

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

SASKATCHEWAN AREA 89

**Group Representative's Guide
to the
Saskatchewan Area Assembly**



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ASSEMBLY STRUCTURE

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

The links of service provide each group a voice in all Al-Anon discussions and decisions at the Saskatchewan Area Assembly. The active involvement of Group Representatives at Assembly ensures each member has access to the experience, strength and hope of the larger fellowship. See page 166 in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for a representation of the service structure for Al-Anon.

Purpose of Assembly

Saskatchewan Area Assembly is held twice a year; in June and November, in various locations in the province. It is a gathering of Group Representatives, District Representatives, and Interested Members not holding a position, and is conducted by the Area Table Officers and Coordinators to discuss the business of Al-Anon. At Assembly, Group Representatives hear a report from the Delegate outlining the work of the World Service Conference that he/she attended on our behalf earlier in the year. The Delegate's Conversation will inform Group Representatives of new resources, challenges and initiatives to learn about Al-Anon/Alateen from a global perspective. Group Representatives will also participate in discussions affecting Al-Anon/Alateen in the Saskatchewan Area and vote on behalf of his/her group. Election of Table Officers and Coordinators is held each year as 3-year terms expire and Group Representatives vote to select the new Table Officer or Coordinator. Coordinators and District Representatives will present resources and/or workshops that may serve to help groups and members grow and thrive. Assembly is a time when we communicate beyond the groups to ensure Al-Anon and Alateen continues to help members "find solutions that lead to serenity".

Who is a voting member of the Assembly?

The only voting members at Assembly are the Group Representatives. Other Al-Anon members can participate in the discussion; however, only Group Representatives make the final decisions. (See Concept 1)

How do the lines of communication work in Al-Anon service structure? (See pg. 166 in *Service Manual*)

Group Representatives act as the voice of their group. By attending district meetings and Assemblies, and acting as an information source for the groups, Group Representatives have a key role in connecting their group members to the larger Al-Anon community. All Al-Anon decisions

are made by Al-Anon members through representation by their Group Representative. Without active involvement by a Group Representative, Al-Anon can fail to serve members effectively and miss opportunities to thrive as a resource to families and friends of alcoholics.

District Representatives act as the voice of the groups in their district at Area World Service Committee meetings (AWSC) in March and September. District Representatives share information and questions with the Table Officers and Coordinators. They also act as a resource to Group Representatives to help groups learn from each other and to help resolve any issues that may arise in the groups. They help prepare the agenda for Assembly and may lead workshops.

Area Coordinators offer resources and support to groups and districts related to their area of service. The Coordinator positions are as follows: Public Outreach, Al-Anon Adult Child, Literature, Alateen Coordinator, Alateen Representative, Alternate Alateen Representative, Archivist, Website and Newsletter Editor. They give reports at Assembly, help lead workshops and are available by phone or email between Assemblies.

The Table Officers help conduct the day-to-day business of Al-Anon at the Area level and act as a resource to groups and districts in the Area. The Table Officers are as follows: World Service Delegate, Alternate World Service Delegate, Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The Delegate is in direct contact with the World Service Office and attends the World Service Conference in April each year with Delegates from Canada, USA and guests. The Delegate presents a report at Assembly from his/her attendance at the World Service Conference to share what is happening to serve members from the World Service perspective. He/she will also take ideas or suggestions to the World Service Office that can help develop resources to serve the needs of the groups.

World Service Office is a resource center for Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups. They are not a governing body, but act as a service body. They provide guidance and support to Table Officers, Coordinators and District Representatives, to ensure they can perform their roles effectively. WSO staff regularly surveys service members to determine what resources may be needed to support Al-Anon/Alateen success in each community. A wealth of information developed from the collective wisdom of many Al-Anon and Alateen groups is available on the WSO website.

GROUP REPRESENTATIVE'S ROLE AT ASSEMBLY

What is the role of the Group Representative?

Read the agenda and discussion topics before you come to Assembly. The District Representative will see that each Group Representative receives the weekend agenda, the business meeting agenda and the Friday Night Pertinent Topics prior to Assembly. The pertinent topics should be discussed with the members of your group so you can represent their thoughts and ideas during the discussions at Assembly and be prepared to vote on their behalf. You will also vote on motions that come up during the business meeting.

Review the Minutes from the previous Assembly. These are forwarded to each Group Representative by your District Representative. The minutes consist of Table Officers', Coordinators' and District Representatives' reports as well as motions and business from Assembly. The minutes from each previous Assembly will be adopted at the following Assembly during the business meeting.

Learn about important issues regarding the needs of Al-Anon/Alateen from a broader perspective. What can members of your group do to ensure Al-Anon and Alateen are relevant and available to the next generation?

Vote for new Table Officer and Coordinator service positions. At each Fall Assembly one or more Table Officers and Coordinators will be completing their term and a new member will be selected by vote. Group Representatives vote to select a suitable candidate to serve in the available position(s) for a 3-year term to begin the following January.

Write down interesting ideas/comments. You will hear from other members at Assembly who may have different perspectives, or great ideas/solutions to discussion topics. Write them down and share them with your group members.

Learn about resources available to your group members. You will have access to Table Officers and Coordinators who have resources to help you in your role as Group Representative. If you have feedback for them coming from your group, now is a great time to have those conversations.

Prepare a report to take to your members. You are expected to share what you learn with the members of your group at future group meetings. You can do this in whatever format works for your group.

What do I need to know?

As Group Representative, you are an important link for communication between the group, District, Area and World Service Office. Without you, your group is missing out on many opportunities for growth through sharing the best Al-Anon has to offer.

Assembly's purpose is to do the business of Al-Anon and to ensure that communication from the Area and World Service Office reaches the groups. Communication works both ways – Assembly discussion topics and workshops are an opportunity for you to communicate thoughts, ideas, problems and concerns about topics being discussed in your group and then taking relevant information back to your group.

Each group should have funds set aside to reimburse your travel, hotel and meal costs to attend Assembly. Coordinating rides and rooms with other Group Representatives can help save on costs and it also provides an opportunity for discussion before and after Assembly.

Who can I ask for help?

Almost everyone at the Assembly is, or has been, a Group Representative. If you don't understand something, be sure to ask someone sitting at your table. During the Saturday business meeting, you will be sitting with your District Representative and other members from your District. At other times, you are free to sit with anyone you wish. We encourage you to sit with someone you do not know, a friend you haven't met yet.

Experience has shown that having a service sponsor will help make your term as Group Representative more fulfilling. It is always better to share experiences in AI-Anon!

What should I take with me?

- Minutes from the previous Assembly
- Your AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual
- Any notes from your group's discussions to help you with voting
- Comfortable clothing (you will be sitting a lot)
- Coffee/tea mug
- Pen and notepad
- Money for Tradition 7 coffee
- A copy of this booklet
- Money if you wish to purchase Conference Approved Literature, for yourself or your group
- Money for Gratitude Basket, Love Money for Delegate, Fundraisers or Raffle Baskets

What do I need to take back to my group?

- Ideas learned from the experience of other Group Representatives
- Resources available from the Table Officers and Coordinators and how to access them
- Highlights from the Delegate's conversation
- Love Gifts from the Delegate's table
- Inform members of the topics that were discussed and new information you may have learned. Also share voting results.
- Encourage participation beyond the group level. Active members = vibrant groups! By sharing what you learn, you will be educating members about the importance of active involvement in supporting the health and growth of AI-Anon/Alateen.

HOW DOES THE BUSINESS MEETING WORK?

What we want to achieve:

- We are all on the same team.
- We want you to be successful.
- Listen, think and support what you believe is best for AI-Anon, regardless of what others are saying/doing.
- All opinions are welcome. You may have a perspective that may help us make a better choice.

How are decisions made?

Before any vote is taken, it is important for all voting members to have the same information. This is the purpose of the Friday Night Discussion of Pertinent Topics held prior to the Assembly business meeting which takes place Saturday morning. In the fall of 2009, Saskatchewan Area Assembly adopted the approach called Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM). In this format, a facilitated discussion allows all members present to express opinions without judgement or bias.

The principles of KBDM are:

- Talk to each other (equality)
- Reason things out (patience)
- Participate in discussions (honesty and generosity)
- Be open minded (understanding and compassion)
- Show respect (acceptance and trust)

Rules of conduct for open discussion:

- One time to the microphone on a topic
- Two minutes at the microphone on a topic
- No side conversations
- Have a 'Respectful Ear'. Write down your questions and pass to your DR
- No cell phones
- No applause
- Express your opinion, but not if someone else has already done so
- Stay on topic
- Follow the agenda
- Be courteous
- Presume goodwill – everyone wants what is best for AI-Anon regardless of whether you agree or disagree

How should I introduce myself when speaking at the microphone?

When speaking at the microphone, introduce yourself by first name and last initial and give your District number. All Group Representatives have voice throughout the weekend. At the Fall 2015 Assembly, Saskatchewan AI-Anon began allowing Interested Members to sit with their district during the business meeting. Prior to this, they sat at their own tables in the back of the hall. Interested Members have voice throughout the Assembly weekend *except* during the business meeting Saturday morning.

How is voting conducted?

After a motion has been made, there will be time for discussion. When the chairperson feels enough time has elapsed and there is a common understanding, he/she will have the Area Secretary re-read the motion and call for a vote. Each Group Representative will have been given a yellow voting card when they signed the voting book prior to the business meeting. You will raise your voting card for *In Favor* or *Opposed*. Hold the card up until votes have been counted. Only Group Representatives, or their proxy, have a vote during the meeting. There are detailed voting procedures included in your Assembly folder that will be reviewed at the beginning of the business meeting.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will I be voting at Assembly?

Voting is conducted at Assembly by Group Representatives only. The “ultimate authority” rests with the group members. This is how AI-Anon is guided by the wishes of the members rather than a governing body. (Concept 1)

I am not able to attend Assembly. Can I send the votes by proxy or can another GR take my place?

To have your group represented, the group could choose a member (who is not also an AA member) to attend Assembly in your place. He/she would be the Alternate Group Representative or Proxy, and would register as a voting member at Assembly by signing the voting book. A Group Representative or Proxy that votes for his/her group cannot also vote for another group. District Representatives who are also Group Representatives are eligible to vote.

Can other members who are not Group Representatives attend Assembly?

Yes, all AI-Anon members are welcome and encouraged to participate in Assembly. The Group Representatives, District Representatives, Coordinators and Table Officers are expected to attend each Assembly. Anyone else may attend as an ‘Interested Member’.

Why is it important for me to attend? Can't I just get a written report of Assembly?

There are many useful conversations that take place at Assembly. It is impossible to capture all the great ideas in a written report. By attending, you have the opportunity to discover interesting ideas that may serve to improve your AI-Anon/Alateen meetings. Fellowship is an important part of AI-Anon/Alateen recovery. We hope you will discover that fellowship at Assembly is a wonderful experience. Attending Assembly connects us with the wider fellowship of the AI-Anon groups.

If my group has a question or a concern they want me to bring to Assembly, how can I do that?

There will be an Ask-it-Basket box at Assembly for you to write down the question and submit it. After a meeting Saturday evening of the Table Officers, Coordinators and most District Reps, the answers to all questions will be presented during a Sunday morning session.

If I can't find someone to share a room with, who can help me find a roommate?

You may contact your District Rep or one of the Table Officers if you are unable to find a roommate. There are times when they can match you with another Group Representative in the same circumstance. If you are unable to find a roommate and your group funds cannot cover the cost of a single occupancy room, check with your district to determine if there may be funds available to cover the extra costs. There are also billets available which allows you to stay free in the home of an AI-Anon member. To inquire about a billet, see the registration form for the registrar's contact information.

My group cannot pay for me to attend Assembly. How can our group participate?

If your group cannot pay for all of your expenses, perhaps your District can help with some of the costs. Staying with a billet instead of in the hotel will greatly lessen the expense. See the registration form for the registrar's contact information. Your group could also do some fundraising within AI-Anon to raise money for your extra costs. (See page 97 in the *Service Manual*).

How can I find a service sponsor to help me with my service position?

There are many members who have participated in service and would be happy to help you on your new journey! Check with service members in your district, or talk with current service members at Assembly. Almost everyone in the room has something to offer. This is where fellowship can be helpful in choosing the right person for you.

What are the qualifications for a Table Officer position?

The nominee should have experience as a current or past District Representative, be prepared to serve for 3 years and be an active member of AI-Anon. Having personal knowledge and skills to perform specific duties of the position is recommended. For example, computer skills for the Secretary and accounting skills for the Treasurer would significantly help them in their positions.

Will there be time for fellowship at Assembly?

The business of Assembly takes place Friday evening during the Discussion of Pertinent Topics time and again on Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon, during the business meeting. At all other times, there is ample opportunity for fellowship. There are presentations, skits and workshops, planned breaks and meal times to connect with others. An early-bird AI-Anon meeting is scheduled for 6:45 Friday evening and a "Spiritual Time" on Sunday morning. These are all good opportunities for spending time with new friends!

Will there be a "Tradition 7" collection at Assembly?

There is a Tradition 7 basket at the coffee/tea table for members to contribute as they are able. There is also an opportunity to make personal donations to Saskatchewan Area Assembly using the "Gratitude Envelope" in your folder, (suggested amount is \$1 to \$2 for every year of your AI-Anon recovery) and a "Love Gift", which is a personal monetary donation to assist the Delegate with incidental expenses while he/she is attending the World Service Conference.

New information came forward at Assembly that makes me think my group would make a different choice if they had all the information. What should I do?

As a trusted servant, you have been delegated authority to use your intelligence to make effective decisions. (Concept 10) When attending Assembly where you have access to all the facts to guide you, it is expected that you act according to your own conscience. (Concept 3)

COMMON ACRONYMS

Here is a list of common Al-Anon acronyms, or initials. This list is to help newer service members become familiar with our service terminology.

AFG	Al-Anon Family Groups
AIS	Al-Anon Information Service
AMIAS	Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (Alateen Sponsor)
AWSC	Area World Service Committee
CAL	Conference Approved Literature
CMA	Current Mailing Address
DR	District Representative
GR	Group Representative
LDC	Literature Depot Centre
PSA	Public Service Announcement
WSC	World Service Conference (an event)
WSO	World Service Office (a location)
KBDM	Knowledge Based Decision Making
T.E.A.M. Event	Together Empowering Al-Anon Members