

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS REGARDING ON-LINE DISRUPTIONS

The WSO recognizes that ONLINE MEETINGS ARE AL-ANON MEETINGS they are not considered a “supplement” to Al-Anon recovery. As face to face meetings make their transition to the digital world, during this time of our current pandemic, there are a few things to consider when operating your online meetings to foster safety and recovery.

Just as in the physical rooms, meetings online pose the risk of having background noise, trolls, inappropriate behavior and other disturbances which can distract from the primary purpose of an Al-Anon Meeting which is to provide mutual aid to the friends and family of problem drinkers(Tradition 5).

We still need to honor the Anonymity of our attendees (Tradition 11) and provide a shield against disruptive behavior. It's not possible to maintain absolute security, however; there are a number of features available to handle the more disruptive participants and keep your on-line meeting safe.

Platform Features To Look Out For

Please note that different Video Conference Platforms may differ in UX (User Experience), but usually they have most of these features. It's suggested to test your platform and explore what is and is **not** useful for your group. Plan to have a “Test Meeting” with some of your members to explore the various features and functionality of the platform your group decides to use.

Features to look out for:

1. The ability to **Remove Participants** - This feature is reserved to the HOST/Co-Host of the meeting.
2. Are you able to set up a **Waiting Room?** - A waiting room is a digital space where the attendee is sent when they access the meeting link. The HOST then allow the attendee(s) into the room through the participants list. It's like a screening process. Trolls usually use “usernames” or “slang terms” as their name. They won't use their real name. Please note that this method isn't used to determine membership (Tradition 3). membership is self prescribed. This is merely a method to keep the meeting secure in that the people there are there for recovery and support.

3. Consider disabling **Join Before Host** to keep users out before the host arrives. When “**Join Before Host**” is enabled anyone can enter at any time.
4. Al-Anon doesn't have an official policy on Cross Talk. However, in the spirit of reducing distractions, Consider restricting **In-Meeting Chat** to reach only host only during the meeting. Many meetings open it up for fellowship or an opportunity for attendees to ask questions after the meeting.
5. You can also take a group conscience regarding **screen sharing, mute and unmute** privileges, **chat settings** among participants and more.
6. Utilize the Platform's Customer Support for Connectivity and Functionality Issues. Millions of people are utilizing Video Conference platforms we are not the only organization migrating to the digital realm.

Suggested Digital Trusted Servant Roles

1. The **HOST** of your on-line meeting

The role of **HOST** maintains order during the meeting by managing the participants. This allows the meeting Secretary to focus on the meeting, while the **HOST** focuses on the room controls. Some AFG meetings had their Face to Face Meeting Secretary, Group Rep, or Business Secretary be this digital service position.

The “Meeting Participants window” offers control over most aspects of your meeting and those attending. Some digital services have training videos that are recommended viewing for all meeting secretaries and anyone who plans to co-host a meeting at any time. Utilize any FAQs on the platforms website under “Help or Support”.

2. The **Co-Host** of your on-line meeting

Co-Hosts have the same privileges as the Primary Host. Co-Hosts can be on “mute duty” to silence lines that are emitting background noise and limit distractions. Co-Host access is granted by the Host of the meeting. It's good to have more than one Co-Host especially when there are a lot of attendees coming to your meeting. For example Meetings with 50+ or 100+ have 2 or more Co-Hosts on duty to keep tabs on disruptions.

3. **Phone List Person**

Some suggested method on how groups have handled the Phone List. the Phone List Person have shared their email in the Meeting Chat for attendees to email the Phone List Person to get a pdf of the phone list. Members email the phone list person their current contact info to keep

the phone list current. Other Meetings have used the chat for members to post their phone directly onto the chat.

4. Treasurer

Some meetings have set up digital payment services to collect 7th Traditions for their groups. Some AIS's have the ability to collect digital 7th traditions. WSO have the ability to set up online 7th tradition donations. If your Group or District has a bank account with a bank card, this is a possibility to collect 7th tradition. The Treasurer would have access to the on-line portal to track incoming donations. The sudden loss of income is a topic among the groups. Establishing a method to collect digital 7th tradition could help keep the donations coming in to support hosting your on-line meeting Conference.

5. Group Tech Support

Do you have skill sets that can navigate the digital realm of on-line video conference technology? Please consider being a helper to aid other members in navigating the platform during your meeting.

Suggestions for Attendees

1. You are able to change your Name Settings to First and Last Initial
2. You are able to keep your video on or off to the level of anonymity you want
3. Depending on the platform you are using, you may have the ability to have a virtual background to not give away your location
4. Reduce background noise by making sure you are muted while the speaker is talking

Meeting Formats

Your Face to Face Meeting script may or may not translate easily into the digital realm. Some Meetings have created committees (Tradition 9) to re-examine their scripts and create an On-line Digital Version. This is an opportunity to be flexible and adaptable to the situation we are in and what is good for the group (Tradition 1). Utilize the Chat to post what reading pages and titles of CAL you are using for your meeting for reference.

CAL E-Books

The use of CAL E-Books may be helpful for digital on-line meetings as you can share your screen with your audience and can read the passage that way.

ASL & Disability Accessibility

Some meetings have provided ASL interpretation by having an interpreter at the meeting with their Video On as they interpret. The AIS social media pages on Twitter and Instagram are set up to have Alt Text. Alt Text allows Visually impaired individuals to have their computer read out our posts to them and get meeting information that way. Ask your group if you know someone who can volunteer for that service or who has that skill set. We have some members who are homebound and are not able to get around during quarantine. Please reach out to them and let them know about your meeting.

Spanish Meetings

Call **503-916-9913** 9-5 PM PST **M-F** support for any information about our Spanish AFG meetings.

Outreach to NewComers

Post your online meeting on the AIS website and AIS social Media Pages on Twitter and Instagram @pdx_alanon The AIS Instagram has grown to 115 followers since we have gone live in Jun 2019. More so since the pandemic started. We need innovative creative ways to reach out to NewComers in search for support and information. Families are in quarantine with active drinking and the support is even more needed. Searching for support on social media networks is becoming a common place to find information. For example, the @D9portlandyha Instagram post as of 04/07/2020 has about 200 hits for the Friday Young People in Al-Anon online meeting. Having a Social Media Presence for your meeting can help Newcomers to find us.

What About Alateen?

Our Portland Alateen meetings have gone online. They are not published on our website. Contact the AIS for Alateen Meeting information. In order to participate in Alateen On-line Meetings your video camera must be on. AMIAS (Al-Anon Members in Alateen Service) are on the meeting as well to meet Alateen Safety Requirements. Email AIS@al-anonportlandoregon.org they will connect you to our Oregon Area Alateen Coordinator. Alateens are Al-Anon members and are welcome to any Al-Anon meeting. For any Alateen aging out and are looking for young in Al-Anon recovery resources they are encouraged to check out **D9 Portland City Young at Heart in Al-Anon Service Committee** instagram page @D9portlandyha

Other Useful links

WSO Updates regarding Covid-19 and how it affects our WSO Office

<https://al-anon.org/for-members/wso/news-from-the-wso/update-on-covid-19-coronavirus/>

Free Downloads - **This literature supplements the face-to-face meetings where AI-Anon members share their insights and experiences with each other.**

<https://al-anon.org/for-members/members-resources/literature/downloadable-items/>

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AIS Board and Staff