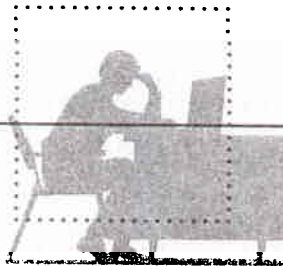


Electronic Meetings



Al-Anon Family Groups acknowledges the value of the Internet and other electronic media for communicating information about Al-Anon and offering hope and comfort to the families and friends of alcoholics. Al-Anon neither endorses, opposes, nor regulates any computer on-line, telephone, or other electronic service provider.



AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS
hope for families & friends of alcoholics



Overview:

Based upon the long-established value of attending meetings for the personal recovery of Al-Anon members, it is important to make the following clarification: Electronic Al-Anon meetings are a supplement to regular attendance at "face-to-face" Al-Anon groups. Likewise, participation as a member in the functions of a group and personal involvement in Twelfth Step service work are important.

Human companionship and warmth cannot be totally replaced by electronic meetings; an important element to our recovery is to stop isolating ourselves. With the exception of Lone Members (e.g. those who are geographically isolated or physically unable to attend a meeting), sharing at "face-to-face" (f2f) or "skin meetings" is essential. Members should encourage other members to attend Al-Anon group meetings in their community.

Things to Remember about Electronic meetings:

Electronic Al-Anon meetings, like Al-Anon groups, agree to abide by the spirit of the Twelve Traditions. Any Al-Anon member desiring to attend an electronic meeting can attend if able to access the meeting through their Internet or telephone subscriber service.

On-line meetings are in reality "open" to anyone with access to the Internet. There is no way of ascertaining or guaranteeing that all participants are Al-Anon members or specifically interested in our program as the relative or friend of a problem drinker. Confidentiality of sharing is difficult to maintain for some Internet provider services.

Members, who as individuals subscribe to various computer services, need to bear this in mind when sharing at an on-line meeting, e.g. live "chat" or posting a message on a bulletin board. Members should be cautious and avoid sharing identifiable personal information on-line.

At open on-line meetings, professionals may be viewing the sharings as a means of learning about our program and how members benefit and support each other. **Anonymity cannot** be guaranteed with the same degree of certainty or sense of commitment as face-to-face meetings. The degree of anonymity afforded members may also depend upon the protocol for transmission of e-mail, the requirements of

an Internet service provider, or the procedures used by an individual on-line meeting. Most services allow for the use of a pseudonym for sending mail and on-line participation. Members need to be aware that pseudonyms or nicknames are frequently used in the on-line world.

On-line meetings are particularly vulnerable to the inability to enforce the unenforceable. If you have a need for anonymity, you may want to discuss it further with your service provider.

Each member is responsible for keeping an electronic meeting focused on Al-Anon recovery and discussion of Al-Anon related topics.

Use of Conference Approved Literature, The Forum, Meeting Format, and Service Materials On-line :

Each year, and for that year only, electronic meetings listed with the World Service Office may request permission from Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to use the Steps, Traditions, Concepts, Suggested Welcome, Suggested Closing and short excerpts (maximum one paragraph) from Conference Approved Literature (CAL) in **text format** in their meetings. Permission to quote from Conference Approved Literature (CAL) is granted with stated conditions and can be revoked if these conditions are not met.

Because not all authors of *The Forum* articles give permission to have their sharings used on the Internet, articles from *The Forum* may be used only if they are listed in the magazine as available for use on the Internet. These may be viewed on the WSO Web site.

Al-Anon members and electronic meetings are encouraged to carry Al-Anon's message of hope and comfort to potential newcomers, those still suffering from the impact of someone else's drinking and the professional community. To assist members with Twelfth Step work, a list of service materials that may be electronically reproduced can be obtained on the Members' Web site, www.al-anon.alateen.org/members.

Just as in face-to-face meetings, to uphold the spirit of our Twelve Traditions, the use or mention of outside literature is discouraged.*

* Please see the Policy Digest section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and the two Al-Anon publications, *Al-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53) and *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-45) for additional background.

Seventh Tradition:

Electronic meetings follow the Seventh Tradition of self support. Meeting expenses may include paying rent (list server or other service provider), PO box, and meeting supplies. These amounts should be agreed to by the meeting members. Meetings ought never endorse, finance, or lend their name to outside enterprises, including Web sites. Electronic meetings send remaining funds to the World Service Office to help carry the Al-Anon message worldwide.

Meeting Media and Features:

Electronic meetings are held via numerous media including on-line and telephone. The type a member chooses to participate in depends upon personal preference. Features of on-line meetings include having sharings available 24 hours a day in e-mail and message board meetings. For those who prefer interactive conversation there are chat room or telephone meetings at a specific time and day.

Electronic meetings use the same meeting format as face-to-face group meetings. Only the method of sharing is different. Any Al-Anon-related topic may be used for a meeting.

Additional information can be found in the *Electronic Meeting Guideline* (G-39) available on the Members' Web site. Registered electronic meetings are included in the Electronic Meeting list that is available on the "How to Locate a Meeting" page of our Public Outreach Web site at www.al-anon.alateen.org.

For safety reasons there are no electronic Alateen meetings at this time. Please contact the WSO for update information.

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Al-Anon/Alateen is supported by members' voluntary contributions and from the sale of our Conference Approved Literature.