Literature Creation Guidelines from WSO (Letter)

Greetings from your World Service Office. Thanks for your question regarding the process for developing Conference Approved Literature.

Our literature has almost always been comprised of two elements: 1) Introductory or bridging text in the first-person plural ("we"/"us") that reflects a broad consensus of our program, gathered from a variety of members' experiences; and 2) the personal sharings written by individual members in the first-person singular ("I"/"me").

As far as "combined," "piecemeal," or "blended" sharings, there is only one instance verified. In 1996, the WSO discovered that a few of the stories in *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-33) were indeed composites of more than one member. It was not until this book came out and one member brought it to our attention that the WSO was aware of it. The Board of Trustees took prompt action, creating an ad hoc committee to define blending and mandating research into the matter. All works in progress were immediately researched to insure that no "blending" of personal stories had occurred in those manuscripts. A policy was established so that the combination of stories would not occur again. At the 1966 World Service Conference the issue was discussed on the Conference floor to inform the fellowship that corrective action had occurred. Since that time, the WSO has continued to take action to assure that the stories presented in our literature are those of individual members. Writers and editors are given the strictest of criteria to follow to assure this.

The description of the CAL process in the *Service Manual* that states, "Material submitted is subsequently coordinated and edited for literary style" simply refers to the fact that member stories are categorized by appropriate subject matter and edited for correct grammar and punctuation.

There is a brief description of the CAL process found on the back of the *Area Literature Coordinators* Guideline (G-6) found at al-anon.org/pdf/G6.pdf that reads as follows:

 "The Process for Developing Conference Approved Literature (CAL) Al-Anon's Conference Approved Literature originates with an idea, which can come from any Al-Anon member, group, or service arm. The Conference gives conceptual approval to ideas that meet the needs of the fellowship in a way not already covered in existing literature. After Conference approval, the WSO requests personal sharings from members around the world. The Literature Committee and the WSO staff coordinate the piece's development. Through this process, the literature reflects the views of our fellowship, without being limited to one person's thoughts or ideas. Drafts are reviewed by the Literature Committee and members of the Policy Committee to assure they adhere to Al-Anon principles, policies, and Traditions. This process provides a series of "checks and balances" to our literature. The Conference does not evaluate or give approval to any literature produced outside of this process. See *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (P-35)."

 I hope this information is helpful. Thanks for all you do as an Area Literature Coordinator, and best wishes for continued peace and serenity in the Al-Anon program.

 Yours in Service,

Tom Coffey
Associate Director--Literature