers of group contacts.
- May pick up the mail from the PO Box (if applicable), receive group emails, or serve as the CMA (Current Mailing Address).
- May keep an up-to-date list of members and their contact information to share with newcomers and members.
- Makes necessary Al-Anon-related announcements at meetings.
- Orders Conference Approved Literature in sufficient quantities to supply the group's needs (if the group does not have a Literature Chairperson).
- Encourages support of Alateen by providing information regarding Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) certification until the group elects a Group Representative.

Treasurer:

- Maintains the group's financial records in a manner that reflects the group conscience. Many groups have an actual budget that includes periodic contributions to the District, local Al-Anon Information Service, Area Assembly, and the World Service Office. (See "Group Finances/Budget.")
- Requests voluntary contributions from members during each Al-Anon/Alateen meeting in accordance with Tradition Seven.
- Groups, in their autonomy, determine how to collect and record member contributions.
- Reads the Quarterly Appeal to Members to the group at two consecutive meetings and shares with members how to contribute.
- Submits/reports a financial statement to the group at regular intervals.

CMA (Current Mailing Address):

- Receives postal and electronic group mail.
- Shares the mail with the group. (See "Considerations When Starting Either an Al-Anon or Alateen Group.")

Phone Contact for the Public:

- Receives calls from newcomers seeking Al-Anon's help or others seeking directions or additional information about the meeting.

Group Representative* (GR):

- Acts as liaison between the group and the District, and between the group and the Area Assembly.
- Becomes familiar with the current edition of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and encourages its use among group members.
- Works through the District in helping to initiate public outreach projects.
- Encourages Alateen sponsorship in accordance with Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.
- Serves as local representative of the appropriate Al-Anon/Alateen member magazine, *The Forum*, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción,* or *Le lien* by:
    - Acquainting members with its usefulness.
    - Suggesting personal subscriptions.
    - Submitting group subscriptions to the WSO.
    - Encouraging members to write articles.
- Is elected for a three-year term.
- Encourages election of an Alternate GR*.

Information Service Representative* (ISR):

- Attends meetings of the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup).
- Acts as liaison between the group and the AIS.
- Reports AIS activities to the group.
- The Alternate GR may serve as the ISR, and the GR serve as the Alternate ISR.*

* Al-Anon and Alateen members who are also members of A.A. may not serve as GR or Alternate GR. See "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Membership and Groups": "Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

Tech Coordinator:

- Opens and closes the electronic meeting room, clearing meeting chats to ensure confidentiality.
- Supports newcomers and members overcome technical challenges during the meeting.

Greeter:

- Makes sure that all attendees are welcomed, particularly those new to the group.
- Gives literature and meeting schedules to all newcomers in accordance with the group conscience. (Many groups also provide or gift newcomers with *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* [B-32] available in softcover and electronic versions.)

Hospitality:

- Sets up refreshments if the group provides them.
- Makes sure meeting area is cleaned up after the meeting.

Business or Steering Committee:

- Deals with questions of policy and local public outreach.
- Deals with any internal problems that arise between the group's regular business meetings.

Resources for Members and Groups

Al-Anon Service Arm Websites

Many Al-Anon Areas, Districts, and Information Services have established websites for public outreach and member information. The WSO website is a resource for Al-Anon and Alateen members, professionals, and the public.

The WSO Website (al-anon.org)

This website includes information for Al-Anon and Alateen members, newcomers, professionals, and the media such as:

- Meeting searches for Al-Anon groups meeting physically or electronically and Alateen groups

- A comprehensive directory of contact information for Areas, Al-Anon Information Services (AIS), and General Service Offices (GSO)
- Digital publications including the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), Al-Anon/Alateen guidelines, and *World Service Conference Summaries**
- Group registration and update forms
- WSO financial information
- Online Store at al-anon.org for purchasing Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL)
- Public outreach materials including the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) magazine, press releases, and samples from CAL, *The Forum*, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, and *Le lien*
- Audio podcasts*, Teen Corner, and the latest news from the WSO

Guidelines Relevant to Groups

The shared experiences of Al-Anon and Alateen members on various topics have been compiled and published by the World Service Office (WSO) and can be found under the Members menu at al-anon.org.

Guidelines that may be helpful to groups include:

- *Members Interested in Speaking* (G-1)
- *Beginners' Meeting* (G-2)
- *Cooperation Between Al-Anon and A.A.* (G-3)
- *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b)
- *Public Outreach Service* (G-10)
- *Group Representatives* (G-11)
- *Starting an Al-Anon Group* (G-12)
- *Suggested Programs for Meetings* (G-13)
- *Starting an Alateen Group* (G-19)
- *The Open Al-Anon Meeting* (G-27)
- *Public Outreach to Professionals* (G-29)
- *Ordering Literature* (G-31)

*Currently available in English only

- *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34)
- *Reserve Fund* guideline (G-41) contains information about group budgets, etc.

Newsletters/Timely Recovery Publications

- *In the Loop*, *En Contacto,* and *Le Messager* contain timely news and announcements from the World Service Office (WSO). These electronic communications are sent at least monthly to the group's CMA (Current Mailing Address).
- *The Forum*, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, and *Le lien,* Al-Anon/Alateen's member magazines, contain recovery stories from members, as well as news and information from the World Service Office. Forms to submit sharings are available under the Members menu at al-anon.org.
- Daily member recovery sharings are available by subscription through the *Today's Reflection* premium content in the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*.
- *Alateen Talk* is Alateen's newsletter, distributed to all registered Alateen groups and by subscription. Alateen members share their recovery and Alateen Group Sponsors share their experiences in Alateen service. Sharing sheets are mailed with every issue and are posted on the Members menu at al-anon.org.

Literature and Service Materials

Al-Anon/Alateen literature and service materials help members to continue their recovery between meetings and gain insight into themselves and the principles of the Al-Anon/Alateen program. Conference Approved Literature (CAL) is written by and for our members and goes through a thorough review process by numerous Al-Anon members to assure that it conveys the program in a consistent and comprehensive manner. Samples from CAL are posted on al-anon.org.

Al-Anon/Alateen service tools help members to conduct the business of Al-Anon/Alateen in a healthy, productive way. Many service tools, including all of the Al-Anon/Alateen Guidelines, the *Service Manual*, and outreach materials are available under the Members menu at al-anon.org to download and print as needed. Other outreach materials are available at very low cost. A complete *Al-Anon/Alateen Confer-*

ence Approved Literature and Service Materials catalog (S-15) is available as a free download in the Online Store at al-anon.org.

Most Al-Anon-produced materials, including CAL; *The Forum, Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, and *Le lien*; *Today's Reflection*; and *Alateen Talk*, are appropriate to use and share at Al-Anon/Alateen meetings. Members are always free to read other publications, but only Al-Anon/Alateen materials are used in Al-Anon/Alateen meetings. This ensures that our program message stays consistent with our principles. (See "Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Materials" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Structure of the Al-Anon/Alateen Fellowship (Links of Service)

The links of service may vary around the world. Each structure organizes the groups according to the needs of the structure.

In addition to the definitions of basic terms found in this portion of "Groups at Work," more information about service positions is in the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). Guidelines are additional resources and are posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org.

Groups

The foundation of the Al-Anon Family Groups structure is the membership. The basic unit is the Al-Anon or Alateen group, which may consist of any two or more individuals coming together for mutual help.

The group's operations are the responsibility of a set of officers/leaders, who are elected by the members. Officers/leaders are usually changed every six months so that everyone has an opportunity to serve the group. These officers/leaders, depending on the size of the group, may be the Secretary and the Chairperson. In time, the group may need a Treasurer, Program Chairperson, and other group officers listed in this publication.

The Group Representative* (GR), an officer as well, is elected for a three-year term and represents the group's concerns and wishes at the District and Area, as well as informing the group of what is happening in Al-Anon in the District, Area, and worldwide. GRs are entrusted with the Right of Decision to vote on behalf of the group according to their conscience and the good of Al-Anon as a whole. (See the "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* and the guideline *Group Representatives* [G-11].) GRs and other officers are leaders and trusted servants who perform their duties in keeping with the Traditions and Concepts of Service, yet they have no authority over the group. Their functions are described under the heading of "Suggested Duties of Group Officers/Leaders."

There are two major lines of communication between the individual group and Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole. The first is the World Service Conference that directly serves Al-Anon and Alateen groups in the US (including Puerto Rico), Bermuda, and Canada, as well as non-geographically based groupings, and groups and structures in other countries (whose voice is heard through the International Coordination Committee). The second is the clearinghouse known as the World Service Office (WSO), headquarters of the Al-Anon Family Groups, which acts as the service center for groups throughout the world and is the link with other national General Service Offices (GSO), several of which have their own Conferences.

Districts

The District is the first link from the groups to the Area, the WSO, and the World Service Conference. Districts are comprised of a number of groups within a geographical or non-geographical part of an Area that meet as needed. The Group Representatives (GRs) from the groups in the District, attend the District meetings to represent their group. An Overlay District is a collection of groups typically aligned by a commonality, such as language or non-geographic location. Groups may belong to either the District or Overlay District based on their group conscience. Decisions may be made on hold-

* Al-Anon and Alateen members who are also members of A.A. may not serve as GR or Alternate GR. See "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Membership and Groups": "Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

ing local functions, doing local outreach, and news will be disseminated to and from the groups.

Each District elects a District Representative (DR), who may visit the groups and represents their voice at Area World Service Committee meetings. Each District may have officers and coordinators to help the District carry the message. The District and its officers are a resource to their groups and may be called upon to resolve questions or problems. For more information on Districts and District meetings, see the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroups)

An Al-Anon Information Service, also known as an Intergroup, is a local service established and maintained by one or more Districts or by groups located close enough geographically or connected by language to one another for easy access and communication. Geographical boundaries need not be observed unless one Information Service conflicts with another nearby, in which case a geographical division is set by mutual agreement.

An Al-Anon Information Service usually performs the following functions:

- Maintains a listing in the local phone directory so that those seeking information about Al-Anon and Alateen can easily find it.
- Maintains a PO Box or an office address for listing with the World Service Office.
- Receives postal mail, email, and phone inquiries, and forwards them to the appropriate group for response or follow-up.
- In cooperation with the Area Group Records Coordinator, may update, publish, and distribute lists of group meetings in their local area.
- Plans and conducts program-exchange meetings where the groups' Chairpersons or Program Chairpersons exchange teams of speakers for a scheduled period.
- Serves as an avenue for local public outreach service, which is channeled through the Districts whenever possible.
- May maintain a stock of Conference Approved Literature (CAL),

when also registered with the WSO as a Literature Distribution Center (LDC) to sell CAL.*

- May maintain a website that is linked to their Area website.
- Holds periodic meetings attended by all the Information Service Representatives where activity reports, including a financial update, are made and matters regarding the groups are discussed.
- Publishes and distributes its own newsletter of local Al-Anon/Alateen activities for the groups that support it.

AIS contact information is published in local directories, meeting lists, and on websites. In keeping with Tradition Eleven, AISs do not use personal phone numbers or addresses of any Al-Anon member. In this way, potential members may be referred without revealing the name, address, or phone number of any Al-Anon or Alateen member and personal anonymity is maintained.

Any local Al-Anon or Alateen group may agree to support an Information Service but joining is purely voluntary. The Information Service is supported by the groups it serves within its determined boundaries; it should not seek or accept support outside that area. Contributions are voluntary and are not a condition of membership.

The guidelines *Al-Anon Information Services* (G-4), *Literature Distribution Centers* (G-18), and *Al-Anon Service Arm Websites* (G-40) are posted under the Members menu at al-anon.org.

Al-Anon Information Service Representation

Experience has shown that the Information Service can be a function of Districts, providing a network of communication. It is suggested that the Alternate Group Representative** serve as the Information Service Representative (ISR) and the GR** serve as the Alternate Information Service Representative. In addition, the Alternate District Representative may be a member of the AIS board, and the DR generally serves as the Alternate Information Service Board

* The WSO will also register LDCs that operate separately from the local Information Service.

** Al-Anon and Alateen members who are also members of A.A. may not serve as GR or Alternate GR. See "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Membership and Groups": "Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual.*

member. AISs are connected to the links in the chain of service through their representative, called an Al-Anon Information Service Liaison (AISL), who attends Area World Service Committee and Assembly meetings.

Areas

Areas are comprised of groups and Districts in a determined location that can be geographically or non-geographically defined. Every group in the Area has a voice and a vote in Area business through their Group Representative (GR). Each Area in the World Service Conference Structure (US [including Puerto Rico], Bermuda, Canada, and non-geographically based groupings) is represented at the annual World Service Conference by an Area Delegate, elected every three years by the GRs. Other Area officers include an Alternate Delegate, Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. Area Coordinators serve as a link between the WSO and local trusted servants. Area Coordinators may include: Alateen; Archives; Public Outreach; Literature; Area Newsletter; Area Alateen Process Person; *The Forum*, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción,* or *Le lien*; Web; and Group Records. All Area officers and coordinators are important links in the chain of service, and a resource to the groups and Districts in their Area.

Area Assembly

The Area Assembly is the business meeting where the groups send their representatives to express a voice and vote on behalf of the group. During an Assembly, the Delegate reports the activities of the World Service Conference. An Assembly can meet at least one or two times a year, or a minimum of once every three years. Many meet more often.

Area World Service Committee

In between Assemblies, Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings are held, attended by the Assembly officers, all District Representatives, Al-Anon Information Service Liaisons, and the Area Coordinators of special services. At these meetings, the Assembly agenda is planned, information and reports are conveyed, and decisions may be made that cannot wait until the next Assembly.

World Service Conference (WSC)

See also the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

The World Service Conference (WSC) is an annual meeting of the elected Delegates from each of the Areas of the World Service Conference Structure, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and World Service Office Conference Staff.* Through the discussions and deliberations at the WSC, the active voice and effective group conscience of Al-Anon is heard on world service matters.

Delegate members attending the WSC are chosen at Area Assemblies by the groups through a series of elections. Having been elected in this democratic manner, they are entrusted by the group conscience, in accordance with Concept Three, to make decisions for the fellowship worldwide.

From the Group to the WSC

Each Al-Anon and Alateen group elects a **Group Representative** (GR) and in this way connects to Al-Anon worldwide, as described in Concept One. The GR attends District meetings, where problems are discussed, and information is exchanged. A District is a defined segment of an Assembly Area. GRs elect a **District Representative** (DR) to represent the District at the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings.

DRs and GRs are expected to attend meetings of the Assembly whenever its Chairperson calls them. Once every three years, at the Assembly, the eligible GRs elect a **Delegate** to the WSC for the ensuing three years.

This succession of elected links gives each Al-Anon and Alateen group a voice in the WSC. The same links provide a continuous chain of communication for the flow of information between the groups, Districts, Assemblies, World Service Conference (WSC), and the World Service Office. When Conference decisions are made, the same communication chain carries the information back from the Delegate, to the Assembly, to the AWSC, to the District Representative, to the Group Representative, and to the group members. A

* See the policy regarding "Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Membership and Groups" portion of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual.*

group that fails to have a Group Representative denies its members a voice and causes a break in the link of communications. A comprehensive summary of each annual WSC, usually held in April, is available to all members under the Members menu at al-anon.org. A printed copy can be ordered from the Online Store at al-anon.org.

As Al-Anon developed in countries outside the World Service Conference Structure, members organized service structures to serve their groups. Representatives from national General Service structures are invited to attend the WSC with voice but no vote, since those representatives vote at their own National Service Conferences.

World Service Office (WSO)

In other countries, service is often provided by a national General Service Office (GSO) which is linked to the WSO through the International Coordination Committee. Each structure organizes the groups according to the needs of the structure.

See also the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

As the principal service center of the fellowship, the WSO acts in conformity with the wishes of the Conference. It publishes all **Conference Approved Literature** (CAL). Many functions and activities of the fellowship circulate through this office. It is the center, not the head; it serves, but does not control or direct. The relationship of the WSO to the groups is fully explained in "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service."

Work at the WSO is done by a paid Staff, some of whom are Al-Anon members. They take care of the huge volume of creative and administrative work involved in implementing the decisions of the WSC, as well as routine matters.

New groups are provided support in their early attempts to become established. Correspondence is maintained with the thousands of groups in the fellowship. Members all over the world are encouraged to form new groups.

The **Board of Trustees**, which meets quarterly, is the legal entity responsible for operational oversight of Al-Anon's funds and services. Its service arm, the **Executive Committee**, which meets monthly, is delegated by the Board to make routine management

decisions required in the interim between Board meetings.

WSO Committees

WSO committees are vital to Al-Anon Family Groups. Since Al-Anon's earliest days, they have provided input, feedback, and creative ideas to assist the Board of Trustees in its efforts to lead Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. WSO committees use a variety of decision-making tools to help achieve an informed group conscience. One such tool is the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM).* These committees always fit into the overall context—never acting as a separate entity, always sharing the work of the Board while being aware of the limits of their decisions.

Some of the work handled by the WSO's traditional committees has been moved to "work groups," "thought forces," or "task forces," which report back to their originating bodies.

Here are the current definitions:

- A WSO **committee** is formed by the Board of Trustees and responds to an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups. While it does not manage or conduct the active affairs of the related service area (such as Public Outreach, Literature, etc.), it may make recommendations about work the Staff is doing or considering. It is often thought to be a permanent part of an organization. It can be an originating body and a thought force or task force may evolve from a committee.
- A **work group** is a unit of people established to meet an ongoing need of the originating body. It can be considered a permanent part of the organization which has formed it. It can be an originating body and a thought force or task force may evolve from a work group. The objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body to move forward.
- A **thought force** is a temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity. It uses the resources available such as the perspective of members of the thought force and Staff

* For a detailed explanation of KBDM, see the 2006, 2008, and 2014 *World Service Conference Summary*, available on the Members menu at al-anon.org. Consider reaching out to the Area Delegate for specific details.

knowledge. For example, a problem identified could be a lack of clarity regarding roles. Strategies that are suggested might include writing job descriptions (the idea, not the actual job description); components of a guideline; or adding text to a portion of the *Service Manual* to clarify. The objective is to identify the potential idea not to write the actual text itself. The thought force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions. If there are facts that are unknown, they can be flagged in the KBDM question, "Things we don't know but wish we did." (Contact the Area Delegate for specifics regarding KBDM questions.) A thought force may lay the foundation for the work of a task force. Sometimes they offer recommendations resulting from their findings. A thought force presents its information to the originating body to move forward. Thought forces are "thinkers," not "doers."

- A **task force** is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity. It uses available resources such as perspective of members of the task force and Staff knowledge. For example, a task could be to choose one of the suggested strategies from the thought force. If the task force chooses writing job descriptions, for example, then it would write the job descriptions. The objective is to complete the job description and present it to the originating body to move forward. A task force may fulfill the recommendations made by a thought force. Task forces are the "doers."

None of these groups is a decision-making body, but they may make recommendations. Each body's objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body, to move forward.

Reaching consensus on WSO committees, work groups, task forces, and thought forces is done in the same manner as it is done at the group level. Members need access to all the information about the issue, they need clarity in what their discussions hope to accomplish, and they trust each other's motives and capabilities. Committee decisions take time, but it is necessary to take the time to hear from all members who want to participate so that an informed group conscience evolves. Each member puts forth his or her ideas, willing to sacrifice them, believing that the best outcome will come from the discussion.

Some committees meet regularly while others meet on an

as-needed basis, all with the underlying goal to spread the message of Al-Anon to all those who need it. Individual committees seek consensus to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee oversees day-to-day operations of the WSO including services to members and groups. The Finance and Policy Committees have agendas specific to these matters, while Literature and Public Outreach make recommendations pertinent to current issues in these areas. Finding new ways to serve the Alateen membership is the job of the Alateen Advisory Committee.* Maintaining adherence to the principles of the program in *The Forum* is the role of the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC). The International Coordination Committee (ICC) handles all issues related to groups and General Service Offices (GSO) outside the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. The ICC provides the connection between the GSOs and the WSC Structure.

Basic Terms Used in Al-Anon Service

See the "World Service Handbook" section of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual *(P-24/27) for a fuller explanation. In countries outside of the World Service Conference Structure, service terms and structures vary according to their needs.*

The individual member usually thinks of Al-Anon/Alateen as the group to which he or she belongs. Yet that single group is one of thousands that meet in all parts of the world trying to cope with the same problems faced by others.

An understanding of the whole Al-Anon picture will show the important role played by each individual in the overall work of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship.

Groups

The **group** is the basic service unit, where close personal interchanges among members take place, where Al-Anon ideas are discussed and applied to personal problems. The entire Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship structure exists for the sole purpose of helping the group members. Every member has the right to participate in the group. To ensure growth, members welcome opportunities to

* This service is no longer used in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, this service may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

be useful to the group, to accept group offices, to support those members who do the work of the group, and to stand ready at all times to comfort and help others affected by the family disease of alcoholism address their common problems.

Home Group: The **home group** is the group a member attends regularly and commits to participating, voting, and giving service. It is frequently the strongest support for an Al-Anon member since relationships tend to be developed through close and regular contact.

Group Representative (GR)*: an Al-Anon or Alateen member elected by the group members to represent the group at District and Area Assembly meetings, where they share information of importance. The GR brings that information back to the group.

CMA: The Current Mailing Address receives the group mail from the WSO and takes it to the group. (See "Procedures for Starting an Al-Anon Group": "Group Contact Information": "Current Mailing Address (CMA).")

Phone Contacts for the Public: Al-Anon members who are willing to receive calls from newcomers seeking Al-Anon's help or others seeking directions or information about the Al-Anon meeting.

Al-Anon Personal Sponsor: an Al-Anon member with whom a member can confidentially discuss personal problems or questions and someone who willingly shares the experience, strength, and hope of the Al-Anon program.

Service Sponsor: an Al-Anon member involved in service who guides a member in applying the Traditions and Concepts of Service, and shares their experience, strength, and hope from giving service to Al-Anon.

Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS): an Al-Anon member who is currently certified through their Area Alateen process and is therefore eligible to be directly responsible for Alateens while being of service to Alateen, including serving as an instant or temporary Alateen Group Sponsor.

Alateen Group Sponsor: an Al-Anon member who is currently certified by their Area process as an Al-Anon Member Involved in

* Al-Anon and Alateen members who are also members of A.A. may not serve as GR or Alternate GR. See "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Membership and Groups": "Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

Alateen Service and has made a commitment to be of service to an Alateen group on a regular basis.

Alateen Personal Sponsor: an Alateen member with whom another Alateen can discuss personal problems or questions. Alateen Personal Sponsors willingly share their experience, strength, and hope of the Alateen program.

Districts

A **District** is comprised of groups segmented either by geography within a geographic Area or other commonality within a non-geographic Area. An **Overlay District** is a collection of groups typically aligned by a commonality, such as language or electronic format. Groups may belong to either the District or Overlay District based on their group conscience. Overlay Districts are formed upon approval by the Area. Group Representatives attend District meetings to discuss business matters and share their group experiences with each other.

District Representative (DR): is elected by the GRs from within their District. The DR chairs the District meetings, represents the groups in their District at Area World Service Committee meetings, and serves as a resource and information source for the groups.

Al-Anon Information Services/Intergroups

An **Al-Anon Information Service (AIS)**, sometimes called an Intergroup, is a local service established by the groups and/or Districts within its geographical boundaries. It exists to aid the groups it serves in the common purpose of carrying the Al-Anon message to the families and friends of alcoholics. An AIS Liaison member links the AIS to the Area.

Al-Anon Information Service Liaison (AISL) a member appointed or elected by the Information Service/Intergroup to serve as the communication link between the AIS and the Area Assembly/Area World Service Committee.

Literature Distribution Centers

A **Literature Distribution Center (LDC)** provides Al-Anon members with local access and quick delivery of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature, including books, pamphlets, booklets, kits, posters, and other Al-Anon material.

Areas

An **Area** is made up of all the Districts in a determined location. Each Area is represented by one Delegate at the annual World Service Conference.

World Service Delegate: an Al-Anon/Alateen member elected at the Area Assembly to represent all the groups in his or her Area at the annual World Service Conference. The Delegate is the primary communication link between the groups and the World Service Office (WSO).

Assembly: is composed of all the GRs in the Area and convenes at least every three years to elect a Delegate and other Assembly officers. Other Area business is conducted at the election and any interim Assembly meetings called by the Area Chairperson.

Area World Service Committee (AWSC): consists of the officers of the Assembly, District Representatives, Coordinators, and AIS Liaison members. They meet between Assemblies to plan the Assembly agenda and deal with other Area business, as needed.

Area Coordinators: coordinate the activities of their service area (e.g., Alateen; Archives; Conventions; *The Forum*, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción,* or *Le lien*; Group Records; Literature; Public Outreach; and Website) in the Area and liaise between the Area World Service Committee (AWSC), other Area committees, and the groups. They convey service information from the WSO to the Districts, AISs, and groups. To perform their duties as a Coordinator, Area Alateen Coordinators must be certified as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) in the Area they serve.

Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP): a member who serves as the Area's designated Alateen contact with WSO AFG Records regarding Alateen forms and processes all Alateen group and AMIAS information for the Area. The AAPP collaborates with the Area Alateen Coordinator concerning the distribution and submission of Alateen forms and WSO reports. Based on their needs and autonomy, Areas may determine if the AAPP is required to be a certified AMIAS.

Area Newsletter Editor: a member performing a vital service by providing up-to-date information to the groups within the Area as guided by the AWSC.

World Service

Conference Approved Literature (CAL): books, pamphlets and service tools conceptually approved by the World Service Conference (WSC) and written by and for Al-Anon and Alateen members. Once developed, this material undergoes a rigorous process of review established by the WSC to assure it is identifiably Al-Anon in content and feeling, and consistently reflects Al-Anon's principles. CAL is identifiable by the CAL seal.

Inmate Correspondence Service: a service that links incarcerated Al-Anon members with members who attend Al-Anon meetings regularly through letters that serve as a meeting.

Inmate Contact: an active member of Al-Anon who attends meetings regularly and is willing to share their Al-Anon program with an incarcerated member through written correspondence.

Lone Member*: an Al-Anon member who cannot attend Al-Anon meetings due to distance or disability. Lone members are encouraged to start Al-Anon meetings in their locale when feasible.

Lone Member Contact*: an active Al-Anon member who attends meetings regularly and is willing to share our Al-Anon Twelve Step recovery program through written correspondence with Lone Members.

International

General Service Office (GSO): the term given to a national service structure in a country outside of the World Service Conference Structure. GSOs are linked to the World Service Office through the International Coordination Committee.

International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM): a biennial service meeting for General Service Offices/national service structures. The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through its Delegates. It is not a decision-making body and passes any recommendations through the International Coordination Committee to the Board of Trustees. In addition to the International Coordination Committee members attending this meeting, the WSO Board of Trustees sends two Trustees, one from the United States and the other from Canada.

* This service is no longer used in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, this service may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

National service committee: a committee comprised of Al-Anon members that is authorized by the groups in a country outside of the World Service Conference Structure to form a national service structure. This committee usually evolves from an Al-Anon Information Service or Intergroup and ends when a permanent national service structure or General Service Office begins.

Notes and Updates

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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Introduction

These policy statements 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.

The questions and shared experiences came from many sources—Al-Anon and Alateen members, regional and national conferences, Delegates to the World Service Conference—and from all over the United States, Canada, and many other countries.

When an individual or a group seeks clarification of any matter relating to the Al-Anon fellowship, it is the responsibility of the World Service Office (WSO) Policy Committee to make statements that interpret and encourage use of the Traditions and Concepts. After approval by the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference, these statements are set forth in the Policy Digest. To arrive at answers that are consistent, loving, and helpful takes time and patience, both on the part of the individual or unit seeking the clarification and on the part of the WSO Policy Committee.

As our fellowship grows, and many more ideas and questions are raised, let us strive to live with, and by, what we have here; secure in the knowledge that changes and additions will be made as circumstances and our growth require.

Channel for Arriving at Policies

The WSO Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all members of the Board of Trustees, members of the Executive Committee, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative Staff.

The WSO Policy Committee is often asked to help when there is confusion about how a specific Tradition applies to a new or controversial situation in Al-Anon or Alateen. The Committee meets regularly during the year to review and discuss each problem or issue in light of the Traditions and determines an appropriate policy recommendation. The proposed policies are then brought to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

The Chairperson of the Policy Committee reports the interim policies passed by the Board of Trustees to the World Service Conference

(WSC) each year for its review. If the wording or intent of these policies is to be changed, it is done at the Conference. Action on each policy requires a majority of no less than a two-thirds vote for approval or disapproval by the entire Conference. The same procedure is required for major revisions and amendments to existing policies.

Policies approved by the World Service Conference are reported in many WSO publications, including *The Forum* and the *World Service Conference Summary.* Appropriate adjustments are made in updating this *Service Manual* and other Conference Approved Literature.

The World Service Conference (WSC)

See also the "World Service Handbook" section of this *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

The WSC is the permanent body for the expression of the conscience of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship in the light of our Traditions. It usually meets annually during April. Its membership is composed of the elected World Service Delegates from each Assembly Area in the World Service Conference Structure, the Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Chairpersons and WSO Staff of all selected committees, and the members of the Executive Committee. Representatives from countries other than the United States and Canada may participate but not vote.

To keep the conscience of the fellowship alive, Delegates serve on the WSO's selected committees or subcommittees. For the sake of continuity and unity, each selected committee has its Chairperson, plus "in-town" members who meet regularly throughout the year at the World Service Office.

The World Service Office

See also the "World Service Handbook" section of this *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

The WSO is composed of executives, Staff members and selected committees supervised by the legally empowered Board of Trustees and its Executive Committee. It functions as a clearinghouse, providing service to the fellowship and spreading Al-Anon's message worldwide.

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.

Group Problems

Any group or service arm within a Conference Area that fails to resolve its disputes or misunderstandings by application of the Traditions and Concepts of Service, should seek guidance from its District or Area Assembly. If further guidance is needed, the matter can then be referred to the WSO or the respective national General Service Office (GSO). The WSO or GSO can only offer suggestions by relating the shared experiences of other groups or by providing the appropriate references in existing service material.

Meetings

Locating Meetings

Al-Anon and Alateen meeting information can be obtained by contacting Al-Anon Information Services (AIS) listed in local telephone directories or the WSO toll-free meeting line number, 1-888-4 Al-Anon (888-425-2666).

A list of Al-Anon Information Services and offices worldwide, is found on al-anon.org. Many Areas and Information Services post meeting information on their local website, which are listed on the WSO site. (See "Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/ Materials": "Other WSO Publications": "World Directories.")

Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome/Families and Friends Only Meetings

Families and Friends Only meetings are for all Al-Anon members and anyone whose personal life is, or has been, deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker. Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meetings may be attended by anyone interested in Al-Anon/Alateen.

Introductory Meetings

Introductory meetings can be held at institutions, such as hospitals, treatment centers, and shelters, or any other location where families and friends of alcoholics gather. Attendance changes frequently. Such a meeting is not considered an Al-Anon group and does not have its own Group Representative. Experienced Al-Anon members share the responsibilities for conducting introductory meetings and for inviting those in attendance to try a regular Al-Anon/Alateen meeting. Al-Anon groups, directly or through their

District, are encouraged to help with the cost of literature and other expenses for introductory meetings. Members must comply with the security requirements of the meeting location.

Audio Tape Recordings*

Occasionally, Al-Anon/Alateen meetings are audio taped by members, but as a matter of courtesy, the person doing the taping should receive permission. Al-Anon/Alateen meetings may be taped with the following suggestions:

- Every member is aware and approves of the taping
- Anonymity is carefully preserved

Videotaping/Filming

In keeping with Tradition Eleven, videotaping/filming at meetings is not recommended.

Films

The use of films at Families and Friends Only meetings is not appropriate; experience shows such use lessens the opportunity and desire for personal exchange between members. This sharing is basic to our program of recovery.

Although it is not suggested as an alternative to having members speak, the occasional use of films at Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meetings may be helpful. It is not, however, the most effective way to carry the Al-Anon message. The explanation under "Al-Anon as It Relates to Others": "Outside Agencies": "Speakers from the Helping Professions" applies equally to the use of films.

Members sometimes plan special meetings to show the five films approved by the World Service Conference: *Lois' Story; Al-Anon Speaks for Itself***; *Alateen Tells It Like It Is***; *Walk This Path of Hope;* and *Lois W. and the Pioneers*. These special meetings are held in addition to a group's regular meeting.

Conventions and Other Events

Al-Anon and Alateen events attract many members, drawing them to celebrate and share their experiences. These events can vary in size and content.

*The WSO has no responsibility in the matter of tape enthusiasts who realize a profit from the sale of taped talks of Al-Anon members.

** No longer available from the WSO but may be available in your Area.

Conventions

Among common Al-Anon/Alateen events are Area conventions, bringing together members from across the Area to celebrate recovery, often for a weekend. Conventions hosted by Areas for Alateen are often referred to as conferences. (See the guidelines *Al-Anon/Alateen Area Conventions* [G-20] and Alateen Conferences [G-16] for more specific suggestions on selecting organizers, planning the program, finances, etc.)

Workshops

An Area, District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS)/Intergroup, or one or more registered Al-Anon or Alateen groups may host a weekend, day, or evening of workshops and meetings, luncheons, or banquets. These activities are planned in keeping with the spiritual principles of the Twelve Traditions to address various topics of interest to members or for public outreach purposes. Weekend events often combine workshops and speaker meetings.

Alateen Participation

Alateen is part of the Al-Anon fellowship. Alateen members are to be included in Al-Anon activities wherever possible at the Area and local levels. It is within the autonomy of the Planning Committee to make the decision whether or not the Alateen members have a separate agenda. All events that include Alateen must be in compliance with the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Area in which the event is held. (See "Alateen": "Events with Alateen Participation.")

A.A. Events with Al-Anon/Alateen Participation

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) may invite Al-Anon/Alateen to participate in conventions or conferences at the Area or local level. It is within the autonomy of the Area/local service arm to participate or not. (See the guideline *Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an Area A.A. Convention* [G-7].) An A.A. event must have Al-Anon participation in order to have Alateen participation.

Al-Anon/Alateen Events with A.A. Participation

Al-Anon service arms may invite A.A. to participate in an Al-Anon hosted event. (See the guideline *Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.* [G-3].)

Distribution of Proceeds

Excess funds are often used to establish the next convention's "seed" fund. Since accumulating large sums of money is discouraged, in keeping with Al-Anon's Traditions and Concepts, excess funds over and above a seed fund for the next event can be donated to the District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), Area, or the WSO.

Videos

Sometimes videos are shown at events for entertainment and education. Because of the Sixth Tradition of non-endorsement, only Conference Approved videos are shown.

Maintaining Anonymity at Events

Video Recording or Filming

Video recording or filming on any format does not occur at conventions, workshops, or other events since it is a violation of Tradition Eleven in safeguarding anonymity. (See "Anonymity.")

Announcing Events

Various types of events are held for Al-Anon and Alateen members to gather for fun and fellowship, to celebrate recovery and enhance their understanding of the Al-Anon/Alateen program.

It may be helpful for members to consider the following spiritual principles when announcing these events:

- Cooperation
- Participation
- Responsibility
- Singleness of Purpose
- Unity or Common Welfare

Al-Anon/Alateen recovery and service events cultivate a sense of community. Recognizing this spiritual need to belong, the principle of participation links the membership to these events.

At Meetings

Members often wonder if a particular event is appropriate to announce. The following should be considered when deciding what to announce at meetings:

- Events hosted by or connected to the WSO, an Area, District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS)/Intergroup, or one or more

Al-Anon or Alateen group can be announced at meetings. These events bring members together to connect through experiences and discussions.

- Al-Anon is often invited by A.A. to participate in recovery events. Almost from its beginning, Al-Anon has taken part in these events. Such participation often led to the growth of Al-Anon and an enhanced spirit of cooperation between both fellowships. When Al-Anon participates through one of its service arms or a registered group in an A.A. event with speakers or workshops, these events may be announced at meetings.

At the WSO

The WSO posts on its calendars:

- Al-Anon events hosted by the WSO or Al-Anon service arms.
- Only A.A. events with Al-Anon participation through its Al-Anon service arms. A representative of the Al-Anon service arm brings that event to the attention of the WSO for potential posting.

Outside the Fellowship

Al-Anon does not affiliate with other organizations; and neither endorses nor opposes any other philosophies, therapies, or spiritual programs. Our experience suggests that confusion arises when such events are announced in Area newsletters, Al-Anon/Alateen local bulletins, on Al-Anon websites, and at group meetings.

The Al-Anon/Alateen name, therefore, cannot properly be used to identify or publicize any retreats, events, or activities sponsored by others. This applies when most, or even all, of the participants are members of Al-Anon/Alateen. Otherwise, there could be a misunderstanding of Al-Anon's purpose and function. In order to avoid any appearance of Al-Anon/Alateen affiliation, it is important to keep promotion of such events outside of Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and meeting locations.

Autonomy of Service Arms When Announcing Events

Whether to announce a particular event is a matter of autonomy, keeping in mind other groups, the District, or the Area may have different criteria. For example, an Area may choose to only make announcements at Assemblies for events sponsored by Al-Anon service arms.

Just as we have no opinion on outside literature, we have no

opinion on events outside of Al-Anon. Members may read or attend whatever helps them in their recovery; but we keep our events focused on Al-Anon principles and topics.

Alateen

Safety and the Alateen Motion

World Service Conference Alateen policies that are approved for the World Service Conference Structure must adhere to the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. The 2003 Alateen Motion is a legal resolution of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and cannot be changed by a World Service Conference motion. Just as our Al-Anon/Alateen policies and procedures must be in keeping with our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, and the "Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter," Alateen policies and procedures for the World Service Conference Structure must also comply with the 2003 Alateen Motion. Only the Board of Trustees can amend or alter the 2003 Alateen Motion. (See the 2003 Alateen Motion at al-anon.org or in the appendix of the current printed or online version of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)

Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements

In order to use the Alateen name, each Area in the World Service Conference Structure must have Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements in place that meet, or exceed, the minimum requirements set by the 2003 Alateen Motion. Each Area's established Safety and Behavioral Requirements, as well as any revisions to those same Requirements, must be current, compliant, and on file with the World Service Office (WSO). These Requirements, developed by individual Areas, protect the teens and the adult Al-Anon members who serve them and assure parents and guardians that Al-Anon and Alateen function within the law.

Each Area must identify the required steps that need to be taken by members in order to comply with their Area's Requirements. Maintaining and implementing these Area Requirements demonstrates to the fellowship and to the public that Alateen is a program characterized by careful oversight of young people seeking recovery from the effects of someone else's drinking.

The Area's Requirements apply to the registration of all Alateen groups, certification of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), Alateen members' participation in Alateen meetings, and all other events with Alateen participation such as conferences and conventions. In order to use the Alateen name, the Area, all AMIAS, all Alateen members, and all meetings and events with Alateen participation must comply with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

Area Alateen Process and the Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP)

In keeping with Area autonomy, each Area must create its own process and documentation that identifies the trusted servants responsible for the ongoing implementation of that Area's Requirements in order to use and continue to use the Alateen name. This Area process includes the steps to follow for registration of Alateen groups, initial certification and annual recertification of AMIAS, guidelines for any events with Alateen participation, and procedures for parental permission and medical care when applicable. An Area's Alateen process is available from the Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP), Area Delegate, Area Chair, District Representative (DR), or Group Representative (GR).

To ensure unity, consistency in communications with the WSO, and compliance with Area Requirements, each Area has an individual who serves as the Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP). The AAPP maintains the current list of certified AMIAS and communicates with the WSO and Area trusted servants as described in the Area Requirements. This list includes certified AMIAS who are eligible to serve the Area at any time. It is within the Area's autonomy to determine how the AAPP service responsibility is fulfilled.

Certification as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS)

Anyone serving Alateen in any capacity must be a currently certified AMIAS in accordance with his or her Area's Safety and Behavioral Requirements. To maintain AMIAS status, all Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service must be recertified annually according to the timeline established by the WSO. All AMIAS must adhere to specific requirements set by the Area in which the AMIAS serves. AMIAS may be certified by more than one Area; however, they must first be

certified by the Area in which they reside. A currently certified AMIAS is an active Al-Anon member directly responsible for Alateen members as a Group Sponsor, chaperone, driver, or any other role as outlined in the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

To ensure adherence to the Alateen policies and safety of all Alateen members, each Area must have an Alateen Coordinator who is currently certified as an AMIAS. In keeping with Area autonomy, the Area determines which other service roles associated with Alateen and its members require AMIAS certification.

Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. may be certified as AMIAS and serve Al-Anon in accordance with their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

Starting an Alateen Group and Using the Alateen Name

In order to use the Alateen name, groups must first register through their Area's Alateen process. Registration provides a connection to worldwide Alateen and ensures unity of purpose for both groups and members. To register as an Alateen group, each Alateen group must have currently certified Al-Anon Member(s) Involved in Alateen Service to serve in the following capacities: the Group Sponsor, the Current Mailing Address (CMA), and the Phone Contact. Two Sponsors are recommended, but not required. Once registered, every Alateen group adheres to the Alateen Traditions. To continue use of the Alateen name, each Alateen group must participate in the Area's annual recertification process. (See the "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" section of this *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* and the *Alateen Service e-Manual* on al-anon.org for more information on "Starting an Alateen Group," "Organization of an Alateen Group," and the "Alateen Group Registration Form.")

Alateen Group Sponsors

An Alateen Group Sponsor is an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) who is certified through the Area's Alateen process and gives his or her time on a regular basis to ensure that the spiritual principles of the Al-Anon program are shared within the Alateen group. As defined in the 2003 Alateen Motion for Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements from the Board of Trustees, an Alateen Group Sponsor is an adult member of Al-Anon who

is a minimum of 21 years old, currently attending Al-Anon meetings, and has been an active Al-Anon member for at least two years. These requirements are in addition to any previous time spent in Alateen. Any additional Alateen Group Sponsor requirements are a matter of Area autonomy.

An Alateen Group Sponsor or Area-certified AMIAS must be present to hold an Alateen meeting, as outlined in the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. When no certified AMIAS are available, no Alateen meeting is held.

Alateen Personal Sponsors

Alateen members are encouraged to sponsor each other in a peer-to-peer relationship. Alateen Group Sponsors and other Al-Anon members do not serve as Personal Sponsors to individual Alateens.

Alateen Meetings and Participation

Alateen meetings are closed meetings intended only for young people affected by someone else's drinking. Only current Alateen members, prospective Alateen members, and the Area-certified Alateen Group Sponsors affiliated with the group can attend. Designated Area trusted servants may occasionally attend the meeting as a resource to the group. No other adults may participate in, or observe, an Alateen meeting. In accordance with Tradition Three, any person affected by the family disease of alcoholism may attend an Al-Anon meeting, regardless of age.

An Alateen group may hold an occasional Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meeting for public outreach to introduce the Alateen program to members of Al-Anon and A.A. as well as members of the community, professional counselors, teachers, and therapists. Participating in public outreach is a Twelfth-Step opportunity for Alateen members to carry the message of hope and to build self-esteem and self-confidence.

Alateen Membership and Age Range

As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. It is within the autonomy of each Alateen group to lower the age limit or divide into groups according to age. The Alateen program does require the ability of members to participate and share experience, strength, and hope. Alateen is not a teaching program.

For group unity and safety, members in their teen years who are legally adults agree to abide by the same requirements as minor Alateens when they attend Alateen meetings and events. Alateen members in the upper teen years are encouraged to begin attending Al-Anon in addition to Alateen meetings.

Whenever minors attend Al-Anon meetings, the Al-Anon group is responsible for prudent safety measures for them just as it is for the safety and common welfare of all members.

Alateen Self-Support and the Seventh Tradition

An Alateen group may find it difficult to meet all its expenses and needs. The local Al-Anon group(s) or District can support their Alateen groups with the goal of the group becoming fully self-supporting as soon as possible. Alateen members are responsible for filling their group service positions and for passing the basket to cover group expenses.

Alateen Meetings in Schools and Other Limited Access Facilities

Alateen meetings held in limited access facilities such as schools, hospitals, juvenile centers, and other professional settings are only available to the young people affected by the family disease of alcoholism in those facilities. However, some facilities may require that a counselor or other staff member sit in on the meeting. In such cases, the meeting is considered open only to the required personnel of that facility.

Prior to having an Alateen meeting in a limited access facility, Al-Anon members meet with the facility staff to explain the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, the Al-Anon/Alateen Traditions, and the principles of anonymity and confidentiality. Alateen members carry the message to other teens within the parameters of the Area Requirements and the Twelve Traditions. (See the guidelines *Starting an Alateen Group* [G-19] and *Public Outreach to Institutions* [G-9].)

Events with Alateen Participation

In order to use the Alateen name, any event or gathering with Alateen participation must be in compliance with the Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Area in which it is held. These gatherings include, but are not limited to, Alateen conferences, Al-Anon/

Alateen conventions, Area Assemblies, multi-Area events, and A.A. events with Al-Anon and Alateen participation. Maintaining the identity and integrity of the Alateen program as a resource for young people affected by someone else's alcoholism is essential.

Al-Anon service arms or conferences/conventions may have fundraising events to provide full or partial scholarships for Alateens or Alateen Group Sponsors who may not otherwise be able to attend these events. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, any contributions of financial support are solicited only from within Al-Anon/Alateen. (See "Financial Matters": "Contributions of Money, Goods, and Services": "Fundraising" and the following guidelines: *Alateen Conferences* [G-16], *Al-Anon/Alateen Area Conventions* [G-20], and *Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention* [G-7].)

Anonymity

Anonymity Outside Al-Anon/Alateen

The experience of our groups suggests that the principle of anonymity—summed up in Tradition Twelve as "the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions"—has three elements. There is anonymity as it applies outside Al-Anon/Alateen, governing our contacts with the general public, the media, and professionals; anonymity within the fellowship; and anonymity as it contributes to our personal growth.

Anonymity and the General Public

When dealing with the general public, it is important to use discretion in revealing one's Al-Anon/Alateen membership. In settings where there is no media involved (health fairs, speaking to community groups or schools, etc.), members are free to use their full names, if they are comfortable doing so.

Anonymity and the Media

Tradition Eleven gives a specific guideline: "we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV." It is Al-Anon/Alateen policy to interpret Tradition Eleven to include the internet as well as all forms of evolving public media. Personal anonymity in the media, guards the fellowship from the Al-Anon/Alateen member who may be tempted to seek public recognition.

When speaking or writing as an Al-Anon/Alateen member in any

form of press, radio, films, TV, internet, or other evolving public media, members use only their first names and last initial or pseudonyms. Members can also speak without identifying themselves or sign articles "Anonymous."

Photographs, video, film, or web postings in published or broadcast media should not reveal full face images of those identified as members.

On any website accessible to the public, whether an Al-Anon site or not, full names, phone numbers, or other identifying information are not posted, if they are identified as belonging to an Al-Anon/Alateen member. (See "Anonymity": "Anonymity Within Al-Anon/Alateen": "Anonymity in Al-Anon/Alateen Publications.")

Anonymity and Professionals

It is important to make Al-Anon/Alateen known through our public outreach work with the many types of professionals who come into contact with families suffering from the effects of someone else's drinking. When working with professionals, Al-Anon and Alateen members are more credible and effective when they give their full names and contact information. While personal anonymity is not required in outreach to professionals, it is helpful to inform the professionals of the importance of anonymity and confidentiality in Al-Anon/Alateen.

Note: Alateen members must comply with local laws and their Area Alateen requirements regarding personal anonymity in all public outreach work.

Electronic Communication Outside of Al-Anon

Email provides a quick and easy way to communicate the Al-Anon/Alateen message to the media and professionals. Members' business email addresses should not be used for Al-Anon/Alateen outreach, as they could imply affiliation and may not be confidential to the member.

Web-based communication, such as online audio/visual materials (e.g., webcasts or podcasts), social media posts, and blogs, provides members with easy access to distribute information about Al Anon/Alateen recovery to a large audience. In keeping with Tradition Eleven ("Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the

level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members."), members who use this type of communication outlet must maintain their personal anonymity and that of any Al Anon/Alateen or A.A. member, as the internet is a form of media.

Anonymity Within Al-Anon/Alateen

Members use their full names within the fellowship when they wish. The degree of anonymity a member chooses (first name, pseudonym, or full name) is not subject to criticism. Each member has the right to decide.

Regardless of our personal choice, we guard the anonymity of everyone else in the fellowship, Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A. This means not revealing to anyone—even to relatives, friends, and other members—whom we see and what we hear at a meeting.

Anonymity goes well beyond mere names. All of us need to feel secure in the knowledge that nothing seen or heard at a meeting will be revealed. We feel free to express ourselves among our fellow Al-Anon members because we can be sure that what we say will be held in confidence.

Anonymity at Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome Meetings and Al-Anon/Alateen Events

At Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome Al-Anon meetings, group anniversaries, conventions, or workshops where non-members may be present, Al-Anon and Alateen members are free to decide how much anonymity they prefer. It is well to begin these meetings with a brief explanation of the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. One suggestion is as follows:

> There may be some who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity in any form of press, radio, films, TV, internet, and other electronic media.
>
> If so, we respectfully ask that no Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. speaker or member be identified by full name or picture in published, broadcast, or web-posted reports of our meeting.
>
> The assurance of anonymity is essential to our efforts to help other families of alcoholics and our Tradition of anonymity reminds us to place Al-Anon and Alateen principles above personalities.

At any function that records its speakers, members need to be aware that some recorders have websites that are open to the public. If speakers use full names, their sharings, including full names, could be posted, which violates the principle of anonymity.

Anonymity in Service

In Al-Anon/Alateen service positions (Group Representatives, District Representatives, coordinators, World Service Conference members, etc.), it is practical to use full names and addresses to facilitate communication.

Confidential Mailing Lists

Confidential mailing lists are maintained throughout our service structure by groups, Districts, Areas, and the WSO. Care must be taken that members' identifying information from these confidential lists is not made available to the public in published materials or posted on public Al-Anon websites.

Service Communication

Service communication via email is expedient and efficient, but care and common sense must be taken in its use, particularly in forwarding messages. Use of blind copies protects members' anonymity. Members should select with care the email address(es) they use to conduct Al-Anon/Alateen business. It is recommended not to use members' full names in them. Business email addresses might not provide privacy and could imply affiliation.

- Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs), Group Representatives (GRs), and other trusted servants sending information by email to group members take care in the wording of email subject lines and use an email address that protects anonymity as the email addresses to which they are mailing may not be private.
- Email addresses of trusted servants are assumed to be private. Electronic correspondence sent among the links of service may include the name Al-Anon or Alateen.

As postal correspondence is delivered by public means, letters (including the return address) to an Al-Anon or Alateen member should never have the name Al-Anon or Alateen on the envelope. The WSO uses "AFG, Inc." on envelopes sent to members in order to protect anonymity.

Anonymity in Al-Anon/Alateen Publications

In all publications available to the general public, personal anonymity is maintained. Although the WSO requests that member submissions to WSO publications include full names, addresses, and phone numbers, the WSO publishes the material signed with first name and initial, "Anonymous," or a pseudonym. Service arm publications follow the same publishing policy when distributed outside the fellowship.

Publications and other materials meant for members (such as flyers, reports, letters, email messages, and newsletters) that identify members by full name or provide members' phone number or address can be posted on Al-Anon/Alateen password-protected websites. Posting material meant for members on websites that are not password-protected could result in publishing a member's full name, which violates the principle of anonymity. (See "Anonymity": "Anonymity Outside of Al-Anon/Alateen": "Anonymity and the Media.")

Anonymity in Our Personal Growth

In Al-Anon/Alateen we share as equals, regardless of social, educational, or financial position. Common sense in the use of anonymity provides freedom and the security each member is assured in Al-Anon/Alateen. Our spiritual growth has its roots in the principle of anonymity. Each member has the right of decision regarding personal anonymity within the fellowship, which we respect whether the member is attending meetings, not attending meetings, or deceased. (See "Public Outreach.")

Financial Matters

Spiritual Principles of Al-Anon's Self Support

Tradition Seven is Gratitude in Action. Al-Anon is supported by members' financial and service contributions together with the sale of our literature.

Our spiritual principles inspire members to support the fellowship as it serves both members and prospective members. As we receive the hope and help we each sought, we use these spiritual principles to ensure that those following in our footsteps have the same opportunities:

Abundance—We learn to change our thinking from what we don't have to an awareness of gratitude for what we do have. As that idea expands, we continue to give of our time and money, realizing we can never give back all we have been given. Thinking abundantly allows us to accomplish our primary purpose of reaching out to families and friends of alcoholics.

Anonymity—Within our practice of anonymity we are reminded that our personal donations are made without recognition or public acknowledgement.

Gratitude—We express our gratitude by giving generously of our time and resources. We want to ensure that Al-Anon will continue to be available to others.

Responsibility—Step Twelve suggests that reaching out is essential as we strive to carry out our responsibility to be there for the newcomer. To fund this very important work, we consider what combination of service and money each of us is willing to provide.

Trust—We believe our trusted servants practice these spiritual principles when making informed decisions about the use of our resources. We realize that we all want what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. As we trust others, we come to understand that we, too, are worthy of trust.

Unity—Our contributions provide the means to create, maintain, and expand the services that are necessary to enhance the sense of belonging, so all members are connected in fulfilling our primary spiritual aim.

Contributions to the WSO

In maintaining the principle of anonymity, no individual's gift is acknowledged publicly, nor can the gift be earmarked for any specific purpose or program. Al-Anon members give knowing that the money will be spent continuing to support and expand the program that brought us peace and serenity during our lives.

As Individual Members, We Give Through:

Direct Contributions

In any calendar year, an Al-Anon member may contribute in gratitude to the WSO any amount up to one percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit.

When giving locally to our groups, Districts, Al-Anon Information Service/Literature Distribution Centers (AIS/LDC), Areas, or General Service Offices (GSO), we make our gifts in a similar proportion to the revenue and expenses of these service arms, keeping in mind that all members want to have responsibility for supporting our structures. Our contributions express our individual abundance so no one donation, regardless of amount, is more important than another. (Also see "Incorporation/Taxes": "Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc." regarding charitable deductions.)

In addition to checks, money orders, and online contributions, members may authorize deductions from their bank accounts. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Birthday Plan. In honor of their Al-Anon/Alateen birthday, members may express their gratitude by contributing an amount for each year's membership.

Memorial Contributions. Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased. (Contact the WSO for details.)

The World Service Office accepts contributions in memory of deceased Al-Anon members from "family" who are not Al-Anon members. The fellowship recognizes that accepting such contributions can give comfort to families as described in Tradition Five.

The World Service Conference defines "family" as anyone who has a close relationship of loving care and concern for another. The individual donor defines his or her relationship to the deceased Al-Anon member.

This one-time gift of gratitude is limited to an amount no greater than $500. Memorial contributions by non-members are not solicited.

Quarterly Appeal to Members. The quarterly appeal gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level. Since the WSO does not maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon/Alateen, quarterly appeal letters are mailed to the groups in February, May, August, and November. It is requested that the letters be read at two meetings to allow individual members to contribute directly to the WSO in addition to their regular group donations. Members give in accordance with spiritual principles and the opportunity to contribute is offered to all.

The 1966 World Service Conference voted that three letters of appeal for individual contributions be sent annually from the WSO to Al-Anon/Alateen members in the United States and Canada. In 1998, the World Service Conference voted to increase the appeal frequency to quarterly. In November the appeal is extended to members of groups worldwide.

Workplace Combined Giving Campaigns. Members may contribute to the WSO via a combined giving campaign through their employers. In keeping with members' individual responsibility to be self-supporting, such contributions come directly from their income and matching funds from employers (non-members) cannot be accepted. Members notify the WSO of their intent to make such contributions, so it is clear the money is coming from a member. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Bequests

The WSO may accept a *one-time* bequest from an Al-Anon member's estate or trust in any amount. Bequest amounts, up to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit will be placed in the General Fund. Members may designate, in a spirit of gratitude, more than the ten percent; however, the portion of the bequest above the ten percent will be reported separately on the financial statements. The World Service Conference will authorize the use of these excess amounts and the authorized expenditures will be administered by the Board of Trustees. These excess amounts are not available for general purposes, unless further authorized by the Conference. (Contact the WSO for details.)

As Groups and Other Service Entities, Members Give Through:

Al-Anon/Alateen Groups

As an expression of gratitude, groups may make donations to the WSO on a regular basis without limit after meeting the group's expenses and contributions to local and Area service entities.

Al-Anon Service Arms

Districts, Al-Anon Information Services (Intergroups), Literature Distribution Centers (LDC), Areas, General Service Offices (GSO), and other Al-Anon/Alateen service entities may also contribute in a spirit of unity directly to the WSO without limit.

Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions

A portion of the funds derived from Al-Anon and Alateen conventions may be contributed to the WSO. (See "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Conventions and Other Events": "Distribution of Proceeds.")

A.A. Conferences/Conventions

Contributions received from A.A. conferences/conventions that are offered as an Al-Anon acknowledgment of Al-Anon's participation in these functions may be accepted by the WSO or its service arms.

Reserve Fund

Warranty One recommends that an ample reserve be the prudent financial principle of the World Service Conference. This ample reserve, created from the generosity and abundance of the members, ensures the continuation of the important Twelfth Step work of Al-Anon Family Groups and the funding of special projects. (See the *Reserve Fund* guideline [G-41].)

Contributions of Money, Goods, and Services

Members' personal contributions of money, time, and experience are appropriate expressions of our spiritual principles.

Fundraising

As part of our responsibility to be self-supporting, many groups, Districts, Areas, Information Services, conventions, conferences, and Assemblies often raise funds to provide services.

Fundraisers such as potlucks, dances, or other social events are usually conducted in agreement with the Al-Anon/Alateen groups directly involved. If such events are open to the general public, use of the name Al-Anon or Alateen violates our Traditions of anonymity and self-support. (Also see "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Conventions and Other Events": "Announcing Events.")

Discounts of Goods and Services

The WSO and other Al-Anon service entities may accept discounts of goods and services that are routinely available to other not-for-profit organizations (e.g., nonprofit postal rates, free placement for public service announcements, etc.). In addition, service

entities may accept discounts of goods and services that are routinely available to other not-for-profit organizations and for-profit entities—e.g., freeware and other digital media—provided that members' anonymity is protected and there are no appearances of affiliation or requirements that would violate our Traditions.

Outside Contributions of Money

Al-Anon and Alateen groups do not solicit or accept* direct contributions of money from outside the Al-Anon membership in order to adhere to the Seventh Tradition of full self-support and avoid the appearance of affiliation or influence by others. Seeking or accepting any outside funding through awards, endowments, gifts, grants, scholarships, etc. would not be in keeping with our spiritual principles. (See also "Financial Matters": "Contributions of Money, Goods, and Services": "Discounts of Goods and Services" and "Financial Matters": "Use of Group Funds.")

Program-Related Jewelry and Other Items

The WSO does not stock or offer program-related jewelry or other items for sale because these actions could divert our service office from our primary purpose.

In keeping with Tradition Six, the WSO does not provide lists of suppliers for articles associated with the fellowship, e.g., plaques, jewelry.

Selling Products/Chances

Selling Products at Meetings/Conventions/Conferences

Tradition Five states that the one purpose of each Al-Anon group is to help families of alcoholics. Therefore, it is inappropriate for an individual or outside entity to use Al-Anon meetings or other Al-Anon events as a marketplace before, during, or after these gatherings for the sale of services or products.

Avoiding Commercialism

Raffling various articles at meetings or other gatherings is a matter of autonomy but to avoid commercialism in the fellowship, it is suggested that these items relate in some way to our spiritual principles. Items such as Al-Anon or Alateen books, subscriptions to *The Forum*,

*The only exception would be subject to the Memorial Contributions Policy for family members.

or the donated products of the creative efforts of individual members are suggested. In keeping with our principle of self-support, we do not solicit or accept items from outside the fellowship. (Also see "Financial Matters": "Selling Products/Chances": "Raffles/Lottery Tickets.")

Selling Products at A.A. Meetings

In keeping with Tradition Seven and our principle of self-support, Al-Anon and Alateen members should refrain from soliciting or selling any products at A.A. meetings.

Raffles/Lottery Tickets

Raffles/lotteries are subject to national, state/provincial, and local laws.

U.S. federal law and Canadian federal law make it illegal to send lottery tickets through the mail.

Governmental regulations may prohibit solicitation of ticket money by letter or by the sales of chances on a prize. Similar restrictions may apply outside the United States and Canada.

There may also be other state or provincial laws which regulate the use of fundraising involving the sale of chances or tickets by charitable organizations. Since groups, Districts, and many Areas are not registered as charities with state/provincial or federal authorities, these laws could prohibit such sales.

Local statutes must also be investigated and complied with in order to prevent individual members and Al-Anon as a whole from becoming involved in public controversy.

After determining that the proposed raffle and/or lottery is legally permitted within the Area where it is to be held, additional precautions need to be taken so that we are not diverted from our primary purpose and do not imply endorsement. Distribution and sale of raffle/lottery tickets should be limited to Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and events. (Also see "Financial Matters": "Contributions of Money, Goods, and Services": "Fundraising" and "Financial Matters": "Selling Products/Chances.")

Public Meetings

During Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meetings when the public has been invited, it is appropriate to read the Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps and the Seventh Tradi-

tion before passing the basket to clarify our spiritual principle of self-support.

Use of Group Funds

Group Expenses

Our Tradition of self-support suggests that the expenses for the group's operation such as rent, literature, insurance, public outreach, supplies, PO Box rental, Group Representative, and Information Service Representative expenses be met first. Funds in excess of an ample reserve are used to help support local and Area structures and the World Service Office.

Rent

In facilities where rent is not accepted, a group may provide a supply of Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and local meeting schedules as an appropriate alternative.

Gifts to Members

In the spirit of unity, group funds are used for group purposes only, not for personal gifts to members.

Childcare

Some meetings are attended by members who must bring children. Using group funds or taking a special collection to pay for childcare at the meetings is within a group's autonomy. Paying for this type of service does not violate Traditions, since avoiding disruption of a meeting benefits the unity of the group as a whole.

Outside Agencies/Groups/Organizations

Fees for Speaking

Sharing our experience, strength, and hope as Al-Anon/Alateen speakers is an example of the important Twelfth-Step work of carrying the message. In keeping with the Eighth Tradition, Al-Anon speakers are reimbursed for expenses only. Fees are not charged or accepted for speaking. When a member is speaking to an outside organization, and a fee is offered, the speaker may suggest funds in excess of expenses be used by the organization for the purchase of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) for distribution by the organization as an educational service.

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.

Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Materials

Conference Approval

What It Is

Conference Approval is the process for development of recovery literature (including recovery literature with a service focus) that reflects the group conscience of the Al-Anon Family Groups through actions taken by the World Service Conference. The conceptual ideas recommended by the World Service Conference are delegated to the WSO Literature Committee for implementation. Each item, when completed, bears the Conference Approval seal.

How Material Receives Conference Approval

Al-Anon Conference Approved material grows out of need. Whether the need is for recovery literature or for recovery literature with a service focus (hereafter both referred to as Conference Approved Literature), the process of Conference Approval ensures that designated Al-Anon members, Delegates, and WSO Staff and Volunteers will review the material before publication and/or production. Many members' participation in the Conference Approval process guarantees the fellowship that the material is an expression of Al-Anon principles. Proposals of new material and major revisions of existing material are brought to the World Service Conference for recommendation and approval. Service committees may propose material with a service focus. Proposed manuscripts and/or content of Conference Approved Literature are reviewed by a Literature Committee. As a final step, the Executive Director, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee, and four other members of that Committee review all new pieces and major revisions of existing material before they are approved. The Board of Trustees through the Executive Director authorizes minor revisions.

Material Written by Al-Anon/Alateen Members

The actual writing is done by Al-Anon/Alateen members. Material submitted is subsequently coordinated and edited for literary style by Al-Anon members who may be professional writers. In keeping with the spirit of Al-Anon, the full name of any individual member

does not appear in the title of Al-Anon/Alateen material, nor is authorship acknowledged. All published material becomes the sole property of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., on behalf of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship.

Material Written by Non-members

A few items were not developed in the above manner. Such exceptions were made when a booklet, talk, or article by a non-member met a specific need and then only with Conference Approval. As a necessary courtesy, credit was given to the author or the organization where the material originated.

WSO Service Tools

Service tools and materials are created by a World Service Office service department, committee, or as the result of a Conference discussion. They are designed to assist members at meetings and in conducting Al-Anon/Alateen service. Service tools are developed by Staff or committees and are subject to Executive Committee approval. As a final step, the Executive Director, the Chairpersons of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and designated Policy Committee members approve the text of service tools.

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual

"Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" is updated on a regular basis at the World Service Office. Approval for additions and revisions to other parts of this *Service Manual* is given by vote at the World Service Conference.

Authorization for Production

Production of new material to be added to the list of Conference Approved material that has been recommended and approved by the World Service Conference, must be authorized by the Board of Trustees.

Identification of Al-Anon/Alateen Publications

The original seal, with the letters "AFG" in the circle and the words "World Service Conference" within the triangle, appears on, and is reserved for, all Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and material with the words "Approved by World Service Conference." Service tools carry the Al-Anon logo and indicate production

by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (See "Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Materials": "Symbols/Logos.")

Use of Material at Al-Anon Meetings

To keep Al-Anon's message in focus, and to encourage unity, only Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and Al-Anon/Alateen service tools are displayed, distributed, and used at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings; including meetings at conferences and conventions. These items reflect the informed group conscience of the Al-Anon Family Groups as expressed by its World Service Conference since 1961.

While individuals may use whatever they find helpful as part of their personal recovery outside of meetings, Al-Anon does not evaluate or recommend anything other than Al-Anon materials. When sharing at meetings, members limit any mention of outside material to a brief reference.

A.A. literature is not used at Al-Anon meetings because it is written for, and from, the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other outside materials can distort the Al-Anon approach.

Conference Approved Literature provides a unified view of Al-Anon/Alateen to members, professionals, other individuals, and outside agencies. Service tools produced by the World Service Office reflect the Al-Anon/Alateen service structure and the shared experiences of our membership. (See *Al-Anon Spoken Here* [P-53], *Why Conference Approved Literature?* [P-35], and the "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon," as found in *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* [P-4] and *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* [P-24].)

The Forum

The Forum is the monthly magazine in which Al-Anon and Alateen members share their experiences. It is "The Voice of the Fellowship," a forum where individual members and groups can be heard. *The Forum* Staff at the WSO, with assistance from a volunteer committee, edits the letters and articles sent from all over the world. This assures a publication that a broad-based international audience can understand and use for growth in the program. It also offers meeting ideas and materials for use in group discussions.

The Forum can be used, and is encouraged to be used, by all members and groups for meetings. *The Forum*, as a concept, is Conference Approved, but it is not possible for each issue to follow the full procedure for Conference Approved Literature. Sharings received for *The Forum* are reviewed for their fidelity to the Al-Anon program and principles by a volunteer committee and/or *The Forum* Staff. Time-sensitive articles, such as editorials, interviews, "Inside Al-Anon," etc., may be reviewed by *The Forum* Staff.

Since it is copyrighted material, the WSO does not grant permission for substantial reprints from *The Forum* in Area, District, or other service arm newsletters in the U.S. and Canada. However, it is permissible for all newsletters to reprint any articles that appear in the "Inside Al-Anon" section of *The Forum*. Newsletters of other countries may, upon informing the WSO, use additional *The Forum* material if they give proper credit line in their publication. *The Forum* is available by subscription.

Other WSO Publications

Timely Reprints

In 1977, the World Service Conference affirmed the continuation of the use by selected committees of articles and reprints of articles from major outside publications. The use of such timely pieces does not endanger Tradition Six regarding endorsement; rather it enhances the public's view of the Al-Anon program of recovery and helps service committees spread the message of Al-Anon's value as a community resource. These committees may also reprint articles from *The Forum,* WSO newsletters, or other WSO publications when interest in a particular subject is indicated. Such reprints can be proposed for development as a permanent piece of CAL if a strong interest in them is evidenced. Because of their timeliness, reprints are often distributed between Conferences. These items are reviewed for appropriateness, use, and distribution by the service committees of origin as well as appointed members of the Policy Committee. These reprints are identified by the Al-Anon/Alateen logo and carry the words "reprinted and distributed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc."

Guidelines

All guidelines are a collection of shared experience and can be adapted by the membership. Guidelines can be identified by this

Al-Anon/Alateen logo and the words "compiled and distributed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc."

The *Conference Summary*

The *Conference Summary* is the annual report to the groups about the World Service Conference and World Service Office activities. It is available to Area World Service Committees and to current and past Conference members as a free download (al-anon.org). Groups and individuals may purchase copies at a nominal cost.

WSO Newsletters

All WSO newsletters and other materials are developed in response to the needs of our membership. WSO Staff and committees review the content. "Inside Al-Anon" in *The Forum* keeps groups attuned to worldwide Al-Anon activities and the latest material available from the WSO. "Inside Al-Anon," along with *Alateen Talk*, is copyrighted. Portions of these newsletters, however, may be reproduced in Area newsletters provided proper credit information is given (for example, "From *The Forum*, January 2022; Reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.").

World Directories

Members may obtain all information formerly published in the World Directories, including names of specific groups, group contact names, and telephone numbers and information regarding the World Service Office and Area trusted servants, from either the Area Delegate, Group Records Coordinator, or the WSO. (See "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Meetings": "Locating Meetings.")

Copyrights

Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL), *The Forum*, and most service materials/tools are copyrighted. The WSO does not grant permission for substantial reprints of CAL in Area, District, or other service arm newsletters, or to outside publications in the U.S. and Canada. It is not necessary for Al-Anon/Alateen service arms to obtain permission to excerpt items of interest from *Alateen Talk* or the "Inside Al-Anon" section of *The Forum* or from service tools.

Whenever a violation of a copyright comes to the attention of the Board of Trustees, it is the responsibility of the Board, through its duly appointed representative, to notify the violator. This is necessary in order to avoid invalidation of the copyright.

Symbols/Logos

The three symbols shown are registered as Al-Anon "marks" with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Use of these marks for other than Al-Anon/Alateen purposes or any alteration of these symbols endangers their legal status.

The Al-Anon/Alateen logo with AFG in the circle is a popular means of identification at conventions and joint fellowship affairs.

The logo without the AFG was adopted by the WSO for easy identification of stationery, service tools, and other Al-Anon/Alateen material. Al-Anon/Alateen service arms (such as Areas, Districts, and Information Services) and conventions with Al-Anon/Alateen participation may use this logo without alteration for identification on printed materials.

The original logo, accompanied by the words "Approved by World Service Conference Al-Anon Family Groups," identifies Conference Approved Literature. (See "Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Materials": "Identification of Al-Anon/Alateen Publications.")

Authorization to Publish and Reprint

Publishing

The World Service Conference has authorized Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., also known as the WSO, to be the sole publishing agency for the fellowship worldwide. Therefore, no Al-Anon group, Information Service (Intergroup), Literature Distribution Center, or any other service arm may produce or publish its own literature or sell outside literature and/or materials. (The only exception is found under "Public Outreach": "Al-Anon Service Arms": "Outreach Publications—AIS/Area" and "Outreach Publications—International.")

Requests to Reprint

Permission to reprint extensively from our publications is not granted in the United States and Canada to any individuals, within or outside of our membership or to any outside agency. Forms to request reprint permission are available from the WSO. Each request received at the WSO to reprint limited excerpts will be evaluated

on its merits and the circumstances. Requests for permission to reprint limited excerpts from copyrighted Al-Anon/Alateen material must include at least four paragraphs from the proposed new text. The new text should include the two paragraphs of the author's/writer's/editor's material immediately prior to the excerpt and the two paragraphs of the author's/writer's/editor's material immediately following the excerpt. When reprint permission is granted by the WSO, the appropriate credit line must accompany the excerpt. Two copies of the published material/document must be sent to the WSO on or before publication. The WSO terminates permission to reprint if the volume is not published within two years from the date of the request.

Countries Outside United States and Canada

Permission to publish CAL is extended only to national Al-Anon General Service bodies in countries outside the United States and Canada. Occasionally such permission is extended to Al-Anon Central Service Committees, Centers, or even a single group, with the provision that the right to publish be relinquished when a general service body is formed.

Granting Permission to Translate CAL

All translations of Al-Anon CAL to other languages are to be submitted to the WSO for review and approval before permission to print or reprint is granted.

Service Tools/Material and Electronic Publishing

A listing of Al-Anon/Alateen service tools/materials that may be posted on websites is found on the Members menu of the WSO website: al-anon.org. A credit line "Reprinted by permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc." is required. No other Al-Anon/Alateen copyrighted literature may be reprinted electronically without express written permission from the WSO.

Translations

Al-Anon literature in translation should conform to the spirit and meaning of the original English version. Application and understanding of the Al-Anon philosophy is naturally affected by varying local customs and culture in different areas of the world (see above, "Granting Permission to Translate CAL").

Literature Sales Outside the United States and Canada

The WSO cannot refuse to fill orders for literature from anyone—Al-Anon members, General Service Offices, or others. It is up to the Al-Anon General Service Offices to educate their groups on the advantage of purchasing literature from them. In this way, the groups strengthen their own national general service committees.

Public Outreach

Much of the direction for Al-Anon's public outreach has been based on the 1966 WSC statement on public relations that has long been a part of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies." Many of the spiritual principles that form the foundation of Al-Anon's policy are contained in the statement included here in its entirety.

The 1966 WSC Statement on Public Relations

Our Traditions state that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. For clarification, the sixth World Service Conference (1966) adopted the following statement, which was reaffirmed at the 1971 WSC:

> It is the consensus of the sixth World Service Conference that if Al-Anon is to continue to exist, it must continue to grow. There is no standing still without retrogression. Al-Anon must continue to grow if it is going to fulfill its primary purpose of reaching millions who need Al-Anon's help but who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.
>
> We will fulfill this primary purpose most effectively by attraction and cooperation—not promotion or affiliation. For the guidance of our fellowship here are authoritative definitions of these sometimes controversial terms:

to attract:	draw by other than physical influence; to invite; to draw to; to cause to approach
to promote:	to push forward; to further advance, as in a business venture (implies "hard sell," advancement for profit)
cooperation:	joint operation or action (implies coming together of two or more people to work together

for a common goal or benefit or on a common problem)

affiliation: association or close connection; a uniting (implies lending one's name, endorsement, legal or financial association)

Al-Anon is *attracting* when it tells people why we are, what we are, what we do and how; we let them know that we are available if and when help is needed. We state the facts, which are communicated via the press, radio, TV, and films, always stressing anonymity at the public level.

Al-Anon is *cooperating* when it works with others,* rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened, and we reach many more of those in need.

The Philosophy and Spiritual Principles of Al-Anon's Public Outreach

Our public outreach is based on the following spiritual principles that promote unity and clarity within the fellowship as well as awareness and hope outside the fellowship. Whenever there are questions concerning public outreach, it is helpful to return to these spiritual principles for resolution:

- Members and groups carry the message.
- Outreach is based on attraction, rather than promotion.
- Personal anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, films, TV, and the internet.
- Cooperation and goodwill strengthen public outreach.
- Members continually broaden the way they carry the message by using new and innovative forms of communication.

Members and Groups Carry the Message

Carrying the message is essential to attracting new members. Our Twelfth Step suggests that members carry the message of recovery to others and make Al-Anon known in their communities.

Al-Anon members who do Twelfth Step work carry the message of Al-Anon recovery keeping in mind adherence to Tradition Eleven.

*Examples are federal, state, provincial, and municipal alcoholism agencies; private health agencies; law enforcement, judicial, and correctional agencies and institutions; general hospitals and state, county, or city mental hospitals; councils of churches, doctors, nurses, clergymen, social workers, and educators.

There is no replacement for individual Al-Anon members carrying the spiritual message of recovery within their communities in ways that media cannot.

Al-Anon Information Services (AISs) or Intergroups

In keeping with Traditions Four, Six, Eight, and Nine, an entire Area, or Districts or groups that have the support of their Area or international structure, may agree to establish a registered Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) or Intergroup. In keeping with Tradition Seven, the AIS or Intergroup operations are sustained by the groups, Districts, or Area which it serves. (See the guideline *Al-Anon Information Services [AIS]* [G-4] and the "Al-Anon Information Service [AIS/Intergroups]" section of this *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for information on being or registering as an AIS.)

Local Public Outreach: Roles and Responsibilities

Al-Anon members who have an understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions have an important role in local public outreach. They carry the message of hope through local media and to professionals throughout their communities.

Providing speakers and literature for community events, participating and exhibiting at health fairs, placing ads in public places, and talking with local radio and TV stations to request that they play public service announcements are some local outreach opportunities. (See also "Public Outreach": "Radio, Films, TV, and the Internet": "Members Continually Broaden the Way They Carry the Message by Using New and Innovative Forms of Communication.")

Making Contact with Professionals

To ensure that professionals are aware of Al-Anon as a credible resource for helping friends and families of alcoholics, groups, Districts, and other service arms can host public meetings, inviting members of the professional community. Meeting schedules and contact information on the websites of Area and local service arms should contain current and accurate information. In this way, the public will have direct and ready access to information, furthering Al-Anon/Alateen's reputation as a credible local resource.

Personal sharing with professionals is one way to carry the message of hope to others. Members may have established relationships with doctors, nurses, members of the clergy, therapists, educators, or other professionals. Every Al-Anon member is encouraged to share the benefits of Al-Anon with members of the professional community with whom they come into contact, divulging their Al-Anon membership whenever they are comfortable doing so. These one-on-one relationships provide the professional with credible evidence of the benefits of Al-Anon's program of recovery and may encourage them to learn more about Al-Anon and perhaps recommend the Al-Anon program to others. Al-Anon does not endorse any outside enterprise. Professionals may endorse the Al-Anon program without violating the Traditions, provided that they do not reveal Al-Anon membership.

National and International Public Outreach: Roles and Responsibilities

Although Al-Anon members carry the message of Al-Anon, it is the World Service Office (WSO) that is solely responsible for creating public outreach messages beyond the local level. This ensures that there is consistency in media messages throughout the world.

The World Service Conference has designated the WSO as the sole publishing agent for the fellowship and sole producer of public service announcements (PSAs). The WSO is responsible for production and distribution of all multi-Area, national, and worldwide communications including those on the internet.

Whenever national publicity of Al-Anon/Alateen may be of interest to local groups, they are, if possible, notified in advance by the WSO.

An Al-Anon general service structure outside the United States and Canada that has received permission from the WSO to print Conference Approved Literature may reprint WSO public outreach materials. The general service structure is not limited in the number of public outreach pieces it can produce. The WSO reserves the right to review such items before publication or broadcast.

Paid Advertisements

A group may pay for an ad in the media, to make the community aware of Al-Anon and Alateen. In accordance with our Traditions, an individual member may pay for such an ad, with group approval. This payment can be considered a member's personal contribution.

Members and local service arms may pay for local advertisements, for example: billboards, screen ads at movie theaters, and transit signs. The WSO reserves the right to approve the content of the message before public placement.

Publicizing Meeting Locations

Meeting information may be printed in church bulletins, newspapers, and other venues for sharing public information.

WSO Produced Posters

Al-Anon/Alateen posters may be displayed on the internet or any public place, with the permission of the place or organization. A local Al-Anon service phone number, PO Box, website, email, and/or office address may be used as a point of contact.

Posters and Flyers for Public Outreach for Al-Anon Service Arms

Al-Anon Information Services and Area World Service Committees may have a need for public outreach posters that can be produced and distributed within their area of service. This could include outreach to a particular cultural group, for example. Districts, Information Services, and Areas work together on such projects so the Al-Anon message remains consistent and unity among the service arms is ensured. Service arms contact the WSO before creating a poster. The WSO has posters available for a variety of needs and topics that might meet the needs of an AIS or Area. The WSO extends permission for such posters, reserving the right to review these items before they are printed and distributed, in order to preserve Al-Anon's public outreach message. These outreach posters may appear on the internet provided that no member's name, phone number, or other identifying information appears, so that anonymity is maintained.

Permission is not required when public outreach flyers are created for a single local event. Flyers on the internet are accessible to the public and must protect members' anonymity.

Outreach Publications—AIS/Area

Although the Conference has designated Al-Anon's WSO as the sole publishing agent for the fellowship, the WSO extends permission to Al-Anon Information Services or Area World Service Committees for the production of only one publication for public outreach for distribution solely within their area of service, reserving the right to review the publication before printing and distribution in order to preserve Al-Anon's public outreach message. To assist potential members in locating a meeting, a meeting schedule is frequently included with such a publication.

Outreach Publications—International

An Al-Anon general service structure outside the United States and Canada that has received permission from the WSO to print Conference Approved Literature may reprint WSO public outreach materials. The general service structure is not limited in the number of public outreach pieces produced. The WSO reserves the right to review such items before publication.

Public Service Announcements

The media (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) offer free airtime or print space to not-for-profit organizations for public service announcements (PSAs). Al-Anon provides such PSAs to inform the general public about Al-Anon and Alateen. The World Service Conference has designated the WSO as sole producer of public service announcements for the fellowship to use in public outreach work.

Area/Local Public Outreach Messages

Areas and local service arms may produce and participate in public announcements, programs, broadcasts, or community calendar items that are of local interest, have local impact, or reflect a local culture's needs. These may be provided to local radio, television, or community cable stations. In such projects, Tradition Eleven is maintained by avoiding recognition of the participants and by the use of first names or pseudonyms. Prior to broadcast, the WSO reserves the right to review such projects for consistency with the Al-Anon message.

Outreach Is Based on Attraction, Rather than Promotion

It has always been Al-Anon's approach to carry a clear and simple message about our program of recovery—that is: to let people know what we are, what we do, and how they can come into contact with us. We do this in many creative ways while avoiding high pressure tactics which distort our message of hope or bring us into public controversy.

We attract interest in Al-Anon Family Groups when we communicate what our lives were like before we came to Al-Anon, what we found in Al-Anon that helped us, and what our lives are like today. In error, we would be promoting Al-Anon if we offered promises, guarantees, personal advice, or gave the impression that we are the experts who know what is best for all families and friends of alcoholics.

Personal Anonymity Is Maintained at the Level of Press, Radio, Films, TV, and the Internet

Tradition Twelve tells us that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our entire program. Members maintain personal anonym-

ity in all forms of public media including press, radio, films, TV, the internet, as well as other ways of reaching the public. It is essential that members consider Tradition Eleven as they keep public outreach messages free from personalities. No one person can ever be the sole representative of Al-Anon. The message of recovery in the media is too important to be overshadowed by a single person or group no matter how well-intentioned.

Anonymity at Local Events for Individuals and Service Arms

As an organization, Al-Anon is not a secret; however, we always protect our members' anonymity. Members are encouraged to participate in local events where Al-Anon information can be shared. Participation at health fairs, speaking at schools, etc., where members might be recognized, is not considered a break in anonymity, since it does not occur at the level of press, radio, films, TV, and the internet.

If the media is present, members who staff such events are requested to practice the principle of personal anonymity. (See "Anonymity in Public Media for Individuals and Local Service Arms" below.)

Anonymity in Public Media for Individuals and Local Service Arms

Tradition Eleven is sustained when members maintain personal anonymity by using first name only or a pseudonym, and by appearing with their back to the camera or in silhouette. This principle applies to all types of visual, audio, or print media, or in any way on the internet when Al-Anon/Alateen membership is revealed.

If membership is not revealed when participating in any form of public media, members can use their full name, face the camera, or appear in print.

Members avoid revealing the identity of any A.A. member.

As an individual, not an Al-Anon spokesperson, any member may write an article about the fellowship for local or national publications and may be financially remunerated. The personal anonymity of someone writing as a member is maintained by signing anonymously or using a pseudonym. Personal anonymity also applies to members who author books or create other public communications.

Cooperation and Goodwill Strengthen Public Outreach

Al-Anon fulfills its primary purpose most effectively by cooperating with others and creating goodwill in the media and in the professional community.

Al-Anon is *cooperating* when it works with others, rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened, and we reach many more of those in need. However, we would give the impression of affiliation if we posted links to professional services on an Al-Anon website or if we added the Al-Anon name as sponsor or co-sponsor for a commercial or community event. The concept of goodwill is simply maintaining our positive relationships and reputation as we work with others. Al-Anon exhibits goodwill when it works harmoniously in the community to provide information and carry the message of hope. In accordance with Tradition Ten, the Al-Anon fellowship does not officially respond to adverse publicity and avoids public controversy. As individuals, members may take any action they wish, as long as they do not divulge their membership or appear to be a spokesperson for Al-Anon.

Members Continually Broaden the Way They Carry the Message by Using New and Innovative Forms of Communication

In the dynamic world in which we live, we need always consider broadening our outreach efforts so that those needing our help may easily find us. This means that there is no end to the possibilities for carrying our message locally, nationally, and internationally.

In developing or conducting public outreach using new forms of communication, including emerging technologies, Al-Anon's outreach message is safeguarded by consistently referencing the primary purpose of public outreach and by applying its underlying spiritual principles.

Media

Individual Al-Anon members and groups are encouraged to work with their Districts, Al-Anon Information Services, and Area World Service Committees on projects for media outreach. In this way, a broad group conscience is reached and the Al-Anon message remains consistent.

The Internet

The internet is a global computer network that is in the public domain. Service arms are encouraged to post WSO public service announcements on the internet or to create links to the WSO website. In keeping with our Legacies, Al-Anon members guard with care their own and others' anonymity and avoid any actions or behaviors that could draw Al-Anon into public controversy or harm Al-Anon's name. (See "Social Media" below. Service guidelines are available under the Members menu at al-anon.org.)

Social Media

Social media can be an important venue for carrying the message of Al-Anon as it fulfills its primary purpose of reaching those who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship. Given social media's global reach, members serving Al-Anon Family Groups are encouraged to understand their unique responsibilities to adhere to our Legacies when using this medium.

Social Media—WSO

The World Service Conference (WSC) has granted the WSO sole responsibility for creating public outreach messages with national and international reach. The WSO, in carrying out its responsibility, will continually look for new ways to do so, using the capabilities of social media and emerging technologies while adhering to Al-Anon's spiritual principles.

Social Media—Areas, Districts, AISs/Intergroups

Service arms (Areas, Districts, AISs/Intergroups) can create blogs, profiles, or social media pages for public outreach relevant to the membership they serve, recognizing the need to adhere to Concept Ten by avoiding conflict with the service authority granted to the WSO by the WSC. Service arms can create and post content consistent with Al-Anon's spiritual principles and Legacies except when to do so would violate copyright law. Only Al-Anon service arms are given permission to use the Al-Anon and Alateen trademark names and logos for social media purposes. (See also "Copyrights" and "Symbols/Logos.")

Social Media—General Service Offices (GSOs) & National Structures

GSOs and national structures can create blogs, profiles, or social media pages for public outreach relevant to the membership they

serve, recognizing the need to ensure consistency with public outreach messages created by the WSO.

Social Media—Groups

In keeping with Tradition Five, the purpose of an Al-Anon Family Group is to help the families and friends of alcoholics. Groups do not create social media pages. Groups are encouraged to support service arms' public outreach efforts.

Social Media—Individual Members

To carry the message as described in Step Twelve, members are welcome to share social media posts from the WSO and Al-Anon service arms for public outreach. Members maintain the principle of anonymity, never revealing their membership, and do not appear to speak for Al-Anon as a whole. They avoid actions, behaviors, or commentary that could draw Al-Anon into public controversy, harm Al-Anon's name, or distort its public outreach message. The names "Al-Anon" and "Alateen" are trademark names and may not be used as usernames, logos, or identifying characteristics on profiles (See also "Anonymity.") In order to adhere to the spiritual principles described in Tradition Twelve, individual members do not create Al-Anon/Alateen social media pages.

Incorporation/Taxes

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Tax-exempt status was granted to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., our World Service Office, in 1956 under Sec. 501 (c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code as a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York and operated exclusively for educational purposes. When New York State law was amended subsequently, the WSO registered as a not-for-profit corporation. Tax-exempt status was similarly granted to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. in 1999 as a registered charity under paragraph 149(1) of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada. While a separate corporation, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. has the same Board of Trustees as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Contributions to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. or Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. may qualify as a

charitable deduction, but the World Service Office makes no judgment as to the specific deductibility of a contribution by any member.

U.S. and Canadian regulations do not contain provisions under which Al-Anon could apply for blanket exemption for its Area committees or local groups, now or hereafter formed. Only central organizations that effectively control their chapters or local units (churches, Boy Scouts, fraternal organizations) can apply for group exemption. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. have no knowledge or control over Assembly or group funds; neither is therefore in a position to furnish the financial statements required to be filed annually with the tax authorities in order to maintain tax-exempt status for groups.

National General Services

Incorporation as a nonprofit organization relates to the tax laws of the United States, which stipulate that any excess of income at the end of the year is nontaxable. Most other countries have some equivalent of the U.S. regulations governing nonprofit corporations. At the suggestion of the WSO, the General Service Boards of U.K. and Eire, Finland, Germany, and other countries have made comparable registration for such legal status with their governments.

General Service Boards should consult with local legal counsel when considering nonprofit incorporation for their organizations outside the United States and Canada. Advantages and disadvantages may vary from structure to structure.

Traditionally, organization within a group should be kept to a minimum, but worldwide unity of our fellowship depends upon creation of national Al-Anon service boards outside the United States and Canada, which should obtain legal recognition as nonprofit membership corporations or the equivalent.

Incorporation is not only for legal reasons; experience has shown it to be the best possible way of ensuring the efficiency and continuity needed to maintain Al-Anon functions throughout the country. For one thing, a corporation does not die even though Al-Anon members do. Thus, incorporation provides vital continuity.

Another advantage is the objectivity of a corporation. There is greater willingness to rotate Trustees than there is to rotate the members of a small, personalized committee or working team.

Other advantages are:

- tax exemption on literature (produced with the permission of Al-Anon's WSO), resulting in greater revenue to be used for fostering the growth of Al-Anon in the country
- protection of physical assets, including office equipment
- protection against personal liability in all business transactions

Assemblies (United States)*

The 1972 WSC recommended the following:

- All Area Treasurers be alerted to the importance of keeping accurate records that can be passed along to their successors.
- Areas seeking favorable determination of tax exemption by the Internal Revenue Service secure advice from a competent lawyer or accountant familiar with federal law. If successful, this would also enable them to obtain a nonprofit bulk-mailing permit for the Area newsletter.
- All Areas learn what the laws in their respective states require of nonprofit organizations.
- Each Area Assembly may want to review the shared experience of other Assemblies before considering incorporation. Because state and local laws vary, all final decisions need to be reviewed by local legal and financial experts. The WSO is neither equipped nor qualified to advise or aid individual Assembly Areas in incorporating or obtaining tax exemption.

Al-Anon Information Services (Intergroups), Literature Distribution Centers (United States)*

Local Al-Anon Service Committees that perform business functions—sign contracts, rent an office, buy equipment, employ staff, print meeting lists and bulletins, or sell Al-Anon material, etc.—may want to explore incorporation in accordance with the nonprofit laws of their state. They may also need to check state and local laws regarding the collection of sales tax.

These suggestions are primarily to protect individual members, volunteers, and employees from possible personal liability. Incorporation would not give local services authority over the groups they serve.

*The suggestions for Assemblies and local Service Centers in the United States may be adopted by the service units in other countries in accordance with the law of their respective national and local governments.

Al-Anon as It Relates to Others

Alcoholics Anonymous—Cooperation

Local Service Centers

Although a separate entity, Al-Anon should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous. In relating to local A.A. Intergroups or central offices, Al-Anon may offer:

- to name one or two members to act as liaison and to provide current lists of group contacts for Twelfth Step referrals
- to submit Al-Anon/Alateen meeting information for inclusion in A.A.'s local meeting list if asked to do so
- to reimburse A.A. for any expenses incurred on Al-Anon's behalf, such as telephone calls, cost of printing meeting lists on which Al-Anon meetings are also listed, copying costs
- Where Al-Anon has not grown sufficiently strong to support its own Al-Anon Information Service office or Intergroup, it may share facilities with A.A. when offered, provided that Al-Anon meets its portion of the financial expenses (desk space, telephone, etc.).

Newsletters

Where Al-Anon is relatively new, it may accept offers from A.A. to include an Al-Anon page in its newsletter. It is desirable for Al-Anon/Alateen to develop its own periodical when feasible.

Participating in A.A. Conventions

Al-Anon and Alateen are usually invited to share the program in A.A. conventions. A guideline for *Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention* (G-7) is posted on the Members menu at al-anon.org.

Twelfth Step Work

Al-Anon performs its own Twelfth Step work in alcohol treatment centers, hospitals, and other facilities and with professionals that work with families and friends of alcoholics. Experience has shown that cooperation with A.A. can be mutually beneficial.

Outside Agencies

Speakers from the Helping Professions

The purpose of Al-Anon is personal growth through applying

the Twelve Steps and sharing our experience, strength, and hope. It is from Al-Anon and Alateen members that we hear the ideas and experiences that guide us in our personal recoveries. Outside speakers at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings may divert the focus from our own recovery to that of the alcoholic. Thus, the group tries to ensure that any occasional guest speaker be knowledgeable about the Al-Anon/Alateen program. Additionally, it is suggested that outside speakers be made aware of our Sixth Tradition in advance and be asked to discuss an appropriate topic.

In any announcement of an Al-Anon and Alateen meeting with outside speakers, it is suggested that a statement such as the following be included: "Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution."

Shelters for Families

In keeping with our Traditions:

- Establishing shelters is not in accordance with our Sixth Tradition, "Our Al-Anon Family Group ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise,..."
- Al-Anon members, as individuals, are free to manage such shelters and help to finance them.
- Al-Anon/Alateen institutions* or limited-access groups may hold meetings at such a facility.

Sharing Facilities

In some localities, Al-Anon may not be able to support its own answering service or Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup). If it is necessary to share space with another enterprise, using Al-Anon letterhead and renting a private PO Box, for example, will prevent any appearance of affiliation.

Clubhouses

Operated by A.A. Members

Many groups use meeting facilities provided and operated by A.A. members. In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, the Al-Anon and Alateen groups pay an agreed sum for rent and are maintained as separate entities at all times.

*See also "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Meetings": "Introductory Meetings."

Operated by Al-Anon Members

Members, as individuals, may establish and operate clubhouses where Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are held. In keeping with Tradition Six, a clubhouse is not owned, operated, financed, or endorsed by an Al-Anon group, District, Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup) office, or Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. It is suggested that Al-Anon and Alateen groups meeting at such facilities be self-supporting and function as separate entities.

Restrictive Policies

Should any clubhouse policy be so restrictive as to exclude any Al-Anon member or include terms for the use of the facility that are contrary to Al-Anon/Alateen Traditions and principles, another meeting place may be more suitable.

Members' Outside Involvement

- When Al-Anon members serve on alcoholism boards or councils they do so as individuals, not as spokespersons for Al-Anon. Al-Anon membership may be disclosed to the board or council provided that anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, TV, and films, in accordance with Tradition Eleven.
- Al-Anon members who engage in legislation or support outside issues are free to do so as individuals. However, Tradition Ten suggests that the Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues. Thus, individuals do not discuss any such legislation or issues at meetings.
- Since Tradition Eight states that Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever nonprofessional, individuals who are professionals do not use their titles in conjunction with the Al-Anon name.

Commercial Enterprises

Filmmakers

Some private filmmakers have indicated interest in producing films concerning Al-Anon and Alateen to sell to public agencies. In the interest of worldwide unity, it is recommended that prospective filmmakers be asked to write to the WSO to explain the proposed project and its probable audience. No commitments should be made to such producers by either groups or individuals. The Al-Anon

name may not appear among the film's credits even though technical assistance has been provided.

Magazines

Mail for Al-Anon/Alateen should not be directed to a PO Box obtained by a publishing company—e.g., in a magazine printing an article about the fellowship. Members cooperating with the author of such an article should encourage the inclusion of an Al-Anon address for responses. For magazines with national coverage, the appropriate national address or PO Box should be used.

Religion/Philosophies

Meetings

Al-Anon is a spiritual program; thus, the discussion of specific religious beliefs at meetings may divert members from Al-Anon's primary purpose. Our meetings are open to all those who are affected by alcoholism whether the member has a religious belief or not.

Retreats

Al-Anon/Alateen Spiritual Meetings

It has been suggested that the name "retreat" often has religious connotations and could imply affiliation if used in connection with an Al-Anon/Alateen event.

Within the Fellowship

Area newsletters or local Al-Anon/Alateen bulletins should not be used as a means of promoting or announcing retreats of any kind to the Al-Anon/Alateen membership, nor should retreats be promoted before, during, or after Al-Anon/Alateen meetings by use of leaflets or announcements.

Conventions

Religious services, and announcements of them, are not a part of an Al-Anon/Alateen event.

Dilution of the Al-Anon Program

Outside Therapies

Our Al-Anon experience helps us understand that we are powerless over another person's drinking. This makes us aware at a meeting of the danger of being diverted from our own recovery by techniques that are focused on the recovery of the alcoholic.

Further, the Sixth Tradition suggests that there be no promotion or endorsement of any outside therapies. At an Al-Anon/Alateen meeting, in keeping with the Al-Anon/Alateen focus, the groups do not announce or discuss activities of other anonymous Twelve Step programs. Al-Anon/Alateen Area newsletters and local bulletins may publicize activities of Al-Anon/Alateen groups and those A.A. activities with Al-Anon participation. Publicizing other organizations' activities creates an appearance of affiliation.

Labels

Focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of our program is strengthened when we avoid using professional terms and labels since they may confuse members by implying affiliation with certain persons or specific therapies.

Professional Involvement

Professionals may initiate the formation of an Al-Anon/Alateen group provided that the meetings are then conducted by Al-Anon/Alateen members. Professionals who are not Al-Anon members may want to invite an existing Al-Anon or Alateen group to provide a brief on-site meeting to demonstrate how group meetings function.

Drugs/Narcotics/Prescription Medications

A symptom of alcoholism in the home may be the abuse of drugs by family members. Occasional discussion of this topic is acceptable at an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting as it may be one of the results of living with alcoholism. However, our responsibility is to ensure Al-Anon's survival as a resource for families and friends of alcoholics. By focusing on these drug-related problems, we risk being diverted from Al-Anon's primary aim. Referral to appropriate sources of help may be suggested to those in need.

Families with Related Problems

Many individuals come to Al-Anon seeking help. If these individuals determine they have not been affected by a problem drinker, they may be informed of our Third Tradition, which states in part, "the only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend." They may also be informed of other sources of help.

Notes and Updates

World Service Handbook

The "World Service Handbook" explains how Al-Anon is held together worldwide, how it is structured, and how our trusted servants can best function within our Structure.

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Introduction

This is your "World Service Handbook." It is for every member of our fellowship who has found the personal benefits and satisfactions that come from taking an active part in Al-Anon's growth.

The opportunities to serve described here can take us far beyond the boundaries of the group and our personal problems. While our Ninth Tradition provides that Al-Anon, as such, shall remain unorganized, it does suggest that an orderly structure and logical procedures will make it possible for Al-Anon to carry its message with maximum effectiveness.

This "World Service Handbook" explains how Al-Anon is held together worldwide, how it is structured, and how each member who is elected or appointed to a particular responsibility can best function in it.

Since our growth depends on how well we serve the fellowship, this book can be helpful as a guide. It gives the methods that have long been standard practice in service work worldwide. All these procedures have been drawn from trial-and-error experience and should be changed only when an Area Assembly is fully agreed that such changes will better adapt these guidelines to its needs.

The suggestions offered here differ in some details from those in earlier versions of the "World Service Handbook." This came about because of the more varied experience with the procedures that many groups and individuals shared with those entrusted with this revision.

Suggested Procedures

While the procedures outlined in the "World Service Handbook" are suggestions, they have been found by Al-Anon and Alateen members who have followed them to be a simple and direct method of selecting Delegates for the Conference and for conducting Assembly and Conference affairs free of political friction.

Al-Anon experience suggests that we follow these procedures *before deciding on changes* and to make changes only when they clearly become necessary. Using the same structural plan makes it simple for all of us to understand each other's Assembly procedures. In addition, such uniformity does much to lessen the Conference workload at our World Service Office. The help of *every* Assembly is needed in forming the best possible framework and to make our

future secure. However, if by majority agreement an Assembly decides to alter one or more of these guidelines, the changes should be a matter of record so all members of the Area Assembly can clearly understand them.

Terms Used in Al-Anon Service

The term "Al-Anon" is always understood to include Alateen. To keep it simple, the pronoun "he" is used throughout.

Alternate An eligible member elected or appointed who can temporarily step in and/or complete the service term of a person unable to do so. Some examples of this service role are Alternate Group Representative, Alternate District Representative, and Alternate Delegate.

Area Coordinator An Al-Anon member, not necessarily a Group Representative (GR), appointed by the World Service Delegate or Assembly Chairman, or elected or appointed according to Area autonomy. The Coordinator usually serves for a three-year term and votes at the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings, but not at the Assembly unless he is a GR. An Area Coordinator unifies one of the Al-Anon special services for an Area (such as Alateen, Archives, *The Forum*, Group Records, Newsletter Editor, Literature, Public Outreach [Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions]).

Area World Service Committee (AWSC) This Committee consists of the officers of the Assembly, District Representatives, Coordinators, and liaison members who meet between Assemblies to discuss Area and District matters, plan the agenda for the Assembly, initiate projects, and make recommendations to the Assembly. All Committee members may vote at the meetings of the Area World Service Committee.

Assembly A meeting of the Group Representatives (GRs) for the purpose of electing a Delegate to the annual World Service Conference, an Alternate Delegate, and Assembly officers. The Assembly also meets between elections to receive and distribute reports on Area and world service affairs. It reviews and approves interim reports of the Area World Service Committee. If a District Representative has not been previously elected by the GRs of a District, his election may take place at the Assembly (see "Terms Used in Al-Anon Service": "Caucus").

Assembly Area A state, province, territory, or non-geographically based grouping represented at our World Service Conference by a Delegate. Some states and provinces that are populous have been divided into two Areas, each with its own Delegate. (See "World Service Conference": "Composition of the Conference.")

Assembly Center The location where the Assembly meets.

Caucus A meeting of GRs from a given District convened at the Assembly for the purpose of electing a District Representative, if none has been elected in his home District prior to the Assembly.

Director of Finance & Operations An individual (not a member of Al-Anon) who is responsible for all financial aspects of the World Service Office (WSO) and with direct oversight of operations.

Districts Convenient segments into which an Area is divided by the Area World Service Committee, with the approval of the Assembly.

District Meeting A meeting of GRs, held as necessary, to elect a District Representative, to hear his reports, and to discuss District matters.

District Representative (DR) An incoming, outgoing, or active Past GR who is elected by the other GRs in his District, either in his home District or at an Assembly. He assists the Delegate in passing on information about World Service Office activities and Conference decisions to the GRs in his District. He is a member of the Area World Service Committee.

Evolving National Structure A network of Al-Anon groups (outside the World Service Conference Structure) in the process of developing a service structure.

Executive Director Chief Executive Officer of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (an Al-Anon member) who has oversight responsibility for all functions of the World Service Office.

General Service Office (GSO) A service structure of one or more nations outside the World Service Conference Structure with a Board of Trustees and other elected Al-Anon members responsible for Al-Anon service-related activities in their respective structure.

Group Representative (GR) A member, preferably with a basic understanding of the Al-Anon program, who is elected, subject to the policy on Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous, in the "Di-

gest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Service Manual*, for a three-year term by his group (Al-Anon or Alateen). He attends Assembly and District meetings and acts as a contact between the group and the DR and between the group and the Assembly.

Liaison Member A member appointed or elected by the local Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup), which serves one or more Districts. He provides a link between this service and the Area World Service Committee and encourages the exchange of information between the two. He usually serves for three years. He votes at the Area World Service Committee meetings, but not at the Assembly unless he is a GR.

Panel A panel consists of one-third of the Delegates attending the World Service Conference. A panel is elected every year for a three-year term. The elections of the three panels are staggered so that a Conference always includes one panel of Delegates with two years' experience. A non-panel Area is one that has not yet joined the Conference.

Region A geographical grouping of Areas. There are nine Regions in the World Service Conference Structure; six in the U.S. and three in Canada.

Volunteer Selected Committees Consist of Al-Anon members with a broad understanding of our program who concentrate on one of the elements of our fellowship, such as Alateen or literature. (See "World Serivce Office": "How WSO Is Structured" and "Concept Eleven" in "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service.")

World Services Services rendered to groups all over the world by our World Service Office (WSO), also known as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and by General Service Offices (GSO) outside the World Service Conference Structure. These services are channeled through the Area World Service Committees and the General Service Committees in other countries. To keep communication open between the WSO and GSOs, an International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) has become part of our Structure.

World Service Office Administrative Staff Paid employees of the World Service Office who coordinate activities and projects for the service functions of the department to which they are assigned. Directors and Associate Directors who fill certain Staff roles are voting members of the World Service Conference and therefore must be Al-Anon members.

World Service Conference (WSC) Al-Anon's annual business meeting, which is attended by all Delegates from the World Service Conference Structure, representatives from other countries, members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, voting members of the World Service Office (WSO) administrative Staff, and other WSO personnel. The Conference provides guidance to the WSO on service matters that are brought to its attention.

World Service Conference Structure A service structure composed of state, provincial, and territorial areas of the United States, Canada, and Bermuda; and non-geographically based groupings with a Board of Trustees and other elected Al-Anon members responsible for Al-Anon service-related activities.

World Service Delegate A District Representative who has been elected World Service Delegate for a three-year term by the GRs at an Assembly. The World Service Delegate shares Area experience at three annual Conferences, which serve Al-Anon worldwide. He brings the views and the spirit of worldwide Al-Anon back to his Area.

World Service Delegate's Alternate A DR elected to work closely with the World Service Delegate, to participate in Area world service activities, and to replace the Delegate if the latter cannot fulfill his three-year term.

Links of Service

The Al-Anon fellowship is represented annually at a World Service Conference (WSC). It is attended by one elected Delegate from each Assembly Area, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and the voting members of the World Service Office administrative Staff. Representatives from non-panel Areas (those not yet electing a Delegate) and countries other than the United States and Canada may attend with voice but no vote.

The Group Representative (GR) is the first link in the chain that leads to the World Service Conference. Each GR is chosen by members of the group and may serve as GR in no more than one group at a time.

The District Representative (DR) is the next link. The Area is divided into Districts, each with one DR, who is chosen by the GRs in his District to serve on the Area World Service Committee.

If a GR becomes a DR, he fulfills both functions unless the Area Assembly chooses to have its groups elect new GRs to replace those who have taken on the duties of DR.

If the DR does not continue to be his group's representative, he relinquishes his vote at the Assembly to his GR replacement. This follows the long-standing principle of one vote per group, which was reaffirmed by the 1975 World Service Conference and applies as well to officers of the Area World Service Committee. They retain their vote at the Assembly only if they have been reelected GR.

The Delegate and new Assembly officers are elected by the GRs at an election Assembly, held prior to December 31 at a convenient location in the Area every three years. The Assembly is attended by all GRs in addition to members of the Area World Service Committee. Al-Anon members are encouraged to attend their Area Assemblies.

In Areas where terms of office begin on January 1, only the outgoing GRs vote for an incoming Delegate and officers—from among the outgoing DRs and others eligible according to Area autonomy. Under this procedure, the new GRs do not vote for the Delegate and officers with whom they will be working for the next three years.

However, an Assembly may prefer to have the incoming GRs elect the Delegate and officers. Under this method both the incoming and outgoing DRs are eligible to stand for office, provided they have previously served at the Area level.

Before the important decision is made as to whether the incoming or outgoing GR has the vote, all the elements of its particular situation should be carefully weighed by the Assembly.

Once the Delegate has been elected, he is no longer either a DR or a GR, so his group would elect a new GR, and his District would elect a new DR. The Delegate votes at Area World Service Committee meetings but not at the Assembly.

Duties of Assembly Members

Group Representative (GR)

A GR is a vital link in the continuing function, growth, and unity of world Al-Anon. He is a member elected by his group for a three-year term. He attends Assemblies, maintains contact between the group and the District and between the group and the Area World Service Committee. He should also make himself thoroughly familiar with the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* ("World Service Handbook," "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work," "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service," and the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies").

GRs should be members with experience, stability, and an understanding of the Traditions and how they work, as applied in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies." It can be a challenging job. Ample time is needed for GRs to perform their many duties.

If a group also has an Alternate GR, the following duties may be shared:

- **The GR and the Group** The GR should be allowed regular time at group meetings to convey information concerning Al-Anon in his District, Area, and, world service affairs. The GR has the responsibility of seeing that correspondence from the World Service Office is reaching his group. If correspondence is not being brought to meetings by the person who is listed as the Current Mailing Address (CMA), the GR consults first with the CMA and, if a change is warranted, contacts the District Representative and the WSO to provide an up-to-date CMA (possibly his own), a phone listing, emails, and other pertinent group information. If the group has a PO Box, or if for any other reason the GR is not the group's CMA, all correspondence should be referred to him. Although he does not replace the Group Secretary, he can explain communications in light of his understanding of the world Al-Anon picture.
- **The GR and World Service** Through the contacts he makes with other GRs and the Area World Service Committee members at Assembly, the GR can gain knowledge of Al-Anon world service and the purpose and work of the Conference. This will enable him to explain these to the group.
- **The GR and District Meetings** The GR is expected to attend all meetings of his District. The GR or the Alternate GR, in the GR's absence, votes at the District meeting. Each group has one vote. Communicating at District meetings, the GR can bring his group's viewpoint on any situation or problem concerning Al-Anon to the attention of the DR. In turn, he informs his group of the outcome of the meetings.
- **The GR and the Area Assembly** In addition to attending the election Assembly, the GR is expected to attend all scheduled Assemblies (and any interim Assembly the Chairman or Delegate considers necessary) and to report back to the group. The GR or Alternate GR, in the GR's absence, votes at the Assembly. Each group has one vote.

- **The GR and *The Forum*** The GR is also *The Forum* representative. He encourages the group to subscribe to at least one copy, acquaints members with its value, and urges them to subscribe. He also suggests stories of interest be sent to *The Forum* at the WSO.
- **The GR and Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions)** Local public outreach activities in the immediate community may be spearheaded by the GR, who may recommend forming a committee within the District, using material available from our WSO. If there is an Information Service, public outreach work affecting all the groups within its area of activity may be its responsibility. Liaison and cooperation should be maintained between the Information Service, the Districts, and the Area Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions) Coordinators.*
- **The GR and the World Service Delegate's Report** If the DR or the Delegate cannot personally give the Conference report to the group, the GR may do so and explain the functions and purpose of the Area Assembly and the Conference. The GR encourages group discussion of these matters and relays group concerns to the Delegate.
- **The GR and Quarterly Appeal to Members** The GR should be mindful of Al-Anon and Alateen's principle of self-support. He makes sure the Quarterly Appeal to Members for support of the WSO, sent four times a year (February, May, August, and November), is read to the group. He may personally present to his group the appeal letters sent by the Area Treasurer for support of the Assembly and provide to the Group Treasurer the name and address of the Area Treasurer, if necessary.
- **The GR and Conference Approved Literature (CAL)** The GR, recognizing the importance of CAL, makes sure that the pamphlet *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (P-35) is always available at the meeting. He encourages use of a variety of CAL for meeting topics.

* When the World Service Office structure changed in 2002, some Areas chose a combination of these Coordinators and named them Public Outreach.

District Representative (DR)

The DR is elected from among the incoming, outgoing, or active Past GRs in his home District prior to the Assembly or by caucus at the Assembly. Each DR represents one District within the Area. He helps the groups in his District understand their relationship and responsibility to the worldwide fellowship.

The duties of the DR are:

- To call and chair District meetings at regular intervals.
- To help the Delegate in every way possible in disseminating Conference information and reports.
- To keep in touch with the GRs of his District to learn the views of the groups and their problems, which, in turn, he may report to the Area World Service Committee or the Delegate.
- To visit all the groups in his District, particularly new groups, to make sure they are getting necessary information and help.
- To help the groups understand and apply the Traditions, which guide us in our fellowship activities.
- To encourage members to become involved in service.
- To coordinate program-related service events and public outreach projects for the District.
- To prepare and update a contact list of the GRs in his District for the Area World Service Committee.
- To urge every group to complete and promptly return the group data sheets sent out annually by the World Service Office.
- To check the group's Current Mailing Address (CMA) with each GR in the District to determine if it is correct.
- To make sure correspondence from the WSO is reaching the groups and being shared with the members.
- To attend Area World Service Committee meetings and Area Assemblies and report on activities within his District.
- To notify the Area Group Records Coordinator of group changes, new groups, or disbanded groups.
- To communicate with the local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup/LDC).

- To help groups understand Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship and help them understand the structure of their Assembly and WSO.
- To get to know the Alateen Group Sponsors in the District and encourage the Alateen groups to send GRs to District meetings.
- To fulfill any duties as stated in the Area Alateen Behavioral and Safety Requirements.
- To refer to resources available at al-anon.org including the *Service Manual* and various service guidelines.

Temporary Chairman

This office is necessary only in an Area preparing for its first Assembly. The temporary Chairman immediately notifies the WSO of his election. He sees that the time and location for a pre-Assembly meeting are chosen and that all groups in the Assembly center are invited to help with the planning. He chairs this meeting, where all preparations for the election Assembly are made, including notifying all groups in the Area. He serves as Chairman of the Assembly until a full-term Chairman is elected; the latter then takes over the balance of the meeting.

Chairman

A Chairman should have leadership and organizational abilities, serving rather than dictating. It is essential to be able to plan an agenda and conduct meetings in an orderly manner. Communication and cooperation with others are key elements of good chairmanship.

Duties of the Chairman are:

- To conduct all Assemblies and Area World Service Committee meetings during his three-year term of office.
- To ask the Secretary to send out notices of all meetings to the Delegate, the Alternate, Area officers, and all voting members.
- To appoint another DR to fill the office temporarily if any officer other than the Delegate resigns before the end of his term. As soon as convenient, an Assembly should be called to elect a successor for the unexpired term. If the Chairman resigns, the Area World Service Committee names a Chairman *pro tem* or the Delegate may serve as Chairman until an election can be held.
- To call an Assembly, after consulting with the Delegate, soon after the Delegate's return from the Conference to hear the

report of WSC proceedings and decisions. He may also call an Assembly at other times deemed necessary by the Delegate or the Area World Service Committee.

- To call meetings of the Area World Service Committee, preferably at regular intervals, to discuss Area matters.
- To call the Assembly for the election of a Delegate and other officers before the end of the Delegate's three-year term of office, allowing ample time for a new Delegate to take office by the first of January.

Secretary

Duties of the Secretary are:

- To work with the Group Records Coordinator, according to the Area's procedure, to maintain current contact information of all GRs, DRs, officers, and Coordinators.
- To send out all notices of Assembly and Area World Service Committee meetings.
- To attend to all regular secretarial work and take minutes of all meetings.
- To send out the minutes to the Area World Service Committee members soon after the meeting and maintain a permanent copy to be passed along to his successor and possibly a copy to the Area archives.
- To call the roll of all voting members at Assemblies.
- To display the list of candidates for office at election Assemblies.
- To ensure that the names and addresses of the Area World Service Committee members are sent to the WSO.

Treasurer

Duties of the Treasurer are:

- To handle all Assembly collections and funds.
- To prepare a special appeal letter to be sent at least once a year to all groups asking them to contribute to the Area treasury to cover Assembly expenses, including contributions to the Delegates' Equalized Expense.
- To forward to the WSO, before January 1, the Delegate's Equalized Expense amount.

- To issue receipts for any contributions received.
- To pay all bills for approved expenditures. It is a sound business practice to have four members authorized to sign checks; of these, two signatures should be required on every check.
- To make quarterly written financial reports to the Area World Service Committee and periodic reports to the Assembly.

World Service Delegate

The Delegate is a channel through which information flows. The group conscience of Al-Anon can work effectively only if it is informed. Much depends on the Delegate being thoroughly familiar with the *Service Manual* throughout his term of service.

The duties of the World Service Delegate are:

In general

- To bring the Area's viewpoint on matters affecting the entire fellowship to the Conference and to return with a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide.
- To be the bridge of understanding that links the groups in the Area with world Al-Anon to help them continue to function in unity.
- To be the servant of Al-Anon as a whole.

At the World Service Conference

- To attend all sessions of the Conference in order to consider the issues brought up, to cast an informed vote, and thus help to guide the Board of Trustees in making decisions.
- To acquire a clear and comprehensive picture of our worldwide fellowship to bring back to the groups in the Area.
- To attend and participate in meetings of a selected committee, thought force, or task force in order to broaden the scope of participation. Delegates meet and participate by conference call and/or email throughout the year and attend face-to-face meetings at Conference.
- To bring issues of concern to him, and the Area, to the attention of the Conference, either through the Conference Leadership Team or directly from the floor in an open Conference session.
- To learn facts and figures; and, even more importantly, to gain a vision of this great movement in action.

- To learn what our World Service Office has meant to Al-Anon in the past and what it, with the guidance of the Conference, will mean to the future welfare of the fellowship.

In the Area

- To give his Conference report to the Area World Service Committee and GRs to carry back to their groups. As often as possible, he makes his report in person at group or District meetings; nothing is more impressive than an eyewitness account.
- To meet with the Area World Service Committee often to learn and evaluate the groups' reaction to his report and to hear their ideas on other pertinent matters. He can thus be better prepared to present the Area's views at the next Conference.
- To get and report a cross section of groups' ideas and opinions through the DRs and GRs, if between Conferences the WSO needs overall group opinion on some urgent matter. Thus, through the guidance of the Delegates, it becomes possible for the WSO to take any necessary action during the year.
- To serve as a contact for public inquiries within his Area if the Coordinator is unavailable.
- To send items to be considered for the Conference agenda to the WSO.
- To submit to the WSO no later than August 15 of the regional election year, either the Regional Trustee (RT) résumé or notification that the Area does not have a candidate.

World Service Delegate's Alternate

The Alternate Delegate works along with the Delegate as much as possible in communicating with the groups. He acquaints himself with all the Delegate's duties, so that if the Delegate is unable to finish his three-year term, the Alternate can step in to complete it.

If the Alternate must complete the term, a temporary Alternate is at once appointed by the Chairman from among the DRs to act until a special Assembly can be called to elect a new Alternate.

Many Areas have assigned or appointed the Alternate Delegate to serve, for example, as one or more of the following:

- Alternate Area Chairman
- Area Alateen Process Person

- Area Newsletter Editor
- Assistant to Area committees
- Chairman of Area Budget Committee
- Chairman of Area Convention Planning Committee
- *Forum* Coordinator
- Group Records Coordinator

The Alternate Delegate can also provide valuable service to the Area by:

- Visiting Area groups and Districts.
- Developing Alateen groups, encouraging Al-Anon members to sponsor them, and setting up Alateen workshops.
- Other responsibilities as assigned by the Area.

Elections

At the Group Level

Election of a Group Representative (GR) and an Alternate

The GR is elected by his group by any election procedure it chooses. The term of office for a Group Representative is recommended to be three years. Service is a vital part of recovery, and it benefits both the Group Representative and the group if a full three-year term is served.

An Al-Anon or Alateen member who is also a member of A.A. is not eligible to serve as GR. (See "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of this *Service Manual*.)

Since the newly elected GR may be attending the election Assembly, the group's elections should precede the date of the Assembly. To emphasize the need for selecting informed GRs, a special election meeting may be called by the group, with time devoted to consider the role of the GR in our service structure and his work in the District and Area. A group may reelect its GR for another term.

Since a GR may be unable to attend all District and Area meetings, an Alternate GR is needed and is elected at the same time. The Alternate may be runner-up in the elections. The Alternate GR's

duties may include serving as the group's public outreach contact, newsletter reporter, and official greeter of newcomers and visitors.

If the GR resigns or proves to be inactive, the Alternate completes the term and may then be elected for a three-year term of his own. Another Alternate may then be elected.

An Al-Anon or Alateen member who is also a member of A.A. is not eligible to serve as Alternate GR. (See "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions": "Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of this *Service Manual*.)

In a city where there is an Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup), the Alternate GR may serve as the Information Service Representative (ISR). The GR generally serves as the Alternate Information Service Representative (AISR).

When the GR Has Been Elected

He immediately sends his name and address to the Area Secretary or Group Records Coordinator, so he can be informed of the time and location of the next Assembly. In a new Area, the GR informs the temporary Chairman.

He becomes thoroughly familiar with his duties. (See "Links of Service": "Duties of Assembly Members.")

At the District Level

Election of a District Representative (DR) and Alternate

The District is the first link from the groups to the Area, the WSC, and the WSO, connecting the groups in unity and for mutual aid.

The election of the DR and Alternate DR from among the incoming, outgoing, or active Past GRs (see next paragraph), none of whom are members of A.A., takes place in the fall of the year after the election of GRs and before election of Area officers. This is often done at a District meeting or by a caucus of GRs at the Assembly. This term of office is three years, coinciding with those of Area officers and Delegate. Each District may choose its own method of electing, including who is eligible to vote.

The DR who is completing his term calls the District election meeting and notifies each group of the meeting, inviting the incoming, outgoing, and active Past GRs and others who wish to attend.

If the DR resigns, proves to be inactive in his District, or for any reason is unable to serve, the Alternate DR completes the term. If the GRs of a District are not aware of the DR's failure to attend Area World Service Committee meetings, the Area World Service Committee may request a replacement.

In a city where there is an Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup), the Alternate DR may be a member of its service board. The DR generally serves as the Alternate Information Service board member.

Other duties of the Alternate DR may include serving as Treasurer or Secretary of the District, as public outreach contact from the District to the Area, or as chairman of meetings on the service structure, Traditions, and Concepts.

When the DR Has Been Elected

He notifies the Area Secretary or Group Records Coordinator of his election and that of his Alternate. He acquaints himself thoroughly with the duties of a DR. (See "Links of Service": "Duties of Assembly Members.")

At the Assembly Level

The Election Assembly

This is held once every three years before the end of December. The Area World Service Committee may also schedule interim Assemblies, which are called by the Chairman at such other times as it is deemed necessary. One such Assembly could be held to hear the Delegate's post-Conference report. Some Delegates prefer to give their reports at combined District meetings arranged by two or more DRs.

Preparing for Election Assemblies Before the Assembly is to convene, the Chairman (or temporary Chairman) prepares for the meeting as follows:

- GRs follow their Area's registration process.
- A map or definition of the Area, with District boundaries indicated, is provided.
- Preparations are made and necessary tools are available for confidential balloting.
- A means of tallying and displaying the voting results is available.
- All GRs have this "World Service Handbook" to guide them in the election procedure.

- Al-Anon members who are not GRs may be invited to assist in the election process.

Election Assembly Procedure

If and when the Area Assembly agrees on alterations in the procedures recommended, it is vital that all groups in the Area be informed of the changes and why they were necessary.

At the Assembly: Preparation

The Chairman (see "Links of Service": "Duties of Assembly Members"):

1. Calls the meeting to order. (If this is the Area's first Assembly, the temporary Chairman conducts the meeting, but only until a three-year Chairman is elected.)
2. Asks for a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.
3. Reviews the procedure in this "World Service Handbook" or any other preferred method for the election of the District Representative, the Delegate, and an Alternate. It is important that everyone also understands the method agreed upon for the election of Area officers.
4. Asks for a vote of acceptance of the proposed method of election. Years of experience have shown the method described in this "World Service Handbook" to be fair and trouble-free. If another method is considered, it should be clearly understood and agreed upon by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly. In keeping with the principle of one vote per group, the Chairman has a vote only if he is still a GR.

Elections

Election of a District Representative (DR)

In many Areas, it is practical to elect DRs in their home Districts prior to the election Assembly. Where this is not possible, the election takes place at the Assembly. (See "Elections": "At the District Level.")

The Chairman:

- Identifies the Area Districts using a map or definition for division. If questions arise about the division or number of Districts, the Chairman asks for discussion and a vote on changes of Dis-

trict boundaries. An advantage of dividing into smaller Districts is that they can be covered more conveniently by the DRs.

- Asks the GRs from each District that has not yet elected a DR to gather in groups to caucus. If the caucus is small, only informal discussion and agreement may be needed. Otherwise, confidential ballots should be cast, and the same procedure followed as for electing Area officers. A DR may repeat his term, provided that the GRs in his District reelect him.

Election of a World Service Delegate*

The Chairman asks the voting GRs to elect a Delegate who is not also a member of A.A.* A Delegate may not succeed himself, but may be reelected after an interim three-year term provided he has remained active in service at the Area level. (See "General Information for Assemblies": "Assembly Structure, Elections, Etc.") Each group has one vote.

1. The Chairman asks each DR and others eligible, according to Area autonomy, whether he is prepared to serve as Delegate for three years. If so, he becomes a candidate.
2. As suggested in Warranty Three, the voting process should be followed even if there is only one candidate.
3. Names of all candidates for the position of Delegate are displayed.
4. Votes are cast. Candidates leave the room or meeting while votes are tallied and displayed.
5. In the spirit of substantial unanimity, the first candidate to receive a two-thirds vote is elected.
6. If no one has the required two-thirds vote after several ballots have been taken, the Chairman may suggest that the candidates with the largest percentage of votes remain on the ballot and the others withdraw.
7. Whether or not any names are withdrawn, another ballot is taken.
8. If still no election occurs, the Chairman asks for a motion to close the balloting and that the choice be made by lot between the

* At the 1977 World Service Conference, it was voted that our Policy is clearly defined, that Al-Anon members who are members of A.A. are not eligible for the office of Group Representative; therefore, the [Admissions/Handbook Committee of the Conference**] Conference Leadership Team would refuse admission of a Delegate who is also a member of A.A.

** This Committee is no longer used in World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, the Committee may be functioning in the worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

two with the highest number of votes. The first one selected becomes the Delegate. Alternatively, some Assemblies prefer to have a final ballot taken, in which case the candidate with the most votes becomes the Delegate.

Election of an Alternate Delegate

The Chairman then calls for the election of a World Service Delegate's Alternate who is not also a member of A.A., following the same procedure as for Delegate.

In case the Delegate cannot complete his three-year term, the Alternate automatically becomes the Delegate for the balance of the Delegate's term. Another Alternate should be elected as soon as possible from among the DRs and officers. Since a Delegate should always have the assistance of an Alternate, the Delegate who has taken over may ask the Chairman to appoint an interim Alternate until a special meeting of the Assembly can be called.

Election of Officers

The Chairman then calls for the election of Assembly officers, usually the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, from among DRs and others according to Area autonomy. Each officer serves for a three-year term. Names of candidates are announced, and a vote is taken following the same procedure as for Delegate.

Some Areas may elect the outgoing Delegate as Chairman of the Assembly. Other Areas use the Past Delegate's Conference experience by electing or appointing them to Area Coordinator or other Area service positions.

Assembly officers, including the Alternate Delegate, may continue to serve as DRs. When a DR becomes Delegate, he resigns as DR and his District elects a new DR.

If a vacancy occurs among the Assembly officers between meetings or an officer is unable to attend meetings, another DR may be appointed by the Chairman to replace the officer until another can be elected. The Assembly Area should never be long without a full quota of officers.

Post-Election Activities

The Chairman directs the Secretary or other designated AWSC member to send a report of the election Assembly to the WSO with

a duplicate to the newly elected Secretary, giving contact information of the Delegate, the Alternate, officers, DRs, and Area Coordinators.

District Meetings

Various types of meetings may be held within a District to unite and inform groups: meetings to hear reports about the activities and business of the Area, sharing sessions for discussion of group and District matters, or program related social events. At regular intervals, meetings scheduled and chaired by the DR are held for such matters as:

- Discussing the need for service committees such as Alateen, Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions), a telephone answering service, or an Information Service. (Refer to the respective guidelines available on the Members menu at al-anon.org.)
- Familiarizing groups, Information Services, and service committees in the District with the wide variety of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) available for friends and families of alcoholics.
- Sharing with the fellowship worldwide by submitting articles or photographs to *The Forum*.
- Communicating the value of "Inside Al-Anon" found in *The Forum* as a sharing vehicle from the WSO to the groups.
- Raising money to support an answering service, hosting platform fees, website, or other means of outreach to members and potential members or to expand existing services.
- Ensuring that all groups are aware of how to make contributions to the District, AIS, Area, and WSO.
- Encouraging ways of stimulating contributions from the groups in the District to Al-Anon's World Service Office. (Our WSO informs the Delegate of all contributions from the groups in his Area; this information can be relayed by each DR so that GRs will know whether their groups have contributed.)
- Discussing how to deal with problems that arise when Al-Anon Traditions are disregarded or other concerns that groups and committees have presented for consideration.

- Planning workshops on Alateen, Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions), Literature, or any other Al-Anon topics of interest to the groups.

Area World Service Committee Meetings

The primary function of the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) is to plan for the general improvement of both the Assembly and the groups. Voting members of this committee are usually the officers of the Assembly, the DRs, Coordinators of services (such as Alateen, Archives, Public Outreach [Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions], Literature, Group Records, *The Forum*, or Newsletter) and liaison members from any Information Services (Intergroups). The chairman of Al-Anon activities at an A.A. area convention or chairman of Area Al-Anon and Alateen conventions should also participate in AWSC meetings.

These meetings, called and chaired by the Area Chairman, may be held at stated intervals to hear and discuss the Delegate's report, to consider Area matters, to suggest items of interest for the Area newsletter, all with the purpose of informing and unifying the groups in the Area. To equalize expenses, successive meetings may be held in various localities within the Area.

Throughout the year, the AWSC is responsible for submitting questions that cannot be resolved at the District or Assembly level to the WSO. It also plans the Assembly agendas, prepares the Area budget, and studies the need for alternatives to these "World Service Handbook" suggestions and presents its findings to the Area Assembly. When advisable, the AWSC suggests revisions of boundaries of existing Districts to be approved at the Area Assembly.

When Al-Anon and Alateen groups are to participate in an A.A. or Al-Anon convention, a separate convention planning committee may be formed, using the talents of the membership as a whole. To assure liaison with the convention planning committee, a convention Chairman may be appointed or elected by the AWSC. He is responsible to the Area and submits reports to the Area Chairman.

All Al-Anon members, except those who are also members of A.A., are eligible to serve as an Area Coordinator. (Guidelines for Area Coordinators are available under the Members menu at al-anon.org.)

Assemblies

The purpose of the Assembly is to assure adequate interchange of information and ideas about service activities, not only in the immediate Area, but where worldwide Al-Anon is concerned. (See "Election Assembly Procedure" for a typical election Assembly.)

Topics the agenda might include are:

- Approval of Assembly minutes
- Chairman's report on Area World Service Committee since previous Assembly
- Delegate's report on Conference and/or recent communications from WSO
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- Voting on issues of concern to the Area brought by the AWSC
- District reports from DRs on progress and problems
- GR time for ideas, opinions, and questions
- Application of the Twelve Traditions of Al-Anon
- Interpretation of the Twelve Concepts of Service
- Workshops and group discussions
- Panel or open mic discussions
- Videos (for a list of current available videos contact the WSO)
- Report on Area newsletter
- Reports from Coordinators of special services: Alateen, Archives, Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions), *The Forum*, Literature, Group Records
- Reports from any other committees, such as Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup), convention
- Brief information session on WSO service—conducted by the Delegate

General Information for Assemblies

(Refer to other portions of the "World Service Handbook" for more complete descriptions of Job Duties, Responsibilities, etc.)

Assembly Structure, Elections, Etc.

- Assemblies are usually held at regularly scheduled intervals. The Area Al-Anon and Alateen groups are notified of each Assembly by the Chairman through the Secretary, the Area newsletter, or by any other effective method.
- A full Area Assembly is comprised of the Delegate, Area officers and Coordinators, DRs, and GRs. Some Areas include or invite other members to attend their Assemblies.
- In order to draw on experience gained in service, an Area may choose to permit anyone who has served a three-year term as DR, has remained active at the Area level (as Newsletter Editor, Coordinator, etc.), and regularly attends Al-Anon meetings to stand for the office of Delegate. It is recommended that Areas have a process or procedure for handling this possibility.
- After the Delegate's third Conference, an Assembly is called to elect a Delegate and officers whose terms begin the following January 1.
- The Chairman, elected for a three-year term, calls and conducts all subsequent Assemblies and Area committee meetings.
- In Areas that have not as yet formed Districts, the Delegate and officers are elected from among the GRs.
- The Area World Service Committee meets whenever need arises to develop the Assembly agenda and to discuss Area affairs.
- A member may not hold an Area Assembly officer position in multiple Areas at the same time.

Communications

- Upon receiving the results of an election, the World Service Office sends a letter of welcome to each new Delegate, with the date of the next Conference.
- In the event the Delegate is not able to attend the Conference, he will continue to receive all WSO communications.

Processes, Resignations, Vacancies, Etc.

- If the Alternate Delegate resigns, a new Alternate should be elected as soon as possible. If lack of time before the date of the Conference makes this impossible, and the Delegate has also resigned, the Chairman may attend the Conference in the Delegate's place. If the Chairman is unable to attend, next in line would be a Past Delegate, beginning with the most recent one.
- If an officer resigns or for any reason is unable to serve, a DR may be appointed by the Chairman to replace the officer until another can be elected to complete the term. He may then be elected for a three-year term of his own. In case the Delegate resigns, the Alternate finishes the Delegate's term and then may be elected for a three-year term as Delegate.

Miscellaneous: Renaming an Area, Changing a Group/District to a New Area

- If an Area has voted to formally change its name to more accurately reflect its boundaries, the Area would submit the request to the WSO. The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) would review the request. If the CLT agreed, it would make a recommendation, in the form of a motion, at the next WSC.
- Groups or Districts located in one Area contiguous with another Area may, through group conscience and following Area procedures, choose to participate in the second Area and give up participation in the first Area, as agreed upon by both Areas.

Finances

At the Group Level

In gratitude and recognition of the principle of self-support, Al-Anon groups are financially responsible in the following ways:

- Each group covers its group expenses such as rent and literature.
- Each group provides its GR with sufficient funds to fulfill the GR duties including participation in the Assembly. Expenses may include meals, transportation, lodging, and registration fees.
- Each group supports the District activities.
- Each group supports the Area by contributing to cover expenses of the Assembly and the cost of sending the Delegate

to the World Service Conference. The Area Treasurer may send the group an appeal letter.

- Each group supports the WSO in recognition of the services provided to the groups.

At the District Level

Just as a member or a group does, a District also practices the principle of self-support by being financially responsible.

Each District provides its District Representative with sufficient funds to fulfill the DR duties including participation in the Assembly and Area World Service Committee meetings. These expenses may include meals, transportation, lodging, and registration fees. (When the DR is also a GR, the Assembly expenses may be fully or partially paid by the group he represents.)

Each District budgets for:

- The funding of public outreach materials and activities (e.g., literature displays, mailings of special announcements)
- Rent for District meetings
- Contributions of support for the Area
- Contributions of support for WSO in recognition of the services provided to the groups and the District

Funds for the budget may be raised by contributions from groups in the District or special events such as District workshops and potlucks.

At the Area Level

Areas plan for their financial responsibilities with an understanding and appreciation of the principle of self-support.

The Chairman presents a budget developed by members of the Area World Service Committee for the approval of the Assembly. The anticipated expense will be shared by each group and District in the Area as they each recognize their individual and collective responsibility. The GRs attending the Assembly should come prepared to discuss and vote on the Area budget.

The Area Treasurer collects group, District, and individual contributions and issues receipts in return. The Area Treasurer disburses the collected funds as the budgeted financial plan and Area policy allows.

A typical Area budget might include:

- Rent or fees for the Area service meetings
- Allowances for travel for AWSC members
- Allowances for lodging for AWSC members
- Allowances for materials for AWSC members to carry out their duties
- An amount for the Delegate's Equalized Expense
- An Area contribution to the WSO
- Other incidental expenses
- Anticipated revenues from Area events
- Anticipated revenues from other service arms, groups, and members
- An amount set aside for an ample reserve

A check to cover the Delegate's Equalized Expenses is sent by the Area Treasurer to the WSO before January 1.

By March 15, the WSO sends each Delegate a check for transportation and incidental expenses. This amount may be more or less than the Equalized Expense payment sent by the Area Treasurer. (See also "Links of Service": "Duties of Assembly Members": "Treasurer.")

World Service Conference

Purposes

Al-Anon's Tradition Two states, "For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern."

The World Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon. It is the practical means by which the group conscience can speak; it is the voice of world Al-Anon and the guarantee that our world services shall continue to carry on under all conditions.

The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown; it makes for unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole upon important matters. This makes it the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen's harmony and survival.

Historical Background

From 1951, when Al-Anon began, until 1961, when the Conference was born, the world services for Al-Anon were conducted from the Clearing House office in New York. All the work was done by a group of volunteers and a few paid workers, all of them living in the New York area. In 1954, our services were incorporated as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., solely for business purposes. There was a Board of Directors that took care of the business and policy matters with the help of an Advisory Board.

When our fellowship was still small, this service arrangement worked well and did much to unify Al-Anon and spread its message around the world.

This meant, however, that Al-Anon services were not linked to our growing groups. There was no way for the services to share with and account to those they served. It was only by means of mail polls and correspondence that the World Service Office was able to receive the guidance and direction of the whole Al-Anon membership.

This degree of isolation from the fellowship as a whole could have proved hazardous for our future. If an unauthorized decision proved to be a serious error, confidence in the World Service Office could be weakened; this would affect the whole vital service effort. Without direct linkage with the widespread Al-Anon groups, it might not have been possible to repair such a condition.

Al-Anon has followed A.A.'s path from the beginning, using its principles and adapting its service structure to our own needs. A.A. had found that the group conscience of its fellowship as a whole could best be heard through the establishment of a conference of delegates representing all sections of the continent and meeting yearly with the Board of Trustees and the General Service staff. A.A.'s first conference met in the spring of 1951.

From 1955 until 1962, Bill W. spent much time developing suitable principles and philosophies for the guidance of all A.A.'s services. These, he felt, should agree with the principles and philosophies expressed or implied in the Steps and Traditions and with A.A.'s experience. The resulting document is divided into two parts: "The A.A. Service Manual" and "Twelve Concepts for World Service."

By 1961, Al-Anon had agreed that its group conscience should have the same means of being guided in the performance of its ser-

vices worldwide. A simple, inexpensive plan worked out by Bill and Lois W. was put into effect on a three-year trial basis.

When the Conference was first initiated, in order to obtain equal representation from all sections of the United States and Canada, the continent was divided into four quadrants by lines drawn through its approximate center from east to west and north to south, coinciding with state and provincial boundaries. Three Delegates were chosen in the first year from each of the four quadrants. These came from the states and provinces with the greatest number of Al-Anon groups. In each of the second and third years, 12 more Delegates were chosen from those states and provinces with the next greatest number of Al-Anon groups. Following this formula, all states and provinces have had the opportunity to join the Conference.

By 1963, the experiment had proved this linkage between the groups and headquarters so effective that the members of the trial Conference voted unanimously to make it permanent. With "The A.A. Service Manual" as a guide, our "World Service Handbook" was developed for Al-Anon by a Handbook Committee, chaired by Lois W. The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter (see Index), long in the process of development, was unanimously adopted by the 1967 Conference. This is a traditional, not a legal, framework within which the Conference functions.

In the meantime, in 1965, the name "Board of Directors" was changed to "Board of Trustees," and since the Conference itself now serves as an advisory board, the previous advisory board was dropped. An Executive Committee was established to aid the Board of Trustees in the conduct of administrative affairs.

The Al-Anon–Alateen Relationship

Alateen is an integral part of our fellowship. Area World Service Committees are urged to encourage Alateen participation at District and Assembly levels.

An Alateen Group Representative (GR) has both voice and vote in the District and Area Assembly and may hold office (if elected by Al-Anon and Alateen GRs) at all world service levels: District Representative, Assembly officer, and Delegate.

Composition of the Conference

The World Service Conference (WSC) is composed of one elected

Delegate from each Assembly Area, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and voting members of the World Service Office administrative Staff. At the 1985 WSC it was voted to make the Conference member ratio two-thirds elected Delegates to one-third Staff and Volunteers.

A non-panel Area may ask the Conference for permission to send a representative to the Conference. Such representation is limited to two years, under the following stipulations:

- The representative's expenses are to be paid by the Area.
- The WSO is to be notified of his attendance no later than February 1.
- The representative is to have voice but no vote at the Conference. These conditions also apply to other countries, except that they may continue to send representatives indefinitely.

Elected Delegates may reflect Area opinion and contribute Area ideas, but they are not bound by directives from their groups. The Delegates as well as all other Conference members are the trusted servants of worldwide Al-Anon.

How It Works

A majority vote of the Conference constitutes only a suggestion to the Board of Trustees and our WSO; a two-thirds vote is binding upon them, subject to the provisions of Concept Seven ("The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional").

On overall policy matters, the Conference makes final decisions. The Board of Trustees and the World Service Office are service arms of the Conference, a part of the whole fellowship.

The Conference is empowered to pass resolutions, make recommendations to the WSO, direct committees to further study or refuse to act at all in a given situation. It cannot, however, mandate or govern the Al-Anon fellowship, which it serves. The Conference represents the Al-Anon membership but does not rule it.

Prior to the Conference, all Delegates are invited to serve on a thought force, task force, or one of the Delegate Member committees.

Upon arrival at the Conference, newly elected Delegates become acquainted with second- and third-year Delegates, as well as with members of the Board, members of the Executive Committee, and Staff.

The following are typical Conference activities in addition to

those outlined in Article 11 of the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter:

- Conference members—Delegates, WSO Staff, Board of Trustees, and Executive Committee members—interact and discuss matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Conference members of thought forces, task forces, and work groups make relevant presentations.
- Delegates have an opportunity to discuss successes and concerns with each other.

Conference Agenda

The Conference agenda is derived from input through the Delegates, Conference Leadership Team (CLT), and the Board of Trustees. In addition, suggestions made to the CLT by any Conference member and the membership-at-large are carefully considered.

A typical agenda includes:

- Deviations from Al-Anon Traditions affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- Proposed amendments to the descriptive text of the Twelve Concepts of Service.
- Consideration of proposed new literature.
- Questions and decisions in the field of overall public outreach.
- State of voluntary contributions—how noncontributing groups can be better informed.
- Consideration of Area problems, provided they do or may affect Al-Anon as a whole.
- Special requests for guidance from Trustees or members of our WSO Staff.
- Any action proposed by the Trustees affecting Al-Anon as a whole, to be presented for Conference discussion and deliberation.
- Workshops and meetings on service functions; how returning Delegates can best serve their Areas.
- Matters concerning Conference procedure, structure, and function.

How the Conference Is Financed

General Conference Expenses The cost of the Conference is cov-

ered by the Delegates' Equalized Expenses and the WSO General Fund. All members reap the benefits of the Conference which makes the group conscience available and effective for worldwide Al-Anon.

The general Conference expenses include the salary of Staff to handle the daily affairs of the Conference while in session; the cost of holding the Conference sessions; the cost of WSO members' (Trustees, Executive Committee members, and paid Staff) attendance at the Conference; and the expenses involved in writing and editing the *World Service Conference Summary* (P-46).

Delegates' Equalized Expenses Because costs of travel to the World Service Conference are different for each Delegate, a formula was developed to provide a fair equalization of expenses: The Delegate's Equalized Expense is calculated by dividing the Full Amount for Delegates to attend Conference by the number of Delegates. The Full Amount is the total estimated travel, hotel, meal, and incidental expenses for the Delegates, including their portion of the costs of Conference supplies. This Full Amount is reported to the Board of Trustees. A substantial portion of the Full Amount, as determined by the Board of Trustees, is the Equalized Expense and is paid by the Areas. The balance of the Conference costs is paid out of AFG Inc.'s General Fund. The Conference Leadership Team informs each Area that this Equalized Expense is to be sent to the WSO by the Area Treasurer before January 1. The Delegates' travel and incidental expenses are defrayed by these funds, regardless of distance traveled.

In gratitude, many Areas choose to contribute additional funds up to or more than the Full Amount.

Conference Procedures

Area Procedures for Joining the Conference

The newly formed Area must first submit a request for admission to the World Service Conference. The Conference Leadership Team (formerly handled by the Admissions/Handbook Committee) will review the request and will make a decision based on policies previously accepted by the Conference. If permission is granted, the Area may proceed as follows:

Our WSO suggests a registered group in this Assembly be invited to elect a temporary Chairman. (See "Links of Service": "Duties of

Assembly Members": "Temporary Chairman.") The temporary Chairman notifies our WSO of his election.

The WSO sends each registered group in the Area the name and contact information of the temporary Chairman and a copy of or link to this "World Service Handbook" for the GRs to study prior to the election Assembly.

Well in advance of the Assembly, the temporary Chairman calls a planning meeting of all groups in the Assembly to:

- Select a date and meeting location for the Area election Assembly.
- Notify all groups in the Area of the time and location of the Assembly where the election will be held to elect a DR from each District, Assembly officers, a Delegate to the annual World Service Conference, and an Alternate Delegate.

A state, province, territory, or non-geographically based grouping having more than 400 groups may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference (see Article 6. b. of the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter). A state, province, territory, or non-geographically based grouping may divide only once, as reaffirmed at the 1982 World Service Conference.

World Service Office

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., better known to most members as the World Service Office or WSO, is the headquarters of the entire fellowship.

What WSO Does

The World Service Office

- Acts as the clearinghouse worldwide for inquiries from those who need help or want information about Al-Anon and Alateen.
- Registers new groups, Information Services, and Literature Distribution Centers; provides them with literature, information, and help.
- Advises the Delegates of the formation or disbanding of groups in their Areas.
- Maintains data of worldwide Al-Anon and Alateen groups.

- Guides Al-Anon's public outreach efforts worldwide.
- Generates cooperation between Al-Anon and the professional community.
- Prepares and distributes Conference Approved Literature.
- Publishes and distributes Al-Anon materials to individuals and groups throughout the world.
- Plans and coordinates the World Service Conference.
- Gives an annual report of its activities and those of the World Service Conference in a *Conference Summary*.
- Carries the Al-Anon message to institutions and encourages the formation of introductory meetings to help those affected by someone else's alcoholism.
- Strives to stimulate interest in service.
- Cooperates with A.A.'s General Service Office, located in New York City, in all matters affecting both fellowships.
- Guides countries outside the United States and Canada in developing their structures and establishing General Service Offices.
- Is responsible for services to Al-Anon Family Groups all over the world, directly or through the Al-Anon General Service Office of each country.
- Maintains translation review of Al-Anon literature into foreign languages and supervises the legal aspects of its distribution.
- Plans, coordinates, and participates in the biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM).
- Reports its activities quarterly to the Board of Trustees and annually to the World Service Conference.
- Organizes and preserves historical Al-Anon material worldwide, past and present.
- Maintains the al-anon.org website.
- Maintains and protects copyrights and trademarks.

How WSO Is Structured

The World Service Office is headed by an Executive Director with assistance provided by a staff of paid employees, volunteer Chairmen of selected committees, and other Volunteers.

The Executive Director and the Staff handle correspondence with all parts of the fellowship to make sure that current information is disseminated to those concerned. Bilingual secretaries and translators are employed to help with foreign language correspondence.

The Delegate member committees* are Literature, Admissions/Handbook**, Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), Group Services**, Public Outreach, and Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT).

Other committees* in alphabetical order are: Alateen Advisory**, Archives Advisory**, Audit Committee, Conference Leadership Team (CLT), Executive, Finance*, *Forum* Editorial Advisory (FEAC), International Coordination (ICC), Nominating*, Outreach to Professionals Advisory**, Policy*, and Regional Service Seminar (RSS)**.

Ad hoc committees may be established for specific purposes when the need arises.

The WSO Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all the members of the Board of Trustees, the members of the Executive Committee, and the voting members of the WSO administrative Staff. It meets quarterly in advance of the meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Its function is to consider problems or projects brought to its attention by any Al-Anon or Alateen member. Its statements of policy, based on our Traditions, are subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference. In particularly sensitive or debatable questions, the decision may be deferred until the Conference convenes.

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is the administrator of the World Service Office. The Board of Trustees has granted it legal authority to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the World Service Office. Its eight members, one of whom serves as Chairperson, are appointed by the Trustees. They include the Executive Director; one voting member of the administrative Staff; the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees; three Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees, elected by the Board of Trustees who contribute experience in specific fields and situations; and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, who serves as an ex-officio member.

*Committees having permanent status, sometimes referred to as standing committees.

**This Committee is no longer used in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, the Committee may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

The Board of Trustees is composed of seven to 21 volunteer members: one sustaining member (the Executive Director), Trustees at Large, and Regional Trustees. Our cofounders Lois W. and Anne B., now deceased, were honorary lifetime members. The term in office for Trustee at Large (**TAL**) and Regional Trustee (**RT**) is three years; they may serve two terms, which may be consecutive.

Trustee at Large résumés are submitted directly to the WSO. The Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) reviews the résumés and submits the results of the review to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee also reviews the résumés and selects potential candidates to be presented to the Board for consideration.

Regional Trustee résumés are presented to their respective Areas and the qualifying chosen résumé is submitted to the WSO by the Area Delegate. Members of each WSC Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) review the résumés and submit the results of the review to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee also reviews the résumés and selects candidates to be presented to the Board for consideration.

The Board of Trustees selects nominees to be presented to the Conference for an expression of traditional approval. These nominees may then be elected by the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting.

The Trustees, along with the members of the Executive Committee, direct the business operations of the World Service Office, observing the Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. They are concerned with guarding the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship against those who may try to profit from our ever-growing public acceptance, with protecting our principles from distortion and dilution; and in general, with acting as the chief service arm of the World Service Conference. The Board serves as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter. The role of the Board is explained in the descriptive text of Concept Seven ("The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional").

The purposes for which the corporation was formed, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, are "to encourage, assist, and serve the families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with the problems concerning and attendant on alcoholism; to reinforce their efforts to understand the alcoholic and to foster his or her restoration to normal life; to disseminate information in relation thereto and

to conduct and participate in any other classes of service to assist families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with their problems." To serve these purposes, it is the responsibility of the Trustees to review all operations of the World Service Office.

In managing the affairs of the corporation, the Board is authorized to:

- Establish and maintain the policies of the World Service Office.
- Control its property and finances.
- Make long-range plans.
- Authorize expenditures.
- Appoint the Executive Committee and other committees.
- Appoint an Executive Director and Director of Finance & Operations for the World Service Office.
- Take whatever measures are prudent and effective in carrying out the purpose of our fellowship.
- Approve the final agenda for the World Service Conference.

Any Trustee who has a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorization by the Board may not vote on the matter.

Three-fourths of all authorized participants registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the World Service Office if or when it is deemed essential. They may request the resignation of the entire Board of Trustees and nominate a new slate of Trustees. Prior to resignation, it is the responsibility of the outgoing Trustees to vote on the successor slate presented by the Conference. For the purpose of bringing about a reorganization of the World Service Office, the number of World Service Office participants voting shall be limited to one-fourth of the total Conference vote.

In this instance, the final decision-making body is the World Service Conference. (Further details of the Board's composition, jurisdiction, and responsibilities will be found in Article 10 of the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter.)

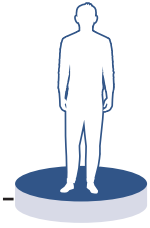
Notes and Updates

World Service Conference Structure Graphic

Members in a group elect a **Group Representative (GR)**.

The **GR** is the liaison between the group and the District and the group and the Area Assembly.

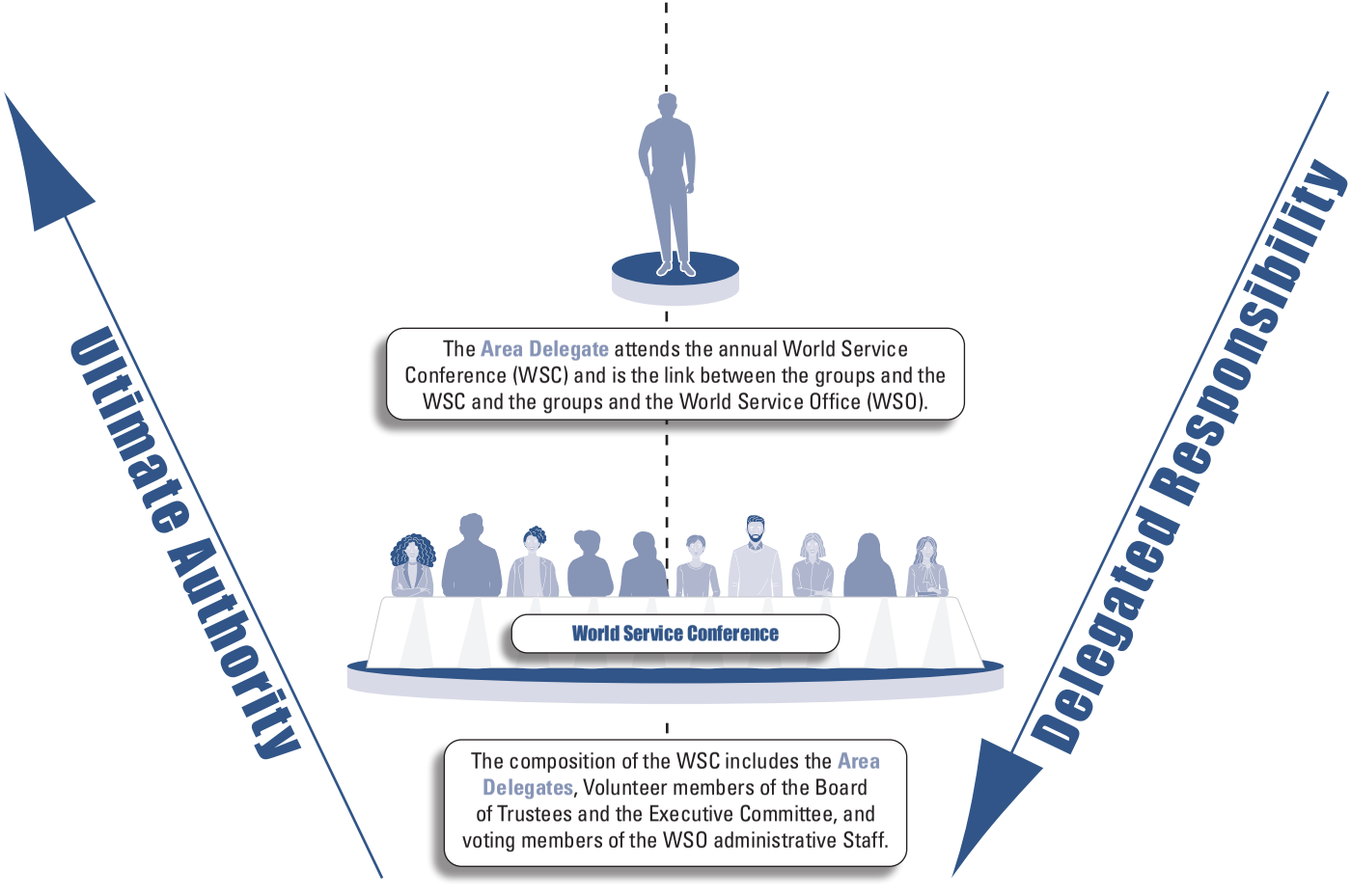
The **GRs** in a District elect a **District Representative (DR)**.



The **DR** represents the District's groups at Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings.

The AWSC consists of Assembly Officers, which includes the Chairperson, Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Treasurer, and Secretary; **DRs**; Coordinators (such as Alateen Coordinator and Literature Coordinator); and liaison members (such as Al-Anon Information Service Liaison).

The **GR** attends the Area Assembly to elect the **Area Delegate**, hear reports, and participate in Area service projects.



World Service Conference Structure Graphic

Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service

"Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service" deals with the "why" of our service structure in such a way that the valuable experience of the past and the lessons drawn from that experience can never be forgotten or lost.

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History of the Concepts

After A.A.'s General Service Office was established, Bill W. spent several years developing suitable principles and philosophies for its guidance that would coincide with the principles and philosophies of the Steps and Traditions and with A.A. experience. These are called A.A.'s Third Legacy.

Although Al-Anon is a distinct entity, our fellowship has its roots in Alcoholics Anonymous. Through our own Al-Anon experience, however, we have recognized the need for using A.A.'s three sets of principles or Legacies: the Steps, the Traditions, and now, the Concepts.

A poll of the one hundred or so groups in existence in 1951 led to the adoption of the Twelve Steps as a way of life for Al-Anon members. Later, the groups accepted an adaptation of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions as a framework within which to operate.

In 1968, the Al-Anon Conference unanimously approved the idea of Al-Anon developing its own Concepts of Service.

Then in 1969, the Conference Delegates were given copies of a tentative document worked out by a committee of in-towners and out-of-towners, chaired by Lois W., portraying service Concepts that coincided with Al-Anon experience and structure. A selection of knowledgeable Al-Anon members were also sent copies. During the year, both Delegates and longtime members sent in their suggestions.

Thus, the Concepts were well considered and revised before the Conference of 1970 affirmed them as guidelines for our services.

One theme welds the three Legacies together—Pass Along Understanding:

1. Recovery—The Twelve Steps urge the individual to carry the message to others.
2. Unity—The Traditions protect the groups from distracting or disrupting influences, so they can be free to pass along the Al-Anon word.
3. Service—The Concepts show how Twelfth Step work can be done on a broad scale; how members of a World Service Office can relate to each other and to the groups to spread Al-Anon's message across the world; and how a Conference of Delegates from all parts of the United States and Canada can supervise such a World Service, so it will always conform to the Tradi-

tions. The 1984 Conference voted that the Twelve Concepts are to be accorded the same stature as the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Introduction

The Al-Anon Concepts of Service record the "why" of our service structure in such a way that the valuable experience of the past and the lessons drawn from that experience can never be forgotten or lost.

Each new generation of world servants quite rightly will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will perhaps show up in time. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. These contingencies should be squarely met and suitable alterations effected.

When structural change does seem advisable, its advocates need only present a strong case for such a change to both the Trustees and the World Service Conference for consideration. This is no more than would be required for the transaction and passage of any other piece of Al-Anon business.

For an appropriate period, any far-reaching structural change should be labeled a "trial," and such changes, as well as lesser ones, shall on final approval be entered in the body of this *Manual*.

Change does not necessarily spell progress. Innovations may produce little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes. These Concepts, it is hoped, will forestall such repetition by holding the experience of the past clearly before us. If a mistaken departure is nevertheless made, they provide a ready means of safe return to an operating balance that otherwise might take years of floundering to rediscover.

The Concepts include a number of principles that have become traditional to our services but that have never been clearly defined and put into writing. For example: Right of Decision gives our service leaders proper discretion and latitude. The Right of Participation gives each world servant voting status commensurate with the member's responsibility and guarantees that each service board and committee will always possess the elements and talents that ensure effective functioning. The Right of Appeal protects and encourages minority opinion. The Right of Petition makes certain that grievances will be heard and properly acted upon. These general

principles can, of course, be used to good effect throughout our entire structure locally, nationally, and internationally.

The Concepts also delineate those important traditions, customs, relationships, and legal arrangements that weld the Board of Trustees into working harmony with the Executive Committee and Staff and the selected committees of the World Service Office.

Great emphasis is placed on the need for a high order of personal leadership, careful induction methods for all incoming personnel, and the best possible relations among those who work in our services. The Concepts portray a structure in which all may labor to good effect with minimum possibility of friction. This is accomplished by a fair and balanced relationship of our workers to their work and to one another.

In service organizations, there is generally a choice between authoritarian structure, in which one person or group of persons has unqualified authority, and the democratic, which calls for checks and balances. It is human nature to try to enhance one's own authority and prestige when in the saddle. But when someone else holds the reins, we tend to resist heavy-handed management. Many of us can recognize these traits in ourselves.

The Concepts define working relations that can be friendly yet efficient. They especially restrain a tendency to concentrate on money and power, this being an underlying, though not always conscious, motivation.

It is hoped that these Twelve Concepts will be a welcome document for the use of our Trustees, the World Service Office, and the members of the Conference, and that the document will prove to be a reliable working guide in years to come.

Concept One

The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.

Tradition Two declares, "For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern." This clearly implies that the groups are to be the final authority, that our leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only.

The Al-Anon groups today hold the ultimate responsibility and authority for our world services, those special elements of overall service activity that make it possible for our fellowship to function as a whole.

Our first move toward the creation of a service structure for Al-Anon was the formation, in 1951, of a central office or Clearing House, as it was then called. This Clearing House was designed to initiate and maintain those special services for Al-Anon as a whole that could not be performed by single groups or Areas. This included writing uniform literature, developing a sound public relations policy, and handling large numbers of pleas for help. We hoped to encourage and aid new groups to form and to furnish them with counsel based upon experience of older and already successful groups. We thought there might be a need for a monthly magazine, and perhaps later, for translations of our literature into other languages.

If Annie S., A.A. Doctor Bob's wife, had lived until 1951, she would undoubtedly have given great moral support to the efforts to open a service office. Her death in Akron, Ohio, in 1949 was a great loss to us all, for Annie had carried the message to many an alcoholic's relative. A.A. families in Akron consulted her constantly, and whenever she visited A.A. groups with Doctor Bob, she always told the wives how she had adopted the A.A. principles as a way of life for herself and urged them to do likewise. A number of Al-Anon groups were started in this manner. Wives of early A.A.s traveled from group to group and talked about their experiences and needs.

When Bill W. was trying to inspire the formation of an A.A. conference of delegates in 1950 by visiting many groups throughout the United States and Canada, he ran across quite a few groups of wives of A.A.s who met for a variety of purposes. Upon his return, he mentioned that these groups needed a unifying center to which they could write for information and suggested that his wife, Lois, establish such an office.

Thereupon Lois and another Anne, Anne B., working in Lois's home in the suburbs, began by asking A.A. whether they had the names of any A.A. wives' groups. Surprisingly, there were 87 names of families and groups of wives who had asked A.A. for help. Lois and Anne wrote to them, and 50 registered immediately. As correspondence increased, the office was moved to New York City, where more help was available.

At its start, the Clearing House polled the groups on the major questions of name, purpose, and method of support for our fellow-

ship, and the adoption of A.A.'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, slightly modified for Al-Anon's use.

In 1954, the Clearing House was incorporated as a nonprofit unit under the title Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., directed by a Board of Trustees consisting of volunteer Al-Anon members.*

By 1960, many of our dreams for world service had come true. In nine years, Al-Anon membership had jumped from 50 groups to nearly 1,500. Unity of purpose had pretty much replaced the early dissimilarity of groups. The basis for membership had broadened. Membership in many groups was 50 percent or more families of alcoholics who did not belong to A.A. and perhaps never would. National publicity had brought in hundreds of members who had no contact with Alcoholics Anonymous. Al-Anon members were confidently united in their purpose of helping themselves in order to help others—and indirectly the alcoholic—and to do this through the use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

As Al-Anon entered its second decade, polling groups on important issues became impractical. The procedure was slow and cumbersome, and because many groups did not respond to letters, polls were ineffective and sometimes inaccurate. There were also constant questions of policy that could not be settled by a poll and on which wrong decisions might lead to disaster. The group conscience had to point a way on these matters.

In order to meet this need, the Al-Anon groups in 1960 voted for the formation of the Al-Anon World Service Conference.

Concept Two

The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.

The many Al-Anon groups scattered all over the world hold in their hands the group conscience.

But it is evident that, in order to get effective action, the groups must delegate the actual operational authority to chosen service representatives who are empowered to speak and act for them. The group conscience of Al-Anon could not be heard unless properly chosen Conference members were fully trusted to speak for it in

* For details of the structure of the World Service Office, see Concept Eleven.

most world service matters. Hence the principle of delegated authority and responsibility to our trusted servants must be implicit from the top to the bottom of our active service structure.

Our World Service Office (WSO) had taken on a crucial meaning for Al-Anon's future. If this vital center were to collapse or bog down, our unity within—and the carrying of our message to innumerable potential members without—would suffer serious and perhaps irreparable damage. Were we ready to take the precautions A.A. had taken to guard against impairment and to establish a Conference of Al-Anon Delegates to whom our service headquarters would be accountable?

Many of us thought we were ready. Also, we recognized that the average member, preoccupied with group life and personal Twelfth Step work, knew little if anything about Al-Anon's worldwide activities. Few Al-Anon members realized how much their group membership and unity were due to the little-noticed activities of our headquarters office.

A few at headquarters felt this attitude showed a lack of faith in Al-Anon. They said: "Why change? Things are going fine. We poll the groups' opinion on any important question. Delegates from all over the country will mean expense and politics. We don't want either; let's keep it simple."

However, the decision lay with the groups. In 1960, Al-Anon held a meeting at the A.A. International Convention in Long Beach, California. There this matter was discussed. Al-Anon members from all over the United States and Canada came to this convention. Their vote on the question would represent a cross-section of Al-Anon. Those present voted unanimously to set up an annual Conference of Delegates on a trial basis for three years. This action was later confirmed by a poll of the groups.

Some years after the Conference had become a permanent foundation for Al-Anon world services, we found that our fears had been largely groundless. Its success had exceeded our highest expectations. It proved that the Al-Anon groups can and will take the final responsibility for their world services.

Our World Service Conference (WSC) is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.

We believe our fellowship is a spiritual society characterized by enough enlightenment, responsibility, and love for God and man to

ensure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions. We rely confidently on Tradition Two, our group conscience, and our trusted servants. Hence it is with a sense of great security that we are assured that Al-Anon's WSC will use its vested authority for giving shape to the destiny that God is holding in store for us all.

Concept Three

The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.

Within the framework of their general responsibilities, whether defined by charter, resolution, or custom, all world service boards, committees, and executives should decide which matters they may properly dispose of and on which they will report, consult, or ask specific directions. By tradition, our world servants should be trusted with these discretions, otherwise no effective leadership is possible. Let us consider why the Right of Decision is imperative for our leaders. Let us examine this principle in its practical application to all levels of our world service structure.

The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter (WSC Charter) and the Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., define in broad terms the responsibility of the Conference to act on behalf of Al-Anon as a whole. In these two documents, a large area of delegated service authority and responsibility has been spelled out. These instruments describe the relationships between the groups, the WSC, the Trustees, and other service arms. These broad definitions and descriptions are an indispensable frame of reference; we could not function without them.

Nevertheless, it has long been evident that the Bylaws and the WSC Charter, important as they are, cannot by themselves ensure smooth functioning and proper leadership at the various levels of service. For example, knowing that they have the final authority, the groups may be tempted to instruct their Delegates exactly how to vote. There is no doubt that the Al-Anon groups have the right to do this. They can give directives to their Delegates on any and all Al-Anon matters.

But good management seldom means the full exercise of ultimate rights. Were the groups to carry their instruction of Delegates to extremes, we would be proceeding on the false premise that a group's opinion could be superior to Conference opinion. As a practical matter, this could almost never be the case. How could "instructed" Dele-

gates settle a question as well as WSC members acting freely with full facts to guide them? It is understood that complete reporting of WSC actions is always desirable. So is full consultation with District Representatives and Group Representatives. Nevertheless, the "instructed" Delegate who cannot act according to his own conscience on a final WSC vote would not be a "trusted servant" at all but a messenger.

The WSC Charter does not actually solve typical problems like these. It is a broad document that can be construed in various ways. Under one interpretation, the groups can instruct the Delegates as much as they like. Under another, the Delegates and Trustees can actually go counter to such instructions, *whenever new information gives them reason to change their point of view*.

Let us look at another illustration: In matters of policy, principles, and program procedures, the WSC has practically complete authority over the Board of Trustees consistent with the legal obligations of the individual Trustees and the Board as a whole respecting corporate business transactions. It surely would not be practical for the WSC to issue hasty and flat directives to the Board of Trustees on matters about which the Trustees would be far more knowledgeable than the Delegates.

Again, this same kind of confusion could beset the relations of the Board of Trustees to the Executive Committee and to committees directed by non-Trustee Volunteers and paid service workers. The Board of Trustees certainly does have authority to control these entities; its authority is final. Yet if the Board of Trustees were to constantly exert their full and absolute authority and attempt to manage these operating entities in detail, then the Volunteers and Staff members would quickly become demoralized.

Therefore, some traditional and practical principle must be applied that at all levels will continuously balance relations between ultimate authority and delegated responsibility. How shall we accomplish this?

The Al-Anon solution to these questions is found in Tradition Two, which refers to "trusted servants." This provides that our responsible leaders be trusted to decide, within the framework of their duties, how to interpret and apply their authority and responsibility to each problem or situation as it arises. This sort of leadership discretion is the essence of the Right of Decision. We need have no misgivings about granting this privilege at every level of world service.

There will always be plenty of ultimate authority to correct inefficiency, ineffectiveness, or abuse. If the WSC does not function well, the groups are free to choose better Delegates to represent them. If the Board of Trustees gets badly out of line, the WSC can censure or reorganize the Board. If World Service Office (WSO) services should sour, the Board of Trustees can appoint a more effective Executive Committee and hire better help. These remedies are direct and adequate. But for so long as our world services function reasonably well, then "trust" must be our watchword, otherwise we shall wind up leaderless.

The above reasons show why our service bodies and members should have a traditional Right of Decision, which could be practically applied as follows:

a. The WSC should always be able to decide which matters it will fully dispose of on its own responsibility, and which questions it will refer to the Al-Anon groups or, more usually, to their Area World Service Committee or GRs. Therefore, it ought to be clearly understood and agreed that our WSC Delegates are primarily the world servants of Al-Anon as a whole. Only in a secondary sense do they represent their respective Areas. Consequently, they should, on final decisions, be entitled to cast their votes in the WSC according to the dictates of their own judgment and conscience.

b. Similarly, the Board of Trustees (operating of course within the provisions of its own Bylaws) should have the right, at all times, to decide when it will act fully on its own responsibility and when it will ask the Conference for guidance, approval of a recommendation, or actual direction.

c. Within the scope of their defined or implied responsibilities, the WSO, its committees, Staff, or executives should each have the right to decide when to act wholly on their own and when to refer a problem to the next higher authority.

This Right of Decision should never be used as an excuse for failing to render proper reports of all significant actions taken, for exceeding a clearly defined authority, or for repeatedly failing to consult those who are entitled to be consulted before an important decision or action is taken.

Our entire Al-Anon program rests squarely on the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust Al-Anon, and we trust one an-

other. Therefore, we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The Right of Decision we offer them is the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively; it also is the symbol of our implicit confidence.

Concept Four

Participation is the key to harmony.

The Principle of Participation has been built into our whole service structure. If all authority were to be assigned to one group and virtually all responsibility to another, we would seriously handicap efficiency of operation and real harmony.

The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter (WSC Charter) specifically provides that the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. shall always be voting members of the WSC, as shall be the World Service Office (WSO) Policy Committee, Executive Committee, and members of the WSO administrative Staff. As indicated in Concept Three, if the groups, sensing their great power, should try to overexercise that power by directing their Delegates how to vote at the WSC, those Delegates would feel they were neither participants nor trusted servants. If, in turn, the Delegates overexercise their power, they could make the Trustees mere rubber stamps.

Though it may seem inconsistent for service workers and Trustees to participate in voting on reports of their own activities, these reports constitute only a fraction of the business of the WSC, which is far more concerned with policies, plans, and actions to take effect in the future. The WSC needs the votes of such knowledgeable people as the Trustees and other members of the WSO.

Since our WSC, unlike governmental bodies, cannot be constantly in session, there is good reason not to give Delegates absolute voting authority over Trustees, Staff members, and Committee Chairpersons. Delegates meet once a year for only a few days and cannot have firsthand knowledge of many problems on which they are expected to vote. This is all the more reason for allowing the often better-informed minority of Trustees and WSO Staff and Volunteers the privilege of balloting.

Some Delegates may object that, on close votes in the WSC, the combined ballots of the Trustees and service workers may decide a particular question. But their greater familiarity through experience

fully justifies this. It should also be noted that they are not likely to vote in a bloc. Differences of opinion among them may be as sharp and considerable as those to be found among the Delegates.

The same concept is borne in mind when our Board of Trustees elects a Chairperson and members of the Executive Committee. If it wished, the Board could appoint its own members to most of these positions, but this is not done, because it would nullify the Principle of Participation.

The active management of the WSO, previously called the Headquarters Office, is vested in the Executive Committee, whose duty is to see that all projects are carefully carried out. Its eight members include the Executive Director; one voting member of the WSO administrative Staff; the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees; three qualified Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees; and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees who serves as an ex-officio member. From time to time, others may be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings without vote.

Whenever the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees appoints a Chairperson to the selected committees, the same Principle of Participation is considered. Trustees, or non-Trustee Volunteers, comprise these committees, which have Staff administrators to do much of the detail work.

These arrangements permit a proper degree of voting participation. No class is set in absolute authority over another. Thus, in the participatory method of doing business, there are no superiors and no inferiors, as distinguished from the institutional, military or governmental method.

However, other than the Executive Director, no paid Staff worker should become a Trustee. First, it would interfere with the rotation of the Board, which already has one non-rotating member. Second, if ever the Board of Trustees had to be reorganized by the WSC, paid Trustees in a bloc might prove a vested interest difficult to dislodge.

Our Board of Trustees may, however, invite paid Staff members, accountants, and any others whose reports or advice may be required, to attend quarterly meetings of the Board, where they would have voice but no vote. When Staff members are thus placed in direct communication with the Trustees, they realize they are wanted and needed.

Perhaps new generations of Delegates or Trustees may wish to weaken, modify, or eliminate the Principle of Participation. Occa-

sionally a few Delegates may question the right of the Executive Committee, the Staff, and even the Trustees to vote in the WSC. New volunteer members of the Executive Committee may ask why any paid Staff members should be on this business management committee. Every now and then, a move may be made to abolish the Executive Committee as a separate entity so that the Board of Trustees could manage the office directly. But the Right of Participation in our service structure is of such high importance to our future that we are urged to preserve this traditional right in the face of every attempt to whittle it down.

Participation also responds to our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong. The Al-Anon ideal of a working partnership could never regard any member as second class. This is perhaps the main reason we have struggled to achieve participation at every level. The Right of Participation encourages us who serve Al-Anon to accept the necessary disciplines that our various tasks require. It assures us that we are truly the "trusted servants" described in Al-Anon's Tradition Two.

Concept Five

The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.

The Rights of Appeal and Petition aim to protect and make the best possible use of minority feeling and opinion.

In the principle of the Right of Appeal, all minorities—whether among the membership, the WSO Staff, Executive Committee, Trustees, or selected committees—should be encouraged to file minority reports whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error. When any minority considers an issue to be so grave that a mistaken decision could seriously affect Al-Anon as a whole, it has the actual duty to present a minority appeal to the body that made the decision.

This traditional Right of Appeal acknowledges that minorities can be right, and that even when they are *partly* or *wholly* in error, they still perform a valuable service by asserting their Right of Appeal and compelling a thorough debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty, or angry majority.

The traditional Right of Petition permits any Al-Anon member to

petition the Board of Trustees for the redress of a grievance after having exhausted all avenues of resolution, beginning with the service arm that made the original decision and working through the links of service.

World Service Office (WSO) employees and members of the Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, or selected committees may also petition for the redress of a grievance, carrying the complaint, if desired, directly to the Board of Trustees. One should be able to do this without prejudice or fear of reprisal.

The Board of Trustees has the right to delegate the consideration of any and all petitions to another body that it deems appropriate. Though in practice, the right to petition the Board of Trustees will seldom be exercised, its very existence will tend to restrain those in authority from unjust use of power.

It should be noted that while minorities, whether groups or individuals, have the right to be heard, it does not mean that the action in question will be delayed while the petition or appeal is being considered, nor does it guarantee that the decision will be overturned.

In our Al-Anon groups, individual freedom is of enormous importance. Anyone who feels his/her personal life is, or has been, deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon. We never take away this right to belong. Neither do we compel our members to believe anything or pay anything.

In our world services, we also go to great lengths in our trust of minorities. Under Tradition Two, the group conscience is the final authority for Al-Anon world services. Nevertheless, the groups have recognized that for the purpose of world services, our group conscience has certain limitations. It cannot act directly in many service matters because it is seldom sufficiently informed about the problems at hand. During times of stress, it may not be the best possible guide, because emotional bias may prevent it, temporarily, from functioning efficiently or wisely. When, therefore, the group conscience cannot act directly, who does act for it?

We trust our servants, knowing that in the unusual event that they fail in their responsibilities, we still have ample opportunity to recall and replace them.

As trusted servants, our Al-Anon leaders must always be ready to do for the groups what the groups obviously cannot do for them-

selves. Consequently, our servants are bound to use their own information and judgment, sometimes to the point of disagreeing with uninformed or biased group opinion.

The foregoing observations illustrate Al-Anon's concern for the freedom and protection of individual members and the whole membership's willingness to trust able and conscientious servants to function for us all.

Our Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter (WSC Charter) is infused with provisions that ensure protection and respect for minorities. This is exemplified, for instance, in the method of selecting Delegates. Unless the majority candidate can poll a two-thirds vote of the Area Assembly, the names are placed in a hat with one or more of the choices of the Assembly minority. By thus drawing lots, the minority candidates have an equal chance with the majority's choice.

This method of electing Delegates strengthens the spirit of democracy among us. Unity is cemented, cooperation increased, and when the Delegate is finally chosen, the minority has no reason for discontent. To increase the actual spirit of democracy by special deference to minority opinion is better than to follow blindly the rule that insists in unqualified dominance by majority vote.

Consider another example: Our respect for the minority position plus a desire for unity and certainty often prompt the WSC to debate important questions of policy even in cases where a majority could easily be obtained. Such a voluntary practice is evidence of real prudence and courteous deference to the views of all. The WSC usually makes important decisions on no less than a two-thirds vote.

This same consideration for the minority position can be found in the WSC Charter provision that no Conference vote can be considered binding on the Board of Trustees unless it equals two-thirds of a Conference quorum. Up to this point, the Trustees have a power of veto. (See Concept Seven, legal rights of Board of Trustees.) They may ask for further debate to check any tendency to haste or emotionalism. They may choose to veto a simple majority or to act with it. Here again is recognition of the constructive value of a trusted minority.

By adding the traditional Rights of Appeal and Petition to minority privileges, we grant to all minorities, whether among our Staff, Executive Committees, selected committees, or Trustees, the means of discharging their world service duties confidently, harmoniously, and well.

In Al-Anon, we believe the spirit of democracy in our fellowship and in our world service structure will always survive despite any countertendencies that may beset us.

We believe that we shall never be subjected to the tyranny of either majority or minority, provided we carefully define the relationship between them. We can then tread the path of world service in the spirit of our Twelve Steps, our Twelve Traditions, and our Twelve Concepts of Service.

Concept Six

The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.

Just as the Al-Anon groups can act decisively in world service affairs only by entrusting authority and responsibility to their World Service Conference (WSC), so must the WSC in turn entrust administrative authority to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.), in order that its Trustees may act freely and effectively in the absence of the WSC.

For several important reasons, the Trustees must have freedom to act. Next to the WSC, Al-Anon's Board of Trustees should be our most influential group of world servants. We have to consider carefully the kind and degree of authority, responsibility, leadership, and legal status the Trustees must possess in order to function effectively in the years to come. We need to define the kinds of professional and financial skills that will be required for an effective Board of Trustees. Thus, we ensure the Board's capability of future leadership.

We need to show how the Trustees ought to be related to the WSC and, in turn, to the Executive Committee and any other active service committees or corporations that may be needed in the future. In a general way, these relations are indicated in our Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter (WSC Charter) and on preceding pages; however, there remains a need to interpret them in detail. These relations should never be frozen into a rigid pattern. However satisfactory and right our present arrangements are, the future may require changes that we do not yet envision. New conditions may require refinements or even considerable alterations. For this reason, our WSC Charter is capable of being amended by the WSC itself.

If later we do make changes that happen to work out poorly, the experience of the past will provide, in these articles, a point of safe return to tested procedure.

A careful review of the legal and traditional rights of the Board of Trustees indicates its administrative responsibilities. Its authority in this field is unquestionably great.

Why should our Trustees be given this wide latitude of judgment and action? The answer is that they are held responsible for all our service activities, as well as for Al-Anon's worldwide public relations. They are expected to spearhead the formulation of Al-Anon policy and its proper execution. They are the active guardians of our Twelve Traditions. The Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the preservation and prudent management of all Al-Anon's financial assets. They are accountable for the internal controls of funds received and the investment thereof. The wide range of their activities is further detailed under Concept Eleven.

While the Trustees must operate under the close observation, guidance, and sometimes the direction of the WSC, it is nevertheless true that only the Trustees can evaluate and handle most of the innumerable transactions involved in our World Service operation. In view of this great responsibility, they must be given a correspondingly large grant of authority and leadership with which to discharge it. It must be understood that the conduct of our World Services is primarily a matter of policy and business. While our objectives are spiritual, these aims can be achieved only by means of an effective business operation. Since our Trustees must function like the directors of any large business corporation, they must have ample authority to manage and conduct Al-Anon's business.

Concept Seven

The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.

At first this Concept may appear contradictory. Actually, both the rights of the Trustees and the World Service Conference (WSC) work well together. On the one hand, we see a Board of Trustees invested with complete legal power over Al-Anon's funds and services; on the other hand, Al-Anon's WSC has such great responsibility for and authority over all aspects of Al-Anon's program and policies that in those areas it could give the Trustees directives and secure their compliance.

This means that the actual power of the WSC will nearly always be superior to the legal power of the Trustees since it flows from the powerful traditional influence of the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter (WSC Charter) itself. It derives from the large majority of group-chosen Delegates in the WSC. And finally, in any extreme situation, it would rest upon the unquestioned right of the Delegates to deny Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. the moneys with which to operate—those voluntary contributions of the Al-Anon groups themselves. Theoretically, the WSC is an advisory body; practically speaking, it has the ultimate rights and powers.

The Board of Trustees is not likely to contest the clear and sustained will of the WSC Delegates and the Al-Anon Areas they represent. If someday a crucial stalemate arose between the Delegates and the Trustees, the WSC, as the conscience of Al-Anon, would find itself in complete authority over the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and its World Service arms.

Experience shows that this balance of powers between the Trustees and the WSC is thoroughly workable. This balance can be maintained indefinitely, because the one is protected by tradition and the other by law.

An interesting question often raised by new Trustees is whether they have a legal right to say no to something the WSC wants.

In certain corporate business areas, the Trustees certainly do have this legal authority; on the other hand, they are quite at liberty to accept, even seek, advice and recommended directions from the WSC or other qualified sources. Just as the WSC should avoid the overuse of its traditional authority, so too should the Board of Trustees avoid overuse of its legal authority.

Clearly, then, our Board of Trustees does reserve a veto power over any WSC action; this is legally necessary and right in principle, even though the veto will seldom be used. At certain times, however, the Trustees' veto could be of important and constructive use.

Here are three typical examples in which it would be the duty of the Trustees to veto WSC action:

1. If, in a time of haste or heavy stress, the WSC should take an action or issue a directive to the Trustees in clear violation of the WSC Charter or of the Bylaws of AFG, Inc.; or if the WSC were to pass any measure so ill-considered or so reckless as to seriously

injure, in the judgment of the Trustees, Al-Anon's public relations, or Al-Anon as a whole, the Board of Trustees would have the duty of asking for WSC reconsideration. In the event of a WSC refusal to reconsider, the Board of Trustees could then use the legal right to veto. If desirable, the Board could appeal the issue directly to the Al-Anon groups themselves.

2. Although traditionally the Trustees should never substantially exceed a WSC approved budget without consulting the WSC, they should feel entirely free to reduce this budget figure during any fiscal year, even though such an action might curtail or cancel plans or projects initiated and directed by the WSC itself.
3. If, by reason of unforeseen conditions, any particular plan, project, or directive of the WSC should become impractical, unworkable, or legally inadvisable during a fiscal year, the Trustees should, without prejudice, be able to use their right of veto and cancellation.

In the years ahead, the WSC should always bear in mind the actual rights, duties, responsibilities, and legal status of the Board of Trustees; the Trustees should constantly realize that the WSC is the real seat of ultimate service authority. Then we may be sure that neither will be seriously tempted to violate either the authority or responsibility of the other. In this way, grave issues can always be resolved by harmonious cooperation.

Concept Eight

The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.

The Trustees of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters act in two major capacities: (a) in matters of policy and finance, they are the principal planners and are responsible for final decisions; (b) in routine operations, the Trustees delegate full authority to executive committees charged with the management of Headquarters.

To arrive at this Concept, experience has led us through the following stages of development:

From 1951 to 1954, when Al-Anon's Headquarters was still trying to feel its way, the workers at the then-named Clearing House

were advised by a committee of representatives of neighboring Al-Anon groups who met occasionally. After the incorporation of Headquarters late in 1954, its Board of Trustees administered the World Service Office. Seven to eleven in number, the Trustees were meeting monthly and appointed a large committee of volunteers to advise them. This Advisory Committee included all the Trustees and convened every three months. Any recommendations or resolutions proposed by the Advisory Committee had to be ratified by the Board of Trustees.

In 1957, the Advisory Committee was further formalized by a Charter and given a new name—the Advisory Board. It was the authorized custodian of overall Al-Anon policy and finance. In the Charter the hope was expressed that a permanent conference of Delegates from the various states and provinces would eventually take the place of the Advisory Board. The day-to-day administration of the office, however, was still in the hands of the Trustees.

After three years' trial, in 1964, the World Service Conference came into being as the permanent guardian of Al-Anon's Traditions and services, replacing the Advisory Board.

By this time, however, the business of Al-Anon's Headquarters had grown so large that it became unwieldy for the Board of Trustees to handle the routine administration of the office. Our Trustees realized they could no longer be concerned, as a body, with the endless details that arose daily, weekly, and monthly in the routine conduct of the World Service Office. They also realized the need to devote themselves to the more serious questions of policy, leadership, finance, group, and public relations.

Therefore, the Board decided to assign its administrative function to a more constantly available eight-member Executive Committee, possessing the power to manage the affairs of the World Service Office on behalf of the Board of Trustees in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees. This Executive Committee is composed of three Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees, elected by the Board; the Executive Director; one voting member of the administrative Staff of the World Service Office; the Chairpersons of both the Finance and Policy Committees; and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, who serves as an ex-officio member. The Chairperson of this Executive Committee is elected by the Board of Trustees.

This Committee considers all project proposals and project approvals from committees and Staff that fall within budget and existing poli-

cy. If a project exceeds budget, it is directed to the Finance Committee. If it entails a change in policy, it is directed to the Policy Committee.

The Board thus became custodian and guarantor of good management of Al-Anon's World Service Office.

In 1994, the WSC agreed to the purchase of property, on a 15-year trial basis, to house the World Service Office. The motion required that the Board of Trustees establish an executive committee for the management of the real property to ensure that AFG not be diverted from its primary purpose. In 1995, the WSC passed a motion to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), also on a 15-year trial. After the completion of the trial periods, the Bylaws were amended in 2012, to include the ECRPM as a Committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Executive Committee for Real Property Management is composed of three At-Large Al-Anon members who are not Trustees, elected by the Board; the Business Manager (Director of Finance & Operations); and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The Chairperson of the ECRPM is elected by the Board of Trustees from the three At-Large members. The Executive Director and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees are not ex-officio members of this Executive Committee and may not attend meetings unless invited to do so.

The Board of Trustees delegates to the Executive Committee for Real Property Management the oversight and the management of real property owned by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

It is within the authority of the Board of Trustees to establish other executive committees if deemed necessary.

Concept Nine

Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.

No matter how carefully we design our service structure of principles and relationships, no matter how well we apportion authority and responsibility, the operating result of our structure can be no better than the personal performance of those who serve and make it work. Good leadership cannot function well in a poorly designed structure. Weak leadership can hardly function at all, even in the best of structures.

Good leadership can be here today and gone tomorrow. Furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers is a continuing activity. We must constantly find the right people for our many service tasks. Since our future effectiveness thus depends upon ever-new generations of leaders, it seems desirable that we now define what a good service leader should be; that we carefully indicate for each level of service (especially for our Board of Trustees) what special skills will be required; that we review our present methods of finding and choosing leadership.

First let's remember that our service structure depends on the dedication and ability of thousands of Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives (DRs), and Delegates. These are the direct agents of the Al-Anon groups; these are the indispensable links between our fellowship and its World Service; these are the primary representatives of Al-Anon's group conscience.

When choosing GRs, Al-Anon groups should keep these facts in mind. It is only the GRs who, in District or Assembly meetings, can name DRs and finally name the Delegate. Hence, great care needs to be taken in choosing these representatives. Hit-or-miss methods should be avoided. Groups without GRs should be encouraged to elect them.

As the GRs meet in their Assemblies to name a Delegate, an even greater degree of care and dedication will be required. Personal ambitions must be set aside, antagonisms and controversy forgotten. "Who are the best qualified people we can name?" should be the sole thought.

The World Service Handbook or Third Legacy method of naming Delegates by a two-thirds vote or by lot greatly reduces political friction; it makes each Delegate feel that he or she is truly a world servant rather than merely the winner of a contest. Thus far, our Third Legacy methods have produced DRs and Delegates of a high level of dedication and competence. Our Area Assemblies need only to continue to act with care and in a selfless spirit.

Some members, still doubtful whether choice by lot is a good idea, feel that the best person does not always win. It must be pointed out that each time we have disregarded the two-thirds vote or lot in naming Delegates, there has been a sense of defeat and disturbance in the minority camp, which is not offset by naming the supposedly best person. Indeed, the second-best person can often be as good a Delegate as the Assembly's first choice and may even be a better Delegate.

Let us now consider the specific personal qualities a World Service leader ought to have. The following slightly modified essay, "Leadership," written by Bill W. for a 1959 issue of the *A.A. Grapevine,* applies equally well to Al-Anon.

> No society can function well without able leadership at all levels, and we are no exception. However, we sometimes warp the traditional idea of "principles before personalities" to such a point that there would be no personality in leadership whatever. This would imply rather faceless automatons trying to please everybody.
>
> At other times, we may demand that our leaders be people of the most sterling judgment, morals, and inspiration.
>
> Real leadership, of course, has to function in between these entirely imaginary poles. In our fellowship certainly no leader is faceless, nor is any leader perfect. Fortunately we are blessed with any number of real leaders—those men and women whose dedication, stability, vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us.
>
> A leader is a person who can put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader is a power-driver, we rebel; when he is just an order-taker and exercises no judgment of his own, he isn't a leader at all.
>
> A good leader originates plans and policies for the improvement of our fellowship. In new and important matters, he nevertheless consults widely before making decisions. Good leadership knows that a fine plan or idea can come from anyone, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership often discards its own cherished plans for those that are better, giving credit to the source.
>
> Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured of sufficient backing, it freely makes decisions and puts them into action, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility. A "politico" is an individual who is forever trying to "get the people what they want." A statesman is an individual who can carefully discriminate when and when not to do this. He recognizes that even large majorities, when badly disturbed or uninformed, can be dead wrong. When such an occasion arises with vital matters at stake, it is the duty of leadership to take a stand against the storm, using its

every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change.

Nothing, however, can be more hampering to good leadership than opposition for opposition's sake alone. "Let's have it our way or no way at all" is often powered by visionless pride or a gripe. The opposition that casts its vote "no" without giving any real reasons won't do either. Leadership should always have good reasons and give them.

Then, too, a leader must realize that even very prideful or angry people can sometimes be right, when the calm and the more humble are quite mistaken.

Another qualification for leadership is "give and take," the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever it can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to many of us. Nevertheless, progress is nearly always characterized by a series of *improving compromises.* We cannot, however, always compromise. Now and then, it is necessary to stick flat-footed to one's conviction. Careful discrimination and keen timing are required in all situations.

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism—an acid test. There are always constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship.

Then there are destructive critics. They power-drive, they are "politicos," they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They spread rumors and gossip to gain their ends—all for the good of the fellowship! We have to learn that these people, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be destructive at all, depending on how we relate ourselves to them.

If we are the target, we ought to listen carefully to what they say. Sometimes they are telling the whole truth; at other times, a little truth. More often, though, they are just rationalizing themselves into nonsense. If they speak even a little truth, we had better thank them, take our respective inventories, and admit we were wrong. If it is nonsense, we can ignore it or lay all the cards on the table and try to persuade them. Failing this, we can be sorry they are too sick to listen and try to forget the whole business. There are few better means of self-survey and of developing

genuine patience than the workouts these usually well-meaning erratic members afford us. This is a large order and sometimes we shall fail to make good on it, but we must keep trying.

Now we come to the all-important attribute of vision. Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this to be heresy. But the valuable principle of "one day at a time" really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means that we are not to repine over the past nor daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God has endowed human beings with considerable capability for foresight and evidently expects us to use it. Therefore, we must distinguish between wishful fantasy and thoughtful estimate. This can spell the difference between future progress and unforeseen woe.

Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think about it at all. The making of estimates has several aspects. We look at past and present experience to see what we think it means. From this we derive a tentative idea or policy. First, we ask how this idea or policy might work in the near future. Then we ask how it might apply under differing conditions in the longer future. If an idea seems good, we try it experimentally, when that is possible. Later, we evaluate the situation and ask whether our estimate is working well.

At this stage, we may have to make a critical decision. Maybe our policy or plan still looks fine and is apparently doing well. Nevertheless, we ought to ponder carefully its longtime effect. Will today's advantages boomerang into liabilities for tomorrow? The temptation might be to seize the immediate benefits and forget the harmful precedents or consequences that might result.

We have found we must use these principles to estimate constantly, especially at World Service levels, where stakes are high. We must think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, group capability, and willingness to contribute. We often must try to think months and years ahead.

Such is the process of estimating the future. Responsible world leadership must be proficient in this vital activity. It is an essential ability, especially in our Trustees. Most of them should be chosen

on the basis that they have already demonstrated foresight in their activities for the fellowship and in their own careers.

Thank God that so many of our service leaders at all levels of operation are blessed with the attributes of tolerance, responsibility, flexibility, and vision.

Concept Ten

Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.

The guarantee of harmonious and effective function of good operational structure is in the relation of its several parts and people, so that none can doubt the nature of their respective responsibilities and corresponding areas of authority. Unless these relationships are well-defined and those holding the final authority are able and willing to delegate suitable operational authority; unless those holding such authority feel able and willing to use it freely as trusted servants; and unless there exists some definite means of interpreting and deciding doubtful situations—then personal clashes, confusion, and ineffectiveness will be inevitable.

The matter of responsibility and its necessary and coequal authority is of such urgent importance that it might be profitable to recapitulate what has already been said, meanwhile taking a bird's-eye view of our entire structure to better envision how this principle does, and always must, apply in our every activity and attitude.

The first characteristic that any working structure must have is a point, or succession of points, where there is ultimate responsibility and ultimate authority. We have already seen how, for Al-Anon's World Service, this kind of final responsibility and authority resides in the Al-Anon groups themselves. And they, in turn, have entrusted some of their ultimate authority to the Conference and the Board of Trustees.

We have observed how the Conference Delegates, directly representing the groups, are actually in a position of ultimate authority over the Trustees. We have seen further how the Trustees are in ultimate authority over the selected and Executive Committees of the World Service Office.

The principle of ultimate authority runs through our entire structure. This is necessary, because all our service affairs and activities

must be directed to the point at which final responsibility rests, so that each worker, or each group of workers, knows who makes final decisions.

If, however, authority is not specifically delegated, we would have the opposite result: The groups could direct their Delegates on every important issue; the Delegates could similarly turn the Trustees into a spineless committee to be given specific direction on almost every matter; likewise, the Trustees could regard themselves as the sole directors of the service entities, making automatons of the working Staff. In short, such a misuse of ultimate authority would add up to a dictatorship in which nearly every classification of Al-Anon servants would have large responsibilities but no definite authority, and hence, no capability of effective decision and leadership. Big or little tyrannies and buck-passing would be the inevitable consequence.

Therefore, it is clear that ultimate authority is not something to be used indiscriminately. Indeed, ultimate authority should practically never be used in full, *except in an emergency*. That *emergency* usually arises when delegated authority has erred, when it must be reorganized because it is ineffective or because it constantly exceeds its defined scope and purpose. For example, if the groups are dissatisfied with the Conference, they can elect better Delegates or withhold funds. *If the Conference must, it can censure, and under certain circumstances, can bring about the reorganization of the Board of Trustees*. (See Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter [WSC Charter].) The Trustees can do the same with the service committees.

These are the *proper* uses of *ultimate authority*, because they correctly discharge an ultimate responsibility. The *influence* of ultimate authority must always be felt, but it is perfectly clear that *when delegated authority is operating well, it should be left alone*. Otherwise, those charged with operating responsibility will be demoralized, because their work will be subject to arbitrary invasion, and the demands made upon them would be greater than their authority.

Let us review the foregoing Concepts and note how, at each structure level, accurate definitions of authority and responsibility have been given. This has been done by (a) traditional means, (b) legal means, and (c) by principles under which doubtful or conflicting situations can be interpreted and resolved.

a. Consider the WSC Charter. It is not a legal instrument, but practically speaking, it is substantially a contract between the Al-Anon

groups and the Conference. The WSC Charter indicates that the Al-Anon groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to the Conference and its service arms. It further suggests that each Conference member be entitled to cast his ballot according to the dictates of his own conscience; that the Conference itself also be granted, under the traditional Right of Decision, the privilege of choosing which matters it will decide and which it will refer back to the groups for their discussion, guidance, or direction. These are the traditional definitions designed to check the natural tendency of the groups to overinstruct Delegates. This gives the Conference an authority equal to its responsibility.

b. Consider next the position of the Trustees. It has already been stated that although the Conference has the ultimate authority, the Trustees must have the legal right to actively administer our service affairs. Their legal right has been further strengthened and its use encouraged by the traditional Right of Decision. We recognize also that the Trustees have a legal right of veto over the Conference when, in rare cases, they feel it should be used. By these means we have guaranteed the Trustees administrative authority equal to their actual responsibility. The position of the Trustees is further strengthened by their voting participation in the Conference and by the recognition that they are Al-Anon's primary World Service administrators. All this, of course, does not deny in any way the ultimate authority of the Conference, should it be necessary to give the Trustees directives or censures or to reorganize the Board.

Much care has also been taken to guarantee the Executive Committee an ample operating authority that fully matches its responsibility for the routine conduct of our active services. The same would be true of any later-formed committees or boards. However, the legal authority of the Trustees over all of its subsidiary committees and boards is not only ultimate, it is absolute the moment the Trustees have reason to make such a decision. They can disband or name committees or boards at any time; they control the budget and can withhold operating funds. Nevertheless, so long as things go well, it is highly important that the Trustees do not unnecessarily interfere with or usurp the operating authority of these entities. Hence the care taken in constructing these definitions of delegated authority.

To a considerable degree, the selected committees of the World Service Office have similar latitude. Under the principle of the Right of Decision, each primary committee may choose what business it will dispose of and what business it will refer to the Trustees. The position of these committees is also fortified by the appointment of a generous proportion of non-Trustee members. Here, too, provision has been made to equalize the authority of these committees with their responsibility.

c. Now we come to the matter of conflicting authority and how these conflicts are to be resolved. Most routine conflicts in the active services are easily settled, because ready communication has been provided between all service committees and boards.

In all matters of joint or conflicting authority, a primary jurisdiction must be established, an understood point or body where a final settlement can be reached. The secondary jurisdiction must also be heard. Minor conflicts will not need to be referred to the Trustees, but the point of final decision is always located there.

Suppose, for example, a plan for creation or expansion of service develops that involves interpretation or application of the Traditions or policies. It first goes to the Policy Committee. If the Policy Committee approves the plans, it recommends them to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees determines what matters it will approve and what it will delegate to the Executive Committee.

However, if the project is not budgeted, the plans will first have to be submitted to the Finance Committee. If the Finance Committee decides the expenditure is in line with the overall budget or financially feasible, it makes its recommendation to either the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees.

Primary and secondary jurisdiction also works the other way around. If the Executive Committee approves any new or expanded service project that involves interpretation or application of the Traditions or policies, it sends it to the Policy Committee. Once the Policy Committee finds it is within the Traditions and policies and the Finance Committee finds it is financially feasible, the Executive Committee recommends it to the Board of Trustees for final decision.

A condition to be avoided at all costs is *double-headed* business or policy management. Authority can never be divided into equal halves. Nowhere does such split authority so bedevil a structure as in its executive departments (see Concept Eleven).

In addition to the methods we use to make delegated authority equal to delegated responsibility, we have two more guarantees—the Right of Appeal and the Right of Petition. As mentioned in Concept Five, a bare majority may constitute a pseudo-ultimate authority on many occasions when it is not warranted. Likewise, executives may excessively supervise their Staff. Therefore, we use the concepts of Appeal and Petition to ensure that every minority and every worker who does a job has an authority and a status commensurate with the responsibility involved.

To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities.

All of this is fully implied in Al-Anon's Tradition Two. Here we see the "group conscience" as the *ultimate* authority and the "trusted servant" as the *delegated* authority. One cannot function without the other. We well know that only by means of careful definitions and mutual respect can we constantly maintain a harmonious working balance.

Concept Eleven

The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.

While the Trustees hold final responsibility for Al-Anon's world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible committees, executives, Staff, and consultants. This means careful consideration of these committees, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the way in which they relate to each other, and the special rights and duties of our executives, Staff, and consultants.

The long-range success of our World Service Office (WSO) will rest not only on the capabilities of the Trustees but also upon the competent leadership and harmonious association of those committee members, service directors, executives, and Staff members who actively carry on Al-Anon's world services. Their quality and dedication, or their lack of these characteristics, will make or break our structure of service. Our dependence on them will always be great.

Staff members are in direct contact with Al-Anon worldwide through correspondence and/or travel. Their performance is constantly on view by visitors to the WSO. They perform most of the routine tasks and carry on most of our services. They often develop and implement new plans and policies. Because this group is the visible image of world service, most Al-Anon members evaluate our service by what they see and feel in them. These Staff members not only *support* the world leadership of the Trustees, they share world leadership with them.

With the approval of the Board of Trustees, its Chairperson annually appoints committee Chairpersons. The committee Chairpersons, in consultation with Staff liaisons, select the At-Large or advisory members who are then approved by the Board. The Chairperson of the Board and the Executive Director are ex officio members of each committee. *Staff members are represented on each committee. Conference Delegates also serve on a number of these committees.*

Selected Committees:

- Admissions/Handbook**
- Alateen Advisory**
- Archives Advisory**
- Conference Leadership Team (formerly Conference**)
- Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)
- Finance*
- *Forum* Editorial Advisory
- Group Services**
- International Coordination
- Literature
- Nominating*
- Outreach to Professionals Advisory**
- Policy*
- Public Outreach
- Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT)
- Regional Service Seminar**

None of these service committees are executive in character. They do not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service departments.

*Committees having permanent status, sometimes referred to as standing committees.

**This Committee is no longer used in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, the Committee may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

The Admissions/Handbook* is a subcommittee of the Conference Committee**. The Conference Committee on Trustees and the Regional Committee on Trustees are subcommittees of the Nominating Committee. Advisory committees and subcommittees make recommendations to their parent committees. Other committees make recommendations to the Executive Committee or to the Board of Trustees. From time to time, ad hoc committees and/or task forces may be established to fulfill a specific, limited purpose. Ad hoc committees and task forces report to the entity that appointed them.

Policy Committee: This is perhaps the most important of all the World Service Office (WSO) committees. It can exercise authority over issues or projects that involve Al-Anon policy, public relations, or the Traditions, as these may arise in other WSO committees. It is empowered to consider any issues or projects submitted by an Al-Anon member or to reconsider a decision already made if any part of the fellowship dissents.

The Policy Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees and also reports minority views. In an emergency, when immediate action is necessary, its decision is binding so far as that particular incident is concerned. But this decision does not necessarily become part of the overall policy, unless approved by the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference.

The Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all members of the Board of Trustees, members of the Executive Committee, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative Staff. It meets quarterly in advance of the Trustees' meeting.

Finance Committee: The primary function of this Committee is to see that our World Service Office (WSO) operation remains financially sound, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program.

This Committee conservatively estimates each year's income. It develops plans for increasing our revenues and keeps a watchful eye on expenditures. It scrutinizes the annual budgets of estimated income and expense submitted by the WSO and makes revisions when necessary. The Committee also sets literature pricing in a way that adequately supports the needs of the service structure.

This Committee may be compelled to risk temporary deficits. However, uncontrolled spending could result in the collapse of vital services.

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On the other hand, fearful hoarding could result in the severe curtailment of such services. Both should be guarded against with great care.

When appropriate, the Finance Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees set aside sums in the Reserve Fund (Warranty One) with the assurance of the immediate availability of those funds.

This Committee is composed of a Chairperson (Treasurer of the Board of Trustees), the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director, and a volunteer member of the Board of Trustees. This volunteer member is appointed by the Chairperson of the Board and approved by the Trustees each year at the Annual Meeting. The Director of Finance & Operations is an ex officio member of the Committee.

Nominating Committee: This Committee aids the Trustees in discharging their prime obligation to see that all vacancies within the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committees are filled with those of the greatest possible competence, stability, and industry.

This Committee makes recommendations that will determine, to a large extent, the continuous success of our services.

In making its recommendations for Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee candidates, the Nominating Committee evaluates and reviews the written input of each member of the Conference Committee on Trustees and the Regional Committee on Trustees as part of its careful deliberation.

The Nominating Committee refuses to accept casual recommendations in its selection of candidates for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, and At-Large members of the Executive Committees (see also Concept Eight).

Conference Committee on Trustees: In 1984, the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) was formed. The CCT, a subcommittee of the Board's Nominating Committee, is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson annually.

The members of the CCT independently review and evaluate résumés submitted for Trustee at Large and résumés for At-Large members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management. A compilation of their reviews is provided to the Nominating Committee to assist it in the selection of candidates to be presented to the Board.

Regional Committee on Trustees: The process for the election of Regional Trustees, accepted by the 2010 World Service Confer-

ence (WSC), includes the formation of a Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) for each of those Regions nominating a Regional Trustee in that year. The RCT is a subcommittee of the Board's Nominating Committee and is composed of all World Service Delegates from that Region plus additional Delegate(s) from outside the Region. Each RCT elects its own Chairperson.

The members of each RCT independently review and evaluate résumés submitted by Areas, within that Region, for candidates for Regional Trustee. A compilation of their reviews is provided to the Nominating Committee.

International Coordination Committee: In 1978, the International Coordination Committee (ICC) was formed as an avenue of communication to support the international growth and to perpetuate worldwide unity of Al-Anon and Alateen.

The ICC is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees. The Committee coordinates the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) and reviews the activities of the World Service Office (WSO) as they relate to those individuals, groups, and service arms outside the Areas served by the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. It also considers first-time requests for permission to reprint Conference Approved Literature (CAL) outside the WSC Structure.

The ICC provides guidance to groups worldwide as they endeavor to form General Service Office structures within their own countries.

Conference Leadership Team (formerly Conference): The Conference Leadership Team has the responsibility to prepare a World Service Conference agenda that facilitates the active voice and effective group conscience of our fellowship.

To foster communication regarding the work of the Conference, *Conference Summaries* are available to all members.

Admissions/Handbook Committee*: The Admissions/Handbook Committee* is a subcommittee of the Conference Committee*. The Committee reviews and recommends requests for seating non-voting participants at the World Service Conference (WSC). It determines if an Area meets the criteria for seating at the WSC and reviews requests for an Area name change. It makes recommendations for changes in the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

*This Committee is no longer used in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, the Committee may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

Archives Advisory Committee*: This Committee is concerned with preserving and organizing historical Al-Anon/Alateen material. It recommends to the Executive Committee current preservation and archival record management techniques to further the ongoing maintenance of those materials. It also acts in an advisory capacity to the World Service Office (WSO) in making the archives available to the Staff, Volunteers, membership, and researchers.

***Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee:** This Committee selects sharings suitable for publication, and through a process of review and assessment, recommends to the editorial Staff articles for inclusion in various sections of the magazine. The Committee critiques previous issues. In reporting to the Executive Committee, it suggests reader surveys, reviews proposed survey text, and considers the results.

Group Services Committee*: In 1996, this Committee was created to respond to the needs expressed by our fellowship as a whole. The Delegate Committee members bring the shared experience of their Areas so that the Committee can offer recommendations to the World Service Office (WSO) on how to best serve the membership.

Alateen Advisory Committee*: The Alateen Committee was restructured as an advisory committee to the Group Services Committee. This Committee identifies and articulates the needs of teenage members of the fellowship to assure that Alateen interests are considered in Group Services Committee decisions and activities. This Committee is composed of members of both Al-Anon and Alateen.

The Literature Committee: This Committee is responsible for all Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and its mission is to see that every aspect of the Al-Anon program of recovery is presented in comprehensive written material for our members, friends, and the world at large. The Committee suggests creation of material to meet new needs or changing conditions and is charged with the revision of existing books and pamphlets.

Our literature is a principal means for facilitating Al-Anon's growth, unity, and service. The influence of the many thousand books and pamphlets distributed each year is incalculable. For these reasons, Al-Anon's policy is to produce only high-quality literature.

*This Committee is no longer used in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, the Committee may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

Public Outreach Committee: This Committee is the umbrella under which we try to reach families and friends of alcoholics and professionals who work with them, through a variety of media and communication vehicles.

The Committee assists in the development of educational tools for our members to use with a variety of outside audiences to inform them of what Al-Anon/Alateen is and how it can be an effective resource for families and friends of alcoholics and attract new members to our fellowship without compromising our Traditions.

Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee*: The Cooperating with the Professional Community (CPC) Committee was restructured as an advisory committee to the Public Outreach Committee. The work of outreach to facilities and institutions was also delegated to this Committee.

This Committee follows Bill W.'s suggestion of being friendly with our friends, the professionals. The broad objective of the Committee is to make Al-Anon/Alateen's purpose better known to professionals at a national level.

The Committee works to improve cooperation between Al-Anon and the professional community, institutions, and organizations at a national level by providing information about who we are, what we are, where we are, and how we can cooperate with them.

Regional Service Seminar Committee*: This Committee shares ideas from Region to Region and recommends ways to make the Regional Service Seminars more effective.

Executives

Any active service, to function well, must be managed by a competent Executive. It must always be directed by *one person*, supported by such Staff as needed. This function must be delegated to an individual with ample freedom and authority to do the job without interference, so long as the work is done well.

Good executives possess a special combination of abilities, one of which is the ability to lead by example, thus securing willing cooperation. If that cooperation is lacking, action must be readily taken without favor or partiality. An executive is often the one who takes the initiative in planning. When making new plans and putting

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them into operation, consultation must be held with those whose experience and wisdom are actually or officially required.

A good executive knows when to ask for specific definitions and directions and when to make decisions. This choice is structurally guaranteed by Concept Three (Right of Decision). If there is an error in judgment or if authority is exceeded, the decision can be reviewed.

Staff Members

Certain key people at the World Service Office (WSO) must be Al-Anon members. Some of these key paid personnel have a vote on our Committees and Corporate Boards. It is not a requirement that clerical Staff be Al-Anon members. It is important that all be treated fairly. As in the management of any business, the prime consideration is getting the job done well.

At our World Service Office, we treat our paid workers in all respects as we do our Volunteers. Our employees are part of the team. The fact that our employees receive a salary from the WSO should never, consciously or unconsciously, be used as a lever against them. To do so would be neither good spiritual practice nor good business. When we can afford it, every employee should be compensated in relation to those offering similar services and abilities in comparable not-for-profit organizations.

No organizational structure can fully guarantee the WSO against the possible damage done by clashing personalities. If, however, our paid Staff cannot or will not do their jobs, we can and should let them go.

By our sustained willingness to practice spiritual principles in all our affairs, we can realize these ideals.

Concept Twelve

The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

In order that the Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power, the General Warranties of the Conference read: "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.

Our Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter (WSC Charter) is an informal agreement made between the Al-Anon groups and their Trustees in 1967 and is the basis upon which the World Service Conference operates. In general, the WSC Charter is a flexible document, since its first eleven articles can be readily amended by the Conference at any time.

But Article 12 stands by itself. An amendment or cancellation of any of its vital Warranties would require the written consent of three-quarters of all *registered* Al-Anon groups. Each group should vote on any such proposals after taking at least six months for careful deliberation. Thus, changes in the Warranties have been made difficult but not impossible.

It is believed that all of these Warranties are permanently important to Al-Anon's general welfare. A change in them should be made only upon positive evidence of some defect, and then only by common consent of the Al-Anon groups. They rank, therefore, with the Twelve Traditions and are as important to Al-Anon's world services as the Traditions are to the groups.

All the Warranties counsel prudence—prudence in personal relations, prudence in money matters, and prudence in our contacts with the world around us. For Al-Anon, prudence is a middle ground, a channel between fear on the one hand and recklessness on the other. Prudence creates a climate of harmony, effectiveness, and consistent spiritual progress. These Warranties express the wisdom of taking thought for the future based on lessons of the past. They

protect us against needless errors and the natural human temptations of wealth, prestige, and power.

The Conference, above all, should feel bound by the Al-Anon Traditions. Indeed, the Conference is named "the guardian of the Traditions." The Traditions, which express the principles and attitudes of prudence, set the pattern of unity and of function; which our World Service Conference is expected to exemplify.

"In order that the Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power" does not mean that the Conference should have virtually no money and no authority. We must have some money and there must be some authority. But how much? How and where should we draw the line?

The principal protection against too much money and too much power is found in the Traditions themselves. As long as our Board of Trustees refuses to accept outside contributions and sets a limit on each member's gift to Al-Anon's world services, we shall not become wealthy to a perilous degree. Indeed, it seems that the chief difficulty will continue to be that of effectively informing the Al-Anon groups as to the actual financial needs of the World Service Office and their responsibility to support it. It is unlikely, therefore, that we shall ever become too wealthy through group contributions. We need only avoid the temptation of accepting money from the outside world.

There can be little risk either in giving Delegates, Trustees, and Staff the necessary authority. Experience indicates that we are unlikely to encounter problems of too much service authority. On the contrary, our difficulty may be to maintain enough of it. We are protected from too much authority by participation, by the Right of Appeal, and by our WSC Charter. A leader who demands too much authority could not long remain in leadership. Our Delegates, directly representing the groups, control the ultimate supply of our service funds. This constitutes a direct check upon the rise and use of personal power. Taken altogether, these factors should be reliable safeguards against too much money and too much authority.

Another sort of authority and power that the Conference cannot be without is the spiritual power that flows from the activities and attitudes of truly humble, unselfish, and dedicated Al-Anon servants. They do not rule by mandate, they lead by example. This is the real power that makes our Conference function.

that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; *

Our attitude toward giving time, compared with giving money, presents an interesting contrast. We give much time to Al-Anon activities for the sake of our groups, our Areas, and Al-Anon as a whole, as well as for our own protection and growth. We often take time from home duties or business to do Twelfth Step work. We do not think these sacrifices are unusual. We remember that people once gave their time to us as we struggled for understanding.

But when it comes to the spending of cash for Al-Anon service overhead, many of us turn reluctant. When we drop money in the meeting basket, its usefulness is not as obvious as when we talk to a newcomer. There is no romance in paying the landlord. Sometimes we hold back when asked to meet Area or Intergroup service expenses. As to world services, we may remark, "Well, our group doesn't get anything out of it. Let's not spoil Al-Anon with money and service organization. Let's keep things simple."

These reactions are natural and understandable, easy to justify. But they quickly disappear when the real need for a given Al-Anon service is made clear by right information and education. We see this in the ever-better job now being done by Delegates, District Representatives, and Group Representatives, who know that raising money by pressure and exhortation is not needed in Al-Anon. When each member can be shown how much the service dollar really buys in terms of helping families to find Al-Anon, contributions are willing and generous.

We can take comfort, too, from the fact that the cost of our world services is small in relation to the size of our fellowship. Our paid workers at the WSO are comparatively few.

Not until 1966 was the Board of Trustees able to establish a savings account that later became a Reserve Fund. Each year before then, the Trustees hoped and prayed that the budget would be met by contributions and literature sales. Fortunately, this turned out as they hoped. But such a hand-to-mouth system of finance, although inevitable in our early years, was not a prudent one for the future.

* In previous versions of Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service, the wording of the Warranties in Concept Twelve included an adaptation, by our cofounder Lois W., of A.A.'s Warranties, which has been replaced with the actual wording of the General Warranties of the Conference. For historical purposes, the previous wording has been retained in the Archives section of al-anon.org.

Group contributions pay for only a portion of the World Service Office expenses; the balance is financed by the sale of literature. It is firmly believed that, as the groups understand the situation more clearly, their contributions will continue to increase, so that the World Service Office can maintain a sufficient reserve to carry it through an emergency, such as a financial depression.

Is a Reserve Fund needed?

In 1969, our headquarters operation was breaking even. Compared with earlier days, this was wonderful. Nevertheless, this was in a period of great prosperity. The Board of Trustees, at its Annual Meeting in 1970, formally established the Reserve Fund with the following stated purposes:

1. To assure continuation of essential services in the event of substantial decline in income.
2. To cover cost of special projects which could not be financed from normal sources of income.

What would it be like in bad times without a reserve? Suppose the WSO income were greatly decreased by a depression, or expenses increased by a steep inflation. We might be faced by a gaping deficit that would make it necessary to discharge some of our paid workers. Mail would go unanswered; requests for information would not be properly serviced. *The Forum* might have to be reduced to its former size. The number of Delegates attending the annual World Service Conference might have to be drastically reduced. These could be the penalties if we did not have a Reserve Fund to fall back on. Is it not wise for us to increase our savings whenever possible, especially in good times?

If the Reserve Fund continues to grow, will "perilous wealth" result?

There are so many present needs for more working capital that it is hard to imagine having too much. Many outreach opportunities are becoming available to Al-Anon. Our continuous growth increases salary expenses as more Staff is needed. Staff and Volunteers are often invited to travel to different parts of the world to carry the Al-Anon message. Translators and translations are needed. Members of the WSO are asked to visit distant groups as speakers at anniversaries, conventions, service events, etc. If there were more funds available, Headquarters could encourage this. There is nothing like personal contact for arousing interest and enlarging understanding.

The Reserve Fund would never be permitted by the Conference to become excessive.

Will the presence of such a fund discourage group contributions?

We believe that further education will help the groups understand the need of such a fund and that it will have little or no effect on their contributions.

Does the establishment of a Reserve Fund mean that we lack faith in God's providence?

Are we not expected to exercise a reasonable amount of foresight in the conduct of our affairs? This is certainly no denial of faith in God's providence; it is instead a willingness to shoulder our own clear responsibility.

Should our books and other literature be sold at cost so that hard-pressed members could purchase them more easily; or sold for less to encourage the general public to buy them?

No, because this would mean sacrificing the support of Al-Anon's world services for small financial advantages to individual members. Experience shows that without a modest profit on literature, the WSO could not pay for its many worldwide services. Money charity to members is not the function of the group, Intergroup, or World Service Office.

If a member cannot afford to buy a book, a Sponsor may give or lend one. Many libraries carry our books. Groups sometimes sell books on the installment plan to help newcomers. If the group undertook to assist individual members financially, the group treasury, which is for the benefit of all members, would soon be dissipated. The same would be true if WSO sold books or literature at cost.

Because of its specialized character there is no reason to believe that large sales of Al-Anon literature could be made to the general public even at lowered prices. To publish in paperback would not be the answer, either: publishers tell us that paperback issues nearly always destroy the circulation of hardcover books.

Does so-called "profit-making" on our books and pamphlets go counter to sound spiritual principles?

Many groups, as well as the WSO, sell books for a little more than cost. Actually, this could be considered additional contributions which

the member-buyers make to the general welfare of their groups or the WSO. The certain and continuous solvency of our world services rests squarely upon these contributions. Looked at in this way, the Reserve Fund is seen to be the aggregate of many small financial sacrifices made by individual members for the good of the whole fellowship.

Warranty Two

that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;*

The application of this principle has already been extensively discussed under Concept Four, "Participation is the key to harmony." It is so important, however, that it is the subject of this Warranty, thus ensuring that Conference action alone can never overturn or amend the Right of Participation. For such a purpose, widespread group consent would be needed, which might be difficult though not impossible for the Conference to obtain. Our whole service experience fully justifies taking this strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at any point in our Conference Structure.

This Warranty against absolute authority is far more general and sweeping in its nature than a guarantee of voting participation. It really means that we in Al-Anon do not want or need absolute human authority in any form.

Article 12 of the Conference Charter might be called "The Service Bill of Rights," because these Warranties, and especially this one, express deep and loving respect for the spiritual liberties of our members. May God grant that we shall never be so unwise as to desire anything less.

Warranty Three

that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;*

Here, on the one hand, we erect a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and on the other hand, take notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle further guarantees that all matters of

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importance will be extensively debated, until a substantial majority can support every critical decision we are called upon to make in the Conference.

The Conference voice would thus speak with authority and confidence beyond that which a simple majority could confer. If any persons remain in opposition, they are likely to be better satisfied because their views have had a full and fair hearing.

The principle of substantial unanimity does, however, have certain practical limitations. Occasionally a matter will be of such extreme urgency that a Conference decision must be made at once. In such a case a minority, however well-intended, could not be allowed to block a vitally needed action or one which is evidently in the best interests of Al-Anon. Here we shall need to trust the majority, sometimes a mere majority, to decide whether Conference debate is to be terminated and a final decision taken. In certain other cases, the majority will also have to exercise its prerogative. Suppose, for example, that a small minority obstinately tries to use the principle of substantial unanimity to block a clearly needed action. In such an event it would be the plain duty of the majority to override such a misuse of the principle of substantial unanimity and call for a vote.

However, majorities will probably seldom need to take such radical stands. If and when they do, the Conference will have to decide, by a simple majority vote, what the requirements of substantial unanimity should be, whether two-thirds, three-quarters, or an even greater majority.

The practical and spiritual result of substantial unanimity will make itself evident.

Warranty Four

that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;*

Practically all societies and governments feel it necessary to inflict personal punishments upon individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles, or laws. Because of its spiritual character, Al-Anon finds this practice unnecessary. When alcoholics fail to

* In previous versions of Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service, the wording of the Warranties in Concept Twelve included an adaptation, by our cofounder Lois W., of A.A.'s Warranties, which has been replaced with the actual wording of the General Warranties of the Conference. For historical purposes, the previous wording has been retained in the Archives section of al-anon.org.

follow sound spiritual principles, alcohol cuts them down. It is not so obvious with us in Al-Anon. It is easier for us to fool ourselves that we are right and that our indignation is justified. However, anger and resentment betray us, and we recognize we've had a "slip." Therefore, no humanly administered system of penalties is needed in our fellowship. This unique condition is one on which we can fully rely and one which we should never abandon by resorting to personal attack or punishment. For much the same reason, we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the goodwill Al-Anon enjoys than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

Therefore, it is evident that the harmony, security, and future effectiveness of Al-Anon will depend largely upon our maintenance of a thoroughly nonaggressive and pacific attitude in all our public relations.

If we recognize that religion is the province of the clergy, that the practice of medicine is for doctors, and that social welfare is for social workers, we can helpfully cooperate with all. Certainly, there is little basis for controversy in these areas. Al-Anon has no concern with reform or politics. We should strictly mind our threefold purpose.

Because our World Service Conference represents us all, it is especially charged with the duty of setting the highest possible standards with respect to these attitudes.

The Conference, however, may sometimes have to apply these principles to specific situations and take certain protective action, especially in the area of Tradition violation. This action, however, need never be punitive or aggressively controversial. When the infractions have serious implications, the WSO consults the Conference for its advice and direction. For the more routine deviations the WSO takes appropriate action, which it reports to the Conference on a timely basis.

Let us take some situations that would require consideration and decision:

- Suppose that Al-Anon falls under sharp public attack or heavy ridicule with little or no justification in fact.

  Almost without exception, it can be confidently estimated that our best defense would be no defense whatever—namely,

complete silence at the public level. Unreasonable people are stimulated all the more by opposition. If in good humor we leave them strictly alone, they are apt to subside more quickly. If their attacks persist and it is plain that they are misinformed, it may be wise to communicate with them in a temperate and informative way; also in such a manner that they cannot use our communication as a springboard for fresh assault. Such communication need not be made by the World Service Office officially. Very often we can use the good offices of friends. Such messages should never question the motives of the attackers, but should be purely informative. These communications should also be private. If made public, they will often be seized upon as a fresh excuse for controversy.

If, however, criticism of Al-Anon is to any extent justified, it could be acknowledged privately, together with our thanks.

- Then we might be confronted by public violations of the Al-Anon Traditions. Individuals, outside organizations, and even our own members may sometimes try to use the Al-Anon name for their own private purposes. As Al-Anon grows in size and public recognition, the temptation to misuse our name may increase.

  It has been said, "Al-Anon is prepared to give away its knowledge and experience—all except the Al-Anon name itself." Our principles can be applied in any situation. We do not wish to monopolize them. We simply request that the public use of the Al-Anon name be avoided by those who wish to avail themselves of Al-Anon techniques and ideas. In case the Al-Anon name should be misapplied, it would of course be the duty of our World Service Conference to press for the discontinuance of such a practice—avoiding, however, public quarreling about the matter.

  The Conference, as we know, is the guardian of the Traditions. But this does not imply the right nor the duty of the Conference to publicly punish or sue every willful violator. Such aggressive public acts would place the Conference in the position of having violated one of its Traditions in order to defend another.

  Privately, however, violators of our Traditions can be informed that they are out of order. If they persist, our resources

of persuasion may be used. Consistent firmness will often bring the desired result.

In the long run, though, we shall have to rely mainly upon the pressures of Al-Anon and public opinion. We shall need to maintain continuous education of the public through communication channels of all kinds.

Experience has shown that continuous and general education respecting our Traditions will be a reliable protection in the years to come.

- Severe internal disagreement among us that comes to unwelcome public attention is unlikely to occur in Al-Anon.

  What should our World Service Conference do about this should it ever happen?

  Always remembering group autonomy, and the fact that Al-Anon's World Headquarters is not a government, the best course is usually to make an offer of mediation. What the Tradition means and what our experience has been, can be recounted. Avoidance of any breakthrough to the public level should always be urged and all parties should be reminded that an unfavorable public image could keep potential members from joining Al-Anon.

  Many of these difficulties with the Traditions represent honest differences of opinion in interpretation of the Traditions. The Traditions sometimes reveal gray areas where violations are often debatable and inconsequential. In such cases, we refrain from offering suggestions, unless they are insisted upon. Many such problems can be solved by the local people concerned.

- It is possible that some day might see a deep rift dividing Al-Anon—a cleavage of opinion so serious that it might involve a withdrawal of an appreciable proportion of members into a new society or one faction's making an alliance with an outside agency, ignoring the Traditions. It might be powered by religious, political, national, or racial forces. It might represent an honest effort to change for the better, but it would certainly pose a serious question of what to do.

  Such a contingency is hard to imagine, yet this is no reason for refusing to give it calm forethought. If it ever came, its

development might be such a terrific surprise and shock that aroused passions could flare, making any constructive solution difficult, perhaps impossible.

Particularly today, when society everywhere is in such a state of fission, this possibility must be considered. The best attitude in such a circumstance might be complete nonresistance—certainly no anger, no attack. Al-Anon has no doctrine that has to be maintained. There is no authority that has to be supported; no prestige, power, or pride that has to be satisfied. And we have no property or money that is worth quarreling about. In the event of a threatened major division, the best possible use should be made of these advantages in a calm and considered attitude of nonresistance.

We have always practiced this attitude on a lesser scale. If a member says there is too much dominance by one person in a group, we simply say, "Why don't you try another one? Or start one of your own." If individual members wish to gather together for any outside undertaking whatever, we still say, "Fine. Only we hope you won't designate such activities as an Al-Anon group or enterprise."

In the event of major division, we would not waste time persuading the dissenters to stay with us. Should they become happier and more serene under new auspices and changed conditions, we would ask ourselves if we could not learn from their fresh experience.

Warranty Five

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.*

In preceding Concepts, attention has been drawn to the extraordinary liberties that the Traditions accord to the individual member and group. No penalties are to be inflicted for nonconformity to Al-Anon principles, no fees or dues levied; contributions are always

* In previous versions of Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service, the wording of the Warranties in Concept Twelve included an adaptation, by our cofounder Lois W., of A.A.'s Warranties, which has been replaced with the actual wording of the General Warranties of the Conference. For historical purposes, the previous wording has been retained in the Archives section of al-anon.org.

voluntary. No member can be expelled from the fellowship; membership always is the choice of the individual. Each group conducts its internal affairs as it wishes, only abstaining from acts that might injure Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole. And finally, any group of relatives and friends of alcoholics when gathered together for mutual aid may call itself an Al-Anon Family Group provided that as a group it has no other purpose or affiliation.

Because we set high value on our liberties and cannot conceive of a time when they will need to be limited, we enjoin our World Service Conference to abstain from any act of authoritative government that could curtail Al-Anon's freedoms. To maintain these freedoms the Conference must remain democratic in spirit and in action.

Therefore we expect that our Conference will always try to act with mutual respect and love, one member for another; that no action will be taken in anger, haste, or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action will be personally punitive; that whenever possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity; and that our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small, whether these be found in the majority or in the minority.

The sum of these several attitudes and practices is the very essence of democracy. Our freedom to serve is truly the freedom by which we live and have our being.

Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter

As amended by the 2022 WSC

Introduction

The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter is a body of principles and relationships through which Al-Anon as a whole can function. The provisions of the document are not legal, but traditional, since the Conference is not incorporated. This charter is an informal agreement between all Al-Anon and its World Service Office (WSO). Certain countries of the world, for language or geographic considerations, have established or may desire to establish their own General Service Office and national conference. This World Service Conference is now the senior conference.

Charter

1. Purpose

a. To be the guardian of both Al-Anon's world services and its Twelve Traditions;

b. To be a service body, not a government.

2. Composition

a. Delegates from states, provinces, and territories within the United States (including Puerto Rico), Bermuda, and Canada, and from non-geographically based Areas, which collectively comprise the WSC Structure; together with the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Executive Committee, and voting members of the WSO Administrative Staff, the three groups that comprise the Policy Committee.

b. Representatives from other countries, when these countries as well as the Conference may be ready for their participation.

c. Representatives from non-panel Areas within the WSC Structure.

3. Relation to Al-Anon

a. The Conference acts for Al-Anon in the perpetuation and guidance of its WSO services.

b. The Conference is a vehicle by which Al-Anon can express its views on policy and note deviations from Traditions.

c. Delegates are free to vote as their conscience dictates and not necessarily as instructed by their Areas.

d. No changes are to be made in the Al-Anon or Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service (except the descriptive text), or the General Warranties of the Conference Charter (Item 12) without written consent of three-quarters of the Al-Anon Family Groups.

e. Wording in the Charter may be changed by the vote of three-quarters of the Conference members; however, the protections afforded the Al-Anon and Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service, and the General Warranties in item 3-d may not be taken away or lessened by Conference vote.

4. Relation to the World Service Office

a. Two-thirds vote of Conference members in attendance is binding upon trustees and any related corporate service.

b. The above does not affect legal obligations of the WSO in conducting business.

c. In accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., three-quarters of all members registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the WSO if or when it is deemed essential and may request the resignation of the whole Board and nominate a new slate of Trustees. For this purpose only, the number of WSO members voting shall be limited to one-quarter of the total Conference vote.

5. Assemblies: Purpose of

a. In each Area within the WSC Structure, Assemblies convene at least every three years and as often in between as is deemed necessary for the purpose of electing District Representatives (if not elected in their own districts), Assembly officers, a Delegate to the WSC, and an Alternate.

b. Assemblies are concerned primarily with world service affairs of Al-Anon.

6. Assemblies: Composition of

a. In each state (including Puerto Rico), province, territory, and non-geographically based grouping, elected representatives of

all Al-Anon groups desiring participation meet together.

b. Areas within the WSC Structure with large Al-Anon populations may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional delegate to the Conference, as provided for in the "World Service Handbook" for Al-Anon and Alateen groups.

7. Assemblies: Preferred Method of Election

a. District Representatives are elected from Group Representatives by confidential ballot.

b. Delegates are chosen from District Representatives by a two-thirds confidential ballot or by lot.

c. Alternates are elected at the same time and for the same term of office.

d. It is strongly advised that the term of office of the Chairperson, other Assembly officers, and District Representatives follow the same pattern.

8. Panels and Delegates' Terms of Office

A third of the Delegates, called a panel, are elected every three years for a three-year term. The election of each of the three panels is held on each of three consecutive years. This staggered election and tenure of office is provided so that a Conference shall always include a panel of Delegates with two years' experience. (This method was adopted because some A.A.s found that their two-year plan resulted in too fast a turnover and the valuable experience of two-year Delegates was lost to the Conference.)

9. Conference Meetings

The Conference meets annually. In grave emergency, special meetings may be called. Conference members may also be asked by the WSO to render advisory opinions at any time by mail or telephone poll.

10. Board of Trustees: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities

a. The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is composed of qualified members of Al-Anon groups. The Board elects its own successors, with nominees subject to the approval of the Conference or a committee thereof.

b. The Board is the chief service arm of the Conference, which is guardian of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions. Subject to e, below, the Board has the responsibility to determine policy and manage the business affairs of the WSO. It may appoint suitable committees and elect members to its Executive Committee.

c. If any subsidiary services are later formed, the Board of Trustees will be primarily responsible for their policy and financial integrity.

d. The Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and any amendments thereto are subject to recall by the Conference by a two-thirds vote of all its members. All Bylaw amendments will be presented to the first Conference to be held after their adoption by the Board of Trustees.

e. Except in great emergency, the Board of Trustees ought never take action liable to greatly affect Al-Anon as a whole without consulting the Conference. However, it is understood that the Board shall reserve the right to decide which of its decisions may require referral to the Conference.

11. Conference Procedure

a. The Conference hears financial and policy reports of the Board of Trustees and WSO services.

b. Delegates and WSO members take under advisement all matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees and pass suitable motions for the direction of the Board of Trustees and the WSO.

c. The Conference may recommend action respecting serious deviation from Al-Anon Traditions and Concepts of Service.

d. The Conference may adopt procedures and elect any needed officers by a method of its choosing.

e. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the members registered at the Conference.

f. At the close of each yearly session, the Conference will send a full report of its proceedings to all World Service Conference members, past WSC members, and Area World Service Committees (Area officers, Coordinators and District Representatives).

12. General Warranties of the Conference

In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions: that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members; that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; 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.

Note: The term Al-Anon includes Alateen. Therefore, the above Charter applies to all registered groups, including Alateen.

Appendix

2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees

The Alateen Advisory Committee, the Group Services Committee, the World Service Office Policy Committee, and the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. have studied the issues concerning the safety and behavior of Alateen members and individuals involved with Alateen service. The Board has reviewed the documents and actions of previous Conferences, previous committees, and the World Service Office correspondence with legal counsel, individual members, Alateen Group Sponsors, Coordinators, as well as Area and district officers.

The Board of Trustees has determined:

- Not all Areas have written Safety or Behavioral Requirements for Alateens and individuals involved with Alateen service.
- The WSO registration procedures and policies should support Areas that have developed Safety and Behavioral Requirements.
- The Al-Anon fellowship should take all necessary steps to provide a safe environment for Alateens and the Al-Anons involved with Alateen service.

As Tradition Four states, "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole." The Board of Trustees has determined that issues of safety and behavior by Alateens and individuals involved with Alateen service do affect every group and Al-Anon as a whole.

The Board of Trustees, under Concept Seven and Warranty Four, is entrusted with the authority and responsibility to protect the Al-Anon and Alateen names and the organizational identity.

Now, therefore, the Board of Trustees resolves:

1. As soon as possible, but in any event, no later than December 31, 2004, if an Area within the World Service Conference Structure uses the Al-Anon or Alateen name in conjunction with any meeting(s), group(s), convention(s), or any other gathering(s) in the Area where Alateen participation is offered, the Area must have Safety and Behavioral Requirements for all Alateen members and Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service. These

safety and behavioral requirements must meet the minimum requirements of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

2. Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service and all Alateen members must adhere to the Area's Safety and Behavioral Requirements, or the Area will notify the WSO that those members are prohibited from participating in Alateen service.
3. As soon as possible, but in any event, no later than December 31, 2004, and for each succeeding year, each Area must have a process to certify, and must so certify to the WSO annually, that each Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service has met the Area's safety and behavioral requirements and has agreed to abide by them.
4. The World Service Office will register only those Alateen groups whose registration it receives through the Area's registration process. The WSO will remove from its registration list any Alateen group that the Area determines does not comply with Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements. The Area's request for removal of an Alateen group must be stated in writing to the Associate Director/Alateen. This applies to all Alateen groups, whether currently registered or not.
5. If the Area states in writing to the Associate Director/Alateen that a group, meeting, convention, or gathering is failing to meet the Area's Safety and Behavioral Requirements, prior registration or interaction with the World Service Office shall not constitute any continuing right to use the Al-Anon or Alateen name.

Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements

1. Every Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service must:
   a. be an Al-Anon member regularly attending Al-Anon meetings.
   b. be at least 21 years old.
   c. have at least two years in Al-Anon in addition to any time spent in Alateen.
   d. not have been convicted of a felony, and not have been charged with child abuse or any other inappropriate sexual behavior, and not have demonstrated emotional problems which could result in harm to Alateen members.

2. There must be at least one Alateen Group Sponsor at every Alateen meeting.
3. The Area Requirements must prohibit overt or covert sexual interaction between any adult and Alateen member.
4. The Area Requirements must prohibit conduct contrary to applicable laws.
5. The Area Requirements must contain procedures for parental permission and medical care when applicable.
6. The Area Requirements must be reviewed by local counsel.

Other points for the Areas to think about in developing their Requirements:

- Requiring two Alateen Group Sponsors at every Alateen meeting.
- Having background checks.
- Considering behavior before, during, and after any Alateen meeting or activity of Alateens and adults involved with Alateen service.
- Connecting Alateen conferences to the Area structure.
- Forming an Alateen meeting that meets at the same time and place as the Al-Anon meeting.
- Being gender conscious.
- Avoiding one-on-one interactions.
- Having an appropriate ratio of adults to Alateens at all times.
- Transporting Alateens to and from events.
- Educational training and awareness programs.

Note: Capitalization and punctuation were updated to reflect current guidelines.

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Al-Anon Family Groups

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

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