

Al-Anon Guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Members Interested in Speaking

G-1

When you are asked as a member of Al-Anon or Alateen, to share your recovery story at a meeting, convention, or other event for the first time, you may experience a momentary sensation of panic. This is a perfectly normal reaction, but after it passes, and you have heard yourself saying, “yes,” you will find that a wonderfully enlightening adventure is in store for you. With a little encouragement, everyone can tell their story. The only ingredients needed are the willingness to try and a reliance on a Higher Power. Sharing your story is an opportunity to discover a new side of yourself, one you may not have realized existed. Members report that speaking before a group adds another dimension of growth to their Al-Anon experience.

When Asked to Speak, Find Out:

- If you are expected to tell your personal recovery story or to discuss a particular topic of the Al-Anon program.
- If your audience is only Al-Anon members, or if it will include others who are not members of Al-Anon Family Groups (such as professionals or students). This will help you decide in advance how best to direct your talk.
- If there is a suggested time limit.
- If you will be expected to participate in a question and answer or open discussion session after your talk is concluded.
- If you are expected to explain some of Al-Anon/Alateen’s history.

Plan What to Say

- Bear in mind that the purpose of your talk is to carry the Al-Anon/Alateen message of recovery by sharing your experience, strength, and hope.
- Give a brief description of yourself before you came to Al-Anon/Alateen, concentrating on your behavior and not that of the alcoholic or others.
- Describe how you have changed your life by using the tools of the program.
- Share on a particular Step, slogan, or Al-Anon/Alateen book or pamphlet that was especially helpful.
- Tell what Al-Anon/Alateen means to you.
- Share how you are applying the Al-Anon/Alateen program to your life and attitudes.
- Focus on your recovery from living with the effects of someone else’s drinking in your life today or in the past.
- Avoid using professional or other outside terminology when speaking as an Al-Anon/Alateen member.
- Express your views on the topic as it relates to your own experience, if asked to speak about a particular subject such as a Step, a slogan, or a topic from Al-Anon or Alateen Conference Approved Literature.

- Use resources [such as the guideline *Suggested Programs for Meetings* (G-13)] if you are asked to choose a subject.
- Stress the need for, and role of, Alateen Group Sponsors, particularly when an Alateen is asked to speak at an Al-Anon group.

Audio Recordings

During open Al-Anon functions, the speakers are often recorded. Therefore, it is up to members who consent to having their talk recorded, to protect their anonymity by using first name only or a pseudonym, as they see fit, and to maintain the anonymity of other Al-Anon and A.A. members in their talk. These recordings become the property of the recording company and may be distributed via multimedia outlets, including the internet, and sold on the recording company’s website, unless the speaker specifically prohibits this when signing the release.

Tips on Talking in General

- Some members find that preparing a brief outline helps.
- Others use an index card with an opening sentence, some key phrases they can call upon in case they get lost somewhere in the middle, and a closing statement for a graceful conclusion.
- Try using the technique of looking at a few individuals in different parts of the room, if facing an audience is a problem.
- Speak so you can be heard in the back of the room.

Speaking Before a Non-Al-Anon Audience

- Make it clear that you are expressing your *own* views and not necessarily those of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole.
- Keep in mind the public image of Al-Anon/Alateen is gained in part from your appearance.
- Try to give a good account of what Al-Anon and Alateen are, what they do, and the services they offer to the community.

- Remember to mention Alateen.
- Preserve anonymity by protecting the identity of all Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. members.
- Tell the inviting organization and the press that only first names should be used in public and from the platform.
- Emphasize the importance of attending Al-Anon and Alateen meetings regularly.

Keep in Mind

- You are interesting—so be yourself and speak from the heart; don't be afraid to let others know you.
- You have an important message. Al-Anon Family Groups has brought you some peace of mind; let everyone know it.
- You will be successful if your talk helps just one person. Remember, wherever you go, most people are friendly and receptive.
- You're there to carry the message that Al-Anon Family Groups offer a new way of life to those suffering from the effects of someone's drinking.

For Members with Other Affiliations

There are no separate instructions for Al-Anon and Alateen members who belong to other anonymous groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, etc.) or who are professionals in the alcoholism field.

When you speak as an Al-Anon/Alateen member, whether before a fellowship or professional audience, keep the focus of your talk on:

- Al-Anon/Alateen
- Yourself
- Your interpretation of the Al-Anon/Alateen Twelve Steps

It is confusing both to potential Al-Anon or Alateen members and professionals to hear our message diluted by referring to other programs.

Share Joyfully

- Describe the effect Al-Anon or Alateen has had on your life. Concentrate on your growth and not that of the alcoholic or others.
- Take some literature along for reference and perhaps some extra pieces to hand out.
- Take the time to talk to potential newcomers on a one-to-one basis. Be sure to have names and phone numbers for referrals.

For further ideas and suggestions on speaking, see our Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature.