

Ask It Basket Questions – Spring Assembly 2022

1. Being new to some Zoom meetings or meetings on the Al-Anon App, what could you do when other than CAL is used?

Outside literature used in meetings as noted by Liz W.S., Chairperson, Executive Committee Member
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Strategy A

Emphasize Conference approved changes to the “Digest of Al-Anon Alateen Policies” in the Service Manual regarding the use of Conference Approved Literature (CAL)—specifically “To keep Al-Anon’s message in focus and 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, 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. . . . Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other outside materials can distort the Al-Anon approach.”

Strategy B

Literature references, such as “Obedience to the Unenforceable” (The Al-Anon Family Groups—Classic Edition, pgs. 166-167), can be featured on the Members’ Web Site and in The Forum and other communications.

Strategy C

Publicize the availability of the pamphlet, Why Conference Approved Literature? (P-35)

Strategy D

Create workshops based on Why Conference Approved Literature? (P-35)

Strategy E

Create workshops based on the 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section, “Conference Approved Literature and Service/Tools/Materials,” pgs. 99-106. Thought Force to Support Areas in Dealing with Groups Whose Activities Fail to Consider Al-Anon or Alateen as a Whole

Strategy F

Create workshops based on the CAL Corner from The Forum

From 2018-2021 Service Manual, Page 113

Use of Material at Al-Anon Meetings

To keep Al-Anon’s message in focus and 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 "Groups at Work" [P-24].)

2. Is the electronic version of the service Manual "always" up to date or do they only update it every year or so? How often is it updated?

"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." (Source: 2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, p. 1)

The electronic copy is updated as needed. It will soon be updated with the text changes that the members of the 2022 World Service Conference (WSC) recently approved. When the updated copy is posted, it will be v2. [See page 2, 2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, lower left corner for latest version number.]

Updates are noted by a vertical change line next to the text. An example can be found on page 12 of the 2022-2025 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual. It denotes that the Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps has been revised. (The 2021 WSC approved the revision.)

(Source: Suzanne M., Associate Director--Conference, responsible for the development of the Manual)

Thanks for the opportunity to answer these Ask It Basket questions. Please contact area89litco@sk-alanon.ca for any further information.

The most up-to-date version of the Service Manual is at <https://al-anon.org/for-members/members-resources/manuals-and-guidelines/service-manual/>

3. If Saskatoon Al-Anon Information Services (AIS) is struggling financially at times with a paid trusted servant and rent fees, why do we allow Prince Albert to have a Literature Depot to sell books? Saskatoon could use these sales to help with its' finances.

Under Tradition 4 this is question, as stated, is an outside issue for the Area 89 Assembly. Service Manual p.65 - 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."

TRADITION 4 - "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole. Saskatoon AIS/LDC (Literature Distribution Centre) is owned by, and serves, Districts 1 and 12. Prince Albert AIS/LDC is owned by, and serves, District 2."

The Area 89 Assembly has no authority to tell District 2 what to do with their AIS/LDC, nor does it have any authority to tell Districts 1 and 12 what to do with theirs.

4. & 5. I have never heard the term "qualifier" before in Al-Anon. Is the term an Al-Anon approved term? Tell me about the term qualifier. Is it a term that Al-Anon embraces?

The term "qualifier" is not traditionally used in Al-Anon, it is not a term Al-Anon embraces. Yes, you will hear it used in meetings in many countries.

The following quotes were taken from the 2007 World Service Conference Summary – Under "Chosen Agenda Item #3" - "How do we address non-Al-Anon terms used during Al-Anon meetings; i.e., my qualifier (or the term co-dependent)?"

"Page 100 of the 2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, subsection "Labels," says, "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. ... We need to be the messenger that this is a warm and loving fellowship for encouragement, not discouragement."

Another quote from that same Conference Summary: "When I hear a new term, I look in the *Service Manual*. If it's not there, I assume it must not be an Al-Anon term."

We also talked about the wording in Tradition 5 that states "The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend." We do not need to share specifically why we believe we qualify for Al-Anon.

Having said all this, Al-Anon members are free to use whatever words they feel best convey their experience, strength and hope, at the same time staying true to the Al-Anon.

6. A group is meeting both face to face and Zoom, but the meeting location has no access to WIFI. They are maintaining good communication between both the face to face and the Zoom people, and they all participate in business meetings. Can they continue for now, as they are, since they have no access to WIFI to be hybrid?

Yes. According to World Service Office, what groups have done, or do, to meet during the pandemic in a temporary manner is fine. These decisions are based on group autonomy way. The caveat (warning) is that business meetings must include all members (physical and electronic). Also, there is no deadline or timeframe for groups to decide to return to physical or stay electronic or be physical with an electronic component. So, keep the status quo!! Keep doing what you are doing.

7. Money received for Delegate from donations-what is the amount received and if it is not all used does the money move forward to another WSO visit?

I am responding thinking the reference is about Love Gifts. The Delegate uses the money for incidentals when travelling to WSC. In the last year of the Delegates term, the Love Give contributions at Spring Assembly, Fall Committee and Fall Assembly is handed to the incoming Delegate. The amount of money varies depending on the contributions.

8. Could the Fall Assembly be held in September rather than October and why did it change from September to October. (I'm told it was held in September some time ago.)

Motion 27/08 Mary V/Vanessa A. CARRIED That Saskatchewan Assembly hold two Area Service Committee meetings per year: one to be held in March and one to be held in September, and two seminar weekends per year: one to be held in June and one to be held in November.

9. If I should test positive for Covid a day or two after this weekend, should I let someone know? If so, who?

That is up to you, not required as no Provincial Regulations to do so. But could advise as a courtesy. Contact Mary C.

10. How can a gentle message be given to a group member who shares at great length (10 - 12 Minutes) at every meeting?

Al-Anon is a gentle program. We strive to be non judgemental and democratic in action.

Tradition 1 states "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity". Many Al-Anon members have come from an environment where they were afraid or not allowed to speak, a don't talk, don't feel, don't trust environment and it is important for everyone to be able to share. Our primary purpose as stated in Tradition 5 is to help families of alcoholics.

In keeping with our Traditions, the following are a few suggestions: There could be a gentle reminder in the preamble to sharing. "Please be mindful of the number of people in the group so everyone gets a chance to share. More detailed discussion may take place between meetings in private conversations with another member, or a personal Sponsor." The Group could have a meeting on the topic of the Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon "Discussion of Religion, Gossip, and Dominance" as lengthy sharing could prevent others from being able to share. No one's story is more important than others. A Group Inventory could also be taken if this remains a concern. Tradition 12 reminds us that we are a fellowship of equals and that Al-Anon is a program of Principles not Personalities.