March 14, 2020

Dear Al-Anon/Alateen Members:

Greetings! I hope this finds you well and healthy!

Please see the Update from WSO document regarding COVID-19 and their recognition that meetings are being cancelled around the country due to the concerns about spreading the virus.

As stated in the WSO Update, "In accordance with Tradition Four, we encourage groups to be flexible in considering alternatives that limit personal contact—anything from linking arms at the closing to temporarily holding the meeting electronically. Groups that choose this latter alternative need not register with the WSO as an Electronic Meeting unless the electronic platform becomes the group’s permanent format."

The Update suggests that you "notify your local service arms" if you are not able to meet in the scheduled location. Please contact the entity/service arm that publishes your local directory (that is, your Al-Anon Information Service/AIS Office, or Literature Distribution Center/LDC, or District website), to inform them of your meeting’s closure.

Please do not contact Mary, our Area Group Records Coordinator, about any meeting closures. She will not change any information in the WSO database, regarding temporary closures. Meetings should contact the local entity that publishes your meeting directory. This information has to be managed at the local level, not at the Area or national levels.

This is the note at the top of the "Find a Meeting" page on the WSO website:

Dear Families and Friends of Alcoholics,

The World Service Office (WSO) is aware that at this time many Al-Anon and Alateen groups have chosen to or been asked to suspend meeting as part of public health initiatives aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) in our communities. The WSO does not have the resources to manually update the status of every registered group in a timely and accurate fashion nor can we easily modify the display of groups on our website on a temporary basis. Therefore, we urge anyone seeking a meeting to connect with a local Al-Anon Information Service office to verify the current status before attending. If you should happen to attend a group that is temporarily not meeting, it will not be necessary to report this using the Report a Problem feature on this website. We are grateful for your cooperation, patience, and understanding as we continue providing the services our members rely on and as we adapt to this situation, one day at a time.
What to do until your meeting re-opens?

There are a number of free online meeting platforms that you and your group's members could use to meet via your phones and/or computers. If you perform an online search using "free online meeting platforms," you'll find a number of alternatives.

The WSO Update notes that there are Electronic Meetings that you might join. There are also regularly scheduled Phone Meetings. You can find information regarding Electronic Meetings and Phone Meetings at: https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/electronic-meetings/

The WSO also has Alateen chat meetings: https://al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen/try-an-alateen-chat-meeting/

I hope that this information is helpful. My personal opinion (and my experience!) is that as Al-Anon members, we are in a unique position regarding this "crisis" as we are accustomed to "accepting what we cannot change" and "changing the things we can" because we practice these principles on a daily basis.

We also know that "this, too, shall pass."

May you all stay healthy and serene in the meantime!

Love in Service,
Donna E.
SCWS Chairperson