



**2003 Al-Anon/Alateen
Membership Survey**

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BACKGROUND & PROCEDURES

This report summarizes the findings of a self-administered survey conducted among members of Al-Anon and Alateen groups, as well as Alateen sponsors. The purpose of this study is to help Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (World Service Office) become more effective and efficient in response to the needs of the groups they serve. The organization undertook this study to identify the current behavior and attitudes of group members, and determine the value of services currently provided to its membership.

As a membership study, the primary objective centered on determining membership behavior. Other key objectives of the study centered on evaluating the relative helpfulness and effectiveness of membership, identifying the most influential resources in the decision to join a group, and measuring the importance of treatment and counseling received before and after coming to Al-Anon/Alateen. In addition, other objectives include, ownership/access to various on-line tools, usage of e-mail, on-line subscription/purchasing habits, and key demographic information.

The key issues measured by the questionnaire include:

1. Factors which were important to members first joining Al-Anon/Alateen
2. Meeting attendance patterns
3. Length of time as a member
4. The effectiveness of various communication channels
5. Relationship of members to an alcoholic
6. Professional treatment used before and after coming to Al-Anon/Alateen
7. Member participation in other support programs

Methodology

The universe studied is members of Al-Anon, Alateen, and members who are also Alateen Group Sponsors. Groups were randomly selected to participate.

Surveys were *distributed* to members at a group meeting during the month of September 2003. Instructions were supplied to the Group Representative or Member Distributing the Survey to the Group. Survey packets included 20 questionnaires for Al-Anon and Alateen members. Two Alateen Group Sponsor Surveys were also included with the 20 Alateen Member Surveys. Members were asked to fill out the survey at the beginning of the meeting or during a break and were specifically instructed not to take the questionnaire home. It was requested that surveys be returned by postage paid return envelope no later than November 1, 2003. SIR received all completed surveys by December 17, 2003.

Extensive *data preparation* occurred prior to tabulation, including a series of electronic and manual checks. Data processing professionals reviewed the data to ensure the highest possible level of accuracy. Project Directors worked with both the client and data processing



staff to determine the banner points (or cross-tabs) that would segregate the data for this study into the most useful groups for analysis. These cross-tabulated tables were prepared using SIR's sophisticated tabulation software, which permits multilevel selection criteria custom-tailored to each project.

Tables that show all the data collected in this study were provided along with this report. Responses are shown for the total sample as well as key subgroups. The percentages of some questions may exceed 100% due to the rounding of numbers and/or multiple responses permitted for that particular question.

Statistical tests have been performed to determine where the apparent differences are "statistically significant," given the number of people asked the question and the percentage who gave a particular response. Significant differences are highlighted in the Executive Summary. The total sample of 743 yields a maximum statistical error of $\pm 3.6\%$ at the 95% level of confidence. (In other words, if you were to repeat this study 100 times, in 95 of those times the percentage giving a particular answer would be within 3.6 points of the percentage who gave that answer in this study. This is the standard level of precision used in the research industry.) The maximum statistical error for each of the three sample sources ranges from $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% level of confidence (Al-Anon members) to $\pm 9.8\%$ (Alateen members) and $\pm 17.6\%$ (Alateen Sponsors).

About SIR

This report was prepared by Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc. (SIR), a full-service marketing research firm owned and operated by researchers. Since 1964, SIR has completed more than 10,000 studies for a variety of clients. We've done it all - from local market surveys to large-scale national studies - providing accurate, actionable research for companies of all types. Our focus is always on getting you the information you need at the lowest price in the timeliest manner.

The SIR team worked closely with representatives from Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (World Service Office) to ensure the study would get you the answers needed to make better decisions. To that end, SIR collaborated with Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to design this research study and develop the questionnaire. The organization supplied the sample from internal records. SIR at its Richmond offices, using a team of proven professionals so that we could maintain the highest level of quality control and consistency, performed all other aspects of this study—including research design, questionnaire development, coding, data processing, analysis, and reporting.

As a leader in the marketing research field for almost 40 years, SIR stands ready to assist our clients in any way, whether it be answering questions related to this study, providing additional copies of items, or helping answer some future management information need. We look forward to working with you again in the future. For more information on SIR, please visit our website at www.SIRresearch.com.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Membership continues to play a major role in Al-Anon and Alateen members' lives, with tenure consistently growing over time.

- Al-Anon members mean tenure is 10.3 years, up from 8 years in 1999.
- Alateen tenure is 2.5 years, up slightly from 2.23 years in 1999.
- Alateen sponsor membership tenure is 12.6 years (up from 10.8 years) and their tenure as an Alateen sponsor is 5.7 years (compared to 4.6 in 1999).

2. Al-Anon and Alateen have a profound effect on the health of its members.

- Almost all feel Al-Anon has improved their mental health and well being (96%) and daily functioning at home, school, or work (95%). Fewer find their overall health status to be improved (87%), with one out of ten electing to say it has remained the same since joining Al-Anon (11%).
- Female Al-Anon members are more likely than male members to feel their mental health and well being (97% vs. 89%) and their daily functions (96% vs. 87%) have been improved by Al-Anon membership. While few consider these aspects to have worsened, males are more likely to feel this way than females (8% vs. 1% for mental health; 5% vs. 1% for daily functioning).
- Over three out of four Alateen members feel their mental health and well being has improved (78%). Fewer, however, find this to be true of their everyday functioning (68% improved), or of the status of their overall health (48% improved). Just as many consider their overall health to have remained the same since joining Alateen (47%).
- Male Alateen members are more likely than female members to find their overall health status improved by Alateen (65% vs. 37%).
- Groups in larger localities seem to have a greater impact on the improvement of Alateen members' overall health status (63% of large cities and 56% of suburban/town near city vs. 32% of small city and 20% of rural/small town). Smaller area members notice little change to the status of their overall health (60% - 68%).

3. Mental health and well-being is most often impacted negatively by someone's drinking.

- Nearly nine out of ten Al-Anon members feel someone else's drinking has taken its toll on their mental health and well being (86%). Daily functioning at home, school, or work (71%) and overall health status (63%) has been negatively impacted as well though fewer report this to be true compared to 1999 findings (80% daily functioning; 67% overall health status).



- More Alateen members find functioning at home, school, or work impacted by someone's drinking when compared to 1999 findings (72% vs. 61% in 1999). Their mental health and well being is also strongly impacted (68%) while overall health is not affected as much (24%).
- Female Alateen members are more affected in their daily functions when compared to male members (80% vs. 61%). High school or college-aged members are also more affected in their daily lives (81% vs. 60% of those not yet in high school).

4. Al-Anon members most often name their current spouse as the alcoholic with whom they have a relationship. With Alateens, it is their parents.

- Half of the Al-Anon members list their current spouse (52%). No less than a third also list other relative/family members (42%), friends (38%), full/half brother or sister (35%), father/stepfather (34%), or grandparent (31%). In fact, more Al-Anon members now list a parent as an alcoholic in their life when compared to 1999 findings (48% vs. 36%).
- Almost two out of three Canadian Al-Anon members list their current spouse as an alcoholic (62% vs. 45% US members).
- Female Al-Anon members are more likely than male members to list their current or former spouse as the alcoholic in their lives (55% vs. 24% current spouse; 30% vs. 17% former spouse). Males, on the other hand, are more likely to name their father/stepfather (52% vs. 32% of females).
- Nine out of ten Alateen members list parents (92%). While the number of father/stepfather alcoholic relationships has remained constant (76%), the percentage of Alateens who report other family members as alcoholics as increased since 1999: mother/stepmother (62% vs. 39%), aunt/uncle (55% vs. 30%), grandparent (42%, vs. 31%), and other relative/family (40% vs. 21%). Employers are also mentioned more often (8% vs. 3%).

5. Many of the alcoholics with whom members have a relationship currently are or have been AA members.

- Half of Al-Anon members' current spouses are or have been AA members (53%, up from 29% in 1999).
- More Alateens report having family members in AA when compared to 1999 findings (63% of father/stepfathers vs. 35% in 1999; 57% of mothers/stepmothers vs. 24%; 10% full/half brother or sister vs. 3%).

6. Many of the alcoholics with whom members have a relationship have a military background.



- Three out of ten Al-Anon members in a relationship with an active duty military alcoholic list their current spouse (29%), while two out of five list current spouses with military reserve status (39%). Of those retired from the military, 24% are current spouses.
- Two out of five Alateen members in a relationship with an active duty military alcoholic list their father/stepfather (40%). One out of eight list father/stepfathers with military reserve status (12%). Of those retired from the military, 35% are father/stepfathers.

7. Less than half of the members received treatment, counseling, or therapy before joining a group.

- Fewer Al-Anon members report receiving treatment of any kind prior to joining (47%, down from 55% in 1999).
- English Canadian and Spanish speaking Al-Anon members are less likely to have received treatment before coming to a meeting (37% - 28% respectively vs. 49% - 52% of French Canadians and English U. S.).
- Older Al-Anon members, those 55 years of age or older, were not as likely to get treatment prior to joining a group (39% vs. 52% of those younger).
- The likelihood of obtaining pre-Al-Anon treatment increases with the level of education (39% high school or less; 43% some college/post high school; 56% college graduate or better).
- Unmarried Al-Anon members are more likely to have sought treatment before joining a group (56% vs. 40% of those married).
- Three out of five Al-Anon members who received treatment/counseling prior to joining feel it played an important part in directing them to Al-Anon (61%).
- Those with no more than a high school education were most influenced by earlier treatment to join Al-Anon (70% vs. 57% with more education).
- Nearly two out of five Alateen members received treatment, counseling, or therapy before coming to Alateen (38%), comparable to findings in 1999 (40%).
- Though not statistically significant, trends indicate that Alateens may be less and less influenced by the treatment they receive prior to coming to Alateen to join the organization (38%, down from 43% in 1999 and 48% in 1996).
- Small city Alateen members are less likely to have received pre-Alateen treatment or therapy (17% vs. 46% - 57% in other types of localities).
- Early treatment played a bigger part in directing males to Alateen than females (56% vs. 24%). It was more influential to those younger than high school age as well in leading them to Alateen (61% vs. 19% of those in high school or beyond).
- Psychological treatment/counseling was most helpful to members before joining Al-Anon/Alateen.



8. About the same number of members receive treatment, counseling, or therapy since coming to Al-Anon or Alateen as they did before joining a group.

- Psychological treatment/counseling continues to be the most helpful to Al-Anon members (56%).
- Spiritual/religious counseling is just as helpful to Alateen membership (62%) as is psychological treatment/counseling (70%).
- Most members say treatment, counseling, or therapy received since coming to Al-Anon plays an important part in their recovery (89%).
- The number of Alateens who feel this therapy plays an important part of their recovery appears to be declining (63% vs. 70% in 1999 and 82% in 1996).

9. Personal recommendations continue to be significantly influential in getting new members to attend their first meeting.

- Over three out of four Al-Anon members list personal referrals (78%). However, almost all Alateens were also influenced by this group (94%). Professional referrals are important as well (40% Al-Anon members; 25% Alateens), while media coverage plays a lesser role in influencing new members to attend their first meeting (14% Al-Anon members; 11% Alateens).
- Family members and close friends/partners are the most important influences for Al-Anon members (19% - 23%).
- Canadian members are more likely than United States members to say family members played an important role in this decision. United States members are more likely than Canadian members to have been influenced by a therapist or counselor.
- Family members are the most influential to Alateens (75%).

10. Almost all Al-Anon members initially attended a regular meeting.

- No more than 5% attended any other type of meeting the first time.

11. The majority of all members currently attend regular Al-Anon/Alateen meetings.

- Al-Anon members attend an average 6 meetings per month.
- Alateen members attend an average 4 meetings per month.
- Slightly more Alateen family and friends (most often a mother or friend) also attend Al-Anon or Alateen meetings (92% vs. 87% in 1999). The biggest increase is found in the number of fathers who attend the meetings (30% vs. 19% in 1999).

12. Of those involved in other types of service, almost half have been Group Representatives (GR).



- Alateen members are just as likely to have been an Alateen Conference Board member (36%). In fact, the number of those who have served as Board members has increased (13% in 1999).

13. Most members are not now, nor have they ever been a member of any other Twelve Step program.

- About one out of six Al-Anon members are current or past members of Alcoholics Anonymous (15%). A quarter is or has been a member of other Twelve Step programs (25%).
- One out of seven Alateen members belong to other Twelve Step programs (15% belong with AA; 14% belong to other programs).

14. Virtually all Al-Anon groups have only Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and services materials available at meetings.

15. About half of all Alateen members report reading Al-Anon/Alateen publications.

- *Alateen Talk* is read most often.

16. Awareness of Al-Anon and Alateen media coverage has increased.

- Nearly seven out of ten Al-Anon members report hearing or seeing Al-Anon and/or Alateen mentioned in the media in the past year (69%). In addition, Alateen members are more aware of the media coverage when compared to past findings (63% vs. 52% in 1999).
- Television is most effective in reaching this audience (36% Al-Anon members; 25% Alateens), though the Internet is also an important medium with Alateen members (23%).

17. Concerning Alateen sponsors:

- Three out of ten Alateen sponsors have been providing this service for over five years (30%) and one out of five for over ten years (20%). The mean years of service are 5.7 years (compared to 4.63 in 1999).
- Most were either asked by an Al-Anon member to sponsor a group or they volunteered on their own (35% each).
- Virtually all sponsor regular groups (97%).
- More now report having a friend who is or was an alcoholic (65% vs. 35% in 1999). Increases are also found among those who have alcoholic “other relatives” (61% vs. 38% in 1999) or employer/employees (45% vs. 14% in 1999). Alateen Group Sponsors are just as likely, however, to have a father/stepfather, a full/half brother or sister, or current spouse who is or was an alcoholic.
- Most do not or have not belonged to Alcoholics Anonymous (86%), but many are current or past members of other Twelve Step programs (43%).



- An increasing number of Alateen Sponsors find gratification in helping others (74% vs. 53% in 1999). They are just as likely, however, to say the greatest reward of being an Alateen Sponsor is giving back to Al-Anon.
- More and more Alateen Sponsors are challenged with avoiding burn-out (42%, up from 17% in 1999). Attracting new members, finding other Al-Anon members to help them and maintaining order, equally challenges them.
- Almost two out of three Alateen Group Sponsors indicate they attend district and area-hosted meetings and workshops for Alateen and Al-Anon (63%).
- Readership for both *The Forum* and *Alateen Talk* has increased significantly, while the number reading *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* remains relatively unchanged (*Forum*: 89% vs. 58% in 1999; *Alateen Talk*: 78% vs. 54%; *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*: 33% vs. 22%).
- Most of their groups are:
 - Sponsored by an Al-Anon group (80%).
 - Without a Group Representative (61%, up from 40% in 1999). Those with a Group Representative report them as attending district and area assembly meetings (75%).
 - Have an average of 2.5 Alateen sponsors, compared to 1.2 in 1999. A third are members of Alcoholics Anonymous (33%) and almost half belong to another Twelve Step program (46%).
 - Are in communication with the Area Alateen Coordinator (63%).
 - Have 10 or fewer members (77%). Most are 12 years of age or older
 - Conduct Discussion (84%) and Step/Tradition meetings (71%).
 - Engaged in service (57%); most often public speaking (50%)
 - Increasingly participate in Conventions/Conferences (76% vs. 60% in 1999), attending an average of 4 in the past (up from 1.1 conferences in 1999).
 - Knows how to reach key people. However, fewer now know how to reach the Area Delegate (69% vs. 90% in 1999).
 - Raises money primarily by bake sales (30%). However, over a third does not raise money (37%).

18. Concerning the Membership Assessment:

- Almost two out of five Al-Anon members have left Al-Anon and later returned (38%). Fewer Alateen Group Sponsors report leaving and later returning to Al-Anon (19%).
- Females are more likely than male members to have left and returned (40% vs. 26% Al-Anon members; 24% vs. 10% Alateen Group Sponsors).
- For Al-Anon members, the average time away was 3.7 years and for Alateen sponsors, it was 8 years.



- Members left because they did not recognize their own need for help (35%), or they were not ready or able to make the commitment (30%).
- Members stay because they recognize the value of the program (86%), it keeps them on track and positive about life (80%), and they recognize their need for help (79%).
- Most all would definitely recommend Al-Anon to others troubled by someone else's drinking (93% Al-Anon members; 100% Alateen Group Sponsors). Less than 1% of Al-Anon members would not recommend Al-Anon.
- Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved literature meets most members needs, including 45% of Al-Anon members who say it completely meets their needs.
- Most members perceive Al-Anon's primary purpose to be helping families and friends of alcoholics (92% of Al-Anon members), including 100% of Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Newcomers can be kept coming back with beginner meetings (58% - 61%), encouraging sponsorship (55% - 58%), and stressing anonymity (29% - 52%). Alateen Sponsors also mention having meetings at the same time and place (65%), as well as childcare (42%).
- Members can be kept coming back to Al-Anon by practicing principles over personalities (58% - 62%). Alateen Sponsors are just as likely to say More Step and Traditions meetings (38%), and rotation of officers/group leaders (31%) would also keep them coming back.



RESPONDENT PROFILE

1. Al-Anon Members:

- Have been a member of Al-Anon for an average of 10.6 years
- Were not former Alateen members (97%)
- Either currently has or had a personal sponsor (57% currently, 22% previously)
Fewer currently have a sponsor when compared to 1999 findings (62%)
- Over two out of five have sponsored others (45%)
- Have an average 3 alcoholics in their lives
- Military backgrounds of the alcoholic relationships
 - Active Duty Military (25%)
 - Reserve Status Military (6%)
 - Retired from Military (10%)
- A majority is female (88%)
- Are an average age of 51
- Marital status:
 - Married (57%)
 - Divorced (16%)
 - Single (10%)
 - Life Partner (7%)
 - Widowed (5%)
 - Separated (5%)
- Have adult children (most not living with them)
- Live in the United States (60%)
- Levels of Education:
 - Less than high school (11%)
 - High school (22%)
 - Some college (18%)
 - Post high school training (9%)
 - College graduate (21%)
 - Post graduate studies or degree (19%)

- Ethnicity:
 - Caucasian (86%)



- Hispanic/Latino/Caribbean (10%)
- Mixed race (2%)
- Native American/Aboriginal (1%)
- Asian (1%)
- African American/African Canadian/Black (less than 1%)
- Other (1%)
- Languages spoken:
 - English (74%)
 - French (30%)
 - Spanish (12%)
 - Other (2%)
- Employment:
 - Employed (69%)
 - Retired (16%)
 - Homemakers (9%)
 - Students (2%)
 - Military (less than 1%)
 - Unemployed (3%)
- Professions:
 - Professional/Managerial/Executive (31%)
 - Clerical/Office/Service Worker (29%)
 - Medical (13%)
 - Sales/Marketing (11%)
 - Skilled worker/Craftsman (9%)
 - Farming/Agriculture (1%)
 - Other (6%)
- Live in large cities or small rural towns (35% - 30% respectively).
- Own or have access to a computer and other computer items (94%). The majority uses them daily (60%).
- Use e-mail daily (62%)
- A third receive newsletters, magazine/journal subscriptions or read books on-line (32%), while 45% purchase on line.



2. Alateen Members:

- Have been members of Alateen for an average of 2.5 years.
- Over half have no personal sponsor (56%). A third do have sponsors (33%), while one out of eight has a traditional Al-Anon sponsor (12%).
- Have an average 4 alcoholics in their lives
- Military backgrounds of the alcoholic relationships
 - Active Duty Military (29%)
 - Reserve Status Military (6%)
 - Retired from Military (29%)
- Almost two out of three are female (62%)
- Are an average age of 14
- Live in the United States (100%)
- Levels of Education:
 - Elementary school (7%)
 - Middle/Upper Elementary/Junior High School (37%)
 - High School (48%)
 - College (7%)
- Ethnicity:
 - Caucasian (72%)
 - Mixed race (13%)
 - Hispanic/Latino/Caribbean (4%)
 - African American/African Canadian/Black (3%)
 - Native American/Aboriginal (2%)
 - Asian (1%)
 - Other (5%)
- Languages spoken:
 - English (97%)
 - Spanish (10%)
 - French (4%)
 - Other (3%)
- Live in a large city (47%)

3. Alateen Group Sponsors:

- Have been a member of Al-Anon for an average of 12.6 years



- Few were former Alateen members (13%)
- Have an average 4 alcoholics in their lives
- A majority are female (68%)
- Are an average age of 49 (up from 45.6 in 1999)
- Live in the United States (97%)
- Live in a large city (50%)
- Own or have access to a computer and other computer items (94%). The majority uses them daily (79%).
- Use e-mail daily (83%)
- Almost two out of three receive newsletters, magazine/journal subscriptions or read books on-line (62%), while 76% purchase on line.

