

A.A.® Guidelines

Relationship Between A.A. and Al-Anon

from GSO, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

A.A. Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members in the various areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). In keeping with our Tradition of Autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an *informed* group conscience.

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 but not affiliating with the other.

Each Fellowship has always had its own General Service Board, General Service Office, Conference, publishing company, and directory. Each has established its own policies and maintained its own services. This separate functioning has served both A.A. and Al-Anon Family Groups well. A.A.'s policy of “cooperation but not affiliation” was established as long ago as the early 1950s, and both Al-Anon and A.A. recognized at that time the importance of maintaining separate Fellowships.

However, from time to time, questions come to both A.A. and Al-Anon General Service Offices indicating confusion as to how A.A. and Al-Anon may best cooperate in the groups, intergroups or central offices, and area and regional conventions and get-togethers.

Here are some common questions about cooperation between the two Fellowships:

Question: Should a group be affiliated with both A.A. and Al-Anon?

Answer: As the primary purpose of the A.A. group is to help the sick alcoholic to recover and Al-Anon Family Groups offer strength and hope for friends and families of problem drinkers, it is suggested they not be combined, but remain separate groups. This enables both Fellowships to function within their Twelve Traditions and to carry their messages more effectively.

Question: Should “family groups” be listed in A.A. directories?

Answer: “After discussion, the Conference reaffirmed A.A. group policy that only those with a desire to stop drinking may be members of A.A. groups; only A.A. members are eligible to be officers of A.A. groups; nonalcoholics are welcome at open meetings of A.A. It is suggested that the word ‘family’ not be used in the name of an A.A. group; if A.A.s and their nonalcoholic mates wish to meet together on a regular basis, it is suggested they consider these gatherings ‘meetings’ and not A.A. groups. Listing in A.A. directories: It was the sense of the meeting that the family groups should not be listed under the family group name in the directories.”

Question: Should A.A. and Al-Anon have combined central (or intergroup) services and offices?

Answer: Experience and the Twelve Traditions of A.A. and Al-Anon suggest that each Fellowship will function more effectively if each retains separate committees, staffs, and facilities for handling telephone calls, as well as separate telephone answering services, intergroup activities, bulletins, meeting lists, and Twelfth Step services of all types. Also, that the members involved in each service committee or office be A.A. members, if an A.A. facility, and Al-Anon, if an Al-Anon facility.

Question: How may A.A. and Al-Anon cooperate in area and regional conventions and get-togethers?

Answer: In accordance with the Twelve Traditions, a convention would be either A.A. or Al-Anon — not both. However, most A.A. convention committees invite Al-Anon to participate by planning its own program, and the committee arranges for facilities for the Al-Anon meetings.

Question: When Al-Anon participates in an A.A. convention, what is the financial relationship between the two Fellowships?

Answer: The relationship and the financial arrangements usually follow one of two patterns:

When an A.A. convention committee invites Al-Anon to participate with its own program, A.A. may pay all expenses (for meeting rooms, coffee, etc.) and keep all income from registrations, etc., in a single fund used to pay all convention bills, after which any excess income reverts back to A.A.

Alternatively, Al-Anon may have a separate registration and pay its own direct expenses, plus a proportionate share of common expenses of the convention. Al-Anon, in this case, receives its own share of the registration income and also shares in any losses that may be incurred.

Question: Should an A.A. convention committee make a contribution to Al-Anon from the financial profits of the convention?

Answer: In accordance with the self-support Traditions of both Fellowships and to abide by the concept of “cooperation but not affiliation,” it is suggested that A.A. should not make gifts or contributions to Al-Anon. By the same token, A.A. should not accept contributions from Al-Anon.

If separate registrations have been kept for both A.A. and Al-Anon members, however, income may be easily assigned.

Question: How may I get in touch with Al-Anon?

Answer: Do an Internet search or look for a local Al-Anon intergroup office or write: Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group, Inc., 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617. Tel: (757) 563-1600; website: www.al-anon.alateen.org.

Note: Al-Anon has its own Guideline on Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A. It is available on their website.

A.A.'s Debt of Gratitude to Al-Anon

The following resolution of gratitude to the Fellowship of the Al-Anon Family Groups was unanimously approved by the 1969 General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The delegates of this, the 19th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, meeting in official session in New York City, this 25th day of April, 1969, do hereby declare:

WHEREAS, it is the desire of this Conference to confirm the relationship between Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups, and

WHEREAS, it is the further desire of this Conference to acknowledge A.A.'s debt of gratitude to the Al-Anon Family Groups, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that Alcoholics Anonymous recognizes the special relationship which it enjoys with the Al-Anon Family Groups, a separate but similar fellowship. And be it further resolved that Alcoholics Anonymous wishes to recognize, and hereby does recognize, the great contribution which the Al-Anon Family Groups have made and are making in assisting the families of alcoholics everywhere.

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