

Presentation on Mandatory Reporting

During training for AMIAS (Al-Anon Member in Alateen Service) the Alateen Coordinator and AAPP go over the Florida law stating that all adults over the age of 18 are mandatory reports of child abuse, neglect or abandonment. Over time we have come to understand that this is information which is applicable and beneficial to all Al-Anon members, not just those training to be in Alateen service.

Alateen is a part of Al-Anon. Alateen is a particular type of Al-Anon meeting for younger people, and there are certain requirements for adults to be involved in those meetings.

Al-Anon is for family members of those with problem drinking. This means that anyone of any age who has been affected by someone else's drinking is welcome at an Al-Anon meeting. If any of us has a young person come into our Al-Anon meeting, we need to welcome them as an Al-Anon member. And we need to be prepared to treat them with respect and encouragement as they decide if Al-Anon is for them. All teenagers affected by alcoholism are not Alateens.

An "Alateen" is a human being who attends Alateen meetings. A teenager who is affected by alcoholism but is not attending Alateen meetings is not an "Alateen." And even if there is a nearby Alateen meeting, they are not required to attend that. They are, however, qualified and welcome to attend Al-Anon meetings.

Since this is the case, it is possible that all Al-Anon members would benefit from knowing the state law about Mandatory Reporting. This is not a scary law. It is not a scary process. It is simply a law – like a speed limit – that it is important to know, and that each Al-Anon member has the autonomy to respond in ways that work for them. Our job as Alateen Coordinators is not to teach or explain or enforce the law. Instead, we make the information available along with the proper contact information of the state agencies who can answer your further questions.

In addition to the cover page with state agency contact information, this booklet has three documents:

- A Mandatory Reporting Checklist published by the Department of Children and Families
- The Florida Statute that requires reporting
- The Florida statutory definitions used in the Florida Statutes for abuse, abandonment and neglect.

The more information we have, the less we need fear the unknown. Please reach out for help if you need more opportunities to discuss this issue. Please know that your Area Alateen Coordinator and AAPP are happy to talk with you and to assist you in getting comfortable and confident about what the law states.

We are grateful for your service and your participation in Al-Anon.

As presented at January 2023 AWSC