



*Virginia Area Al-Anon Alateen Assembly*  
*P.O. Box 2583*  
*Midlothian, Virginia 23113-8583*

**March 15, 2020**

Dear Virginia Al-Anon & Alateen Members.

The Area Officers have been trying to stay up to date on the quickly evolving COVID-19 outbreak. Our Fellowship from individual Groups to the World Service Office (WSO) has been discussing how to continue to meet and carry on activities during the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. Groups and members are justifiably concerned about health and safety issues and are looking for guidance on how to address this question.

Our Fellowship is a repository of shared group experience and functions as a resource center for Al-Anon members and groups who are looking for the shared experience of the Fellowship. While providing guidance on health issues is outside the scope of what the Area & WSO sharing offers we can share the experiences gathered thus far. For more specific information we suggest contacting your national, state/provincial and local health authorities for appropriate information. Attached is a memo on COVID-19 from the WSO for your reference that further conveys that message.

The Virginia Area does have some general experience to share regarding how some groups and members have begun to address this issue. Our collected experience suggests that talking about these issues before they arise or worsen can help a group be prepared to address them in a sensible and helpful manner and allow the group to continue keeping the focus on our common welfare and primary purpose. Some groups have discussed through an Group Conscience making changes to customs at their meetings. Some examples have included: avoiding shaking hands and handholding; keep safe distancing, making sure meeting hospitality tables are sanitary; or suspending food hospitality for the time being. Regardless of group decisions, each individual is responsible for their own health decisions. Some groups have considered contingency plans in case the group is temporarily unable to meet in person. Plans have included: creating/updating contact lists and keeping in touch by phone, email or social media; meeting by phone or online via WebEx or other means. Each Group and District, being autonomous should discuss the situation through a Group Conscious process and determine what is most prudent for them. Providing members information for the Virginia Service Centers to include temporary changes in the location or means individual meetings are held may serve as an additional helpful resource. If a group isn't holding its regular meetings, they may want to communicate this to your District & Al-Anon Service Center. I am enclosing a note from the Northern Virginia Service Center on their current status for reference. Some alternatives if your meeting space is closed:

1. WSO electronic meetings (on their website)
2. VA Area's WebEx meeting capacity

3. Use your group's contact list to form conference call group
4. Meet in members' homes, if appropriate, or restaurants or parks?
5. Individual members may have access to WebEx or other apps, like Zoom, etc.
6. Sponsor calls

Visit the Area Web site (<https://www.vaaanon.org/>) as well for additional information as it becomes available. Please be assured that the health and safety of attendees is a priority. The Virginia Area Officers and the WSO are closely monitoring relevant health advisories regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus). Use the links of service to stay informed and convey information.

We hope this sharing on the COVID-19 is helpful and the Officers will pass along additional information as the situation continues to change.

Thank you for all you do in service and take care of yourselves,

- Tom S.
- Virginia Area Chair, Panel 59

#### Helpful Links:

1. Virginia Area Website: <https://www.vaaanon.org/>
2. Al-Anon: <https://al-anon.org/>
3. Northern Virginia Service Center: <https://alanonva.com/?v=7516fd43adaa>
4. Tidewater Service Center: <http://www.tidewaterasc.org/>
5. Virginia department of Health: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/>