

WHO?

Anyone troubled by the sexual behavior of another person qualifies for S-Anon membership. Two or more members, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an S-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation (T3)*. Men and women decide for themselves whether or not they qualify for membership. There is no screening process.

S-Anon members may be in various professions, occupations, and religions, or be working other Twelve Step Programs. However, when we come together as an S-Anon group, we leave our other identities outside (T8, T10).

At meetings, members use first names only. Whom you see and what you hear at group meetings, and member to member, are kept in confidence (T12).

WHERE?

S-Anon groups often meet in churches, libraries, health clinics, or other public buildings. Although groups have started in restaurants, lobbies, parks, or even cars, experience shows that finding a neutral place as a permanent location helps members to stay focused on the meeting and not be distracted by other things. It may be helpful to seek out places that are already familiar with Twelve Step programs and already host meetings of other fellowships.

When selecting a name for the group, experience has shown it best to not use the name of the building or organization where the group meets, as this can cause confusion by implying that the group may be affiliated with the church, facility, or organization (T3, T6).

WHEN?

Consider a weekly time that is good for the most people. Some meetings last an hour and others 90 minutes. When there are fewer members, the meetings can be shorter or time can be used for more reading or sharing.

HOW?

Starting and building an S-Anon group is a spiritual endeavor. It is a commitment that requires some time

and patience. No one has to do it alone. The World Service Office (WSO) will help you find experienced members of S-Anon who are available to offer guidance and support. The Higher Power, of our understanding can also guide us. S-Anon groups are the life of the S-Anon Fellowship.

Tradition One states, "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity." The unity of S-Anon depends on members and groups adhering to the Twelve Traditions of S-Anon and the principles of the program. Each group is autonomous, except in matters affecting another group, S-Anon, or SA as a whole (T4), and may decide how to attract new members, its location, name, time, and topics.

MEETING FORMAT

The suggested general meeting format is Conference Approved and available from the S-Anon Website, the *S-Anon/S-Ateen Service Manual*, and *Working the S-Anon Program*. The *S-Anon /S-Ateen Service Manual* is available as a download from the Website or may be purchased from the WSO. It can answer questions about S-Anon groups and the S-Anon Fellowship. Reading it before starting the group can be helpful. Groups may choose to study the Twelve Steps, discuss recovery topics or tools, or invite S-Anon members as speakers to share their experience, strength, and hope.

UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY

Anonymity is an important principle to remember when starting an S-Anon group. We protect each other by not repeating information or names of members outside the group. Each person chooses how much information to reveal, but those who hear the sharing carefully guard that information. Only in this way can we feel free to share what is in our minds and hearts (T11, T12). Another aspect of anonymity is that no one S-Anon member or group speaks for the entire S-Anon Fellowship.

GUIDELINES FOR SHARING

Upholding the meeting guidelines, including "no crosstalk," even with only two or three members present, helps us focus on recovery and be prepared when new members arrive. The "no crosstalk" guideline helps people feel safe to share without

being interrupted or given advice. After the formal meeting is over, there can be time for fellowship and conversation. Some have found it helpful to bring a journal to use some of the time for personal writing. This is especially useful if you are the only one at the meeting, which can happen from time to time.

OBSERVING TRADITION SEVEN

The Seventh Tradition states, "Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." A Seventh Tradition collection may be taken at each meeting. Group funds are used to take care of group expenses such as rent and supplies. Because we are a self-supporting fellowship—S-Anon members covering all of S-Anon's expenses—we pay rent to the facility where meetings are held, even if it is only a small amount. Group funds may be used to purchase literature and Public Information and Outreach materials for the group and also to make donations to the WSO to help the S-Anon fellowship meet its expenses.

LITERATURE

Having S-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) available may be helpful. CAL includes S-Anon, Al-Anon, SA, and AA literature. Groups often eventually use a bag or a box to hold supplies.

REGISTERING THE GROUP

We are encouraged to register the group with the WSO when the group has a set time and location. Registration forms are available in the *S-Anon/S-Ateen Service Manual* or on the S-Anon Website. When registering, someone from the group gives contact information to be able to receive information and updates from the WSO. Correspondence from the WSO comes without a specific return address to protect the anonymity of members. A group member(s) also serves as the group contact person for inquirers. The WSO does not give out specific locations of groups, but refers inquirers to a group contact person in the area requested.

The registration information is considered confidential and is used for WSO official business only. You may choose to allow the WSO to give out certain information to the Area Delegate for your state or province, the Intergroup (representatives from local groups), and/or the Regional Trustee so that you can stay informed of local events and issues that may affect your group. These S-Anon members may also be able offer your group support and encouragement.

SPREADING THE WORD

S-Anon's primary spiritual aim is stated in Tradition Five, "Each S-Anon Family Group has but one purpose, to help families of sexaholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of S-Anon, by encouraging and understanding our sexaholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of sexaholics."

Attracting members to an S-Anon group can take time. The WSO will refer inquirers from your area to the group contact person. Some groups have sent flyers and letters to local professionals, posted flyers or posters in public places, and given information to their own doctors and others in health care, religious communities, or support services. You may post general information about S-Anon, so that inquirers can contact the WSO and get a contact number to find the actual meeting location.

Occasionally, S-Anon groups may hold an open meeting and welcome non-members, such as professionals and students. These open meetings are often speaker meetings that help others learn about S-Anon.

SERVICE WORK IN AN S-ANON GROUP

Members of an S-Anon group may take on service positions to help the group function. As the group grows, positions may include leaders for each meeting, a treasurer, person to hold the key and open the building, group contact person(s), literature person (makes literature orders), and Group Representative (GR). The

GR serves as a voice of the group to the Area Delegate and the Intergroup. Groups often schedule periodic business meetings to discuss the business of the group. The group service positions may take time to be filled as the group is getting established. Since we have no self-appointed leaders, experience has shown that periodically rotating service positions among members helps to maintain harmony within the group (T2, T9) and offers more members opportunities to grow in recovery through service.

Starting an S-Anon group may be challenging, but it is worth the effort. S-Anon groups are supportive places where we can share with others who understand. They are where we can learn how to work the S-Anon program with honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness.

** The Twelve Traditions, like the Twelve Steps, take time to understand and appreciate. They are referenced in the guideline (T1, T2, T3,...T12) to show how they can apply to groups.*

STARTING S-ANON GROUPS

S - A N O N
International



Family Groups

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Produced as a service tool by
the WSO, S-Anon
International Family Groups,
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