

An Area Helping

Hand :



Suggestions for Health Fairs/Professional Conventions, Conferences, and Symposiums

This is a document of suggestions. Please be creative and include your style of depicting Al-Anon Family Groups as a resource for hope and recovery. The Area presents this to you as a tool to guide you in preparing for a health fair or other professional events. It is written based on member experience. Take what you like and leave the rest.

Although we are not professionals, it is important to represent Al-Anon Family Groups with an image of respect and pride. Imagine your display pictured on the front page of the local newspaper. We hope that happens and that you and your Virginia Area Al-Anon Family groups will be proud of how you have presented Al-Anon and Alateen to the general public.

Area Display Unit – “Alcoholism Shatters Lives”

The Area now owns a beautiful display unit, which is available to all Districts for use in health fairs and professional events. The display unit can be seen on our Area web site www.va-al-anon.org. It has two panels, one in English and one in Spanish. It can be used as a floor unit or a tabletop display. The tabletop display is achieved by reducing the height of the panels. The panels work like window shades. They are simply pulled out of the base and attached to a tall upright pole. When the pole is shortened, the panels become about half as tall, which makes it a perfect table display.

To acquire the display unit for a District event, have the District Representative (DR) contact the Area Public Outreach Coordinator to be certain the unit is available for the date needed. The Area Public Outreach Coordinator will contact the DR to confirm the display unit availability and the shipping costs. Then the DR will complete an order form (that can be downloaded from the Area Public Outreach web site page found at, www.va-al-anon.org) and send it to the Area PO Coordinator with a check to cover the shipping cost.

The Area will use an account with a shipping service that will deliver the display unit to the designated address and pick it up from that address. The unit can be shipped to any address within the Area, only if it is ordered by the DR for District use.

Included with the unit are instructions on how to set up the display unit and any necessary shipping or packing directions. Also included is a copy of this document.

Who can participate in a Health Fair or Professional event?

Any Al-Anon member. It is suggested that the member/s be familiar with the Service Manual, literature, and attends Al-Anon regularly. First things first – it is suggested that a member who knows about a health fair or professional event work with the District Representative and or District Public Outreach Coordinator. This keeps all the links of service informed.

How do Health Fairs or Professional events come about?

Frequently they come about by invitation directly to the District as a result of previous Public Outreach service. The Area or the World Service Office may also direct invitations to the District.

Is it all right to ask folks to include us if they have an event that would be appropriate for Al-Anon participation?

Yes. The hope is that the Districts and Groups will be pro-active and approach folks that could benefit by our presence at their health related events. *Examples are federal, state, and municipal alcoholism agencies; private health agencies, law enforcement, judicial, and correctional agencies and institutions; general hospitals and state, county, or city mental hospitals; councils of churches, doctors, nurses, clergymen, social workers, educators.* Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual, p.99, footnote.

What do I need to know ahead of time?

- Where it will be held?
- When does the event start?
- Length of the event?
- When can you set up your display?
- What fees are required?
- Number of attendees so you can plan on handouts, etc?
- What will be provided, for example: table (how big, round or long), chairs, tablecloth, etc.?

How do I dress?

We know how Al-Anon/Alateen members hate musts. So the following are “suggestions!” Basically use common sense. But, for those who like a little more direction because they want to be appropriate, the following might help:

Remember we are invited guests. Men in sports coat and slacks and women in suits/blazers show respect and send a message that they are taking the event seriously.



In place of a sports coat or suit, men may want to consider a dress shirt and slacks and for women a white blouse and black skirt or slacks. Wear comfortable shoes, but please leave the sneaks home.

Please stand next to or in front of the display table. Take turns with a co-volunteer sitting down to rest. The worst thing to do is to sit as if hiding out behind the table. Standing, ready to greet people with a smile, a handshake or an offer of candy are actions paramount to how many people will interact with Al-Anon volunteers. Another option is to stand in front of the table and handout a piece of literature to each person. Some will refuse....that is ok....the person that really wanted to stop by but was embarrassed to do so, now has a piece of literature in his or her hand.

A lesson in humility

Remember alcoholism still has a stigma. People will tell you how much they don't need your help because “that” is not a problem in their lives. Folks may even tell you how little they drink missing the message that Al-Anon is for friends and families of alcoholic people. Denial and fear may be an indicator of some reactions. Results of our hard work are often illusive. But, when a professional comes to your booth and tells you how they respect and refer folks to Al-Anon and Alateen, or when someone tells you that Al-Anon saved their lives or their marriage those other moments don't seem so important.

When attendees do show interest, answer any question they might have and point out to them which literature they may have for free. Then ask for their business card and explain that they will receive a “thank you for stopping by” literature packet...or bookmarks or whatever the District agrees the thank you should be. If available, reciprocate with an Al-Anon “business card.” (See supplies) This is a grand time to practice not taking things personally. *People that don’t shake your hand or say hello have done that to many others before you!*

Is The District Ready?

Accepting an invitation to participate in a Health Fair or Professional event will depend on how much money your District Budget has allowed for Public Outreach. The Public Outreach Coordinator or District Representative, when there is no Coordinator, can propose a budget amount for health fair/professional conferences, etc. start up costs to be approved in the next year’s budget.

The District may not be able to say yes to this year’s invitation. Keep the contact’s name, address and telephone number along with the dates or time the event will take place next year. Call the contact approximately four months before the projected date to ask to be included in the event.

Generating seed money

Districts can agree to raise funds for Public Outreach Health Fairs and Professional Conferences. One suggestion is to take coffee cans and wrap them with construction paper. Mark them with the project’s name suggesting extra change contributions and distribute them to the District groups to be placed in the middle of the meeting table. The GRs will be the District’s “salespeople for extra change contributions” so provide them with the necessary information, which will enable the GRs to be effective supporters of the project.

Note:

Members may already have many of the supplies listed below they would be willing to lend...example: table, chairs, tablecloths, books marked “display copy,” candy and business cards bowls, donated candy, name tags, pens, paper etc. All donated items should be in excellent condition so we represent Al-Anon Family Groups in a light that is attractive, friendly and inviting.

The DVD suggested is an optional piece that can be effectively used by someone who is technically inclined. It “Explains concisely what Al-Anon is and how it can help those affected by alcoholism. Great for outreach to professionals and other clients..” (WSO online literature description) The DVD can be made into a continuous loop so the message plays repeatedly. This is another tool to attract folks to the Al-Anon Family Group booth/table.

Supplies;

- 6 ft table (A table is frequently supplied)
- 2 – 6 foot fabric table cloths – 1 white and 1 royal blue
- Pens
- Nametags for volunteers
- Candy bowl
- Candy
- Bowl or jar for folks to place their business cards. By doing so, they will receive in the mail a free “Thanks for Stopping By” gift.*
- Paper Pad for notes

****Thanks for Stopping By gift**

You may choose to display the “gift” on your table so the attendees can see the contents. On the other hand, the committee may want to make it a “surprise gift of literature.” Your gift could be, for example, five free *Beginner Packets* or 20 *Are you Concerned about Someone’s Drinking?* (M-1) Whatever your budget can afford and your committee chooses. **Refer to the below “Postage” notes.**

District Business Cards with as many meetings printed on front and the back as possible along with the answering service telephone number and VA web site address.

(Relatively inexpensive at Office Max, Office Depot, Internet, etc.) This was a Fall 07 Assembly PO Action Committee suggestion.

District Meeting Lists

Professionals frequently request meeting lists. Be prepared to have a generous supply available at your display. They often want “several” which they will keep on hand for their clients.

Postage

Postage and envelopes for follow-up appreciation notes and/or promised literature should be included in your budget.

When preparing a budget proposal for the District, include enough literature for attendees to “take one” and a significant amount of the inexpensive pieces of literature to use as handouts or follow-up thank you packets.

Suggested Literature (prices effective 1/28/08) **Available through your nearest Service Center listed below.

- Literature Rack M-54 \$32.00
- Literature Order Forms S-16 Free
- Troubled by Someone’s Drinking? (20 questions) S-17 .03
- Detachment S-19 .03
- Did you Grow Up with a Problem Drinker (20 questions) S-25 .03
- Al-Anon Fact File P-36 .20
- Doubting Your Sanity? English/Spanish P:-89es .06

- Facts about Alateen P-41 .25
- Has Your Life Been Affected by Someone Else's Drinking? S-20 .02
- USA English DVD 6 minutes AV-31dvd \$5.00 (**optional**)
- Are you Concerned About Someone's Drinking? M-1 .03
- Al-Anon/Alateen Is & Is Not Bookmark M-44 .05
- Al-Anon is for All People of Color S-68 Free
- Al-Anon is for Adult Children S-69 Free

Virginia Service Centers**

Tidewater Service Center
281 Independence Blvd.
Pembroke 1, Suite 406
Virginia Beach, VA 23462
757 499 1443
www.Va-Al-Anon.org

Northern Virginia Service Center
100 N. Washington St.
Suite 212
Falls Church, VA 22046
703 534 HELP (4357)
E-mail: info@alanonva.com

Professional Referral Pad M-77 .50

This 50-sheet pad gives medical, counseling, religious, legal, and other professionals an easy means to refer clients to Al-Anon and Alateen. Also available in French and Spanish. Groups have often referred to this item as the "prescription pad" because the professional hands a sheet from the pad to the client/patient, which recommends Al-Anon Family Groups.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism is an excellent handout for professionals or as a thank you for stopping by the Al-Anon table (NOTE. Check with the Area Public Outreach Coordinator to see if there is supply of these on hand for professional conventions/conferences. Availability and cost will depend on the Area budget, etc.)

Additional Literature for Professionals

If you know the event will be attended by professionals, as well as the general public, consider the following pieces of literature.

- Fact Sheet for Professionals English/Spanish S-37es Free
- Help for Employee's Troubled by Someone's Drinking S-63 Free
- Information for Educators: Alateen Meetings in Schools S-64 Free
- Alcoholics, Their Families, and The Judicial System S-65 Free

NOTE: All literature in an Al-Anon Family Group's exhibit must be Conference Approved Literature (CAL). When in doubt, please refer to the Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual. Currently, (2008) reference to CAL is on p.92.

Sharing with Others

Finally it is a matter of courtesy for the District Representative or the District Public Outreach Coordinator to inform the Area Public Outreach Coordinator that the event has transpired.

Submit to *Area Highlights*, WSO, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454, a brief story about your event, where it was held and what you learned about your participation. Point out what you saw as your successes and what, if anything, you might do differently next time. *Area Highlights* is a newsletter that goes out to all Areas throughout the US and Canada. Through this newsletter we can share our experience, strength and hope as volunteers for Public Outreach.

Photographs

If possible, please send photos of your display to the Area Public Outreach Coordinator for archives or possible Area Highlight stories. Please do not include members in the photos.

Thank you notes

Please send thank you notes to the host of the event and to Al-Anon/Alateen volunteers.



**“Be not afraid of growing slowly,
Be afraid only of standing still.”**
(Courage to Change, Chinese Proverb p.220)

Reviewed and approved by VAWSC
August 2008