

Updating “Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism”: A Journey of Renewal

What if one simple magazine could create the moment someone begins to feel hope again—to realize they are not alone? For those of us serving as World Service Office (WSO) Staff, this question reflects the heart of our work. Our personal recovery remains closely connected to our daily responsibilities. Whether we are reading member sharings, reviewing professional articles, or revisiting Conference decisions from decades past, we are reminded again and again that Al-Anon’s legacies of recovery, unity, and service are deeply intertwined. The literature and outreach materials we steward are voices of experience, strength, and hope that once supported us at the outset of our journeys and continue to support us today.

One such tool is *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFAM) our public outreach magazine. *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* offers help and hope to people who may not yet know about Al-Anon or the support it provides. To align with the WSO’s longstanding tradition of focusing on public outreach in September, as well as to coincide with national and international campaigns that focus on recovery this month, we are beyond excited to introduce the fully updated and redesigned *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine. Working together across departments on this project has given each of us an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the magazine’s purpose while strengthening our own personal recovery and commitment to carrying Al-Anon’s message to the families and friends of alcoholics.

A Brief History of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*

As part of our work, we immersed ourselves in the archives, reading original correspondence with professionals and seeing the handwritten notes of Al-Anon’s pioneers. This experience reminded us that public outreach has always required courage, care, and cooperation and that our responsibility is to carry that spirit forward.

Originally published in 1965 as a book titled *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (B-1), the publication was created to fulfill a twofold purpose: “to spread knowledge of Al-Anon, and to increase local and national income necessary for Al-Anon’s growth” (1965 *World Service Conference Summary* [P-46], p. 14). For decades, the book served as an important introduction to Al-Anon for professionals and the public.

By the mid-1990s, however, Al-Anon recognized the need to reassess. In 1998, following recommendations from the Outreach to Professionals Advisory, Public Outreach, and Literature Committees, the Board of Trustees discontinued the book due to content that was no longer suitable for professional outreach (1998 *World Service Conference Summary*, pp. 60, 66).

From 2000 to 2005, the September issue of *The Forum* magazine focused on public outreach and included information from professionals. At the 2006 World Service Conference, a new approach emerged and was adopted: a dedicated annual outreach magazine available in English, Spanish, and French (*2006 WSC Summary*, p. 32).

In September 2020, the Public Outreach and Executive Committees approved a change that came from the fellowship: removing the year from the cover to enhance the magazine's timelessness. The 2021 edition was the first to reflect this update (2020 World Service Office Annual Report, p. 22). During the COVID-19 pandemic, physical distribution was restricted, but an electronic format accessible on the Al-Anon website supported continued sharing and outreach.

Why *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* Matters Today

In 2025, the significance of this publication became increasingly apparent, leading the Board of Trustees to make updating the magazine a priority so that it would remain current and relevant to today's evolving recovery landscape. Families and friends of alcoholics—and the professionals who serve them—continue to ask for accessible, relatable, and trustworthy resources. *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* helps meet that need.

A Shared Service Effort

Participation was key to the new edition. The fellowship generously responded to the call for sharings, and professional contacts likewise submitted articles for consideration. Members of the WSO Public Outreach Committee reviewed and scored member sharings, while selected WSO Staff reviewed and scored professional articles. Reviewers shared how meaningful the experience was and how deeply moved they were by the quality, honesty, and compassion reflected in the submissions.

While we were unable to publish every submission, this process reinforced a recovery principle we personally know well: writing is never wasted. Sharings that are not selected inform the overall message and often find new life elsewhere. Reading members' sharings—published or not—also nourishes our recovery, reminding us how much these principles matter.

From Manuscript to Outreach Tool

This update has truly been a joint effort between Literature and Public Outreach, with essential support from other departments throughout the WSO. It is designed to meet people where they are—offering hope to those just discovering Al-Anon, an opportunity to give back for members, and a trusted, informative resource for professionals seeking to understand and refer to our program.

Although the collection and review process was modeled after those used for [Conference Approved Literature \(CAL\)](#) and *The Forum*, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* differs in purpose and process. Unlike *The Forum*, which is a recovery magazine for members, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* is a service tool developed by Staff and Committees for public outreach, attracting potential members and introducing professionals to our program.

Because it is a service tool, it follows a specific approval process as described on pages 110-11 of the *2026–2029 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). This careful process reflects Al-Anon's commitment to unity and responsibility.

Looking Ahead

Through its thoughtful periodic renewal as well as its availability in both print and digital formats, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* will continue to be a key resource for raising awareness of Al-Anon and Alateen while contributing to our self-support. Member and professional contributions enhance its authenticity, reach, and effectiveness.

For us, this project has been a renewing journey in recovery and service. We are grateful to all who contributed to it and to those who help bring its message of hope to others. More than just a magazine, this new edition of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* offers a simple yet powerful way for members to carry the message to those who may not yet know about the Al-Anon or Alateen programs of family recovery.

We encourage members and professionals alike to share it. You can offer copies to local treatment centers, libraries, or schools; provide it to doctors, therapists, and community leaders; leave it in public spaces like coffee shops, salons, buses, and airports; or send the digital version to someone who may need it. With your help, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* will find its way into the hands of those who feel alone and hopeless and let them know that there is help and hope in Al-Anon.

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