

MEMORANDUM

TO: Conference Members
FROM: Executive Director
DATE: February 26, 2010
RE: Recurring Question: "Crosstalk"

The WSO was asked at the 2006 WSC to send a copy of questions it receives from Conference members and our responses to all Conference members so that they can share leadership by responding to recurring questions in their Areas. The WSO believes that the following questions and our response might be one of those topics.

- What is the Al-Anon policy on crosstalk?
- What is the crosstalk statement that we can read at the beginning of the meeting?
- Please clarify the term "crosstalk."

ANSWER: The word "crosstalk" has crept into our Al-Anon vocabulary, but there is no standard definition of the word within our fellowship. The Al-Anon/Alateen Suggested Welcome tells us, "The loving interchange of help among members...make[s] us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity." The subject of "crosstalk" has been discussed at several World Service Conferences. Each time, the consensus has been that Al-Anon has no official definition of this term, and that what is important in each group is that we maintain a loving and welcoming environment for those who attend our meetings. Each group can discuss how to approach maintaining a "loving interchange" in their group meetings.

Al-Anon members are each at different stages of recovery, and experience suggests that the well-meaning actions of a member could be interpreted as "crosstalk." Whatever the intent, it is the disruption of group unity and harmony that could give a newcomer a negative view of Al-Anon. Discussion of religion, gossip, and dominance are pointed out in the pamphlet *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4) as the "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon." Along with the Three Obstacles, "Group Problems and Solutions" are mentioned in the "Groups at Work" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P24/27). A discussion of these topics could provide insight and solutions to issues that a group might interpret as "crosstalk" but may be a different problem.

Groups are encouraged to take a periodic review and discuss matters of concern in light of the Traditions. Many groups have found this process to be beneficial in determining the will of the group. The *Guideline for Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8) is a useful service tool that can aid in this process. It can also be downloaded from the Al-Anon Members' Web site under the "Group Services" tab.

The autonomy of groups allows each group to determine the format of their meeting by making an informed group conscience decision that abides by the Traditions. A group might hold a meeting on the topic of "loving interchange," or contact the District Representative to discuss at a District meeting the topic of how to maintain "loving

interchange.” Other groups may have experience, strength, and hope they could share on this matter.

Articles from *The Forum* about crosstalk/loving interchange are available on the Al-Anon/Alateen Members’ Web site (www.al-anon.alateen.org/members) under the “Publications” tab/Forum. These sharings might offer some insights for group discussion.