

Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Starting an Alateen Group

G-19

Starting an Alateen group is a spiritual undertaking. It takes time, commitment, the support of one or more Al-Anon groups, and patience. In order to use the Alateen name, the group must have Alateen Group Sponsors who are certified and meet all of the Area's Requirements for service to Alateen, and the Alateen meeting must be registered through your Area's Alateen process, before the first meeting. Contact your District Representative, Alateen Coordinator, or Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) for information on your Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements and your Area's process for distribution and submission of Alateen forms. Your Group Representative (GR) can provide the contact information for these trusted servants, or contact the WSO.

Who Can Start an Alateen Group?

Professionals, school personnel, A.A. members, Al-Anon members, or the teenagers themselves can *initiate the formation* of an Alateen group; however, Area-certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) are needed in order to register an Alateen group. Each Alateen group requires one or more Alateen Group Sponsors who are currently certified to be of service to Alateen through their Area Alateen certification process. Al-Anon groups that are firmly established may want to help the younger members of Al-Anon by starting an Alateen group.

Where Do We Begin?

The essentials needed to start an Alateen group are listed below. Your Area may have additional requirements, and the sequence of events may differ.

- Contact one or more Al-Anon groups for support of the Alateen group. Experience has shown that Alateen groups which meet at the same time and place as an Al-Anon or A.A. group are more successful, safer, and the Alateens have fewer transportation problems. Al-Anon groups can also support the Alateen group by encouraging members to become certified AMIAS in order to serve as regular or back up Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Decide on a location to hold the meeting (such as a school, recreation center, hospital, religious facility, or other public place), and a day and time.
- Select an appropriate name for the group. The name should be informative and inviting to newcomers. See section titled "What Name Should We Choose?"
- Contact your Area Alateen Coordinator or Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) for the Alateen Group Registration/Change form (GR-3), the Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) form, and any additional Area form(s).
- Complete the AMIAS certification and Alateen group registration process BEFORE the first meeting.
- Contact your Area Alateen Coordinator regarding Alateen Group Sponsor training.

- Follow your Area's Alateen process for being included in the district, Area, or Al-Anon Information Service meeting directories and Web sites.

What Types of Alateen Meetings Are There?

Closed meetings: All Alateen meetings are closed meetings; only Alateens and the affiliated (or substitute) Alateen Group Sponsors attend. District or Area trusted servants may occasionally attend the meeting as a resource to the group per the Area's Alateen Requirements. Potential Alateen Group Sponsors may visit Alateen groups after certification as an AMIAS, with the Alateen group's authorization. Alateen groups may also have occasional open meetings to celebrate the group's anniversary or for public outreach purposes.

Limited Access meetings: Meet at locations where the general membership may not be able to attend (such as a school or group home). Alateen Group Sponsors in limited access meetings must also be certified through their Area Alateen process in addition to complying with any facility requirements. More information on school meetings is available in the *Alateen Meetings in Schools* guideline (G-5) and *Information for the Educator: Alateen Meetings in Schools* leaflet (S-64).

What Name Should We Choose?

Most groups use a name that is either descriptive of its location, time or day of meeting, meeting purpose, or a program phrase, plus the word "Alateen." A group's name should not imply affiliation with any other twelve step group, self-help group, commercial venture, religious group, or other outside enterprise. Your group name should be inviting or informative and an attraction to potential newcomers. All Alateen groups, including those that lower the age limit, are registered as "Alateen."

Examples of Alateen group names are:

- Friday Night Alateen
- Be Excited About Recovery Alateen
- Courage To Be Me Alateen
- Woodland Hills Alateen

Who Can Sponsor an Alateen Group?

Alateen groups require Alateen Group Sponsors who are currently certified as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) through their Area's Alateen process.

Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. and meet their Area's certification and Alateen group registration requirements may sponsor an Alateen group by virtue of their Al-Anon membership. Check your Alateen Area Requirements for additional information. Anonymity regarding disclosing membership in other programs would be maintained in the Alateen meeting just as it would be in any Al-Anon meeting.

Parents who are currently certified through their Area Alateen process may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors; however, whenever possible, it is preferred that the relatives of any of the Alateen members attending the group not sponsor the group.

How Do We Find Alateen Group Sponsors?

Ask nearby Al-Anon groups if they would be willing to support the group by providing Alateen Group Sponsors. Contact your District Representative and Area Alateen Coordinator for assistance and information about the Area Alateen Requirements and Alateen Group Sponsor training. If there are other Alateen groups nearby, ask if Alateen Group Sponsors and Alateens from that group would be willing to share about Alateen and Alateen group sponsorship at Al-Anon meetings or events.

How Do We Register our Group?

Contact your District Representative, Area Alateen Coordinator, or AAPP to obtain the Alateen Group Registration/Change form. Complete the form and submit through your Area process. All service positions listed on the form (Current Mailing Address [CMA], Contacts, and Alateen Group Sponsors) must be currently certified AMIAS in the Area(s) in which they reside and serve.

What Can We Expect from our District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), and Area?

- The district, AIS, and Area can help identify eligible Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Districts may be able to help locate Area-certified AMIAS to serve as backup Alateen Group Sponsors when the regular Group Sponsor(s) is not available.
- Districts may provide assistance in getting start-up literature for the meeting.
- District Representatives and/or Area Alateen Coordinators can be called for help if a problem arises. It is also a good idea to invite these trusted servants to your meeting once or twice a year to keep in contact.
- Areas provide information about workshops and training for AMIAS.
- Districts, AISs, and Areas may publish a meeting directory and/or list meetings on a Web site.

What Can We Expect from the World Service Office (WSO)?

Registration with the WSO insures a connection with Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide. Only groups registered with the WSO can use the Alateen name. The WSO toll-free meeting line refers callers to your meeting.

Alateen groups receive*:

- New groups receive a series of three packets filled with a variety of information, suggestions for meeting topics, meeting format, information for Alateen Group Sponsors, sample Alateen literature, and service materials, including *Al-Anon Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24)
- A free copy of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and other service tools
- The quarterly Alateen publication *Alateen Talk*, and forms for sending in sharings
- All mailings sent to Al-Anon groups, including the monthly *Forum* magazine, the *Group e-News* newsletter, and the Quarterly Appeal Letter
- An annual group update form sent to help keep your group information current
- Access to information and publications on the Al-Anon/Alateen Members' Web Site

*Mailings are sent to the Current Mailing Address (CMA) listed on the Alateen Group Registration/Change form. The *Group e-News* is sent via e-mail to the CMA. New group packets are sent at initial registration, six months later and around the one-year anniversary.

How Can We Attract New Members?

- Use the service structure (Area/district/AIS) as much as you can. Announce the meeting at local district and AIS meetings, and at local events, such as anniversaries.
- Ask nearby Al-Anon and A.A. groups to announce your meeting and to bring their children. It helps if the Alateen group has a flyer with the name, location, day and time, and an Alateen Group Sponsor's first name and number as a contact for information.
- Ask your Area/district/AIS Public Outreach Coordinators for assistance.
- List the meeting in the local paper. Many papers list the meetings for free in the local events column.
- Provide information about the meeting to local schools. Ask for help from an Al-Anon group to contact the school's special assistance counselors.

Remember - Alateen behavior at meetings, conventions, round-ups, Assemblies, etc. can attract or turn away potential members or their families.

Additional Guidelines for Alateen groups

- Alateen Safety Guideline* (G-34)
- Members Interested In Speaking* (G-1)
- Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b)
- Alateen Meetings in Schools* (G-5)

The Alateen Group is the heart of the Alateen program !

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