

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AA AND AL-ANON

The Fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups have a unique relationship. They are naturally drawn together by their close family ties, yet the *Twelve Traditions*, the General Service Boards, and the General Service Conferences of both Fellowships suggest that they function more effectively if they remain separate, each co-operating but not affiliating with the other.

Each Fellowship has always had its own General Service Board, General Service Office, Conference, publishing company and directory, and each has established its own policies and maintained its own services. This separation of function has served both AA and Al-Anon well; as a matter of fact, AA's policy of *co-operation but not affiliation* was established as long ago as the early 1950's and both Al-Anon and AA recognised then the importance of maintaining separate Fellowships.

Nevertheless, from time to time questions come to both AA and Al-Anon General Service Offices indicating confusion as to how AA and Al-Anon may best co-operate in the area of Groups, Central Offices, Area and Regional Conventions and get-togethers. The staff members of the General Service Offices of AA and Al-Anon met and discussed these questions and AA's General Service Conference approved the following Guidelines:

Question: Should a Group be affiliated with both AA and Al-Anon?

Answer: *As the primary purpose of the AA Group is different from that of the Al-Anon Family Group, it is suggested they not be combined but remain separate groups. This will enable both Fellowships to function within their Twelve Traditions and to carry their separate (different) messages more effectively. Thus, the group name, the officers and the meeting should be either AA or Al-Anon, but not both. Naturally, all are welcome to attend the open meetings of both AA and Al-Anon Groups.*

Question: Should the word 'family' be used in the name of an AA Group?

Answer: *AA Group policy was reaffirmed, i.e. that "only those with a desire to stop drinking may be members of AA Groups and only AA members are eligible to be officers of AA Groups". It was therefore suggested that the word 'family' (long identified with Al-Anon) should not be used in the name of an AA Group.*

Question: Should AA and Al-Anon have combined central services and offices?

Answer: *Experience and the Twelve Traditions of both AA and Al-Anon have shown that each Fellowship will function more effectively if it is separate from the other. This includes separate committees, staffs and facilities for handling telephone calls, as well as separate telephone-answering services, intergroup activities, bulletins, meeting lists and Twelfth Step services of all types. Naturally, the members of any service committee or office should be members of the Fellowship to which that committee or office is responsible.*

Question: How may AA and Al-Anon co-operate in Area and Regional Conventions and get-togethers?

Answer: *In accordance with the Twelve Traditions, a Convention is either AA or Al-Anon, not both. However, most AA Convention committees invite Al-Anon to participate by planning its own programme; the Host Committee may also arrange facilities for the Al-Anon meetings.*

Question: When Al-Anon participates in an AA Convention, what is the financial relationship between the two Fellowships?

Answer: *The relationship and the financial arrangements usually follow one of two patterns: if the AA convention committee invites Al-Anon to participate with its own programme, the committee pays all expenses (for meeting rooms, coffee, etc) and keeps all income from registrations. Alternatively, attendance records of AA members and Al-Anon members may be kept separately, Al-Anon paying its own direct expenses plus a proportional share of common expenses of the convention. Al-Anon in this case receives its own share of the registration income and, of course, shares in any losses that may be incurred. This procedure is followed at International Conventions of AA and elsewhere.*

Question: Should an AA Convention Committee make a contribution to Al-Anon from the financial profits of the Convention?

Answer: *In accordance with the self-support Traditions of both Fellowships and to abide by the concept of co-operation but not affiliation, it is suggested that AA should not make gifts or contributions to Al-Anon. By the same token, AA should not accept contributions from Al-Anon. If separate registrations have been kept for both AA and Al-Anon members, income may be easily assigned.*

Question: Should 'family groups' be listed in AA directories?

Answer: *Because many such Groups had asked to be listed, this question was put on the agenda for the 1972 AA General Service Conference. The conclusion was in accord with the consensus already reached by AA and Al-Anon, as noted earlier in these Guidelines, and was recorded as follows in the 1972 Final Conference Report:*

"After discussion the Conference reaffirmed AA Group policy that only those with a desire to stop drinking may be members of AA Groups; that only AA members are eligible to be officers of AA Groups; that non-alcoholics are welcome at open meetings of AA. It is suggested that the word 'family' not be used in the name of an AA Group. If AA members and their non-alcoholic family and friends wish to meet together on a regular basis, it is suggested they consider these gatherings to be 'meetings', not AA Groups.

"Listing in AA directories: it was the sense of the meeting that the family groups should not be listed under the family group name in the directories.

"We think you will be interested in the resolution of gratitude to the Fellowship of the Al-Anon Family Groups which was unanimously approved by the 1969 General Service Conference of AA (North America):

"The delegates of this, the 19th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, meeting in official session in New York City, this 25th day of April, 1969, do hereby declare:

WHEREAS, it is the desire of this Conference to confirm the relationship between Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups, and

WHEREAS, it is the further desire of this Conference to acknowledge AA's debt of gratitude to the Al-Anon Family Groups, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that Alcoholics Anonymous recognises the special relationship which it enjoys with the Al-Anon Family Groups, a separate but similar fellowship

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Alcoholics Anonymous wishes to recognise, and hereby does recognise, the great contribution which the Al-Anon Family Groups have made and are making in assisting the families of alcoholics everywhere."