

For our Newcomers

Here are a few things to keep in mind at your first meeting...

- If you are concerned about someone's drinking, you may attend ANY Al-Anon meeting. While some groups choose to have certain Attendees selected, they will welcome anyone looking for help. Please refer to our tri-fold Meeting Schedule in your Newcomer Packet for a list of meetings or wa-al-anon.org.
- Al-Anon is a mutual support group. Everyone at the meeting shares as an equal. No one is in a position to give advice or direction to anyone else. Everyone at the meeting has experienced a problem with someone else's drinking.
- You are free to ask questions or to talk more deeply about your situation after the meeting with any of the members. During the meeting, when members are sharing, if you'd rather just listen, you can say "I pass," or explain that you'd just like to listen.
- Every meeting is different. Each meeting has the autonomy to be run as its members choose, within guidelines designed to promote Al-Anon unity. Al-Anon recommends that you try at least six different meetings here or elsewhere before you decide if Al-Anon will be helpful to you.
- Al-Anon is not a religious program. Even when the meeting is held in a religious center, the local Al-Anon group pays rent to that center and is not affiliated in any way with any religious group. Your religious beliefs —or lack of them— are not a subject for discussion at Al-Anon meetings, which focus solely on coping with the effects of someone's drinking.
- It will take some time to fully understand the significance of anonymity to the Al-Anon program. But at its simplest level, anonymity means that the people in the room respect the confidentiality of what you say and won't approach you outside the room in a way that compromises your privacy or the privacy of anyone who attended an Al-Anon meeting.
- The meeting will likely begin with a reading of the Twelve Steps of Al-Anon. It will take some time to fully understand how the Twelve Steps can be a helpful tool in recovering from the effects of someone's drinking. But Al-Anon gives you the opportunity to grow at your own pace.

Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics.