

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How will attending Al-Anon or Alateen groups help my patients, clients, consumers, or students?**

Adult and teenagers attending Al-Anon or Alateen meetings respectively are relieved to find that they are not alone. Even if uncertain that a relative or friend's drinking is causing them stress and despair, people attending Al-Anon or Alateen meetings will acquire information about alcoholism or alcohol abuse as an illness and its impact on the nondrinker. They will also learn about the importance of family treatment and recovery whether the alcoholic or problem drinker continues to drink or not. They will usually be able to identify with and meet others who have had similar experiences and hear first-hand how members are utilizing the Al-Anon/Alateen program for hope, support, and to improve their lives.

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## **Is an appointment needed?**

No advance notification or formal written referral is necessary to attend an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting. Most Al-Anon groups have a contact who can be called for information about the group, our program in general, or for directions to a meeting. Many Alateen groups meet at the same time and location as an Al-Anon group. Alateen meetings are open only to teenagers. (Note: Some Alateen meetings also welcome pre-teen aged children)

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## **How do I make a referral?**

It is helpful to make your patient, client, consumer, or student aware of Al-Anon or Alateen and our purpose. Many people have never heard of Al-Anon or Alateen.

Although Al-Anon and Alateen groups follow the same meeting format, each group's meetings are slightly different from each other because attendees and topics of discussion vary each week.

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## **What does Al-Anon or Alateen cost?**

There are no dues or fees for Al-Anon or Alateen membership. Most groups have expenses and pass a basket for voluntary contributions. The money is used to meet the group's expenses such as rent for the meeting room, to buy Al-Anon/Alateen literature, to support the local Al-Anon Information Service, and to fund the expenses of the members who perform service on behalf of the group.

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## **How do the Al-Anon Family Groups and the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. support themselves?**

Through the sale of Al-Anon/Alateen literature and voluntary contributions from members, Al-Anon groups, and service arms. The Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and the Al-Anon Family Groups do not accept grants or funding from outside sources.

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## **What about problems other than someone else's drinking?**

In addition to alcohol abuse, newcomers as well as Al-Anon members may be worried about a relative or friend who has another type of addiction, mental illness, compulsive or problematic behavior. While Al-Anon's principles are applicable to many different situations and concerns, the Al-Anon program focuses on helping members recover from the effects of someone else's drinking. Newcomers as well as Al-Anon/Alateen members are also encouraged to seek help from other resources for concerns in addition to or other than someone else's drinking when needed.

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**Is Al-Anon or Alateen compatible with the professional care and services I offer?**

Yes. Al-Anon/Alateen is a peer support group. As peers, they exchange their respective experiences. The mutual sharing among members helps members to realize that they have a variety of options that they may not have realized they had before attending Al-Anon or Alateen. Al-Anon members do not give direction or prescribe specific solutions for other members.

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**Is the Al-Anon Family Groups program religious?**

No. It is spiritually-based upon principles applicable to people from a wide variety of backgrounds and applicable to people regardless of their religious beliefs—or lack of religious beliefs.

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**What is the Al-Anon or Alateen meeting format and what do members talk about at meetings?**

Most Al-Anon and Alateen groups have a discussion topic at their meetings such as acceptance, overcoming fear, change, one of Al-Anon's slogans (e.g. One Day at a Time, Easy Does It) or one of the Twelve Steps. Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are facilitated by members, rather than a professional. Each week, a different member chairs the meeting on a different subject.

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**Why do members continue to attend Al-Anon or Alateen after the drinker is in treatment, sober, attending Alcoholics Anonymous, or no longer actively involved in the individual's life?**

Al-Anon is a program of self-discovery and personal growth. Recovery is an on-going process and is not limited to whether or not the alcoholic or problem drinker continues to drink, is visibility present, or actively involved in a member's life. The effects of someone else's drinking are deep and may present challenges that continue throughout life.

Members form new friendships with other members and often can find great personal satisfaction in maintaining their relationships with their Al-Anon friends. Al-Anon and Alateen members also reinforce their own recovery and find great satisfaction in sharing their application of the Al-Anon program with newcomers.