

Best Practices for Managing Group Emails

Handling group email accounts is an important role for trusted servants in S-Anon groups. Effective communication can make a significant difference in helping newcomers and inquirers feel welcome and supported. The Public Information and Outreach Committee compiled information on “best practices” that many groups have found useful for group volunteers managing this communication channel, to help ensure timely, respectful, and helpful interactions. We suggest you consider these ideas as your group members discuss how to best carry the message of your group’s recovery.

In all cases, it is recommended that at least two members have the ability to access the group email, and for the group to establish protocols for transferring access when rotation of service occurs.

Group Email Best Practices

Timeliness is Key

- **Daily Email Checks:** Check the group email daily or every other day. Given the urgency often felt by those reaching out, once a week is typically insufficient.
- **On Meeting Days:** Ensure emails are checked on the day the group meets, especially a few hours before the meeting starts.
- **Forward Emails:** Consider automatically forwarding group emails to a group contact volunteer’s personal account to ensure prompt notifications. Remember to update forwarding information as service rotates.
- **Vacation Coverage:** Arrange for someone else to manage the emails if the primary volunteer is unavailable.

Provide Automated Responses

- **Warm Welcome:** Set up an automatic response to acknowledge receipt of emails, informing newcomers and inquirers that someone will get back to them shortly, and provide a warm welcome with direct access to additional S-Anon resources. Consider offering to make phone contact with the inquirer if they provide their number. Example: "We are glad you are reaching out for support. If you haven’t already, we recommend you sign up for the [S-Anon Welcome Packet](#). A member of the group will get back to you in the next couple of days."
- **Newcomer Meetings:** If your group offers a regular newcomer meeting, mention this in the auto-response. Consider including a member’s phone number who is available to provide phone support in the interim. Example: "If this is your first Twelve Step meeting, are you available to meet at [time of the newcomer meeting]? If you are interested in connecting with a member sooner, [member name] is available to respond to phone calls or texts at [phone number]."
- **Closed Meetings:** Clarify that S-Anon meetings are closed, meant only for family and friends of sex addicts. Example: "S-Anon group meetings are only open to family members and friends of sex addicts."

- **Self-Qualification:** Include a brief note that members decide for themselves if they qualify for S-Anon and provide a link to [The S-Anon Checklist](#) or attach a copy of the checklist, with appropriate credit to S-Anon, to help them decide whether they might find help and hope in S-Anon. Example: "Wondering if S-Anon is for you? Please see the attached checklist."

Standardize Communication

- **Templates:** Use email templates to help reduce the workload. Draft a standard response used for all inquiries and personalize them with the recipient's name.
- **Essential Information:** Include meeting time, address, online access information, and any other helpful details the inquirer may need to attend the meeting in your response.

Ideas for Improving Meeting Growth

Newcomer Meetings: Offer to meet with a newcomer before a meeting. If your group is large enough, it might host a meeting specifically for newcomers before the main meeting. This helps demystify the process and provides a comfortable introduction.

Literature and Resources: Inform newcomers about available literature and how to find information about more meetings. Encourage them to sign up for the [free Newcomer Welcome Packet](#), subscribe to the [S-Anon Recovery Blog](#), or watch the [S-Anon outreach videos](#).

Follow Up: Have group volunteers reach out to newcomers over the next two to three weeks to offer support and answer questions.

Encourage Sponsorship: Discuss the importance of finding a sponsor and beginning to work the S-Anon Twelve Steps.