Who are professionals?
As awareness grows that addiction is a family disease, so Co-Anon will attract the interest of professionals such as: counselors, therapists, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, lawyers, clergy, nurses, teachers, writers and media professionals. The following guidelines are designed to help Co-Anon groups and individual members maintain the Co-Anon Traditions while cooperating with outside professionals.

Can professionals (non-Co-Anon members) attend Co-Anon meetings?
Professionals may attend Co-Anon meetings provided that permission has been asked from the group. We ask, however, that professionals refrain from giving advice or dominating the discussion in any way. Note-taking or tape-recording is permitted only by prior group consent.

Can professionals be invited as guest speakers?
Professionals may be invited as guest speakers if the focus of the Co-Anon Steps and Traditions is maintained. They are discouraged from promoting any professional therapeutic viewpoints, and are encouraged to focus on family members' recovery, rather than the recovery of the addict.

Co-Anon Family Groups are for friends and family members affected by the disease of addiction.

Find a meeting near you

www.co-anon.org

Co-Anon and the professional

www.co-anon.org

Guidelines for Working As Professionals

Can Co-Anon members participate on outside panels?
Members may participate on a panel put together by professionals for the purpose of Public Service Information. It should be made clear that opinions expressed were strictly those of the person who gave them. Since Co-Anon does not affiliate itself with outside enterprises or organizations, continued participation in such panels is discouraged.

Can Co-Anon members participate in outside research?
Co-Anon may not lend its name to any outside research project, but members may participate on an individual basis if they wish. Again, it should be made clear that opinions expressed were strictly those of the person who gave them.

Can professionals start a Co-Anon Group?
Co-Anon groups should not be run by professionals. However, a professional may instigate the formation of a new group when experienced members are not available. Once the group has begun, the professional should withdraw and turn the group over to its members to create group officers. It is recommended that a new group work closely with Co-Anon World Service.

These guidelines are for Co-Anon members who also work as trained, licensed or certified practitioners within the field of mental health. They may also be helpful to Co-Anon members asked to volunteer for agencies, faculty or training programs outside Co-Anon Family Groups.
A member's reference to their own professional capacity should be avoided before, during and after meetings. Sharing is encouraged as an equal recovering Co-Anon member, rather than from a professional perspective of expertise in the field of addiction.
Any services provided to Co-Anon Family Groups by a Co-Anon member should be on a non- professional basis, however expenses may be reimbursed if necessary. Services include: Twelfth-Step work hotline volunteer, public information, sponsorship, group officers, regional or WSO officers, authoring of literature, etc. Special workers may be employed by Co-Anon according to guidelines in Traditional Eight.
The content of paid professional lectures or groups given by Co-Anon members, should reflect their professional expertise and skills, rather than the recovery process of Co-Anon Family Groups. Neither Co-Anon Twelfth-Step work, nor public information functions are performed for pay.
References to membership in Co-Anon are avoided at outside engagements. Those who speak in a professional capacity ask that they not be introduced as a Co-Anon member.

A member is free, however, to break their own anonymity below the level of press, radio, TV and film, if they wish to respond to a question from the audience. If so, they are encouraged to state that any opinion expressed is strictly their own, and does not represent Co-Anon as a whole.
Anonymity should be maintained on all brochures, programs, flyers, letterheads or business cards. Professionals should avoid disclosing Co-Anon membership on all such written materials or announcements.
Disclosure of Co-Anon membership to clients on a personal basis is an individual decision, and not a break of Tradition.
Co-Anon members applying for a job in the field of substance abuse may mention membership on a resume, and it should be made clear that this information is confidential.
A Co-Anon member who is a professional should only quote Co-Anon literature with prior written permission from Co-Anon World Service.
It is a break in anonymity for an author to refer to their Co-Anon membership in: (i) their professional writings, papers, books, articles, etc., or (ii) in the publisher's notes about the author.
These guidelines are based on Co-Anon's Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service which help us maintain our primary purpose: to help families of addicts.