
What is Al-Anon?

Learn more about this important resource

Al-Anon defines itself as “a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else’s drinking. By sharing common experiences and applying the Al-Anon principles, families and friends of alcoholics can bring positive changes to their individual situations, whether or not the alcoholic admits the existence of a drinking problem or seeks help” (al-anon.org).

Roughly 16 years after the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in the mid-1930s, Anne B. and Lois W. (wife of Bill W., one of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous) co-founded Al-Anon, a 12-step program for family members and friends of alcoholics. Al-Anon uses the same basic text as Alcoholics Anonymous (the “Big Book”), modifying its message only slightly to *address those impacted by someone’s alcohol or drug use*, rather than the drinker or user themselves. Whereas members of AA talk about being powerless over alcohol, members of Al-Anon talk about being powerless over the alcoholic and the decisions they make.

Remember that being powerless does not mean being helpless, and Al-Anon would certainly not endorse an abusive or destructive relationship. Rather, Al-Anon tries to help individuals liberate themselves from the desire or need to control other people, and the desire to try and prevent those people from experiencing the consequences of their actions.

What are Al-Anon meetings like?

Like Alcoholics Anonymous, there are no dues or fees for Al-Anon attendance, although groups typically will ask for donations. AA and Al-Anon are self-supporting through their own members’ contributions, and there are costs associated with running meetings (rent, literature, coffee/refreshments). You are not obligated to donate, however.

Al-Anon meetings are often centered around a topic (such as “letting go of control”) or a study of AA or Al-Anon literature (passages from the Big Book might be read and commented on by attendees).

Meetings typically last one hour. There are different meeting formats and types of meetings. There are *speaker meetings* (one member of Al-Anon shares his or her personal story) and *sharing meetings* (attendees share for a few minutes each if they wish to do so). While most Al-Anon meetings are open to members of either sex, there are also some men's-only and women's-only meetings. Meetings can take place in churches, community centers, or even an individual's home.

Find out more information:

- For a list of meetings in your area, visit al-anon.org
- You can find a list of free downloadable pamphlets, checklists, and other literature [HERE](#).
- For young people impacted by a family member's alcohol use, check out [ALATEEN](#). Alateen has resources specifically for adolescents impacted by someone else's alcohol and drug use – including articles, chat features, and lists of meetings.

If someone you love is struggling with addiction, get support and assistance, including short-term counseling, and other resources in your area. You are not alone.



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short term counseling
for you & your family.**

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