

Where did the name Al-Anon come from and why the dash (-)?

I've seen many publications pertaining to Al-Anon and never found an explanation of the meaning of Al-Anon. Where did it come from and what does it mean?" writes Margaret G. from Brody, MT.

The World Service Office immediately put the archivist to work. She came up with the following:

In May 1951 Lois W., Chairman, and Anne B., Secretary, sent the first letter from the Clearing House¹ polling the 87 family groups that had previously written to the AA General Service Office. One question asked was, "Do you approve of the name AA Family Group? If not, what do you suggest'?"

Approximately 57 responses were received. Some groups suggested names they were already calling themselves such as, AA Associates, AA Auxiliary, Non-AA, Triple A, Women's Auxiliary of AA, Friendship, AA Helpmates, Twelfth Step Auxiliary. The majority, however, favored the AA Family Group name, which Lois and the Committee changed to "Al-Anon" which is a contraction of the two words. Alcoholics Anonymous.

This decision came about when AA objected to the use of the letters "AA" in the name of the national association of non-alcoholics since their Sixth Tradition stated that an AA group ought never lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise.

The hyphen was included because there are, in many locations in the U.S. and Canada, AA Clubhouses that call themselves Alanon or Alano. The hyphen also identifies Al-Anon as a distinct organization.

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¹ The office that Lois and Anne used was called the Clearing House until AFG Headquarters, Inc. incorporated in 1954.