



## **AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS, BC/YUKON AREA**

# **Group Representative's Guide to the BC/Yukon Area Assembly**

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# ASSEMBLY STRUCTURE

## Structure of the AI-Anon Fellowship (Links of Service)

These links of service/communication provide each group a voice in all AI-Anon discussions and decisions at the annual BC/Yukon Area Assembly. The active involvement of Group Representatives at Assembly ensures each member has access to the experience, strength and hope of the larger fellowship. See pages 176 & 177 of the 2022-2025 *Service Manual* for a representation of the service structure for AI-Anon.

## Purpose of Assembly

BC/Yukon Area Assembly is held in the lower mainland of BC once a year at the end of September. It is a gathering of Group Representatives, conducted by the Area Officers and Coordinators to discuss the business of AI-Anon. At Assembly, Group Representatives hear a report from the Delegate outlining the work of the World Service Conference that he/she attended on our behalf earlier in the year. The Delegate report will inform GRs of new resources, challenges and initiatives to learn about AI-Anon/Alateen from a global perspective. GRs will also participate in discussions affecting AI-Anon/Alateen in the BC/Yukon Area and vote on behalf of his/her group. Election of Officers is held each year as 3 year terms expire and GRs vote to select new Officers. Coordinators present resources available to groups that may serve to help groups grow and thrive. Assembly is a time when we communicate beyond the groups to ensure AI-Anon and Alateen continue to help members “find solutions that lead to serenity”.

## Who is a voting member of the Assembly?

The only voting members at Assembly are the Group Representatives. Other AI-Anon members can participate in the discussions, however only Group Representatives make the final decisions. (see Concept 1)

## How do the lines of communication work in AI-Anon service structure? (See pages 176 & 177 in the 2022-2025 *Service Manual*)

Group Representatives act as the voice of their group. By attending district meetings and acting as an information source for the groups, Group Representatives have a key role in connecting their group members to the larger AI-Anon community. As AI-Anon grows and evolves, Group Representatives can inform their members so that members can guide the decisions on behalf of AI-Anon to best serve the needs of the group. All AI-Anon decisions are made by AI-Anon members through representation by their Group Representative. Without active involvement by a Group Representative, AI-Anon can fail to serve members effectively and miss opportunities to thrive as a resource to families and friends of alcoholics.

District Representatives act as the voice of the groups in their district at Area World Service Committee Meetings (AWSCM) in May each year. District Representatives share information or questions with the Area Officers, Coordinators or the World Service Committee (via your Delegate). They also act as a resource to Group Representatives to help groups learn from each other and to help resolve any issues that may arise in the groups. They help prepare the agenda for Assembly.

The Area Officers conduct the day-to-day business of Al-Anon at the Area level and act as a resource to groups/districts in the area. The Delegate is in direct contact with World Service Office and attends the World Service Conference in April each year with Delegates from Canada, USA and Puerto Rico. The Delegate presents a report from his/her attendance at the World Service Conference to share what is happening to serve members from the World Service perspective. He/she will also take ideas or suggestions to the World Service Office that can help develop resources to serve the needs of the groups.

Area Coordinators, Al-Anon Information Services and Literature Depots offer resources and support to groups related to their area of service. They will be introduced at Assembly and are also available by phone or e-mail.

World Service Office is a resource centre for Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups. They are not a governing body, but act as a service body. They provide guidance and support to Area Officers, Coordinators to ensure they can perform their roles effectively. WSO staff regularly survey service members to determine what resources may be needed to support Al-Anon/Alateen success in each community. A wealth of information developed from the collective wisdom of many Al-Anon and Alateen groups is available on the WSO website. [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org)

## GROUP REPRESENTATIVE'S ROLE AT ASSEMBLY

### What is the role of the Group Representative?

- ***Read the agenda and discussion topics.*** Background information will be included on the BC/Yukon Al-Anon website. These topics should be discussed with the members of your group so you can represent their thoughts and ideas during the discussions at Assembly and be prepared to vote on their behalf.
- ***Read the "Consent Agenda" and note any errors or omissions.*** The Consent Agenda consists of Officer and Coordinator reports as well as minutes from the previous Assembly. These are published to the BC/Yukon Al-Anon website.

- **Learn about important issues regarding the needs of Al-Anon/Alateen from a broader perspective.** What can members of your group do to ensure Al-Anon and Alateen are relevant and available to the next generation?
- **Consider the qualifications of nominations for Officer service positions:** Each year one or more Officers are completing their term and a new Officer will be selected by vote. Group Representatives are asked to consider the skills and abilities of each applicant to ensure he/she is able to perform the duties of the position. GRs are encouraged to discuss applicants with their group members (we try to have resumes available before Assembly) and then vote for the person they consider best able to meet the needs of the position. Additional applicants may come forward at Assembly. GRs are asked to consider the late applicants and review their qualifications for the position. At times there may be only one applicant. If that person is not considered suitable, there will be an option of voting “no candidate”. Voting is done by ballot.
- **Write down interesting ideas/comments.** You will hear from other members at Assembly who may have different perspectives, or great ideas/solutions to discussion topics. Write them down and share them with your group members.
- **Learn about resources available to your group members.** You will also have access to Officers and Coordinators who have resources to help you in your role as Group Representative. If you have feedback for them coming from your group, now is a great time to have those conversations.
- **Prepare a report to take to your members.** You are expected to share what you learn with the members of your group at future group meetings or however it works best in your group.
- **Encourage members to subscribe to the Bulletin:** This is available free via email and is the communication publication that keeps members informed of what is happening in Al-Anon beyond the group level. It also provides interesting topics to encourage members to use all the resources available to them. There are also reports from Coordinators that can provide ideas to help your group grow and suggestions to keep meetings interesting.

#### **What do I need to know?**

- As Group Representative, you are an important link for communication between the group and District, Area and World Service Office. Without you, your group is missing out on many opportunities for growth through sharing the best Al-Anon has to offer.
- Assembly’s purpose is to ensure communication from the Area and World Service Office reaches the groups. Communication works both ways – Assembly discussion topics are an opportunity to communicate thoughts, ideas, problems and concerns about topics being discussed and then voting on behalf of your group.

- Each group should have funds set aside to reimburse your travel, hotel and meal costs to attend Assembly.
- Assembly is where members select their Officers: Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. One or more Officers will be completing a 3 year term each year. GRs vote to select a suitable candidate to serve in the available position for a 3-year term to start the following January.
- If your group is not able to entirely fund your attendance at Assembly, first go to the district to ask for help with the costs. Your attendance is important! If funds are not available, contact the Area Treasurer to request financial assistance for the portion your group/district cannot fund. For budgeting purposes, it is requested that the request be made 1-2 months in advance of Assembly. This step is to ensure the Area has funds available. Contact the Treasurer at [treasurer@bcyukon-al-anon.org](mailto:treasurer@bcyukon-al-anon.org).

#### Who can I ask for help?

- Almost everyone in the room is, or has been, a Group Representative. If you don't understand something, be sure to ask someone sitting at your table. We encourage you to sit with someone you do not know, a friend you haven't met yet.
- Experience has shown that having a service sponsor will help make your term as Group Representative more fulfilling. It is always better to share experiences in Al-Anon!

#### What should I take with me?

- BC/Yukon Area Bulletins from August and September and Officer and Coordinator reports, AIS/LDC Liaison reports, previous Assembly minutes, agenda and background information related to discussion topics available on the BC/Yukon Al-Anon website.
- *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (either hard copy or downloaded copy from [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org) )
- Comfortable clothing (you will be sitting a lot)
- A coffee/tea mug or water bottle
- Pen and notepad or electronic device for note taking and reference to downloaded documents
- Current meeting address, contact info, postal address, and e-mail address for group (if available)
- A copy of this booklet

#### What do I need to take back to my district/group?

- **Ideas** learned from the experience of other Group Representatives.
- **Resources** available from the area Officers and Coordinators and how to access them.
- **Highlights** from the Delegate report (World Service Conference)

- **Discussion topics** Inform members of the topics that were discussed and new information you may have learned. Also share voting results.
- **Encourage** participation beyond the group. Active members = vibrant groups! By sharing what you learn, you will be educating members about the importance of active involvement in supporting the health and growth of AI-Anon/Alateen.

## HOW DOES THE MEETING WORK?

### What we want to achieve:

- We are all on the same team
- We want you to be successful
- Listen, think and support what is best for AI-Anon regardless of what others are doing.
- All opinions are welcome.
- You may have a perspective that may help us make a better choice.

### How are decisions made?

Before any votes take place, it is important for all voting members to have the same information. This is the purpose of having background information available prior to Assembly where group members can voice their opinions. In 2008, BC/Yukon Area adopted an approach called Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM). In this format, a facilitated discussion allows members to express opinions without judgment or bias. The principles of KBDM are:

- Talk to each other (equality)
- Reason things out (patience)
- Participate in discussions (honesty and generosity)
- Be open minded (understanding and compassion)
- Show respect (acceptance and trust)

### Rules of conduct for open discussion:

- 2 minutes at the microphone
- Begin and end each session on time
- No side conversations
- No distractions
- No applause or expressions of approval or disapproval of speakers
- Express opinions, but not if someone else has already done so

- Stay on topic
- Follow the agenda
- Be courteous
- No scents
- Presume everyone wants what is best for Al-Anon regardless of whether you agree or disagree

### **How should I introduce myself when speaking at the microphone?**

When speaking at the mic, introduce yourself by first name and last initial (or full name if you wish), district # and name of your city/town. Each person can have one time at the mic per discussion topic. (See page 100 in the 2022-2025 *Service Manual* for “Anonymity Within Al-Anon/Alateen”.)

### **How is voting conducted?**

Before the business session, the Chairperson will ask the GRs to decide if the votes counted will be simple majority (51%) or 2/3 majority (66%) to pass. During the discussion, when the Chairperson feels there is a common understanding of the issue and members are ready to make a decision, a motion is requested. One person crafts the motion (with suggestions from others). Writing a clear and accurate motion may take some time, but it is important to ensure future members are clear about the intent. When a clearly stated motion is prepared (usually after dinner), the Chairperson calls for a “second” and then the vote. Only Group Representatives vote “for”, “against” or “abstain”. General discussion votes are done by a show of hands. Election votes are done by ballot.

### **What is a “Consent Agenda”?**

A motion was passed in 2008 to adopt a Consent Agenda. This means that the Officers’ and Coordinators’ Reports and the minutes of the previous Assembly are distributed to the voting members ahead of time for perusal. The Consent Agenda saves time by not requiring the reports and minutes to be read at Assembly. The Consent Agenda is published on the BC/Yukon Al-Anon website prior to Assembly. GRs are asked to read the reports before Saturday morning of Assembly. If there are any issues arising from the reports, they can be identified and placed on the agenda for discussion later in the day by stating your concerns before the Consent Agenda is approved. The content of the “Consent Agenda” (other than those parts identified for later discussion) are then voted on as accepted or not by the GRs.

Note: The Treasurers report is not included in the Consent Agenda.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. Will I be voting at Assembly?**

Voting is conducted at Assembly by Group Representatives only. The “ultimate authority” rests with group members. GRs have the “delegated authority” from his/her group. (See

Concept 2 & 3) This is how Al-Anon is guided by the wishes of the members rather than a governing body. (see Concept 1) There will be times that voting needs to be handled at AWSCM, but those votes would need to be ratified by GRs at Assembly.

**2. *I am not able to attend Assembly. Can I send the votes by proxy or can another GR take my place?***

GRs must be in attendance either in person or electronically to vote. Because the discussions often bring out new ways of thinking about issues, it would not be following Knowledge Based Decision Making to allow proxy votes. A GR who votes for his/her group cannot also vote for another group. To have your group represented, the group could choose a member (who is not also an AA member) to attend Assembly in your place. He/she would be considered the "Alternate Group Representative" and register as a voting member at Assembly.

**3. *Can other members who are not Group Representatives attend Assembly?***

Yes, all Al-Anon/Alateen members are welcome and encouraged to participate in Assembly. All members are welcome to offer their ideas during discussions. This is how we ensure we have full knowledge before the GRs vote.

**4. *Why is it important for me to attend? Can't I just get a written report of Assembly?***

There are many useful conversations that take place at Assembly. It is impossible to capture all the great ideas in a written report. By attending, you have the opportunity to discover interesting ideas that may serve to improve your Al-Anon/Alateen meetings. Fellowship is an important part of Al-Anon/Alateen recovery. We hope you will discover that fellowship at Assembly is a wonderful experience.

**5. *If I can't find someone to share a room with, can you help me find a roommate?***

You may contact one of the Area Officers if you are unable to find a roommate. There are times when they can match you with another GR in the same circumstance. If there is a medical reason for needing a private room and your group cannot afford one, you may contact the Treasurer at least one month in advance of Assembly for approval, to ensure funds are available.

**6. *If I can't find someone to share a room with, how can I get my expenses paid?***

If you are unable to find a roommate and your group funds cannot cover the cost of a single occupancy room, check with your district first to determine if there are funds available to cover the extra costs. If that is not possible, contact the Area Treasurer at least one month before Assembly to request help with expenses and to ensure funds are available.



**7. *My group cannot pay for me to attend Assembly. How can our group participate?***

If your group cannot pay for all of your expenses, perhaps your district can help with some of the costs. Your group could do some fundraising within Al-Anon to raise money for your travel costs (pages 53 & 106 in the *2022-2025 Service Manual*). If further help is needed, you may contact the Area Treasurer to request financial help to attend. Please do this at least one month before Assembly to ensure funds are available. We encourage you to make every effort to attend. Your group will gain a great deal of benefit from your attendance! Electronic attendance is also an option.

**8. *How can I find a service sponsor to help me with my service position?***

There are many members who have participated in service and would be happy to help you on your new journey! Check with service members in your district, or talk with current service members at Assembly. Almost everyone in the room has something to offer. This is where fellowship can be helpful in choosing the right person for you.

**9. *Should District Representatives attend Assembly? (not expected at Assembly – but encouraged)***

District Representatives are encouraged to attend Assembly. It is great to have DRs and the GRs from the district work together at Assembly. Unfortunately, due to the geography and size of our Area, we are unable to fund expenses for DRs to do so. District funds may be used to send DRs to Assembly with permission of the groups in the district, or the member may choose to attend at his/her own expense.

**10. *What are the qualifications for an Officer position?***

The applicant should be completing the third year as a District Representative or be a past District Representative, be an active member of Al-Anon, and be prepared to serve for 3 years. Applicants are asked to outline their service experience which indicates their involvement in Al-Anon and familiarity with Steps, Traditions and Concepts. Applicants may also outline their personal knowledge, skills, and abilities to demonstrate they can perform the duties of the position. For example, a secretary should have basic computer skills to operate the equipment at meetings and prepare minutes of meetings. (See Concept 9)

**11. *Will there be time for fellowship at Assembly?***

The business of Assembly is 7-9 pm Friday night and Saturday from 9 am to 9 pm. Although the business is priority, there are fun presentations planned and regular breaks to connect with others. An early bird meeting is scheduled for 8 am Saturday morning and a “spiritual meeting” scheduled from 9-11 am Sunday morning. Lunch and dinner breaks are also good opportunities for spending time with new friends!

**12. How can I receive a copy of the BC Yukon Bulletin?**

The Bulletin is emailed monthly to all Group Representatives who have provided their email address to Group Records with the option of opting out. If you have not received the email, you can sign up from the website [www.bcyukon-al-anon.org](http://www.bcyukon-al-anon.org) The members' page is password protected: username "member" password "Area81"

**13. Will there be a "Tradition 7" collection at Assembly?**

Yes. We pass the basket at Assembly for Tradition 7 contributions. Many members make personal contributions; however, your group may wish to donate through the GR. In many Areas in North America, Assemblies have registration fees to cover costs. To date, our Area funds are sufficient as we work to keep costs to a minimum.

**14. Where are the guidelines for how the BC/Yukon Area conducts the business of Al-Anon?**

In 1968 a motion to follow the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* was approved. Since then, new motions have changed some of our policies to better reflect the needs of our Area. These motions are posted on [www.bcyukon-al-anon.org](http://www.bcyukon-al-anon.org) under "member resources". To enter the "members" section User Name is: *member*, Password: *Area81* (no space)

**15. New information came forward at Assembly that makes me think my group would make a different choice if they had all the information. What should I do?**

As a trusted servant, you have delegated authority to use your intelligence to make effective decisions. (see Concept 10) It is assumed that you have had full consultation with your group members and understand their needs. When attending Assembly where you have access to all the facts to guide you, it is expected that you act according to your own conscience. (see Concept 3)

## **Al-Anon Declaration**

**Let It Begin with Me**

**When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, let  
the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there,  
and let it begin with me.**

## COMMON ACRONYMS

Here is a list of common Al-Anon acronyms, or initials. This list is to help newer service members to become familiar with our service terminology.

AAPP	Area Alateen Process Person
AFG	Al-Anon Family Groups
AFG,Inc.	Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (World Service Office)
AIS	Al-Anon Information Service
AMIAS	Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service
AWSC	Area World Service Committee
AWSCM	Area World Service Committee Meeting
CAL	Conference Approved Literature
CMA	Current Mailing Address
DR	District Representative
GEA	Global Electronic Area
GR	Group Representative
KBDM	Knowledge Based Decision Making
LDC	Literature Depot Centre
ODAT	One Day at a Time
PEG	Permanent Electronic Group
PO	Public Outreach
PSA	Public Service Announcement
WSC	World Service Conference (an event)
WSO	World Service Office (a location)

## RESOURCES

- *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2022-2025*
- Websites: [www.bcyukon-al-anon.org](http://www.bcyukon-al-anon.org) Member Login (user name: **member**, password: **Area81**); then click Member Resources/Assembly – this is your “Go To” place for Assembly information
- <http://al-anon.org/> Members’ Section
- Al-Anon Traditions and Concepts of Service: Various Conference Approved Literature (CAL)
- BC/Yukon Area Bulletin

### 2023 BC/Yukon Officers:

Delegate: Owen H. (D1 North Vancouver)	<a href="mailto:delegate@bcyukon-al-anon.org">delegate@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Alternate Delegate: Nancy M. (D18 Kelowna)	<a href="mailto:altdelegate@bcyukon-al-anon.org">altdelegate@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Chair: Patty T. (District 14 Nanoose Bay)	<a href="mailto:chair@bcyukon-al-anon.org">chair@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Secretary: Vacant	<a href="mailto:secretary@bcyukon-al-anon.org">secretary@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Treasurer: Janis A. (D10 Langley)	<a href="mailto:treasurer@bcyukon-al-anon.org">treasurer@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>

### 2023 BC/Yukon Coordinators

Alateen: Michelle W. (D15 Nanaimo)	<a href="mailto:alateen@bcyukon-al-anon.org">alateen@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Group Records: Sarah O. (D10 Langley)	<a href="mailto:grouprecords@bcyukon-al-anon.org">grouprecords@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Archives: Vacant	<a href="mailto:archives@bcyukon-al-anon.org">archives@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Public Outreach: Gail S. (D10 Langley)	<a href="mailto:publicoutreach@bcyukon-al-anon.org">publicoutreach@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Website: Lothar S. (D17 Sooke)	<a href="mailto:website@bcyukon-al-anon.org">website@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Webmaster: Vacant	<a href="mailto:webmaster@bcyukon-al-anon.org">webmaster@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Bulletin: Jean H. (D27 Prince George)	<a href="mailto:bulletin@bcyukon-al-anon.org">bulletin@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Hybrid Event: Akemi M. (D5 Richmond)	<a href="mailto:event@bcyukon-al-anon.org">event@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Hybrid Equipment: Ernie W. (D18 Kelowna)	<a href="mailto:equipment@bcyukon-al-anon.org">equipment@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>
Literature: Audrey E. (D16 Victoria East)	<a href="mailto:literature@bcyukon-al-anon.org">literature@bcyukon-al-anon.org</a>

### Al-Anon Information Services and Literature Depots

Vancouver 604-688-1716	<a href="mailto:afgcentraloffice@gmail.com">afgcentraloffice@gmail.com</a>
Victoria 250-383-4020	<a href="mailto:alanonvictoria@gmail.com">alanonvictoria@gmail.com</a>
Kelowna	<a href="mailto:ldcokanagan@yahoo.ca">ldcokanagan@yahoo.ca</a>