

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 speak before an audience for the first time, you may experience a momentary sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach, wobbly knees, clammy hands, and an overall sensation of terror. But after these perfectly normal reactions pass and you have heard yourself saying, "Yes," when you really meant, "No," you will find that a wonderfully enlightening adventure is in store for you. With a little encouragement, and a reliance on a Higher Power, everyone can speak. The only ingredient needed is the willingness to try. Members report that speaking before a group adds another dimension of growth to their Al-Anon experience. It's an opportunity to discover a new side of yourself, one you may not have realized existed.

WHEN ASKED TO SPEAK, FIND OUT

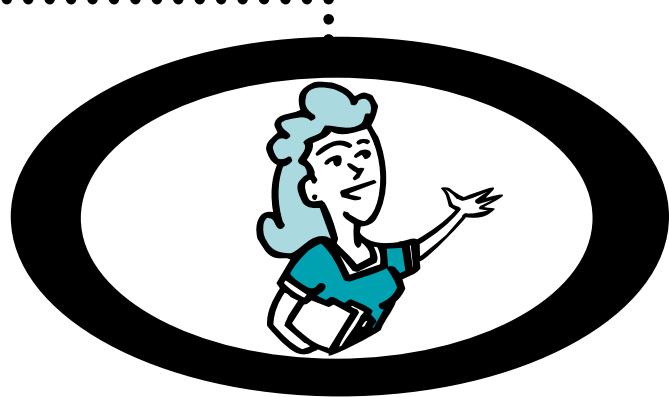
- If the meeting is open to those who are not members of Al-Anon Family Groups, so you can decide in advance how best to direct your talk;
- How long you will be expected to talk;
- If you will be expected to participate in a question and answer or open discussion session after your talk is concluded;
- If you are expected to tell your personal recovery story or to discuss a particular topic of the Al-Anon program;
- If you are expected to explain some of Al-Anon/Alateen's history.

AUDIO TAPE RECORDINGS

During open Al-Anon functions, the speakers are often taped. Therefore, it is up to members who consent to having their talk taped to protect their anonymity as they see fit. These tapes become the property of the taper and may be distributed via multi-media.

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, Al-Anon or Alateen book, or pamphlet that was especially helpful.
- Tell what Al-Anon means to you.
- Share how you are applying the Al-Anon program to your life and attitudes.
- Focus on your recovery.
- If asked to lead a closed meeting on a particular subject such as a Step, a slogan, or a topic from any of the hardcover books, it helps to express your views on the topic as it relates to your own experience.
- If you are asked to choose a subject, the Guideline, Suggested Programs for Meetings (G-13), will be helpful.
- It helps for Alateen speakers at Al-Anon groups to stress the need for and role of Alateen sponsors.





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.
- If your talk helps just one person, it has been successful. Remember, wherever you go, most people are friendly and receptive.
- You're there to carry the message that Al-Anon Family Groups offers a new way of life to those suffering because of a loved one's alcoholism.

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.
- If facing an audience is a problem, try using the technique of looking at a few individuals in different parts of the room.
- Speak so you can be heard.

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 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 AA 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.

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 member, whether before a fellowship or professional audience, keep the focus of your talk on:

- Al-Anon
- Yourself
- Your interpretation of the 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 hardcover books.