

# Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

## Area Archives

G-30

One of the best ways to protect the future of the Al-Anon fellowship in an Area is to look to the past. Of course, our primary purpose remains—to carry the message of hope to the families and friends of alcoholics. The collection and preservation of our past renews our sense of purpose and serves as the thread that links the generation of stories that are to follow.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of an Area Archives is to preserve the experience, history, and memorabilia of the Al-Anon fellowship from the beginning of the family movement in that locale. This history should be preserved so as to be available to the membership and the serious researcher, within the framework of our Traditions, for the good of Al-Anon as a whole.

### Archives Coordinator Archivist and Archives Committee

In cooperation with the Area, the Archives Coordinator or Archivist serves as the link between the World Service Office and the local trusted servants. This position, along with the Archives Committee, is responsible for the preservation and maintenance of the local Area Archives.

In most Areas, the Archives Coordinator is elected or selected for a three-year term; this member may choose to establish a committee to help with long or labor-intensive projects. Members who are selected are usually familiar with the Area history and interested in the preservation.

In other Areas, the Archives Committee is appointed by the Assembly for a three-year term. The new Committee then chooses an Archivist, who oversees the Archives collection and assists the Archives Coordinator.

The Archives Committee is responsible for establishing policies and procedures, as well as budget requirements which are approved by the Area World Service Committee (AWSC). The Archives Committee maintains final responsibility and authority for the use of the archives in compliance with all matters of general policy of the AWSC.

### Location

An Area Archives might start in the home of the person interested in assuming the responsibility of collecting the material. Some Areas house the Archives at a location such as an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) or Literature Distribution Center (LDC) nearest the Archives Coordinator. Later, the Archives might be placed in a centrally located Al-Anon office.

Wherever the Area chooses to keep the material, remember the following:

- move items into acid-free folders, boxes, and photo sleeves
- store in a cool, dry place
- protect the anonymity of all members

### What to Keep and What to Build on

Possible categories are:

- Minutes of the Assembly and district meetings (List the motions separately for quick reference)
- Reports - Committees, Coordinators, and Delegates
- Group histories
- Longtime member interviews or recordings
- Directories—world, Area, and local
- Editions of Area and local newsletters
- Group, Assembly, convention, or event flyers
- Public information literature produced locally for presentation or educational purposes with distribution within or outside of Al-Anon
- Programs of conventions or conferences
- Photographs of important events
- Book of remembrances of deceased pioneers
- Relevant correspondence with discussion on policy concerns during the Conference or workshops inside or outside of the Area
- Papers, notes, etc., from trusted servants
- Area articles that are selected for use in WSO publications such as *The Forum* or *Area Highlights* with content specific to the locale
- Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings
- Memorabilia, gifts, or souvenirs
- Conference Approved Literature with pioneer autographs that commemorate local events or celebrations

The extent of archival holdings depends largely on space. Common sense is a key factor in determining what history is, what will be history in the future, and what can be discarded.

## How to Identify Material

The importance of clearly identifying all material: people, places, events, dates, etc., cannot be stressed enough. Many items will be identified with the date of origin (minutes, etc). However, photographs should have the name(s) of subject(s) and the date written on the back. Undated material can add hours of time to the work of future researchers and may sometimes make the document less valuable. *Please be sure to date everything!*

## Interviews

Interviews with Area pioneers are a valuable and interesting section of any Archives. Longtime members are asked to recall early experiences. They may be invited to participate in a recorded interview. Whether written or recorded, the topics vary but often include recollections of early group development and their personal recovery stories.

## Document Search

After the Archives are organized, a search system is necessary to locate material in the collection. With electronic documents, a simple word search can replace the need for a card catalog. Utilize resources from a local library or state, provincial, or national archives to help establish a system.

Additions to Archives require changes to the document that is used to search. To avoid any confusion, post and date the master document log in a central location and update the backup on a regular basis.

## Anonymity

Al-Anon's tradition of anonymity regarding members, regardless of whether they are living or deceased, should always be kept in mind when making material available.

Note: The *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) provides guidance on the topic of anonymity and is available in printed version or can be found on the Al-Anon Members' Web site.

## Supplies and Equipment as needed and when feasible:

- Acid-free storage boxes and file folders
- Shelves for storage containers
- Scrapbooks for photos, newspaper clippings, etc., acid free scrapbooks, and archival photo sleeves are preferred
- Card catalog, index in binder, or other kind of finding aid
- Display cabinet for memorabilia
- Framed photos of places and events for wall hangings
- Audio recorder
- Supply of blank CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, or tapes
- Archival plastic paper clips
- Stainless steel staples and a stapler
- White cotton gloves (for handling photos, slides, and negatives)

Good sources for supplies are archival supply houses. For additional resources, search the Internet, or check your local stationery store, library, or the telephone directory.

## Suggested Uses for Archival Material

Archival material can be used for workshops at Assemblies, anniversary meetings, public information displays, and anywhere that you would like to share your Al-Anon history.

## Educational Opportunities

Check local libraries, colleges and/or universities, and the Internet for applicable courses, workshops, seminars, etc.

## Suggestions

One way to avoid the duplication of WSO publications is to retain materials that specifically commemorate local Area events or were produced by the community served.

Delicate or especially large collections often need the guidance of members educated in library science or archival procedures. Ongoing projects are best served when the incoming and outgoing Coordinators discuss the goals for suggested completion.

To help with research, add Area historical documentation on the local Al-Anon Web site. Make every effort to create a secure, password-protected process to view the holdings with overview by the Area. Some Areas use off-site storage or purchase secured cloud settings to backup the Archives.

Members are encouraged to become familiar with the current interpretations of copyright regulations pertaining to fair use and privacy concerns.

## Where to Find Help

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.  
Attention: Archives  
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

**Phone:**  
757-563-1600

**Fax:**  
757-563-1655

**E-mail:**  
wso@al-anon.org