



# 2021

## Membership Survey Results



Al-Anon Family Groups  
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics



# Al-Anon Family Groups

Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

## BACKGROUND:



Al-Anon Family Group’s headquarters, referred to as the World Service Office (WSO), is in Virginia Beach, VA. The WSO facilitates the membership survey every three years. The survey documents the benefits of Al-Anon from the perspective of members who have seen the quality of their lives improve after participating in the Al-Anon program.

## OBJECTIVE:



Determine the demographic and sociographic profile of Al-Anon members. Identify the relationship between the Al-Anon member and the alcoholic. Measure the impact that relationships with alcoholics have had on Al-Anon members’ lives. Determine the impact of the Al-Anon program on members’ quality of life.

## METHOD:



Data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed to Al-Anon members with varying lengths of membership in English, French and Spanish via email, digital bulletin board, and the organization’s monthly publication. From June to July 2021, 16,486 Al-Anon members responded to the survey.

## CONCLUSIONS:



The method of collecting data from Al-Anon members yielded valid data that was reviewed by an outside vendor. Members saw an overall improvement in their quality of life through participation in Al-Anon; increased length of time in the program and outside treatment led to even greater improvement.



## The Many Faces of Al-Anon

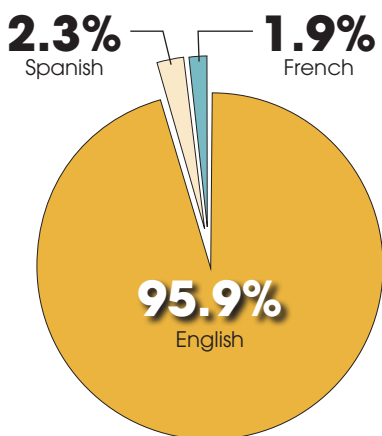
Alcoholism does not discriminate. Al-Anon Family Groups are an incredibly diverse fellowship welcoming all people. Al-Anon members are people just like you who are concerned about someone with a drinking problem. The 16,486 members who participated in this survey represent only a portion of our fellowship.



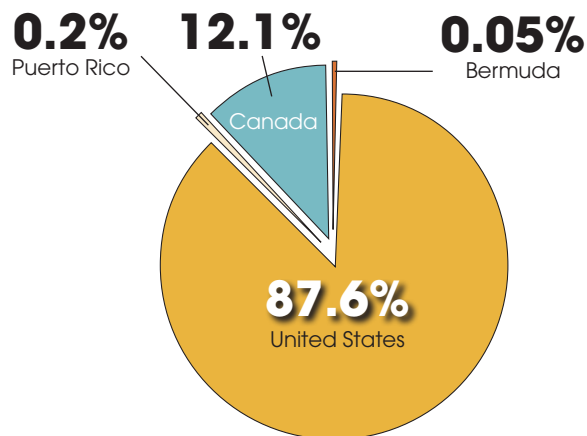
Results showed that the average Al-Anon member's age is 62.5 years old. On average, members reported attending their first meeting at 44.1 years old.



Members identified as female (86.8%), male (12.6%), and neither male nor female (0.6%).\*



Available in Three Languages

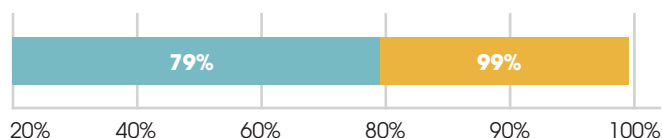


Geographical Distribution of Members

Of those completing the survey, **90%** identified as white.

The remaining **10%** includes Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin, Black/African American, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native/First Nation, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and mixed race.\*

Members have varying degrees of education; **99%** indicated a minimum of high school education or equivalent, with **79%** having completed undergraduate or graduate studies.\*



n = 16,486 (unless otherwise noted below)

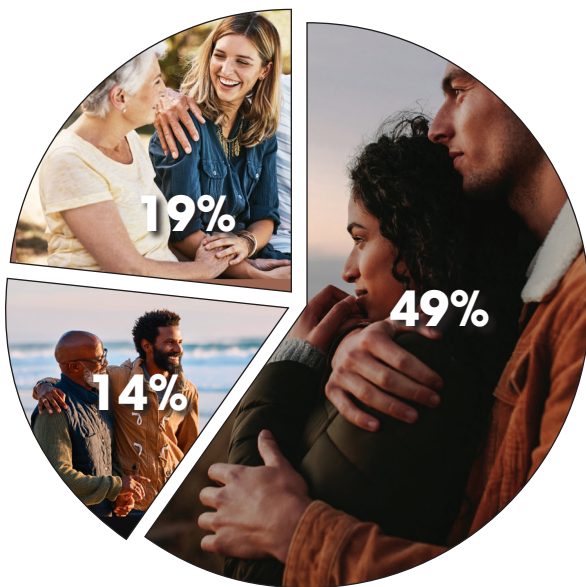
\*Gender 16,414 • Race & Ethnicity 16,020 • Education 16,230





## The Familial Ties of Alcoholism

Alcoholism is a family disease. The disease affects all those who have a relationship with a problem drinker. Data from 15,935 responses suggest that most Al-Anon members are affected by alcoholism spanning multiple generations.



**49%** of members surveyed came to Al-Anon because of a romantic partner's alcoholism/addiction, **14%** due to a parent's, and **19%** due to a child's.

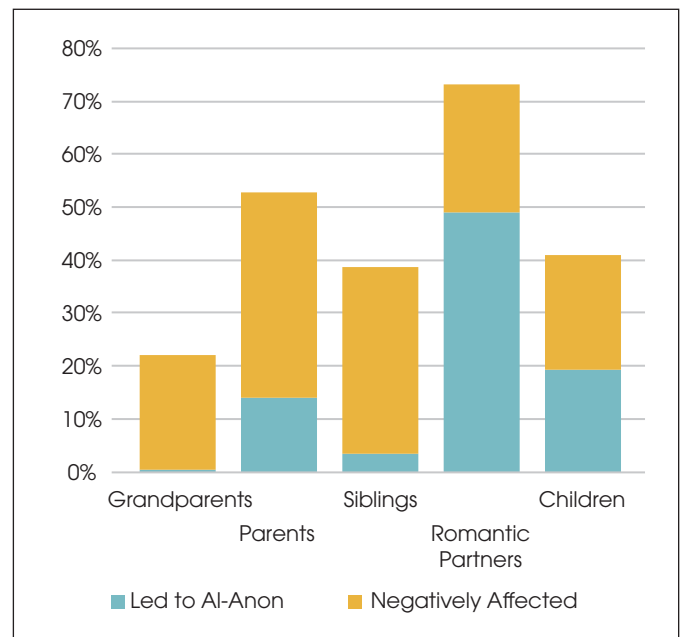
Person	% Led to Al-Anon	% Negatively affected
Grandparents	0.4%	22.0%
Parents	14.0%	52.7%
Siblings	3.5%	38.6%
Romantic Partners	48.9%	73.2%
Children	19.2%	41.0%

Members identified the following relationships with people whose alcoholism/addiction has led them to Al-Anon or has at any time negatively affected their life.

n = 15,935



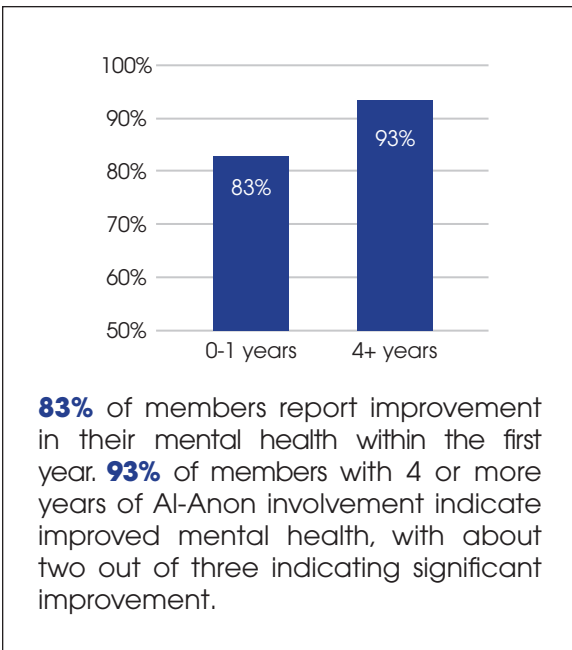
On average, 67 out of 100 members reported being affected by alcoholism spanning two or more generations. Results by demographics (i.e. age, gender, language, income, sexual orientation, or race) remained consistently between 60 to 70 out of 100.





## The Effectiveness of Al-Anon

Participation in Al-Anon meetings can have profound effects on a person’s mental health and improve their quality of life. Asked to rank their mental health on scale of one to seven, 15,561 members surveyed scored an average of 3.14 prior to attending Al-Anon meetings and 5.8 on the day they took the survey.



Members indicating three or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) rated their mental health scores lower than those with fewer than three ACEs. This is true both before and during Al-Anon attendance. Despite these lower scores, results showed a **39%** higher improvement in their mental health score compared to members who did not report any ACEs.



Nearly **97%** of those surveyed indicated they attend at least one meeting per week. Results showed that when members attended more than one meeting per week, they rated a **nine percent** higher improvement in their mental health score than those who attended only once per week.

n = 15,561



## Lifelong Impact of Alcoholism on Concerned Others

Living in an alcohol-addicted family system affects people in many ways. When asked about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), defined as abuse, neglect or household challenges that occurred from the ages 0-17:

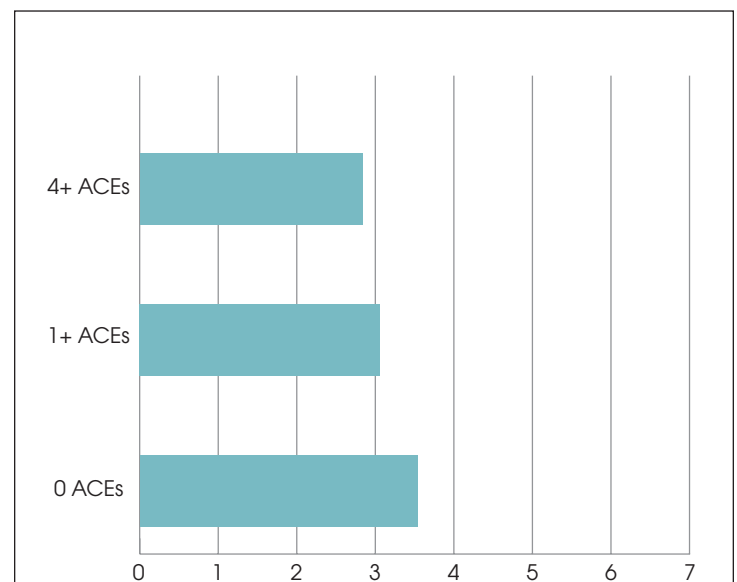
- 7 in 10 members reported experiencing at least one ACE
- 3 in 10 members reported experiencing four or more ACEs



Members who identified as children of alcoholics were four times more likely to experience four or more ACEs than those who had not been affected by a parent's alcoholism/addiction. Children of alcoholics reported emotional neglect, emotional abuse, and parental addiction as the top three ACEs.



Data suggests that members with four or more ACEs are **71%** more likely to be diagnosed with mental illness than members with three or less ACEs.



Data suggests a relationship between a higher number of ACEs and lower self-rated mental health scores.

Members who reported no ACEs rated their mental health before attending Al-Anon meetings at an average of 3.52 out of 7. Among members who indicated experiencing at least one ACE, the average mental health score drops by 14%, to 3.03; when members report four or more ACEs, the score drops even further, to 2.83.

n = 16,150



## Al-Anon and Treatment

Al-Anon complements and supports professional counseling, therapy, or treatment. Many Al-Anon members continue to seek professional assistance in addition to regularly attending meetings. The link between Al-Anon and the professional community has always been one of interchange, cooperation, and support.



Of the 10,848 members who reported receiving treatment prior to attending Al-Anon, 41 percent were referred to the program by a professional. 2,485 members indicated starting treatment since beginning Al-Anon meetings. Nearly three out of four continue to receive professional counseling, therapy, or treatment while attending Al-Anon meetings.

# IMPROVEMENT



Al-Anon members on average reported an improvement in their mental health regardless of any treatment received.

Members attending Al-Anon meetings in tandem with professional counseling, therapy, or treatment reported a 14 percent greater improvement in the current condition of their mental health than those who had not received treatment.



Results showed an improvement in members' mental health scores regardless of years they have attended meetings and/or any treatment received.

Data indicates that the longer a member has attended meetings, the greater the improvement. Members who reported four or more years of continuous membership and having received treatment scored 31 percent greater improvement in their mental health compared to members who had attended for zero to three years.

n = 15,765


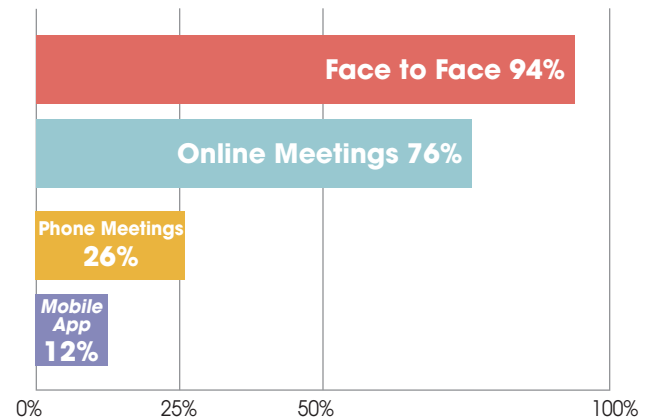




## AI-Anon Welcomes Newcomers

Visiting a variety of different meetings to gather information or to hear how others handle issues with alcoholism may be helpful to understand how the AI-Anon principles work in many different circumstances.

Currently, there are over 24,000 AI-Anon groups and nearly 1,500 Alateen groups meeting in 118 countries.

Survey results indicated that **94%** of members have attended face to face/in-person meetings, **76%** online meetings, **26%** phone meetings, and **12%** participated in meetings on the AI-Anon Family Groups *Mobile App*.



Individuals concerned about someone's drug addiction are welcome to attend AI-Anon to determine if it's right for them, with the understanding that our program focuses on alcoholism.

Survey results indicated that 28% of members first came to AI-Anon because of a drug problem in a relative or friend.



AI-Anon members also seek help from other resources when needed, for concerns in addition to or other than someone else's drinking.

30% of members also consider or have considered themselves a member of other recovery programs, including A.A.

n = 16,486





Al-Anon Family Groups, a nonprofit organization, is a spiritual, not religious, program providing support since 1951 to anyone affected by someone else's problem drinking. There are no dues or fees required for membership; Al-Anon is self-supporting through members' voluntary contributions.

As a peer-facilitated mutual support group, Al-Anon complements professional therapy, counseling, or treatment. Members attending Al-Anon meetings in tandem with professional treatment reported improvements in their mental health.

For more information visit [al-anon.org/prof](https://al-anon.org/prof)

Professionals are welcome to observe any virtual or physical Al-Anon meeting designated as Families, Friends and Observers Welcome.

For meeting information visit [al-anon.org/meetingsearch](https://al-anon.org/meetingsearch) or call 1-888-4AL-ANON. Al-Anon is conducting a Longitudinal Study (2022-2026) to generate valid data and insights that demonstrate the long-term impacts of attending the Al-Anon program. Al-Anon cooperates with researchers, students, the media and professionals studying the effects of alcoholism on concerned others.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.  
1600 Corporate Landing Parkway  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

Telephone: (757) 563-1600  
Email: [professionals@al-anon.org](mailto:professionals@al-anon.org)

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc.  
275 Slater Street, Suite 900  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H9  
Telephone: (613) 723-8484  
Email: [wso@al-anon.ca](mailto:wso@al-anon.ca)