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# **Group Inventory:** Is Our Meeting Spiritually Sound?

2025 Fall Assembly Workshop

Ginny S, Duane F

# Introductions

## **Ginny**

Piedmont DR, District 17, Enjoyed being GR twice and currently my home group is Seekers of Serenity at Orange Presbyterian Church on Thursday Night. Enjoy Painting in my spare time, enjoy my (7) grandkids, gardening and retirement.

## **Duane**

Held several positions in Group, District and State and learned quite a bit. I am involved in a District Outreach project that started over 5 years ago providing a Newcomers meeting around the world. Enjoy painting in my spare time, enjoy my (10) grandkids, Collecting Antiques and looking forward to retirement.

# What Is a Group Inventory?

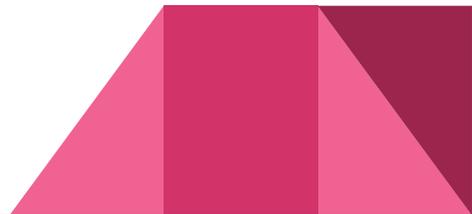
It's a bit like store staff going through the back room and deciding what to keep, throw out, and add so customers will "Keep Coming Back."

How each Al-Anon Family Group conducts an inventory is as varied as the groups.

## KEY RESOURCES:

- Al-Anon Guidelines [G-8a](#) "Taking a Group Inventory"
- Al-Anon Guidelines [G-8b](#) "Taking a Group Inventory: Methods and Reflections"

-Adapted from "[The Group Inventory](#)—'How Important Is It?'" (Christa A., Senior Group Services Specialist, *The Forum* December 2020)



# Why do a Group Inventory?

## Rationale

Help keep your group healthy and invigorated by communicating clearly and sharing responsibility

## Opportunity

Discuss which past group actions:

- Have benefitted group and members' growth
- Should be stopped, started, updated, or improved

## Possible Outputs

Ideas for new service opportunities

Ideas for reaching out to potential members

**Resolutions for concerns before unity is disrupted**

# Discussion Break

Thoughts and reactions?

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# Case Study: (1) Va. Beach AFG's Approach

## Step 1

### Identify need for inventory

- Group felt like they had a healthy Group but was open to an Inventory to ensure everyone had a voice.
- Requested an impartial State Officer which is discussed in our Manual.
- The Group was Virtual and was open to how ever long it took.

## Step 2

### Plan inventory process

- We met and agreed to how and what CAL we would use and schedule.
- Set loose timeframe, with regular opening, GR announcements and closing.
- Agreed to read and try to address each question and if not voice on one we would just move on to the next one.

## Step 3

### Conduct inventory

- Group had ample chance to obtain G8A and G8B and read ahead to familiarize themselves with the Questions and format.
- Group was reminded each session that each person had a voice and encouraged to be honest about how they felt.
- Sessions were well attended with full participation including newcomers.

# G-8a

# Al-Anon **guidelines**

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

## Taking a Group Inventory

G-8a

*Taking a periodic group inventory helps to keep your group healthy and invigorated. Members can use the inventory to discuss what actions have been beneficial to group and personal growth, and what actions need to be updated, discontinued, or improved. Discussions during or following an inventory can include ideas for new service opportunities, ideas for reaching out to potential members, and resolutions for major or minor concerns before the group's unity is disrupted. "The harmony and success of each group depends on shared responsibility, a warm spirit of fellowship, and individual self-improvement." (Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work (P-2), Introduction)*

Please see G-8b for "Methods and Reflections" pages.

### My view of our Al-Anon or Alateen group

- Does the group abide by the Traditions in all of its affairs?
- Do we criticize others in the group or gossip about them?
- Are group business meetings held at regular intervals?
- Are group business meetings conducted in a manner that members feel safe to share opinions?
- Are members pressured by dominant members to accept their ideas?
- Does our group have a process for the minority voice to be heard even after we've made a decision?
- Do members purposely reveal their length of time in Al-Anon or Alateen to gain credibility during group discussions?
- Are we forming cliques or being indifferent to other members of the group?
- Is the group process adequate for informing members about local, Area, and worldwide Al-Anon/Alateen events and concerns?
- Does our group undertake service projects on its own or in conjunction with the district, Al-Anon Information Service, or Area?
- Is our group active and supportive at the district and Area levels? Do we send representatives and financial contributions to the district, the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), and Area as well as to the World Service Office (WSO)?
- Are there ways in which the group is not fully self-supporting?
- How does the group show its support for Alateen? Is Alateen literature available?
- Are several eligible Al-Anon members certified to be of service to Alateen if a local group needs help?
- Do we have a literature display of Conference Approved Literature (CAL)? Do we regularly reorder CAL? Do we have a group lending library?

- Does our group process for selecting a Chairperson/Leader for the weekly meetings encourage members to volunteer to serve? Are the Chairpersons/Leaders prepared?
- Do all members have an opportunity to participate in service to the group?
- Is there rotation of leadership in the group?
- Does the group have a process for handling problems? If so, are members aware of the process?

### My view of our Al-Anon or Alateen weekly meetings

- Is the meeting location convenient, safe, and welcoming?
- Do members arrive early to welcome newcomers and visiting members?
- Is Al-Anon's principle of anonymity explained when newcomers or visitors are present? Do we emphasize the importance of not repeating who we see and what we hear at the meeting?
- Does the meeting follow the "Suggested Meeting Format Outline" in *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work (P-24)*?
- Is there a Chairperson scheduled for each week?
- Are our meetings fresh, interesting, and helpful?
- Do we encourage everyone to participate in the discussions by sharing and listening?
- Do we refrain from giving advice?
- Are our meeting topics Al-Anon related?
- Do we make good use of our Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and *The Forum* for themes and topics for meetings?
- Do we stick to the subject of the meeting or wander off on tangents?
- Are we easily diverted from the topic in order to focus on a member's problem?
- Do we avoid discussions of the alcoholic and his/her shortcomings?

- Is the group's copy of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* available for members to use?
- Does the meeting format allow time for reports from group officers?
- Do we make an effort to give a warm welcome to newcomers?
- Do we welcome everyone to our meeting regardless of age, gender, appearance, etc.?
- Are teenagers welcomed at our meeting?
- Are newcomers encouraged to share? Do we read the "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon" and explain what is appropriate to share in a meeting?
- Are newcomers given at least one member's telephone number, a schedule of meetings, and some Al-Anon/Alateen literature?
- Do we let newcomers know what sponsorship is and how to obtain a Sponsor?

### Additional for Alateens

- Do we take responsibility for the meeting or do we leave everything to the Alateen Group Sponsors?
- Do we show respect for others at the facility where our meeting is held?
- Is the group an attraction to Al-Anon members and others to bring their children to Alateen?
- Do we remember that the Alateen Group Sponsors are volunteers who are being of service to the group?
- Do we ask Al-Anon groups to support our group by providing certified Al-Anon Members involved in Alateen Service when our Alateen Group Sponsors are not able to serve?
- Do we hold an annual open meeting and notify local Al-Anon groups?

### Additional for Alateen Group Sponsors

- Do we arrive at the meeting before the Alateens and leave after they do?
- Do we encourage the Alateens to take responsibility for their meetings?
- Do we keep everything that is said at the meeting confidential, even when parents ask questions?
- Do we encourage the group to use Alateen literature including *Alateen Talk* and *The Forum*?
- Do we suggest an occasional writing meeting so the group members can submit sharings to *Alateen Talk* and *The Forum*?
- Are we familiar with the *Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34)* and our Area's Alateen Requirements?
- Do we have an emergency plan if something unexpected happens at the meeting or an Alateen Group Sponsor is delayed?

## Do I keep the focus on Al-Anon and my own recovery when I share?

### My part as a member of the Al-Anon or Alateen group

- Do I attend the meetings regularly?
- Do I usually arrive a few minutes early and/or stay a few minutes after the meeting to help setup or put away tables, chairs, literature, or refreshments, and to welcome newcomers?
- Do I periodically volunteer to chair/lead a meeting?
- Do I attend steering or business meetings and offer ideas for improvement?
- Can I accept disagreement and differing points of view good-naturedly?
- Do I keep the focus on Al-Anon by maintaining my anonymity if I'm also a member of another recovery program?
- Do I volunteer for, or willingly accept, a group office for which I am eligible, such as Secretary, Chairperson, Program Chairperson, Treasurer, or Group Representative?
- Do I understand that private, personal circumstances compel some members to limit their service to the group?
- Do I criticize others in the group or gossip about them?
- Do I criticize or gossip about other groups?
- Do I ever repeat anything personal I have heard at meetings or from another member outside of the meeting?
- Do I communicate with other members for my personal recovery and to help others, rather than to complain and gossip?
- Do I welcome new members, talk with them, suggest pieces of Al-Anon/Alateen literature, and offer my phone number or the group's telephone list and local meeting schedule?
- Do I volunteer to sponsor newcomers? Am I presently sponsoring another member?
- Do I read Al-Anon/Alateen literature every day, and apply the principles to my daily life? Do I let the group know which pieces of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) are particularly helpful as part of my sharing at meetings?
- Do I keep the focus on Al-Anon and my own recovery when I share?
- Do I interrupt or carry on a conversation while another member is speaking?
- Do I listen carefully to the speakers, the Chairperson, and other group members?
- Do I avoid giving advice to members?
- Do I try to make the fellowship known to others who need help? Do I participate in group service projects?
- When group problems arise, do I focus on the problem or the solution?
- Am I willing to support the group conscience even when I disagree with the outcome?
- Do I show interest in the group officers' reports?

Revised 2013 G-8a

This Guideline may be photocopied.

This piece may be adapted by a General Service structure and distributed within that structure.

Al-Anon Family Groups 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617 [www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)

# G-8b

## Al-Anon **guidelines** The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

### Taking a Group Inventory Methods and Reflections

G-8b

#### Methods for taking an inventory

*Each group is encouraged to develop its own procedure for taking an inventory. It can be done at one time or over a period of time. Some groups decide to hold a special meeting before or after the regular meeting, other groups use the inventory as a meeting topic once a year. Groups can ask the District Representative or an Area officer to facilitate the inventory meeting. Regardless of the method, experience shows that the group benefits most by allowing time to openly discuss the responses, comments, and suggestions. Most members find that the answers to any questions that arise can be solved by application of the Twelve Traditions as well as by using the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27).*

#### Here are some suggested methods for using the guideline:

1. Use the inventory questions for group discussion. In some groups the Chairperson or another trusted servant asks one question per meeting as part of the group format.
2. Distribute the forms to members at the beginning of the meeting. The Chairperson or Secretary collects the completed forms and uses the answers for a group discussion.
3. The Chairperson provides a note pad to each member. The Chairperson reads a question and encourages members to share more than just "yes" or "no" and to write down their comments. Pass a basket to collect the pages. Pass the basket again having each individual take out a page randomly and read the answer. (This method usually generates more honesty because of the anonymity.)
4. Give a copy of the inventory to each member and ask that they fill it out and bring it back the following week. At the next meeting have the Chairperson read a question and have others read their responses.



Additional thoughts on my view of our Al-Anon or Alateen group:

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Additional thoughts on my view of our weekly Al-Anon or Alateen meeting:

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Additional thoughts on my part as a member of the group:

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Now that I have participated in taking a group inventory, I plan to take the following action(s):

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#### Additional resources for groups:

*Groups at Work* booklet (P-24)  
*Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)  
*Al-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53)  
*Information for the Newcomer* (S-4)  
*Anonymity* (P-65)  
*Alateen Talk*  
*The Forum* magazine

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△ Al-Anon Family Groups 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617 [www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)

Revised 2013 G-8b

# Outcomes

Efficiency, pragmatism, service -  
and confidence!

A new healthy respect and closeness with Group Members.

Uncovered that each area discussed was good and healthy but discovered endless possibilities to better reach out Newcomers, more ways to attract them and take care of each other week to week.

Saw ways to better communicate with each other on upcoming information, timing of information.

Discussed ways to blend the exceptional experience with those who were newer and appreciate both.

Discussed some Projects the Group could do to participate in more outreach including Alateen and other Groups by inviting them in periodically and sharing on a whole different level.

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# Discussion Break

Thoughts and reactions?

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# Impact of our Group Inventory: A Newcomer's Perspective

"Painless" way to learn  
group history, customs,  
personalities, values

Great way to make all  
members feel included,  
regardless of tenure

Energizing, refreshing,  
unifying

Testimony to group  
respect for Al-Anon  
process

Equalizer: every member  
= same level of input

Warm and supportive  
intro to service

# Discussion



# Thank you!

Ginny S

Duane F