

Worksheets

Step 1

The Three Circles

ver 2.0.0.4

Step 1 - We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior, that our lives had become unmanageable

The Principle of Honesty in Step 1 as the Foundation of a Healthy Recovery
The principle behind Step One is Honesty, and when we take a closer look at this step, it just makes sense: the first step asks us to take an honest look at our lives and tell the truth. For many practicing addicts including sex addicts, this may be the first time in forever that they have actually done so.

The thing about Step 1 is, it only can be complete if we admit to our innermost selves, rather than to any other, that we are powerless over our drug of choice and that our lives have become unmanageable. Many of us were used to lying or omitting key facts about our lives where others were concerned: we have invented excuses for tardiness, explained away drained bank accounts, cast blame on others, denied wrongdoing. We may even have learned to fool ourselves to some degree. But in the end, self-honesty had to win out. When we could look at the man or woman in the mirror and admit that we had lost control over our addiction, and that our lives were suffering as a result, we had truly taken Step 1.

• Let go of reservations; don't worry about being judged for what you've done.

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.



Tri County Recovery

part of The Path to Healing and Recovery group

<https://tcr.p2har.org>

info@tcr.p2har.org

toll free : 844-523-8575, ext 10827

The Three Circles

The three circles - goal: to help people identify their sobriety

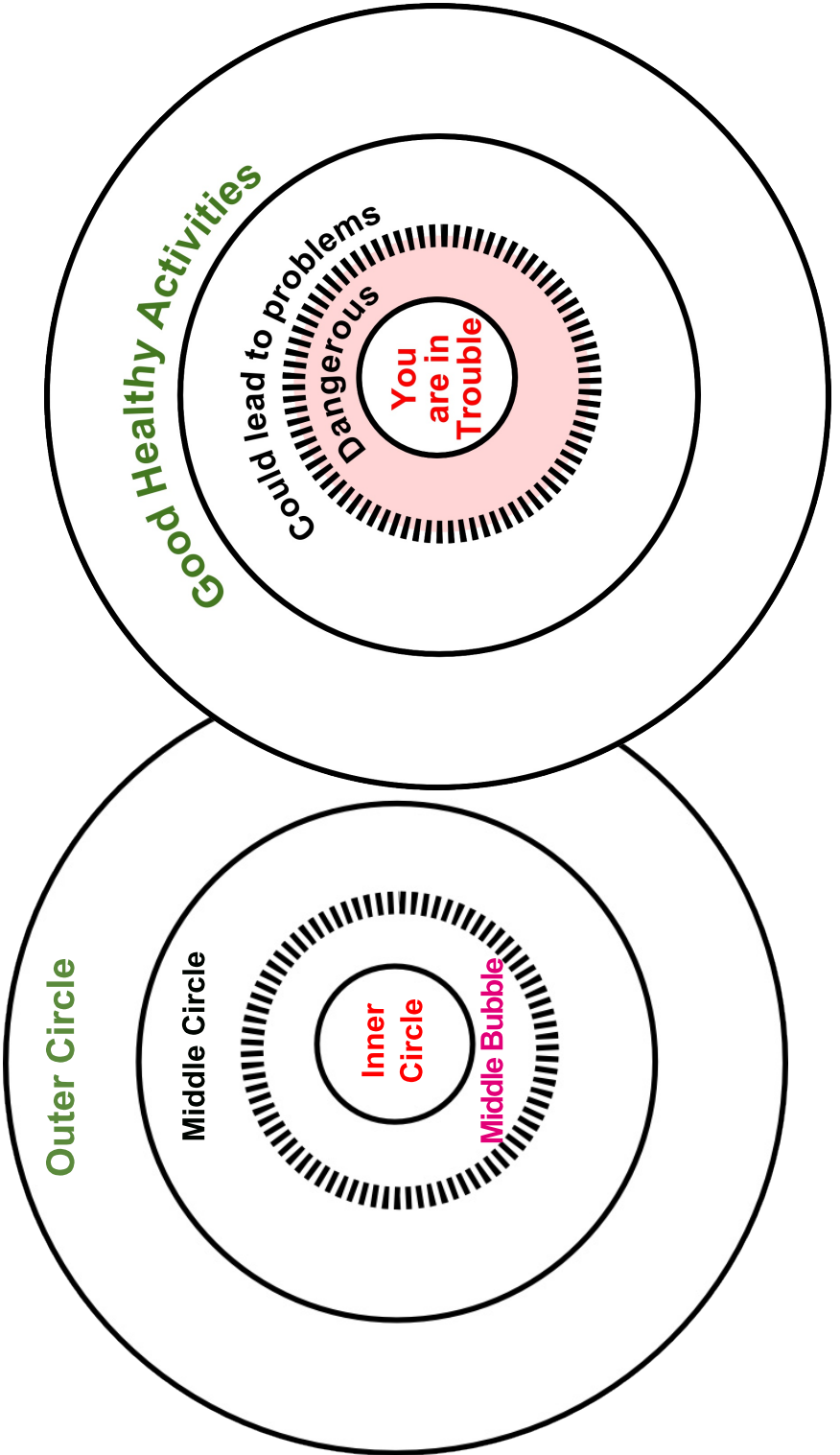
"To help us define our sexual sobriety, many of us use a tool developed within SAA called The Three Circles."

"We draw three concentric circles, consisting of an inner, middle, and outer circle. With the help of our sponsor or others in recovery, we write down various behaviors in each of the three circles. In the inner circle, we put the sexual behaviors we want to abstain from, the ones we consider 'acting out'. In the middle circle we put behaviors that may lead to acting out or that we are not sure about. In the outer circle we put healthy behaviors that enhance our life and our recovery." Sex Addicts Anonymous pg 16

In addition to the three circles, some people use a fourth circle called the middle bubble. With the help of our sponsor or others in recovery, we write down various behaviors in each of the three/four circles. In the inner circle, we put the sexual behaviors we want to abstain from, the ones we consider acting out.

The middle bubble is used for activities that while not strictly part of the inner circle are dangerous and will likely lead us into the inner circle. In the middle circle we put behaviors that may lead to acting out or that we are not sure about. In the outer circle we put healthy behaviors that enhance our life and our recovery."

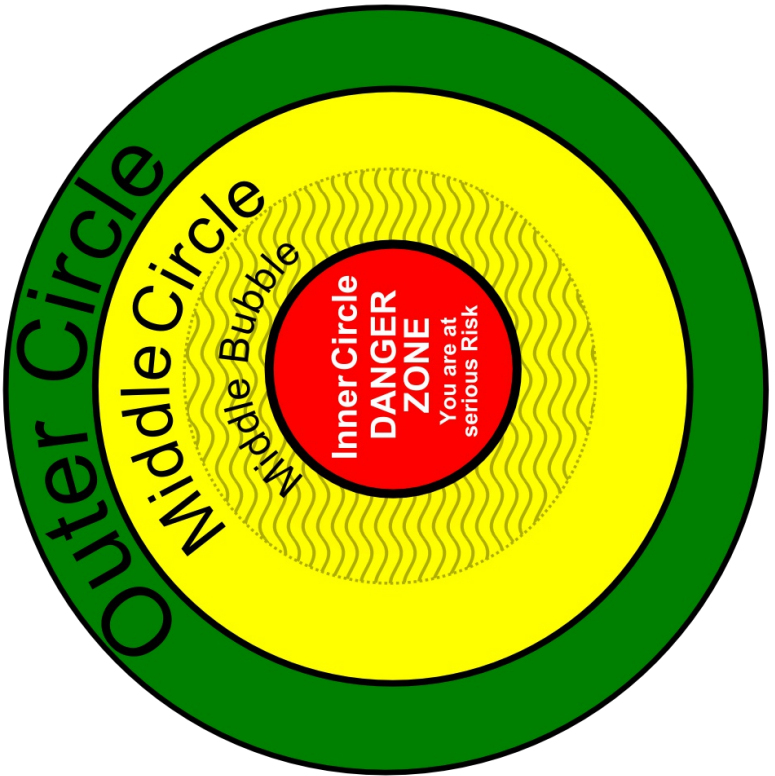
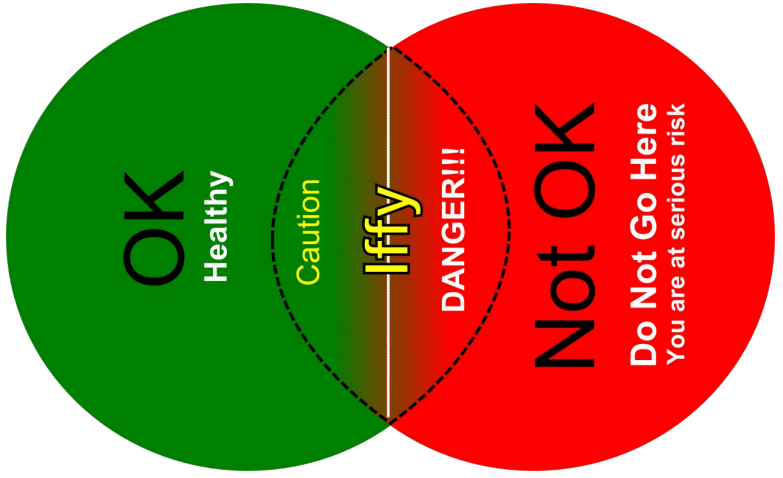
Sex Addicts Anonymous pg 16.



Circle Exercise

On a sheet of paper, list every kind of sexual activity you have ever been involved in, alone and with other people. That might include masturbating with porn, masturbating without porn, having sex with a partner, engaging in cyber sex, telephone sex, viewing late night TV channels, voyeurism, visiting massage parlours, sex cinemas, sex workers, dogging sites, stranger sex, affairs, one night stands and so on and so on.

Once this has been done, the challenge is to separate the list into the appropriate areas in the circle below. The top OK circle is where you write all the behaviours that fit with your values and you are completely comfortable with. The inner circle NOT OK circle is for the behaviours that are definitely outside of your value system. The overlap - middle circle - IFFY area is for those behaviours that you're currently unsure about. You might be unsure because you don't know how you feel about it or whether it would cause a problem for a partner. You should also list here any behaviours that, although OK in themselves, might lead to the NOT OK circle. For example, someone who's addiction has been to visiting sex workers may not have an addiction to internet pornography but they may put internet porn in their middle IFFY circle because they know they are much more likely to be tempted to visit sex worker sites when online.



Inner Circle

"In the inner circle we write down the sexual behaviors that we want to stop. Inner-circle behaviors are the addictive sexual behaviors that brought us to SAA, the things that made us hit bottom in our disease" Sex Addicts Anonymous pg 16

"When we're new to the program, our sponsor may suggest that we put compulsive sexual behaviors that don't have serious consequences in our middle circle rather than our inner circle. This allows us to concentrate on our most destructive behaviors first." Sex Addicts Anonymous pg 17

For example, people who have committed felonious behavior in their past may want to put only those behaviors in their inner circle.

It is vital to making progress to put as few items as possible in our inner circle. For many of us, at some time during the first 12 months of sobriety, the compulsion comes back in full force. If we can avoid the most harmful behavior at that point, we are improving our lives. Thus, we recommend putting only the most harmful behavior in the inner circle.

At this point, fill in the inner circle form (next page). Put as many items as you think appropriate in here. Don't worry about being perfect. This will be revisited later as you start working with your sponsor, sobriety partner or others in the fellowship.

Middle Circle

"The middle circle helps us avoid being perfectionists about our standards for sexual sobriety. In the middle circle, we place behavior that is 'slippery' for us or about which we are uncertain.

"Most of us come to SAA without really knowing what healthy sexuality is. We're usually uncertain about whether some behaviors are addictive or not. We place them in the middle circle until we can determine if they are addictive or have negative consequences."
Sex Addicts Anonymous pg 17

We can place in the middle circle all those activities that lead up to acting out. For example, we can put in things like contacting an old partner, "cruising", the driving to an acting out place, etc.

At this point, fill in the middle circle form (next page). Put as many items as you think appropriate in here. Don't worry about being perfect. You may even repeat items you have put in your inner circle. These will be items you are unsure about. This will be revisited later as you start working with your sponsor, sobriety partner or others in the fellowship.

NOTE: "The middle circle can be seen as a safety net, allowing us to walk the tightrope of abstinence without having to fear that a false step would necessarily be disastrous." Sex Addicts Anonymous pg 18 but the middle circle should not be considered a free play zone, rather it is like a yellow light at a corner with a Red Light Cam. You might get away with running the yellow 10 times but you will eventually go over the line and get caught.

The Outer Circle



Shoot for the **GREEN!**

"Finally, we put those behaviors in the outer circle that we consider healthy, safe, and beneficial to our recovery. Practicing these behaviors is a way of being gentle with ourselves. These are acts of self nurturing that help bring meaning, fulfillment, serenity, and joy into our lives.

Outer circle behaviors include healthy sexuality. Healthy sexual behaviors are ones we choose that enhance our life, our recovery, our connection to others, and our spiritual life. Examples might include dating, non-abusive sex within a committed relationship, healthy masturbation with or without fantasy, taking a dance class, wearing attractive clothes, or enjoying affectionate touch.

Many of us include in our outer circle other healthy activities in our lives, not just healthy sexual behaviors. These are frequently the things we didn't have time to do when we were acting out." Sex Addicts Anonymous pg 18

Many of us start the program not knowing what to put in our outer circle. One way to find out items to put here is to do a "gratitude list" where we list all the things, relationships, and activities in our lives that we can be thankful for. This list can suggest many items to put in our outer circle.

At this point, fill in the form for the Outer circle. Put as many items as you think appropriate in here. Don't worry about being perfect. This will be revisited later as you start working with your sponsor, sobriety partner or others in the fellowship. You may even repeat items you have put in your middle circle. These will be items you are unsure about.

This will be revisited later as you start working with your sponsor, sobriety partner or others in the fellowship.

Foreseeable Positive Benefit to Life of Not Acting Out

When listing positive rewards of new behaviours, people often include such things as improved health, more opportunities, better self esteem, being able to be honest with people and yourself is often included as well. The important thing is to be honest and personal about the rewards you realize will materialize by staying outside of your inner circle.

Aspect of Life	Benefit to Life

Populating the Circles

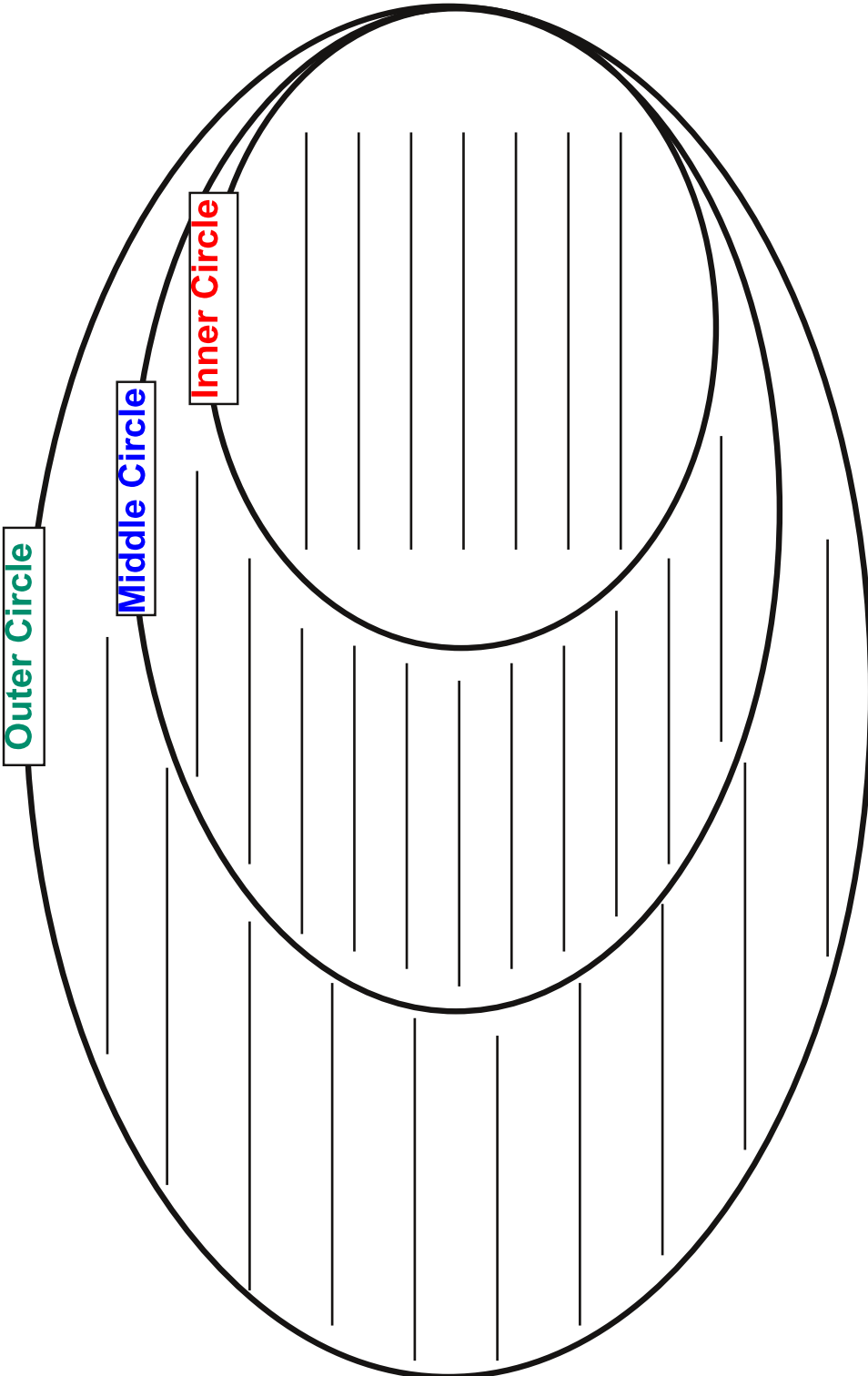
Now, working with your sponsor, co-sponsor or other trusted servant, share and discuss the lists you made in the previous sections and then fill in the circles below remaining conscious of your middle bubble and your inner circle.

Remember, your sponsor will help you determine which items are more problematic for you and items where you are being too hard on yourself.

Place as many safe and healthy items as you can in your outer circle.

Remember, these activities are good activities for you to perform and they are activities you enjoy. Time spend doing them is time you will not spend acting out.

Work closely and carefully with your sponsor for your middle circle, middle bubble and inner circle. Explain how each activity has affected your life and how the absence of them will improve your life and what you anticipate you life will be like in the absence of them and then fill that item into the circle.

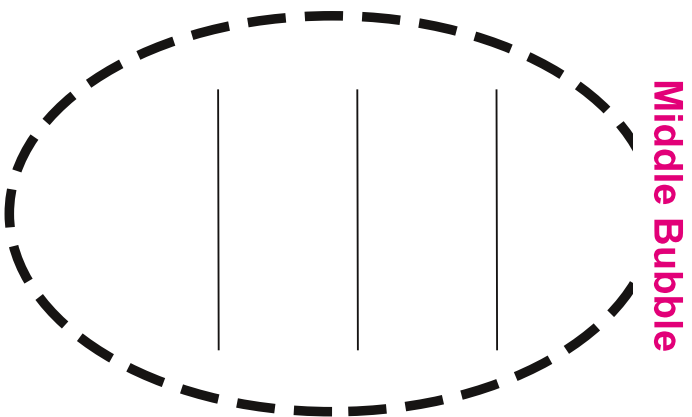
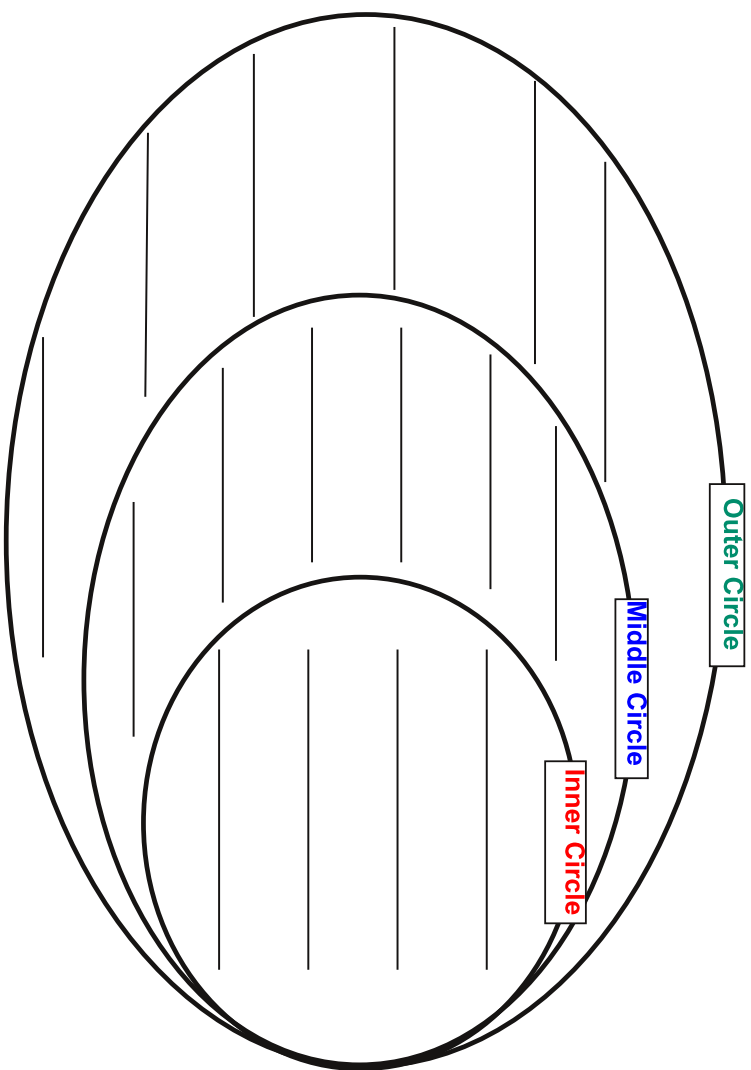


The Three Circles (and middle bubble)

Now, select some of the items you have determined are the most problematic for your highest priority to focus on and place them in the appropriate circle below.

attention. Pay attention to these and what they are trying to tell you as you experience, contemplate or engage in them.

Also, spend some time and enter some middle bubble "Yellow light" warning signals that you are heading towards trouble.



You can use this page for notes to yourself

