

Al-Anon Family Groups

The members of this Al-Anon Family Group share with you what it is like to come to a meeting for the first time. There may be a few things you are wondering about.

We are often asked about the group and what happens at our meetings. If you have questions, be sure to ask a member to answer them now, or the next time you come, and *please* do come back.

Who are the members and why are they here?

Members are all kinds of people from all walks of life: wives, husbands, lovers, sisters, brothers, children and parents of alcoholics. No matter what our relationship is or has been with a problem drinker, we share a common bond: we feel our lives have been deeply affected by another person's drinking. We meet together to share our experience, strength and hope.

How will it help me?

You will probably hear about a situation much like your own. If you don't find someone with the same set of circumstances, you may still be able to identify with the way most of us feel about the effects of alcoholism on our lives. We are all individuals striving to become the best people we can, each in our own way. That way is not the same for each of us, but there is help for everyone whose problem is alcoholism in others.

Do I have to say anything?

No. If you would rather sit and listen, you are free to do so. We try to listen with an open mind. We say, "Take what you like and leave the rest." We usually have a group leader who calls on those who want to express an opinion, ask, or answer a question.

Will anyone say I've been here?

We are urged to respect each other's anonymity. We use first names and last initials; we do not talk about the people we see, or repeat what we hear at meetings. We also guard the anonymity of AA members.

Is this some kind of religious fellowship?

No. Ours is a spiritual one where we try to accept the idea that we are dependent upon a Power greater than ourselves for help in solving our problems and achieving peace of mind. Members' individual beliefs are a personal matter and we make it a point to avoid discussions in terms of any specific faith.

Who runs this group?

We all do but to maintain order and allow for its smooth functioning, we elect group officers to serve for short periods of time, usually six months to a year. At an Institutions group, experienced members lead the meeting. We all volunteer to help serve refreshments and to clean up.

Are there other groups like this?

Yes. Ours is one of many thousands of Al-Anon and Alateen groups in over 80 countries around the world. We are tied together through a World Service Office (WSO) in New York City which acts as a clearing-house for ideas and service. In the U.S. and Canada, each group belongs to a District and an Assembly Area. The Group Representatives meet to elect a Delegate to the annual World Service Conference where decisions are made to ensure our unity. Other countries may have different service structures which are tied to the WSO.

How much is this going to cost?

There are no dues or fees to join an Al-Anon or Alateen group. Most groups do pass a basket and we put in what we can afford to contribute on a voluntary basis. We use the money to pay the rent for a meeting place, to provide Al-Anon Conference-Approved Literature for the group, to buy refreshments, and to support our local and worldwide service centers.

Now, what do I do?

We members found it helpful to go to many meetings, to talk to others, before and after meetings, and to exchange phone numbers with a willing member with whom we can confidentially share our problems. After awhile, you may wish to ask a longtime member to be your sponsor – a special friend, with whom you can continue sharing your personal feelings. Between meetings, you can read Al-Anon/Alateen books, pamphlets, our magazine, The FORUM, and our newsletters. We offer you our friendship and our understanding. Please keep coming back.

Call (805) 688-4304

The Serenity prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.