

Guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon Members

Suggested Format for Al-Anon/Alateen Meetings

Al-Anon Groups are the heart of the Al-Anon programme. Good meetings ensure healthy Groups. Varying the meeting topics and planning specific programmes keep the Group healthy, alive and interesting. Preparing for a meeting, whether it is telling your own story or researching the vast treasure of Al-Anon literature stimulates growth and self-confidence. The possibilities for meeting topics are endless and each Group will develop its own choices for good meetings.

OPENING THE MEETING

Because every Group is autonomous, formats of meetings may vary, but most follow a familiar pattern, allowing members to visit Groups anywhere in the world and feel 'at home'. A few tips:



- Open meetings on time, usually with a moment of silence (to remember why we are here). Welcome members, particularly newcomers.
- Read the Suggested Preamble, the Suggested Al-Anon Welcome, the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions and, perhaps, the Integrity Clause. The Concepts may also be read. Bear in mind that not everyone likes to read aloud.
- Introduce the speaker for the meeting, who will share on a suggested Al-Anon theme or their own story. Experience suggests that more can be accomplished by discussing a single topic on which members share their thoughts.
- Each member is encouraged to share but no pressure should be brought to bear on any member to speak.
- Before the meeting closes, gently ask any newcomers if they would like to speak. Some may be too shy unless prompted but will 'open up' if encouraged to do so.
- Close with the Suggested Closing followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Approved Literature (CAL), and shares how this applies to their own life. Other members then explain how the Step helps in their recovery. Further analysis of the Steps may be found in Al-Anon literature.

The Twelve Traditions

Study one or more of the Traditions regularly: their value in maintaining Group unity and growth may be discussed, keeping in mind the goal of Al-Anon unity worldwide. Try to apply the Traditions to family relations, in order to discover new insights. As with the Steps, helpful pointers will be found in Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

The Twelve Concepts and Warranties

You may gain a better understanding of the service structure of Al-Anon by studying the Concepts and Warranties. You may also find it thought-provoking to discuss applying these principles to your personal life.

Slogans

Display the Slogans around your meeting room as a reminder of their value. Choose one or more as a meeting topic regularly, inviting members to share how they use them in their lives. A variation is for each member to pick a Slogan out of a hat and share on its importance to them in their recovery.

Literature Meeting



Choose a particular piece of CAL, ask one member to read the salient points to the meeting then share on its impact. Other members can then speak of their own

experiences with the piece.

Personal Stories

Ask one member to start the meeting with their personal story, describing what their life had been

SUGGESTED MEETING TOPICS



The Twelve Steps

Try to include a Step Meeting once a month, as these Steps are the basis of the Al-Anon programme. The speaker reads the Step chosen, often using an explanation from a piece of Al-Anon Conference

like, what happened, how Al-Anon helped and how their life is now.

'Ask It Basket'

Ask members to write questions on Al-Anon topics (anonymously or not) then open them up for Group discussion.

Visiting Al-Anon Speakers

Invite one or several members from other Groups to share at your meeting on a regular basis and be prepared to visit other Groups to share your story.

AA Speaker



Invite AA members to share at your meetings from time to time as this can be interesting and helpful, giving insights into the disease of alcoholism. If appropriate, suggest to the guest

speaker that the emphasis be placed on the family recovery rather than dwelling on their experiences as an active alcoholic.

Open Meeting

Plan occasional Open Meetings which non-Al-Anon members may attend. (Please notify GSO of the date of these meetings.) Invite professionals and other people to see how a Group meeting functions. Other types of Open Meetings can be planned for Public Information (See *PI Guidelines Booklet UK14*).

Group Inventory (Group Conscience) Meeting

Invite members to share their views on how they would like to see the Group evolve and on any perceived problems within the Group.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Always open meetings on time.
- Don't let one member monopolise the meeting.
- Discourage talk about the alcoholic.
- Avoid gossip, criticism and discussion of religion.
- The anonymity of other members must be



preserved at all times. Al-Anon meetings must be absolutely confidential and problems arising should never be discussed outside.

A member's telephone number must not be passed on to a third party without express permission.

- Members must be allowed to work out their own problems without pressure or persuasion.
- The meeting concludes with the Suggested Closing and the Serenity Prayer.

- It is customary to take a voluntary collection at each meeting to cover the Group's expenses and to support of the work of the General Service Office and Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK & Eire.
- The time for refreshments can play an extremely important role in the Group, as it gives members an opportunity to share on a one-to-one basis. Online meetings may want to allow time before and/or after the meeting for fellowship and refreshments. 
- For details of all types of meetings, see *Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual, Part 2: Groups at Work*.
- Plan your programme well in advance. Try to achieve a balance between meetings which feature speakers and those which centre around discussion of a topic.
- Vary the content to make it more interesting.

OTHER POSSIBLE TOPICS

- Sponsorship.
- Carrying the Message.
- Acceptance.
- Tolerance towards others and self.
- Planning the action and not the results.
- Principles above personalities.
- Serenity and humility.
- Overcoming fears.
- Using the tools of the programme.
- Gratitude.
- Dealing constructively with anger.
- HOW - Honesty, Openness and Willingness.
- Attitude - is yours worth catching?
- Meditation and the Eleventh Step.
- Higher Power.
- Service.
- Contributions to *Al-Anon Today*.
- Welcoming newcomers.

An unlimited supply of topics can be found in Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

The content of every book and leaflet offers options for a variety of subjects and situations.

Copies of our literature order form are available from the website.

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