

# Bolton Hill Al-Anon Family Group (AFG) Hybrid Meeting Format

*Please start & stop the meeting on time*

## • **Moment of Silence & Serenity Prayer**

## • **Welcome**

We welcome you to the Bolton Hill Al-Anon Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

We who live, or have lived, with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can. We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon we discover that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

We urge you to try our program. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes, and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.

The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with an alcoholic is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.

The Al-Anon program is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous), which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives, along with our slogans and the Serenity Prayer. The loving interchange of help among members and daily reading of Al-Anon literature thus make us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.

Anonymity is an important principle of the Al-Anon program. Everything that is said here, in the group meeting and member-to-member, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in Al-Anon.

## • **Preamble to the Twelve Steps**

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

## • Twelve Steps

Because of their proven power and worth, A.A.'s Twelve Steps have been adopted almost word for word by Al-Anon. They represent a way of life appealing to all people of goodwill, of any religious faith or of none. Note the power of the very words.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of *God as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with *God as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## • Traditions - introductory paragraph and Tradition corresponding to the month:

The Traditions that follow bind us together in unity. They guide the groups in their relations with other groups, with A.A., and the outside world. They recommend group attitudes toward leadership, membership, money, property, public relations, and anonymity.

The Traditions evolved from the experience of A.A. groups in trying to solve their problems of living and working together. Al-Anon adopted these group guidelines and over the years has found them sound and wise. Although they are only suggestions, Al-Anon's unity and perhaps even its survival are dependent on adherence to these principles.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.
3. The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

5. Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
6. Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

• **Concepts** - introductory paragraph and Concept corresponding to the month:

Carrying the message, as suggested in the Twelfth Step, is Service—Al-Anon's third legacy. Service, a vital purpose of Al-Anon, is action. Members strive to *do* as well as to *be*.

Anything done to help a relative or friend of an alcoholic is service: a telephone call to a despairing member; sponsoring a newcomer; telling one's story at meetings; forming groups; arranging for public outreach; distributing literature; and financially supporting groups, local services, and the World Service Office.

1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.
2. The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.
3. The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.
4. Participation is the key to harmony.
5. The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.
6. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.
7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.
8. The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.
9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.
10. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
11. The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.

12. The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter. In all proceedings, the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions:
- (1) that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
  - (2) that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;
  - (3) that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity;
  - (4) that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
  - (5) that though the Conference serves Al-Anon, it shall never perform any act of government; and that, like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

• **Signs** that would be on display:

- ◊ Whom you see here – What you hear here – When you leave here – Let it stay here
- ◊ Al-Anon Spoken Here – Let's Leave Other Affiliations Outside: Your Professions, Religions, Other Philosophies, Outside Publications, and Other 12-Step Programs: Keep the Focus on Al-Anon
- ◊ If Al-Anon has helped you, wouldn't you like to give that gift to your child? Alateen is meeting Sunday mornings; check the Alateen page at [Alanon-Maryland.org](http://Alanon-Maryland.org)

• **Please Read:** "This is often a large meeting. Please limit your sharing to 3-5 minutes so that more may have an opportunity to participate."

• **Crosstalk Statement:**

Please refrain from addressing suggestions to another member. As explained in chapter four of *How Al-Anon Works*, "In Al-Anon, we don't give advice."

Our Tenth Tradition states in part, "The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues..." Therefore, so that our personal political, religious, and ideological ideas do not inhibit others from sharing, we keep them separate from our own personal growth and struggle in Al-Anon.

Instead, we simply share our own experience. We accept what others say because it is how they feel at this time. This allows everyone to share freely.

Between meetings, many of us find it helps to reach out to other members with similar experiences, to discuss our dilemmas in detail.

Thanks for your cooperation.

- Are there any **announcements** for the good of the group or for Al-Anon as a whole?
  - ◊ Mention the Baltimore AIS website [[alanon-maryland.org](http://alanon-maryland.org)] for events, meeting changes, closings, and more.
  - ◊ Ask people to raise their hands if they are willing to serve as a temporary sponsor.

- **Literature Depot** – Kim at alanonliteraturedepot@gmail.com [*post this info in the chat*]

- Ask if anyone is **new** to Al-Anon - if so, invite them to introduce themselves by their first name, and ask someone to read the **Newcomers Welcome:**

Welcome to the Bolton Hill Al-Anon Family Group! We are glad you made it here this morning.

You may have come to help a loved one with a drinking problem. What we have found most helpful, surprisingly, is to keep the focus on ourselves. We take comfort in the 3C's: we didn't cause another's alcoholism, we can't control the drinking, and we cannot cure it. But we can recover, one day at a time, from the profound effects that alcoholism has had on us.

Our directory lists many local meetings, searchable on the interactive map at Al-Anon.org. Currently the most up-to-date list, including those meeting virtually, may be found at Alanon-Maryland.org. Each meeting has its own flavor. We suggest that you attend six meetings before deciding whether Al-Anon is for you.

Toward the end of this hour the secretary will invite you to share, if you'd like – but that choice is yours. We encourage you to stay after the closing, and to ask any questions you may have at that time.

Be gentle with yourself. Your recovery is already beginning!

◇ Invite them to visit the Newcomer's Page on Alanon-Maryland.org for a free Newcomers' Packet and other pamphlets and literature.

- Ask if anyone is at the Bolton Hill Meeting for the **first time** - invite them to introduce themselves by first name

- **Introductions:** Zoom Host will mute everyone and greet each person by first name

- In accordance with our **Seventh Tradition:** we have no dues or fees, but we are self-supporting through our own voluntary contributions.

*[treasurer will post donation information]*

- **First** Saturday of each month – we share on the Step corresponding to that month
- **Third** Saturday of each month – we share on the Tradition corresponding to that month

- Ask if anyone has a **reading** they would like to share

- **Open the meeting for discussion** - mention that we leave a few minutes at the end of the meeting for the newcomers to share if they wish

- Before ending, ask newcomers if they would like to share

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- **Closing:**

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.

The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A few special words to those of you who haven't been with us long: Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

We aren't perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you. After a while, you'll discover that though you may not like all of us, you'll love us in a very special way—the same way we already love you.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.

Will all who care to, join me in closing with the declaration followed by the Serenity Prayer:

*Let It Begin with Me*

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,  
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen  
always be there, and *Let It Begin with Me*.

God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change  
The Courage to change the things I can  
And the Wisdom to know the difference.

*December 5, 2024*

All copyrighted readings copied and pasted from the 2022-25 Service Manual,  
available online at: <https://www.al-anon.org/pdf/P2427.pdf>