

What is “Cooperation”?

Cooperation is working with others outside of our program, providing information about who we are, what we do, and how to reach us. Cooperation means:

- Providing literature, meeting schedules, and telephone contact numbers to professionals.
- Setting up display booths or “take one” tables at outside conventions, conferences, and health fairs.
- Giving Al-Anon and Alateen presentations to family members and staff at facilities.
- Responding to requests from the media and professionals for Al-Anon and Alateen information.
- Offering Al-Anon and Alateen members’ services to share how the program works for them.

What is “Affiliation”?

Above all we want to protect our fellowship from outside pressures. Affiliation makes Al-Anon and Alateen vulnerable and can lead to the dilution of our primary spiritual aim. Affiliation means:

- Allowing Al-Anon/Alateen’s name to be used as part of another organization.
- Endorsing or implying endorsement of specific treatment methods, therapeutic techniques, certain professionals or authors or specific facilities.

Frequently Asked Questions about Cooperation vs. Affiliation

Q: Can we send or give literature or catalogs and order forms to professionals without their requesting it?

A: Yes. Mailings allow Al-Anon to become visible. Personal delivery of literature provides information about the Al-Anon fellowship and the help Al-Anon offers to relatives and friends of alcoholics. Based on the 2003 membership survey, 40% of Al-Anon and Alateen members were introduced to the program through a professional’s referral.

Q: If we provide literature catalogs and order forms to professionals, is this promotion?

A: No. Giving professionals literature order forms and catalogs lets them know the range of Al-Anon and Alateen literature available as well as how to obtain it.

Q: Can we place posters, “take-one” displays, copies of *The Forum*, or meeting information lists at a facility or professional waiting room?

A: Yes, this is an effective way to reach potential newcomers. However, it is advisable to obtain administrative approval from the facility or professional.

Q: Can Al-Anon and Alateen members speak as members of our fellowship at professional conferences?

A: Yes. When speaking at a professional conference, we share that we’re speaking from our personal experiences and not for Al-Anon as a whole. We maintain anonymity by not disclosing our full name and avoid full-face appearances at the level of press, radio, TV, Internet, and film.

Q: Can meeting schedules be given/sold to professionals?

A: Yes. Meeting lists can be provided free or they can be sold (this is a matter of local autonomy). This is one of the most essential services we can provide. We cooperate with the professional community by providing meeting information, which may be used to refer clients to a meeting.

Q: Can I give a professional or reporter my full name?

A: Yes. When we serve as an Al-Anon/Alateen contact, it’s helpful to give our full name and telephone number, so we can be easily reached for more information. Serving as a press contact is not public; in dealing with the media, we must explain our principle of personal anonymity at the public level. We can also give the name and telephone number of the local Al-Anon/Alateen information service.

Q: Can a counselor or someone from the helping profession be invited to speak at an Al-Anon or Alateen gathering?

A: It is acceptable to invite a knowledgeable member of the helping profession to speak at a special meeting or workshop. The 2002-2004 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* states, “...the group tries to ensure that any occasional guest speaker be knowledgeable about the Al-Anon/Alateen program.

Additionally, it is suggested that outside speakers be made aware of our Sixth Tradition in advance, and be asked to discuss an appropriate topic” (page 94). Any such speakers should be made aware that it would be inappropriate to recruit clients at an Al-Anon meeting.

...singleness of focus is what keeps the fellowship of Al-Anon strong. It will not be diluted with factionalism; it will not be divided through enlistment in other causes, as long as groups observe this Tradition and have no other affiliation.

Al-Anon’s Twelve Traditions Illustrated, p. 9

Al-Anon is cooperating when it works with others, rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened and we reach many more of those in need.

2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, p. 88

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Attracting and Cooperating

A Guide for Members in Public Outreach Service

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

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This Step summarizes the entire Al-Anon program. Simply stated, it encourages us to share the Al-Anon message as we continue to practice the principles of the program on an ongoing basis.

Though we may feel eager to let others know how the program has worked in our lives, there is yet another step we need to take before forging ahead—we need to determine how to carry the message within Al-Anon’s Traditions.

Attracting

Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.

Tradition Eleven provides a meaningful road map; by following it we become ready to carry Al-Anon’s message outside of our group.

We begin by reaching out to the public through the media and the professional community to let them know that Al-Anon/Alateen exists as a valuable resource for families and friends of alcoholics.

Tradition Eleven states that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. So *what’s the difference?*

What is “Attraction”?

In Al-Anon, attraction means we share how the program works for us and how it can work for others. We attract when we convey that Al-Anon and Alateen groups are friendly and inviting to all.

Attraction is drawing others to us by reflecting positive qualities. Means of attraction include:

- Providing information

- Generating goodwill
- Cooperating with professionals and the media
- Explaining how Al-Anon/Alateen works in our lives

What is “Promotion”?

If we “promote,” we no longer merely exhibit our value and worth; instead, we are in a “selling” mode that may result in resistance rather than encourage the attraction of new members. Promotion means:

- Using “pressure tactics”—not taking “no” for an answer.
- Making promises.
- Comparing ourselves to self-help or professional programs for families.
- Exaggerating or misrepresenting Al-Anon’s purpose; that we can help everyone.
- Presenting ourselves as a spokesperson for Al-Anon Family Groups, by allowing our full name, face, and membership to be identified at the level of press, radio, TV, Internet, and film.

Frequently Asked Questions about Attraction vs. Promotion

Q: Are press releases about Al-Anon and Alateen considered promotion?

A: No. Press releases are a means of attraction. They can inform the general public through the media and professional organizations about the purpose of the Al-Anon program, where Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are held, and provide announcements of new books and materials.

Q: Is the use of Al-Anon and Alateen TV and radio public service announcements (PSAs) considered promotion?

A: No. PSAs are an effective way to carry the Al-Anon/Alateen message to mass audiences. Great care is taken in the production of Al-Anon/Alateen PSAs to see that they carry the program message in an appropriate, informative manner.

Q: Is it a break of Traditions to give catalogs, order forms, or introductory information sheets about new Al-Anon and Alateen books to libraries?

A: No. Many libraries retain Al-Anon and Alateen literature as part of their reference material. Supplying libraries with this information is another means of carrying our message to the public.

Q: Is it considered promotion if an Al-Anon/Alateen group pays for an ad in a local newspaper, school yearbook, school newspaper, or community magazine?

A: No. Groups often pay for an ad in a newspaper or magazine to make the community aware that Al-Anon/Alateen is a community resource. Many newspapers offer free “community calendar” listings as a public service. Both kinds of ads or listings can give information about Al-Anon’s purpose and local meeting schedules. We always maintain personal anonymity.

Q: Must members who write about Al-Anon remain anonymous?

A: Tradition Eleven is very clear on maintaining anonymity at the public level, which includes the printed word. Writers who write about their personal membership in Al-Anon or Alateen should use first name only or a pseudonym. Writers who do not reveal personal membership in our program are free to write under their full names.

Q: Are Al-Anon/Alateen Web sites considered attraction or promotion?

A: The Internet and the World Wide Web are relatively new means of attracting newcomers to the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship. Web sites that follow Al-Anon guidelines, policies, and Traditions have the capacity to carry the message to untold numbers of potential members. Just as we avoid promotion in other avenues of public outreach, we avoid it on our Web sites (see the publication, *Frequently Asked Questions about Creating and Maintaining Al-Anon/Alateen Web Sites* [S-66]).

Q: Is placing Al-Anon and Alateen meeting information in church bulletins promotional?

A: No. Members frequently offer information about Al-Anon and Alateen’s purpose and meeting schedules. Most churches are happy to provide listings of all meetings in their facility.

Q: Can Al-Anon/Alateen information service/intergroup numbers be placed in the Yellow Pages and in the local listing of the telephone directory?

A: Yes. Listing Al-Anon/Alateen information service numbers in the Yellow Pages and local directories is a service to those looking for help. It is not advisable for individuals to list their home number as Al-Anon/Alateen contacts.

Attraction and promotion are differing approaches to the same end, public information. The difference between them is a matter not only of degree but of kind. “Attraction” implies the quality of humility. This is well exemplified by Al-Anon anonymity at the public level, which means that we place principles before personalities. On the other hand, “promotion” often connotes high pressure methods of aggressive selling and self-interested persuasion.

The Al-Anon Family Groups—Classic Edition,
p. 132-3

Al-Anon is *attracting* when it tells people why we are, what we are, what we do and how; we let them know that we are available *if* and *when* help is needed.

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Cooperating

Tradition Three

The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

Tradition Three expresses our need to avoid affiliation with any outside entity. We don’t affiliate, but we do cooperate. So *what’s the difference?*