

AL-ANON guidelines

The Shared Experiences Of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Beginners' Meeting

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Beginners' Meetings are an important part of our Al-Anon Family Groups. Members introduce newcomers to the Al-Anon program as well as inform them about the disease of alcoholism. They give the newcomers the opportunity to discuss their feelings with long-time members, which is something they cannot always do at meetings with preplanned programs. Remember, when chairing a Beginner's Meeting you are simply sharing the experience, strength and hope that you found in the Al-Anon program of recovery. This Guideline simply offers suggestions to make your sharing easier.

The usual time for Beginners' Meetings is from 30 to 45 minutes, just prior to Al-Anon meetings. Beginner Meetings are conducted by an Al-Anon/Alateen member who understands the Twelve Steps and Traditions. Patience, tolerance, the abilities to listen and to explain our program to families and friends of alcoholics are important qualities for those who conduct Beginners' Meetings. Having two or three other Al-Anon members present to share their views on questions that may arise, is a good idea.

Urge the newcomers to read the Al-Anon books and pamphlets; point out the benefits of each. Encourage beginners to share the Al-Anon program of recovery with their children. A fine way of doing this is to display and discuss Al-Anon/Alateen literature. It is helpful to introduce the Conference-Approved Literature (CAL) associated with each of the suggested meetings. A personal explanation about the contents and value of each piece makes our written recovery information come alive.

It can be very helpful to offer newcomers a copy of *The Forum* magazine to read between meetings. The magazine is especially good for newcomers who might feel too afraid to make phone calls, yet. Since the magazine is a "meeting in your pocket," the stories can keep newcomers in touch with Al-Anon's message of hope, based on the experience and strength of individual members. Groups can decide whether to loan the magazines or to give them away.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR A SIX-WEEK SERIES OF MEETINGS:

- Open the meeting with the Serenity Prayer, the Suggested Welcome, the Preamble and the Twelve Steps.
- Explain who attends Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and what newcomers may expect at a meeting.
- Stress the importance of attending all scheduled Beginner Meetings in the series.
- Encourage newcomers to attend other Al-Anon meetings and offer a list of meetings in the area.
- Explain how Alateen is part of Al-Anon and the help it offers to children of alcoholics.
- Briefly explain that Al-Anon is a spiritual program. However, we do not discuss specific religious tenets.
- Point out the importance of guarding each member's anonymity; stress that gossip is detrimental to ourselves, to others and to Al-Anon as a whole.
- Encourage newcomers to express their feelings so they will be able to concentrate on their own recovery. This is an ideal time to emphasize the need for individual sponsorship.
- Explain Al-Anon Conference-Approved Literature (CAL) and the importance of reading it. Inform newcomers about Al-Anon/Alateen books, pamphlets and *The Forum* magazine.
- Suggest occasional attendance at open AA meetings.
- Stress the importance of talking with members before and after meetings. Have members' phone numbers and local meeting lists available for distribution.
- End the meeting with the Suggested Closing and a prayer that is acceptable to the group conscience.



First Meeting

Describe the impact alcoholism has on those close to the alcoholic.

Briefly discuss Step One—emphasizing that we are not responsible for the alcoholic’s behavior.

Talk about the 3C’s: We did not cause alcoholism. We cannot control it. We cannot cure it.

Suggested Conference Approved Literature for First Meeting

- P-48* Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism
P-13 Purpose and Suggestions
S-4 Information for the Newcomer

And their choice of pamphlets applicable to their circumstances

- S-17 Al-Anon, Is It For You?
S-20 Alateen, Is It For you?
S-25 Did you Grow Up With A Problem Drinker?
P-41 Facts About Alateen
P-1 Al-Anon Is For Men
P-16 To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic
P-21 Youth and the Alcoholic Parent
P-85 Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians

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Second Meeting

Continue to discuss Step One.

Delve into living one day at a time.

Suggested Conference Approved Literature for Second Meeting

- P-32* This Is Al-Anon
P-14 So You Love An Alcoholic
M-12 Just For Today
S-19 Detachment

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Third Meeting

Review Step One.

Discuss the slogans:

- Let Go and Let God
- Easy Does it
- Live and Let Live
- First Things First
- One Day at a Time
- Keep It Simple
- Think
- Listen and Learn

Suggested Conference Approved Literature for Third Meeting

- P-7* A Guide For the Family
P-19 What Do You Do About the Alcoholic’s Drinking?
P-6 Freedom From Despair

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Fourth Meeting

Discuss Step Two

Introduce the Serenity Prayer and discuss its three parts: acceptance, change, wisdom.

Suggested Conference Approved Literature for Fourth Meeting

- P-4* Alcoholism, The Family Disease
P-2 Al-Anon, You and the Alcoholic
P-15 Three Views of Al-Anon
M-26 Serenity Prayer Card

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Fifth Meeting

Discuss Step Three.

Talk about understanding ourselves and letting go of fears, resentments and self-pity.

Suggested Conference Approved Literature for Fifth Meeting

- P-3* Alcoholism, A Merry-Go-Round Named denial
P-9 How Can I Help My Children?

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Sixth Meeting

Explain that each person is a vital part of an Al-Anon group.

Discuss sponsorship and the importance of selecting a sponsors as soon as possible.

Talk about choosing a home group and how a group is structured according to the Twelve Traditions.

Encourage attendance at as many other Al-Anon meetings as possible.

Briefly tell how Al-Anon came to be.

Suggested Conference Approved Literature for Sixth Meeting

- P-31* Sponsorship, What It’s All About
P-33* Why Is Al-Anon Anonymous?
P-17 Twelve Steps and Traditions
P-18 Twelve Steps and Traditions of Alateen
M-44 Al-Anon/Alateen Is and Is Not bookmark

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*Denotes smaller selection of literature for groups with limited financial resources.

Packets of pamphlets selected for newcomers to Al-Anon/Alateen are available as follows:

- K-10 Al-Anon Newcomers Packet
K-21 Adult Children of Alcoholics Newcomers Packet
K-23 Men’s Newcomer Packet
K-24 Parent’s Newcomer Packet
K-18 Alateen Newcomer Packet