

New Comers Welcome Kit

Collection of Pamphlets and information for the newcomer.

Remember that SAA is a safe and supportive environment
and that everyone has
stories they aren't proud of.
Choose someone you are comfortable
sharing with.

Version 2.0.0.1



Tri County Recovery
of the Path to Healing and Recovery Group

SAA - From Shame to Grace

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This guy is walking down the street when he falls in a hole. The walls are so steep he can't get out.

A doctor passes by and the guy shouts out "hey you, can you help me out?"

The doctor writes a prescription throws it down the hole and moves on.

Then a priest comes along and the guy shouts up "father, I'm down in this hole can you help me out?"

The priest writes out a prayer, throws it down into the hole and moves on.

Then a friend walks by - "Joe its me, can you help me out?"

and the friends jumps into the hole.

Our guys says "Joe are you stupid. Now we are both down here"

The friend says "yeah, but I've been down here before and I know the way out"

A Native American fable describes two wolves that battle inside each of us. While there are several version of this legend, here is one (author unknown):

An old Cherokee chief was teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil—he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, self-doubt, and ego. The other is good—he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. This same fight is going on inside you—and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?” The old chief simply replied, “The one you feed.”

From
Shame to Grace
SAA

ABOUT SAA

SAA is a 12 Step program adapted from AA for men and women who seek recovery from compulsive or inappropriate sexual behavior. We make no judgments about sexual preference and are not affiliated with any other group or organization. Though we emphasize the spiritual nature of recovery, we do not support or oppose any particular faith or religion. We maintain strict confidentiality and anonymity in order to encourage openness and honesty. You are not required to state you are a sex addict or to speak at all, though many find it freeing to do so. We recommend you attend this or other meetings six times before making a decision as to whether you will benefit from this program.

As a fellowship of recovering addicts, Sex Addicts Anonymous offers a message of hope to anyone who suffers from sex addiction.

Through long and painful experience, we came to realize that we were powerless over our sexual thoughts and behaviors and that our preoccupation with sex was causing progressively severe adverse consequences for us, our families, and our friends. Despite many failed promises to ourselves and attempts to change, we discovered that we were unable to stop acting out sexually by ourselves.

Many of us came to this realization when we started attending SAA meetings. In that setting we heard stories similar to ours and realized that recovery from our problem was possible. We learned through the SAA Fellowship that we were not hopelessly defective.

The basic principles of recovery practiced by SAA are found in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Although we are not affiliated with AA or with any other organization or agency, we are, indeed, grateful for permission to modify and apply the Steps and Traditions to sex addiction, making recovery possible for us.

As sex addicts who have found a solution, we offer a message of hope to all who suffer from sex addiction. This booklet is an invitation to recovery for anyone who believes that he or she may be experiencing the same problem that we have faced.

— Sex Addicts Anonymous, / A Pathway to Recovery

Dear Newcomer

Welcome to S.A.A.. When we came to our first meeting many of us were having a variety of feelings. We were relieved to have found a place where our pain and despair might be understood. We were angry that we had to get help and couldn't manage this part of our lives. We felt lonely and were ashamed of our sexual history. We had secrets that we were reluctant to share. We were distrustful, guarded and frightened. We had been abused and we had abused others. We were sex addicts and needed help.

The programme of S.A.A. is patterned after the Twelve Step Programme of Alcoholics Anonymous. Here we learn a new way of living. We learn, at our own pace, to experience intimacy and sharing with others in a healthy way. We learn to trust; to express our feelings; to ask for our needs to be met; to say no when no is appropriate; and to stay around when all we want to do is run. Here no one shames us for what we have done or are still doing.

Here we have a safe harbour within which to heal and for that we are grateful.

The only requirement for membership in S.A.A. is a desire to stop compulsive sexual behaviours. It is a programme of progress, not perfection. If you are willing to be honest and have a desire to have and maintain healthy relationships, then you are in the right place.

It is suggested that you attend at least six meetings before you decide whether the programme is for you. At your first meeting we encourage you to talk to others and exchange telephone numbers with those you relate to. We also suggest that you select a temporary sponsor to assist you in learning the basics. The selection process is easy: all you do is ask someone you relate to (to whom you are not sexually attracted) if they would be willing to be your temporary sponsor until you learn your way around. At a later date, after you have got to know us better, we suggest you choose a permanent sponsor.

Although anonymity is a core tradition on which the programme depends, you should be aware that some people may decide after careful thought to report certain disclosures to the authorities.

In addition to attending meetings and talking with others we suggest you read our primary text *Sex Addicts Anonymous (The Green Book)*, S.A.A. pamphlets available via saa-recovery.org, Alcoholics Anonymous (*The Big Book*) and other appropriate recovery literature.

We are happy that you are here, for it is the newcomer that keeps S.A.A. alive and well. We encourage you to take it **ONE DAY AT A TIME, BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF, and KEEP COMING BACK.**

Toolbox For Sobriety

or agency, we are, indeed, grateful for permission to modify and apply the Steps and Traditions to sex addiction, making recovery possible for us.

SAA (Sex Addicts Anonymous) is a fellowship of recovering addicts which offers a message of hope to anyone who suffers from sex addiction.

The basic principles of recovery practiced by SAA are found in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Although we are not affiliated with AA or with any other organization

Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober, to abstain from sexually compulsive behavior, and to carry the message to the sex addict who still suffers.

Recovery begins with abstinence from one or more specific sexual compulsions.

Having said that, the question arises: How do we define "abstinence" or "sexual sobriety"?

The three circles is an exercise / diagram used by recovering addicts to describe and define behaviors that lead either to a relapse into or recovery from addictive behaviors. Our group has found great power in the use of the circles and we encourage recovering addicts to complete the Three Circle Exercise. This will help you to identify behaviors that promote or endanger your sobriety.

Traditional 12 Steps

- Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.
- Step 2 Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
- Step 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- Step 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- Step 7 Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
- Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- Step 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
- Step 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

Simplified 12 Steps

- | | |
|---|--|
| Step 1 - I've got a problem | hurt and do something about it |
| Step 2 - I need help and help is out there | Step 9 - I will repair relationships when I can |
| Step 3 - I will ask for help | Step 10 - I accept that I will make mistakes but I will resolve them when I do |
| Step 4 - I'll work out what's wrong with me | Step 11 - I will stay connected to others and be accountable |
| Step 5 - I'll share what's wrong with me | Step 12 - I will help others |
| Step 6 - I'm willing to change | |
| Step 7 - I'll accept help to change | |
| Step 8 - I'll work out who I've | |

The Twelve Traditions of SAA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SAA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SAA membership is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SAA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.
6. An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sex Addicts Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SAA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sex Addicts Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SAA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

WELCOME TO SAA

Congratulations on taking a step toward recovery by attending this meeting. Be assured you are not alone; we are all here to support one another on this journey. You may speak out about your feelings, thoughts, behaviors and doubts with no fear of rejection or judgment. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have; answers may not be given immediately due to a tradition of not engaging in dialog or “crosstalk”. We have all been new and understand there is a lot to learn. The Newcomer Packet is intended to help you begin recovery with suggestions and ideas that other members have found helpful and will also help you understand the terms and concepts you will hear discussed in meetings. We hope you will find this a safe and comfortable place to seek recovery, sanity, and serenity.

During Meetings

Each meeting has a different format but most are based on the 12 steps and step work. One member will chair the meeting, serving as a trusted servant. We use first names only to ensure anonymity, and do our best to respect everyone’s right to speak at meetings.

Because many of us have difficulty sharing our feelings, we have a policy of not interrupting anyone or commenting on what they say (this is also known as “crosstalk”). If someone requests feedback, we don’t give advice but share from our own experiences in similar situations.

Again, questions are welcomed but due to the tradition of not engaging in dialog or “crosstalk”, these questions may not be answered until after the meeting. Don’t worry that you may have offended anyone; we have all been new and don’t expect you to know everything about how the meeting works.

We usually close each meeting with the a closing prayer. In a many groups, this involves holding hands, but you are not required to, if you find it personally uncomfortable.

Between Meetings

Most of us have found a common element in our addiction is our tendency to isolate. This isolation feeds our desire to “act out” sexually. We strongly encourage keeping in touch with other members of the program between meetings. For this reason, we’ve compiled a phone list, available to you during or after the meeting.

This list is updated every so often, and if you so choose, you can be added to the list. It may be helpful to make practice calls to other members when you aren’t in a difficult situation so it can be easier to call when you are in

danger of acting out. You can also ask for numbers from members if they aren't on the list.

Finding A Sponsor

We also suggest you seek a sponsor to help you develop a program of recovery. A sponsor is a person who has been in SAA longer than you who can answer questions, offer encouragement, and give suggestions on how to “work” the 12 steps. We encourage you to listen to others as they speak at meetings, then approach someone whom you connected with or whose ideas you find helpful. The phone list also indicates which people are willing to sponsor.

See section below "Getting a Sponsor"

Helpful Reading

You can read about sex addiction and recovery in the pamphlets in this Newcomer's Packet or in the following

Books:

- Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA “Green Book”)
- Hope And Recovery by Hazelden Publishing
- Out of the Shadows by Patrick Carnes
- Don't Call It Love by Patrick Carnes
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA “Big Book”)
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (AA “Twelve and Twelve”)

The SAA Green Book can be ordered through the SAA website (saa-recovery.org) or purchased from the group treasurer after the meeting. The other books are available in most major bookstores, either new or used.

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity

To accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Keep coming back -- it works if you work it and you're worth it!

If Sex addiction is real why are we just hearing about it?

One argument that is proffered against sex addiction's existence is that it seems to have appeared on the social scene so recently, but sex has obviously been available since the dawn of time.

"If sex was 'addictive' how come it's only happened so recently?"

The answer to this is simple: the internet. The world wide web has made sex available and accessible to all, and accessible within relative anonymity, hence bypassing the usual social inhibitors. If crack cocaine was privately and freely available on every street corner, it's certain the growth in coke addiction would soon hit the headlines.

At no other time in history has it been so easy to become sexually addicted.

*Paula Hall,
Understanding and Treating Sex Addiction,
p6*

Before the rock starts moving, it takes very little effort to prevent it from rolling down the hill

Once the rock is in motion, it takes more effort to stop but near the top of the hill when it has just started in motion, it is easier and not that difficult

As the rock picks up momentum, more and more effort is required to stop it from rolling down to the bottom of the hill

Moving very fast now, it is just about inevitable it will hit the bottom

The Best way to prevent the rock from rolling down the hill is to stop it before it begins

Now, near the bottom, the boulder is rolling with so much speed, you don't have enough strength to stop it

How to stop the Rock from rolling Down the Hill



A Pathway to Recovery

ver 1.0

Literature Committee Approved

June 2010

Revision: December 2015

As sex addicts who have found a solution, we offer a message of hope to all who suffer from sex addiction. This pamphlet is an invitation to recovery for anyone who believes that he or she may be experiencing the same problem that we have faced.

— Sex Addicts Anonymous, / A Pathway to Recovery

THE PROBLEM

Sex addiction was progressive for most of us. Thus, its consequences usually became more severe over time. We experienced obsession, which is mental preoccupation with sexual behavior or fantasies. We experienced compulsion, which is an urge that is stronger than our will to resist. Both were destructive, because they led us to addictive sexual behavior. We refer to these behaviors as acting out. [Paraphrased from Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 3]

While living in addiction, our preoccupation with sex and sexual fantasy became more important than friends, family, and career. Sex-related obsessions filled our minds and distorted our thinking. Sex became our way to get relief from negative feelings and further avoid responsibility. We repeated sexual behaviors even though we were often aware of the potential risk to others and ourselves. Much of our time was spent acting out or trying to manage the resulting crises and problems. Many of us went against our own moral values, for sex became an overpowering force in our lives. We fabricated lies to hide our behavior. We found ourselves isolated and alone, often gripped with fear and despair. [Paraphrased from Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 4]

No matter how sincerely we desired to stop our preoccupation with sex and our destructive sexual behavior, we found that we were powerless to change. Others may have engaged in the same behaviors without ill effect, but we could not. Our will power repeatedly failed. We could not stop acting out sexually, even when we faced negative or disastrous consequences. We came to realize that we were powerless to change on our own.

QUESTIONS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT

1. Do you keep secrets about your sexual behavior or romantic fantasies from those important to you? Do you lead a double life?
Yes / No
2. Have your desires driven you to have sex in places or with people you would not normally choose?
Yes / No
3. Do you need greater variety, increased frequency, or more extreme sexual activities to achieve the same level of excitement or relief?
Yes / No
4. Does your use of pornography occupy large amounts of time and/or jeopardize your significant relationships or employment?
Yes / No
5. Do your relationships become distorted with sexual preoccupation? the same destructive pattern which prompted you to Does each new relationship have the same destructive pattern which prompted you to leave the last one?
Yes / No
6. Do you frequently want to get away from a partner after having sex? Do you feel remorse, shame, or guilt after a sexual encounter?
Yes / No
7. Have your sexual practices caused you legal problems or could your sexual practices cause you legal problems?
Yes / No
8. Does your pursuit of sex or sexual fantasy conflict with your moral standards or interfere with your personal spiritual journey?
Yes / No
9. Do your sexual activities involve coercion, violence, or the threat of disease?
Yes / No
10. Has your sexual behavior or pursuit of sexual relationships ever left you feeling hopeless, alienated from others, or suicidal?
Yes / No
11. Does your preoccupation with sexual fantasies cause problems in any area of your life-even when you do not act out your fantasies?
Yes / No
12. Do you compulsively avoid sexual activity due to fear of sex or intimacy? Does your sexual avoidance consume you mentally?
Yes / No

If you are uncomfortable with your answer to any of these questions, we encourage you to consider the following options
Contact the International Service Organization (ISO) of SAA for more information.

SAA RECOVERY

Recovery was possible for most of us only when we accepted the fact that we were powerless over our addictive sexual behavior and that we were incapable of changing through will power alone. Many of us came to this realization when we started attending SAA meetings. In that setting, we heard stories similar to ours and realized that recovery from our addiction was possible. We learned through the SAA Fellowship that we were not hopelessly defective.

Through applying the Twelve Steps conscientiously in our lives, we received the capacity to refrain from obsessive mental preoccupation with sex and from compulsive sexual behavior. As we exercised courage and grew in faith, we began to realize our daily problems were stepping stones to spiritual growth. As we continued working the Twelve Step Program, we experienced the return of personal integrity and found a new sense of purpose in our lives. We discovered the joy of freedom from addiction.

OUR FELLOWSHIP

As a fellowship, our primary purpose is to carry the SAA message to the sex addict who still suffers.

As individuals, our goal is to live free from addictive sexual behaviors and obsessions, which becomes possible by applying the principles of the SAA Twelve Step Program in every aspect of our lives.

Membership is open to all who desire to stop addictive sexual behavior. There are no other requirements.

Our groups and the fellowship supported are entirely by voluntary contributions from members.

SAA is not associated with any other twelve-step fellowship, institution or organization. We do not support, endorse, or oppose outside causes or issues, nor are we affiliated with any other. SAA is based on the principles and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are grateful to AA for this legacy which makes recovery possible for us as sex addicts.

GETTING STARTED IN SAA

The principles expressed in the Twelve Steps are central to our recovery. Most of us learned to apply these through the Fellowship of SAA. Here are some suggestions for how to get started:

Attend an SAA meeting in your local area and follow these recommendations:

Attend six consecutive meetings. Give yourself a chance to determine if you want what our Program offers.

Seek a temporary or permanent sponsor as soon as possible to guide you in getting started.

Read recovery literature. Pamphlets and books are available at most meeting sites, from the ISO of SAA, or from your local bookstore.

If an SAA meeting is not available in your immediate local area, there are other options:

Look for meetings within commuting distance of your home. Some members travel a significant distance to attend meetings until they are able to start a meeting near where they live.

Attend online or teleconference meetings. Information about these meetings can be found at: www.saa-recovery.org under "Meetings."

Read SAA recovery literature.

Find another sex addict in your local area and start an SAA group. Contact the ISO of SAA for a Group Guide, which gives information on how to get started.

Although SAA has no affiliation with other twelve-step fellowships, find open meetings of other sex-related twelve-step groups, known as "S-Fellowships," to work the Twelve Steps. If no S-Fellowship meetings are available, some members choose to attend open twelve-step meetings, even if they are not sex related.

HOW TO REACH US

Contact the ISO of SAA office by telephone, postal mail, or the Internet for information about SAA meetings around the world and for literature about sex addiction and recovery:

P. O. Box 70949, Houston, TX 77270

713-869-4902 or 800-477-8191

Office hours: 10:00 am-6:00 pm US Central Time - Monday-Friday

Email address: info@saa-recovery.org

Website address: www.saa-recovery.org

Local Contact:

Tri-County Recovery
Path to Healing and Recovery (P2HAR)
<http://tcr.p2har.org>
info@tcr.p2har.org
Tel : 1-844-523-8676, ext 10827

The Bubble

A Metaphor for Addictive Sexual Behavior

Conference Approved May 1992

Revision: January 2009, December 2015

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v 1.0.0.1

The Bubble

IMAGINE A LITTLE CHILD dipping a plastic paddle into a solution and blowing bubbles. The child keeps doing it over and over, and eventually blows so long and hard that a giant bubble emerges and engulfs the child. This is a powerful image for expressing what happens to us as a sex addict.

Being hit with the obsession to act out is like being engulfed in the bubble. We are powerless and carried away by the all-encompassing power of our compulsions. In the grip of our addiction, we see the outside world through a transparent wall, but we can't communicate with it realistically because the wall cuts us off.

The bubble was blown during those times when our minds were preoccupied with addictive thoughts and fantasies, it became full blown when we progressed to acting out our sexual rituals, and it burst only when the rituals ended in some kind of climax.

The exhibitionist who spent hours driving around in a car looking for victims is totally caught up in the bubble. The voyeur who waited outside a window hoping for a magical glimpse of a naked body, the addict who met someone and ended up quickly in bed with them, the addict who cruises the streets for prostitutes, or who hurried to an arcade to hide in a little booth and spend quarters to gaze at pornographic movies—all these addicts were helplessly in the grip of the bubble.

The bubble is an appropriate, poetic image for many reasons. It expresses the radical nature of the addict's isolation. When we were in the bubble acting out, we existed in a secret world of our own creation where we sought thrills and pleasure. Unfortunately, this was also a world of shame and guilt though these feelings did not hit us until the bubble burst and we reentered the real world. Addicted, we then prepared to create the bubble once again in order not to have to live with feelings of shame and thus we were isolated prisoners within the addictive cycle.

The bubble is also an appropriate image to express the sense of liberation we usually felt while acting out, as though we floated above all the burdensome responsibilities of normal life. Life seemed as simple, symmetrical and unified as a bubble because all the great and overwhelming realities of life were reduced to a single purpose. There was only one meaning in our lives during those hours spent in the

bubble—all thoughts and feelings were expressed only in relation to that one purpose. Life was immensely simplified in the bubble.

Life was also "safe" in the bubble, as though it were a womb. Ironically, the wall of the bubble surrounding us actually seemed protective even when it carried us into great danger, because we believed that as long as we stayed in our own isolated world nothing could really touch us. This is not to say that in the bubble we never experienced fear, on the contrary, fear of police, fear of discovery by a spouse, fear of disease—all these fears were felt in the bubble.

The addict, however, found a way to turn these fears into sources of stimulation that became part of the very "fix" that was sought. In the meantime, the real fears of life which we did not face—losing a job, financial insecurities, death of a loved one, rejection by someone significant in our life—seemed far, far away, outside the bubble's wall. That is why, in an ironic way, we felt "safe" in the bubble, and further illustrates how the complexities of life became reduced in the bubble to single-minded simplicity. We never had to deal with the real, complex fears of life, instead, all feelings were expressed only in relation to sex. This simplicity and safety enabled us to feel in control when we were in the bubble; "I know how to hide from the police, and therefore my fear only pumps up my adrenaline, making me feel all the more in control and powerful." To deal with life's problems we often resorted to acting out in order to feel that reassuring simplicity, safety, and control that being in the bubble supplied.

The bubble is also an appropriate image for acting out because it expresses the irony that in this "liberation from the realities of life, we were actually trapped. We may have felt as if we were flying to Mars, but actually we were trapped, engulfed in a bubble that felt like total freedom to go anywhere and do anything. The problem, however, is that the simplistic single-minded obsessiveness which the bubble represents became more and more a restrictive space. Finally, we discovered that we no longer used the bubble—the bubble used us. Our freedom had become utter slavery.

Being compelled to enter the bubble is an expression of our powerlessness. When it burst, as it inevitably did, we felt the unmanageability as we crashed to the ground. The unmanageability was profound because our escapes into the bubble had prevented us from facing reality and learning the lessons necessary to effectively cope with life.

Abstinence

Conference Approved May 1999 Revision: Dec 2015
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v 1.0.0.1

Introduction

In SAA, we use the term abstinence but it may be difficult to know exactly what we mean. The purpose of this pamphlet is to clarify the word abstinence, based on our experience in SAA. In the process we define some of the basic terms we use in the program. The circles chart below in the circles section illustrates how we categorize our behaviors.

Acting-out

When we admit that we are powerless over our addictive sexual behavior, we accept that we cannot behave in certain ways. These behaviors are very compelling before we do them, but afterward they leave us feeling shameful, remorseful, empty, and craving. We call these behaviors acting-out. The uncontrollable, nagging, urge to act out is called a compulsive desire. Acting-out is painful, costly and high-risk or dangerous. It is often abusive to others. If we weren't addicts, these consequences would be enough to make us stop. We need a program of recovery, because we are compelled to act out despite the consequences.

Abstinence

Abstinence means not acting-out. For the Alcoholic, it means not drinking; for the compulsive eater it means not eating certain "binge" foods or not eating in a compulsive way. In SAA, we must define for ourselves what we abstain from. We write a list of all our acting-out behaviors and the patterns of behavior which lead us to want to act out. We then set restrictions on doing these things. This process is called setting **boundaries**.

Many of us write a sex plan with our sponsors. In it we write down our boundaries, date and sign the paper. We agree to revise our boundaries only after reviewing them with our sponsors. Abstinence does not mean giving up sex. That is celibacy. While some of us have found it useful to practice periods of celibacy, it is not a requirement of membership in the program. We don't give up our healthy sexual expressions; we give up acting-out: compulsive, painful, and destructive sexual behaviors. We cannot rely on abstinence as our only means of recovery. Abstinence does not mean controlling our addiction by the force of our will power. That's **white knuckling**. In order to remain abstinent we need the tools of the program, each other, and our Higher Power. We maintain our abstinence

and gain serenity by working the program of the Twelve Steps. As we work the program, our judgment improves, our thinking clears, our emotions emerge, and our compulsive desires lose their power.

The purpose of abstinence is to stop hurting ourselves and others, and to grow healthy in our sexuality and our spirituality.

We seek healthy sexuality. Healthy sexual behavior is safe, joyful, and within our personal moral standards. When we are healthy in our sexuality, we are intimate with ourselves, our feelings, and our partner (if we have one). We may struggle to maintain healthy sexuality so we need to be patient. Healthy sexuality is a spiritual experience that is worth working for.

Abusive and High-Risk Acting-Out

In SAA, you define for yourself what behaviors are acting-out. We don't require abstinence for membership in SAA. The only requirement for membership in SAA is a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior.

Nonetheless, we offer the following recommendation for starting your list of inner circle behaviors. We want you to examine two types of behavior: acting-out which is abusive to others, and acting-out which is high-risk or dangerous to yourself.

Abusive to others means our sexual behavior violates other people's right to choose with whom they engage in sex and under what circumstances. We must have explicit permission from people to engage in sexual activity. Failure to do so violates their rights. Examples of abusive behavior include: sexual assault, incest, indecent liberties, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and stalking.

Our behavior is abusive to others when we use threats, power, or authority to coerce a person into sexual activity. We may tell ourselves that they have a choice, but it is not a free choice. Having sex with these people takes unfair advantage of them and violates their rights. Examples of this include: sex with someone you have power over, sex between a minor and an adult, sex with a person who is intoxicated or impaired, and sex with a patient or parishioner.

Having sex with people when we carry a sexually transmitted disease without informing them violates their right to choose the conditions of their sexual activity. It also exposes them and their partners to disease and possible death. Therefore, it is abusive.

Sexual affairs violate the right of the committed partner to know the full circumstances of their sexual contact. Many of us in SAA have found that our affairs are discovered by the partner, are destructive to the committed relationship, and cause great pain to all parties involved-including the children. We consider affairs to be abusive.

High-risk behaviors are those sexual activities which put you in danger. Some examples are: masturbating while driving a car, buying and selling

sex, unsafe sex, anonymous sex, one night stands, sex in public places, and sex or relationships with dangerous people. Most behaviors which are abusive to others are high-risk as well. Many abusive behaviors involve the risk of disease, assault, blackmail, injury, arrest, or death.

These examples do not cover all behavior which is abusive or high-risk. Examine your behaviors with rigorous honesty to see if they are abusive or high-risk. We want our members to recover safely. There are behaviors which are not especially abusive or high-risk. Those behaviors which cause us pain; cost us time, energy, or money; or are compulsive; are still acting-out, even when they aren't abusive or high-risk.

SAA has no consensus about what behaviors are acting-out beyond those which are abusive or high-risk. We expect you to decide for yourself which of your behaviors are acting-out. Some of us consider all masturbation to be acting-out. Others set a boundary that we may masturbate in a healthy way. We have no policy regarding sex with people we aren't married to. Still, many of us choose to have sex only with people with whom we share emotional intimacy and commitment.

We recommend that you seek the guidance of others in the program to sort your behaviors into healthy, acting-out, high-risk and abusive. We know that our addiction has impaired our judgment about the consequences of our behavior. With support, we can break through this denial. Consult with your sponsor and other members in the program to decide how you feel about a behavior, the risks or costs, and your moral standards. One guideline is how you would feel telling others in the program about what you have done.

Sex addicts like to rationalize a behavior by saying I'm only hurting myself. We have three responses to that excuse. First, you have to ask yourself why is that ok? Second, people who care about us are hurt when we suffer - even when they don't know specifically what we are doing. And third, if we continue an acting-out behavior, we run the risk of our behavior escalating to more dangerous behavior.

With abstinence, we understand our behaviors with greater clarity. We can revise our boundaries, as needed, as we grow in the program.

Triggers

Situations arise that bring up the urge to act out. We call these triggers. An obvious trigger is being exposed to someone sexually exciting, such as seeing an attractive person in revealing clothes.

Most of the time our triggers are not as obvious. We often become vulnerable to acting-out when we are under stress or attempting to avoid some emotion. Emotional stressors are very important triggers to watch out for. As addicts, we use sex to avoid feeling our emotions. We respond to feelings of fear, anger, resentment, anxiety, loneliness, shame, and even

joy with the desire to act out. Even when we are triggered by something sexual, we usually have some emotional trigger behind it.

As we become aware of our triggers, we take steps to avoid them. We can change our life-styles to reduce triggering situations. For example, we may change our routes around town to avoid places that trigger us or even change our job if it sends us on the road too often. In these ways, we defend our abstinence.

Still, we can't avoid all triggers but we can change how we respond to them. When triggered, we can call someone in the program, pray, or go to a meeting rather than act out. We remember to focus on the consequences of acting-out rather than the fantasy.

When we use the tools of the program, we often find the emotional source of our triggers, and the urge to act out passes.

Slippery Behaviors

Slippery behaviors are things we do that expose us to triggers. They may not be sexual in themselves, but they put us at risk to act out. Slippery behaviors include: driving by where we used to act out, calling former lovers, sexual obsession, watching T.V. for sexual content, and watching people we're attracted to.

Sometimes we do these things in order to become triggered; sometimes we are motivated by something else. We often fool ourselves into believing that we have a legitimate reason to be in a triggering situation when our true motivation is to become triggered. Accepting that we are powerless over our addiction means accepting that we cannot indulge in these behaviors without risking acting out.

Sexual Obsession

We don't have control over having sexual thoughts and feelings. They occur frequently, even among non-addicts. Sex addicts have sexual thoughts and dreams, and we do not consider them slips. It takes time for our addictive sexual thoughts to fade away.

However, when we indulge in sexual thoughts to escape our feelings or to get a high, they become more than thoughts. Losing ourselves in sexual preoccupation is sexual obsession. Examples include: fantasies about sex, replaying sexual encounters or pornographic materials, and planning future binges.

When we catch ourselves in sexual obsession, we choose to interrupt the process. We bring ourselves back to the present moment. We do this by taking a few deep breaths, counting to three, and focusing on what we are experiencing at the time. We get in touch with our senses. We ask ourselves how our body feels and what we feel emotionally. If the thoughts persist, we phone someone in the program and/or say a prayer to our Higher Power.

Some of us consider sexual obsession to be acting-out; almost all of us

find it slippery. You will have to decide if sexual obsession is acting-out for you.

Summary

Abstinence in SAA means not acting-out achieved through the support of working a program of recovery. We suggest you consider acting out to be any sexual behavior which is abusive, high-risk, painful, costly, or compulsive. Slippery behaviors are anything we do which triggers us. We set boundaries around both our acting-out behavior and our slippery behavior. We change our routines to avoid triggers and use program tools when we become triggered.

With the help of sponsors and other recovering sex addicts, we define our own boundaries. We recommend that you start with boundaries restricting behaviors that are abusive to others or high-risk to yourself.

We are sexual beings, even as we are abstinent. We strive for healthy sexuality as part of being human, rather than eliminating sex from our lives.

We know that we will continue to have sexual thoughts. We are not concerned about our sexual thoughts so long as we let them pass. We set boundaries around the sexual obsession that we consider acting-out or slippery behavior.

Consult with your sponsor or experienced fellowship members about defining your boundaries. The **Three Circle pamphlet** is a helpful guide. Establish your boundaries now; they don't have to be perfect. We revise our boundaries as we grow in recovery.

We support you in your efforts to maintain your abstinence and work toward recovery. There is no limit to how healthy we can become when we work together.

Sexual Sobriety and the Internet

Conference Approved May 2007 Revision: May 2008
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v 1.0.0.1

Introduction

For many of us in SAA, the Internet was a place where we acted out as part of our sexually addictive patterns. Isolated in front of the computer screen, we spent hours looking at pornography, making contacts for anonymous sex, masturbating while online, or searching for new ways to act out. Unable to stop, we stayed at the computer looking for one more jolt of excitement. Some of us engaged in illegal behavior, such as soliciting sex from minors or downloading child pornography. Others of us got lost in the exchange of "romantic" e-mail—sometimes with complete strangers.

We looked for ways to intensify the experience, forgetting that bigger highs will eventually lead to even greater suffering and unmanageability. Sometimes there were serious repercussions in our relationships, and sometimes the loss of control and suffering was totally within ourselves. We usually kept our behaviors a secret, hoping that our partners, our roommates, or our bosses would never know the truth. Those of us who acted out in this way know that the consequences from sitting alone at a computer can be just as great as those found in the world of prostitutes, adult bookstores, or anonymous encounters. We risked and sometimes lost our relationships, our jobs, our health, and even our sense of self.

We tried to rationalize the problem. We told ourselves that these behaviors were not a big deal - after all we were free to do as we pleased. But in moments of despair after acting out, we often wondered how we got caught in the cycle once again. In spite of our best efforts to control and manage this behavior, we could not leave it alone. We always went back for more.

Many of us reached a point of desperation and were willing to try a different approach. Coming into the fellowship of SAA, we began hearing stories of people who had found a solution to their sexually addictive use of the Internet. We started to look at our own patterns of using the computer for sex and to examine the damage our behavior had caused. In doing so, we realized that, somewhere along the line, we had lost the freedom of choice. We realized that we were out of control. We could not stop this addictive behavior on our own.

Taking Action

Some people may be able simply to make a decision to stop acting out with the computer and stick to it. But we often found that having a good, logical reason to stop was not enough. Many of us came into the Fellowship having tried and failed with various methods of dealing with addictive sex, including spiritual counseling, psychotherapy, and medication for compulsive behavior.

To recover from sex addiction, we first had to find a way to stop acting out while online. Most importantly, we had to find a way to stop returning again and again to the same incomprehensible and demoralizing behavior. Thankfully, we found a solution in the Twelve Steps and the Fellowship of SAA. It worked where other methods have failed.

Through bitter experiences, we discovered that we had to put the principles of the program into action. Below, we describe some of the concrete steps we took. Going to meetings and getting honest were a good beginning, but we needed to do more. Different things have worked for different people. These are just some of the practical methods we have used to help us abstain from addictive sexual behaviors one day at a time. We were often advised to seek out members who had sustained long periods of sobriety. We asked them how they did it. By taking the suggestions of others and letting go of the behaviors, we were able to start the process of recovery.

Restricting Access

We had deleted all pornographic images, e-mail, or website information that we used in acting out. We removed it from the computer and wherever we had it stored. There was no reason to delay. Making it less available bought us precious time to make better choices when we felt compelled by our addiction. In early recovery, we did whatever we could to eliminate our access to sexual triggers and make acting out less likely.

A radical but simple solution for some of us was to stop using the Internet altogether for a period of time. While this was an extreme measure for some, we were encouraged and supported by our fellow addicts. Some of us felt that we could not function without the Internet, or that our lives would not be as full and happy. However, the opposite was often true. We experienced relief in staying off the Internet altogether, because what seemed like innocent online activity led many of us into trouble.

Living without the Internet need not be a permanent necessity or solution. Once we gained a significant amount of continuous sobriety from this kind of addictive behavior and had more experience working the SAA twelve-step program, most of us found we were able to use the Internet again safely.

Becoming Accountable

Sometimes, exposure to the Internet is unavoidable. For example, work may require that an employee use the Internet, or an SAA member might live with other people who subscribe to an online service. If we had legitimate need for Internet access, we found it helpful to be accountable to a sexually sober member of the Fellowship. Someone with a significant amount of abstinence from addictive behavior will often see things differently and may be able to give useful feedback.

One way to become accountable is to make simple agreements with other recovering addicts. Some people made a commitment, perhaps with a sponsor, to go online only for specific work-related tasks. In other words, we agreed not to hang out online, browsing through websites or chatting with others online. We sometimes found that wandering about on the Internet, even on sites that are not sex-related, could lead to acting out. Part of this accountability agreement would include absolute honesty about any behavior that violates the agreement.

Others have used a technique called book-ending, in which we speak with another sex addict before and after an online activity that might be dangerous for us to do alone. One addict may call and say, for example, "I am nervous about being on the Internet. So, I plan to go online, quickly get the information I need, and then get offline. After that, I will call you to tell you that I am finished. I expect it will take ten minutes." This kind of accountability can be just enough to help an addict who is on shaky ground.

Making It Less Anonymous

In our addiction we tended to keep secrets from those close to us. If we must use the Internet, we consider putting our computer where we will have less privacy. We might place it in a high-traffic area of the house. At work, some of us made our computer screens visible to co-workers or left our office door open.

We stopped creating multiple e-mail addresses and screen names. Where possible, we made a point of using our real name as part of our email address as a reminder that we are not anonymous when online. As we achieved sexual sobriety, we felt better about ourselves, because we did not have to try continually to conceal our identities or hide our behaviors.

Other Ideas

Here are other suggestions that members have used successfully:

- Have a friend set up a password that prevents online chat or access to sexually-explicit websites.
- Commit never to go online when alone.

- Tape a prayer, quotation, or affirmation to your computer monitor and use it.
- Develop a routine of connecting spiritually before connecting to the Internet.
- Use the computer to communicate with recovering sex addicts.
- Use browser, e-mail, and search engine settings to limit images and content that may be suggestive or triggering.
- Install software that blocks sex-related sites on the Internet.
- Allow a friend or sponsor to have access to the history of your Internet use.

SAA has a website with a description of the Fellowship, a list of SAA meetings by area, an online bookstore, and other relevant information. There are also meetings online that may be helpful, especially when unable to attend group meetings. If we continue to relapse into addictive behavior on the computer, however, we must take drastic action and stop using the Internet altogether until we are able to achieve a significant period of abstinence from acting out.

Conclusion

Sex addiction is a serious and progressive problem. We have found it helpful to ask ourselves, *"Am I willing to go to any length to stay sexually sober and to recover?"* Our experience shows that putting abstinence from addictive sexual behavior first is a key element in preventing relapse. If the Internet is a problem for you, we recommend trying some of these suggestions. They have been helpful for many of us to defuse the addictive cycle that kept us returning to act out online.

These ideas are some of the stop-gap measures which have proved helpful early in recovery. In the long run, the solution to the problem of sex addiction and the key to healthier sexuality lies in practicing rigorous honesty and committing to the spiritual principles found in the Twelve Steps of SAA.

Welcome to the Newcomer

First Steps to Recovery

v.1.0.0.4

First Step Experiences

"We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior that our lives had become unmanageable." (page 22, Sex A addict's Anonymous)

For most of us the First Step was diametrically opposed to one of our core beliefs: that we were in control and that if we tried one more time or maybe just a little bit harder we would "get it."

We found Step One was the first of many paradoxes we would confront in our program. We eventually recognized that the only way we could stop our destructive acting-out behavior was to admit that we could not stop.

This step became important to us because we found we could not progress in the steps until we had accepted Step One to some degree. We learned that our First Step was both an event and an ongoing process. There was a specific time when we took that First Step. For some of us it was in the circle when we choked out the words,

"Hello, my name is ' _____ ' I'm a sex addict." It might have been an encounter with a struggling brother or sister in the fellowship. Or it might have been when we decided to attend our first meeting or heard someone else's story and found it to be our own. For most of us, those moments of acceptance were followed by periods of doubt and denial.

We find now that if we take the First Step daily, it helps us to keep current and centered. While it is not a requirement that we introduce ourselves as sex addicts at meetings, it may be a helpful reminder to ourselves. This helps reduce the likelihood that we will deceive ourselves again into believing we can control the powerlessness on our own. When we finally admitted our state of denial, we became aware of the nature and pervasiveness of our manageability.

By working the First Step and sharing our story with others in the fellowship, our denial broke down and we came to a greater understanding of the extent of our powerlessness and unmanageable. Some of us wondered, "Why didn't someone tell us?" Someone probably had told us, but we were not ready to face the truth and had no support to deal with the raw pain. To protect ourselves, we went into denial. In the fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous we find support and acceptance to face our behaviors.

Some of us were rigorous in identifying our behavior and its far-reaching consequences, and shared that in a meeting. We found this a cleansing and healing event. Some of us took this step within the first few weeks of entering the fellowship. Others came to meetings for years be-

fore we were finally ready to present our story. Some of us who rushed into the First Step later discovered this might be another expression of our need to control things and work the "perfect" program. We also found that whatever efforts we did make were affirmed by our fellows. We found that other members who heard our shameful secrets offered acceptance, love, and support. Our fear of rejection was unfounded.

It is important to note that the First Step is neither a solitary nor private activity.

"No step is done well in isolation. We work the steps with someone who understands our problem and cares about our recovery, preferably a sponsor. A sponsor will help us prepare each step, give us guidance and suggestions, and listen to us as we share the experiences and insights we gain"

(page 22, Sex Addicts Anonymous).

The First Step begins with the words "We admitted that..." It needs the light of the love of our group members. It is not safe to attempt it alone because we delude ourselves too easily. The First Step is a matter of honesty and openness, as we can bury ourselves in the shame that lives in the shadows of isolation.

Step One, like all the others, has a basic simplicity. It is not about making any changes. Nor is it about our family, spouses, or any others. It is simply about telling the truth about ourselves, our behavior, and its consequences.

First Step Questions

We encourage you to keep in close contact with your sponsor and experienced fellows as you work your Step One. You will gain the experience, strength, and hope of other members and you will take steps to move out of the shame of your secrets and compulsive behaviors. Remember, the First Step is not a solitary activity. No one else can do it for you, but you can't do it alone. The following questions may be used to guide you:

1. What specific activities have been a part of your addictive sexual behaviors and rituals?
2. In what ways have you been preoccupied with sex or a relationship (e.g. obsessing, fantasizing, sneaking, or taking time that should have been spent with family, work, etc.)?
3. How have you not been able to control these behaviors, despite promises and attempts to stop? Where and when have you found yourself engaging in repeated, unplanned instances of sexual behavior and compulsive activity (e.g. planning to go to the store but finding yourself in a porn shop, cruising, or taking an out-of-the way route to scope out activ-

ity)? How has using the Internet or mobile apps for sexual purposes affected your life?

4. In what ways were you lured into sexual activities when confronted with an object, person, or Image that "set off" addictive behavior?
5. In what ways have you tried to deny, rationalize, explain, or justify your sexual behavior with yourself, your family, or others?
6. What other lies have you told to conceal your compulsive sexual behavior?
7. In what ways have you been abusive or disrespectful while engaging in your compulsive behaviors?"n
8. Can you give examples of how you have used euphoric recall (thoughts or feelings of exhilaration, a "high") of previous experiences or fantasies of compulsive sexual behavior?
9. Have you risked, or had an arrest for, illegal behavior? Have you lost or jeopardized your job, position, or reputation because of your compulsive sexual behavior?
10. In what ways have you put yourself in danger of disease, physical abuse, assault, or death while acting out your sexual addiction?
11. How has your compulsive sexual activity affected the following areas of your life? Identify one or two specific examples for each area that applies to your experience.
 - * education lost degrees, failing grades
 - * career/employment lost opportunities, reprimands
 - * relationships with family, marriage, other primary relationships, children influence on others and their goals, feelings, connections
 - * relationships with friends - impact on your social life, ignoring or isolating from others.
 - * financial money spent on pornography, prostitution, sexual paraphernalia, fetishes, fines, bail, legal fees, medical expenses, transportation expenses
 - * spirituality - relationship with your higher power
 - * physical health accidents, abuse, sexually transmitted disease, stress-related symptoms, e.g. allergies, psoriasis, headaches, back pains, ulcers, etc.
 - * mental health self-esteem, wholeness, integrity, depression, suicidal thoughts, counseling, therapy
 - * morals and values - avoiding and ignoring your moral compass, the effect it had on your self esteem and feelings
 - * personal goals and objectives enumerate lost opportunities and dead dreams
12. What was your most recent episode of acting out behavior?
13. What precipitated it? Identify your specific feelings and thought patterns before, during, and after the incident.
14. What attempts did you make to stop or control the behavior?
15. What could you have done instead?

"Many of us have found it helpful to examine our sexual behavior in detail when working this step. Some of us write a history of our sex addiction, from as far back as we can remember up to the present, trying to leave nothing out. Looking at our own story helps us see how we were powerless over our addiction"

(page 23, Sex Addicts Anonymous).

Some Types of First Steps

First Steps are taken in many ways - and we encourage you to consider these options.

1. Identification: We take the First Step in the weekly meeting as we greet one another and say who we are. Few of us forget our first meeting when we faintly introduced ourselves as a sex addict and a room full of members boomed back "Hi." It was a clear case of "We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior."
2. With a Sponsor: We take the First Step in private by sharing it with our sponsor or other friends from the fellowship.
3. Mini-First Step: We take a Mini-First Step in a brief (usually 2-5 minute) presentation highlighting some aspects of our story. Groups often do these at the beginning of the steps cycle, at the first meeting attended by a newcomer, or at special events such as retreats. They have the effect of bonding the group together by sharing mutual experiences.
4. Formal First Steps: We share with a group the details of our behavior and its consequences, to illustrate the powerlessness and manageability of our lives as active addicts. Below is an example of an introduction that could be read to the group prior to a member presenting their First Step. There are many ways to prepare and present a first step. For example, in some meetings, a member may get most of the meeting time to present (see note at the bottom of this panel). In other meetings, presentations may be more limited. Other group members may use the last 10-15 minutes to share how the presentation impacted them.

Recovering from a relapse

Many find that taking a formal First Step detailing the

events that led to a relapse is a good way to recover sobriety and momentum in their program. Ask your group for time to do this. Focus on the powerlessness and unmanageability that led to the loss of sobriety. Identify better options that you might have exercised.

Note: There is a telemeeting at 8:00 pm Monday that frequently features a formal first step presentation.

Call In Number: (857) 232-0476

Passcode: 968655

This is an english language meeting. Unfortunately, this is a men's only meeting. This meeting is open to those seeking help. 8:00 PM (America/Toronto)

An Example of an Introduction to a First Step Presentation



This would be read aloud by the trusted servant or the member's sponsor just prior to a member presenting his or her First Step.

" _____, you are about to share your First Step with us. We acknowledge and affirm your courage in taking this step. We would like to clarify some things about this experience for each of us. The primary

purpose of your formal First Step presentation is to aid you in your program of recovery. It need not be done to please the group or to gain status. There is no right or wrong way to present a First Step. Any effort you make is legitimate.



Here are some suggestions which others have found helpful. We encourage you to be specific about your behaviors and to speak from your heart. This will help you get in touch with the pain and reality of your addiction. Try not to bury yourself in shame or victim hood. Let us hear you, not your addict speaking.

The group has a responsibility to love, care for, and accept you. The members will avoid judging, giving advice, or taking care of you. Some members may become triggered and may leave the room. Please do not take this personally nor as a reflection of the quality of your share.

I will let you know when _____ minutes remain. This will give you _____ time to complete your presentation and allow time for members to share their impression: of your First Step. Remember, we are here for you! May God grant you serenity. "



Here are the primary components of a good first-year sexual recovery plan.

These recommendations are typical for the majority of addicts seeking help from a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist (CSAT), and may not necessarily reflect the treatment approach of other mental health treatment providers or recovery programs.

Assessment by a mental health professional with specialized training in treating compulsive sexual behavior. The International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals (IITAP) is a great resource for locating a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist (CSAT) in your area. Mental health professionals without knowledge or training about compulsive sexual behavior sometimes may not know how to assess the problem and it gets overlooked or minimized. Occasionally, people who are deeply troubled by their sexual behaviors or experience intense shame about normal human sexual feelings or behaviors label themselves sex addicts when it's simply not the case. On the other hand, most sex addicts tend to minimize the extent of their problematic behaviors. That's why assessment is so important.

Participation in regular (preferably weekly) individual and group psychotherapy, along with attending 12-step meetings such as Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) or Sexual Compulsives Anonymous (SCA) and working with a 12-step sponsor.

Therapists and/or sponsors often recommend to a newcomer that he practice abstinence from all sexual behaviors for the first 3 months of treatment and attend 90 12-step meetings in 90 days – sometimes referred to as “90 in 90.” Although 90 in 90 may seem extreme at first glance, when compared to the amount of time many sex addicts spend planning, preparing for and engaging in their sexual behaviors, 7 hours a week of meetings is often a fraction of the time spent acting out.

Daily written recovery work and reading of recovery literature.

Creation of a sex plan or Three Circle Plan. This plan outlines the behaviors the addict wants to abstain from (inner circle) as well as healthy behaviors (outer circle) that will replace those that are destructive and unhealthy. For more information about SAA's Three Circle Plan, visit their website.

If the sex addict is in a long-term relationship, the partner or therapist may ask him to prepare a formal therapeutic disclosure. If he agrees, the sex addict will complete a written disclosure to present to his partner in a therapy session, often followed by a polygraph exam. It is sometimes recommended that the sex addict complete the First Step in his 12-step community before presenting a disclosure to his partner.

Partners often find it helpful to get more information about sex addiction and the recovery process from trusted sources.

Porn Addiction Symptoms

How Porn Morphs Your Brain

Porn: *It's an addiction that is quietly sweeping the nation. Just as bad as any drug addiction or alcoholism but it never gets discussed.*

People have lost their jobs because of it. Anyone with an internet connection will understand that it's becoming more rampant. Almost everywhere you look, somehow you'll encounter it, whether randomly through a Google Photos search, searching for a YouTube video, or at the end of a blog article..

Basically, our whole way of looking at sexuality is under attack.

There are more and more triggers coming at you every day, almost every moment: the flip of a skirt, an advertisement on the side of the freeway, the pictures that the media portrays from women from Victoria Secret and Sports Illustrated, the magazine covers sitting in the grocery store checkout lines, etc.

What separates a porn addiction from a keen interest in porn is the negative consequences of your behavior. With a porn addiction, the behavior is considered compulsive, wherein you would spend an inordinate amount of time watching porn instead of interacting with others or completing important tasks. Moreover, the behavior would persist even if harms your career, relationships, or state of well-being.



Did you know that erectile dysfunction is the most common reason that young men decide to stop looking at porn?

And this isn't any normal ED we're talking about either... ED from Internet porn addiction is completely un-treatable. Viagra won't work because the

problem is in your brain, not below the belt.

As you continue reading, you'll learn that erectile dysfunction isn't the only or even the worst porn addiction symptom. But first, let's talk about why excessive porn use leads to addiction:



Why is Porn Addictive?

Since you're here reading this, obviously you know that porn is addictive. But do you know why?

If you haven't already, watch this quick 10-minute TED Talk called The Great Porn Experiment by Gary Wilson about the effects of porn on your brain:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSF82AwSDiU>

Basically, your brain reacts the same way to porn as it does to meth, heroin or crack. Here's exactly how the addiction forms:

Step-by-Step Porn Addiction Process:

1. You look at a pornographic image or video.
2. Your brain believes that you're looking at a potential mate, so it releases the "happy chemical", Dopamine.
3. Dopamine makes you feel good and gives your brain the drive to finish mating. Because the Internet provides you with an unlimited supply of fresh mates, your brain tells you to binge like a rabbit during mating season.
4. When you "finish", you're completely exhausted as your brain tries to process the extreme amounts of Dopamine.

Now, if you stopped right here and never looked at porn again, you'd be fine.

But you don't.

If you're anything like most men, you were first exposed at a young age and have looked at porn ever since. So, here's what happens next as your brain reacts to chronic porn use:

The Effects of Chronic Porn Use:

After several months (or even years), your brain becomes desensitized to the Dopamine you're flooding it with.

In order to maintain long-term sensitivity to Dopamine, your brain produces a protein called Delta Fos-B (pronounced fawz-be).

After the first time your brain makes Delta Fos-B, it'll keep producing more with each cumulative porn use.

Over time, multiple layers of Delta Fos-B accumulate inside your brain's "pleasure center", the Nucleus Ambens.

As it builds up, Delta Fos-B creates a compulsive response in your brain that makes you feel like you need Dopamine.

Your brain associates Dopamine with porn, and so therefore that need for Dopamine becomes a need for porn.

And that's when you're addicted.

The more Delta Fos-B that's stored in your brain's Nucleus Ambens, the stronger your compulsion for Dopamine will be. This process explains where your porn cravings come from and why they grow stronger over time.

How Long Does it Take Your Brain to Re-wire?

In most cases, Delta Fos-B will stick around in your brain for about eight weeks. However, every time you're exposed to porn, you reset that timer AND you make your cravings stronger than they were before.

Scientists still don't understand everything about Delta Fos-B or the neurochemical process behind addiction. All we know for sure is that it takes a minimum of eight weeks for your brain to clean itself and go back to normal.

Fun Fact: The younger you are, the longer it will take your brain to cleanse Delta Fos-B. If you're younger than 30, it could take up to 16 weeks before your brain is back to normal.

Common Porn Addiction Symptoms

We already said at the beginning of this post that a common symptom of porn addiction is erectile dysfunction. This is because porn desensitizes your brain to normal sexual activity. So, even if you can get hard enough for intercourse, most addicted men will struggle to climax from real-life sex.

However, most porn addiction symptoms actually aren't physical. Here are some of the most commonly cited symptoms in men today:

ADHD or an inability to concentrate

Depression

Mood swings

Anti-social behavior or social anxiety

Performance anxiety

Obsessive tendencies

Disinterest in real women

An escalating need for more extreme or taboo porn

Mental foginess

Loss of willpower or discipline

Zombie-like feeling, especially during the afternoon

Grumpiness or irritability

Constant feeling of guilt or fear



Notice that these symptoms are completely different from porn addiction withdrawal symptoms. These are only the symptoms you'll notice WHILE you're addicted, although they may continue until your brain resets back to normal.



<https://www.artofmanliness.com/articles/the-possible-pitfalls-of-too-much-porn/>

Hopefully by now you see just how serious porn addiction is. The chemicals that your brain creates when you use porn – Dopamine and Delta Fos-B – are the exact same ones it creates when you use cocaine or meth.

This is why it's so difficult to stop looking at porn. You'll need the same strength of will as a junky in rehab, except you're the only one in control of your recovery.

But trust me as someone who's been there – when you're finally free of your addiction, you'll look back and say that all the pain of quitting was worth it.

I beat it, and you will too!



Sex Addiction Withdrawal

The Four Month Withdrawal Cycle

v5.0.0.3

Withdrawal

"The pain of withdrawal is unique, special, even precious (although you probably don't now think so). In a sense, the experience is you, a part of you which has been trying to surface for a long time. You have been avoiding or postponing this pain for a long time now, yet you have never been able to lastingly outrun it. You need to go through withdrawal in order to become a whole person. You need to meet yourself. Behind the terror of what you fear, withdrawal contains the seeds for your own personal wholeness. It must be experienced for you to realize, or make real, that potential for you and your life which has been stored there for so long."

Excerpted from Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous

What Symptoms Should I Expect

When suffering from any addiction, many people begin their recovery by stopping the addictive behavior immediately. Though this is probably one of the more effective ways to distance yourself from the addiction, it can take a toll on you mentally and physically. It is filled with symptoms that are, to put it simply, your mind and body's way of coping with the sudden loss of numbing behavior.

When it comes to sex addiction, it could become normal to isolate from your family to make time to watch porn, to keep secrets about compulsive sexual behavior, and engage in other sexual behavior that is out of control. This can lead to sexual dysfunction (especially for men), broken relationships, excessive expenditures, loss of career opportunities and risk to current employment.

Knowing how dangerous sex addiction actually is should encourage you to stick with recovery despite how difficult these symptoms become.

Do you feel worse now that you've stopped looking at porn?

Knowing what to expect when you're going through porn addiction withdrawal is crucial to fighting temptation. When you understand what your body is going to throw at you, it's a lot easier to say, "This is normal and I just have to get through it."

If you know anyone who's ever tried to quit smoking, these withdrawal symptoms will look pretty familiar. Studies have shown that withdrawal from porn and masturbation is just as severe as withdrawal from heroin or cocaine.

As you continue reading, you'll get a day-by-day walk-through of the most common stages of porn addiction withdrawal.

If you struggle with sex addiction and are looking for help, you have taken the first step to a better life. Seeking recovery from your addiction will help you reclaim your life as your own, which makes the choice to change such a brave and powerful one.

However, the road will not be easy, and it is important to know what you're in for as you begin your recovery journey from sex addiction. When in the midst of recovery from any addiction, there will be symptoms to expect and they can range in severity. However, knowing what to expect can help you learn to handle whatever your recovery road has to throw at you.

Sex Addiction Withdrawal Symptoms

The mental and emotional components of sex addiction withdrawal can be intense, in particular in the beginning, and like substance use, cause cravings. Withdrawal is different for everyone, but in general, a person can experience bouts of depression or anxiety, mental and physical exhaustion, mood swings, irrational thoughts, unexplainable physical pain, irritability, sleepiness or sleeplessness.

The following represent porn withdrawal symptoms experienced by a people over a period of time, with onset starting within 48 hours of quitting.

17 Sex Addiction Withdrawal - Symptoms to Expect

Insomnia	Relapse	Body aches
Irritability	Mood Swings	Chills
Shame	Agitation	Genital Sensitivity
Headaches	Dysphoria	Night sweats
Depression	Lack of appetite	
Loss of Interest	Anxiety	

1 to 7 Days Without Porn

The first thing that happens when you quit is that your Dopamine levels take a nose-dive. Dopamine is the chemical your brain surges into your system every time you look at porn/act out.

In these first few days, your brain is literally in shock.

Many people experience these withdrawal symptoms within 48 hours of quitting:

Grumpiness – Every little thing will irritate you. Some become extremely cynical about everything around them.

Mood swings – As your brain tries to rebalance itself, you'll feel like a teenage girl having her first period... Happy one minute and on the verge of tears the next. Seriously.

Headaches – Some people report intense migraines while others might get subtle pressure headaches that lasted for hours at a time.

Anxiety – Some people have legitimate panic attacks, but while others this more as a general feeling of stress. From the first three days for the next three months, some have reported they always felt like they had way too much to do.

Pornographic Thoughts – Temptation during the first week is extremely

intense. This is because your last pornographic experience is still fresh on your mind. We'll talk more about this later.

The Seven-Day Craving

Can you quit looking at porn for an entire week?

For most people reading this, the answer is no. The classic test of addiction is whether or not you can make it a full seven days without even looking at porn. That's because of the Seven-Day Craving, a classic pitfall for first-time quitters.

The Seven-Day Craving is exactly what it sounds like... You'll usually experience very intense cravings around Day 7 without looking at porn. For some people, you'll get your 7-Day Craving at Day 21. For others, it'll come at Day 5 and last 'til Day 10.

1 to 3 Weeks Without Porn

Congratulations! You made it past the first week. You've still got a long road ahead of you, but you should still pat yourself on the back for making it this far.

These are the most common symptoms people report after the initial one-week hump:

Zombie-like State – Because your brain has been deprived of its regular Dopamine highs, it's common for abstainers to enter a sluggish, zombie-like state. Expect low energy levels to last anywhere from two weeks to two months.

Unable to Focus – Many find they are not able to work efficiently in the first few weeks after they quit. The constant fatigue somehow can make them feel restless, and things that normally took 30 minutes now take an hour. This can be accompanied by had no motivation and no focus.

Social Awkwardness – It's hard to accurately describe this symptom, but many people echoed that they felt awkward or exposed in social settings. It feels like you constantly have your foot in your mouth.

Low Sex Drive – You might expect your sex drive to be bursting at the seams after going without porn for a week or two, but many people report the exact opposite. Although porn will still ignite temptation when you think about it, any other sexual activity may not sound appealing while your brain reboots.

Loneliness – Single people especially will have trouble with this one. You'll experience loneliness, and you'll want to escape it with porn. Don't give in!

4 to 8 Weeks Without Porn

28 days without any porn or masturbation is when about 50% of the people start feeling the initial porn addiction withdrawals start to go away.

For the rest of you, keep going, your relief is just a few weeks away!

Heavily addicted people will probably need another month or two. Even if you still struggle with withdrawal symptoms, by now you've at least gotten used to going through each day without porn. Looking at it is no longer a habit.

Here's what's happening in your brain right now:

The "layers" of addicting Delta Fos-B which built up in your brain due to repeated Dopamine overdosing are starting to disintegrate. Your brain is essentially re-wiring itself to function with normal levels of Dopamine.

Here are some specific withdrawals to look out for from days 30 to 60

Random Temptation – There have been so many times that addicts have made it to four or five weeks without looking at porn, only to have a single bad day that send the sufferer hurtling back into relapse.

Bursts of Overwhelming Emotion – You may be reading a book, looking out the window or lying in bed when suddenly you feel yourself tearing up about nothing in particular.

Insomnia – People who were heavily addicted to porn for a long time are the most likely to experience insomnia in this stage of recovery. Insomnia due to withdrawal is nearly impossible to treat, and over-the-counter sleep aids probably won't do much to help.

Depression – Again, not all people will suffer from depression, and some may experience it much earlier in the withdrawal process. It's not uncommon for this depression to last several weeks, but it always goes away eventually.

2 Months & Beyond

If you've made it two solid months without looking at porn at all, then you're starting to notice some definite improvements in your life.

- * You're starting to feel happier
- * Your sex drive is coming back in a healthy way
- * You have more energy and focus than ever before
- * Your marriage and relations actually feels fulfilling and your partner looks gorgeous/handsome

If a person doesn't relapse, Porn addiction withdrawal symptoms will rarely last more than 6 months. If a person remains abstinent and doesn't relapse the withdrawal symptoms will last between two and four months

at which point the turning point will be achieved.

If a relapse occurs, perseverance and starting again is the key.

There's one thing that you absolutely must remember at all times...

Never - Ever - Let Your Guard Down

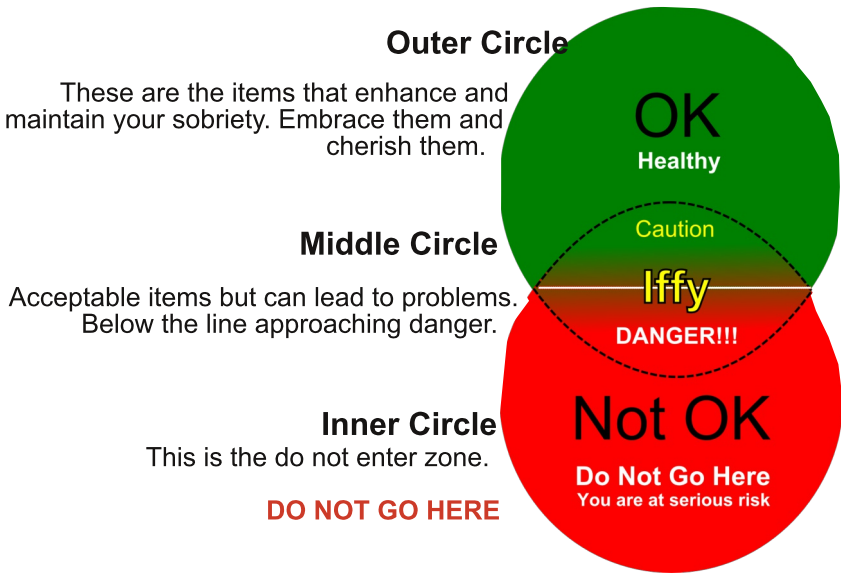
Temptation could come at any turn, and years down the road you may still face a spark of temptation every now and then. But if you can keep yourself away from porn without any relapse for a full two months, without doubt, you'll start noticing some changes.

An Introduction to the Three Circles and the Middle Bubble

Conference Approved May 2000 Revision: May 2007

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v 3.0.0.2



The Outer Circle

"In the outer circle, we put healthy behaviors that enhance our life and our recovery."

All safe activities go in the outer circle. Time with your family, walking, exercise, meditation. This is where your sobriety lives and these activities will let you retain it.

Middle Circle

In the middle circle, we put behaviors that may lead to acting out, or that we are unsure about.

Middle circle items, while still maintaining sobriety can lead quickly to trouble.

Watching movies with racy content, while not explicitly in the inner circle can quickly set up situations where the inner circle barrier can be broken. They may contain triggers or make you vulnerable and get your guard down.

The Middle circle is not a free play zone, rather it is like a yellow light in an intersection where there is a traffic camera for red light violations.

A lot of the time you will get away with going through the light but inevitably, you will push it just a bit too hard or be just a bit less cautious than usual and you will slip up.

The Inner Bubble

Some people use a inner bubble as a enhanced warning they are heading towards danger.

While the activities contained in the the Inner Bubble are not part of the inner circle, they are approaching it and make the likelihood of a slip much greater.

Entering or contemplating entering the inner bubble is a signal to step back, call a sponsor or friend in sobriety and move away from the activity. To do nothing will almost certainly result in a relapse.

Inner Circle

“In the inner circle, we put the sexual behaviors we want to abstain from, the ones we consider ‘acting out’”. These are the behaviors that we identify as addictive, harmful, or unacceptable to us.

Three Circles

Defining Sexual Sobriety in SAA

Conference approved November 2000 Revision March 2016

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Version 3

ABOUT THIS PAMPHLET

This pamphlet has been approved by the International Service Organization of SAA, Inc. It is based on literature published and used by the Southern California Intergroup of Sex Addicts Anonymous. Additional ideas were contributed by the Twin Cities Intergroup. We are grateful for this gift of their experience.

ISO of SAA, Inc.

P. O. Box 70949 Houston, Texas 77270

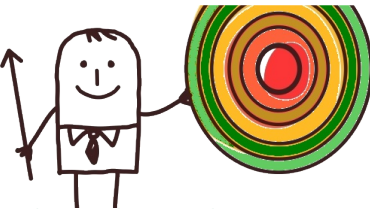
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THREE CIRCLES



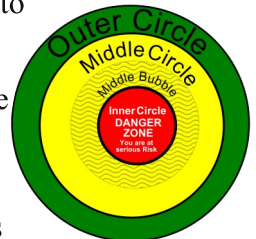
Shoot for the Green!!!

Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober, to abstain from sexually compulsive behavior, and to carry the message to the sex addict who still suffers. Recovery begins with abstinence from one or more specific sexual compulsions. Having said that, the question arises: How do we define "abstinence"

or "sexual sobriety"?

The idea of abstinence is based upon analogy with Overeaters Anonymous. Just as the compulsive overeater does not have to totally give up food, but needs to learn a new approach to food which is non-destructive and non-compulsive, so the sex addict needs to learn a new approach to sex which is non-destructive and noncompulsive.

The idea of sexual sobriety is rooted in the heritage of Alcoholics Anonymous which continually reinforces the idea to alcoholics that it is the "first drink" which gets them "drunk." That first drink begins the "phenomenon of craving" which inevitably activates further self-destruction. Similarly our "inner circle" in SAA consists of that behavior which we deem equivalent



to the first “drink.”

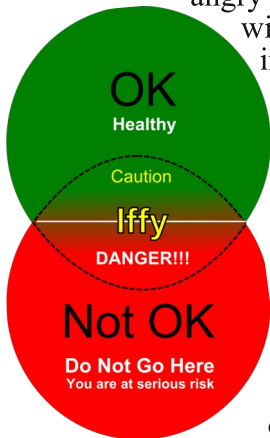
Unlike the alcoholic who, however, must simply *“put the plug in the jug,”* and practice total abstinence from alcohol, most of us have no desire to plug up our sexuality and become totally celibate. For it is not sex in and of itself that causes us problems. It is the various ways we misuse certain kinds of sex that causes us to get *“drunk.”*

Each of us needs to carefully consider which sexual behaviors we are powerless over, which sexual acts lead to feelings of demoralization. These are the addictive behaviors from which we will want to abstain. Each addict has his or her own specific set of compulsions and *“triggers”* from which it is necessary to abstain. There are sexual behaviors which are acceptable or even experienced with a sense of gratitude and enjoyment. Therefore our program acknowledges each individual's dignity to choose his or her own concept of healthy sexuality.

THE INNER CIRCLE

We have found it simplest to draw a circle. Inside this circle, we write down each one of the compulsive sexual behaviors from which we feel it necessary to abstain. That will become our *“Inner Circle”* and everything inside is totally off limits for us. These behaviors are the *“drugs”* we must stop using, the *“alcohol”* that gets us drunk and destroys our lives.

One day at a time, we abstain from all behaviors which we have placed in the inner circle and we award chips or medallions for consecutive abstinence from these inner circle behaviors. Many of us may list behaviors such as: anonymous sex, voyeurism, masturbation with pornography, prostitution, sadomasochistic behavior, manipulative or angry sex within a relationship, phone sex, cross-dressing with masturbation, exhibitionism, child sexual abuse or incest.



THE OUTER CIRCLE

Just as there was no question that the behaviors listed in our inner circle were compulsive, addictive, and therefore dangerous and destructive, so there is no question that the behaviors we list in our *“outer circle”* bring recovery and are to be encouraged, praised and practiced.

That is to say that healthy sexual behaviors are behaviors we choose because they enhance our life, our recovery, and our spiritual connection. Examples of behaviors that some people place in their outer circle are: working the twelve steps, being sexual within a committed relationship - honoring the bond of love that you and your partner have built, masturbation with or without fantasy, enjoying affectionate touch, taking a dance class, playing a sport, wearing beautiful clothing, taking a bath, developing non-sexual friendships with

people, developing new healthy interests, dating, and sharing our recovery with other recovering sex addicts.

In short we want to be gentle with ourselves - to practice behaviors that are self nurturing. These outercircle behaviors are clearly the anti-thesis of our old way of life, and it is the practice of these actions which will lift our obsessions and compulsions and bring us serenity and joy. Once again, it is important to actually write these down on paper, listing them in an outer circle which is drawn around the inner circle.

THE MIDDLE CIRCLE

We have found that much of our shame is rooted in a kind of merciless perfectionism. Because we are human, we invariably fall short of our lofty ideals, and then sink into a destructive cycle of self-condemnation, shame and eventually, acting out in our inner circle.

Such all or nothing thinking permeates our lives and is the source of much pain and confusion. Many in our program have found recovery only by freeing our minds from the shackles of moralistic perfectionism, learning to embrace our common humanity and avoiding extremes. After all, we are neither gods nor devils, but perpetually imperfect human beings.

The middle circle is where we place behavior of which we are uncertain. Recognizing that we come into this program resentful, afraid, and confused about our sexuality, we know it is not easy to go from inner to outer circle overnight. While the inner circle relates to behaviors which keep us in permanent isolation and fantasy, the outer circle refers to behaviors which help us move out into the real world.

We are all human and ours is a program of progress not perfection. We are trying to move towards a sane sexual ideal, but we have found that one does not rise from the gutter to the heavens in one amazing leap. We do not always know what is good for us and what isn't, nor are we always willing to do the absolute best thing - thus the need for a "*middle circle*" in which we place those sexual behaviors which fall neither in the category of demoralizing addictions from which we absolutely must abstain, nor in the category of ideal behavior. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines, and to abstain from some behavior(s). Herein lies the grey areas which in our black and white thinking, we have refused to live with all of our lives.

Within the middle circle, however, there are some behaviors which if not addressed will eventually lead us back to our inner circle. We call these boundary behaviors. Some examples of actions which may be defined as boundary behaviors are: cruising for prostitutes or for a place to practice voyeurism, acting seductively in an inappropriate situation or contacting an old acting out partner in order to renew an addictive sexual relationship.

Crossing a boundary is engaging in a ritual or slippery behavior that may result in acting out. Engaging in boundary behaviors does not change our sobriety date, but because we recognize that our sobriety is jeopard-

ized, we take action to re-connect with the program. If we find that we are engaging in boundary behaviors, we need to respond in a healthy way to take care of ourselves, lest we cross into inner circle behaviors. There are several things we can do: tell an S.A.A member, tell our sponsor, read S.A.A literature or attend an S.A.A meeting and talk about our behaviors. Being accountable and reaching out takes away the shame and the feelings of helplessness. It may be hard for us to admit that we have crossed a boundary, but it is just this type of honesty that heals us and allows us to not drift towards destruction.

As we gain sobriety by having clear boundaries and working our program, it becomes much easier to stay sober and to truly enjoy recovery. As time goes on, and as we work the twelve steps of recovery and grow in our participation in meetings and service, our compulsions and obsessions are progressively lifted. We may then find that behaviors which were acceptable for us when we were new must now be put in the inner circle.

CONCLUSION

Sexual addiction is a cunning and baffling disease. For too long most of us found it familiar, almost comfortable to remain in the cycle of acting out, feeling demoralized, swearing off, and then acting out again. We know from painful experience that it is easy to fool ourselves if that is what we really want to do. How then do we know if we have drawn a functional middle circle or if we are simply deluding ourselves? After all, our *"best thinking"* got us here in the first place.

Our experience is that if we are rigorously honest with ourselves about our middle circle behavior we will not choose to deceive ourselves into practicing inner circle behavior. In order to stay honest about this, it is necessary to share our program with others. We do not keep our behaviors hidden.

Ultimately, our definition of sobriety is our own, but if we define our own program of recovery in isolation, our selfmade programs may deceive us, becoming too loose or too restrictive.

We write down our recovery program using the three circles as a way to gain clarity. We share our program so that we can gain a balanced recovery and we do this by directly showing our three circles to our sponsor and to people in our group. Without this clarity we can continue to act out, because we are confused about what sobriety is for us.

In S.A.A it is each member's prerogative and privilege to experience his or her own mistakes and joyful successes. From these we discover what we can and cannot do sexually, and progress along the road to a sane and nonaddictive sex life. We believe such a sex life can, *"by the grace of God,"* be enjoyed by all of us, married or single, straight or gay. Obtaining and maintaining abstinence from inner circle compulsions are the bedrock foundation of all the personal growth which will surely follow.

Getting a Sponsor

Conference Approved July 2013
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v 1.0.0.2

Who Needs a Sponsor Anyway?

1. Fellowship members who experience relapse and do not have a sponsor
2. Members who have attended meetings a while but never worked with a sponsor
3. Members who need to change sponsors
4. Online and telemeeting members who have no face-to-face meeting
5. Members brand new to SAA

Whether we're just coming into the SAA fellowship or have been here awhile, we realize we cannot stop our sexual addiction by our own unaided efforts. Many of us knew it before we came in. We all need help. Part of that help is sponsorship. In fact, it is an old saying that you cannot work an SAA program without a sponsor.

So who needs a sponsor in SAA?
The answer is certain: Everybody.

What is Sponsorship?

Sponsorship is the mentor-relation between an SAA member - or sponsee and a sponsor, a member who has already worked the program and has experienced the gift of sobriety. The sponsor helps the sponsee to determine their own addictive sexual behavior. The sponsor guides the sponsee on how to use the literature and tools of the program, how to work the Twelve Steps and Traditions, and how to find sobriety.

While the SAA fellowship is not a religion of any kind, it is spiritual in nature. For it has been our experience that a Higher Power will direct the recovery process. In this matter, what sponsors do is listen to you and point the way, so that sponsees as a result of working SAA's Twelve-Step program may have a spiritual awakening in their own time, in their own way, and for themselves.

Who is a Sponsor?

A sponsor is an SAA member who is sexually sober. A sponsor is experienced in service, attends meetings regularly, and also works with a sponsor. A sponsor has worked through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions sufficiently to be able to help another addict along the way.

Why Sponsorship?

It is a proven practice, handed down through generations, that recovery from addiction can only take place with others. All the steps and traditions are written in the "We".

1. We recover as individuals but we do not recover alone.
2. We recover together.
3. We recover helping others and being helped by others.

Meetings do this; program calls do this; fellowship does this. And sponsorship does this. And in this, the sponsor's recovery is helped just as much as the sponsee's.

What Sort of Person is a Sponsor?

A sponsor is a sex addict who knows what addictive sexual behavior is and can speak to another addict with the authenticity of experience. A sponsor can level with you. A sponsor can listen to you with understanding and neutrality. A sponsor knows that sex addiction is a chronic condition that needs the daily remedy of a program and wants to offer it to you regardless of what your behaviors have been.

How Shall I Go about Getting Sponsored?

For those new to SAA, it's a good idea to start looking for a sponsor right away. One suggestion is to go to a number of meetings until you find someone who has the recovery you want and to ask them if they will help you get it too.

If you are having difficulty getting a sponsor, you may want to consider a temporary sponsor. That means a sponsor willing to work with you on a shortterm basis. The temporary sponsor may not be able to take you on as a fulltime sponsee, but will at least help you to get started. Or, if it works out, you may actually become sponsor and sponsee!

If your situation is such that you cannot attend in-person meetings, you may still be sponsored by email or over the phone. For some, conferring through on-line video works well, and the staff at the ISO can give you a contact list of members who offer long-distance sponsorship. So don't be shy: many people in SAA have achieved sobriety while being sponsored by people they have never met in person.

How Shall I Know Whom to Choose?

Find someone who has what you want. How will you know that? It may be through a certain sobriety or spiritual quality. You will sense it. You might want to choose someone with whom you can't get away with things, someone you feel you can tell the truth to. While you may choose someone whose sexual orientation, personality, or lifestyle is compatible with yours, it is also true that great benefit can be gained from a sponsor whose personality or life style is quite different from your own

How Do I Know a Sponsor is Safe and Sound?

It is best not to use as an SAA sponsor someone who has an outside-SAA relationship with you. This includes significant others, relatives, friends, business associates, spiritual ministers, mental health professionals, and sponsors from other Twelve Step fellowships. For they often lack particular experience in dealing with SAA sexual addiction and recovery.

As a general rule, sponsees steer clear of sponsorship with anyone to whom they are sexually attracted.

What if Someone I Ask Says No?

Potential sponsors may decline your request for reasons such as insufficient time, inexperience, or a full quota. You may feel badly, but don't take it personally: keep asking until you find one! Searching for a sponsor may feel daunting, but once you get a sponsor you will find the search to have been worth it.

Does My Abstinence Have to be the Same as My Sponsor's?

No. Your sponsor may seek sexual sobriety in one area, and you in another, for SAA does not have a single definition of abstinence. Therefore a particular sexual behavior toxic to one member may be all right for another. Your sexual abstinence will consist of ceasing your own particular addictive sexual behavior

What Can I Expect from a Sponsor?

In SAA, there are various styles of sponsorship. Some sponsors use our SAA literature. Others use outside literature, including that from other fellowships.

Some sponsors require a personal meeting every week; some only have phone time. Some have certain limits on their availability, some none. Some require attendance at a certain number of SAA meetings a week. Some ask you to call them at a certain time every day; some do not. Some have the sponsee move rapidly through the Twelve Steps, while others go more slowly.

So, to prepare yourself to get a sponsor, it's wise to ask other members about how their own sponsors work. That way, when interviewing potential sponsors, you arrive somewhat informed and you are able to ask about their style and expectations. And you are also better prepared to ask for what you ideally want. This can help both of you determine whether you're a good match

Are There any Do's and Don'ts in Starting Sponsorship?

Generally speaking, you should not expect from your sponsor any services that are given by a professional counselor or therapist. A sponsor is not responsible for a sponsee's recovery. It's also a good idea not to think of your sponsor as being your Higher Power or best friend. And you certainly may question a sponsor's suggestions to get to the reasoning behind them.

Also, you may change your sponsor. And if you feel your sponsor is behaving improperly, by all means ask other sober members about what is going on. If they agree that something is amiss, go ahead and find a different sponsor. While you may talk to your sponsor about anything you mutually agree to, remember, your sponsor will be simply a recovering fellow sex addict who helps you solve one problem.

Whatever suggestions the sponsor offers in working the Twelve Steps, go with them honestly and fully. This means don't make up some program of your own secretly and alongside it. The program tools being offered to you are the same that kept your sponsor sober, and they can help keep you stay sexually sober too.

Starting on the Path to Recovery

Let those few simple tools of SAA recovery be your focus. Your sponsor is a trusted servant who wants you to experience the gifts of recovery too. Difficult as it may be to imagine now, you will one day be able to pass on your program of recovery to someone who needs it, just as your sponsor passed it on to you when you started out. You will be able to offer it with the same kindness and freedom with which it was offered to you. That and recovery are the great gifts of sponsorship.

Here is a checklist you might want to keep in mind when you are considering a sponsor.

- Does the potential sponsor have what you want?
- How long has the potential sponsor been in SAA?
- How long has the sponsor been sober?
- Does the sponsor have a sponsor?
- Is the sponsor working the Twelve Steps and Traditions with a sponsor?
- Does the sponsor attend meetings regularly?
- How often does the sponsor want to speak to you or see you?
- How often do you want to see or speak to the sponsor?

Members Willing to Sponsor

Sponsors Name	Number

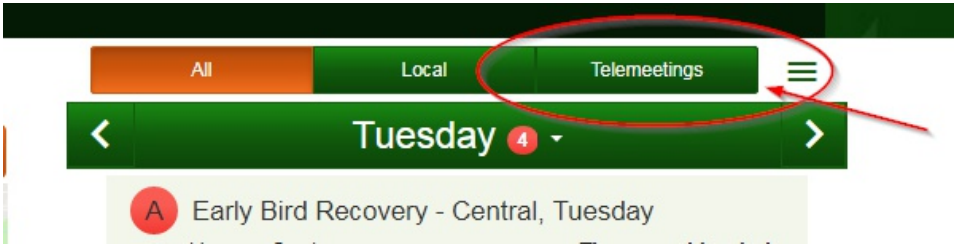
It has frequently been repeated, the opposite of addiction is connections. Take the opportunity to get some names and phone numbers of people in the group you can call and get in the habit of calling them. Call when you are not in crisis. That way when you are struggling it will be easier to reach out.

Members Name	Number

Telemeetings



Link to Meetings <https://saa-recovery.org/meetings/>



select the telemeetings tab at the top on the right hand side

Note : This list is not exhaustive, it is merely a sample extracted from the main SAA Recovery site. There are many more to attend. Each meeting will have a slightly different format but most of them will be familiar.

You are encouraged to attend several different meetings.

All of the telemeetings can be accessed by dialing the posted phone number and entering the meeting pin when requested.

Many of them can be accessed using a application - most systems have applications for Windows, macOS, Linux as well as Android phones/tables and Apple phones/iOS

FreeConferenceCall [1];

FreeConferenceCalling [2]

TeleTex meeting [3];

Telecom Line Error [4];

Free Conference Call HD [5];

Busy Signal [6];

A great benefit to your recovery can be found in attending 90 meetings in 90 days. By immersing yourself in the your recovery in this way you will obtain a insight you wouldn't ordinarily find.

I have four meetings I highly recommend below before the larger grouping.

I find the Monday night one is particularly good.

Monday

8:00 PM (America/Toronto)

A Journey to Hope SAA

Mens Meeting

often 1st step presentation

Open to those seeking help

(857) 232-0476,

Passcode: 968655

App1 [1]

Monday

11:00 PM (America/Toronto)

A Journey to Hope SAA

Mixed

Open to those seeking help

(857) 232-0476,

Passcode: 275750

App1 [1]

Tuesday

8:00 PM (America/Toronto)

A Journey to Hope Step Study

Mixed

Open to those seeking help

(857) 232-0476,

Passcode: 968655

App1 [1]

Tuesday

11:00 PM (America/Toronto)

A Journey to Hope

Mixed

SAA Beginner's Meeting

Open to those seeking help

(857) 232-0476,

Passcode: 275750

App1 [1]

This is a sample of meetings to demonstrate the range and variety. This is a sample of meetings range and variety.

Sunday 2:00 PM

A Journey to Hope
Freedom Through Recovery
Mixed Open to those seeking help
Speaker/Step/Tradition/Book
Study
(857) 232-0476,
Passcode: 275750
App1 [1]

Sunday 5:00 PM

Afternoon women's Telemeeting
Original Sunday Afternoon
Women's Telemeeting
woman only
Open to those seeking help
Contact members for meeting
access information

Contacts:

Louisa: 215-796-4323

Sharone: 415-864-
1301

Wendy M: 843-258-
3528

OUTERCIRCLE1964
@GMAIL.COM

Application: TBD

**Sunday 8:00 PM
(America/Toronto)**

SAA Talk
SAA Call Sunday (Telemeeting)
Mixed
Open to Visitors not just self
identified addicts
Topic
(605) 475-6333,

Passcode: 258258

Application: TBD

**Sunday 8:00 PM
(America/Toronto)**

A Journey to Hope
Freedom Through Recovery
Mixed
Those Seeking help
Step Study meeting Speaker/Step
(857) 232-0476,
Passcode: 968655
Application: TBD

Sunday 9:00 PM

(America/Toronto)
SAA Talkunday GLBTQ
Telemeeting
Mixed
Open to Visitors

Varies/GLBT
(605) 313-5145,
Passcode: 532229
Application: TBD

Monday 8:00 AM
(America/Toronto)
Early Bird Big Book Study for
Sex Addicts
Mixed
Open to Visitors
Book Study
(712) 770-4160,
Passcode: 215701
Application: TBD

Monday 1:00 PM
(America/Toronto)
SAA Talk
Women's Conquering Fear of
Intimacy
Woman
Those seeking help
Topic
(712) 770-4160,
Passcode: 599840
Application: TBD

Monday 9:00 PM
Eastern Time
SAA Online
SAA Online Text Monday
Mixed
Fill in the following: - Nickname:
(you choose) / - Channel: #saa
Those Seeking Help
Topic
<http://www.saaonline.org/meetings/attend.php>
Application :Web browser

Monday 9:00 PM
(America/Toronto)

SAA Talk
Answers in the Heart Study
Mixe
Those seeking help
Book Study
(605) 313-5143,
Passcode: 189161
Application: TBD

Monday 9:00 PM
(America/Toronto)
SAA Talk
Intimacy & Sexual Avoidance
Singles
Mixed
Those Seeking Help
Topic
(712) 770-4160,
Passcode: 599840
Application: TBD

Monday 10:00 PM
(America/Toronto)
Agnostics of SAA
We Agnostics of SAA
Mixed
Those seeking help
Step/Tradition/Topic
(605) 475-6333,
Passcode: 744457
Application: TBD

Monday 11:00 PM
(America/Toronto)
A Journey to Hope
Experience, Strength and Hope
Mixed
Those seeking help
Varies
(857) 232-0476, Passcode:
275750
Application: TBD

1. FreeConferenceCall Applications for macOS , Windows , Linux , android and iOS; Application/App information and Download
 2. FreeConferenceCalling No application - strictly dial in connections
 3. TeleTex use a standard web browser to join this meeting. It is a text format where the meeting is conducted in browser chat window. Use the url listed in the reference above
 4. TeleTex telecom line error at time of last testing (20190606)
 5. www.Freeconferencecallhd.com application available for Android Iphone and also a browser based web app which features a voip dialer. An account is needed but that is free.
 6. TeleTex Busy signal at time of last testing (20190606)
- TBD: Applications marked TBD are meetings which still needs to be confirmed if there is an application available. If an app is available and used, no long distance charges will be incurred. If you notice a meeting marked TBD and you discover an app is available, ples let us know

Comparing the Different 12-Step Meetings for Sexual Addiction

12-step support groups are extremely helpful to people who are trying to overcome an unhealthy dependence on substances (such as alcohol or drugs) or behaviors such as problematic gambling or sex addiction. They give people who have similar problems a way to share their experience, strength and hope with each other. The actual "twelve steps" are principles for living. The original 12-step group is Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

When it comes to 12-step groups for sexual addiction, people are surprised to learn that there are five of them:

- **Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA)**
- **Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA)**
- **Sexual Compulsives Anonymous (SCA)**
- **Sexaholics Anonymous (SA)**
- **Sexual Recovery Anonymous (SRA)**

In Alcoholics Anonymous there is only one way to be sober: stop drinking! However, "sexual sobriety" is different, because the goal isn't to stop having sex. Each of the 12-step groups for sex addiction defines sobriety a little differently. This is helpful to know when deciding which group to attend.

Here is how each fellowship defines sexual sobriety (any official language of each group is italicized):

Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA)

The goal of SAA "is abstinence from one or more specific sexual behaviors. But unlike programs for recovering alcoholics or drug addicts, Sex Addicts Anonymous does not have a universal definition of abstinence.....Most of us have no desire to stop being sexual altogether. It is not sex in and of itself that causes us problems, but the addiction to certain sexual behaviors. In SAA we will be better able to determine what behavior is addictive and what is healthy. However, the fellowship does not dictate to its members what is and isn't addictive sexual behavior. Instead we have found that it is necessary for each member to define his or her own abstinence."

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA)

SLAA focuses on both "sex and love addiction" which is defined as "any sexual or emotional act, no matter what its initial impulse may be, which leads to loss of control over rate, frequency, or duration of its occurrence or recurrence, resulting in spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, and moral destruction of oneself and others." SLAA defines sobriety as abstinence from one's self-identified "bottom-line" behaviors.

Sexual Compulsives Anonymous (SCA)

"Members are encouraged to develop their own sexual recovery plan, and to define sexual sobriety for themselves. We are not here to repress our God-given sexuality, but to learn how to express it in ways that will not make unreasonable demands on our time and energy, place us in legal jeopardy -- or endanger our mental, physical or spiritual health."

(Note: SCA originally existed primarily for gay and bisexual men. However, it welcomes all sexual orientations, and an increasing number of women and heterosexual men attend.)

Sexaholics Anonymous (SA)

SA is different than all of the other groups:

SA defines the problem as addiction to "lust" rather than addiction to sex.

SA is the only fellowship that specifically defines sobriety in terms of specific behavior. According to SA "any form of sex with one's self or with partners other than the spouse is progressively addictive and destructive....."

SA goes even further by narrowing this definition to "marriage between a man and a woman". This means that anyone not in a heterosexual marriage must be celibate, i.e. completely abstain from all sexual behavior, including masturbation.

SA gives only two choices (sex with a heterosexual spouse or celibacy). I believe this is excessive, unnecessary, discriminatory and confuses sexual practices with sexual addiction. For practical purposes I do not generally recommend SA to anyone who is not in a heterosexual marriage, and I oppose its stance on ethical grounds even though I continue to list it as a resource because of the value it serves for some people.

Sexual Recovery Anonymous (SRA)

SRA was formed by SA members who broke away from the SA because of its sobriety definition. SRA defines sexual sobriety as "the release from all compulsive and destructive sexual behaviors. We have found through our experience that sobriety includes freedom from masturbation and sex outside a committed relationship." So SRA also defines sobriety in terms of specific practices, although it is not as restrictive as SA.

Summary

Now that you have know how each 12-step group defines sexual sobriety, you can make up your own mind which to attend or recommend.

Additional SAA Meetings

<https://saa-recovery.org/meetings/>

SLAA

Guelph - Tuesday - 7:00
PM - 8:30 PM
This is a closed
meeting
Group Name: From
Shame to Grace
Location:
Homewood Health
Centre, Mackinnon
Building, Basement,
Room F
Address: 150 Delhi
Street, Guelph,
Ontario
Meeting Format:
Inclusive meeting
for all
Contact: Alex 226-
486-1213

SCA

Toronto 6:30 pm Friday
Evening
519 Church St
Community Centre
-519 Church St

SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS KITCHENER

Sorry, but our meetings do
not advertise their
exact meeting

locations.

NOTE, Please only attend if
you want to stop your
own sexually self-
destructive thinking
and behaviour. If you
are a spouse, friend,
or associated with a
suffering Sexaholic,
please contact
SANON for meetings
in your area.

More information on day,
times, and locations,
please use our
contact info below:
Telephone: 416-410-
7622
E-mail:
sa.kitchener@yahoo.
ca

Sexual Recovery Anonymous (SRA)

there doesn't appear to be
any in Canada

The Following Pamphlets from the pamphlet library have been encapsulated in this booklet

A Pathway to Recovery v 1.0

The Bubble - A Metaphor for Addictive Sexual Behavior -
v1.0.0.1

Welcome to the Newcomer - First Steps to Recovery - v1.0.0.4

Porn Addiction Symptoms - How Porn Morphs Your Brain

Sex Addiction Withdrawal - The Four Month Withdrawal Cycle -
v5.0.0.3

An Introduction to the Three Circles and the Middle Bubble -
v3.0.0.2

Getting a Sponsor - v1.0.0.2

Telemeetings (*brief*)

Abstinence - v1.0.0.1

Sexual Sobriety and the Internet v1.0.0.1

In the story of Ulysses from Greek mythology, there were figures called Sirens. They sang captivating songs that would mesmerize sailors, distracting them so much that they would crash their boats on the rocks. The sailors would have to plug their ears or tie each other to the masts of their ships so they would not founder in the Siren's traps. These stories depict the Sirens' songs as intensely sexual, filled with the promise of quenched desire.



But the lesson of the myth was **never to trust the Sirens'** song-no matter how promising or believable.

As an addict, you know the Siren song of addiction. There was a promise of sexual fulfillment in an experience that always turned out to be disappointing.

Like the sailor following the Sirens' song, the addict flounders on the rocks following the illusion of addictive promise. One of the hardest lessons addicts learn is that they cannot trust their judgment about these matters. They must ignore, silence, or distance themselves from the song that will always betray them.

So how do you do that?

Boundaries

Facing the Shadow - Patrick Carnes - Starting Sexual relationship recovery Chapter Six - What is Sobriety Managing Life without Dysfunctional Sexual Behaviour p286