

Ask it Basket – Fall Assembly 2019

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021 is the service manual referred to in several instances below.

- 1. If this is a spiritual program why is God emphasized in the Twelve steps. And the word Him emphasized? Should it not simply state Higher Power?**

Page 14 of the Service Manual: states “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.”

Page 22 of the Service Manual: states under **Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon***

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. Traditions specify that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. Why do we need to put the label of “alcoholic”? Why can’t it be enough that we are affected by someone else’s drinking? Does the label keep newcomers away because they don’t want to admit? NB: not thinking about other additions – just wording.**

Page 15 of the Service Manual – Twelve Traditions – “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. . .” So the source is Alcoholics Anonymous.

Page 23 of the Service Manual – Who Are Alcoholics? “All kinds of people are alcoholics—people from all walks of life. . . . Alcoholics are people whose drinking causes a continuing and growing problem in any area of their lives.”

Use of the word Alcoholic is throughout our Conference Approved Literature and materials so it does not appear to be a concern regarding newcomers.

- 3. Is selling used literature (Al-Anon CAL approved) with all pages intact allowed at the group level? A member was asking as they have found many at used book stores, garage sales, etc. And thought that people who could not afford to pay the full price of a new one could have this as a more affordable option!**

On page 106 of the Service Manual it states: Avoiding Commercialism: Raffling various articles at a meeting 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, 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.

Selling Products at Meetings/Conventions/Conferences: Tradition 5 states that one purpose of each Al-Anon Family 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.

In this provided circumstance, proceeds from literature sales would go to the individual seller, rather than the group, and for this reason felt this would be considered commercialism, and the group setting would not be appropriate to sell these materials. It was also noted that sales of CAL through AFG groups is one way our groups remain self supporting.

That being said, what members choose to do outside their meetings on their own time is their prerogative.

4. Do we need prior approval to use a Al-Anon logo? If so, what is the procedure to get the approval? An example of use of a logo would be printed on merchandise to sell for an Al-Anon fundraiser.

Page 115 of the Service Manual - **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 “Identification of Material”).

5. Is the new language referring to “open meetings/closed meetings” mandatory or can each group decide to implement this change? Jean mentioned going to meetings and not hearing the new wording.

From In the Loop (news from your WSO) → explore more Articles → July 31, 2019

New Way to Designate “Closed” and “Open” Meetings

The Al-Anon Meeting Type designation, which previously referred to whether the meeting was open to visitors or closed to attendance by members only, often confused members and newcomers. It has been replaced by the term Meeting Attendees, and the options have been changed to “Families and Friends Only” and “Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome” on the WSO [Group Records Forms](#).

These new descriptions match the wording approved by the Board of Trustees at their April 2019 meeting. The language is consistent with the Al-Anon spiritual principles of confidentiality and anonymity. The new terms were designed to be clearer to new members and more welcoming to both new and potential new members and professionals seeking to understand our program.

6. How long does a group keep records? ie: Business Meeting Records, Financials

Page 48 of Service Manual – under 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, CMA (Current Mailing Address), Group Representative (GR), or phone contacts to their Area Group Records Coordinator in writing.

We also felt that this was up to the group autonomy how long records were to be kept.

7. **We know from the recent Members Survey that Al-Anon members who have friends and family members who have an addiction to drugs have benefitted from the Al-Anon program. However, Vali F.'s article was referred to today and that through our traditions our primary purpose is helping family and friends of alcoholics. Would you please clarify the message for members who come to an Al-Anon meeting who have a family member or friend with an addiction to drugs without an obvious problem with alcohol?**

Page 131 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.

8. **Can an Al-anon member sell other Al-Anon members products or services as long as it's outside the meeting? (My sponsor thinks it's not ok to approach them at all in this respect even outside the meeting environment – they're in program. So that makes them off limits entirely.)**

Refer to page 106 in the Service Manual, "Selling Products at meeting/Conventions/Conference" the paragraph states:

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 gathering for sale of services or products. I would also like to state Tradition 6. Our Family Group out never endorse, finance or lend out 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. If you feel the Al-Anon member is using the meetings to better their business, then that is highly inappropriate and violates of the spiritual aim of Al-anon. But the answer is yes, under Tradition 6, Al-Anon members are allowed to do business within anyone they choose to as long as it is an outside issue and no Al-Anon service arm should have an opinion on it.

9. **Can we announce BBQ or social functions at meetings when there is only Al-Anon involvement? We've been doing this at our groups for years but recently a member was shut down from announcing an end of summer BBQ get together by the meeting chairperson because it was deemed to be an outside issue. What if the social get togethers/functions involve members in other 12 step programs such as AA or CODA? In the past when we've done this we've had just Al-Anon members attend these get togethers but some functions has a few CODA and AA members as well. Some argue it's an outside issue but some argue it's fellowship which is also important in recover. I think it would be OK if it was just Al-Anon members attending but I'm not sure what the answer is if it involves other people/groups as well.**

From page 91 and 92 of the Service Manual

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

What to Announce at Meetings

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.

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

- Generally, those events put on by or connected to Al-Anon service arms are announced at meetings, in our newsletters, and on local websites. These events bring members together to connect through experiences and discussions.
- Areas, Districts and AISs often plan program-related activities for fun and fellowship, to encourage participation in service and sometimes fundraising. These gatherings unite groups within the District and neighboring Districts and often improve the health of the groups and lead to the growth of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole. These events can be announced at Al-Anon meetings and communicated in our publications.
- 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. While we remain a separate entity from A.A., we cooperate whenever possible. When Al-Anon participates in an A.A. event with speakers or workshops, these events may be announced at meetings, in our newsletters and on our websites.

10. Why are there several different preambles to the Steps, Traditions and Concepts?

In the Service Manual on page 111, 4th paragraph

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

(Refer to page 11 as being the most recent one that is up to date.)

There many versions out there being used therefore from other Al-Anon literature I would say that the decision of it would be Group Autonomy in keeping with the Traditions and Warranty 5 of Concept Twelve. (on page 109 in the Service Manual).