

TO SHARE OR NOT TO SHARE (ON THE SCREEN)?

As your trusted servants of Southern California World Service, we are frequently asked this question:
During a virtual meeting, what literature can we share on the screen?

Below are the *updated current* policies of June, 2021, that provide guidance regarding sharing Conference Approved Literature (CAL) on screens during virtual meetings. The answers to the various Ask-It Basket questions that we've received were formulated in cooperation with WSO staff, because this is a "we" program!

1. Why can't we show **all** of our literature on the screen during a meeting?

Al-Anon's literature is copyrighted *and* we receive income for every piece of literature that our members buy. We also *lose* income every time members scan and upload documents to the internet and make them available for free.

For example, anyone can easily and quickly find the "Do's and Don'ts" online--for free. It's online because someone, somewhere, made a copy and uploaded it to a website--which is a violation of our copyright. So every time someone opens that document and shares it during a meeting, they are not paying for the piece of literature in which the Do's and Don'ts are printed. We are a program of principles--one of which is "obedience to the unenforceable." Just because we *can* do something (i.e., show a bootlegged copy of our literature on the screen), is it *right* to do so?

2. Can one of our members screenshare a .pdf of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021 version two (2)* and ask members to read from it?

Yes, members can now share the .pdf of the most recent *Service Manual*.

When sharing any content from the *Service Manual* beyond the Opening, Closing, or any of the Three Legacies, members are asked to provide reference to the page number from which the material was shared.

To ensure members are sharing the most recent *Service Manual*, currently the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual version two (2)* (P-24/27), it may be helpful to link to <https://al-anon.org/for-members/members-resources/manuals-and-guidelines/service-manual/> where the *Service Manual* is displayed.

The online version of the *Service Manual* can be challenging to display and navigate during a meeting. Our experience from member calls and emails is that it may be easiest to copy/paste any *Service Manual* excerpts you wish to use onto a blank document or slide for sharing. Or, **you can download the .pdf of the Service Manual from that WSO page (using the Download arrow on the toolbar); the .pdf is easy to enlarge and navigate when showing it on the screen.**

3. Do members have permission to share excerpts from **other** Conference Approved Literature (CAL) (in addition to the *Service Manual*) on the screen during an online meeting?

Over the course of the pandemic and the explosion of virtual meetings that resulted (from being unable to meet in person), WSO has agreed that **yes, the meeting *can* share excerpts from CAL on the screen, provided that they take the following steps:**

- A. Photocopy, scan, or copy and paste the image without alteration but **do *not* retype it.** (Typing allows too easily for errors or unauthorized changes.)
 - B. Only photocopy or scan what can realistically be discussed during one meeting or workshop.
 - C. Add the copyright/attribution line, including the title of the piece, page number, copyright date, name of our organization, and that permission is only for use in that specific meeting (e.g., “From page 79 of *How Al-Anon Works*, copyright 1995, 2008, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. for one-time use only by the [insert name of Al-Anon group or workshop].”) *
 - D. Share the image only during that discussion and do not save, post, or share on any website or email.
 - E. Request that members not take screen shots of the image or post elsewhere. **The image is not to be distributed outside of that one meeting occurring on one date/time.** (See question #1 above for the explanation of this policy.)
4. Do members violate Al-Anon’s copyright by retyping the literature, whether the Steps and Traditions or the “standard” readings (including the Opening and Closing)?

No and Yes--depending on which pieces of literature you’re talking about. **Before considering retyping our Steps/Traditions/Opening/Closing please re-read #1 above. Our first preference, always, is to *buy the literature in which our readings are printed!***

- A. No: Members are *not* violating copyright by retyping **these specific passages:**
 - the Three Legacies (Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service),
 - Opening, or
 - Closing. . .

. . . **IF** the **retyping is completely accurate, including italicization and punctuation.** (Typing easily allows for errors or unauthorized changes, so be sure that the typed version is exactly the same as the original.) This is acceptable IF the purpose of creating a printed copy or PowerPoint is to support the meeting Chair in leading the meeting or workshop.

(Keep in mind that you can show the .pdf of the *Service Manual* on the screen as easily as you can show a retyped document!)

It is *preferable* for groups to purchase *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24)--and other CAL--for use by the meeting/workshop leader. (See question #1 for the explanation of this policy.)

B. Yes: **Members do violate copyright by retyping any other CAL or Al-Anon service tools.**

5. If a reading (like the “Do’s and Don’ts”) is not available in electronic form, is there a way to show it on screen? That is, can **someone photocopy or scan the page (not retype it)**, if they enter the copyright information at the bottom of the page?

Yes. Someone may photocopy or scan (not retype) the page *with the understanding that **the attribution as outlined below is added to that page.*** For this example, it would read:

“From pages 21-22 of *Alcoholism the Family Disease* (P-4,) copyright 2005, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. for one-time use only by the [name of Al-Anon group] AFG.” *

6. Since we can retype the Steps and Traditions, why not use this opportunity to “update” the wording--if our Group exercises its autonomy (Tradition Four) and votes to do so?

Tradition Four states: Each group should be autonomous, **except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.**

Changing the wording of the Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service *would* affect Al-Anon as a whole.

“To keep Al-Anon’s message in focus and encourage unity, only Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and Al-Anon/Alateen service tools are displayed, distributed and used at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings, including meetings at conferences and conventions. These items reflect the informed group conscience of the Al-Anon Family Groups as expressed by its World Service Conference since 1961.” (*Service Manual*, p. 113)

The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter states that:

“No changes are to be made in the Al-Anon or Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service (except the descriptive text), or the General Warranties of the Conference Charter (Item 12) **without written consent of three-quarters of the Al-Anon Family Groups**” (*Service Manual*, p. 224).

*** This is the correct format of the citation:**

From pages [] of [*Name of book or pamphlet*], (P-___,) copyright [*date*], Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. for one-time use only by the [name of Al-Anon group] AFG.”

Love in Service,
Donna E.

Alternate Delegate

Any other “Ask-it Basket” questions about literature can be sent to us at groupandmemberconcerns@scws-al-anon.org.