

MEDIA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following are sample questions that could be asked in an interview or used in a publication without reprint permission. (The suggested answers may be used as a guide for the Al-Anon/Alateen member being interviewed.)

1. Q. What is alcoholism?
A. Since 1954, alcoholism has been recognized by the American Medical Association as a chronic, progressive disease.
2. Q. What is Al-Anon?
A. Al-Anon Family Groups is a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope with each other in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family disease and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.
3. Q. How long has Al-Anon been in existence?
A. Al-Anon has been offering hope and help to the families and friends of alcoholics since 1951. Al-Anon/Alateen has 24,000 groups in over 130 countries.
4. Q. What is Al-Anon's purpose?
A. Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families and friends of alcoholics. Al-Anon is non-professional. We do not counsel or advise our members, nor do we endorse or affiliate with other agencies or organizations.
5. Q. Who can be a member of Al-Anon/Alateen?
A. Anyone whose life has been or is being affected by someone else's drinking. This includes immediate family members, relatives, friends, co-workers, employers, etc.
6. Q. Does the alcoholic in a person's life have to be a member of AA before that person goes to Al-Anon?
A. No, many people come into Al-Anon whether or not the alcoholic is drinking.
7. Q. Does Al-Anon help parents whose children have a drinking problem?
A. Yes. In Al-Anon, members have a variety of relationships with the alcoholic. Sometimes it is a parent, teen or adult child, spouse/partner, sibling, grandparent, or a friend. All members can offer and receive insight to recovering from the effects of this disease.
8. Q. Are people hesitant to come to Al-Anon or Alateen?
A. Yes, and there can be several reasons. There is still a stigma attached to the disease; for example, people are afraid that someone will find out there is a drinking problem in the home. The family also becomes entrenched in the disease. Denial and isolation can become a way of life and make reaching out for help very difficult.
9. Q. What is the purpose of anonymity?
A. Personal anonymity, as well as confidentiality of members sharing in our program, creates a safe place to get help. We often say, "Whom you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here."
10. Q. Do you find most of the people in Al-Anon have the same frustrations?
A. Yes. Even though people's situations differ, fear, anger, resentment and loneliness are some of the

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common effects from the family disease of alcoholism. Many people in Al-Anon and Alateen have discovered that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible to find contentment and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is drinking or not.

11. Q. Will Al-Anon tell me how to get my loved one sober?
A. We come to realize that we can't control or change another person and that our efforts to do this only frustrate us and can even make situations worse. In Al-Anon, we learn to detach by taking the focus off the alcoholic and concentrating on our own healing.
12. Q. How do Al-Anon members learn to detach?
A. By sharing with each other and by trying to apply the Al-Anon Twelve Steps to their everyday lives. As we learn healthy ways of dealing with our problems, we find that we live happier and better lives in spite of what's going on around us.
13. Q. What are the Twelve Steps?
A. The Twelve principles for personal recovery adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous.
(Suggestion: The Twelve Steps could be given to the interviewer in advance.)
14. Q. Are the children in the family affected by alcoholism?
A. Yes. Many children are profoundly affected. They experience many of the same feelings that adults do including a sense of loss, confusion, and guilt. Alateen is a program for our younger members. In Alateen, young people meet to exchange experiences and to gain an understanding of themselves and the alcoholic. This helps their own personal development and can help stabilize troubled thinking resulting from close association with an alcoholic.
15. Q. What is the age range for Alateens?
A. Their ages usually range between 12 and 18; however, some groups have members younger than 12.
16. Q. Does alcoholism result in cases of physical abuse toward adults and children in the family?
A. Yes, sometimes this is a result of alcoholism. As members grow and heal, sound decision-making skills are learned. We learn to protect ourselves physically as well as emotionally.
17. Q. How are Al-Anon and Alateen groups financed?
A. There are no dues or fees. Al-Anon is fully self-supported by voluntary contributions from members and the sale of literature. We do not accept any outside funding.
18. Q. Where can a person in this area get more information about Al-Anon and Alateen?
A. Call the Al-Anon information service in your area listed in the telephone directory under Al-Anon or Alcoholism.

OR

Call the following toll-free telephone number for meeting information outside your local area:

1 888-4 AL-ANON (425-2666)

You may also visit our World Wide Web site at:

www.al-anon.alateen.org

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