

Guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon Members

Co-operation Between Al-Anon and AA

Tradition Six states in part, 'Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous'. The fellowships of Al-Anon/Alateen and AA have a special relationship. They were closely allied in their origins and are naturally drawn together by their family ties. However, experience suggests that if they remain separate they will each work more effectively.



Therefore, in keeping with this Tradition, there can be no combining, joining or uniting which would result in the loss of identity of either fellowship. Being a separate entity rules out affiliation or merging, but it does not exclude co-operation or acting together for mutual benefit. Al-Anon acknowledges with gratitude the spiritual contribution of AA.

Here are some questions that frequently arise:

Can there be a combined Al-Anon and AA Group?

No. A Group must be either one or the other to be registered with either the Al-Anon or AA General Service Office.

Should AA members be asked to speak at Al-Anon open meetings?

An occasional talk by an AA member at an open meeting can be interesting and helpful. When the programme includes AA speakers it helps to keep the focus on Al-Anon by having an Al-Anon speaker last.



Should AA members be asked to speak at Al-Anon public meetings?

No, the object of these meetings is to inform the general public about Al-Anon. An AA speaker could divert the attention of the audience from the effects of alcoholism on the family to the illness of the alcoholic.

What is the role of the Al-Anon member who is also a member of AA?

Some members of Al-Anon are also members of AA; they are welcome to join Al-Anon if they feel their lives have been affected by someone else's drinking.

However, their eligibility to hold office in Al-Anon or Alateen is limited. AA members do

not serve as Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives (DRs) or Area Coordinators. They do not do service beyond Group level. (See *UK & Eire Service Manual*) Members of AA cannot be Sponsors of an Alateen Group. (See *UK & Eire Service Manual*) They do not serve on the telephone helpline or as e-responders.

How do other Twelve Step programmes relate to Al-Anon?

Members should not discuss their membership of other anonymous fellowships because the primary purpose of an Al-Anon Group is to help the families and friends of alcoholics.

Their attendance at Al-Anon or Alateen meetings indicates their membership eligibility and their willingness to focus their attention on the help that only Al-Anon can offer.

What procedure can be taken to ensure co-operation when both fellowships are participating in a convention?

When Al-Anon invites AA participation, the Al-Anon hosts provide ample meeting space. Ask an AA liaison member to attend the planning sessions, request that AA members choose their own speakers and plan their own agenda. Al-Anon is responsible for the overall convention plans and activities. (See *Guidelines for Conventions, UKG3.*)

When Al-Anon is invited to participate at an AA convention, members should remember they are present by invitation. The overall plans are AA's responsibility and close co-operation with the organising committee should be established whenever possible. However, Al-Anon is a separate entity, responsible for its own speakers and meetings (including collections and sales of literature).

If Alateen meetings are to be held at a convention, then it cannot be stressed firmly enough that organising committees must be fully conversant with the *Al-Anon Safeguarding Children Policy*. The main points to note are that:

- Two Alateen Screened Group Sponsors need to be present at all in-person Alateen meetings.
- A consent form must be completed by the legal guardian giving their permission for the Alateen member to attend and naming the adult responsible for the Alateen member if the member is not accompanied by the legal guardian.
- It is the responsibility of the Al-Anon organising committee to check that Alateen Screened Group Sponsors are on the current Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors. *(For further information, contact the General Service Office.)*

Should AA members sponsor Alateen Groups?

No. This is not in line with the *Al-Anon Safeguarding Children Policies*.

Should Al-Anon and AA have combined Information Services?

No. Both experience and the Twelve Traditions suggest that each fellowship functions more effectively if it retains separate facilities.

Can Al-Anon accept a contribution from an AA convention in which Al-Anon and Alateen have participated?

Yes. A survey conducted by the World Service Office indicated that Al-Anon and Alateen participation contributes substantially to the success of AA conventions. In acknowledgement of Al-Anon and Alateen support, many AA convention planning committees do offer a proportion of the registration proceeds to Al-Anon. The World Service Conference has determined that such contributions may be accepted.

Should Al-Anon stock and/or use AA literature?



No. In general, neither fellowship stocks nor uses the other's literature. When Al-Anon members use AA literature for their meetings,

there is a tendency to concentrate on the alcoholic and his/her behaviour rather than the family experience and their own recovery.

There is, of course, a great deal of value in literature other than that which is Al-Anon Conference Approved. But it is not the purpose of Al-Anon to make its members familiar with all the approaches - only the Al-Anon approach. Those who wish to acquaint themselves with AA reading material can readily find it at an open AA meeting.

