



Virginia Area Al-Anon Alateen Assembly
P.O. Box 2583
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April 3, 2020

Suggestions for Groups and Members on COVID-19

Stay Informed. First, stay informed about what is happening and get your information from reputable sources. The CDC's website : <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> on COVID-19 is a useful starting point, as is the **Virginia Department of Health** website: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/> . For the latest updates that affect Al-Anon, check our **Coronavirus Preparedness** webpage: <https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-safety-and-readiness-tips-for-you.html> . It will be updated with the latest news and information, as well as meeting temporary closures and event cancellations.

Laws and Regulations: In all matters, we will be governed by applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Keep abreast of these through reputable, fact-based news sources, as well as the CDC and State websites.

Meeting Cancellations/Temporary Closures: Your group's meeting place may have its own restrictions which the group will need to abide by. Keep your DR (District Rep) informed about meeting location/time changes or if a group becomes temporarily inactive. Each group should have a contact for their meeting location and the personnel at the meeting location should have a specific Al-Anon person to contact — the GR (Group Rep) or another contact person — to keep the group informed about the specific requirements for that location.

Over the last 2 weeks, a few groups have already temporarily suspended their meetings. This is evolving quickly and it is important for groups to communicate their status to their members as well as to their DR and the Group Records Coordinator, and Service Center. We will try to reflect those changes on this website, as well.

If you are sick, please stay home. Members are encouraged to reach out to one another by calling an Al-Anon friend or to use electronic meetings, which are available almost anytime, anywhere. Discuss with one another how you might maintain "the loving interchange of help among members," even when members can't meet face-to-face.

Keeping hands, materials, and surfaces clean. Groups may want to remind members to wash hands or to make hand-sanitizer available. Groups might also consider how to keep materials and surfaces clean, especially eating utensils and equipment, as well as surfaces where food is served or eaten.

Personal Contact: While Al-Anon hugs and holding hands at the end of meetings are a few of the things that make Al-Anon a warm and loving environment, these aren't required. Tradition 5 could be a helpful meeting topic to generate ideas around "welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics" in an environment where close contact might no longer be safe. Groups may want to take a group conscience to decide how they want to end their meetings in a warm, spiritual way without holding hands, allowing for members to opt out if the group decides to continue the practice. See more information about Social Distancing at the **CDC website.:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Additional Considerations

There is a lot of additional information about preparedness outside of meetings at the CDC and from reputable news sources. While these are outside issues, it is good to be informed. Use your best judgment. Discuss them with family and friends.

This might be a good time to reflect on the final message of the Steps: "to practice these principles in all our affairs." Reach out to each other – this wonderful Program our ours in many ways boils down to one person being there for another. Keep the tools of the program — the Steps, Slogans, and literature — close by.