

LIFELINES

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Editor's Corner

My husband and I recently purchased an exercycle on line. It was advertised as "some assembly" required. When it arrived, we inspected the contents to make sure that all the parts and tools had been provided. After confirming that everything was there, we began assembling the bike.

Because the tools were provided, we used them. This worked well until the bolts on the pedals needed to be removed so that the pedal could be attached to the bike. The wrench provided wouldn't budge the nut that needed to be loosened. No matter how long we tried, it wouldn't release.

Now I have a tool box with a full assortment of the type of tools I need to keep myself relatively efficient with stuff around the house. I remembered that I had a ratchet wrench and a whole slew of different sized heads for it. It seemed to me that this probably would work better than the flat wrench provided with the exercycle. Sure enough, that ratchet wrench did the trick and the last piece of the installation was done.

This got me thinking. How many times have I tried to do something forgetting that I could use my own "tools?" Someone else might have tools that work for them but that doesn't mean that that particular tool is going to work for me. I need to remember that I have my own tool chest.

There are a lot of people and events in my life that I have no power over. This is one of the challenges I count on having for my entire life. But I also need to remember that does not mean I am helpless. I have the tools of the program that my history has proven work for me. I need to stop and remember that I am not drifting alone without any help.

I have my Higher Power. I can ask for help from this Power. Often, lately, my request is more for patience and insight. And I know many times I have to go through the process of struggling until I am open enough and quiet enough to receive these. I have to try over and over to loosen that "nut" until I accept that no matter how many times I try to loosen it, it won't until I have the right tool for the job.

I have my sponsor. Thanks to this digital age, I can do something as simple as sending a text. This act of reaching out reminds me that I don't have to struggle alone. In fact, I can release the struggle. I can also call or meet with her or any of my Al-Anon friends. I had spent so much wasted energy thinking that a strong person never needed to ask for help - that self sufficient was something to strive after. Thank God, I usually don't fall into that old, useless trap now.

I can read our literature, go to an extra meeting, repeat the Serenity Prayer until my mind stops whirling and my heart slows down.

I have a wealth of tools that I know work. I listen at meetings and receive the gift of more tools from all of you thanks to your presence at meetings and your willingness to share. I ask for help remembering and utilizing these abundant gifts from this wonderful program.

A grateful member of Al-Anon,
Elaine H., Lifelines Editor

Meeting Notices:

HOLIDAY CHANGE***

(These are the latest changes as of the January Issue publishing date. Please check the riafg.org website for any additional updates.)

Tuesday Cranston/Warwick Daytime Al-Anon - 10 AM -**WILL MEET on January 1st.**

The Al-Anon at Noon group in Westerly at Christ Episcopal Church **WILL MEET on December 31st and WILL MEET on January 2nd.**

Jamestown Live and Let Live **WILL MEET on December 31st** at the Grange 6 West St., Jamestown.

Wakefield Just For Today **WILL MEET on December 31st.**

Al-Anon Works If You Work It group in E. Greenwich on Tuesday Mornings **WILL NOT MEET on January 1st.**

Charlestown New Life, Cross' Mills Baptist Church, **WILL MEET on January 1st.**

Self Discovery Al-Anon Group, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, West Warwick, **WILL MEET on NOT MEET on December 31st.**

There Is Hope AFG, Four Corners Community Church, Cumberland, **WILL NOT MEET on December 31st.**

Step Up To The Summit, Summit Baptist Ch, Coventry, **WILL NOT MEET ON December 31st.**

H.U.G.S. **WILL NOT MEET on January 1st.**

Let It All Go, North Kingstown Methodist Church, NK., **WILL MEET on January 1st.**

New Beginning, E. Greenwich, **WILL NOT MEET on January 1st.**

NEEDS SUPPORT

Cranston/Warwick Day Time Al-Anon, Tuesday at 10:00 AM at Edgewood Congregational Church 1788 Broad St., Cranston.

South County Step meeting, Thursday from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM needs your support.

Let It All Go AFG, Tuesday 7:30 PM, North Kingstown Methodist Church, 450 Boston Neck Rd., North Kingstown

Keep It Simple Saturday K.I.S.S. on Saturdays at 1200 PM, Ray Hall, 2nd floor, Room 4, Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Blvd, Providence

Higher Powered Lunch Bunch on Tuesdays at 12:10 PM at St. Stephen's Church, 114 George St., 2nd floor, Providence.

LOCATION CHANGE

Westerly Friday Night AFG is now meeting at Grace United Methodist Church, 10 ParkAve., Westerly.

MEETING CLOSURE

A New Beginning, Thursdays at 7:00 PM at St. Paul's in Portsmouth has closed.

Upcoming Events:

Jan 8, 2019 Charlestown New Life Anniversary Celebration, Cross' Mills Baptist Church, Charlestown. Potluck at 6:00 PM. Al-Anon, AA speakers and meeting from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. See flyer.

Jan 9, 2019 Butterflies Are Free Anniversary, Kingstown Congregational Church, Kingston, Anniversary meeting at 12:00 Noon.

Jan 12, 2019 AWSC meeting at Cranston Office, 106 Rolf Street, Cranston 10:00 AM to Noon

Mar 22-24, 2019 Rhode Island AA Convention with Al-Anon participation. See flyer.

May 18, 2019 RIAFG Spring Assembly, 9:00AM to 3:30PM at St. Luke Episcopal Church, 99 Pierce St., E. Greenwich.

Anniversary Celebrations:

Charlestown New Life



Where: Cross' Mills Baptist Church
4403 Rd. Old Post Rd., Charlestown
(next to the Cross' Mills Library)

When: Tuesday, January 8th, 6-8:30 PM



Details: Pot luck at 6 PM, speakers at 7 PM and fellowship.

Pot luck will be in the basement of the church.....

and speakers in the main hall.

Need more info? Contact Elaine at lifelines.riafg@gmail.com

LET'S CELEBRATE!!

BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE IS 20 YRS OLD!

**COME AND JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 9, 2019 FROM 12PM - 1PM,
KINGSTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
RT.138 at UPPER COLLEGE ROAD
(OPPOSITE KINGSTON LIBRARY)
KINGSTON, RI 02881**

FELLOWSHIP

ALANON AND AA SPEAKERS

FOOD (pot luck donations welcomed though not required:-)

**PLEASE BRING A FRIEND ALONG. WE LOOK
FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE**



AA Liaison:

The AA Convention theme is "Our Big Book: Saving Lives Since 1939." The Dates are Mar. 22 – 24, 2018 at the Gurney's Resort in Newport. Register before March 8 cost is \$25.00. Register on or after March 9 cost is \$30.00. Register online (preferred) or download the printable registration form at www.aainr.com.

Eloy M. from Colorado, Panel 56 delegate will serve as our Al-Anon speaker at the March convention. His sharing is powerful! He spoke at the WSO Conference this spring. Eloy will speak on Saturday, March 23, in the morning during the convention.

Attached is the Al-Anon flyer for the AA Convention. Please consider distributing this to your groups. Al-Anon meeting titles will be included in the AA Convention program and on display at the convention. Thank you to those who have volunteered to lead an Al-Anon meeting, and I welcome additional volunteers for the remaining two meetings.

Yours in Service and Fellowship,
Jackie G., AA Liaison

OUR BIG BOOK **SAVING LIVES** SINCE 1939 + **AL-ANON**
43rd Rhode Island Convention March 22-24, 2019
AA CONVENTION WITH AL-ANON PARTICIPATION

Five Al-Anon meetings will be available. Please consider leading one – a great way to serve! Meeting leaders are responsible for the \$25.00 registration fee. Registration: <https://aainr.com/convention/>

SPECIAL NOTE: ELOY M., our AL-ANON guest speaker will give his talk on Sat., Mar. 23 at 10:15 am.

Al-Anon Meetings CAL = Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature

Sat., Mar. 23 at 9:00 am: **Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism - Nel P.**
Suggested CAL - Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism pamphlet

Sat., Mar. 23 at 11:30 am: **How Al-Anon helped save my life? - Barbara H.**
Suggested CAL - You pick and share your personal story.

Sat., Mar. 23 at 2:30 pm: **Al-Anon Slogans - How they help us.**
Suggested CAL - Any daily reader, How Al-Anon Works pgs. 65 -75

Sat., Mar. 23 at 5:00 pm: **Al-Anon Fellowship -Breaking Our Isolation - Heather M.**
Suggested CAL - From Survival to Recovery pgs. 13, 18, 23, etc. or Concept Four

Sun., Mar. 24 at 8:30 am: **How I practice the Al-Anon Twelve Steps in My Daily Life.**
Suggested CAL - Paths to Recovery, Daily Readers or How Al-Anon Works

If you would like to lead a meeting, please contact Jackie G. by email: aa.riafg@gmail.com or leave a message at our Area Office phone number, (401) 781-0044.

Parking is FREE and available at the hotel, though it's limited. The hotel offers valet parking @ \$20.00 per night. We have a FREE trolley that runs from the Newport Visitors Center parking lot (there will be a sign) 23 Americas Cup Ave from, Friday, March 22, 6-8:00 pm, 9:30-midnight & Saturday, March 23, 8am-8pm, 9:30-midnight: <https://www.discovernewport.org/about-newport/visitor-center/>

Area Office News:

Volunteers Needed

The Area Office still needs volunteers! Please consider giving back by volunteering for hours in the office or as a volunteer from your home. Both positions have training.

Office volunteers responsibilities:

- Greet anyone who calls the office
- Greet visitors to the office. They are usually coming for literature.
- Retrieve recorded messages, return calls and record them in our log.
- Open and distribute the mail
- Fill literature orders for in-person purchasers.

At home volunteers responsibilities:

- Access the Al-Anon voicemail account from their home phone, retrieving messages
- When the caller leaves a message and a number, the at home volunteer calls them back
- Mailing a meeting list or referring the caller to riafg.org
- Keep a brief written log of calls returned and communicate with the Office Coordinator

Please call the office for more information and/or to volunteer!

Jane A., RIAFG office coordinator

We currently have 4 Volunteers: Here is the schedule:

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| Monday: | 12:30 to 2:30 PM | Phyllis H. |
| Wednesday: | 12:30 to 2:30 PM | Paul B. |
| Thursday: | 6:00 to 7:30 PM | Jane A. |
| At-Home Volunteer: | Tuesday | Clara R. |

Members Share:

There have been a lot of newcomers at meetings lately. "Tis the season." And though I am careful, in my empathy towards them, to not impose my experience on theirs, hearing and seeing them, witnessing their courage, I cannot help but be taken back to when I was new in this program, too.

I came into Al-Anon broken, angry, and afraid. But what strikes me most looking back is the feeling as if I were a floating ball at the end of a thread, bobbing in the wind. How easy it was for me to be knocked aside, set spinning. I believed I had to struggle and hold on tightly to stay attached. Because I was so tenuously tethered, every slight breeze felt like a hurricane threatening to send me flying off. Every mishap felt catastrophic, the smallest incident an emergency, every decision life-and-death. When there were bigger incidences, and there were many, I was paralyzed.

I read the other day a sentence about migratory birds, that each bird can feel the pull of the earth, and know its small place upon it. After years in Al-Anon, my heart resonates with that sentence. I no longer feel tethered to a thread. I feel instead the pull of my higher power, drawing me to my own small place on this earth. I can still be knocked off course, but not for long. I now have 12 Steps, tools, my sponsor, meetings, and service to put me back on track.

I often think of the Al-Anon reading about an airplane's autopilot being on course only 5% of the time. The other 95% it's self-correcting. The plane is still where it is supposed to be, still homing in on the same place on the earth. As am I.

Susan L.

The Day Might Not Be Sunny

The day might not be sunny,
The sun may not be shining,
Your best friend might not be funny,
And you choose to spend the day whining.

The perspective you look at the day with depends on a lot
You can spend it sad and mad,
Or you can take a look at what you've got.
You can thank God for the people in your life, like your Mom & Dad.

Be grateful and loving of what you have in your life
Because other people have it worse.
People live in poverty and in strife,
And we have the ability to to live a life, free from guilt and curses
Instead, we have a friendship with each other.
It might be difficult now,
When you fight with a sister or brother,
But this is where we come to figure out how.
We are so lucky, so blessed.
We are healthy and bettered,
We are fed and dressed.
All feelings of hate are fettered.

This is where we come to realize, we aren't the answer.
We need help with what our lives give us.
We could have a disease like cancer.
But we will always need program, it's the safe place of trust.

I come here to share,
Will I see you there?

by Ellie K., Sunday Night East Side Alateen

Members Share:

I'm a firm believer that AA saved my life and Al-Anon saves my sanity! You see, I'm a 'double winner'! I got sober in February of '84. After a couple years, I was nagged into attending Alanon by an AA friend. It was gentle nagging!! I would walk by a room full of friends, my group of alcoholics, and walk trudgingly into the Al-Anon rooms. I didn't speak for almost a year. I was waiting for these Al-Anon people to bash the alcoholic in their lives. Instead they taught me how to keep the focus on me; that as long as I kept that focus on me, I couldn't meddle in the alcoholic's life! I come from a long line of alcoholics and this disease has also affected some of my siblings.

In Al-Anon I learned to stay out of their way. That if I got between the alcoholic & their bottom that they would land on me.

When I found a bottle of scotch in my 16 year old son's room, I had already been in Al-Anon for quite a few years. I told him he didn't have a shot! I was on to him. I'm not sure if he's sober today because I had to detach with a great deal of love from his life. I have tools today that have never failed me - IF I PICK THEM UP AND UTILIZE THEM! My dilemma today is that I walk by the AA room & head into the Al-Anon room, but I want to attend both. You see these rooms are full of my friends, both sober alcoholics and families that love those alcoholics.

Thank you for letting me share!
Judi K

Forum Article:

Sharing My Recovery With My Children

Tonight, my teenage daughters cried because their father was drinking and had an angry outburst. I hugged them, and we talked honestly about their feelings. One of my daughters felt sad and scared. My other daughter, however, was extremely angry. They both felt guilty and asked if they had done something to cause him to drink.

I explained the disease of alcoholism. I shared that they could separate the disease from the person. They could still love their father, but hate the disease. The words continued to flow as I explained that they didn't cause his alcoholism, they couldn't control it, and they couldn't cure it. Lastly, I also explained that they did not have to accept unacceptable behavior - like how their father had behaved this evening.

As I reflect on my conversation with my daughters, my heart is overflowing with gratitude for the Al-Anon program. It is only because of the tools and slogans that I was able to respond in an honest and healthy way. When I live my program, I am able to break the generational patterns in my family.

by Jay F., Saskatchewan

Reprinted from The Forum, issue January 2019, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqtr., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.)**Editor's Note: Would you like your own subscription to the "Forum?" A subscription form is in the back of all issues. The cost is \$11.00 per year and there is also an online version available.

AWSC News:

Seeking Volunteer(s) to Explore Alternative AWSC Office Locations

At the AWSC meeting on November 17, 2018, concerns were brought up regarding the location of our current area office at 106 Rolfe Street, in Cranston: the lack of parking and no handicapped access. **We need a volunteer (or two!) to help research alternative spaces.**

Currently the rent is \$395.00 per month which includes heat, AC and internet. The office also pays monthly about \$20.00 for electricity and \$54.00 for phone service. The new space needs two rooms, one for our literature/office space and one for meeting space. We need about 450 to 500 square feet of space. We need to have parking, for around 12 cars because people come to meetings every Thursday and to regular AWSC meetings. Anyone who has an interest in working on finding a new space should contact Jane, the office manager, at office.riafg@gmail.com or Phyllis, the Area chair at chair.riafg@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for your service. We simply can't do this important service work without people like you.

District II News:

What's NEWs in District II – October 2018

Once a month, District II meets for about an hour at a named location to unite the individual groups within the district. Topics range from informing groups of news from the Area or World Service levels to planning program-related events for fun, fellowship, and sometimes fundraising. District meetings also coordinate service and public outreach projects and as such are a great way to learn more about or get involved in service. As a start, District II will continue to bring its news to you!

District II started rotating its meeting location back in September in an effort to encourage participation and service. This month's district meeting was held at the West Greenwich Town Hall directly following the Forever Hope Meeting. (Again, as a side note, both meetings were very well attended that day. Also, several members continued fellowship afterwards over lunch at The Middle of Nowhere Diner.)

The District Meeting started off by reading and accepting the minutes from September. Then, three main topics from old business were revisited.

First, it was agreed upon to continue to email information from the District Level to the Group Reps (GRs) as it occurs or as is necessary.

Second, the group discussed the format of the Lifeline's reader-friendly version of the District II meeting minutes from August, which first appeared in the November issue. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the August re-write format and to continue to use this format moving forward. Also, after a month of prayer and meditation, the group decided to ONLY include member's first names in the actual meeting minutes for accountability purposes on action items but NOT in the Lifelines version. And, as a direct result of this voting process, a new service position was created and voluntarily filled by a trusted servant to rewrite the minutes each month for Lifelines. #theprogramination!

Finally, the group discussed possible dates and locations for the 2019 Spring Assembly Meeting, since District II will be hosting it. The proposed dates were May 11, May 18, and June 1. The suggested locations were St. Luke's Church in East Greenwich and Kingston Congregational Church across from URI. A GR from each respective home group meeting location (above) volunteered to gather information regarding availability, cost, accommodations, etc. and report back at next month's district meeting.

In new business, one GR shared that she was experimenting with using Lifelines at meetings and asked how other GRs were using Lifelines in their meetings. A few ideas were shared briefly before the meeting was adjourned.

If any District II groups would be willing to host a future District Meeting, please contact the District II Rep. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday January 15th or Thursday January 17th at 6:30pm. Location TBD. For more info, please contact your GR or the District II Rep directly. We hope to see you there!

Links of Service

Member + Member = **Group**

Group + **Group** = **District**

District + **District** = **Assembly**

Assembly + **Assembly** = Conference

RIAFG Safe Meetings Procedure

In Al-Anon we are blessed to have meeting spaces where we can “place principals before personalities” and attend and share safely. Unfortunately, there are rare instances in which meetings are confronted with threatening or unstable behavior that disrupts members’ safety. At the Fall Area Assembly, Group Representatives voted to create a committee charged with drafting a statewide safety procedure to support meetings faced with such situations. While we are fortunate to have some models of other states’ procedures, we want to ensure our procedures meet Rhode Island members’ needs. If you have a suggestion or comment on this matter, please email the committee at riafg.safemeetings@gmail.com so that we can include your experience, strength, and hope in our efforts.

*****Any Al-Anon member can send feedback, join, or request clarification from any of the task forces that are currently addressing the Spring Assembly service breakout findings, group safety issues, and the Do not refer/re-refer policy creation. Above are the emails for two of the committees. For now any questions, concerns for the Do not refer/re-refer policy can be sent to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com and I will forward them.

News from the WSO:

Let’s Talk Safety

Safety is an important issue within Al-Anon—one that all can address. Open discussion on the topic can aid groups in developing workable solutions to safety issues—solutions that are based on the fundamental principles of our fellowship and that will help keep our meetings safe. [This document applies only to Al-Anon meetings, groups and members: For Alateen safety, please refer to your Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.] When members feel safe and are safe at meetings, the unity of our groups (Tradition One) is maintained.

Al-Anon groups are spiritual entities; they are made up of families and friends of alcoholics who gather and share their experience, strength and hope to solve their common problems. Yet, we are not immune to the difficulties that affect the rest of humanity.

Al-Anon is a microcosm of the larger society within which we exist. Problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of Al-Anon. As we strive to share in a spirit of trust, both at meetings and individually with our Personal and Service Sponsors and other Al-Anon members, it is reasonable for each member to expect a meaningful level of safety. Those attending Al-Anon meetings benefit other members and themselves when they provide a safe environment in which families and friends of alcoholics can focus on gaining and maintaining serenity. The group can then fulfill its primary purpose—to help families and friends of alcoholics. For this reason, groups and members discuss the topic of safety.

Autonomy and Group Action

There is no government within Al-Anon and no central authority, legal or otherwise, to control or direct the behavior of Al-Anon members. In accordance with the Fourth Tradition, the formation and operation of an Al-Anon group is guided by the group conscience of its members. Al-Anon groups and service entities such as Areas, Districts, Al-Anon Information Service Offices and Literature Distribution Centers are autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon as a whole.

Recognizing that safety is an important issue to their members, many groups have taken action to keep distractions and disruptions to a minimum within the context of the group.

Al-Anon Membership

Al-Anon membership has never been contingent on any set of behavioral or moral standards beyond those founded on common sense, courtesy and the timeless values of kindness, tolerance and love.

Al-Anon’s Third Tradition states in part, “The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.” This brings an openness that helps define our character as a diverse fellowship;

however, some people come into Al-Anon without an understanding of the type of behavior that is appropriate in meetings or in the company of other members. A person can find serenity in Al-Anon and yet still not understand what is acceptable behavior.

Dealing with Disruptions

While most groups operate with a healthy balance of spontaneity and structure, there are a number of situations that can threaten group unity and challenge the safety of the group and its members. Often these can center on disruptive individuals—those who are confrontational and aggressive or those who are simply unwilling to put the needs of the group first. Such behavior can hijack the focus of a meeting and frighten members, new and old.

Some groups have developed plans for addressing disruptive behavior and have established procedures through their group consciences to ensure that the group's welfare is protected. In many cases, disruptive behavior is preempted by having the Chairperson state the expectations for behavior in the meeting.

Some groups mention in their opening announcements that illegal and disruptive behavior are not tolerated. Still other groups have asked disruptive members to leave the meeting. Additionally, groups and members always have the option to call the appropriate authorities if disruptive behavior continues or anyone's safety is at risk.

Group Safety and Unity

Situations that groups have addressed through their group consciences include: sexual harassment or stalking; threats of violence; bullying; high-pressure controlling behavior; financial coercion; racial intolerance; sexual orientation or gender identification intolerance; and dominance that pressures Al-Anon members to accept a particular point of view or belief regarding medical treatments and/or medications, politics, religion, or other outside issues. In addition, there may be other behaviors that go on outside of typical meeting times that affect whether someone feels safe enough to return to the group.

Some groups develop their own guidelines or procedures to help keep the meeting safe. Al-Anon members can speak to those who are acting inappropriately, being careful to consider everyone's personal safety when doing so. Situations can be discussed at business meetings, where members can come to a group conscience about how to handle concerns: a meeting on the Traditions may be all that is necessary to make the member aware of behavior that is unacceptable to the group as a whole and help the member become willing to change. As a last resort, the disruptive member may be asked to stop attending the meeting for a specific period of time. Groups that take this drastic action do so to preserve the common welfare and to maintain the unity of the Al-Anon group.

In any situation, if a person's safety is in jeopardy, or the situation breaches the law, the members involved can take appropriate action to ensure their safety. Calling the proper authorities does not go against any Al-Anon Traditions. *Anonymity is not a cloak protecting criminal or inappropriate behavior.*

Inappropriate or predatory behavior, such as unwanted sexual attention or targeting vulnerable members, can be especially troublesome. These behaviors may go on outside of the meeting room. While Al-Anon members can be caring and supportive to those affected, we are not professionals trained to handle such situations. Law enforcement or other professional help may be necessary.

Victims of inappropriate behavior, harassment or predators can let the group know about such situations, often through a Sponsor or trusted friend. This way the group is informed, and members can help address the situation and curtail further problems. Group discussion should focus on how to create an environment where all family members and friends of alcoholics can find and maintain serenity.

Al-Anon and the Law

Al-Anon membership does not grant anyone immunity under the law; being at an Al-Anon meeting does not put anyone beyond the jurisdiction of law enforcement officers. As individuals, Al-Anon members are also "citizens of the world," and as citizens, we are not above the law.

Through the group conscience process, many groups have established guidelines identifying when it may be appropriate to call authorities and handle a given situation within the legal system. No Al-Anon group has to tolerate illegal behavior, and any activity within an Al-Anon meeting is subject to the same laws that apply outside the meeting. In the past, groups have had to confront illegal acts such as violence, embezzlement, theft of property and more.

Emergencies

Injuries, accidents, fires, etc., sometimes do occur during meetings. To accommodate these situations, groups can also develop plans and procedures, often in consultation with their meeting location or local authorities. Addressing an emergency situation is more important than continuing the meeting, and members should not hesitate to call emergency personnel in critical situations.

Keeping the Focus on Our Primary Purpose

Tradition Five states: “Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.” It is hoped that our primary purpose will transcend most issues and curtail negative behaviors. However, sometimes issues of safety jeopardize group harmony.

Safety is important to the functioning of the group. When members maintain order and safety in meetings, the group as a whole benefits, and all those involved are able to focus on recovering from the family disease of alcoholism and learning how to live a serene life.

Ultimately, the experience of how these situations are handled can be as varied as our fellowship. Using good judgment and common sense, while adhering to the Twelve Traditions, seems to provide the best guide.

What Can Groups and Members Do?

Groups and members can discuss the topic of safety to raise awareness in the fellowship and seek through sponsorship, workshops and meetings, to create as safe an environment as possible for the newcomer and other members or potential members. This can be the subject of sharing in groups, Districts and Areas.

Here are some helpful suggestions and reminders:

It is always a good idea to talk about issues of safety before they arise.

Each member attending an Al-Anon meeting is responsible for being mindful of safety.

The Chairperson of each meeting can communicate clearly what Al-Anon is and what it is not.

Sponsorship plays an important role, and Sponsors can be helpful in pointing out warning signs or unhealthy situations to Sponsees and newcomers.

Al-Anon members who are concerned about the words or actions of a Sponsor or another member may find it helpful to speak to someone they trust, such as their Al-Anon group or a professional, as needed.

It may be helpful to include “Safety in Al-Anon” as a topic in a group inventory.

Groups may benefit from developing guidelines and procedures on safety.

In all discussions about safety, keep the focus on our primary purpose and our common welfare, and place principles above personalities.

A Special Word to Anyone Confronted with Violence

Al-Anon’s gentle process unfolds gradually, over time. But those of us facing violent, potentially life-threatening situations may have to make immediate choices to ensure the safety of ourselves and our children. This may mean arranging for a safe house with a neighbor or friend, calling for police protection, or leaving money and an extra set of car keys where they can be collected at any time in case of emergency.

It is not necessary to decide how to resolve the situation once and for all—only how to get out of harm’s way until this process of Awareness, Acceptance and Action can free us to make choices for ourselves that we can live with.

Anyone who has been physically or sexually abused or threatened may be terrified of taking any action at all. It can require every ounce of courage and faith to act decisively. But no one has to accept violence. No matter what seems to trigger the attack, we all deserve to be safe.

Helpful Resources for Al-Anon Members and Groups

The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4)

In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You* (B-15)

From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home* (B-21)

Sponsorship, What It’s All About* (P-31)

Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts Kit* (K-70)

Sponsorship—Working Together to Recover* (M-78)

Al-Anon/Alateen Is & Is Not Bookmark* (M-44)

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)

Taking a Group Inventory (G-8a)

Contact your District Representative or Area Delegate for local shared experience.

**May be* available at your group or local Literature Distribution Center; *is* available in the Al-Anon Store at al-anon.org

World Service Office
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454
Phone: 757-563-1600; Fax: 757-563-1656;
Website: al-anon.org

The **WSO Group Records Team has been renamed** to more accurately reflect the scope of our team's work, as our responsibility goes beyond just maintenance of group records. It includes registering and updating groups and electronic meetings worldwide; maintaining data for Al-Anon Information Services (AISs), Literature Distribution Centers (LDCs), and AISs/LDCs; and updating contact information for Area Trusted Servants, Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), General Service Offices, and International Delegates. This name change also extends to our team email address. Starting now, please contact us at AFGRecords@al-anon.org for any of these functions or if you have questions or comments about this change.

The Group Services Department is pleased to announce that the guideline, ***How to Start an Al-Anon Group (G-12)*** has been updated and is available on the al-anon.org website under the "Members" tab. Please share this with your members and in your groups. This guideline was revised as a result of the input from you...the members. We thank you for sharing your experience, strength and hope with us.

If you are aware of local Al-Anon websites that post this guideline or any service arm that shares this guideline (whether in print or electronically), please update your links and files to use the current version. Please be advised that this guideline is being translated into Spanish and French. We will inform you once it is posted.

Order Now: Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2019 (AFA)

The WSO is now accepting orders for *AFA 2019* second printing magazines. You can get yours by:

Placing orders on line from the WSO store at al-anon.org/afa2019

Downloading an order form at al-anon.org/afaform

Faxing the WSO at 757-563-1656 or

Mailing to 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

Stretch your gratitude for Al-Anon into the new year by using *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA) 2019* magazines to carry our message to families and friends of alcoholics who receive services from professionals. Locations accessible to the public, such as libraries, also welcome *AFA* magazines to inform the public about the effects of alcoholism on the family. This is your opportunity to carry and share the message of hope with families and friends of alcoholics.

The deadline to order *AFA 2019* magazines is February 11, 2019, 5 PM ET.

Request for Sharings for Newcomers

Please consider writing an article for people who are considering attending their first meeting, but uncertain as to whether they qualify for membership in Al-Anon. In 300 words or less, please share what it was like for you as a newcomer. You may wish to focus on: What it was like before Al-Anon and what led you to your first meeting; The first slogan or program idea that had particular significance for you; What kept you coming back after your first meeting.

Whatever brought you to Al-Anon, let your story benefit someone else who has yet to experience the gifts of hope and peace that Al-Anon offers

Please submit your sharings to *The Forum*, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617; or to wso@al-anon.org, or to al-anon.org/18forumshare.

Would you like to be on the distribution list for Lifelines? Send an email requesting this to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com. These are sent as “BCC’s” so your anonymity is protected. Do you have a story or an Al-Anon event to share? Would you like to share why your home group is so special to you? Would you like to share yo? Please email these to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com

WEB Sites, Addresses and phone numbers:

RI AFG: www.riafg.org Office:,106 Rolfe St., Cranston, RI 02910
Telephone:401-781-0044. Office hours available by calling this number.

WSO: al-anon.org. Office: 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway,
Virginia Beach, VA 23454. Telephone: 757-563-1600

God, grant me the serenity to accept the the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.

Photo by TH

