

RESOLUTION TEAM REPORT

Business Meeting to Discuss Group and Member Concerns

December 6, 2020

Format for the Business Meeting

- Members only need to identify themselves by their first name.
- Members will remain muted until called upon by Chair.
- Questions and Comments: are related to the Resolution Team Report.
- Questions begin with “who, what, when, etc.”
- Comments: “I think that...I feel that...I believe that...I think you should...”
- Two opportunities for Questions:
 1. After History/Background information, and Resolution Team Process information is presented
 2. After the Resolution Team report is presented
- Comments: At the end, after Resolution Team report.
- Please Remember: All AI-Anon discussions should be “constructive, helpful, loving, and understanding” (SM pg.22)

Agenda for the Business Meeting

1. History and Background Information.
2. Southern California Policy for Resolving and Member Concerns: Process as it relates to the relisting request.
3. Resolution Team (RT) --formation; charge; process.
4. Questions regarding History/Background & RT Process.
5. Resolution Team Report & Recommendation.
6. Questions, then comments regarding RT Report.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

2010 -- Orange County AI-Anon Information Service Office (AIS) removed four groups from their Directory. Their concerns were “...practices which are not advocated by our Service Manual, and not representative of AI-Anon Principles, Concepts and Traditions.” At that time, these groups collectively referred to themselves as “The Gottawannas.” (The group with Gottawanna in their title changed its name on 12-18-19)

2010 -- The four groups wrote a joint “Minority Report,” refuting the findings of the Orange County (OC) AIS Office report. (The “Gottawanna” name was used within the Minority Report; one of the four groups has since disbanded.)

2016 -- November - Group Representatives (GRs) approved the Southern California Policy for Resolving Group and Member Concerns.

2018 -- May

- The four (now three) meetings sent a joint letter to the Southern California World Service (SCWS) Area Officers requesting that their meeting be relisted in OC, using the Policy process to evaluate their request.
- The request letter indicated that the three groups had changed/stopped particular practices that were of concern to the OC AIS, and the 2010 Minority report was attached as additional verification of these changes.

2018 -- June - SCWS Officers responded to relisting request.

2018 -- July - Officers connected with the Group Representatives (GRs) of the three meetings, and the Orange County District Representatives (DRs) of the three meetings.

- The “right of appeal” process in the Policy includes providing a list of corrective actions taken.
- The Appeal letter and the 2010 Minority Report were submitted by the groups to fulfill this purpose.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POLICY FOR RESOLVING GROUP AND MEMBER CONCERNS

2018 -- August - Officers formed a Resolution Team (RT)

It was decided that the three Resolution Team members would...

- not reside in Orange County (Districts 57, 60, 63, 66)
- have no history of attending the three groups
- have been active in Al-Anon in many service levels
- be well acquainted with the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual and other Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

2018 -- August - Area Officers notified the DRs/GRs that letters/emails regarding the three groups could be sent anonymously to the groupandmemberconcerns@scws-al-anon.com email address.

- The Resolution Team opened up the process for members to inform them of all the reasons why the meetings should be relisted.

Resolution Team's Parameters for Including an Email/letter in their Report

- Timeframe for member's experiences with the three groups was from 2010 onward (when the Minority Report was written).
- Only accepted first-hand experiences-no hearsay or gossip.

Definition of terms.

- Experience the process of doing and seeing things and of having things happen to you; encounter or undergo (an event or occurrence); skill or knowledge that you get by doing something.
- Hearsay: Information received from other people that one cannot adequately substantiate; the report of another person's words.
- Gossip: casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true.
- Opinions: a view or judgment formed about something not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.

What did the Resolution Team do?

The Resolution Team members met weekly and all three members participated in the following:

- Reviewed all of the original related documents from 2010: OC AIS letter; Minority Report; SCWS response to the four meetings (July 2010)
- Read the formal request to relist, the Area's reply, and other communication to the meetings' GRs and DRs.
- Followed Area Guidelines for the RT, which involved the process of reviewing/evaluating submission from Group members.
- Read all submissions (60+) from former and current Group members. (The RT placed more value on members direct experiences with the three meetings within the last five years.)
- Categorized the letters and emails.
- Evaluated the submissions. NOTE: Due to the established parameters (i.e., timeframe, direct experiences, etc.), only 41 of the original 60 letters were considered/included in the Report.
- Attended the three meeting, individually and together.
- Contacted and interviewed members who had submitted letters/emails.
- Wrote a Report which included their Recommendations.

Questions Related to History/Background and/or Resolution Team Process?

Overview of Findings:

1. Members experiences in support of re-listing the three meetings:

- 14 people expressed positive feelings about the meetings.
- Two members specifically requested the meeting be relisted.

- None of the letters mentioned the previous concerns or changes to group practices that were referred to in the 2010 Minority Report.
2. Members experiences not in support of re-listing of the three meetings:
- 27 asked that the meetings not be re-listed, in “strong terms.”
 - 24 people wrote detailed, specific letters.
 - 3 members asked to communicate in person or on the phone.
 - Many of the experiences recounted by those 27 members were similar to each other.

The following findings were based on:

- The letters submitted by the respondents.
- The site visits by the RT members.
- The reading of all submitted materials (i.e., the original Minority Report, the Relisting Request letter, etc.)
- The follow-up interview by the RT members with some respondents.
- Reading of the Policy and the pertinent CAL on which the Policy was based.

Resolution Team Report

The following topics were addressed by members:

- Sponsorship
- Dominance
- Literature
- Affiliation with Outside Entities
- Group Autonomy
- Financial Management
- Alateen

For each of the topics, we will be addressing:

- Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) related to the topic.
- The Minority Report and 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter: In support of relisting.
- Individual members’ experiences in support of relisting.
- Individual members’ experiences not in support of relisting the meetings.
- Resolution Team experiences.

Sponsorship

Conference Approved Literature (CAL) related to “Sponsorship”:

(note: “conference” refers to the World Service Conference or WSC)

- “Al-Anon Personal Sponsor”: an Al-Anon member with whom a member can confidentially discuss personal problems or questions and someone who willingly shares the experience, strength, and hope of the Al-Anon program.”

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, 2018-2021, version 2, p.73 (will now be referred to current Service Manual as “SM”)

- Between meetings, we can call our sponsor when we face a difficult situation... It’s wonderful to have someone to turn to who already knows our story... someone who respects our privacy and will keep what we say absolutely confidential...He or she listens, shares experience, strength, and hope, and offers support and encouragement...Sponsorship is a mutually beneficial relationship” How Al-Anon Works, B-22, p.36-37

2006 World Service Conference (WSC) Chosen Agenda Item Question:

How does the fellowship help newcomers understand that Al-Anon sponsorship does not include:

- Pyramid sponsorship--Sponsor, grand-Sponsor, great grand-Sponsor;
- Need for prior approval to be in a group;
- Being told not to attend other meetings;
- Fear of leaving the group, alienation, snubbing, or ridicule.”

(Many Voices, One Journey, B-31, p.362)

CAL related to Sponsorship (cont'd)

- Following the 2006 WSC discussion, the Sponsorship-Working Together to Recover (M-78) Bookmark was published in 2007. Many Voices, One Journey, B-31, p.361-362
- From the Sponsorship--Working Together to Recover Bookmark, M-78. Sponsorship is:
 - A relationship built on equality, anonymity, and trust.
 - A commitment to practice healthy communication--not based on intimidation or demands.
 - A experience based on unconditional love, not shame or judgment.
 - This private relationship is focused on the Al-Anon principles.

In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

From the 2010 Minority Report:

- “If a member decides to change sponsors, that decision is his or her individual choice.” (p.8)
- “Sponsors share their experience, strength, and hope, but the ultimate decision is left to the individual Al-Anon member.”
- Regarding sharing personal information about sponsees from the podium: “This was a practice in the past... that practice does not exist today.” “Some of these practices that may have happened in the past no longer exist because people have moved on.” (p.12)

From the 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter:

- “The incidence of any dominance in sponsorship was unknown, and only discovered after individual members stopped attending these meeting, over twelve years ago.” (p.2)
- “The guidelines regarding Sponsorship included in CAL and the Service Manual are incorporated into the meeting formats and all members are encouraged to embrace them.” (p.3)

Individual Members’ Experiences in support of relisting the meetings (direct quotes):

- I have gotten to work through the Steps with my sponsor and I’ve gotten to repeat them by being able take sponsees through the Steps.
- I am forever grateful my sponsor brought me to this meeting. I was attracted to the strong recovery in that meeting then and still am today.
- My sponsor was the very first woman I ever trusted. She walked me through the 12 Steps and I changed because of it. She and the ladies in my home group loved me back to life.
- I continued to call my sponsor and she always gave me these “assignments”: Read my pages, write a gratitude list, use the God Box, pray. We traveled to endless planning meeting, District meeting and conventions. I always said yes, I didn’t know why I did, I was such an isolated person but I heard myself say okay every time.
- My sponsor told me, “You’re ready and she wants what you have, so give it away so that you can keep what you’re getting.” I wouldn’t have been able to do this without a sponsor believing in me. Because of this experience, I have had the privilege to say yes a number of times.
- There are no cliques in this meeting, just the circle of Al-Anon supporting each other, and when a newcomer walks in, the circle widens as they are welcomed..”
- Several of the members enthusiastically praised the Tuesday night meeting in particular. Members described experiencing “unconditional love” and a “loving and supportive” environment in which they felt supported, heard and understood.
- Current members of the meetings reached out to newcomers with supportive and loving phone calls and texts.
- Members emphasized that the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, Sponsorship, detachment, prayer and meditation and use of the phone list and Al-Anon literature were the foundation of a good Al-Anon program.

Sponsorship (cont'd)

Individual members' experiences not in support of relisting the meetings:

- Many members described a “pyramid” or “chain” sponsorship structure at the three meeting. One member of the group is referred to by a title (“The Longtimer”) and this member is considered to be the “head” sponsor. Everything “goes up” through sponsorship.
- Many members reported that “you’re only as sick as your secrets” is used as the reason for why they were urged to tell everything to their sponsor. They are also instructed not to confide in anyone (including their spouses) until they have first spoken to their sponsor.
- Members reported being told that sponsorship is “the most important tool” for recovery. They are told that for the “preservation of unity,” all of their private information is shared with the other sponsors and with the member referred to as “The Longtimer.”
- Sponsorship is not a confidential relationship. Sponsors are:
 - required to report to the member referred to as “The Longtimer” what their Sponsees say, and
 - report which Step their Sponsees is on.
- Many members reported things they’d told their sponsors in confidence were repeated to them by their A.A. spouse, in public from the podium, or from other members.
- Many members reported that:
 - they were told who should and should not be their sponsor
 - they were told who they should/not sponsor
 - they should keep or “drop” sponsees as directed by their sponsor and the member referred to as the “The Longtimer”
 - they were told by their sponsor which “outside” meetings they should/not attend
 - they were required by their sponsors to go to other Al-Anon meetings to recruit newcomers and bring them to the three meetings.
 - they were instructed to go to other A.-Anon meeting to get GR commitments in order to control the vote when the original Area Policy was being discussed and voted on at the Area Assembly
- Members were given new “recovery dates” by their sponsors when they started working with a sponsor from the groups. Time attending other Al-Anon meetings “doesn’t count.”
- Members who stopped taking anti-depressants were given new “sober dates” by their sponsors, and had to work the Steps again, as if they were newcomers.
- Several Members reported that the “rule” to “follow sponsor directions” was emphasized to an extreme degree:
 - Members were “shunned,” “publicly scolded,” and “yelled at” for not following their sponsor’s direction or doing what their sponsor expected
 - Members were not allowed to sit next to their sponsor at meetings, when their sponsor and/or the member referred to as “The Longtimer” deemed them as not having followed their sponsor’s direction adequately
- One member described the group(s) as operating “like the rings of a tree.” Newcomers “are the outer ring.” Several members referred to initially being “love bombed”-- and described this as a positive and supportive experience. They would be surrounded by members who were warm, welcoming, and loving, and they invite the newcomer to reach out to them at any time.
- As members move into the “inner ring,” they began to see and experience a structure of “dominance” and “control” that was counter to Al-Anon principles and traditions.
- Many of the writers described having ignored the “red flags” and discomfort that they experienced prior to moving into the inner ring. This discomfort was connected with sponsorship, “dominance” and “control.”
- Sponsors direct their sponsees to attend the Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday meeting, along with several other meetings held at “The Hall” that are not registered Al-Anon meetings. Several members reported feeling “pressured” to place attending the meetings above marital and family obligations and relationships.

Sponsorship

Resolution Team Experiences

- At one of the meetings the RT members attended, the leader shared from the podium that she was told by her sponsor to date and marry a man from the A.A. meeting in “The Hall.” She talked about having to do what your sponsor says, even in areas like who to date and marry, even if it’s against your own ideas and desires, and what she learned from doing that.

Dominance:

Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

- Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. (SM, p.16)
 - Dominance: Our leaders are trusted servants; they do not govern. No member of Al-Anon should direct, assume authority or give advice. Our program is based on suggestion, interchange of experience, and rotation of leadership. We progress in our own way and pace. Any attempt to manage or direct is likely to have disastrous consequences for group harmony. (“Three Obstacles to Success,” SM. p.22)
 - Another source of difficulty can arise with sponsorship. It is important to make clear the distinction between guidance and advice. Guidance comes through sharing, listening, explaining the program, and point out choices available. Guidance never imposes a decision on someone else or dictates a course of action. The use of this Tradition will prevent a Sponsor from assuming authority over the member being sponsored; it offers protection to them both.” Al-Anon’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, B-8, p.92
 - Al-Anon is a fellowship of equals. We are equally important, regardless of our social status, education, intellectual qualities, color, nationality, or religion.” Al-Anon’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, B-8, p.92
 - “We are all experts because of our experience, and we are all beginners because our lives are in a constant state of growth and change. Newcomers are as likely as longtime members to utter words that inspire and inform.” How Al-Anon Works, B-22, p.108
 - Members listen to each other without criticizing, passing judgment, or giving direction. There are no right or wrong answers. All share as peers, and every member is listened to with courtesy and respect.” Information For The Newcomer (pamphlet-S4)
 - From the Welcome, Newcomer! Packet: K-10 (So You Love an Alcoholic)
 - “Do attend at least six meetings before deciding if Al-Anon is right for you.”
 - “Take what you liked and leave the rest.” (SM,p.20)
- From Alcoholism, the Family Disease, P-4, “Do’s and Don’ts”:
- “Don’t dominate, nag, scold, or complain.”
 - “Don’t try to push anyone but yourself.”

In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

From the 2010 Minority Report:

- “We admit that at one time the Tuesday Meeting phone list was ordered by time in the Al-Anon program. However, about 3-1/2 years ago, in light of the group’s inventory work and a group conscience, the phone list was changed to be ordered alphabetically to enhance the principle of equality in our group.” (p.8)
- “A members’s medical decisions are personal decisions and an outside issue.” “A member’s decisions regarding romantic relationships are personal and an outside issue.”(p.10)

From the 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter

- “Dominance and control of members by a handful of members previously attending these meetings, unbeknownst by the majority of the other members, has ceased for the past a least ten years.” (p.23)
- “Regular business meetings, group inventories, and education through the Traditions and Concepts of Al-Anon continues, and as a result, two or more additional members were uncomfortable to continue their practice of dominance and now attend other meetings in Orange County.” (p.2)

Dominance

Individual Members' Experiences in support of relisting the meetings:

- "I have found the rotation of leadership inspiring to be all inclusive to all members regularly attending this meeting, regardless of a member's time in the program."
- "Our meeting is blessed with long-time members with over 20, 30 and 40 years and I'm constantly amazed by their generosity and humility in sharing their experience, strength and hope; their rigorous honesty about themselves and owning their part--they share consistently that long-time membership in Al-Anon doesn't equate to sainthood--and their examples of working the steps, talking to newcomers, and applying the program to their lives. There are no hierarchies in our meeting; just Al-Anon members helping each other."
- I've never encountered a more loving and supportive meeting and am hard-pressed to find one that is comparable to the consistency, strength and commitment with which its members practice the Al-Anon principles."

Dominance

Individual members experiences not in support or relisting:

- One member and only one member is referred to by an honorific title(The Longtimer).
- Seating at meetings is determined by the length of time in the program. Sponsees are told where to sit by their sponsors.
- The member referred to as the "The Longtimer" has "her seat" which no one else sits in.
- Members reported that when the member referred to as "The Longtimer" is at a meeting, she shares last, has no need to raise her hand when it's "her time," and observes no time limit. Other members raise their hands and their shares are timed.
- A number of members reported that the member referred to as "The Longtimer" requires them to:
 - go to other non-Al-Anon meeting at the Hall
 - attend an out-of-town retreat ("A Woman's Safe Place") hosted by the members of the three meetings, and
 - attend events at which the member referred to as "The Longtimer" speaks.
- Members were instructed by their sponsors not to "talk back" to the member referred to as "The Longtimer" and to take everything she says "as truth."
- Makes it clear that events related to the groups takes precedence over family events, even holidays.
- If members do not conform to these "requirements" they report being shunned by other group members.
- Many members reported instances in which the member referred to as "The Longtimer" revealed private information about members (that had been shared with their sponsors or privately with her) from the podium, violated those members' anonymity, name-called and publicly ridiculed various members in front of the group.
- A number of members were told that they had to stop taking prescription anti-depressants. Al-Anon members who took prescription medication for mental health issues were termed "not sober." These members were told that they couldn't work the Steps or had to start over on the Steps once they stopped taking medication. The reason for this practice, according to these members, was that Al-Anon members must be "sober" to keep A.A. members sober.
- More than one person reported being told who to date and who to marry by their sponsor. Those members who reported this were all told to date/marry a member of the A.A. group from "the Hall."

Dominance

Resolution Team Experiences

- The use of the title "The Longtimer" was observed/heard by the RT members when they attended one of the meetings. More than one member pointed out photos on the wall of "The Longtimer" to the RT members.
- The RT members observed handmade banners on the wall of "The Hall" that celebrate the recovery anniversary date of the member referred to as "The Longtimer" and her husband, who is not a member of Al-Anon. There are no banners for any other members of the group. (Members of the RT took pictures with the knowledge and permission of group members.)

As noted in the previous section on Dominance, the RT members heard a leader share from the podium that she was told by her sponsor to date and marry a man from the A.A. meeting in the Hall.

- The RT members observed that the phone lists were in alphabetical order rather than based on the number of years in the program.*

*An Al-Anon member recently sent the Area a phone list from the Tuesday meeting “last updated August 2020,” which listed the members in order according to their “recovery date.”

Literature

Use of Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

- “Experienced Al-Anon members introduce newcomers to the Al-Anon program through Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature and the first three Steps, as well as inform them about the far-reaching effects of the family disease of alcoholism.” Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, 2028-2021, v-2, p.31

- “A.A. literature is not used at Al-Anon meetings because it is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other outside materials can distort the Al-Anon approach.” Service Manual, p.113

- “Cooperation between Al-

Anon and A.A.: There is, of course, a great deal of reading value in literature other than that which is Al-Anon Conference Approved. But it is not the purpose of Al-Anon to make its members familiar with all the approaches--only the Al-Anon approach. Those who wish to acquaint themselves with A.A. reading material can readily find it at an A.A. open meeting.” Al-Anon Guidelines, Cooperation Between Al-Anon and A.A. G-3

- “Between meetings and when other people are not available, Al-Anon literature can offer us the comfort of knowing... Our pamphlets and books provide valuable information about the disease of alcoholism and how to cope with its effects.” How Al-Anon Works, B-22, p.40

The Al-Anon Family Groups, B-5: Classic Edition publication history.

- First published, 1955 (republished 1960, renamed: Living With an Alcoholic)

- Mainly referred to the alcoholic as the husband, the wife as the Al-Anon.

- Only three books listed as resources: two were Al-Anon, one was the A.A. Big Book; listed many pamphlets that are discontinued

- Had a different version of the Preamble to the 12 Steps, did not include the 12 Concepts, and did not have the Suggested Closing.

- The Classic Edition has a Preface, Appendix and footnotes on almost every page regarding changes to the book over the course of different printing--each time updating the information to reflect our current membership.

- How Al-Anon Works (B-22, 1995) was written to replace The Al-Anon Family Groups. They wanted this new book to reflect “...the universality of Al-Anon/Alateen today, instead of reworking B-5.” (Many Voices, One Journey, B-31, p.269)

- Note: The Al-Anon Family Groups is not referred to as “Al-Anon’s Big Book” within the book itself, nor in any other CAL.

Literature

In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

From the 2010 Minority Report:

- “What better resource is available to learn about alcoholism and the Twelve Steps of A.A. than from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous? Accordingly, many Al-Anon members who regularly attend the de-listed meetings refer newcomers to the Big Book as additional reading, But there are not musts--there are only suggestions. In no way is reading the Big Book a requirement for membership in A.-Anon.” (p.9)

- “We have a variety of Al-Anon literature at each of the delisted meetings.” (p.9)

Literature

In Support of Relisting the Meetings (cont'd)

From the 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter

- Each meeting highlights that there are no “must” or rules in Al-Anon, with only Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and no A.A. Big Book or literature at meetings, Since 2010, each meeting continues to make it clear that reading the A.A. Big Book is a voluntary personal option, as described in the Three Views of Al-Anon (P-150), “do learn all you can about alcoholism”.

Individual Members’ Experiences In Support of relisting the meetings:

- “The format and sharing at this meeting combined with use of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature I find refreshing.”

Literature

Individual Members Experiences Not in Support of Relisting the Meetings:

- A number of members reported that working the Steps was done in a “militant” fashion. Sponsees were required to read the first 164 pages of the A.A. Big Book prior to working the Al-Anon Steps.
- Members were directed to purchase the old “unrevised” version of Al-Anon Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions.

Resolution Team Experiences

- The RT members reported that the Sponsorship Bookmark was displayed on the literature table of one of the meetings.
- RT members were provided with the formats of the three meetings which refer to the out-of-print edition of Al-Anon Family Groups: “We recommend the Al-Anon Family Groups book which is Al-Anon’s Big Book and has in it the readings that were read earlier.” The meeting’s literature person stated that the book could not be purchased at the literature table nor at the local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) office.
- The only literature for sale were pamphlets, the daily readers Courage to Change and One Day at a Time. None of the meetings displayed or sold How Al-Anon works or any CAL workbooks.

Affiliation with Outside Entities

CAL related to “Affiliation with Outside Entities”

- Traditions related to outside affiliation:
 - Tradition 3: “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.”
 - Tradition 6: “Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance, or led our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us form our primary spiritual aim.”

(SM, p.15)

- “The WSO will register a group with the understanding that the group abide by the Al-Anon Traditions and not affiliated with or endorse any outside entity or practice.” (SM, p.34)
- “At an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting or meeting location, groups do not announce, publicize, or discuss activities of other Twelve Step programs, as this could create an appearance of affiliation or endorsement, even if the event or activity is composed primarily of Al-Anon or Alateen members.” (SM, p.54)
- “Tradition Five defines Al-Anon single purpose, Tradition Six encourages cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous, maintaining that Al-Anon is a separate entity that ought never affiliated or create the appearance of affiliation with any outside enterprise. Putting these principles into practice maintains a separation between the service structures of Al-Anon and A.A. This separation helps avoid the appearance of conflict of interest and safeguards Al-Anon singleness of purpose.” (SM,p.86,87)

CAL related to Affiliation with Outside Entities (cont'd)

- “The Al-Anon /Alateen names therefore cannot properly be used to identify or publicize retreats, events or activities sponsored by others. This applies when most or even all to the participants are members of Al-Anon/Alateen. Otherwise there could be a misunderstanding of Al-Anon’s purpose and function. In order to avoid any appearance of Al-Anon/Alateen affiliation, it is important to keep promotion of such events outside of Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and meeting locations.” (SM, p.92)
- “The fellowships of Al-Anon (which includes Alateen for its younger members) and A.A. have a unique relationship. They were closely allied in their origins and are naturally drawn together by their family ties. Yet the Twelve Traditions emphasize that each works more effectively if it remains separate.”
- “Tradition Six specifically states that Al-Anon and A.A. are separate entities. Therefore, in keeping with this Tradition, there can be no combining, joining, or uniting which would result in the loss of identity of either fellowship.” Al-Anon Guidelines, G-3: Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.
- Should Al-Anon and A.A. have combined clubhouses? Should Al-Anon groups meet at such clubhouses? According to our Traditions, clubhouses are projects outside of the Al-Anon fellowship. Members, as individuals, may join with others to establish such facilities, but their operation is not affiliated with or financed by any Al-Anon or Alateen group. Although some Al-Anon groups use these meeting facilities, each group maintains its separate identity...” Al-Anon Guidelines, G-3: Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.

In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

From the 2010 Minority Report:

- “The meeting is held in an industrial complex in Anaheim. The meeting location is exclusively dedicated to provide space for Al-Anon and A.A. meetings, and rent is paid with Seventh Tradition funds. Individuals who attend meetings at the meeting location also have the option of paying hall dues directly to the location. Hall dues are voluntary and not related to Al-Anon as a group--it is an outside issue. These dues supply electricity, toilet paper, paper towels cleaning supplies, etc. to the facility. Individuals make the choice to pay hall dues just as dues are sometimes paid to Alano Clubs.” (p.4)

From the 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter

- “As stated before, meetings and members are not associated with any group houses, leaving individual decisions on living arrangements to each member. Each meeting practices Al-Anon’s 7th Tradition and use all funds following group consciences exclusively for Al-Anon meeting expenses and Al-Anon service arms as defined in the Service Manual.: (p.3)

Individual Members Experiences In Support of Relisting the Meetings.

- “Everyone in Al-Anon has a choice to attend whatever meetings they choose to go to in recovery.”
- “I do not want to water down the recovery from Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Principles. I want to be a part of the Worldwide Fellowship of Al-Anon by continuing to stride for group unity and practice our Al-Anon declaration that “when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,...”

Individual Members Experiences Not In Support or Relisting the Meetings

- “A women’s Safe Place” is an event hosted by the members of the three meetings which is not affiliated with any service arm. Members reported being required by their sponsors to fundraise for, and attend, this event.
- At one of the “AWSP” events, several members stated that the member referred to as “The Longtimer” began the meeting by stating that one of her family members another county needed money for school tuition and that she had with drawn the money from the event’s bank account. Members noted that there was no subsequent report about whether the money was repaid to the account.
- Members reported that there was a house associated with the three groups in which some women who attend these meeting were directed to live. This house was referred to by the name of the street on which it is located.
- One of the requirements for living in this house was mandatory attendance of all of the three meetings as well as “the Saturday morning and night meetings.”

Individual Members Experiences Not In Support or Relisting the Meetings (cont'd)

- Members describe being encouraged to think themselves first as members of the “Gottawannas” and then as members of Al-Anon.
 - Other Al-Anon meetings are referred to as “outside” meetings.
 - Members who leave their meetings are referred to as “blow-outs.”
 - Sponsors refer to certain other Al-Anon meetings as “sick.”
- There appears to be a strong affiliation with the A.A. that meets in the same hall as two of the Gottawanna meetings. That A.A. group’s website states that “because of the support and cooperation from the members of the Gottawanna Al-Anon Family Group we were able to get ourselves a good old fashion meeting hall, where we could enjoy having our meetings with complete autonomy.”

Affiliation with Outside Entities

Resolution Team Experiences

- The banner at the front of The Hall has the names of both groups hand-painted on the heading and doesn’t distinguish between A.A. and Al-Anon events.
- The RT members were present when an announcement was made for members to participated in “blinging out” the banner at “the Saturday meeting.” There is no registered Al-Anon meeting in the hall on Saturday, so this announcement was for an outside event.
- The RT members were present for “Hall dues” announcement at one of the meetings.

Group Autonomy

Conference Approved Literature (CAL) related to “Group Autonomy”

- Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other group or Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole. (Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, 2018-2021, v-2 p.15)
- “Meetings differ because each group is free to make many decisions for itself.” “the only restriction on this freedom is that the well-being of Al-Anon and A.A. must take precedence over the interest of any one group. As we saw in the First Tradition, our unity is essential to our survival as a fellowship. No group should make decisions that would detract from that unity.” (How Al-Anon Works, B-22, p.111)
- Tradition Four says that each group is autonomous, free to conduct meetings in a way that suits its members as long as it abides by the Traditions and doesn’t harm the overall unity of Al-Anon.” (Courage to Change, B-16, p.112)
- “However the Tradition cautions us to be sure that decisions made by our group do not affect another group adversely or present an unfavorable or inaccurate picture of Al-Anon of A.A. as a whole.” (Paths to Recovery, b-24, p.163)

In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

From the 2010 Minority Report:

- “The Tuesday Meeting is often referred to by regularly attending members as the Gottawanna home group meeting. We object to the Service Board’s allegation that we are disrupting Al-Anon’s unity by identifying ourselves by the name Gottawanna. We are in no way separating ourselves from Al-Anon.” (p.4)
- “Each of the de-listed meetings has taken a group conscience that the officers of the meeting should wear either a dress or a skirt during their commitment. Consistent with Tradition 11, we believe that this helps us be a program of attraction.”

In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

From the 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter

- “In 2006, a group conscience was taken to update the format of the phone list of alphabetical, as it remains today.” (p.2) *
 - “Each meeting holds business meetings and group inventories on a regular basis to keep each meeting healthy and provide an open forum for any discussion of concerns that may rise.” (p.3)
- * An Al-Anon member recently sent the Area a phone list from the Tuesday night meeting, “last updated August 2020,” which listed the members in order according to their “recovery date.”

Individual Members’ Experiences In Support of relisting the meetings:

- “I appreciated the use of a taking a group conscience for anything big or small, including finding a new location the meeting to how to handle to negativity unleashed by Orang County Intergroup when we shard our plan to have a round robin.”
- “I got to hold my first Al-Anon commitment at this meeting as the co-chair, too. With this commitment, I got to come early, make coffee, and get help from other members with setting up the meeting. After the Step Study, I got to ask members for help cleaning up too. This commitment showed me how important it is to have unity in meetings.”

Individual Members Experiences Not In Support of relisting the meetings:

- Members reported that when business meetings were held, the outcome was predetermined. The were “told” how the group’s members would deal with issue(s) and were instructed to follow directions.
- Group consciences were “rigger” with no Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM).
- Officer positions, especially Secretary and Treasurer meeting positions, were predetermined by the members referred to as “The Longtimer” who communicates through sponsors.

Resolution Team Experiences

- The RT member did not attend a business meeting or participate in a group conscience.

Financial Management

CAL related to “Financial Management”:

- Tradition 6: Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance, or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us form our primary spiritual aim. (SM, p.15)
- “There are no dues or fees to attend Al-Anon or Alateen meetings.” “Group contributions support all levels of Al-Anon service including the District, the local Al-Anon Information Service, the Area, and the World Service Office.” (SM, p.55)
- “Keeping Al-Anon a safe place where we can come for comfort and solutions means it must not be a place where we feel pressured or obligated to buy anything.” Paths to Recovery, B-24, p.186
- “In keeping with Traditions Six and Seven,
 - the group does not provide financial aid to members in need or to any outside enterprise.”
 - “A group is discouraged form giving all of its funds to an outside entity such as a clubhouse even as a condition of using the meeting room.”
 - “Al-Anon groups are not responsible to support a clubhouse, other than paying rent.” (SM,p.56)
- Suggested duties of the Treasurer: (excerpt of list of duties below)
 - Maintains the group’s financial records...
 - Asks another member to help count and record the collection
 - Submits a financial statement to the group at regular intervals (SM, p.58)
- “It is not recommended that group funds be deposited into a member’s personal account as such accounts legally belong to the member, not the group, and accurate record-keeping could be difficult.” (SM, p.58)

Financial Management

CAL related to “Financial Management” (cont’d):

- From Al-Anon Guidelines, G-41: Reserve Fund Guidelines:
 - Are all members in our group familiar with our group, district, and Area financial needs?
 - Does our group rotate its service positions, such as Treasurer?
 - Do we require more than one person’s name/signature on the bank account?
 - Have we ever withheld funds because we disagreed with a decision made by a group conscience of a larger Al-Anon service body? If so, for how long? At what point do we accept that group conscience?

In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

From the 2010 Minority Report:

- “Hall dues are voluntary and not affiliated with any Al-Anon group or meeting. It is each individual’s personal choice on whether or not to contribute to the meeting facility through hall dues.” (p.10)

From the 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter

- “Each meeting practices Al-Anon’s 7th Tradition and use all funds following group consciences exclusively for Al-Anon meeting expenses and Al-Anon service arms as defined in the Service Manual.” (p.3)

Individual Members Experiences In Support or Relisting the Meetings:

- No experiences related to Financial Management were reported.

Individual Members Experiences Not In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

- A number of members (some of whom had been group Treasurers) allege a lack of financial transparency. They reported that there are no regular financial reports given at the meetings.
- Two former group Treasurers reported that the 7th Tradition envelopes go to the home of one particular member.
- One member alleges that she observed members hired to do personal tasks at the home of one member of the group. The people doing the tasks were “paid in singles” out of one of the 7th Tradition envelopes.

Resolution Team Experiences

- Members reported being encouraged to contribute money beyond the 7th Tradition to support the meeting Hall. An announcement was made at one of the meetings a RT member attended that anyone who “wants to pay their Hall dues could come see me at the back of the room during the break of after the meeting.”

Note: The 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter refers to the groups making contributions to the service arms. The groups have not contributed to SCWS, and over the last two years, one meeting contributed \$175 to WSO, another group contributed \$30, and the third showed no recorded contributions to WSO.

Alateen

Conference Approved Literature (CAL) related to “Alateen”:

- “As Tradition Four states, “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or A.A. 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.” (SM, p.228)
- “Service to Alateen requires certification as an Al-Anon Member involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) through your Area process.” Alateen Service e-Manual, 2020, p.3
- Alateen Group Sponsors...
 - Are certified AMIAS
 - Must be registered with certified AMIAS before meetings begin
 - Alateen meetings are attended only by Alateen members, prospective members, and the Area-certified Alateen Group Sponsors affiliated with the group. Alateen Service e-Manual, 2020, p.3-7

Alateen

CAL related to Alateen (cont'd)

- “In order to use the Alateen name, the Area, all AMIAS, all Alateen members, and all meetings and events with Alateen participation must comply with the Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.” (SM, p.94)
- All Alateen members, Al-Anon Members involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), and all meetings and events with participation must adhere to the Area’s ASBR. SCWS Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (Reviewed by WSO--September 15, 2020; SCWS Area Assembly approval--September 26, 2020)

In Support of Relisting the Meetings

From the 2010 Minority Report:

- There is no mention of Alateen in this report.

From the 2018 Formal Request to be Reinstated letter:

- There is no mention of Alateen in this report.

Individual Members’ experiences In Support or Relisting the Meetings:

- No experiences related to Alateen were reported.

Individual Members’ experiences Not In Support of Relisting the Meetings:

- The Alateen meeting at “The Hall” was renamed the “Young Al-Anon meeting” by the member referred to as “The Longtimer” after the Area Alateen Safety & Behavioral Requirements (ASBR) were adopted by the Assembly in 2004 (see RT note below). This member instructed the younger members to call it “Preteen.”
- Members reported that when their children attended this meeting, the group sponsors did not have to be an AMIAS.
- There are no “Alateen” or “Young Al-Anon” meetings registered at “The Hall”.

Resolution Team Experiences

- The RT members observed artwork on the wall showing the cover of an Alateen book.
- There is a meeting called a “Young Al-Anon” meeting which children ages 8-16 attend. There are two group sponsors.
- The RT members were told that the parents go into another room during that meeting.

In Summary

Members have reported issues, actions, and practices that:

- Conflict with Traditions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 12,
- are not in alignment with the The 3 Obstacles to Success,
- are counter to The Sponsorship Bookmark and pamphlets,
- and ignore the principles described in the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual and other pertinent CAL

In addition, the Area continues to receive letters form members who have recently attended the three meeting and found that a number of these practices of concern are ongoing.

Recommendation

The RT members report that:

- Given what they learned during their fact-finding process, including analysis of the letters of over two dozen recent members of these meetings,
- The RT members' experience visiting the groups--which lent credence to some of the more serious and potentially harmful practices recounted by group members,
- The Resolution Team cannot, at this time, recommend that any of these three meetings be relisted.
- The SCWS Board reviewed the Resolution Team's Report and unanimously voted to support the recommendation of the RT. That is, the Board voted that these meetings will not be relisted at this time in local Area directories.
- Per our Policy, we will be sending a copy of this report, by certified mail, to the GRs of the three groups, and a copy to the Orange County Al-Anon Information Service Board.
- In addition, per our Policy, we will be notifying the World Service Office (WSO) of the process and result of our deliberations, and will ask them to remove the Groups from its online directory.

According to the Policy, the groups continue as registered Al-Anon meetings and remain active with voice and vote at the Area Assembly, District, Literature Distribution Center (LDC) and/or Al-Anon Information Service (InterGroup).