

AL-ANON guidelines

The Shared Experience Of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

A Meeting on Wheels

G-22

A meeting on wheels is an opportunity for Al-Anon and Alateen members to demonstrate what a meeting is like to potential members, professionals and others interested in learning about the help and hope available in our fellowship.

It is usually conducted by three or four members. One is selected as chairperson to lead the meeting and participate in the discussion. The program should allow each of the members to participate equally on a given topic (see meeting format below). This usually takes about 15-20 minutes. This is followed by a question-and-answer period that can be conducted by the chairperson or another member.

Our Conference-approved videocassettes, Al-Anon Speaks for Itself and Alateen Tells It Like It Is may be shown beforehand.

TIPS

- Remember—you don't have to be perfect.
- Review this sheet with other participants prior to presentation.
- Read guideline for Members Interested in Speaking (G-1).
- Keep the focus on your own recovery.
- Display anonymity card, posters and literature and, when possible, hardcover Al-Anon/Alateen books.
- Provide appropriate Al-Anon/Alateen literature, for example:
 - S-4 *Information for the Newcomer*
 - S-17 *Are You Troubled by Someone's Drinking?*
 - S-20 *Is Someone's Drinking Getting to You?*
 - S-25 *Did You Grow Up With A Problem Drinker?*
 - P-48 *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism*
 - P-79/84 *Institutions Series*
 - M-7 *Al-Anon Basic Program Wallet Card*
 - M-18 *Alateen Basic Program Wallet Card*
- Offer catalog and order forms.
- Hand out local meeting lists and provide the telephone number of a local contact, if desired.
- Distribute material for professionals in attendance, i.e., *Getting in Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen* (S-23), and *Al-Anon Speaks To You, The Professional* (P-58).

AVOID

- arguing or challenging doctors, social workers, counselors or any other person.
- offering opinions on alcoholism, its treatment or the AA program.
- giving advice to individuals.
- speaking for Al-Anon as a whole.

SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT

Leader: My name is _____ and I am the leader of tonight's (today's) meeting.

Have other members introduce themselves by first name only in the spirit of anonymity, as they would at a meeting. Mention that

Al-Anon is a spiritual rather than religious program and that we are not professionals.

PREAMBLE

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/ALATEEN WELCOME

We welcome you to the _____ Al-Anon 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 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 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 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 literature thus make us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.

Al-Anon is an anonymous fellowship. 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.

THE TWELVE STEPS

Because of their proven power and worth, AA'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 principles in all our affairs.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

Depending on time, the leader can explain the purpose of the Traditions and/or read the introduction, the Tradition corresponding to the month (i.e., February - Tradition Two) or the entire Twelve Traditions.

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

The Traditions evolved from the experience of AA 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 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. Al-Anon 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.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Members tell us that a meeting on wheels is often three meetings in one: a meeting on the way to the meeting; the meeting itself; and the meeting you'll have on the return trip.

A meeting on wheels can be a service "high." It's a way to carry the message and have fun and fulfillment at the same time.

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, TV and films. 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.

PROGRAM

Suggested topics for discussion: the First Step, How I came to Al-Anon/Alateen, slogans, accepting alcoholism as a family disease.

One member may take the part of a newcomer by asking questions such as: "How can I get my husband to stop drinking?", "How can I get my children?", "Is it my fault my mother drinks?"

"How can I help my children?", "Is it my fault my mother drinks?" The rest of the panel shares as if at a regular meeting.

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 like 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?