

**Virginia Area Assembly, October 26-27, 2024**  
**Ellie Fetterly, VA Area World Service Delegate, Panel 62**  
**WSC Theme - Our Path Toward Grace, Unity, and Understanding**  
**Panel 62 Theme – It Started With A Shoe**

Delegates Report “Our Path toward Grace, Unity, and Understanding”

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Spiritual principles linked to the words of the Conference theme, “Our Path toward Grace, Unity, and Understanding,” and the work of the Conference. The Chairperson connected “grace” to the spiritual principles of clarity, love, flexibility, and freedom from judgement; “unity” to the principles of teamwork, participation, shared responsibility, cooperation, and kindness; and “understanding” to listening with open-mindedness, honesty, mutual respect, critical thinking, and reasoning things out with others. This is your place; these are your people.

**INCLUSION**—THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES DESCRIBED THROUGH OUR LEGACIES AND MISSION “If I widen my circle and you widen your circle, the circle of Al-Anon widens, and that’s how we become more inclusive.”

**GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY DISCUSSION** - The Policy Committee posed a question originally submitted by a District in the WSC Structure: “Is the gendered language in the Steps and Traditions in alignment with Al-Anon’s Legacies?” The Policy Committee discussed the question posed at its July 2023 meeting. To gain a wider viewpoint on the topic, the Policy Committee asked for input from the 2024 World Service Conference, seeking insight and perspective rather than policy decisions. All Conference members were asked to consider the question thoughtfully and prayerfully, to review and study the Legacies from an unbiased perspective, and to understand that no decisions were being made during discussion. The Policy Committee also affirmed that the conversation would not alter the boundaries established by the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter, which states there will be no changes to the Legacies without written consent of three-quarters of the Al-Anon Family Groups

The **Choosing a Group’s Name** Task Force Chairperson introduced this discussion of proposed changes to the “Choosing a Group’s Name” portion of the Policy Digest. The topic of group naming policy was originally brought to the Policy Committee by the Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT), which has the responsibility of reviewing any new group registrations containing names that may not adhere to Al-Anon policy. SPIRiT Staff reported they had seen an increase in proposed names that could be considered potentially not welcoming to the newcomer, reflected affiliation, and/or focused more on identifying differences than similarities and Al-Anon principles. After discussion, the Policy Committee created a thought force, then a task force to revise the “Choosing a Group’s Name” text portion to more thoroughly interpret the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service, reflect the fellowship’s shared experiences, and identify the spiritual principles on which the policy is based.

**TASK FORCE: PERSONAL AND SERVICE SPONSORSHIP** “I have come to understand that clear communication is vital. Whether I am the Sponsor or the sponsee, I need to speak up.” The members of the Task Force on Personal and Service Sponsorship were charged to create a workshop for Areas, Districts, and groups on the topic of sponsorship. At the 2024 Conference, they presented an outline of three different workshop agendas (full day, half day, and 30 minutes); handouts with quotes from Conference Approved Literature on five different topics relating to sponsorship; and five skits relating to these topics for use in workshops. The five topics identified by the Task Force were: “How to Get and Use a Sponsor”; “How to Navigate the Relationship”; “Challenges of Getting and Using a Sponsor”; “Service Sponsorship”; and “I Want to Be a Personal/Service Sponsor. The guideline for new Literature about Sponsorship was posted on [al-anon.org/sharing](http://al-anon.org/sharing) and on AFG Connects communities for dissemination throughout the fellowship, and the Team has begun collecting sharings for the piece.

Material in this report derived or reprinted from WSC 2024 Summary

## Annual Trustee Report

**Al-Anon Impact-** 2023 Worldwide Al-Anon Family Groups Statistics: 22,457 Al-Anon and Alateen groups worldwide

**Finances** - Cost of WSO Services Allocated across WSC Registered Group- The average cost to support each group is \$330

**Virginia stats:** Only about 60% of our groups donate to the WSO The average group donation is \$182.71 Nationally, the overall group donations average \$196.00 What can we do to at least get Virginia above the average?

**Inmate Correspondence Service** - The pandemic prevented the distribution of several WSO mailings, including the Inmate Correspondence Service (ICS) Contact update. Historically, there have always been Al-Anon members willing to serve incarcerated people by volunteering to write letters that serve as meetings, since many incarcerated populations must find their own path to the program. The WSO acts as a postman to preserve the anonymity of the ICS Contact. ICS Contacts send their correspondence to the WSO, which is forwarded to the assigned inmate and vice versa. Areas are encouraged to reach inmates through a variety of public outreach efforts.

**Impacts of Electronic Groups on the Service Structure** - Because of the success of electronic groups, the WSC Structure has even added a 68th Area, the Global Electronic Area (GEA), which is made up exclusively of electronic groups seeking to attract a global audience. At year end, the GEA had 941 groups holding 1,556 meetings. In addition, some groups still temporarily meet electronically, and some electronic groups have moved into geographic Areas and seek to attract a local audience.

The impact of the electronic groups on Al-Anon is further demonstrated by the extraordinary success of the Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App, which has more than 177,500 active users.

**Sharing Professional Validation of Al-Anon Recovery:** The final dissertation, “Does It Work If You Work It? The Therapeutic Elements of Al-Anon Participation,” was presented to the Board of Trustees. Here we have a professional who did their research and came up with evidence-based data that backs up what we hear in meetings: “It works if you work it!” Their findings suggest that the following four actions improve members’ recovery: • Going to meetings • Being spiritually motivated • Being of service • Getting a Sponsor and being a Sponsor

**Al-Anon Family Groups Copyright & Trademark Protection** Presentation - Recognizing the need to attract members to our meetings and groups in order to fulfill Al-Anon’s primary purpose, some traditional permission is granted to Al-Anon Family Groups and their registered service arms. For example,

- Groups may use the Al-Anon or Alateen logo on group event flyers.
- WSC Structure service arms, which consist of Areas, Districts, Al-Anon Information Services, and Intergroups, may use the Al-Anon or Alateen logo or the Al-Anon or Alateen name on:
  - Social media pages
  - Websites
  - Guidelines

Additionally, all registered Service Arms, groups, and members may download, print, photocopy, and publish Al-Anon Guidelines, as these represent the experience, strength, and hope of our members and groups in undertaking Al-Anon service responsibilities.

The WSO also offers explicit permission in certain cases to use trademarked and copyrighted materials:

- The WSO provides permission to those members, groups, and registered service arms which request permission to reprint limited excerpts of Conference Approved Literature using the reprint permission form available on al-anon.org.
- In the last few years, the WSO has rolled out new group registration and update forms that include explicit permission to use CAL during meetings. This permission applies to both in-person and electronic groups. It allows for the printing or posting of only the portion of CAL feasible to be shared and discussed during one meeting. When registering, groups agree not to permanently post materials but instead to remove them immediately following the meeting, in the case of a post; or ask members to return the material for shredding at the end of the meeting, in the case of photocopies. (Specifics can be found by reviewing the New Al-Anon Group Registration Form available on al-anon.org)

Members responded to this presentation, and the WSO received numerous reports of violations related to social media. As a result, the WSO worked with Apple, Facebook, and YouTube to remove content violating AFG, Inc.'s intellectual property rights. • Podcasts of One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (B-6) and Courage to Change (B-16) by two individual accounts were removed from Apple's iTunes platform. • Ten Facebook groups using the trademark name of Al-Anon and posting pages from our daily readers were removed for violating Facebook's intellectual property policy. • One channel on YouTube that had produced 734 videos reading from One Day at a Time in Al-Anon, Courage to Change, and Hope for Today (B-27) was removed by YouTube.

**Public Outreach Toolkit** - In a digital world, things change frequently, and a PDF [Public Outreach] document is not flexible enough to be updated regularly. With that in mind, the Public Outreach Committee made the recommendation to develop and maintain a space on al-anon.org where trusted servants could share public outreach ideas with one another. This idea became the Public Outreach Toolkit (PO Toolkit), which launched on al-anon.org this year, featuring several of the projects from the Best of Public Outreach. These ideas are tagged with various attributes, making it easy for any member to find ideas that fit their service arm, budget, and/or time commitment. Furthermore, as the clearinghouse of Al-Anon Family Groups, we also created a form on this page for members to share their Public Outreach experience, strength, and hope. These submissions are reviewed by a Work Group of the Public Outreach Committee, then added to the PO Toolkit.

**TASK FORCE: REVITALIZING ALATEEN** The Revitalizing Alateen Task Force (TF) introduced this presentation by stating the charge given to their task force: to develop an action plan to support revitalizing Alateen among groups, Districts, and Areas in the WSC Structure. The TF came to a consensus that the most effective approach to this charge would be to create a public outreach campaign aimed toward developing relationships between Alateen service arms and professionals in their communities in the position to recommend Alateen, such as therapists, school personnel (nurses, health teachers, guidance counselors, prevention coordinators), teen center directors, and emergency health services.

The final product of this campaign was a resource packet designed for customization and use by Alateen service arms across the WSC Structure and international structures. The packet consists of step-by-step instructions for trusted servants implementing the outreach campaign, an action plan for creating local task forces to carry out the outreach to professionals, a letter for professionals about the purpose and benefits of Alateen, a customizable flyer for distribution in the community, a PowerPoint presentation and speaker notes to deliver at events with relevant professionals, and a document about Alateen literature and links to resources.