

ALATEEN GROUP SPONSORSHIP/ WSO TRAINING MODULES

Module I: OVERVIEW OF ALATEEN

WHO IS WITH OUR KIDS??????

Becoming an AMIAS (Alateen Member Involved in Alateen Service):

REQUIRED FORMS:

1. Alateen Group Sponsor Application (signature must be notarized)
2. Al-Anon Members Involved In Alateen Service Form – Mailed to & signed by the AAPP
3. Three letters of reference from members who know you well.
4. Applicants must agree to abide by the Maine Area (#23) ALATEEN MINIMUM SAFETY and BEHAVIORAL REQUIREMENTS

Can prospective Alateen Group Sponsors attend Alateen meetings as “guests?” **NO.** Members must go through the certification process in order to be in the Area’s pool of potential Alateen Group Sponsors.

Al-Anon members who are not eligible for certification can support Alateen by participating in outreach projects or helping to plan an event with Alateen participation.

Al-Anon Groups: Supportive Al-Anon groups are essential to Alateen. Alateens are members of the Al-Anon fellowship. Where there is no Alateen meeting available, young people are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings (Service Manual Pg. 77)

Various roles for AMIAS:

1. Alateen Group Sponsors
2. Temporary substitute sponsors
3. Chaperones/transportation providers
4. Al-Anon members showing support for Alateen, who are willing to help as needed

Trusted Servants in the Alateen Area Process:

- **Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP):** Contact person between WSO Group Records and the Area. He/she processes Alateen Sponsor applications, Alateen Group registrations and is responsible for record keeping.
- **Area Alateen Coordinator:** The channel of communication on all other matters pertaining to Alateen. He/she holds Alateen training workshops, assists Districts/Alateen chairs in Districts with starting of new Alateen groups and maintains a list of Alateen sponsors who are available to sponsor.

1.

Starting an Alateen Group:

- Obtain WSO Guideline: Starting An Alateen Group (G-19) for guidance
- Read Maine Area Behavioral Requirements
- See Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34)
- **ALATEEN GROUPS CANNOT MEET UNTIL THEY ARE REGISTERED**

Registering an Alateen Group:

- Two Certified Alateen Sponsors must be listed.
- There must be a contact person for the group and a CMA (Current Mailing Address).
- CMA & contacts for all Alateen groups must be Certified Alateen Sponsors.
- WSO will only register groups through the Area process:
- In Maine **All forms** for certification of Alateen Group Sponsors and Alateen Group Registrations **must** go through the AAPP, including any changes in Alateen group information i.e. change of time, date, meeting place, change of Alateen sponsor listed on the Alateen Group Registration Form.)

Alateen Resources: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

District/Area Trusted Servants:

District Representative: _____

District Alateen Chair: _____

Area Alateen Coordinator: _____

Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP): ***Sandy F. 799-8217 altdelegate@maineafg.org

Area Officers: Area Chair: ***Melissa F. chair@maineafg.org

Alateen Sponsor Workshops ***These terms end on Dec.31, 2013

WSO (World Service Office)

Staff

Guidelines/Service Tools

Members' Web Site

WSO Guidelines:

Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34)

Starting An Alateen Group (G-19)

Alateen Meetings in Schools (G-5)

Alateen Conferences (G-16)

Area Alateen Coordinators (G-24)

2.

AMIAS SAFETY CHECKLIST:

- Work their own Al-Anon program and participate in local/area Al-Anon & Alateen events
- Avoid one-on-one interactions with Alateens
- Know when to step down as an Alateen Group Sponsor
- Attend District meetings and Area Assemblies whenever possible
- Participate in Alateen Sponsor Workshops
- Stay informed – connect with the Area Alateen Coordinator
- Use all of your resources
- Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else.....

Module II: THE ALATEEN MEETING:

ALATEEN IS: part of Al-Anon Family Groups, a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend

ALATEEN IS NOT: a program for young people seeking sobriety (a common misconception in the outside world)

Both Alateens and Alateen group Sponsors have been affected by the disease of alcoholism and are in Al-Anon & Alateen to recover. As an Al-Anon member, an Alateen Group Sponsor has much to offer Alateen members. The Alateens take responsibility for their meetings; the Alateen Group Sponsor's role is to provide direction and to keep the focus on the Al-Anon/Alateen program. The Alateen Group Sponsor does not facilitate the meetings, but supports and encourages the Alateens to take responsibility for their own meetings.

Responsibility Statement: "Al-Anon members Involved in Alateen Service are to provide direction to assure that emphasis is placed on the Al-Anon program of recovery and, to the best of their ability, maintain an atmosphere that will protect the Alateen members from physical and emotional harm." From WSO Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34)

Age of Alateens: Alateen groups are usually for young people ages 13 to 18. However, groups have the autonomy to accept members younger than teen years if they have the maturity to participate in an hour-long Alateen meeting as a shared learning experience. "Teaching" is not compatible with the Al-Anon principle of sharing.

Some parents will look for meetings for **very young children**; experience suggests that the best way for parents to help their children is to go to Al-Anon themselves. (Helpful pamphlet: How Can I Help My Children? (P-19) **All** Alateen meetings, regardless of age range, will be called "Alateen."

Alateen Group Sponsors:

- Coach the Alateen members to chair the meeting and to be responsible for the group
- Listen: Learn when to be quiet and when to share
- May find it helpful to ask one or two questions to help Alateens find their own solutions
- Treat Alateens with respect and courtesy, set limits and don't accept unacceptable behavior

3.

- Work with each other as a team to sponsor the meeting
- Share recovery with Alateens; Alateen Group Sponsors share their personal problems with their personal Al-Anon sponsor or Al-Anon groups, **not** with the Alateens
- As in Al-Anon, it is not our place to give advice when Alateens share their problems
- Alateen sponsors do not operate as trained professionals. Our only common ground is that we are persons who have been affected by the disease of alcoholism
- We cannot give away what we do not have. We continue to go to Al-Anon meetings for our own recovery

NEW ALATEEN GROUPS:

- When a group is new, the members will need assistance from the Alateen Group Sponsors to become comfortable chairing meetings and presenting topics for discussion.
- Once a group is established, members then can be encouraged to elect group officers, including a GR and to attend District and Area meetings.
- Periodically, have discussions about anonymity and confidentiality ...a reminder to let what is said in the meeting, stay in the meeting.
- If parents ask questions of Alateen Sponsors – refer them directly to their child.
- Parents need to know that Alateen is a safe place for their child. Be sure to include parents in an annual open meeting (whenever possible)

ALATEEN AND THE LAW:

- Alateens should be made aware of mandatory reporting laws, so that they can make informed decisions about what they choose to share in the meeting.
- In all Maine Area Alateen meetings, a statement should be read as part of the opening before sharing begins. Things said at the meeting are confidential except that Alateen sponsors are required to report when a teen shares that they feel like hurting themselves or someone else or if they say that they are being abused.
- If an Alateen mentions something that should be reported, the first thing Alateen sponsors would want to do is talk with the Alateen after the meeting and encourage them to speak with a trusted adult (teacher/clergy/extended family etc.) If they won't and you feel it should be reported, either report it anonymously or as a private citizen – do not involve Al-Anon or Alateen.

TOPICS/FORMAT IDEAS:

- Groups at Work (P-24) which is also in the Service Manual Pg. 24-27
- Conference Approved Literature, Alateen Talk, The Forum, E-Cal
- Steps, Slogans, Traditions
- Alateen stories and articles about recovery are always needed for WSO publications.....writing can be good use of meeting time

4.

ALATEEN MEETINGS IN SCHOOLS:

- See the WSO Guideline: Alateen Meetings in Schools (G-6)
- See Pamphlet: Information for the Educator: Alateen Meetings in Schools (S-64)

Module III ALATEEN EVENTS

TYPES OF EVENTS:

- District/local events
- Area Assemblies/other service meetings
- Al-Anon/Alateen Conventions
- AA Conventions with Alateen Participation
- Alateen Conferences

EVENT GUIDELINES:

- **The Area Safety & Behavioral Requirements** apply to all events that use the Alateen name. Safety & Behavioral Requirements at events must meet or exceed Area Safety & Behavioral Requirements.
- **The event** must have a **connection** to the Area/District in which it is held.
- **Alateens** must be in the **care** of Area Certified AMIAS at all times.
- **The event** must have a **plan for implementing** and **adhering** to the Area Requirements.
- **There must be verification** that any participating AMIAS are currently **certified**.
- **A WSO ID number** is **not** proof of certification. Every individual who has business with the WSO has an ID # (for example: a subscription to the Forum). **Verification** of AMIAS' certification must be obtained from the Maine AAPP (Area Alateen Process Person).
- **For information** regarding **permission** forms/forms for **medical emergency** in Maine, see Maine Area Safety and Behavioral Guidelines #10.
- **When parents or guardians** bring Alateens to an event, they are responsible for them.
- **References for planning events:** Alateen Conferences Guideline (G-16) / Alateen Safety Guidelines: (G-34) - *** **Maine Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements:** See #10

Module IV Part A: DEALING WITH ALATEEN CHALLENGES: (There will be challenges)

Know Your Resources

People:

- Other Alateen Group Sponsors (AMIAS)
- District Alateen Chair/District Representative
- Area Alateen Coordinator/AAPP/Area Delegate/Area Chair
- WSO
- Members of supportive Al-Anon group
- Service Sponsor

5.

Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools:

- Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)
- Al-Anon/Alateen Guidelines
- Alateen – Hope for Children of Alcoholics (B-3)

- Twelve Steps and Traditions for Alateen (P-18)
- World Service Conference Summary (P-46)
- How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics (B-24)

TOOLS WE CAN USE:

- Encourage Alateen groups to study the Traditions and how they apply to the group & Alateen events
- Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL)
- Taking a Group Inventory Guideline (G-8), group discussions and voting
- Use your links of service (DR, District Alateen Chair, Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Chair & other trusted servants)
- Whenever possible, involve the Alateen group in the solution
- Talk to each other – use your resources

Types of Challenges:

SAFETY ISSUES:

- Matters of physical safety are not negotiable/dangerous behavior cannot be tolerated
- Alateen Group Sponsors have the responsibility to insure that the meeting is a safe place. “Engaging in rough housing, fighting, overt or covert sexual behavior or any other inappropriate activity before, during or after meetings or events can put your group in a dangerous position.” (Alateen Safety Guidelines, G-34)
- Be familiar with your Area Alateen Requirements, Area Process and local laws
- Research local resources and hotline phone numbers that could help a child with a dangerous or abusive situation (in Maine = Ingraham Volunteers, 211).
- Safety requirements can be enforced by the group as well as the Alateen Sponsors

LEGAL ISSUES:

- Mandatory Reporting: Discussed previously—see **Alateen and the Law** (pg. 4)
- By informing the Alateens of applicable laws, they have a choice in what they share.
- References: 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34)
- When thinking of reporting:

- Start by discussing the matter with the Area Alateen Coordinator/DR or other trusted servants
- Before reporting, discuss your intentions with the Alateen member

6.

- Follow advice of legal counsel regarding keeping identities anonymous since accusations of child abuse are defamatory and could lead to claims of libel and slander.
- Any reporting is done as an individual or anonymously, not as an Alateen Group Sponsor in order to keep the Alateen fellowship from public controversy.
- The confidentiality of sharing in Al-Anon and Alateen meetings has no legal standing.

KEEP THE FOCUS ON SAFETY:

- Transport Alateens in a group and with another adult
- Do not transport Alateens without parental permission
- Obtain permission/medical care forms when required
- Be gender and number conscious
- Avoid one-on-one interactions with Alateen members for their safety and yours
- Treat Alateens with respect
- Demonstrate Al-Anon principles with what you say and do
- Do not accept unacceptable behavior:
 - Use “I” messages
 - Don’t be afraid to ask a disruptive Alateen to leave the meeting
 - Ask for help from other AMIAS
 - Identify what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior before the meeting or event
 - If the Alateen group sets its own behavioral guidelines, they will be more willing to abide by them

POSSIBLE GROUP BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS:

- Dominating the discussion in meetings

- Rudeness
- Getting off topic
- Lack of self-discipline
- Age differences
- Siblings: are asked to be peers in the meeting, keep family rivalry out of the group, keep each other's confidences

ADDRESSING PROBLEMS IN THE ALATEEN GROUP:

- Group members and sponsors can ask disruptive behavior to stop
- The issue can be discussed by the group if the behavior continues
- The group can discuss adding to their behavioral guidelines including actions to take with violators (example: use of cell phone/texting during meeting)
- Start with the Serenity Prayer, share the problem in a general way, invite discussion
- Encourage the Alateen and Group Sponsors to apply the traditions to the situation and stick to Al-Anon principles

7.

- The group may decide that a group inventory would be helpful: this can help to prevent problems, identify them and find solutions
- Giving the Alateens responsibility for their meeting or event can deepen their commitment to upholding behavior requirements
- Discuss "taking an informed group conscience" with the group
- After discussion and the vote, the group honors the opinion of the majority

MODULE IV - PART B TYPES OF CHALLENGES

CONFLICTS:

- Conflict can occur in any group and dealing with it can make the group and individuals stronger
- Can be conflict between Alateen members and an Alateen Group Sponsor, or between two Group Sponsors or two Alateens
- Just as challenges are part of life, so is conflict

PROCESS FOR RESOLUTION:

Conflict between Alateens and a Sponsor

- Encourage open discussion in the group. Stress “Principles above personalities”
- The group can ask their DR, Area Alateen Coordinator, or other trusted servant to be part of the discussion. An impartial party may provide a new perspective
- The sponsor may step down for a time – know when to step down as a sponsor

Conflict between Alateen Group Sponsors

- Personality conflicts
- Difference in style of sponsoring
- Dominating the group and other Alateen Group Sponsors
 - o Use your resources
 - o Talk with your District Rep, Area Alateen Coordinator, other trusted servants
 - o We may not like or get along well with everyone, but we love each other “in a very special way”

Some conflicts are with the Area Alateen Process

- Use of the Alateen name requires compliance with Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. **This is not optional.**
- The Area Alateen Coordinator, AAPP (Area Alateen Process Person) and Delegate are the contacts for Area Process questions

Alateens and Difficult Situations

- **Topics Alateens could bring up**
 - o Living with physical violence
 - o Running away
 - o Peer pressure
 - o Abuse
 - o Sex and sexuality
 - o Suicide
- **Behaviors you might notice**

- Fidgeting or moving around
- Crying
- Seeming angry or confused
- Doodling
 - Unless they are putting themselves or others in danger, don't worry about these activities
 - As Sponsors we listen, listen, listen
 - As Sponsors we bring the focus back to the message of Tradition Eleven & Twelve while imparting the wisdom of our own experience, strength and hope.
- **Difficult Situations – When you encounter tough stuff, what can Alateen Group Sponsors do?**
 - Let the Alateen talk about it. Encourage members to find their own solutions.
 - Suggest meeting topics – General discussion on coping with violence or coping with anger.
 - Know your local laws/Area policy on mandatory reporting. Keep a list of community resources.
 - Talk to other Alateen Group Sponsors and your Service Sponsor. Share your concern without violating the Alateen's anonymity.
 - Encourage Alateens to have a "safe" person to turn to – a relative, counselor, teacher or neighbor.
 - Help them to come up with options for themselves.
- **Detaching from things you hear in Alateen**
 - Alateens may share family matters that are disturbing. Remember they are only sharing one side of the story. Sponsors should not place themselves between the child and the parent. Listen with love. We do not need to take sides.
 - Alateen Group Sponsor's role is not to "fix" each Alateen's problems.
 - Alateen meetings and events are a safe haven for the Alateens
 - AMIAS need to keep their focus on their own recovery and not let other's problems become overwhelming.
 - Talk with other Alateen Group Sponsors, your Personal/Service Sponsor and trusted servants – don't try to handle difficult situations alone.
 - References: Detachment (S-19) A Guide For Sponsors of Alateen Groups (P-29)

- **Avoiding Sponsor Burnout**

- Attend additional Al-Anon meetings
- Attend or chair a meeting on “laughter!”
- Attend Alateen Sponsor meetings
- Use your Personal and Service Sponsors

9.

- Put your emotional and spiritual needs first
- Take a break from sponsoring

- **Interactions With Parents – Be prepared to answer questions such as:**

- How can I get my child to attend?
- Can I stay at the meeting with my child?
- How is the meeting run?
- Will they talk about me?
- Will you counsel them personally?
- Does my child participate?

- Stress how Al-Anon can help the parent.

- Give them literature

- What parents need to know:

- When to use permission forms
- Let them know the safety procedures for the meeting or event
- Reference: [How Can I Help My Children?](#) (P-9)

- **When Parents Ask Questions**

- Alateen recovery is about learning to keep the focus on oneself, just as Al-Anon members do
- Alateen Group Sponsors and Alateens are bound by our Tradition of Anonymity. In the same way, we respect parents’ confidentiality and do not share what they say with the Alateen member.

- Never come between a child and their parent or undermine the parent's authority. The parents' decisions must be adhered to, whether you agree with them or not.
- Stress with teens the importance of NOT talking about the meeting at home.
- "Sponsors can stress the importance of anonymity, not only for the parents, but for all members of Al-Anon, Alateen, and AA." From: A Guide for Sponsors of Alateen Groups (P-29)

ANONYMITY - Challenges of Technology

- It is Al-Anon/Alateen policy to interpret Tradition Eleven to include the Internet as well as all forms of evolving public media.
- "We maintain our anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV and film because no one person is authorized to be a spokesperson for Alateen." From: Alateen-Hope for Children of Alcoholics (B-3)
- "On any web site accessible to the public, whether an Al-Anon site or not, members' full names and faces are not posted if they are identified as Al-Anon/Alateen members." From: 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) Pg. 88.
- For the safety of our Alateens, we never post Alateen phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or any other identifying information.
- Any contacts for an Alateen event posted online should be Area-Certified AMIAS. Reference: Guideline for Al-Anon Web Sites (G-40)

10.

Financial Challenges

- Group Finances

- It is the goal of every Al-Anon/Alateen group to be "fully self-supporting" Tradition 7
- Within Al-Anon/Alateen, members and groups help each other to attain the goal of self-support
- Discussion of Tradition Seven in Alateen groups is helpful

- Alateen Conference Expenses or (Maine Area Convention)

- Attending Alateen conferences is an individual expense. Alateens participate in paying for their attendance whenever possible. (Alateen Conference Guideline G-16)
- Alateens should be encouraged to plan their own fundraising activities and to ask the Al-Anon District/Area for help (or their sponsoring Al-Anon group)

- The Alateen Conference Guideline (G-16) provides shared experience on local/Area Alateen event fundraising.
- **Applying the Traditions in Alateen meetings/events and in Alateen service**
 - Study of the Traditions can:
 - Help solve problems
 - Help the Alateens understand the principles of anonymity and self-support
 - References: Alateen-Hope for Children of Alcoholics (B-3) Twelve Steps and Traditions for Alateen (P-18)
- **The challenge of attracting teens to the group**
 - Getting the word out about Alateen is an ongoing challenge
 - Work with AA, Area Alateen Coordinator, District, Public Outreach contact
 - Plan Public Outreach for
 - Al-Anon groups
 - AA Groups
 - Schools
 - Community
 - Local events (health fairs, etc.)
 - Professionals
 - Have an annual open meeting and invite Al-Anon groups, AA Groups, local professionals, general public.

Module IV Part C Dealing with Challenges

Area Alateen Process

- See Maine Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements
- Alateen Groups must promptly update their group information whenever a change is made.
- *** **A change in Sponsor** or **CMA** (current mailing address) must be updated **immediately**, as groups do not qualify for registration without active AMIAS in these roles.
- Re-certification: See Maine Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements (#3)

11.

Supportive Al-Anon Groups:

- Are a source of certified AMIAS as backup Alateen Group Sponsors
- Welcome teens to their meeting
- Let the group know that Alateen is available
- Encourage members to bring their children to Alateen
- See Responsibilities of Groups = Maine Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements (#5)

“Before recovery can take place, an environment of trust and safety must exist. It is the responsibility of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole to work together to maintain a healthy, loving, and supportive environment.”
From: Alateen Safety Guidelines” (G-34)

SAFETY/LEGAL ISSUES

FINDING THE BALANCE AMONG CONCEPT THREE AND TRADITIONS TWO AND FOUR

“Concept Three tells us the right of decision makes effective Alateen Group sponsorship possible: ***Within the framework of their job description***, it should be traditional for Alateen Group Sponsors to decide which matters they may handle on their own, and which they will report, consult, or ask specific direction.” WSO Module IV - Part A

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