

Task Force – “Meeting Types”

The charge is: **Develop a list of potential types of meetings that meet a variety of group needs while remaining consistent with Al-Anon Legacies. Then develop a workshop to assist a group in determining the type of meeting that is acceptable to the group conscience, while encouraging the use of *Groups at Work* and Conference Approved Literature by group members.**

Our Conference Approved Literature provides information on many types of meetings that groups can have. This should always be the first resource when determining the type of meeting a group should establish.

| Guidelines | <i>Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual/ Groups at Work</i> |
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| <i>Beginners’ Meeting (G-2)</i> | “How to Start a Group” p. 30 |
| <i>Cooperation Between Al-Anon and A.A. (G-3)</i> | “Things to Consider When Starting an Al-Anon or Alateen Group” p. 34 |
| <i>Alateen Meetings in Schools (G-5)</i> | “Starting an Electronic Al-Anon Meeting” p. 38 |
| <i>Starting an Al-Anon Group (G-12)</i> | “Meeting Ideas” p. 43 |
| <i>Services in Correctional Facilities (G-14)</i> | “Membership and Groups/Meetings” p. 83 |
| <i>A Meeting on Wheels (G-22)</i> | |
| <i>The Open Al-Anon Meeting (G-27)</i> | |
| <i>Electronic Al-Anon Meeting Guideline (G-39)</i> | |

However, there are times when meetings need to be “non-traditional” in order to meet the needs of individual members or the group as a whole. The following are some suggestions for other types of meetings. (This list is not meant to be all-inclusive. All meetings should be consistent with Al-Anon Legacies.)

1. Brown bag – For breakfast, lunch, or dinnertime meetings. Attendees are encouraged to bring their meal and eat during the meeting.
2. Technology-assisted Meetings – Member’s choice or for homebound members due to illness/accidents, shut-ins, lone members (those who live a distance from face-to-face meetings), or members who are traveling or living outside of the country. An alternative to face-to-face meetings.
 - a. Telephone Meetings (one-on-one).
 - b. Registered Group Meetings with electronic connection (audio and/or video).
3. Homebound Member Meeting - Available members hold a meeting in home for temporarily ill or shut-in members.
4. Stand up Meeting – May be an informal, brief, and spontaneous pick-up meeting at a place of work, business, etc., or a registered group that meets regularly for a short time (i.e. 30 minutes). It is “stand-up” because the meeting is short enough for members to stand around and talk.
5. Roving Meetings (type A) – A group that regularly schedules its meeting at a different set location on a rotating basis. This will be clearly printed in meeting lists, where and when each meeting occurs.
6. Roving Meetings (type B) – A group that changes location with no particular set pattern. Meeting lists would be published on an Internet site where members could go to find the meeting location (like the way food truck vendors advertise their locations on a daily basis).
7. Transient Meetings – Meeting held on college campuses that will have a transient membership as the result of changing class schedules. This type of meeting could also be considered for shelters, subsidized housing projects, etc. (These meetings may or may not be LIMITED ACCESS.)
8. Special Language Needs Meetings – These meetings, although they may be considered closed meetings, welcome the attendance of interpreters. These interpreters could be sign language or spoken language.
9. Family-Friendly Meetings (for families with children of any age that can’t be left at home) – Meetings where any family member, regardless of age is welcome. Younger children may need a quiet activity, but older children may participate. (The meeting location would need to confirm that there were no liability issues.)

10. Meeting in a bus – Meetings for Families living in dangerous situations (where their activities are monitored). A bus would go around and pick up members. The meeting would actually be held in transit. When members got dropped off, they could have a shopping bag. (Ok, it's a little out there, but we have been asked to dream.)
11. Seasonal Meetings – If the members of a group are not in the area the entire year, the meeting may become inactive during the time when everyone is away, and then reactivate when they return.
12. Identified Need Location Meetings – A group that meets at a location where Al-Anon members have identified a potential need. (e.g. Women's Shelters, Community Room of a low income rental complex, etc.)

Supplementary ideas for variations in conducting a meeting from meeting opening to meeting closing.

1. *Groups at Work* for each member to use at meetings.
2. Literature Discussion Meeting – Chair chooses topic and provides readings from CAL.
 - a. Circle Meeting – Reading and sharing starts in a circle to the right or left of the Chair (**Pros:** Often members who rarely speak will share in this format / **Cons:** If a member is at the end of the circle and needs to speak, they may not have the opportunity if time runs out/could extend meeting if group conscience agrees.)
 - b. Raise hands to share – Chair calls on members' raised hands to share (**Pros:** Member who needs to share may be more likely to have the opportunity / **Cons:** Some members are reluctant to raise their hand to share.)
 - c. Tag Meeting – Each member who shares chooses the next member to share, starting with the Chairperson (**Pros:** It provides a fun variety for a meeting / **Cons:** This can feel like grade school if you are last to be chosen.)
 - d. Slip of paper – Chair chooses readings (topic/slogans, etc.) and copies on slips of paper – basket is passed and each member chooses one slip or Chair can pass an envelope.
 - e. Pick-a-Stick – Place tongue depressors in a cup with slogans or feelings for members to choose and share.
3. Legacy Meeting – Meeting topic is Step, Tradition, or Concept of the month. CAL literature is read regarding the specific Legacy, then the entire meeting discussion is focused on that Legacy.
4. Slogan Meeting – Chair chooses a slogan or slogans, provides readings from CAL / members read and share
5. Member Anniversary meetings:
 - a. Anniversary Meeting: members celebrate their number of years in Al-Anon; focus of sharing is member's choice.
 - b. "Birthday" meeting: celebration of member's Al-Anon birthday with cake; members celebrate the number of years in the program and share their most recent year of recovery.
6. Group Anniversary Meeting, i.e.:
 - a. Can circulate fliers within the fellowship, have speakers (Al-Anon/Alateen/A.A.), provide refreshments
 - b. Speaker first hour, followed by Public Outreach Forum; listing of program distributed to professionals, (Can provide Professional Packets).
7. Meeting by cell phone – Including ill or housebound member by passing a cell phone during the meeting.
8. Service – Chair provides readings on Service / Members share on reading and/or their experience, strength and hope around Service as a Recovery Tool.
9. Sponsorship
 - a. Personal sponsorship
 - b. Service sponsorship
10. Group Inventory at regular intervals determined by the group.
11. Seasonal Meetings:
 - a. Summer:
 - i. Meetings in the Park, daytime or after dark.
 - ii. Evening campfire meetings.
 - iii. Chili cook-offs.
 - b. Winter:
 - i. Candlelight meetings – topics can be more personal.

- ii. Soup and Bread Meetings – Have member bring a big pot of soup and others bring rolls, biscuits, cheese sticks, or disposable bowls, plastic tableware, and napkins. It is a good way to bring people together.
- c. Spring:
Have members bring spring blooms and fill a vase. Have suggested sharings on typed pieces of paper for members to draw from. After they share, they can add their bloom to the vase on the table. Watch it grow in beauty. A name can be drawn at the end of the meeting to receive the bouquet.
- d. Fall:
A romp in the leaves to someone's front porch for a topic meeting. Hot chocolate and donuts.
Alphabet Soup Meeting – Each member chooses a letter of the alphabet from a bowl; use the index in our CAL to choose a topic starting with that letter, and share on that topic.

In summary, it is up to each group to determine what type of meeting will best fit the needs of the group, the members and potential members. There are no “rules.” However, meetings should be held in welcoming, convenient, and economical locations. Although churches are popular locations, if possible hold meetings in neutral locations, such as mall community rooms, hospitals, libraries, or schools. And meetings can be held at any time or day of the week.