

## **Policy Committee Update**

**April 2025**

Debbie P., Chairperson

Policy statements are interpretations of our basic guides: the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service. They help clarify how a Tradition or Concept might apply to a new or confusing situation that arises in Al-Anon or Alateen. Changes and additions to the Policy Digest are made only as our circumstances and growth require, since anticipating and including every specific situation would be impossible.

The purpose of the update sent each quarter by the Policy Committee Chairperson is to report progress and provide information on the following:

- Topics that are generated by the fellowship and discussed by the Policy Committee regarding issues or concerns that need clarification or interpretation in consideration of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service.
- Progress of work being completed by Policy Committee work groups and task and thought forces.
- Policy motions to be presented to the World Service Conference (WSC).
- Policy motions passed by the WSC.

The Policy Committee meeting occurs quarterly prior to the Board of Trustees meeting. The Policy Committee met in person on April 22nd and 23rd, 2025.

The **2024-2025 Concept Study Task Force** presented the final installment of the Policy Committee Concept Study, which has offered Policy Committee members the opportunity to study the Concepts together throughout this year. We completed our study by reviewing Concepts Eleven and Twelve as well as the General Warranties. These conversations have helped the Policy Committee members remain focused on our spiritual principles throughout all our discussions.

### **Local Services—Autonomy of Groups Task Force**

This Task Force was charged to consider the feedback from the previous Policy Committee discussion on the remaining “Autonomy of Groups” section of the “Local Services” section of the Policy Digest, the previously proposed “Meeting List Publishing Policy” language, and recommended revised language and placement of the paragraph within the Policy Digest.

Following the January meeting, the Task Force provided recommended Policy Digest language to the World Service Conference (WSC) members for their feedback. The Task Force considered the comments and questions received before recommending no further changes. At the WSC, the Task Force addressed each question and comment submitted and facilitated a conversation on the updated Policy Digest text. The WSC approved a motion accepting the revised Policy.

## **Choosing a Group's Name Policy Appeals Discussion**

### *April 2025 Policy Committee Meeting*

The 2025 April Policy Committee meeting included an opportunity for the Policy Committee to reflect upon how we, as a Policy Committee, arrived at the group conscience decisions made both when bringing the proposed Policy to the 2024 WSC for consideration and when making the decision last July to approve the implementation approach proposed by Staff. Considering that journey, the Committee was also invited to consider their role at the WSC in the upcoming discussion regarding the “Choosing a Group's Name” Policy.

In reviewing our role, we examined the text from the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and passages from the descriptive text of Concept Nine. We acknowledged that the spiritual principles contained within Concept Five called for the group appeals to be brought to the decision-making body, the WSC, for Conference members' reflection and consideration as well as the opportunity to collectively discuss as a body.

We acknowledged that both the 2024 and 2025 WSC members had been provided a significant amount of information on this topic. We also reflected on the realization that despite the volume of information shared with the Conference, when making the decisions before and following the 2024 WSC, the Policy Committee had had access to more data and insights based on several years of discussions and Staff reports. Through these discussions, the Policy Committee members acknowledged that their primary responsibility in the 2025 WSC conversations was to listen and learn with open minds and hearts.

### *2025 World Service Conference*

Prior to the 2025 World Service Conference, the Policy Committee provided the WSC members with a memo to help prepare for the WSC discussion, a document outlining the history of the “Choosing a Group's Name” Policy conversations, as well as all the appeals to the “Choosing a Group's Name” Policy that had been received by the WSO between September 2024 and March 31, 2025.

During several sessions throughout the Conference, discussions were held to discover whether the Conference members were in alignment on how to proceed. The discussions evolved organically, with as many voices as possible having the opportunity to be heard. Conference discovered the primary, although not exclusive, concern with the Policy was its implementation. As discussion progressed, many agreements were reached and clarifications shared, including the Policy Chairperson's declaration that it was never the Policy Committee's intention to direct Staff to enforce the “Choosing a Group's Name” Policy implementation on existing groups—ever.

Member agreements included alignment on the importance of ensuring every Al-Anon Family Group welcomes all those affected by someone else's drinking and not registering groups whose members state they will not be welcoming to all or whose names reflect affiliation with outside entities. As WSC time ran out, though, misalignment remained on one implementation approach. Conference members considered how to implement "Choosing a Group's Name" Policy as it applies to new group registrations and established groups' updates when the name submitted includes an identifier, such as "parents."

As it was imperative that the 2025 WSC provide clear direction on how to proceed with implementation before the Conference closed, a motion was offered that would provide guidance to the WSO Staff until the WSC reconvenes again in 2026. The approved motion allows Staff to accept new group registrations and established groups' updates when submitted names include identifiers, as listed in the current version of the "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" section of the *Service Manual*. The motion provided time for Conference members to bring this discussion back to the Areas to explore concerns, thoughts, and opinions on the implementation and the Policy through spiritual conversations with the groups.

A statement from the Policy Committee was provided to the Delegates for assistance in reporting back to their Areas.

As always, the Policy Committee welcomes all questions and suggestions from any Al-Anon member, meeting, group, or Area regarding issues that might need further clarification or interpretation in light of our Legacies.