

AL-ANON guidelines

The Shared Experiences Of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Alateen Conferences

G-16

The purpose of an Alateen conference is to encourage the growth of Alateen and to increase understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions through the sharing of ideas, fun and fellowship with other Alateens and sponsors. Area or regional conferences give Alateen members and their sponsors the increased sharing of experiences of a wider Alateen membership.

STRUCTURE

Conference Board or Committee

Most Alateen conferences are composed of a committee, or in some instances a board of directors consisting of Alateens and sponsors. Initially, a group of interested members may form this committee. Eventually officers should be elected and by-laws written outlining responsibilities. Samples of conference by-laws are available from the WSO.

Area Liaison

Establishing a connection between the conference board and area assembly is essential. This will improve communication within the area and the conference. It is a way of insuring support from Al-Anon as a whole.

Incorporation

Many conferences are incorporated as nonprofit corporations. One of the advantages of incorporation is that nonprofit corporations can be tax exempt. In addition, it protects individual board members who could be held financially liable if the conference is not incorporated. Consult a local lawyer regarding incorporation.

Insurance

Investigate the need for personal injury insurance at the conference and during travel to and from. Insurance against property damage may also be necessary. Consult site officials to determine if they require insurance; some of them provide insurance for groups like Alateen. If sponsors transporting Alateens to the conference are not covered under conference insurance, it is advisable for the sponsor to consider obtaining insurance within his or her area.



Have a Permanent Mailing Address

Once the conference becomes established, a permanent mailing address is suggested. A Post Office Box is recommended to insure anonymity and continuity.



PLANNING THE CONFERENCE

Selecting a Site

A permanent site is recommended for:

- privacy
- safety
- travel convenience
- cost

Theme/Program

- Select a theme. Encouraging Alateen members to submit suggestions for theme and workshop titles generates enthusiasm and new ideas.
- Introduce special guests at banquets or large meetings.

- Announce attendance by non-fellowship persons who have been approved by the conference committee. Read aloud the Anonymity Statement at the start of each session.

Letting Everyone Know

- Mail first announcements at least **four** months in advance. Consult the area delegate(s) and local information services for up-to-date mailing lists.
- Send announcements to *Alateen Talk* and *The Forum* and local and area newsletters at the same time.
- Establish schedule of meetings, workshops, etc.
- Mail second announcement with registration forms **two** months in advance.

- Consider inviting a WSO representative or a member of the Alateen Advisory Committee.
- Invite area delegate(s), area Alateen Coordinator(s), district Alateen coordinators, local information service, Alateen committee chairs, and district representatives. Check with these officers for conflicting dates within your area.

Funding

In keeping with Tradition VII, contributions for purposes of attending the conference should not be solicited from outside Al-Anon. Alateens may raise money for the conference by performing services and by means of activities within the fellowship, e.g. bake sales, car washing, spaghetti suppers or the sale of articles pertinent to the program such as the Serenity Prayer, slogans, etc. These activities should be held at reasonable intervals and with the permission of the respective Al-Anon groups.

Other Tips

- Use local Alateen groups to serve as host groups to aid in planning and running the conference.
- Display Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Be sure to order from the WSO or your local LDC well in advance. Allow at least five weeks for delivery.
- Have the current chairperson prepare a condensed report of the conference for the next chairperson with recommendations for the following year.
- A conference is a special event; however, regular Alateen meetings should not be taken up with conference-related discussions. Conference details can be discussed at a special business meeting or an hour before or after the regular Alateen meeting.

INSURING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Guidelines/Forms

- Develop a parental permission form, including provision for medical emergencies. Consult local medical authorities regarding information required for treating such emergencies. Many hospitals will not treat a minor without a notarized form from a legal guardian.
- Prepare behavior guidelines for sponsors and Alateens. The guidelines should be general enough to allow flexibility, but specific enough to conform with site or schedule requirements. These guidelines should be read and understood by all before leaving the home area.

Other Safety Tips

- Invite or arrange with site to have a registered nurse available. This person should also be aware of Alateens who require medication during the conference.
- Possession of alcohol or drugs is strictly forbidden. (If an Alateen needs medication, it must be reported to the sponsor and the attending nurse upon arrival.)
- Consider state laws in such matters as minors smoking in the presence of adults.
- Remember that while sponsors are not parents, they are responsible for the Alateens they bring.

- All Alateen members need to remember that what they do reflects on their group, the conference and the name of Alateen as a whole.
- See that Alateens attending the conference arrive and leave as a group with their sponsors, if possible, and that sponsors know of their group members' whereabouts.
- Require everyone's attendance at workshops, meetings, and other conference sessions.
- Abide by gender-specific dorm rules: no girls in boys' rooms; no boys in girls' rooms.

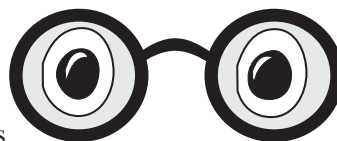
Sponsors of each group should be aware of their special responsibility as adult escorts of their Alateen group. It's important for the Alateen group to understand that because the sponsors are responsible for the Alateens they bring, they have the right to refuse to bring a member whom they do not think will abide by these guidelines, always keeping "principles above personalities" in mind.

For the safety of Alateens and their sponsors, the general rule of thumb is "there's safety in numbers." When engaged in one on one interaction, extreme caution is the key. Alateens and sponsors should avoid meeting in isolated places.

WHEN PLANNING YOUR CONFERENCE, WHAT IS YOUR VISION?
HOW CAN YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN?

An Alateen conference can be a tremendous energizer and recovery boost for everyone involved. It is a place for growth, for hope and for an increased commit-

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ment to our younger members. It can be an event that causes parents, Al-Anon and the public as a whole to think favorably about Alateen. A conference can also be a sad and traumatic experience for vulnerable children and their sponsors. A bad experience could tarnish the name of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole.