

Policy Committee Update

April 2019

Norm W., Outgoing Chairperson

Terry F., Incoming Chairperson

The purpose of the update sent each quarter by the Policy Committee is to report progress and provide information on the following:

- Topics that are generated by the fellowship and discussed by the Policy Committee regarding issues or concerns that need clarification or interpretation in light of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service;
- Progress of work being done by Policy Committee work groups, task and thought forces;
- Policy motions to be presented to the World Service Conference (WSC); and
- Policy motions passed by the WSC.

The “Alateen Policy” section of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” appears on pages 93 through 97 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)*. In February, revisions to this text that had been approved by the Board of Trustees during its October 2018 meeting were posted for comments and suggestions by members of the 2019 WSC. The suggestions and comments of the Conference members were considered by the Policy Committee, and some further modifications to the text were made and then approved by the Board of Trustees at its April 2019 meeting. The amended revisions were approved by the 2019 World Service Conference.

The Electronic Meetings Work Group (EMWG) is developing new ideas about how to improve our understanding of the needs and wants of electronic meetings and the role the WSO can play in helping the members in these meetings achieve Al-Anon’s primary purpose. The EMWG will continue its efforts to obtain information directly from the electronic meetings. The Work Group also prepared and delivered a presentation at the 2019 World Service Conference.

The Policy Committee discussed the continuing efforts of the World Service Office to invite electronic meetings that use the Al-Anon name to register with the WSO in accordance with the following policy statement, on page 89 of the *Service Manual*:

“When electronic meetings form, they register with the World Service Office (WSO) in order to use the Al-Anon name.”

The Policy Committee then passed the following motion: “The Policy Committee recommends to the Board to direct the office to pursue all appropriate remedies to protect the Al-Anon name, pursuant to the electronic meetings policy in the Policy Digest.” This recommendation was adopted by the Board of Trustees.

There was a follow-up to a policy discussion in January 2018 finding that the terminology “Open/Closed” was not consistent with our spiritual principles of confidentiality and anonymity, nor welcoming to newcomers. The Executive Committee approved a motion to use the wording “Families and Friends only” and “Families, Friends, and Observers welcome” to replace “Closed” and “Open,” respectively, to identify meeting attendees on the AFG Electronic Meeting Registration/Update Form. The change in wording was to be used on a trial basis for six months prior to making a recommendation to the Board regarding implementation of this change on the Group Records forms. After review of materials and discussion, the Policy Committee recommended to the Board of Trustees “to end the trial and update the language permanently

on both the Electronic Meeting Registration/Update form and Group Records forms.” This recommendation was accepted by the Board.

At the Open Policy Meeting, a discussion was held on “Dilution of the Al-Anon Program.” The Policy Committee engaged in a detailed discussion on the topics of 1) “Labels,” i.e. language and professional terms; 2) “Professional Involvement”; and 3) “Drugs/Narcotics/Prescription Medications.” These are briefly addressed on page 131 in the section of the Policy Digest entitled “Al-Anon As It Relates to Others.” It was noted during the discussion that the text is outdated. The Policy Committee felt that this section needed to be revised to reflect the spiritual principles underlying the policy and to add greater clarity to the text of this portion of the Policy Digest. As Policy Committee task forces are currently reviewing four other sections of the Policy Digest, work on this section will commence after completion of some current reviews.

Policy statements are interpretations of our basic guides: the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service. They help clarify how a Tradition or Concept might apply to a new or confusing situation that arises in Al-Anon or Alateen. Changes and additions to the Policy Digest are made only as circumstances and our growth require, since anticipating and including every specific situation would be impossible. As always, the Policy Committee welcomes all questions and suggestions from any Al-Anon and Alateen member, group, or Area regarding issues that might need further clarification or interpretation in light of our Legacies.