

Finding Your Voice: How to Handle Group Issues





WELCOME!

▶ **Frankie A.**

▶ **Stacey P.**

▶ **Tina S.**



In our Al-Anon groups and service arms, our freedom is balanced with the responsibility to preserve our Traditions and abide by Al-Anon principles.



---*Conflict Resolution Tool*, "Autonomy: Freedom with Balance"

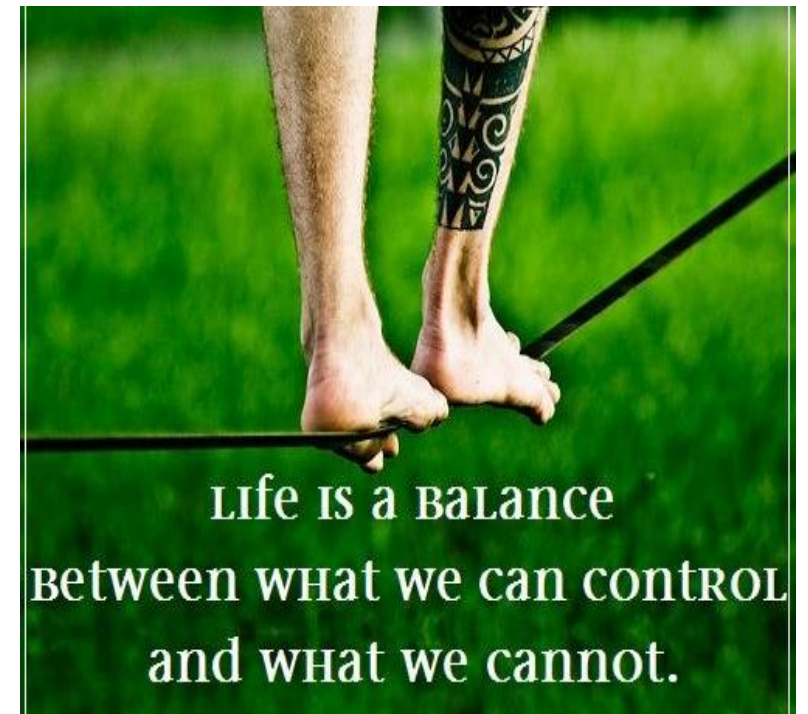
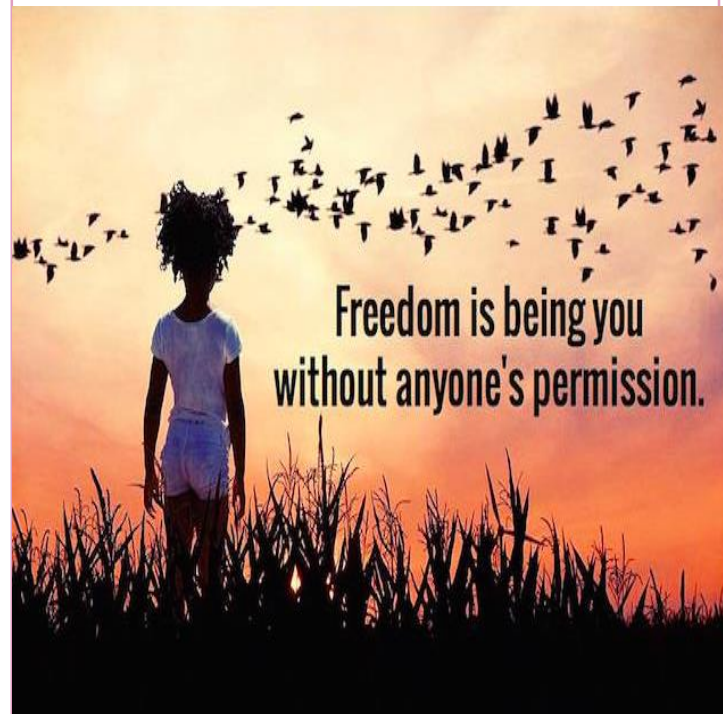
TRADITIONS

PRINCIPALS

Autonomy: Freedom with Balance

Autonomy

*The Crazy Idea
That You
Get To Choose
What You Want
With Your Life*





REMEMBER:

Begin by presuming good will, because every member of Al-Anon sincerely wants what's best for individual members, *as well as* for Al-Anon as a whole.

ISSUES

Common group problems:

- ▶ Outside affiliations/organizations
- ▶ Cross-talk
- ▶ Social media during meetings
- ▶ Non Conference-approved literature
- ▶ Meeting format
 - ▶ In a Group Conscience, did you find out information after the fact that, had you known before, you may have made a different decision?
 - ▶ Have you ever thought that the long - timers are withholding information?



WITHOUT AL-ANON:

Inappropriate Responses

Scary words and feelings

WITH AL-ANON:

Knowledge based
decision making
(KBDM)

Empowerment

KNOWLEDGE BASED DECISION MAKING



KBDM

Based on:

- ▶ Open communication between membership
- ▶ Dialogue before deliberation
- ▶ A culture of trust

Why should we use KBDM?

- Allows thorough examination of issues without an end or action in mind
- Making a good decision is more important than *who* makes the decision



Let's start with the basics...



The KBDM Process

1) GATHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

All members that have information related to an issue compile this information into a handout to which all members have access. This includes historical perspectives, articles, motions that are related, etc.

2) EXPLORE CURRENT KNOWLEDGE OR LACK THEREOF

The discussion is “framed” according to the issues “pros and cons”, implications of decisions, “what we wish we knew but don’t”, etc.

3) FACILITATE A VERBAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Members ask questions to gain clarity about the issue. The inquiry must be asked in the form of a question, i.e. Who, What, When, Where, Why, How, Is, etc.

4) Clarity!



The meeting begins...

GROUP CONSCIENCE LEADER

- Restates the topic/issue/question to begin the discussion
- is allowed to request a specific member to respond to the question, or allow anyone who has direct knowledge (not an opinion) to answer the question
- is allowed to stop a group member if the response becomes a commentary or personal opinion



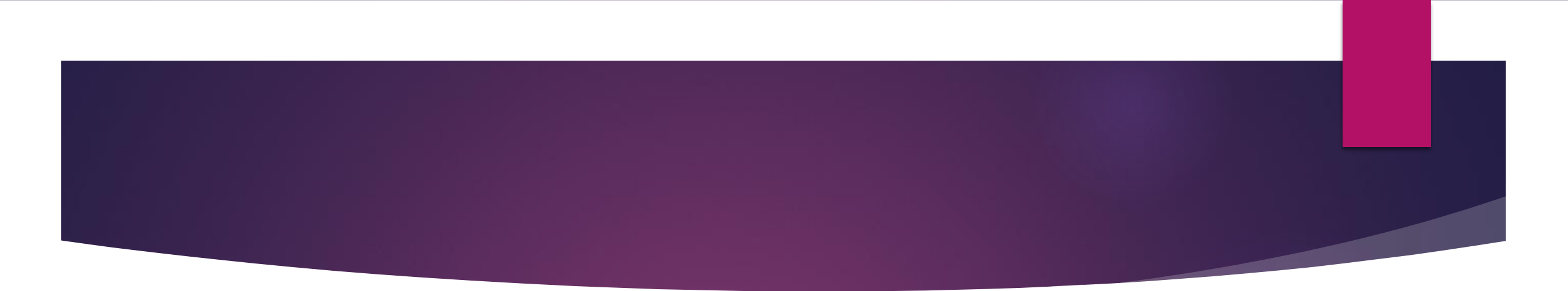
MEMBERS:

- May ask as many questions as necessary
- Can be timed when asking or responding to questions

A SUMMATION



A designated individual involved in the discussion summarizes what they have heard and requests confirmation from all members that they heard the same information.



**NEVER MAKE
PERMANENT
DECISIONS
ON
TEMPORARY
FEELINGS**

DECISION MAKING

Scenario 1

Based on the information exchanged, a general consensus is determined, If all are in agreement, no motion is needed. If not, a motion may come to the floor

Scenario 2

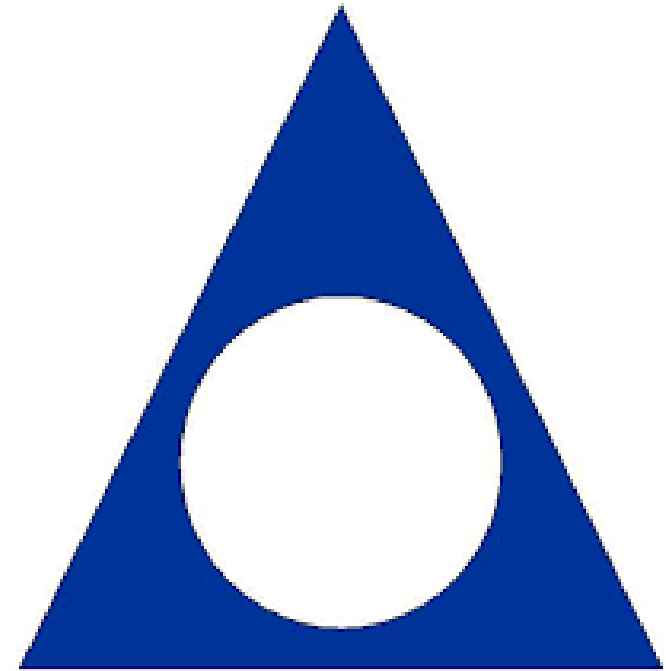
The Group Conscience Leader(s) may suggest that the issue be sent to a Group or District Representative, for research or gathering of more information and / or discussion*

Scenario 3

No motion or decision is made and the “status quo” remains

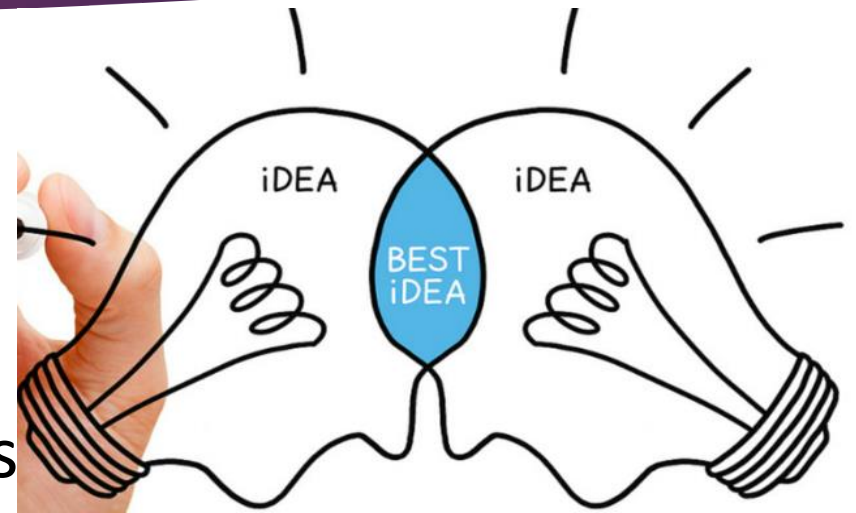
What does this mean
for Al-Anon as a
whole?

**We talk to each
other and reason
things out.**



BENEFITS OF KBDM FOR YOUR GROUP

- Collaboration and deliberation yield good information
- Better participation is gained by members listening and sharing information; more voices are heard; more ideas are generated
- Members accept responsibility for actions taken



BENEFITS OF KBDM FOR YOUR GROUP



- Members' thinking expands to include the best decision for the whole
- Members feel they have been heard and even if everyone doesn't agree, most agree that they know enough to support a decision
- Provides for ongoing strategic thinking and strategy development

BENEFITS OF KBDM *OUTSIDE* OF AL-ANON



We accept the decisions made in our family / workplace / meeting because we had the opportunity to gather the information and have our questions answered.

When we are more actively involved in decision making in our family / workplace / meeting, we start thinking about the greater good for the greatest number.



“Each group is autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.”

4th Tradition



BUT WHAT IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH YOUR GROUP'S
KNOWLEDGE BASED DECISION?



Southern California Policy

For

Resolving Group and Member Concerns

MEMBERS RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT:

- Therapist-created meetings that charged fees
- Use of outside literature in meeting (A.A. and others)
- Groups with formally-structured and/or dictatorial sponsorship
- Funds misused, or groups financially tied to an outside entity
- ...and more



IN RESPONSE, IN 2012, A THOUGHT FORCE
QUESTION WAS RAISED:

“How can Southern California World Service (SCWS) support Districts and Intergroups in dealing with groups whose activities do not consider Al-Anon as a whole?”

THEIR 2014 CONCLUSION:

Create a Task Force “to prepare an Area Policy to help meetings remain consistent with Al-Anon Traditions and policies as presented in the Service Manual.”

THE TASK FORCE PROCESS:

Do other Areas have policies?

If so, what's in them?

And how are they working?

Al-Anon Alateen

Service Manual 2014-2017



Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work
Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies
World Service Handbook
Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter
Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

- To consider the unity of Al-Anon as a whole
- To keep its message clear
- Help ensure the safety of individual members

REMEMBER CONCEPT 12, WARRANTY 5:

- Our Conference “will always try to act with mutual respect and love, one member for another...
- No action will be taken in anger, haste, or recklessness...
- Care will be observed to protect all minorities...
- No action will be personally punitive...
- Whenever possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity...
- Our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great and small, whether these be found in the majority or in the minority

WHEN CONCERNS ARISE...

ACTION:

Any individual may report concerns about group practices

RESPONSE:

Initial evaluation: by the Delegate, Alternate Delegate, and Immediate Past Delegate

TOOLS:

There is a dedicated email account and mailing address set up for confidential member concerns

FACT-FINDING

The appointed Individual(s) will hold a collaborative dialogue with the group itself, as well as any affected members, thereby ensuring that everyone is heard and can exercise the right of appeal.





RECOMMENDATIONS CAN INCLUDE:

- Nothing more needed
- Additional education
- Suggesting follow-up fact-finding
- Removal from local directories

Archiving

A full report of the fact-finding and decision is confidentially archived to ensure that future officers with a need to know are aware of the history of any reported concern that warranted the creation of a resolution team.



RESOURCES:

<http://alanonla.org/literature.html>

- ▶ Conflict Resolution Card # **S-71** \$1.25
- ▶ Conflict Resolution Using Our 12 Traditions #**S-72** \$5.50
- ▶ Talk to Each Other Booklet--Resolving Conflicts within Al-Anon #**S-73** \$5.50
- ▶ Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict Kit (S-71, S-72, S-73) # **K-70**
\$11.50

QUESTIONS



