

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can Al-Anon help me?

The decision to attend an Al-Anon meeting sometimes comes when feelings of despair and hopelessness dominate our lives and relationship with the alcoholic(s). We may be confused, sad, or unsure how to cope. Al-Anon works by providing members with hope for change. Meetings are a safe and confidential place to come together and learn a better way of life through the Twelve Steps—whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

2. Do I have to sign-up or register before I go to a meeting?

No. When you find a meeting date and time that works for you, you can simply show up. If you wish to confirm the date/time of the meeting you may call the Service Center -- 414-257-2415.

3. Is there a fee to attend meetings?

There are no dues or fees for membership, the meetings/groups and Al-Anon as a whole are supported by voluntary donations from members.

4. My child is a heroin addict; can I attend Al-Anon?

When you attend an Al-Anon meeting, you get to decide if it is a fit for you. The effects of dealing with another's addiction are very similar no matter the substance in question. In Al-Anon we keep the focus on ourselves and not on the alcoholic or addict. You will likely come across many parents of alcoholics and addicts in the rooms of Al-Anon.

5. Does Al-Anon facilitate interventions?

No. Al-Anon is not a place to learn how to get the alcoholic sober or to impress upon the alcoholic the gravity of his/her condition. Al-Anon is a place of hope and healing for friends and family members regardless if the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

6. What is the difference between an open and closed Al-Anon meeting?

Open Al-Anon Family Group (AFG) meetings allow attendance by all members and potential members as well as people who are not families and friends of alcoholics but who are interested in learning about Al-Anon Family Groups (AFG), e.g., medical professionals or students. Many open Al-Anon meetings are speaker meetings where the format for that meeting is one Al-Anon speaker and one AA speaker sharing their story for the group --see the Secretary's Corner on this website for upcoming open meetings.

Closed meetings are for all Al-Anon members & potential members--anyone whose life has been affected by a problem drinker. Closed meetings give members the freedom to share and listen to the experience, strength, and hope of one another on a confidential and anonymous basis. Most meetings in our directory are closed meetings, unless otherwise designated.

7. What is Alateen?

Alateen is a part of Al-Anon Family Groups, but the focus is on creating a fellowship of teens whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. Alateen meetings are assisted by experienced Al-Anon members and provide teens with a place to meet other teenagers struggling in similar situations. There are no dues or fees for attendance. The guideline for age of attendance is between twelve and nineteen years old. Some groups may accept younger children, but this should not be confused with childcare. See the directory for a list of meetings with Alateen participation.

8. What is a sponsor?

A sponsor is someone you have a mutual and confidential relationship with and who has been in the program just long enough to serve as a guide through the Twelve Steps of recovery. Sponsors often serve as listeners and can help process personal situations. Sponsors are not professionals, but instead share their experience, strength and the hope they have gained through Al-Anon to help you find answers that fit your situation.

9. What are beginner meetings?

Beginner meetings introduce the general Al-Anon meeting format, literature used, and common language of Al-Anon. Beginner meetings are not required but can be helpful when you are new. You are welcome at a beginner meeting whether you are brand new or have attended Al-Anon meetings in the past. Beginner meetings are held every Monday at 7:30 p.m. in room 2135, in the same building as the Service Center in West Allis.

10. What is the Service Center?

The Service Center is a local information office for Al-Anon Family groups in Southeastern Wisconsin. The Center takes calls from prospective members, hosts a beginner meeting on Monday evenings, manages a website and maintains a list of active meetings in the Milwaukee area. The Service Center supports meetings and individual members by having an extensive selection of Al-Anon books and pamphlets for purchase, and operates as a Literature Distribution Center (LDC) serving the northern Midwest area of the United States.