

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Conference Members  
FROM: Executive Director  
DATE: August 13, 2010  
RE: Removal of "it is suggested" from "Use of Material" section of "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies"

The WSO was asked at the 2006 WSC to send a copy of questions it receives from Conference members and our responses to all Conference members so that they can share leadership by responding to recurring questions in their Areas. The WSO believes that the following question and our response might be one of those topics.

**Question:** Why were the words "it is suggested" removed from the "Use of Material" section of "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" in the *Service Manual*? Is the word "suggested" being removed from all Conference Approved Literature and the way Al-Anon prefaces its ideas?

**Answer:** New wording for this section of the "Digest" was approved unanimously in April 2010 by the World Service Conference. As of the next printing of the *Service Manual*, the first paragraph will read as follows:

## **Use of Material at Al-Anon Meetings**

To keep Al-Anon's message in focus and encourage unity, only Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and Al-Anon/Alateen service tools are displayed, distributed, and used at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings, including meetings at conferences and conventions. These items reflect the informed group conscience of the Al-Anon Family Groups as expressed by its World Service Conference since 1961.

In the current *Manual* it reads as follows:

## **Use of Material**

To keep Al-Anon's message in focus, it is suggested that only Al-Anon /Alateen Conference Approved Literature and Al-Anon/Alateen service tools be displayed, distributed, and used at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings, conferences and conventions. These items reflect an informed group conscience.

This issue was originally brought to the Policy Committee. A Delegate was concerned that some members were using the "it is suggested" line as an excuse to ignore the CAL policy. Our policies are interpretations of our basic spiritual guides, the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. The "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" is intended to help members follow these guides. Although all these policies remain "suggestions," most of them are not preceded by the words "it is suggested." The introductory statement at the beginning of the "Digest" already makes this clear.

While the new wording does not change the policy, it recognizes how the fellowship's acceptance of Conference Approved Literature has grown since 1961, when the idea of CAL was approved at Al-Anon's first Conference. Our Al-Anon Membership Surveys have shown in recent years that 98 percent of Al-Anon groups use only Al-Anon Conference Approved

Literature. The Task Force felt that the wording should “presume goodwill.” The Policy Committee and the World Service Conference agreed that the wording in the “Digest” should reflect the current situation, neither as a plea nor a demand, but as a statement of fact. We all still remain "obedient to the unenforceable."

Aside from this one instance, we are unaware of any efforts to remove word "suggested" from Conference Approved Literature or the way Al-Anon prefaces its ideas.