

SUGGESTED AL-ANON MEETING FORMAT

Adapted from the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2022-2025

(Each group is free to formulate their own Meeting Format based on the following format, at least to include the Serenity Prayer, Al-Anon Preamble to the 12 Steps, the Al-Anon 12 Steps, Passing the basket (7th Tradition) statement).

Meeting Opening

Open the meeting with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

The Serenity Prayer

Chairperson: Will you join me in a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer?

God grant me the serenity

To accept the things I cannot change,

And wisdom to know the difference.

The Suggested Al-Anon Welcome

We welcome you to the Al-Anon Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

We who live, or have lived, with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can. We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon we discover that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

We urge you to try our programme. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes, and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.

The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with an alcoholic is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.

The Al-Anon programme is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous), which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives along with our slogans and the Serenity Prayer. The loving interchange of help among members and daily reading of Al-Anon literature thus makes us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.

Anonymity is an important principle of the Al-Anon programme. Everything that is said here, in the group meeting and member-to-member, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in Al-Anon.

Special Note: Anonymity is a spiritual principle and cannot be used as a legal basis to shield criminal behaviour, past or current. It is wise to remember that Al-Anon meetings are not

above the law. Members need to exercise care in sharing information that could require reporting to authorities.

Our Three Legacies

Recovery through acceptance of the Steps

Unity through the Traditions

Service through the Concepts

The threefold guides of Al-Anon point the way to a normal, useful life for the individual. They also are a framework within which the groups can carry on their affairs in harmony.

Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organisation, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practising the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

Many groups choose to have a member read one, or all, of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and/or Twelve Concepts of Service.

Twelve Steps

Because of their proven power and worth, A.A.'s Twelve Steps have been adopted almost word for word by Al-Anon. They represent a way of life appealing to all people of good will, of any religious faith or of none. Note the power of the very words.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Optional Readings

At this point in the meeting, groups may choose to read one or more of the “Optional Readings” (pages 21-25 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2022-2025) or other selections from AI-Anon Conference Approved Literature.

Introductions

The Chairperson invites members to introduce themselves. Members may choose to use their first name only or their entire name, according to their personal preference. The Chairperson may ask newcomers to identify themselves and welcome them.

At some point in the meeting, many groups have the Chairperson say if the group meeting has a special format (Step-study, speakers or discussion group), has a specific routine for calling on members, asks members from other anonymous fellowships to remain anonymous and focus on the AI-Anon programme, and clarifies if the meeting is for Families, Friends, and Observers (Welcome) or for Families and Friends Only**. Members are also told how they can obtain AI-Anon Conference Approved Literature.*

*This is a Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome meeting; we welcome visitors seeking information about AI-Anon, as well as newcomers and members of AI-Anon.

** This is a Families and Friends Only meeting for AI-Anon members and prospective members only. Anyone who believes they have been affected by someone else’s drinking is welcome.

Announcements and Reports

This is a time for announcements of local AI-Anon events, service meetings, and other group business, including day and time of business meetings, Treasurer’s or librarian’s report, and announcements from the District, Area, or World Service Office.

The Meeting Programme

The meeting programme is decided by group conscience and typically involves one member introducing a speaker or topic for discussion. (See “Meeting Ideas” in the WSO Service Manual)

Passing the Basket:

At some point during the programme, voluntary contributions are made, following this statement by the Chairperson or Treasurer:

“We have no dues or fees; according to our Seventh Tradition, ‘Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.’ We contribute in gratitude for what we have received from AI-Anon.

Groups with expenses may also include this statement, We do this through our own voluntary contributions by passing the (electronic) basket to cover group expenses, including rent or platform fees, purchase of literature and the support of our service arms.”

Alternatively, groups without expenses may encourage their members to visit al-anon.org or other service arm websites to support their services to the worldwide fellowship directly.

Suggested Al-Anon Closing:

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.

The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A few special words to those of you who haven't been with us long: Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realise that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

We aren't perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you. After a while, you'll discover that though you may not like all of us, you'll love us in a very special way – the same way we already love you.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love, and peace of the programme grow in you one day at a time.

Will all who care to, join me in closing with the _____ prayer?

Al-Anon Declaration:

It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience. Many groups say the Al-Anon Declaration after the Suggested Al-Anon Meeting Closing:

Let It Begin With Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there,
and - *Let It Begin With Me.*