

How our Traditions shape the policy regarding service participation by members of Al-Anon Family Groups who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous

Current Policy:

Al-Anon's policy is that members who are also members of A.A. do not serve as Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Area Delegate, World Service Conference member, alternate to any of these service positions or on any committee of the World Service Office. *(from page 87 in the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021)*

How the Traditions have shaped this policy:

Tradition Five defines Al-Anon's single purpose. Tradition Six encourages cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous, maintaining that Al-Anon is a separate entity that ought never affiliate or create the appearance of affiliation with any outside enterprise. Putting these principles into practice maintains a separation between the service structures of Al-Anon and A.A. This separation helps avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and safeguards Al-Anon's singleness of purpose.

Filling service positions is a matter of District and Area autonomy, within this policy and the spiritual principles that form its basis. Tradition Four grants autonomy to local service arms, except in matters affecting Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole. Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. participate fully in all group activities, including group conscience decisions. However, they do not hold Al-Anon service positions that vote in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole.

Participating in Al-Anon service is integral to recovery for every member. Step Twelve, carrying our message to others, is a very important part of Al-Anon service. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of A.A. are often in a position to carry our message to those who are not aware of the benefits of attending Al-Anon Family Groups. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of A.A. may serve Al-Anon in ways that include being an Alateen Group Sponsor (see "Alateen Policy") or they may be invited by local/Area service arms, the Board of Trustees or the World Service Office to participate in projects, in keeping with the spirit of this policy.

This policy on service participation by members of Al-Anon who are also A.A. members protects Al-Anon's viability as a program dedicated to helping the families and friends of alcoholics. It ensures that Al-Anon's service structure represents the unique perspective of families and friends of alcoholics, recognizing that the alcoholic's perspective is represented in A.A.'s service structure. Members honor this policy out of respect for Al-Anon unity and the group conscience process, in accordance with Tradition One and Tradition Two. *(from pages 86-87 in the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021)*

Examples of service positions that can be held by members of Al-Anon Family Groups who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous:

- Group Chairperson, Secretary, or Treasurer
- Greeter
- Set Up/Clean Up
- Alateen Sponsor
- Amias (Al-Anon Member in Alateen Service)
- Any position on the Area Convention Committee
- Speaker
- Assisting the local AIS (Al-Anon Information Service) or LD (Literature Depot)

Examples of service positions that are not held by members of Al-Anon Family Groups who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous:

- Group Representatives (GRs)
- District Representatives (DRs)
- Area Coordinators
- Newsletter Editors
- Delegates and/or any of their alternates

Applying THINK:

THOUGHTFUL

Al-Anon welcomes A.A. members to its meetings and encourages them to share their experience, strength, and hope to others.

This policy protects Al-Anon's viability as a program dedicated to helping the families and friends of alcoholics, ensuring that Al-Anon's service structure represents the unique perspective of families and friends of alcoholics, and recognizing that the alcoholic's perspective is represented in A.A.'s service structure.

HELPFUL

Participating in Al-Anon service is integral to recovery for every member. Step Twelve, carrying our message to others, is a very important part of Al-Anon service. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of A.A. are often in a position to carry our message to those who are not aware of the benefits of attending Al-Anon Family Groups. *(from page 87 in the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021)*

INTELLIGENT

The Fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups have a unique relationship. They are naturally drawn together by their close ties, and yet the Twelve Traditions, the General Service Boards, and the General Service Conferences of both Fellowships suggest that each functions more effectively if it remains "separate," cooperating with, but not affiliating with the other.

NECESSARY

... alcoholics' top priority had to be their own sobriety; therefore, their first commitment had to be to the A.A. program. This priority would be a conflict of interest with their commitment to the Al-Anon/Alateen interpretation of the program... *(from page 184 in the Many Voices, One Journey)*

Al-Anon values the participation of A.A. members in meetings, as Alateen sponsors, and welcomes hearing their point of view at Area Assemblies. Keeping our governance leaderships separated offers a clarity of structure and unity of purpose. While A.A. and Al-Anon both focus on recovery from the effects of alcohol, the experiences of alcohol users are significantly different from the experiences of those who have lived with the effects of alcoholism. Our individual focus must be on our own recovery.

KIND

Having the guidelines for leadership in our Service Manual, we have clear, kind, respectful expectations. Often A.A. members will be asked to serve on special committees to advance understanding between AA and Al-Anon.

Discussion Questions: *(from Paths to Recovery)*

Tradition Five: Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.

- How do I describe our primary purpose in a meeting? To newcomers?
- Do I remember Al-Anon's primary purpose – to help families and friends of alcoholics – in my service activities? How does this affect my actions?

Tradition Six: Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

- How does my group cooperate with A.A.? When?
- How do I consider cooperation with A.A. in my service work?

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

- How does my group consider the impact of its decisions on Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole? Has the group considered Lone Members, inmates, groups throughout the world? Newcomers? Longtime members?
- When visiting a new group, do I feel irritated if it's not just like my home group? Do I want to straighten them out? What can I learn from visiting other groups?

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

- How do I use this Tradition in my meeting?
- What does "common welfare" mean to me? My group? In other areas of service work within Al-Anon?
- What does "unity" mean to me? My group? In other areas of service work within Al-Anon?

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.

- What is the difference between Al-Anon leadership and governing?
- How am I willing to support the group conscience even if I don't agree with it?