

There have been lots of questions for years about the policies in the Area 61 Policy Manual. Have we been following the policies? What exactly does this or that policy mean? Is this policy outdated, etc.? In March, at the Policy Committee, after much discussion, the Chairperson asked that a Task Force be created to look at the Policy Manual and to come up with a definition of what policy is and what is a procedure.

Our Policy Manual has been a supplement for the Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual Policies as it should have been. We had specific ways of running our Area that were not always covered in the Service Manual. Over the years the Policy Manual has grown. With each new problem or situation, we create more policy or rewrote our policies. We were always changing our policies when circumstances changed. We were using the band aid approach. Each thing we did had to be approved by the Assembly and sometimes the process was very long and we heard the complaints especially that it takes up too much of the Assembly's time continually updating it.

For several years now we have been saying that this needs rewriting completely, no more Band-Aids. One day we looked at our Policy Manual with new eyes and thought, "This is mostly procedure, not policy!" The other stumbling block is there doesn't seem to be a logical reason for the way it is laid out and it can be hard to find the Policy one needs when they need it.

Adhering to our Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) process and especially the last question about what we still needed to know. We needed more information. Our first question as directed by the Chairperson was **what exactly policy is, and what is procedure?** We formed a Task Force (TF) which consisted of Past Delegates Carol V. as chair, Cathy T. and myself and Ann J. our Treasurer. We asked all members of the Policy Committee to tell us what they believed was policy and what was procedure. While there were lots of definitions online for those two words, they were mostly about municipalities or corporations. We wanted a definition that worked for our Area and was Al-Anon in content. Here is what we came up with:

*Area 61 **Policy** is a set of guiding principles or directives, a high level overall plan embracing the Traditions and Concepts not covered in the Policy Digest section of the Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual.*

Examples: Alateen Policy, AMIAS Policy, or Finance Policy.

*A **Procedure** tells how to go about achieving Policy (as long as it doesn't affect another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.) A series of actions or steps taken, for example instructions, guidelines, job descriptions, etc.*

We also wanted to show the Assembly some examples in our Policy manual of what should remain policy and what should become procedure. We quickly realized most of our Policy manual is directions on how to do something. For example, in our Policy manual on page 5 under general policies #2 which states:

*“All AWSC members should have a copy of the Al-Anon Alateen Service manual, as each duty is explained and we should apply as per Service Manual, unless we have a policy stating different.”*

This would probably be better off in a procedure such as a job description.

Or on page1 under Assemblies #1 reads,

*“Our Assemblies will be centrally located in Wisconsin. The 3rd weekend in May will be the Spring Assembly and the last full weekend in September will be the fall Assembly. **Care should be given to avoid scheduling Assembly weekend during major holidays. When or if this occurs, the Assembly weekends may be adjusted. They will be scheduled annually 3 years in advance.**”*

Some of this is Policy (a high-level principle or directive) and some is procedure (steps on how to achieve the policy) and the last part is a job description for the Assembly Coordinator. And if the hotel changed the 3 years to 4 years we would, at this time, have to come back to you for a vote on that change.

We are hoping to make this as painless a process as possible. We want to move forward and declutter and reorganize the Policy Manual. We are hoping to have a copy available by the 2017 AWSC for the DRs and then as soon as possible out to all GRs for voting on at the 2017 Fall Assembly.

If you have comments/thoughts on any of this, or even just places where you think we might need help or you need to point something out to us please forward them on to any of us on the Task Force. Now, any questions?