

Helpful Hints for Temporary Electronic Meetings

1. Before the meeting starts, the Meeting Chair may ask for volunteers for the meeting readings (the Welcome, Closing, etc.). The Welcome and Closing readings can be found either in the *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* book or in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (manual can be viewed for free online at the web address below).

<https://al-anon.org/for-members/members-resources/manuals-and-guidelines/service-manual/>

- The **Welcome** reading can be found on pages 11 and 12 of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* or in the *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* book on pages 8 and 9.
- The **Closing** reading can be found on page 20 of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* or in the *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* book on page 396.

Inform meeting attendees where other readings can be found in the Electronic Meeting Resources.

NOTE: Assign a member to post relevant information to the platform chat feature, if enabled. This information could include links and page numbers to the online *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* and/or book name and page number of selected Conference Approved Literature (“CAL”) to be read during the meeting.

2. If you are new to attending Zoom meetings and want more information on using the Zoom meeting platform, the Zoom website offers several free tutorials and videos that you may find helpful. You do not need a Zoom account to participate in this Al-Anon meeting. In keeping with the Al-Anon Traditions, Al-Anon, nor any Al-Anon group is not affiliated with Zoom and thus does not provide customer service for the Zoom platform.
3. All recording and chat-saving features could be disabled so these features cannot be used during this Zoom meeting (These features can be disabled by the group’s Zoom account holder under their Zoom account settings).
4. When you first join the meeting, your own video camera will be turned off and your microphone will be muted. You can select Start Video at the bottom of your screen if you want to turn your video on. You can select Unmute at the bottom of your screen to unmute your microphone. During the meeting, it is requested that attendees keep their microphone muted unless they are called on by the Meeting Chair (These features can be enabled by the group’s Zoom account holder under their Zoom settings).
5. If you click on Participants, you will find options to rename yourself (to manage your anonymity) and to use the Raise Hand feature. Please use the Raise Hand feature to indicate you would like to share during the meeting (These features can be enabled by the group’s Zoom account holder under their Zoom settings).
6. The Meeting Chair and other trusted servants may assist meeting attendees privately

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via the chat box with any problems or technical questions during the meeting. If you find the chat to be distracting, you can close the chat box on your screen. To close the chat box, just click on the "Chat" at the bottom of your screen.

7. It is requested that you use headphones and shield your computer screen from being viewed by anyone around you who is not an Al-Anon member if you are not alone while attending this meeting to protect our anonymity and ensure that our sharing remains confidential.
8. To support the sharing and meeting participation of attendees who call-in by phone (since they do not have the Raise Hand or chat box options for communication), we request that phone attendees simply wait for a pause in the sharing and then verbally inform the Meeting Chair of their desire to share.
9. For newcomers, ask him/her to stay after the meeting, to answer any questions and to provide newcomer with other Al-Anon Resources; recruit members to volunteer for this. Also, Al-Anon newcomer(s) can click on or cut-and-paste the following link to the Al-Anon WSO website to receive a one-time email with information that may be helpful at link: <http://al-anon.org/welcome>
This information can be posted to the Zoom chat feature, if enabled.
10. For anyone who wants to make Tradition Seven contributions while we are temporarily holding AFG meetings on Zoom, one available option is to go to the WSO website to contribute directly to WSO on behalf of the group. To do so, click on or cut-and-paste the following link to the national Al-Anon website <https://al-anon.org/contributions/member/> Then, on this website you will find more information on payment options and can select and proceed with your preferred payment method for making your contribution. Each Al-Anon group has an AFG Group ID#, assigned by the WSO. Your Group Representative should have this information. If you need more information, you may contact WSO or the Memphis Area AIS, by phone or email, as follows:

WSO Website address: <https://al-anon.org>

WSO email: wso@al-anon.org

WSO Telephone (757) 563-1600

AIS Website address: <https://memphisareaal-anon.org>

AIS email: mphsafg@yahoo.com

AIS Telephone (901) 323-0321

NOTE: To donate directly to a specific Al-Anon organization—for example, WSO, Tennessee Area 52, AIS, and/or District 20: addresses of each of these groups are published on the AIS website, <https://memphisareaal-anon.org> .

On the Home page, click on "Service Tools", then

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on the Service Tools page, under “Group Resources”, find “District Financial Reminder Form” and click on it,
The form, “District 20 Where to Send Donations for Al-Anon Service” will open.

This information can be posted to the Zoom chat feature, if enabled.

11. To find a meeting schedule and additional info about other local Al-Anon meetings that are currently holding temporary electronic meetings, you can visit the new Memphis Area Al-Anon website located at <https://memphisareaal-anon.org>. This information can be posted to the Zoom chat feature, if enabled.
12. Set up a group email for your group. Ask members if they wish to be added to the group email. Send group/Al-Anon related information to the group email when necessary.

Security information:

Zoom is currently taking steps, evolving ideas, implementing security measures, and doing updates to address security issues. Zoom has resources on their website and a blog that they update with things they are doing. If a person has a paid Zoom account, Zoom sends out notifications; if no paid account, you can go to the Zoom website to inform yourself.

No attendees have experienced Zoom bombing with their electronic meetings to date.

Security features available:

- Using a password to get to the meeting,
- Forming Safety Committee: This Committee keeps up with Zoom’s safety measures, discussing among themselves the advantages versus disadvantages, and takes the information back to the group for the group to discuss and decide which safety features to implement; the safety committee implements the approved security changes. Also, a member of the safety committee attends every meeting and performs the following duties: opens the Zoom meeting using the “host key” feature (obtained from the person who pays for the Zoom subscription); designates the meeting chair and co-chair (if applicable) as co-hosts in the Zoom meeting system upon their arrival; has the ability to mute everyone at the beginning of the meeting; remains present and attentive and monitors the chatbox postings, meeting attendees/participants list, and meeting attendee video gallery in the Zoom meeting and is prepared to intervene in any “Zoombombing” situation (“Zoombombing” refers to activities performed by an individual or individuals who enter an electronic meeting solely for the purpose of harassing meeting participants and causing disruption) or other disruption that could arise during our electronic Zoom meetings. [If a “Zoombombing” situation or other disruption occurs, the safety committee representative can remove a disruptive participant from the

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meeting or place them in the waiting room]; and stays until the meeting is closed and all participants have left.

- Using the waiting room feature: This puts each meeting attendee into a “limbo” state until the meeting host allows them into the meeting. Disadvantage: unless someone oversees monitoring the waiting room, meeting attendees may not be admitted promptly to the meeting. Access must be granted for each member to join (the waiting room could be monitored and meeting attendees admitted by the Safety Committee Representative for a group or by another designated group member who has co-host capabilities). Locking the meeting: At any time during the Zoom meeting, if this feature is engaged, then no more attendees can join the meeting. The meeting room can only be locked by someone who has co-host capabilities in the meeting such as the Safety Committee Representative for a group or another group member who has been made a co-host.

NOTE: At the bottom of the Zoom meeting screen, there is an icon that looks like a shield: this has all of Zoom’s security features summarized so that the information is in one place and readily available for education and use.

There is a trade-off with the more security features put in place versus the ease of using Zoom. The more security features used, the harder it may be for members to attend, especially keeping in mind the technological ability of some members.

Preserving Anonymity:

Suggestions that were made regarding preserving anonymity follow:

- Using the waiting room feature
- No screen sharing, as this could impact the Al-Anon copyrights—See “Copyright issues” below under “Other Topic Discussed”
- No using the chat feature during the meeting. If the chat feature is used during the meeting, the owner of the meeting account can select “Do not allow chats to be saved by participants” in their meeting account settings.
- Be mindful of where your computer/phone is placed in your home during the meeting: Since members names are available on the screen, along with their faces, it is important that attendees are mindful of this for anonymity of other meeting attendees. This relates to other family members being able to see your device’s screen and possibly identify Al-Anon members; also, being mindful of displaying or other credentials on the wall behind your device for meeting attendees to view.
- Not posting the meeting password. For example, the Louisiana area does not post the meeting password. The member looking for a meeting would have to call or email to obtain the password to attend a meeting. This also provides a personal contact, through a phone call, for newcomers looking to attend a meeting. This situation involved an area that did not have an AIS (no website) so the District was taking the member calls.

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- Not using the video/audio recording feature: Not allowing participants to record the meeting. A security feature allows the Host to disable participants from recording the meeting, as follows: when this feature is engaged, if a participant hits “Record”, a message is sent to the Host to ask if the Host allows this person to record the meeting. The Host makes the decision at that time. Normally, no regular AI-Anon meeting should be recorded.
- Discussion: There was discussion about members joining the Zoom AI-Anon meeting without displaying their name—some attendees have either their device name or phone number displayed. Although the host has the option of changing an attendee’s name, if known, this is up to the autonomy of the group and actions performed by the host should be respectful.

Seventh Tradition and remaining self-supporting:

There was discussion that some of the AI-Anon links of service, as well as the individual groups, still have on-going expenses. How do we support them if we are not physically putting money in the basket during face-to-face meetings? Suggestions that were made regarding how members are following this tradition:

- Have an envelope, or cup or any physical reminder to make a contribution, by your device or near the place you sit while attending a meeting and put a donation into it every time you attend an electronic meeting; one member has an envelope for each meeting and puts a donation in the respective envelope when attending a meeting.
- Have your group treasurer give his/her home address to the group members and ask for monthly donations to be mailed
- Donate directly to a specific AI-Anon link of service—for example, WSO, Tennessee Area 52, AIS, and/or District 20. Addresses of each of these groups are published on the AIS website, <https://memphisareaal-anon.org> and see “Service Tools” under “Group Resources” click on “District Financial Reminder Form” – see form, “District 20 Where to Send Donations for AI-Anon Service”

Questions and Answers and topic to which question relates:

How do we preserve the anonymity of members and autonomy of the individual groups?

Q: Is there a way to change your name to get your last name off?

A: Go to Participants, click “More”, see “Rename”—you can rename yourself.

The Host can rename participants but be respectful of wishes of the attendees.

A: In the meeting settings for account owners, there is a setting available that removes part of a displayed phone number, replaces it with asterisks, to protect anonymity.

How to get the message out to current AFG members and newcomers ?

Q: Who is responsible for listing electronic meetings—on the website or with the AI-Anon phone service?

A: Each group is autonomous. Currently, the AIS is assisting the AI-Anon community in getting the information out to the Mid-South Area. See “Discussion” under question above

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“How to get the message out to current AFG members and newcomers ?” for more information as to this process.

How can we ensure the safety, security, and serenity of members during meetings and guard against intruders?

Q: Is there a way for the host to chat or speak with a member in the waiting room if the name is unclear?

A: There is a Zoom chat feature, available to the host only, to send a chat to everyone in the waiting room. As far as we know, there is no way for the waiting room attendee to respond.

A: A suggestion was made that, once a member has joined the meeting, the host can mute all participants and only speak to the unnamed attendee to find out who he/she is.

A: A suggestion was made to ask all attendees to change his/her identifier to first name and last initial.

How can we ensure the safety, security, and serenity of members during meetings and guard against intruders?

Q: With Zoom, is there a different password if you are using a smart phone than if you are using a computer/laptop/tablet?

A: When a meeting requiring a password is set up by the Host, the Host can choose to use a different password for each type of device. A numeric password can be used for both devices or an alphabetic password can be set up for smart phones.

How can we serve as Trusted Servants who do not govern in an electronic format? How can we overcome the fear of chairing an electronic meeting?

Q: Who is responsible for leading a meeting?

A: Every group is autonomous. Each group decides the host's and/or chairperson's meeting responsibilities.

How do we help members participate in Electronic Meetings?

- Set up “mock” or “practice” meeting in advance. Notify members of this practice meeting and invite them to participate with questions.
- Tutorials are available for Zoom.
- Michelle E., AIS Webmaster, has volunteered to train members on Zoom. If interested, please email AIS: mphsafg@yahoo.com
- Open the regularly scheduled meeting 30 minutes early and remain open for 30 minutes after the meeting for participant questions and assistance.

Suggestions to help with the flow of Electronic Meetings:

- For meetings that open Zoom early, assign readings during the time before the AI-Anon meeting begins.

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- Draft a “modified” meeting format: for an electronic meeting
- Have the meeting chairperson lead the meeting, does some of the readings—note in the “modified” meeting format, “Chairperson does/reads/says...”
- Have a meeting chairperson and a co-chairperson to share duties—for example, the co-chairperson could watch the chat and respond to attendees’ questions or to post the page number and book. If both a chairperson and co-chairperson are assigned, it is helpful to have a meeting format that identifies which person will perform each duty of the format.
- Along with the meeting chairperson, assign a person to monitor the waiting room (they will need to be made a co-host), if any, participants’ names, and watch for disruptive behavior. This person would have the ability to remove attendees should they become disruptive.
- Attend other electronic meetings to see how other groups are doing Zoom.

Other topics discussed:

AI-Anon meeting etiquette, in general: It was discussed that each AI-Anon meeting is a place of reverence. No one wants to have the Chairperson instructions, or anything happening during the meeting, cause anxiety about what to do or how to do something. The meeting format is a guideline and we should be mindful of a member’s ability to perform whatever the format includes and help his/her if we can.

Electronic meeting etiquette: Since electronic meetings are a relatively new way to meet, we are learning and evolving with meeting etiquette. There were many reminders that the host must always be respectful with meeting attendees, especially regarding the host’s ability to implement security features during a meeting—for example, changing an attendee’s name and muting an attendee or all attendees. One way to be respectful of attendees is for the host to monitor participants; when someone has background noise that is loud, the host can mute that person—it is helpful to announce this at the beginning of the meeting by asking all attendees to mute themselves, unless sharing or reading.

Introductions: The following suggestions were made to handle introductions: the chairperson could go through the participant list and say hello to all participants—if there is a participant with an unidentifiable “identifier”, the chairperson could ask for his/her name. For a small meeting, the chairperson could call on each attendee and ask him/her to say hello.

Other topics discussed (Cont'd):

AIS is the organization getting the word out about AI-Anon meetings locally, both for electronic and face-to-face meetings.

District is the organization getting the word out to WSO about AI-Anon meetings so that callers can be given current meeting information.

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WSO is gathering information about the current temporary electronic meetings so callers can be directed to meetings currently being held.

Conference Approved Literature, "CAL": members are asked to avoid using CAL on the screen, as this could possibly lead to WSO losing copyrights. Use of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual is acceptable, and this book is available electronically on the WSO website. Members can download the service manual for free.

Copyright issues: Al-Anon literature is copyrighted. Posting the copyrighted documents could result in WSO losing the copyrights so any published copyrighted information should be preapproved by the WSO prior to use. There is a procedure to do this on the WSO website.

Uber electronic meetings: Irene F., AIS Board member, has used Uber for a while. She said that Uber and Zoom were similar in security features—for example, both platforms allow the administrator to remove a participant from a meeting; settings can prevent participant screen sharing; Uber sometimes shows the participant's device name/number or the phone number. Irene offered to help the participant with specific Uber questions, as well as other Uber administrators with questions, after the meeting. See "Tips and Other Resources" attached.

Unidentified participant: Each group's conscience agrees on how to handle an unidentified participant. Some identifiers show the participant's device name, telephone or first and last name. Does the group require that all participants identify themselves? How does this align with Al-Anon anonymity?

Suggestions regarding unidentified participant:

Sort the group's telephone list in numerical order, including the member's name beside the phone numbers. Have this list available for Host to help with identifying members by phone numbers.

Ask participant to identify themselves when he/she joins.

Gentle reminder at beginning of the meeting that last name be identified by initial only.