

# AL-ANON guidelines

The Shared Experience Of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

## Guidelines for Newsletter Editors

G-21

*A newsletter can be a key source of information, unity and harmony for a district, area, or information service.*

### **PURPOSE OF A NEWSLETTER**

A newsletter is a vital link in keeping groups and members informed. Establishing individual newsletter guidelines makes it easier for an editor to decide what to include. An assembly, district, or Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) may be asked to take a group conscience or hold a workshop to clarify specific purposes, such as to:

- encourage attendance at service events
- communicate local, area and AIS news
- attract Al-Anon members into service

**TIP:** *Ask yourself why you are publishing this newsletter? Who is the audience? What do they need? What would they like?*



### **THE ROLE OF THE EDITOR**

- Clarity of communication is the editor's job. The editor may work with a selection committee of two or more experienced Al-Anon members to help select material.
- Encourage members to make it *their* newsletter by submitting information, reports, and service sharings.
- Determine the type of submissions that will be accepted and establish a due date for submissions.
- Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. (A WSO style sheet is available upon request.)
- For the sake of clarity, use uniform terms as defined in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Handbook Section. For example, it is confusing to use "section" or "zone" when you really mean "district" or "area."
- Please spell "Al-Anon" and "Alateen" correctly, with hyphens in the proper place.
- Always have someone else proof the final pages.

**TIP:** *Live and Let Live - be tolerant of different styles and communicate with the writer if substantial changes are needed.*

### **PRODUCTION**

Develop a production timeline and publication deadline.

Use an organized, consistent format to aid readers.

- The masthead may include the name of the newsletter, date, and a mailing address (P.O. box if possible; if not, the editor's address may be used).
- Some newsletters list the names and addresses of area or local officers.
- Include subscription information.
- Place your newsletter's title and date on each page to get credit each time an article is copied.
- Encourage members to share their Al-Anon news and print guidelines for sharings and notices. (Some request that all submissions be in writing by mail, fax, e-mail, or computer disc.)
- Include in your guideline standards for submissions, i.e., functions must be open to any member...
- Publish late submissions only if you can still meet the timeline. The most important consideration is getting the newsletter out in time to accomplish its purpose.

The use of computer software can create a professional appearance, generate enthusiasm and enhance readability with the use of attractive graphics and fonts.



**TIP:** *Include a little humor! Make it light! Make it interesting!*

### **TRADITIONS AND POLICY**

In keeping with Tradition Six, the 1981 World Service Conference approved the following policy: "Al-Anon newsletters and bulletin boards should not be used for publicizing activities of other organizations, the possible exception being AA."

Policy on *The Forum* reprints from the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*: "...Since it is copyrighted material, the WSO cannot grant permission for substantial reprints in area newsletters, in the U.S. and Canada. Newsletters of other countries may, upon informing the WSO, use *Forum* material if they give a proper credit line in their publication." This policy also applies to Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

The Al-Anon logo with just the triangle and circle may be

used without the letters "AFG" or any other graphics in the center. The original seal accompanied by the words "Approved by the World Service Conference," identifies Conference Approved Literature. This seal is not for newsletter use.

If quotations, graphics, or illustrations from other publications are used, the publisher, including Al-Anon, should be contacted for permission and credit given.

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**Anonymity** - Never put the name "Al-Anon" or "Alateen" on the envelope, including the return address. It's best to avoid using last names within the publication unless absolutely necessary.

### CIRCULATING YOUR NEWSLETTER

- Limit the number of pages to keep mailing costs down.
- In some areas, DRs are given a sufficient supply for the GRs in their home districts. Others prefer to mail the newsletter to each group or to AISs.
- When quantity permits, reduce mailing costs by using bulk mailing permits; information on bulk mailing is available from your local US postal service.
- Exchange newsletters with other areas/districts.
- Please include the WSO on your mailing list.

### SUGGESTED NEWSLETTER TOPICS

Reports of:

- Area officers: delegate, alternate delegate, secretary, area chairperson, and treasurer's financial report (some areas include contributions by group)
- Area and local coordinators (Alateen, Public Outreach, Literature, *Forum*, Group Records, Archives, etc.)
- District representatives (DRs): "District Happenings," meeting announcements, workshops, special events
- Group representatives (GRs) – anniversaries
- Upcoming voting issues - job descriptions of officers and



coordinator positions published before elections to encourage members to participate

- Regular column(s) such as, "Things to Think About" or "Tips On ..." (Consider the same heading with different subjects every issue.)
- Assembly highlight reports
- Information and agenda for upcoming assemblies/service meetings
- "The Service Corner" - officers, coordinators and DRs can be encouraged to submit sharings on how service work helped with recovery
- Inserts or separate flyers about special area/district workshops or events

**TIP:** *To handle a controversy, ask both sides to write. Featuring reports of personal grievances can result in disunity. Use judgment if a submission is inaccurate or misleading. Communicate with officers for guidance.*

### WHEN SPACE ALLOWS

The following "fillers" can be used for reminders or to call attention to other important information:

- List of officers and coordinators with phone numbers, addresses and/or e-mail addresses
- Remind groups about the importance of keeping mailing information up to date
- Importance of using the group registration number when communicating with the WSO, especially on orders and contributions
- The history of your area
- Conference Approved Literature (CAL) meeting topics, creating displays, etc.
- Features about Al-Anon and Alateen books, publications *The Forum*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* and other WSO newsletters.
- Reminders of other materials available from the WSO, annual AFG Service Plan, discount literature packets, Literature in Translation, *Getting In Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen* (S-23)
- Information on Al-Anon conventions and regional service seminars
- WSO telephone, fax, toll-free meeting line telephone numbers and e-mail address
- A list of acronyms used commonly in Al-Anon
- Show boundaries on a state map with districts marked.
- Quarterly appeals for individual and group contributions from the WSO
- New literature, World Service Office guidelines or specific pamphlets
- Excerpts from *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)

**TIP:** *Share your excitement!*