

Guideline: Public Outreach - Participation in Community Awareness Programs.

This guideline contains suggestions for Al-Anon members who are participating in health fairs and other events. Outreach activities can include information tables, speakers, open meetings and panel discussions. Some of these suggestions are the result of the White Bison/Sacred Hoop Journey, which took place in Alameda, California, in June 2002.

Local Al-Anon contacts need to take part in planning meetings or speak with the event coordinator before the event. Also, you should know where to reach the coordinator during the event. In this way, you might be able to request or negotiate important changes such as moving the location of the display table, publicizing an open meeting, and making Al-Anon related announcements.

1. Be pro-active in communicating Al-Anon's needs rather than waiting to be contacted by the local event organizer. You may also discover some things that need to be changed or improved after you are actually at the event.
2. Be early and see if you can locate your table in a high traffic area, preferably with other health-oriented tables.
3. When there are various health-oriented speakers at the event, see if you can request that an Al-Anon or Alateen speaker address the main body, even if only for 5 minutes. A short talk will let people know about the program and the location of the information table.
4. If you decide to hold open meetings or presentations, make sure they are well publicized and do not conflict with other events. It is not a good idea to overlap with open NA or AA meetings.
5. You can ask that AA cooperate with us with by letting an Al-Anon volunteer speak for 5 - 10 minutes, or by having some literature in the area during their speaking. Contact them in advance.
6. The message of Al-Anon is hope. In displays and sharing make our message a little more fun, spontaneous and inspiring - a message of attraction.
7. You may want to consider skits. It is possible to have a simple skit with as little as two or three members "winging it" on a specific topic using simple props.
8. There may be prejudice in some communities against Al-Anon and 12-Step programs in general. Hopefully this will change as people see us, hear us. Keep in mind who will be attending the event you are preparing for. If a diverse group of volunteers are needed, ask for help from groups all over.

White Bison turned out to be a very spiritual event with lots of friendly people, good speakers, songs and ceremonies. Hopefully these suggestions will help our trusted servants provide public information at similar events in the future.

Please contact your local Public Outreach Coordinator for questions.