



# **Alateen Service e-Manual**

Tips and topics for  
Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service  
(AMIAS)



**Al-Anon Family Groups**  
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics



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# Overview of Alateen service

Alateen provides a safe place for young people affected by someone else's drinking to share their own experience, strength, and hope with each other, and to learn how to apply the principles of the Al-Anon/Alateen program to their lives. Al-Anon members who wish to serve Alateen in any capacity are required to participate in a certification process established in their Area. Once certified, the member becomes an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). Alateen Group Sponsors are certified AMIAS who give their time to ensure that the spiritual principles of the Al-Anon program are shared with the Alateen group. We welcome you to this area of Al-Anon/Alateen service. Select a topic, and get started!

## Let's get certified!

- Service to Alateen requires certification as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) through your Area process.
- AMIAS may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors, chaperones, drivers, or other roles as outlined in their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.
- Your Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person, or District Representative can provide you with information on certification in your Area (contact WSO if you need contact information for these trusted servants.)

See "Alateen safety" section.

## Alateen Group Sponsors

- Are certified AMIAS
- Must be present to hold an Alateen meeting
- Provide oversight for a safe forum for the Alateen meeting.
- Provide guidance to the Alateen members to take responsibility for the Alateen meeting.
- Are active members of an Al-Anon group, attending meetings regularly

See "Becoming an Alateen Group Sponsor" section.

## Starting an Alateen group

Groups must be registered with certified AMIAS before meetings begin:

- Follow Area process for AMIAS/Alateen Group Sponsor certification and training
- Select a meeting place, day, and time
- Register your group through Area Process

See "Starting an Alateen group" section.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*When I moved from one district to another in my Area, I had to give up my position as District Representative. Without some service work, I had a big hole in my life that needed filling. I heard about an Alateen group that needed an Alateen Group Sponsor. I was already certified as an AMIAS in my Area, so I tried the Alateen group for two months and went with them to an Alateen conference. Well, I got hooked on Alateen! In those wonderful members, God found for me the very thin to fill the hole in my life. I got started in service work early in Al-Anon and I am unhappy without it.*

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# Becoming an Alateen Group Sponsor

## Certification through the Area process

A member who has completed all the Area requirements for certification as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and any additional requirements for sponsoring an Alateen group is qualified to serve an Alateen group as an Alateen Group Sponsor.

## Importance of training, connecting

Most Areas offer some type of Alateen Group Sponsor training. Alateen Group Sponsors are encouraged to stay connected with the local Al-Anon groups, with their district, with each other, with the district/AIS/Area Alateen Coordinators, and other trusted servants. It is important not to become isolated.

### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*I am aware that new Alateen Group Sponsors cannot feel as strongly and confidently as I do about Alateen service, but they can learn what their responsibilities are. I was new once also, and still remember the insecurity and fear I felt. I gained confidence from other Alateen Group Sponsors. We never have to be alone in Alateen service!*

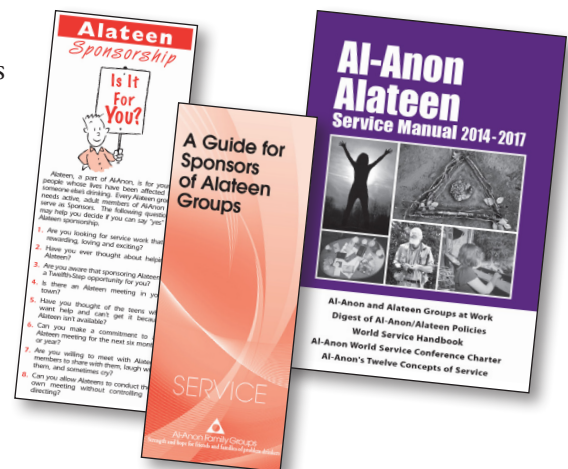
## Resources are available

Specific Alateen Requirements vary by Area, so your first resources are:

- Area Alateen Coordinator/Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP)
- District/AIS Alateen contact
- District Representative (DR)
- Other certified AMIAS/Alateen Group Sponsors
- Area Officers
- Area Web site

## World Service Office resources

- Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and service tools
  - Alateen books and pamphlets
  - Alateen Sponsorship—Is It for You?* (S-27)
  - A Guide for Sponsors of Alateen Groups* (P-29)
- Al-Anon/Alateen guidelines
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)
- *Alateen Talk*\* (quarterly)
- *The Forum*\*\* (monthly)
- Two WSO Web sites:
  - Public Outreach Site: [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org)
  - Members' Site: [al-anon.org/members](http://al-anon.org/members)



\* Printed in English only and mailed to English, Spanish, and French language Alateen groups in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda. Excerpts from *Alateen Talk* are translated to French and Spanish and posted on the WSO Public Outreach Web site.

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## Starting an Alateen group

Alateen groups may be requested by professionals, parents, teens, A.A. and/or Al-Anon members. A preliminary step to getting a group started is having a pool of Area-certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) available to serve as the Alateen Group Sponsors and as substitute/backup for the primary Alateen Group Sponsors. Alateen groups cannot meet without certified Alateen Group Sponsors present.

The first step to starting an Alateen group is contacting your Area Alateen Coordinator, who can provide:

- information about becoming certified in your Area
- assistance locating other certified AMIAS to serve as Alateen Group Sponsor(s)
- the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements
- the forms necessary for certification and Alateen group registration

Your District Representative (DR), Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), or the WSO can provide you with contact information.

Reviewing the guideline *Starting an Alateen Group* (G-19) and the “Alateen Policy” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) may be helpful. Both are available on the Members’ Web site.

See also the brief overview, “How to start an Alateen group quick reference.”



### Choosing the day/time and location of Alateen meetings

- Consider the day and time carefully. There is no perfect time. The Alateen Group Sponsors need to be able to fulfill their commitment to the group, and the time should be convenient for the Alateens.
- Alateen meetings held at the same time/locations as existing Al-Anon meetings are ideal. This is more convenient for parents/guardians and solves many transportation difficulties.
- A concurrent Al-Anon meeting can provide:
  - A pool of backup/substitute Area-certified AMIAS;
  - A meeting for Alateen Group Sponsors and Alateens to attend, should the Alateen meeting not be able to be held;
  - A meeting for other family members to attend.
- Groups that meet each week are apt to be more firmly established from the outset. Weekly meetings give members a better opportunity to work their program and apply it to their daily lives.
- When a meeting is held late on a school night, it may be difficult for some young people to attend. If younger members are to be considered, an earlier time may be desirable. An earlier time can also be helpful for older teen members, who may have to complete homework after the meeting.

#### Ask yourself these questions when choosing a meeting location:

- Are there other people around at the meeting time, or would the Alateen group be the only activity?
- If you don't have a cell phone, where is the nearest telephone? Is there a phone where the Alateen member can call a person who may be late picking him/her up after the meeting? How would you report an emergency?
- Is the area safe? Will parents or other family members feel comfortable leaving their children there?
- How is the area after dark? Is it well lit? Will children be visible as cars drive in and out of the parking areas?

## Registering an Alateen group

It is required to register your group and keep the information up-to-date so those searching for Alateen help can find your group. All Alateen group registrations and changes are processed thru your Area process. Do not send Alateen forms directly to the World Service Office (WSO). Your Area Alateen Coordinator and/or District Representative can clarify the process.

List the two primary Alateen Group Sponsors for the group on the Alateen Group Registration/Change Form (GR-3). Usually one of the primary Sponsors will also serve as the group's Current Mailing Address (CMA). Additional Group Sponsors can also be added to the group's record. These individuals will be recorded in the WSO records of your group after going through the Area process.

It is important that you keep your Area Alateen Coordinator and/or Area Alateen Process Person informed of all group changes, including CMA, contacts, primary AND any additional Alateen Group Sponsors.

## Current Mailing Address (CMA)

Select a mailing address that will stay the same for at least one year. Most groups use the address of one of the Alateen Group Sponsors; others have a post office box. If the CMA is an individual member's address, the member must be an Area-certified AMIAS. Note that an electronic newsletter is e-mailed to all Al-Anon/Alateen CMAs monthly, so CMAs are encouraged to register with an e-mail address.

## Contact phone number(s)

Make sure the group contact phone number(s) is that of a certified AMIAS, usually one or two of the Alateen Group Sponsors. This first name and phone number may be given to callers who contact the WSO's toll free meeting line number.

Keeping the contacts current is very important, especially to the new Alateen or parent who may be given a name and telephone number to call. The contact should be fully informed so he/she can give the caller information about Alateen meetings in your area. It may be helpful for the contact to keep an Alateen pamphlet, bookmark and/or meeting schedule near the phone.

## Registration packet

After it is registered, your group will receive mailings from WSO that contain helpful information for your group, including:

- The *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* booklet (P-24), with the meeting format and helpful group information (sent with first packet)
- A copy of the group's record with the group's ID number
- Samples of Alateen Conference Approved Literature and service materials
- The *Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), an essential tool for answering group concerns and establishing group procedures. It is updated every three years and is always available on the Members' Web site, [al-anon.org/members](http://al-anon.org/members). A printed copy will be sent to the group's Current Mailing Address.
- Sample copies of *Alateen Talk*\* and *The Forum*\*\*
- Alateen Guidelines
- *Getting in Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen* (S-23), our list of Al-Anon Information Services around the world
- Literature order forms

All registered Alateen groups will receive *Alateen Talk*\* quarterly. It will be mailed to the group's Current Mailing Address (CMA). The *Group e-News* newsletter is e-mailed monthly to the CMA.

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## Before the new group starts meeting

- Complete the AMIAS certification and group registration process. Alateen groups do not meet or appear on local meeting schedules until the registration process is complete.
- Contact your District Representative and local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS). Ask them to circulate the information about the new group starting.
- Ask for assistance with public outreach from the district and/or AIS:
  - Alateen public outreach is a collaborative effort between those involved in Alateen service and those involved with public outreach service.
  - Discuss outreach to schools, counselors, juvenile facilities, local youth organizations, etc.
  - See the section on “Spreading the word: Alateen public outreach” for more suggestions.

## Age range

- Alateens are young members of the Al-Anon fellowship. As the name implies, Alateen was originally designed for members in their teens. In recent years, however, it is recognized that there are younger children who are ready for Alateen. Any young person who attends Alateen should be able to participate in a shared learning experience. Neither the Alateen Group Sponsors nor the older teens in attendance should be teaching or babysitting the younger children. Each group decides for itself whether to lower the age of admission below the teen years.
- Members in their teens who are legally adults (age 18 in most locations) agree to abide by the same requirements as minor Alateens when they attend Alateen meetings and events. Alateen members in the upper teen years are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings while still attending Alateen, to assure a smooth transition. Young people beyond the teen years attend Al-Anon meetings.

## Who attends Alateen meetings

- Alateen meetings are generally closed meetings, attended only by Alateen members, prospective members, and the Area-certified Alateen Group Sponsors affiliated with the group.
- An Alateen group may hold an occasional public outreach open meeting to educate the local Al-Anon membership, professionals, and/or the general public about Alateen.
- Potential Alateen Group Sponsors complete the Area certification process before visiting an Alateen group.
- When appropriate in the course of their service responsibilities, district/Area trusted servants (e.g., District Representative (DR), Area Alateen Coordinator) may attend closed Alateen meetings as a resource to the group, in keeping with the Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. DRs or other trusted servants who are not certified AMIAS cannot have the care and responsibility for Alateens during the meeting; AMIAS must be present. When possible, the Alateens should be made aware of such visits in advance.
- Some meeting locations may be considered “limited access,” such as school meetings where only students at that school may attend. When possible, the Alateens should be made aware of such visits in advance.
- When a school or other facility requires that a staff member sit in the meeting, the meeting is considered “open only to required personnel in a limited access setting.” (*Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), “Alateen Policy” section)



## Alateen meetings in schools

Alateen meetings in schools have been successful in many Areas, providing access to Alateen to students who might not otherwise be able to attend. Starting meetings in schools may require negotiation with school staff. The following resources may be helpful:

- *Alateen Meetings in Schools* guideline (G-5)
- *Information for Educators* (S-64)
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), “Alateen Policy” section



## How to start an Alateen group quick reference

Each Area in the World Service Conference structure has Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements in place. Al-Anon members wishing to become certified as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) need to become familiar with their Area’s Requirements. Information may be obtained from:

- Your District Representative or District Alateen Chair/Coordinator.
- Your Area Alateen Coordinator or Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP).
- Your Area Web site (Visit [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org), and click on the “Find a Meeting” tab. Then click on your state/province for a pop up window with the Area site).
- If you cannot locate the information, contact WSO at [wso@al-anon.org](mailto:wso@al-anon.org) (with “Alateen” in the subject line) and staff will connect you with your Area Alateen Coordinator.

All Alateen paperwork for AMIAS certification and registration of groups must be submitted through your Area process. After completion of the steps in your Area process, the Area will submit the final paperwork to WSO for processing of AMIAS certification and registration of groups. When AMIAS certification is complete, the Area will notify the member. When group registration is complete, the WSO will send a New Group Packet to the new group.

### Important things to know when starting an Alateen group:

- Alateen groups must be registered, with certified AMIAS, before the group begins to meet.
- Alateen meetings are closed meetings; only Alateens and the Area-certified AMIAS affiliated with the group attend.
- Only currently registered Alateen groups are able to meet and are listed in local directories and on Web sites.
- All changes to Alateen group information are sent to WSO through your Area’s process.
- Submitting incomplete forms or bypassing the Area’s process will create delays.

### Helpful Alateen information

- *Starting an Alateen Group* (G-19)
- *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34)
- *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (P-21)
- *Facts about Alateen* (P-41)
- *Information for Educators* (S-64)
- *A Guide for Sponsors of Alateen Groups* (P-29)
- *Alateen Sponsorship: Is It for You?* (S-27)

### WSO Alateen forms

(All Alateen forms are distributed by the Area)

Al-Anon  
Member  
Involved in  
Alateen Service  
(AMIAS) Form

Alateen  
Registration/  
Group Records  
Change Form  
(GR-3)

# Organization of an Alateen group

The organization of a group should be kept simple. Even a small group, however, needs someone to lead the meetings and someone to handle correspondence and keep track of the treasury. Use the structure of your Al-Anon group as a guide. In large groups, someone is often responsible for refreshments, setting up, and cleaning the meeting room. Changing officers regularly gives all Alateen members a chance to serve the group.

## Staying connected

It is important that your group elect an Alateen member as Group Representative (GR) to represent the group at district meetings and also to attend Area Assemblies. At Assembly meetings, your GR will get to know your Al-Anon Delegate, who speaks and votes for Al-Anon and Alateen issues each year at the World Service Conference, and the Area Alateen Coordinator, who encourages members to become involved in Alateen service. Alateen Group Sponsors do not serve as GRs for Alateen groups.

**Tip:** Providing transportation for Alateen GRs to district/Area meetings is a service opportunity for local AMIAS who are not Alateen Group Sponsors.

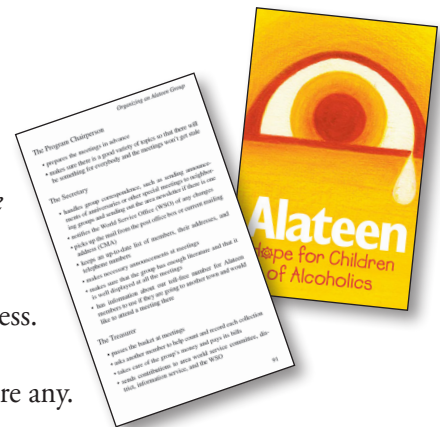
Please take the time to let your service representatives know that your group exists. Your Alateen group is a part of Al-Anon and service meetings are for your Alateens.

## Duties of Alateen group officers

In general, the duties of group officers are as follows:

### The Meeting Chairperson

- Plans the meeting in advance
- Follows the meeting format (See the *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* booklet [P-24] for suggested format.)
- Opens the meeting and leads the group in closing the meeting.
- Sees that a little time is available for announcements and group business.
- Expresses special welcome to newcomers.
- Announces the subject of the meeting and introduces speakers if there are any.
- Keeps the discussion on the program and meeting topic.
- Makes sure everybody gets a chance to talk.
- Some groups may also have a Program Chairperson (See page 91 in *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* [B-3].)



### The Secretary

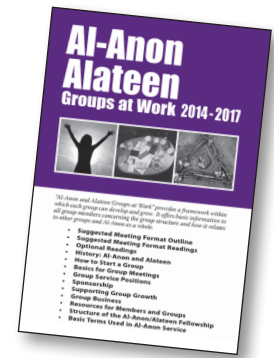
- Handles group correspondence, such as sending announcements of anniversaries and other special meetings to neighboring groups, the district, local and Area newsletters, and the nearest Al-Anon Information Service (AIS). Note that the group's CMA should be used as the return address, not an Alateen's address.
- Promptly sends any group changes (Current Mailing Address, Alateen Group Sponsors, etc.) through the Area Process.
- Makes announcements at meetings.
- Makes sure the group has enough literature and that it is displayed at meetings.

## The Treasurer

- Passes the basket at meetings for the Seventh Tradition collection.
- Asks another member to help count and record each collection.
- The group's money should be held by one of the Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Works with the Alateen Group Sponsor(s) to send contributions to the district, the Area Assembly, the AIS (if there is one), and the WSO.
- Keeps a record of all receipts and expenses.
- Makes a report to the group at regular intervals, usually once a month.

## The Group Representative (GR)

- Represents the group at district meetings and Area Assemblies; is a link to the World Service Conference through the Assembly.
- GRs serve a three-year term, one day at a time.
- Alateen group GRs are Alateen members; adults do not take this role.
- Where there is an Al-Anon Information Service/Intergroup (AIS), the groups may elect an Information Service Representative (ISR) to represent them. The Alternate GR may serve as the ISR. (Refer to the *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* booklet [P-24])



## Finances

Meeting group expenses may present some difficulties. Local Al-Anon groups may sponsor an Alateen group and contribute financially to help the group with expenses. Since Alateen is a part of Al-Anon, providing such assistance is within group autonomy. Al-Anon's help with meeting expenses should be discontinued as soon as the Alateen group can become self-supporting. It gives the members a heartening sense of independence to assume this financial responsibility. It is also in keeping with Tradition Seven, which says, "Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." (Even established groups may need continuing financial help in order to attend Alateen conferences, conventions, and round-ups.)

The key to financial responsibility is passing the basket! Those coins add up quickly!

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**CAUTION!** Far too often, the group's treasury has been "lost" by sending money home with a well-meaning Treasurer. Young people may lose track of the money and the real tragedy is that he/she does not come back to the meeting, probably because of embarrassment. An Alateen Group Sponsor shares: I hold the money for the group, but the Alateen Treasurer counts it and enters it in a book each week.

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## Paying rent

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition of self-support, the group needs to pay rent. If rent is not charged, some donation should be made on a regular basis. Providing a supply of meeting schedules and Alateen literature may serve as rent if a facility will not accept monetary donations.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*The church in which we were meeting considered it part of their community service to allow our Alateen group to use their meeting room. While there was no formal rent, we usually made a donation. After a time, we got sloppy about this obligation. Eventually, we found we were in danger of losing the space. We had been taking their kindness for granted. We quickly apologized and were fortunate to be able to stay. After that, we were careful to make regular donations even when our treasury was not large.*

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## Alateen literature helps the group grow

Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) is compiled from the sharings of Alateen members and contains valuable subject matter for meetings. Alateen Group Sponsors encourage the Alateen chairperson to use:

- Alateen books
  - Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B-3)
  - Alateen—a day at a time* (B-10)
  - Courage to Be Me—Living With Alcoholism* (B-23)
  - Living Today in Alateen* (B-26)
- Alateen pamphlets
  - Alateen's 4th Step Inventory* workbook (P-64)
  - Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for Alateen* (P-18)
  - The “Alateen Talks Back” booklet series.



Another good resource, free to each registered group, is Alateen's quarterly newsletter, *Alateen Talk*,\* which has meeting topics and member sharings in each issue. Al-Anon's monthly magazine, *The Forum*,\*\* has an Alateen page. Using CAL and other Al-Anon/Alateen publications helps keep the meeting interesting and on the topic.

For a list of available literature and ordering information, visit the on-line shopping cart, or see the Al-Anon Family Groups Conference Approved Literature (CAL) Catalog (S-15). The books, booklets, pamphlets and Al-Anon guidelines contain a wealth of meeting resource material, as does *Alateen Talk* and *The Forum*. Materials can be ordered through your local Literature Distribution Center (LDC) or from the WSO.

## What is the meeting format?

There is no rigid format for an Alateen meeting, and groups may adapt the Al-Anon/Alateen meeting format in the *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24), *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B-3), and *Courage to Be Me—Living With Alcoholism* (B-23).

A typical meeting might go like this:

1. A moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer
2. Read the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome
3. Read the Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps
4. Read the Twelve Steps (Some groups pass the *Groups at Work* booklet or another Alateen book around so each member can read a Step. Others have a supply of *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for Alateen* (P-18) pamphlets so members can follow along)
5. Read one or all of the Alateen Twelve Traditions
6. Express a special welcome to newcomers
7. Introductions by first name
8. Announcements
9. Optional: Read today's page from *Alateen—a day at a time* (B-10) or *Living Today in Alateen* (B-26)
10. Announce meeting topic (See “Meeting topics/ideas.”)
11. Optional: “Happys and Problems” or “Sharing the Positive”
12. Near closing time, read the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing
13. Closing (Group's choice)

\* Printed in English only and mailed to English, Spanish, and French language Alateen groups in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda. Excerpts from *Alateen Talk* are translated to French and Spanish and posted on the WSO Public Outreach Web site.

\*\* Printed in English only. Spanish- and French-speaking Al-Anon and Alateen groups receive *En Accion* and *Le Lien* respectively six times a year, which includes selected articles translated from *The Forum*.

# Role of Alateen Group Sponsors in Alateen meetings

In order to hold an Alateen meeting, Alateen Group Sponsor(s) must be in attendance. All Alateen Group Sponsors must be certified through the Area process as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), and must have completed all Area Requirements to serve an Alateen group. Both Alateens and Alateen Group Sponsors have been affected by the disease of alcoholism and are in Al-Anon and Alateen to recover. As an Al-Anon member, an Alateen Group Sponsor has much to offer Alateen members. The Alateens take responsibility for their meetings; the Alateen Group Sponsor's role is to keep the meeting safe and provide guidance to help the teens keep the focus on the Al-Anon/Alateen program.

## Setting behavior guidelines/boundaries

No matter the age of the Alateen members, the Alateen Group Sponsors have the ultimate responsibility for physical and emotional safety in the Alateen meeting. The Alateen Group Sponsors can set some safety guidelines for the group, such as refraining from rocking chairs or hanging out of an open window. Facility rules and state/provincial or local laws that apply to minors must be followed; e.g., smoking.

The Alateen Group Sponsors can introduce the idea of the group setting Behavioral Guidelines for the meeting, and what the consequences will be. If the group members participate in setting up the rules for meeting behavior and the consequences for breaking them, they will be more likely to police themselves, and problems can be avoided. Behaviors such as talking out of turn, monopolizing the meeting, texting, and rough or inappropriate physical contact are examples that the group might address.

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### An Alateen member shares:

*Alateen is a big, wonderful fellowship. It is exciting to go to Area meetings, Assemblies, and conventions and make new friends. Sometimes in the excitement of meeting new people, seeing old friends and feeling the warmth and love of the fellowship, we forget that our actions are important. When we act inappropriately, it hurts Alateen as a whole. In order to continue, Alateen needs the support of Al-Anon. When they see Alateens behaving poorly, they aren't likely to support or get involved in our program. Conversely, when they see Alateens respecting the site and other people, they are strongly influenced to support our efforts. What we do and how we do it makes a difference.*

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## Who leads the Alateen meeting?

The Alateen members lead the meeting. Alateen members may need help forming a group. However, they are capable of conducting their own meetings and handling group responsibilities. Alateen Group Sponsors encourage them to do so.

When a group is new and attendance small, the Alateen Group Sponsors will need to participate more in the group discussions, but we remember not to monopolize the meeting. Especially when the group is new, Alateen Group Sponsors may briefly share their experience with the Twelve Steps and knowledge of the Twelve Traditions. Alateen Group Sponsors encourage Alateens to share.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*When I first considered starting an Alateen group, I asked an experienced Alateen Group Sponsor how I could get a bunch of new people to share. She said: "When my group was new, until they shared their own experience, they read a lot from the Alateen literature." That response gave me the confidence to start a group. For a while, the meetings consisted mostly of passing a piece of literature around the circle. But when the members learned to share, I believe it was because the literature contains sharings from other Alateens.*

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## Providing guidance - the difference between teaching and sharing

Alateen Group Sponsors are constantly reminded to listen and not dominate the meeting; they are not to be teachers. When a group has a core of Alateen members who are mature in the program, this is usually not difficult.

When the group is new or has many new members, how does a new member share the program when he/she has no idea what it's about? The solution lies in literature. Groups are encouraged to build a library of group copies and have on hand enough copies of each pamphlet and booklet that each member can follow along as the topic goes around the table. Members who have personal copies of *Alateen—a day at a time* (B-10) and/or *Living Today in Alateen* (B-26) can bring it to each meeting. Have extras on hand for newcomers.

It may take a while to build this library, but if the group works on it when funds become available, members will never run out of thought-provoking material.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*For a long time I could not understand how Alateen worked. The kids never seemed to talk about their problems with the alcoholic. A wise Alateen Group Sponsor explained to me that discussion of a "boy/girlfriend problem," "teacher problem," or "best friend problem" could be a cover for the alcoholic problem the kid was not allowed to discuss. If I helped the kids learn some tools of the program, they could apply the tools to any problem. I had to suspend my judgment about what is and is not "on the meeting topic."*

*I have learned not to underestimate how much good I am doing simply by being in the Alateen meeting week after week. I show the kids that some adults do follow through on their commitments. To paraphrase an A.A. saying, "How does Alateen work? Very well, thank you!"*

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## Just how much are the Alateen Group Sponsors expected to participate at meetings?

Alateen members help each other by sharing their experience, strength, hope, and encouragement. The Alateen Group Sponsors may take part in these discussions, suggesting positive use of the program and sharing their experience on the topic, always being careful, however, not to monopolize the meeting. The Alateen Group Sponsors need to be sensitive to the Alateen members and in time, come to know when to be quiet and when to share. Sponsors encourage full participation by all members of the group.

Starting the meeting on time: There is much that Alateen Group Sponsors need to leave up to a Higher Power and the group. But one responsibility we can accept is encouraging the meeting to start on time even if some group members straggle in after the meeting has started. Starting on time means ending on time. Parents appreciate not having to wait for their children and are likely to be more willing to provide transportation.



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## **An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:**

*As an Alateen Group Sponsor, I frequently find myself making two major mistakes with the group members. Sometimes I do their jobs for them, such as calling to make sure they have a meeting planned, doing their secretarial work, or managing the meeting. I also tend to want to give them the answers to their problems, often forgetting to steer them toward the tools of the program so that they can find their own solutions.*

*The slogans “Let Go and Let God” and “Easy Does It” have become daily reminders that I cannot know the answers for someone else. If I quit trying to manage, my Higher Power will work the problem out in His own time and way.*

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## **Meeting topics/ideas**

It helps to have a meeting topic, such as a slogan, a Step, or a feeling (anger, resentment, joy, etc.). Members can then share their experience, strength, and hope relating to the meeting topic. CAL is a good source of topics. Consistent use of Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) will assist the young people in becoming familiar with using the tools of the program.

Additional suggestions for planning and conducting Alateen meetings can be found in *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B-3) and *Courage to Be Me—Living With Alcoholism* (B-23).

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## **An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:**

*Our Alateen meeting is at a juvenile detention center where teens are held from one to six weeks. Since their stay is short-term, we guide the meeting and try to get them to share. We ask for volunteers to read the “Suggested Welcome” and the “Preamble to the Twelve Steps.” We concentrate on a Step each week, usually One through Four. After we go through one of the Steps, we get the feel of what literature would be helpful. We again ask each member to read a line or question and share an experience and/or how the reading can help them. These are our favorites:*

- *Has Your Life Been Affected by Some Else’s Drinking? Alateen Is For You! (S-20) has twenty questions to which many young people relate.*
- *Alateen Do’s and Don’ts (M-9). We read the Do’s first and ask the members to comment on one or two ideas. We then read the Don’ts and ask them to relate their experiences.*
- *“Alateen Talks Back” series—especially Alateen Talks Back on: Slogans (P-70). We encourage them to start using the slogans right away in the detention center.*
- *The Just for Today card (M-11). They can also use this immediately.*
- *The Serenity Prayer. We have found this to be a good closing prayer.*
- *Alateens love to read their birthday pages in the daily readers. Quite often they share how that page was written about them.*
- *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent (P-21) explains so well what is happening in their lives.*
- *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics (B-3). The chapter on “Understanding Ourselves” tells how alcoholism affects both the alcoholic and the family.*

*A good variety of material helps keep the meeting going. We try to give the Alateens information, ideas, and hope for themselves.*

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## “Happys and Problems”

Some Alateen groups include sharing good things and not-so-good things about their week during the course of the meeting.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*Our group wanted to talk about their problems. However, the meeting was in danger of being taken over by these discussions. We decided to go around the room at the end of the meeting so that each member would have a chance to say what was bothering him/her. The group also felt it was important to share the positive things in their lives. We call this part of the meeting “Happys and Problems.”*

*One of the most valuable assets of Alateen is sharing what happens in our lives. We have learned in Al-Anon that when a member goes on at length about a personal problem, the meeting suffers. We encourage members to speak to another member after the meeting. The same is true for Alateen.*

*Once started, the meeting can be so taken up with problems that there is no time for in depth discussion on the tools of the program.*

*Having the opportunity to tell what is on their minds seems to allow members to leave the meeting feeling better. We all have good things happen to us and we all have problems that challenge us.*

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Alateen Group Sponsors share that sometimes problems seem to require a more immediate solution. Here is where Alateen Group Sponsors sometimes have to remind themselves to just sit back and listen. Before long, they come to realize that there is no way they could ever solve all of the Alateens’ problems; that the best course may be just to listen. Being heard is often what everyone in the program needs the most.

Furthermore, it reminds the Alateen Group Sponsor that he/she is present to sponsor and guide the group, not the individual Alateens.

## Anonymity

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of Alateen and Al-Anon. Alateen members need to understand that they are not to repeat what is shared in meetings to others (including other members, friends, or parents). Discussing anonymity can be done without instilling a feeling of shame or secrecy. If members are classmates, anonymity is especially important. The members themselves should, as soon as possible, assume responsibility for upholding this important principle as we cannot feel safe in sharing if we are worried that what we say will be repeated. The group can reinforce this by displaying the Anonymity Table Card, “What you hear here, Whom you see here, When you leave here, Let it stay here,” and refer to it frequently, especially when there are newcomers.

If a member has a concern about his or her anonymity, an Alateen Group Sponsor can suggest a meeting on the topic. Often, a breach of anonymity is made innocently because new members do not understand its importance.

## The Alateen Group Sponsor and parents/guardians

Alateen Group Sponsors do not share with others, including parents/guardians, what is said in meetings. The Alateen Group Sponsor should let the group know that, if approached by a parent/guardian with questions about the meeting, he/she will direct the parent/guardian back to the teen. However, if asked outright about attendance, a Group Sponsor will be truthful. Covering for the Alateens is not part of the confidentiality to which each member is entitled. (See also the section on “Challenges in Alateen service”/“Interactions with parents/guardians.”)



## Confidentiality and the law

As stated in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), “Anonymity is a spiritual principle and cannot be used as a legal basis to shield criminal behavior, past or current. It is wise to remember that Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are not above the law. Members need to exercise care in sharing information that could require reporting to local, state, provincial, and national authorities.”

Laws regarding reporting of child abuse vary by state and province. If an Alateen Group Sponsor is a mandatory reporter, this should be made known to the Alateens at every meeting, so they have the choice of what they choose to share. Some Alateen groups read a statement at the beginning of every meeting. See the *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34) and “Alateen Safety” section of this *e-Manual* for more information.

## Tips for Alateen Group Sponsors

- We remember that we cannot give away what we do not have. We continue to go to Al-Anon meetings for our own recovery.
- We use a personal and/or service Sponsor to reason things out.
- We remember to go to the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) when asked questions about Al-Anon and Alateen policies. (Each group receives a free copy of the *Service Manual* after it registers with the WSO.)
- We remember that, as in Al-Anon, it is not our place to give advice when Alateens share their problems. We also remember we are hearing only one side of the story.
- We remember that it is not the role of an Alateen Group Sponsor to function as a trained professional. We do not use professional techniques or terminology in Alateen meetings. We share our experience, strength and hope with Alateens, as people who have been affected by the disease of alcoholism.
- We remember that Alateen, like Al-Anon, is anonymous and what is said at meetings is confidential. We are not free to repeat what we hear, whether at a meeting or one-on-one. (See *Alateen Safety Guidelines* [G-34] section on “Legal and Traditional Responsibility,” for information on mandatory reporting.)
- We remember to reach out to other Alateen Group Sponsors for support. An easy way to do this is to attend Alateen Group Sponsor or district meetings. Check with your Area Alateen Coordinator or District Representative. Ask them how to contact other Alateen Group Sponsors in your Area.

### Remember:

- That all of our slogans can help, especially:
  - Just for Today
  - Keep an Open Mind
  - Easy Does It
  - Let Go and Let God
  - Together We Can Make It
- That Alateens respect our consistency, honesty, patience, and understanding.
- To detach with love.
- That we can learn a lot about the job we are doing as Alateen Group Sponsors through regular group inventory meetings.
- Not to expect too much too soon.
- To be ourselves—and to have fun!

# Relationships with Alateens

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## In meetings

Alateen Group Sponsors spend only about an hour a week with Alateen members and make few, if any, demands on them. The Alateen Group Sponsors listen, share their own program, but do not have the responsibility or the emotional involvement of a parent/guardian. The Alateen meeting environment fosters open and free communication that may not yet exist at home.

It is important to remember that the role of the Alateen Group Sponsor is to provide a safe place for teens to share with each other, and to support and encourage the group as a whole. All teens should be treated equally, without any indication of favoritism.

## Between meetings

The Alateen Group Sponsor can encourage Alateens to seek each other's counsel between meetings. Remember that personal sponsorship is a peer-to-peer relationship; Alateens serve as personal Sponsors to each other. Alateen Group Sponsors and other AMIAS do not serve as personal Sponsors to individual Alateens. Adults in Alateen service need always use caution in any one-on-one interactions with minors, including in person, via telephone, or other electronic means. Remember that communications such as text messages and e-mails can be saved, forwarded, and manipulated. Be sure you know the teens and that everything you say or write is appropriate for the Alateen Group Sponsor/Alateen relationship.

It is important in all interactions with Alateens for the Alateen Group Sponsor(s) never to interfere with, give opinions about, or otherwise intervene in a way that puts the Alateen Group Sponsor in an adversarial role with the parent/guardian.

# Role of Alateen Group Sponsors/ AMIAS outside of group meetings

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## AMIAS at Alateen Events

Each event using the Alateen name has safety requirements in place that are in compliance with the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Area in which it is held. The specific roles of AMIAS for that event will be included in the event guidelines. Some AMIAS duties may include:

- Transporting Alateens with parent/guardian permission as outlined in the Area/event Requirements.
- Participating in keeping the event secure.
- Taking responsibility for several Alateens (for weekend events such as Alateen Conferences).
- The assigned AMIAS should know where the teens in their care are at all times.
- At some conferences, Alateens are required to “check in” with their assigned AMIAS at regular intervals.
- Rooming assignments should be such that one adult and one teen do not share a room, without a third person of the same gender housed in the room. Needs surrounding gender identity may need to be addressed by the event committee. Adults and Alateens should never share a bed.

See the section on “Alateen events”, and the guideline *Alateen Conferences* (G-16).

## AMIAS in the district/AIS/Area

- Alateen Group Sponsors are encouraged to connect with their local service arms. Alateen is Al-Anon, and it is best when Alateen groups don’t operate in isolation from the rest of our fellowship.
- Alateen Group Sponsors can encourage the Alateen group to elect an Alateen Group Representative. Note that the Alateen Group Sponsor does not take group offices, other than holding the treasury for the group. (See “Duties of Alateen group officers” section.)
- The Alateen GR and other Alateen members attend Assemblies and other Area events in compliance with the Area Requirements, including traveling with a certified AMIAS with signed/notarized parent/guardian permission.
- Alateen Group Sponsors can let the district/AIS know when the Alateen group needs support, whether it is by encouraging younger members to attend, identifying AMIAS to serve as backup or substitute Alateen Group Sponsors, asking the district to consider an Alateen public outreach project, or just letting them know that the group is doing well.
- Alateen Group Sponsors can ask for help—other certified AMIAS may be able to transport Alateens to service and recovery events.

# Alateen participation in events

Whenever Alateen is included in local or Area events, the event must be in compliance with Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

## Safety Requirements and Alateen events

Special events provide the opportunity for Alateen and Al-Anon members to share recovery with others outside of their groups. As with all things Alateen, safety is our primary concern. Any event using the Alateen name must have Safety and Behavioral requirements that meet or exceed the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Area in which it is held. The *Alateen Conferences* guideline (G-16) and the *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34) provide guidance applicable to all Alateen events.

### Use of the name “Alateen” for all events requires:

- Connection with the Area(s)
- Safety Requirements and a plan for implementing them at the event, in compliance with the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements
- Certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS)

## Types of Events

- Alateen conferences
- Al-Anon/Alateen conventions
- A.A. conventions with Al-Anon/Alateen participation
- Area business meetings (Assembly, Area World Service Committee)
- District/AIS local event

## Alateen conferences

Area Alateen events provide fun and fellowship for Alateen members, Alateen Group Sponsors, and other Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS)! Members enjoy meeting others from outside their local group as they learn more about recovery. Depending on location, events may be called:

- Conferences
- Conventions
- Round-ups
- Rallies
- Reunions

Alateen conferences are a valued experience for Alateens; many look forward to them all year long. These events are first and foremost a recovery experience for the Alateens. The AMIAS are there to help the teens to have this experience. Both Alateens and the AMIAS involved will increase their understanding of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and other tools of recovery. The AMIAS also have the opportunity to share and learn from one another.

Some Alateen conferences are held in and organized by one Area, mainly for teens and AMIAS from that Area. Others may be a collaborative effort of two or more Areas. For multi-Area conferences, each Area has approved its members' participation. Most Alateen conferences are “closed” events, attended only by the Alateens and AMIAS. Conferences that offer open meeting(s) must have a safety plan in place to insure that the Alateens are always in the care of AMIAS, and that the AMIAS present are clearly identified.

Your Area Alateen Coordinator can provide information on approved Alateen events in your Area. AMIAS must have their Area's approval before taking Alateen members to any event. The Area Requirements will determine the permission forms needed. Alateens must be transported by certified AMIAS and remain in the care of AMIAS throughout the event. See also "AMIAS at Alateen events."

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### **An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:**

*The sharing and caring at Alateen conferences is infectious. In Alateen, teens grow through the Twelve Steps. The conference offers another opportunity for members to grow. The additional time together and concentrated focus on the program has produced some amazing results. To me, it is almost magical. Sometimes it's hard for adults to fathom how important a conference can be to an Alateen member.*

*For many Al-Anons, conventions are the frosting on the cake. Our weekly meetings are our meat-and-potatoes. We'd like to think it's that way for Alateens as well, but it does not always work that way. Many times Alateens do not have the opportunity to share with persons outside their home group. The membership changes only when new members arrive.*

*Conferences bring new views of the program to Alateen members and, through them, to the group. At conferences, even the newest member has the opportunity to soak up the experience of seasoned Alateens. Experienced members become even stronger. They grow through giving back and reinforcing their contact with the Steps and Traditions. As the members grow in the program, the group becomes healthier, benefiting even the members who were unable to attend the conference.*

*The glow of a conference is felt in weekly meetings long after the actual event is over. Alateen conferences are wonderful for Alateen Group Sponsors, as well. I love to share with other Group Sponsors as we watch our groups grow in the program.*

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## **Al-Anon/Alateen Conventions**

Alateen is part of Al-Anon Family Groups, and it is hoped that all Al-Anon events, including Area Conventions, would include Alateen participation. This can be a shared recovery experience for all Al-Anon/Alateen members. It is also an opportunity for AMIAS who are not currently serving an Alateen group to serve Alateen and support the regular Alateen Group Sponsors.

### **A.A. conventions with Al-Anon/Alateen participation**

A.A. may invite Al-Anon and Alateen to participate in its conventions or other events. As with any event using the Alateen name, the A.A. planning committee must agree to the Al-Anon Area's Alateen Requirements for Alateen participation. Alateen cannot participate without including Al-Anon participation. (See guidelines *Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.* [G-3] and *Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention* [G-7].)

### **Area business meetings**

As a part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, Alateen groups have a voice and vote at district and Area Assembly meetings, and Alateen groups are encouraged to elect and send a Group Representative (GR) to these service meetings. Note that Alateen GRs are Alateen members; Alateen Group Sponsors do not serve as GR for Alateen groups. All Alateen participation must follow the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Just as at any other gathering, Alateens must be in the care of their parent/guardian or certified AMIAS at all times.

## District/AIS local events

Workshops or other get-togethers are a way to connect Alateen and Al-Anon members. Whenever Alateens are included in local events, there must be a safety plan in place. When parents or guardians transport Alateens to an event, they are responsible for them. When Alateens are transported by Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), they must be in the care of AMIAS at all times during the event. Transporting Alateens is a service opportunity for AMIAS who are not Alateen Group Sponsors.

## Resources on Alateen events

- *Alateen Conferences* guideline (G-16)
- *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34)
- *Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.* guideline (G-3)
- *Members Interested in Speaking* guideline (G-1)
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention* (G-7)
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Area Conventions* (G-20)



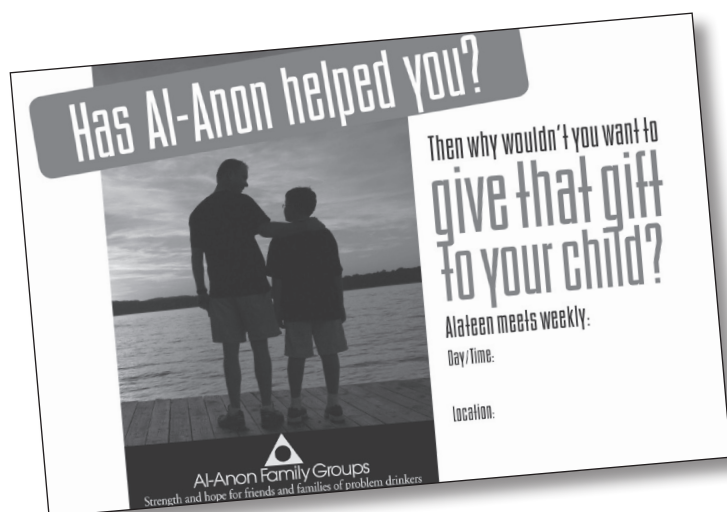
## Spreading the word – Alateen public outreach

Public Outreach informs the general public about who we are, what we do, and how to get in touch with Al-Anon and Alateen. In public outreach service, members work with: the media; professionals (teachers, counselors, etc.); facilities, such as schools and treatment centers; and organizations, such as scouting or church youth groups. Our trusted servants also need to inform Al-Anon and A.A. groups and their members of the availability of Alateen.

Your district or Al-Anon Information Service may have a Public Outreach Committee or local Coordinator who can assist Alateen groups with their outreach efforts. Here are some ideas for local Alateen outreach.

### Outreach within Al-Anon Family Groups

- Inform neighboring Al-Anon groups that Alateen is available. Obtain copies of the *Alateen Table Card* (M-80). Write your meeting day/time and location on each card. Have each Alateen write a short sharing on what Alateen has meant to them, and put the sharings together in a memo asking the Al-Anon group to display the card at their meetings. Deliver the memo and a table card to each Al-Anon group in your district.
- Encourage participation in Al-Anon and A.A. conventions. Help provide an Alateen speaker for Al-Anon and A.A. conventions or special events.
- Have an interchange of meetings with other Al-Anon groups. Ask the Al-Anon group to invite Alateen members to speak for a portion of their meeting time. This way, Al-Anons get to have their regular meeting in addition to learning about Alateen.
- Visit other Alateen groups and ask those members to bring their recovery experience to your new group.
- Visit your district or Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) meeting and ask the GRs and ISRs to let their groups know that Alateen is available.
- Inform all interested adults and young people about the Alateen meeting by having a public outreach open Alateen meeting. See guidelines *A Meeting on Wheels* (G-22) and *The Open Al-Anon Meeting* (G-27).
- Hold a group anniversary meeting, and invite all the Al-Anon/Alateen groups in your district to attend.



## Outreach to schools and other professionals who may work with families

- If you are a new Alateen Group Sponsor for an existing group, be sure professionals know how to reach you if they need more information. The school counselor or nurse may be helpful.
- Review the Public Outreach guidelines, available on the Members' Web site.
- *The Best of Public Outreach* has lots of ideas for reaching out to professionals.
- Let professionals in your area know about your group. Help them understand that Alateen is for the families and friends of alcoholics, not young people seeking to recover from their own drinking problem. Social workers, religious advisors, school teachers and guidance counselors as well as community center personnel often deal with the disease of alcoholism. They will be grateful to have a place to refer young people troubled by a problem of alcoholism in the family or in a friend. You may check in your area for professionals and organizations dealing specifically with the disease of alcoholism, such as the National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc., treatment centers, and halfway houses.
- Enlist the assistance of your Area/district/AIS Public Outreach Chair or Committee. Plan to use the Al-Anon/Alateen outreach video, *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31), and An Open Letter to my Teacher (OT5).

## Outreach to A.A.

- Let local A.A. groups know that Alateen is available.
- Visit local open A.A. meetings.
- Ask if your local A.A. group might like to have an Alateen speaker.

## Outreach to the general public

- Contact the local district/AIS, Alateen Coordinator, district Public Outreach Chairperson and/or the Area Public Outreach Coordinator for guidance and support.
- Review the Public Outreach guidelines, available on the Members' Web site.
- *The Best of Public Outreach* has lots of ideas for carrying the message.
- Alateen members or their Alateen Group Sponsors may post notices of their meetings in public spaces (Ask permission of the facility before posting.) Check with the Area Alateen Coordinator to be sure such postings are in keeping with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.
- Work with a Public Outreach committee or coordinator to assist with carrying public service announcements (PSAs) to local media.

## Helpful tools

- *Information for Educators: Alateen Meetings in Schools* pamphlet (S-64)
- Guideline: *Alateen Meetings in Schools* (G-5)
- *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31 DVD) containing video segments suitable for showing to educators and other professionals. Samples are available at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org).
- *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* annual outreach magazine
- *The Best of Public Outreach*
- *A Meeting on Wheels* (G-22)
- *The Open Al-Anon Meeting* (G-27)
- *Members Interested in Speaking* (G-1)
- *An Open Letter to my Teacher* (OT5)
- Alateen outreach graphics roadside designs
- *Alateen Talk* excerpts



# Challenges in Alateen service

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## Problems in the meeting—tools we can use

As with any group, an Alateen group may have problems with unacceptable behavior, misunderstandings, or a lack of focus and unity. Certain members may have difficulties in their own lives to address. Or members may have a problem with an Alateen Group Sponsor. The best solutions are those that members discover for themselves. The program offers the following tools, among others:

- Group discussion
- Conference Approved Literature (CAL)
- The Twelve Traditions
- Group inventory and group conscience vote
- The links of service—the District Representative (DR), the district Alateen Coordinator, and/or Area Alateen Coordinator.

## How can a member bring the problem to the group?

An Alateen Group Sponsor and/or Alateen member may call the group's attention to a problem, honestly sharing his/her view of the situation. This may be followed with a group discussion and suggestions of which program tools might help. It may be helpful to begin discussion with a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer,

## The literature and service tools contain many answers

Many solutions can be found in our Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and service tools. District or Area trusted servants can help suggest literature and service tools with ideas on a particular topic. Some suggestions include:

- The *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)
- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for Alateen* (P-18)
- *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B-3)
- *Courage to Be Me—Living With Alcoholism* (B-23)
- *Alateen—a day at a time* (B-10)
- *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24)
- *Living Today in Alateen* (B-26)
- *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b)
- *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34)
- Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts Kit (K-70)

## The Traditions give us direction

Alateen's Twelve Traditions are guideposts for the group. Alateen Group Sponsors can suggest the group examine them in the light of what is happening in the meeting. This not only helps to solve the problem, but gives the Traditions real meaning for the members. The Traditions provide guidelines that help the group keep personalities from overpowering principles.

## Dealing with behavior

Our young people often have problems to begin with and may not behave appropriately in every situation. The Alateen Group Sponsors and other Alateen members need not accept unacceptable behavior like swearing, rudeness, unnecessary noise, etc. This sort of behavior is also unacceptable at an Alateen or Al-Anon convention or any event where an individual's behavior could reflect on Alateen as a whole. Al-Anon and Alateen are not above the law, and any illegal activities (such as use of drugs, smoking, or drinking by minors) could require reporting to authorities.

One of the responsibilities of Alateen Group Sponsors is to see that the group respects the place where the meeting is held. Reckless behavior towards the building and property has caused many groups to lose their meeting site. Dealing with disruptive behavior is a truly a time when Alateen Group Sponsors need to put principles above personalities.

After discussing the behavior with the individual, if nothing changes, the group has the right to ask him/her not to return for a few meetings. The teen is encouraged to return when ready for the Alateen program.

In the meeting, the problems are more likely to be side-conversations and fooling around. As discussed in the Setting behavior guidelines/boundaries section, the Alateens can be encouraged to police themselves by setting their own guidelines.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares

*Our biggest group problem is keeping our meetings focused and recovery-oriented. We get side-tracked into gossip or goofing off. Members' restlessness can be distracting. Some are "group clowns" who cannot resist burping or putting various items up their noses while someone else is reading. Sometimes I feel that nothing works out the way it should.*

*We tried several things to help with this problem. First, by group conscience, we have a "3-Ds" rule. No destructive, disruptive, or distracting behavior in meetings. The Alateens seem to remember the 3-Ds and will confront other members using that as a guide, which is more effective than an Alateen Group Sponsor always correcting them.*

*Our group has also chosen to include "Remember" (page 102 in Alateen – Hope for Children of Alcoholics [B-3]) at the beginning of every meeting. It tells newcomers what kind of behavior is expected and reminds the old timers.*

*And finally, I use the slogan "Easy Does It" to remind the Alateens and myself that there never is a "perfect" meeting. The meeting belongs to the Alateens. When I feel we have become hopelessly scattered or distracted, someone will bring a problem to the meeting and the whole group will come together with real experience, strength, and hope. We do recover.*

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## Younger children

From the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), "Alateen Policy" section:

"As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. Family members below teen years might not be ready for the Alateen program. Such children may have to depend on others to choose what they learn. This could lead to the development of a teaching program. "Teaching" is not compatible with the Al-Anon principle of sharing. There are, however, younger children who can benefit from the Alateen program, which requires the ability to participate in a shared learning experience.

"It is within the autonomy of each Alateen group to lower the age limit or divide into groups according to age. Whatever the decision, all such groups will be registered as "Alateen" at the World Service Office. Members in their teen years who are legally adults agree to abide by the same requirements as minor Alateens when they attend Alateen meetings and events. Alateen members in the upper teen years are encouraged to begin attending Al-Anon as well as Alateen meetings; young people beyond the teen years attend Al-Anon meetings."

Some groups are reluctant to take in younger members because they are afraid that there will be behavior problems.

Alateen Group Sponsors have shared the following tools for working with younger children:

- Groups may be divided according to age, as long as each meeting is in compliance with Area Alateen Requirements (e.g., sufficient number of certified Alateen Group Sponsors available).
- Younger children may respond well to taking activity breaks during the meeting.
- The “Younger Members” and “Tear It Out and Keep It” pages from *Alateen Talk* can be helpful to groups with younger members.

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### **An Alateen Group Sponsor of a group for younger members shares:**

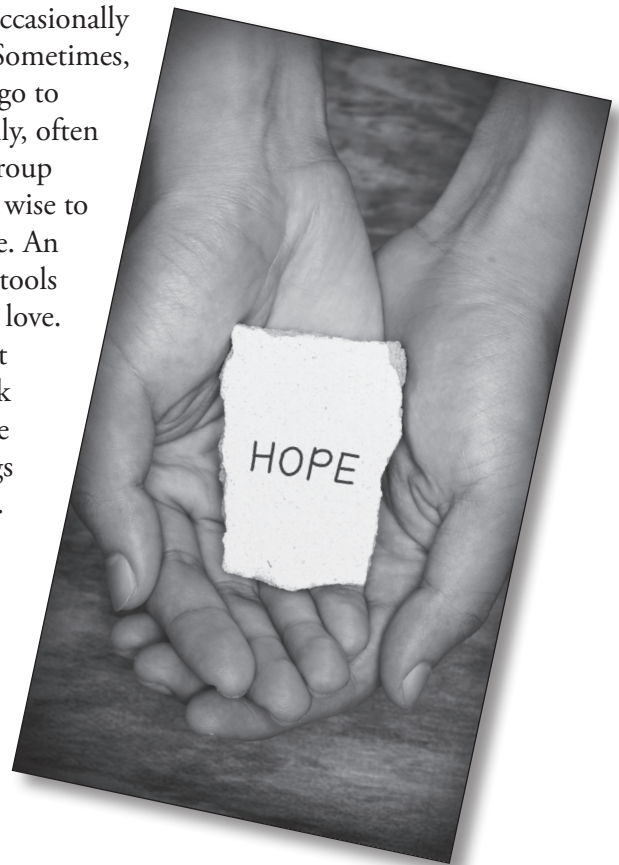
*Our group’s age guideline is age 8-12. Sometimes, a parent brings a younger child. It’s very hard to turn a child away, so I ask the child (not the parent) if helshe can sit still for an hour. If the answer is yes, I tell the parent we’ll try it out, but please stay nearby so that if it doesn’t work, we can take the child out of the meeting. We seldom have a problem. Once the child has agreed to sit quietly, helshe usually does. In fact, they are often less disruptive than the older members! Once, I heard a five-year-old say, after hearing a page from Alateen—a day at a time: “Than sounds just like my house.” His sharing brought tears to my eyes. After that, any age child was welcome, as long as helshe could sit quietly.*

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### **Difficult situations**

While the Alateen meeting should focus on the member, occasionally members share about things that happen within the family. Sometimes, the Alateen Group Sponsor may know the parents and even go to meetings with them. Children, during the teen years especially, often view things entirely differently than their parents. Alateen Group Sponsors refrain from judging anyone—parent or child. It is wise to remember that anyone’s sharing tells just one side of the issue. An Alateen Group Sponsor’s job is just to listen and to offer the tools of the program, not to take sides. It may help to detach with love.

In other instances, an Alateen member may touch a subject sensitive to an Alateen Group Sponsor, and it may bring back painful feelings on topics such as divorce or the loss of a close family member. Remembering to detach and/or share feelings with a personal Sponsor may help the discomfort to go away.



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## An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*Our Alateen Coordinator had been asked to start a combined group for three shelters. One shelter was for unwed mothers, one for battered families, and one for runaways. It took almost a year to get the Alateen meeting started. Sometimes the discussion is very heavy and almost too much for me to hear. Each teen is in some sort of crisis or they would not be in the shelter. After the third or fourth meeting, I found myself crying during the drive home. I blubbered to my personal Sponsor how sad it was and how badly I felt for everyone. I was careful to discuss my feelings and not divulge the details of what I heard in the meeting. I remember her response, "They have choices just like you. They don't need your sympathy; they need to know we all have choices." I called two other Al-Anon friends and each said the same thing. I felt hope, not only for the teens, but for me. I remembered a talk when I heard an Al-Anon member say that in any crisis she receives one of two miracles. One miracle is that her Higher Power removes the crisis. The other miracle is that He gives her the grace to go through it. Thinking back over my life, I know that I have had similar experiences, even when I didn't believe in a Higher Power. I came to learn that, in Alateen, there is always hope.*

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When an Alateen member shares of experiences related to the difficult topics of abuse, violence, or suicide, the Alateen Group Sponsor can encourage the teen to seek help from school counselors, social service agencies, police and the courts. Some Alateen Group Sponsors maintain a list of community resources, to be able to share how Alateen members can get in touch with those who may be able to help. Alateen Group Sponsors, however, are careful to limit their part in the discussion to their own experience, and do not give specific advice.

**Note on mandatory reporting:** Alateen Group Sponsors should be familiar with the laws in their locality regarding reporting of abuse toward minors, and be prepared to comply with them. There is valuable information on this topic in the section of this *e-Manual* on "Alateen Safety." See also the *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34). Sponsors are encouraged to speak with the Alateen member, with other Alateen Group Sponsors and/or district/Area trusted servant before reporting. Any reporting is done as an individual, not as an Al-Anon member or Alateen Group Sponsor.

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## An Alateen Group Sponsor shares

*A 10 year-old Alateen asked me if she could talk to me alone after the meeting. She said she thought she had been sexually abused. She didn't want this to happen again. She was afraid nobody would believe her and that telling would cause an even deeper division in her family. This was a big problem. We talked about several alternatives. I shared that as a parent, I would want to know if something awful happened to my child. There is no way for anyone to know the best solution for another person. I chose to join hands with her and pray that our Higher Power would show her what to do. I told her not to worry about the answer for the moment.*

*God would make it clear to her what to do. The next week, she told me that she had told her mother and that her brother was going to get counseling. She would never again have to be alone with him.*

*By the way, months before this happened, I shared with the group that my daughter had been abused and how I felt. The Alateen told me this is why she felt comfortable coming to me about the problem.*

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## Interactions with parents/guardians

### What information can Alateen Group Sponsors give to parents/guardians?

The Alateen Group Sponsor has the responsibility to safeguard the confidential discussions of the meeting. It is very important for an Alateen member to know how he/she can trust the Alateen Group Sponsor to honor confidentiality. As the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome states, “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/Alateen.” If a parent/guardian persists in asking how a child is doing in the program, the Sponsor can suggest the parent/guardian ask the child directly.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares with parents/guardian:

- *Please be on time. Latecomers disrupt the meeting. Children are usually dependent on someone to get them to the meeting. When a parent is habitually late, the child misses part of the meeting. Hearing the Opening, Steps, and Traditions read each week are important.*
- *Please don't put Alateen in the same category as TV. Once your child accepts Alateen as a place where he/she is comfortable and wants to go, please don't turn the tables and use it as a means of punishment. “I couldn't come last week because I was grounded.” “I can't go to a conference because I got in trouble.” Alateen is an important life experience. As long as the child wants to attend, we hope you will do everything possible to provide the means to get him/her there.*
- *Please respect the confidentiality of the group. Encourage your child to refrain from discussing who said what at the meeting. That's especially important when more than one child in the same family is in the same group. Don't ask Sara what Bonnie said. If Sara volunteers to tell about what Bonnie says, you can remind her that the group has a slogan that says: “Whom you see here, What you hear here, When you leave here, Let it stay here.” It is impossible for most Alateens to share openly if they think it will be repeated outside of the meeting.*
- *If the timing is not right now, try again later. If your child refuses to go to Alateen when you first offer it, you can set an example by regularly attending Al-Anon. Perhaps if he/she sees how you have benefited, the idea will be more appealing.*
- *Please don't ask us to babysit. Alateen is a recovery tool. If there is a need for babysitting, you may wish to encourage your Al-Anon group to set up a babysitting service. We appreciate your need to get to a meeting; it's just that that's not what Alateen is all about.*
- *Please don't expect Alateen to help your child recover from alcoholism and drug addiction. It is true that Alateen has taught many children the symptoms of alcoholism and, as a result, some have come to recognize their own disease. However, this is not the place to recover from that disease. Alateen is for the relatives and friends of alcoholics.*
- *Please be on time to pick up your children after the meeting. As Alateen Group Sponsors, we can't leave until you get there. If you are attending Al-Anon or A.A. meetings while your kids are at Alateen, please claim responsibility for their actions after the meeting. The Group Sponsors are volunteers, who give up their time in order to be there for your children. We appreciate all the help you can give.*

*I wish I could convey to you how much your children mean to me. It's not always been easy going, and there have been times when continuing has required some soul searching. But each time I think of all the Alateen members who have found a new way to look at their lives as a result of what they have come to learn about themselves and the disease of alcoholism—and of all the fun I have had in the process—I know I'm hooked on Alateen.*

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## How should an Alateen Group Sponsor answer when a parent/guardian believes his/her child is at an Alateen meeting when he/she is not?

There may come a time when a parent/guardian believes his/her child is at an Alateen meeting, but the child does not attend. The Alateen Group Sponsor should let the group know that, if approached by a parent/guardian about attendance, he/she will direct the parent/guardian back to each member. However, if asked outright about attendance, an Alateen Group Sponsor does not have to lie. Covering for the Alateens is not part of the confidentiality to which each member is entitled. Alateen Group Sponsors should also stress that the surrounding space outside the building is not part of the meeting room.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*An Al-Anon member came up to me after the Alateen meeting and said: "Gosh! My kids sure love you—sometimes it even seems like they love you more than me."*

*"I can understand why you might say that," I replied. "I don't have to get them to clean their rooms or do their homework or take out the garbage. They are here for one or two hours a week. I give them lots of understanding and love them unconditionally. I can be objective, with no emotion involved, when they talk about themselves. Wouldn't you love me too?"*

*"You have to worry and be concerned for their welfare. You are a parent full-time and it is harder."*

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### What can an Alateen Group Sponsor do if the Alateen members lie to their parent/guardian about their whereabouts when the parent/guardian won't allow them to attend Alateen?

A parent/guardian may object to their children attending Alateen meetings. One solution could be for the group to have an open meeting so the members can invite their parent/guardian to see what Alateen is and does. Having Al-Anon/Alateen literature on display at these meetings can be extremely helpful. Alateen members should be encouraged to look for opportunities to tell their parent/guardian the truth, but it is their own decision. See the guideline *The Open Al-Anon Meeting* (G-27).

## Siblings in a meeting

There is a saying: "There are no brothers or sisters in Alateen." This means that when there are members of the same family attending the same meeting, they are each individuals. Put-downs and telling stories on each other should be discouraged. Siblings also need to be able to trust that what they say in the meeting will not go home to their parents.

In some families, the disease of alcoholism has drawn siblings close together. In others, it has driven a wedge between them. We can only ask that, for an hour a week, they put aside their family relationships and attend the meeting as individuals.

If the group is large and splits into two meetings, the siblings can go to separate rooms.

## Broken anonymity

Nothing upsets a member like having his/her anonymity broken. It is important to discuss anonymity frequently in the meeting. Many groups display the *Anonymity Table Card* (S-9) that says: "Whom you see here, What you hear here, When you leave here, Let it stay here," at all meetings. It is available from the World Service Office. See also "Role of Alateen Group Sponsors in Alateen meetings," "Anonymity" section.

## Conflict in the group

There are times when the group becomes dissatisfied with its Alateen Group Sponsor. If, after an honest appraisal, the group feels a change of sponsorship would be desirable, the group needs to seek another certified AMIAS who is willing to sponsor the group.

It may be a good idea for Alateen members to know that they can ask the Alateen Group Sponsor to leave for part of the meeting in order to be able to more freely discuss the problems relating to the Alateen Group Sponsor (remember that an AMIAS must remain in the room with the Alateens, in keeping with the Area Requirements). Other Alateen Group Sponsors, the District Representative, the Area Alateen Coordinator, or Delegate may be contacted for further help and invited to attend a meeting. To protect the anonymity of the concerned members, these trusted servants can ask the Alateen Group Sponsor to call for a group conscience decision to allow them to sit in on the meeting.

As in any conflict situation, the group should discuss the matter in light of the Alateen Traditions, keeping principles above personalities.

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### An Alateen Group Sponsor shares:

*A group conscience meeting can deal with many types of problems, large and small. Recently at our meeting, the members began to disagree on the reading of the Twelve Steps. Everyone wanted to read Step Two. I suggested we stop the meeting and do a group conscience to settle the dispute. Everyone who had a suggestion was heard. Then we voted. It was unanimously decided that we would continue to go around the room with the Steps, taking turns, but when we get to Step Two, everyone will read in unison.*

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### A group inventory may help

The group inventory allows the group to look at what is going well in the group, as well as to identify problems and determine solutions. A group inventory is probably the most successful tool in helping the group to deal with difficulties. It may take a while for Alateens to realize they can be honest in front of the group, so it's a good idea to have the group take inventory periodically, not just when problems arise. A brief, regularly scheduled group inventory can also help prevent problems from building up. The guideline *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b) provides questions for Al-Anon and Alateen groups to use in taking an inventory.

Groups are remarkably adept at admitting their shortcomings. Sometimes that is enough. When they see the problems, the group is able to put a plan of change into action.

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### An Alateen group takes an inventory:

*Problems always seem to come up in the newly formed groups. If nothing is done about them, the whole group suffers. Our group had a lot of problems. Some people quit coming because of interruptions. We seemed to be going down the drain until we decided to have a group inventory meeting.*

*At first, we were afraid we would hurt someone by what we said. We shared and it was all right. Instead of directing a suggestion to one person, we directed our comments to the group as a whole. Suggestions kept pouring in and the more we talked, the more excited we became about our changes. Here are a few things we decided to try and help our group:*

- *Everyone will have a chance to be a Chairperson.*
- *People need a chance to express exactly what they feel. No one will "hog" the meeting and talk too much. No one person is in charge, so everyone is to be welcomed equally and to be treated equally.*
- *Only three interruptions will be tolerated; after three, the person will gently be asked to leave.*
- *Members are asked to talk only when called on and not to interrupt when others are speaking.*

- *If the next Chairperson is unable to attend, he/she will take the responsibility to contact someone else who can take the meeting.*
- *The Chairperson is encouraged to look up one of the Traditions and discuss it briefly at the beginning of the meeting. This will give us a better understanding of the Twelve Traditions.*
- *The Treasurer will pass the basket at the end of the meeting.*
- *We will conduct ourselves properly when at a meeting. Alateen is a place where we go to help ourselves. We should not ever take advantage of it in a negative way.*
- *We will always try to have one Step meeting a month.*
- *It would be helpful if personal problems were discussed after the meeting, either with a personal Sponsor, another member of the group, or an Alateen Group Sponsor.*

*There were only a few things discussed at our meeting. We are hoping these improvements will show in our meeting and will bring some people back.*

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## Avoiding Sponsor burnout

It is a fact that Alateen Sponsorship:

- Can be an incredible personal growth experience!
- Can be deeply moving!
- Provides unequaled satisfaction when the Alateens in your group utilize Al-Anon principle learned in meetings!

It is also a fact that Alateen Sponsorship:

- Can take an emotional toll.
- Can put you in touch with some painful feelings.
- Can challenge your knowledge of the tools of the Al-Anon program.

It is very important that all Alateen Group Sponsors have a “Burn-out Plan” to take care of themselves, and ensure that Alateen Group Sponsorship remains an enjoyable experience. Here are some suggestions:

- Attend additional Al-Anon meetings.
- Attend or chair a meeting on “laughter”!
- Attend Alateen Group Sponsor meetings/weekends in your district/Area.
- Use your personal and service Sponsors.
- Put your emotional and spiritual needs first.
- Take a break from sponsoring the Alateen group.





# WSO Resources

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## Materials available on the Members' Web site, [al-anon.org/members](http://al-anon.org/members)

- *The Alateen Service e-Manual*
- Section on Starting an Alateen Group
- *Alateen Talk* (quarterly newsletter) excerpts
- *Area Highlights* (quarterly newsletter)
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)
- Alateen guidelines
  - Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34)
  - Starting an Alateen Group* (G-19)
  - Alateen Conferences* (G-16)
  - Alateen Meetings in Schools* (G-5)
  - Area Alateen Coordinators* (G-24)
- *The Best of Public Outreach*
- *A Guide for Sponsors of Alateen Groups* (P-29)
- *Alateen Sponsorship—Is It for You?* (S-27)
- *Information for Educators* (S-64)

## Outreach materials

- *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* video (AV-31dvd). See sample clips.
- *Alateen Table Card* (M-80)
- *Alateen Talk* (quarterly newsletter) excerpts
- *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (outreach magazine)
- *The Forum* (monthly magazine)

# Alateen Safety

## Background on Alateen safety

### **History and background of the motion that established the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.**

From the time Alateen was formed in 1957, Alateen safety has been a topic of discussion and concern. In 2002, in a “Talking with the Delegates” session at the World Service Conference, the Board of Trustees asked, “What do you as Delegates think is the most important issue facing Al-Anon in the future?” In the Delegates’ responses, the topic of Alateen safety was of such high priority that at the following year’s Conference, Alateen safety was the entire focus of the “Talking with the Delegates” discussion. Time was devoted to this topic at WSO Board meetings, as well as in the WSO Policy and Group Services Committees’ meetings. The Board reviewed all information ever recorded about Alateen from the WSO Archives. As more Areas created their own Alateen requirements, it became obvious that the WSO had nothing in place to support these Areas.

The Board, recognizing its responsibility to protect the Alateens and the Alateen Group Sponsors, as well as the Alateen name, was unanimous in its decision that the time had come to take action to provide formal legal protection and support for our Alateen program. The Board began a process of setting down basic Alateen requirements which would need to be adhered to by the fellowship as a whole in order to maintain the right to use the Al-Anon or Alateen name. After the resolution was finalized and approved in December 2003, it was sent to all Delegates. Implementation by the Areas was required no later than December 31, 2004.

Motion 12 of the 2004 World Service Conference affirmed the minimum safety and behavioral requirements for Alateen that were put into effect in December 2003 (See 2004 and 2005 *World Service Conference Summaries*, available on the Members’ Web site, for additional background information).

Some members of the fellowship did not agree that this action was necessary. Citing Concept Five, they voiced their minority view by petitioning the Board to reconsider its actions. The Board thoroughly reviewed all correspondence received and, after careful consideration and much discussion, denied the appeals.

### **In 2010, a section on “Alateen Policy” was added to the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section in the 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), with the following note:**

*World Service Conference Alateen policies that are approved for the World Service Conference structure must adhere to the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. The 2003 Alateen Motion is a legal resolution of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and cannot be changed by a World Service Conference Motion. Just as our Al-Anon/Alateen policies and procedures must be in keeping with our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, and the World Service Conference Charter, Alateen policies and procedures for the World Service Conference structure must also comply with the 2003 Alateen Motion. Only the Board of Trustees can amend or alter the 2003 Alateen Motion.*

## 2003 Alateen Motion

### ***The following motion was approved by the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. in December 2003:***

The Alateen Advisory Committee, the Group Services Committee, the World Service Office Policy Committee, and the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. have studied the issues concerning the safety and behavior of Alateen members and individuals involved with Alateen service. The Board has reviewed the documents and actions of previous Conferences, previous Committees, and the World Service Office correspondence with legal counsel, individual members, Alateen Sponsors, Coordinators, as well as area and district officers.

The Board of Trustees has determined:

- Not all areas have written safety or behavioral requirements for Alateens and individuals involved with Alateen service.
- The WSO registration procedures and policies should support areas that have developed safety and behavioral requirements.
- The Al-Anon fellowship should take all necessary steps to provide a safe environment for Alateens and the Al-Anons involved with Alateen service.

As Tradition Four states, “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.” The Board of Trustees has determined that issues of safety and behavior by Alateens and individuals involved with Alateen service do affect every group and Al-Anon as a whole.

The Board of Trustees, under Concept Seven and Warranty Four, is entrusted with the authority and responsibility to protect the Al-Anon and Alateen names and the organizational identity.

Now, therefore, the Board of Trustees resolves:

1. As soon as possible, but in any event, no later than December 31, 2004, if an area within the World Service Conference Structure uses the Al-Anon or Alateen name in conjunction with any meeting(s), group(s), convention(s), or any other gathering(s) in the area where Alateen participation is offered, the area must have safety and behavioral requirements for all Alateen members and Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service. These safety and behavioral requirements must meet the minimum requirements of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.
2. Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service and all Alateen members must adhere to the area’s safety and behavioral requirements, or the area will notify the WSO that those members are prohibited from participating in Alateen service.
3. As soon as possible, but in any event, no later than December 31, 2004, and for each succeeding year, each area must have a process to certify, and must so certify to the WSO annually, that each Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service has met the area’s safety and behavioral requirements and has agreed to abide by them.
4. The World Service Office will register only those Alateen groups whose registration it receives through the area’s registration process. The WSO will remove from its registration list any Alateen group that the area determines does not comply with area safety and behavioral requirements. The area’s request for removal of an Alateen group must be stated in writing to the Associate Director/Alateen. This applies to all Alateen groups, whether currently registered or not.
5. If the area states in writing to the Associate Director/Alateen that a group, meeting, convention, or gathering is failing to meet the area’s safety and behavioral requirements, prior registration or interaction with the World Service Office shall not constitute any continuing right to use the Al-Anon or Alateen name.

## Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements

1. Every Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service must:
  - a. be an Al-Anon member regularly attending Al-Anon meetings.
  - b. be at least 21 years old.
  - c. have at least two years in Al-Anon in addition to any time spent in Alateen.
  - d. not have been convicted of a felony, and not have been charged with child abuse or any other inappropriate sexual behavior, and not have demonstrated emotional problems which could result in harm to Alateen members.
2. There must be at least one Alateen sponsor at every Alateen meeting.
3. The area requirements must prohibit overt or covert sexual interaction between any adult and Alateen member.
4. The area requirements must prohibit conduct contrary to applicable laws.
5. The area requirements must contain procedures for parental permission and medical care when applicable.
6. The area requirements must be reviewed by local counsel.

Other points for the areas to think about in developing their requirements:

- Requiring two Alateen sponsors at every Alateen meeting.
- Having background checks.
- Considering behavior before, during, and after any Alateen meeting or activity of Alateens and adults involved with Alateen service.
- Connecting Alateen conferences to the area structure.
- Forming an Alateen meeting that meets at the same time and place as the Al-Anon meeting.
- Being gender conscious.
- Avoiding one-on-one interactions.
- Having an appropriate ratio of adults to Alateens at all times.
- Transporting Alateens to and from events.
- Educational training and awareness programs.

## Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements

“Each Al-Anon Area in the World Service Conference Structure has Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements in place which meet or exceed the minimum requirements set by the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees (available from the WSO). The Area’s Requirements include minimum requirements for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), Alateen meetings, and Alateen participation in conferences, conventions, and other events. In order to use the Alateen name, the Area, all Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service, all Alateen members, and all meetings and events with Alateen participation must be in compliance with the Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Each Area’s Alateen process details the steps that must be taken to meet its requirements.”

*Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24-27, “Alateen Policy” section)*

To obtain a copy of your Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, contact your Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP), another Area trusted servant, or District Representative (DR). To locate these Area members, contact your Group Representative (GR), DR, or the World Service Office.

[If you are keeping these documents in a notebook, insert your Area Requirements following this page]

## Area Alateen Process – Certification as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS)

### Area Alateen Process

“Each Area has its own process to implement and maintain its Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, including the paperwork required for certification of AMIAS, registration of Alateen groups, and events with Alateen participation.

“Details on an Area’s Alateen process are available from the Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP), another Area trusted servant, or your District Representative (DR). To connect with Area trusted servants, contact your Group Representative (GR), DR, or the World Service Office.”

*Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), “Alateen Policy” section*

**Every Al-Anon member who is involved with Alateen service must be certified as an AMIAS through their Area Process.**

### Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS)

“An Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) is an Al-Anon member who is currently certified through their Area’s Alateen process and is therefore eligible to be directly responsible for Alateens while being of service to Alateen. AMIAS may be certified by more than one Area; however, they must first be certified by the Area in which they reside. AMIAS may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors, chaperones, drivers, or other roles as outlined in their Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Area Alateen Coordinators are required to be certified AMIAS; the Area determines which other service roles require certification.

“Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. may be certified as AMIAS and serve as Alateen Group Sponsors by virtue of their Al-Anon membership, in accordance with their Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program at all times.”

*Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), “Alateen Policy” section*

[If you are keeping these documents in a notebook, insert your Area Requirements following this page]

## Legal Issues

### **Legal and Traditional Responsibility of AMIAS, including Alateen Group Sponsors:**

**Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service** (AMIAS) may become aware of instances of child abuse. A dilemma then arises on how to deal with the problem. If in an effort to protect the Alateen member from further harm, an incident is reported, is the Tradition of anonymity or confidentiality violated?

The first action is to seek legal advice regarding Area requirements and existing state/provincial laws. Child abuse laws relating to mandatory disclosure usually refer to individuals performing in a professional capacity, and not as volunteers. It is advisable that the laws in each state/province/country be investigated because they do vary from place to place. Where reporting is required, there is no choice but to comply with the law. In most localities, an Alateen Group Sponsor is not legally required to report instances of suspected child abuse. Yet, as a Sponsor, we may question what is truly right for the Alateen member in the long run. Alateen Group Sponsors and AMIAS who are required by law to report cases of suspected child abuse should let the Alateens know, up front before sharing begins, that they will disclose such incidents that are discussed at the meeting or event.

Alateen Group Sponsors and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service who feel a moral responsibility or are compelled by law to report cases of suspected child abuse to the authorities should contact their Area Alateen Coordinator, District Representative, or other Area-designated trusted servant prior to reporting. It is important to reason things out through the Area process before disclosure, keeping in mind the Traditions and the Alateen member's anonymity.

Prior to reporting to the authorities, the Alateen Group Sponsor or Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service should also discuss their intentions with the Alateen member to avoid placing the member in danger and to maintain confidence and trust in the Alateen Group Sponsor/AMIAS and the Alateen program. It is important to follow the advice of your local legal counsel, as keeping the identity of the alleged abuser anonymous is important, since accusations of child abuse are defamatory and could lead to claims of libel and slander. In order to keep the Alateen fellowship from public controversy, any reporting is done on a personal basis rather than as an Alateen Group Sponsor or Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service.

From the *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34)

### **Q: If reporting is mandatory, how do we prepare the Alateens?**

If a mandated reporter is present, the Alateens must be made aware of this at every meeting, before sharing begins, so that they have a choice in the subjects they share. Some groups read a statement at the beginning of each meeting. If it becomes necessary to report something, do it as an interested and concerned adult, not as a representative of Al-Anon or Alateen.

### **Q: What should we do if we are considering reporting? Whether reporting is mandatory or not:**

- Start by discussing the matter with the Area Alateen Coordinator, DR, or other trusted servants according to the Area's process.
- Before reporting, discuss your intentions with the Alateen member.
- Follow advice of legal counsel regarding keeping identities anonymous.
- Any reporting is done as an individual, not as an Alateen Group Sponsor or AMIAS.

**If you are not familiar with the laws in your state/province regarding the reporting of crimes against children, please contact your Area Alateen Coordinator.**

[If you are keeping these documents in a notebook, insert your Area Requirements following this page]