

holic. Diverse as we are, it is inevitable that we will sometimes disagree, but we recognize that in order to recover from the effects of this powerful disease, we need to look beyond our own narrow individual limits for help, understanding, and support. We strive always to place principles above personalities.

*"I focused less and less on being gay as I grew in my understanding of the family disease of alcoholism and truly saw how it had devastated my entire life."*

No matter what our life experience may be, we are united in our gratitude for the countless open doors that welcome us to the rooms of Al-Anon, where we find peace, understanding, contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

*"I am continually awed by the humbling equality of the recovery we are all seeking under the one big roof of worldwide Al-Anon."*

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

*Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps*

**For meeting information call:**  
1-888-425-2666 (1-888-4AL-ANON)

Al-Anon/Alateen is supported by members' voluntary contributions and from the sale of our Conference Approved Literature.

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Al-Anon may be listed in your telephone directory

# Al-Anon Family Groups Welcome Gays and Lesbians

*Al-Anon Is for All Families  
and Friends of Alcoholics*

## OUTREACH



Al-Anon Family Groups  
Strength and hope for friends and families of problem drinkers

*“When I attended my first Al-Anon meeting, I was afraid for two reasons. The first was what everyone else experiences—that my family would never again be normal, and that my last resort, Al-Anon, would not be able to help. But my second reason was that I was gay, coming into a room of straight people who might judge me for being who I am, and they might reject my plea for assistance. Both fears were unfounded.”*

## Unique Lives, Common Experiences

Al-Anon Family Groups is for anyone whose life has been affected by someone else’s drinking. It is a fellowship of families and friends of alcoholics who come together to share their experience, strength, and hope to recover from the effects of alcoholism.

One of the things we find by sharing in meetings is that while each of us is different, we also have a lot in common. It is, in fact, in the sharing of our diversity and unique experience that we break down our walls of isolation, grow in understanding, realize we are not alone, and learn we deserve full, happy, and productive lives.

*“When I first came to Al-Anon, I thought if the members knew I was a lesbian, they would reject me, and I needed their help. I would use ‘he’ or ‘they’ to refer to my partner and then cry because I couldn’t be honest. One night after a meeting when three of us were talking, I was asked a question I couldn’t answer truthfully without giving myself away. Shaking and scared, I took a chance and said my relationship was with a woman. I was a lesbian. What I got back was acceptance and support. One of these women became my Sponsor and both are part of my support system.”*

What we find in Al-Anon is acceptance, love, and a place to heal. We find loving voices and caring people who guide us gently along the path to recovery. Regardless of our individual personalities, backgrounds or opinions, we are welcomed.

*“I kept coming back for several reasons. The group asked me to come back. I can’t ever remember feeling that kind of warmth and acceptance before. Although I was afraid they wouldn’t relate to me, I knew I related to them. While our external situations and circumstances were often different, our feelings were the same. Also, at that point I was desperate and totally void of hope. The mere fact that these people were dealing gracefully with their situations let me know it was possible.”*

## How Al-Anon Works

In sharing our experience, strength, and hope, we cannot help revealing some details and particulars of our lives. It is important that we feel free to do so, for only in an environment in which we can shed our fears are we able to grow. Regardless of our sexual orientation, there are certain matters that are better shared one-on-one with a trusted friend. By keeping our meetings focused on our Al-Anon recovery, we are able to put our problems into perspective and, by listening to the sharing of others, we learn how to make our own lives more manageable.

*“After a few meetings, the idea slowly formed that maybe my being a gay man wasn’t really the problem after all, that maybe the problem was alcoholism. I kept coming back and slowly, one day at a time, the unconditional love of the Al-Anon fellowship enfolded me. I was accepted exactly as I was, perhaps for the first time in my life. The members continued to*

*share their experience, strength, and hope with me and to look beyond my being gay (where my focus kept returning) to my being affected by the family disease of alcoholism. Gradually I began to heal: the group members accepted me and that gave me permission to accept myself; they said they loved me and that gave me permission to love myself.”*

*“I’m not in Al-Anon to talk about my sexuality as such. I’m there because somebody else’s alcoholism has affected my life. Being gay is a part of me, so it’s inevitably going to be a part of my story.”*

Each Al-Anon meeting is slightly different and, since we are all individuals, we may well visit several meetings before we find at least one at which we feel at home. Some Al-Anon meetings may be designated as “gay and lesbian,” where newcomers may feel more comfortable sharing with other gay and lesbian members. However, **every** Al-Anon group welcomes **all** families and friends of alcoholics. Alcoholism is our common bond, and we come together with willingness to listen and learn and to share the message of hope with others in the fellowship.

*“What I love about Al-Anon meetings is that I am getting close to people who normally I would not be able to know so well, for most of my friends are gay or lesbian. And I hear from my Al-Anon brothers and sisters in meetings that they enjoy getting to know us, as they might not otherwise be able to. Walls are disappearing, and love and community are growing and expanding.”*

## An Open Door

Al-Anon has continually offered an open door to all of us who have suffered from loving someone—partner, relative, or friend—who is an alco-