

the addiction cycle and the shame you feel, which takes the power out of the acting out.

There are all types of 12 step meetings for sex addicts and their partners. Here are a few of them:

- * Sex Addicts Anonymous
- * Sexaholics Anonymous
- * Prodigals International
- * Celebrate Recovery
- * Pure Desire
- * CO-addict of Sex Addition
- * Recovering Couples Anonymous
- * LDS Addiction Recovery
- * Smart Recovery
(not strictly a 12 step program but a recover program based on principles of recovery that are based on discussing and approaches to unhelpful behaviours).

Check out these free resources if you think you might have a problem, or feel you partner might have a problem. There is help and it's there for anyone who wants it. You just have to ask.

If you're like most people, you're scared to expose your inner feelings to anyone - especially strangers. That's really normal. Every person at a 12 step meeting has had to walk into the meeting feeling the exact same thing, and they get it. The people in the 12 step meetings are all recovering from something, and know how hard it is to start the recovery process. You'll find allies and support from them if you allow yourself to be open, and share your struggles with them. You get enormous value from 12 step meetings, which far outweighs the initial uncomfortable feelings of starting something new.

Start by educating yourself about 12 step meetings, then find a meeting in your area and go. If you take those two steps, you will be on your way to something better for you and your family. I would love to hear how your experience with 12 step meetings has changed you. Please leave comments below.

Do 12 Step Meetings works for Sex Addicts

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Tri County Recovery
of the Path to Healing and Recovery Group

SAA - From Shame to Grace

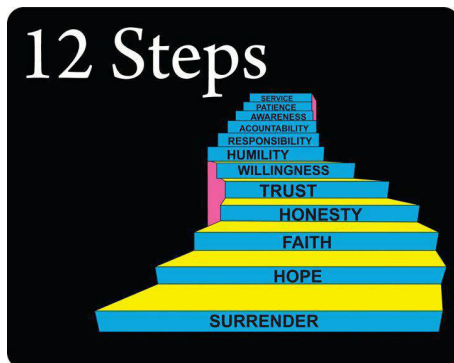
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Sex addiction therapists get asked this all the time, *"How can I stop my sexual acting out behavior?"* While the acting out behaviors are different for everyone, the root causes are very similar.

Treating the root causes of the addiction is how people gain sanity in their lives. Sanity is gained by attending 12 step meetings, attending individual counseling, attending sex addiction group counseling, and living a life that includes recovery from addiction.



Participating in all that recovery work may seem overwhelming for people early in their recovery process, but that is what it takes to become free from sexual addiction. Those who have had the best recoveries are the people who make recovery their number one priority.

You can't sort of do recovery - you're either all in or all out. There's always a period of time where people need to experience whether or not they can feel safe. In this article I want to focus on the 12 step meeting benefits.

I encourage people to go to 12 step meetings and observe for the first few times. Usually, after a few meetings they feel more comfortable and find out no one has been judged, and that other people are struggling just like them. 12 step meetings are a place to feel accepted and valued for who you are with no strings attached.

Many times the roots of addiction included a childhood in which it was not ok to be you. You may have been blamed for someone else's anger or chaos, and then learned to feel like you were a failure or a bad person. Others were praised for everything they did and got a sense of entitlement and they walk around with a bloated sense of self, but underneath feel like they need to perform extremely well to get praised and affirmed. Both suffer from negative self-esteem and self-image. Both are seeking approval from others rather than having a deep sense of being okay internally.

Most 12 step meetings help people to experience unconditional love and acceptance, an experience that was non-existent in their lives. Most addicts have only experienced conditional acceptance. Meaning: if you do this I will approve of you.

Conditional acceptance sets you up to have addictions because you can never do enough to get the approval you need from others. We can learn what unconditional acceptance is by being part of a group experience, and 12 step meetings are one free way to gain this experience.

Those early in recovery have a hard time seeing the benefits from 12 step meetings due to still viewing the experience from their *"conditional eyes."* They make comments like, *"These guys messed up this week and every one was patting them on the back and telling them they did a good job. That doesn't make sense to me."*

The conditional eyes only see the failures and judge. There is no shame in seeing this way. This is the only way you have been taught to see things. You can learn to see differently if you want.

Unconditional eyes see the person's efforts to correct the failures and affirm these efforts to become healthier. Seeing things differently is one of the main goals of 12 step meetings, and an honorable goal of recovery from sex addiction.



Experiencing others' unconditional acceptance of you is another surprising benefit from attending a 12 step meeting. It doesn't happen the first time you attend a meeting, it happens over time. One day, if you go to a 12 step meeting regularly, you will realize that people really like you for who you are, not for who you pretend to be. That's a huge realization, and incredibly healing when it happens.

Many people make lifelong friends in 12 step meetings. Sex addiction especially makes people isolate, which reinforces the shame, which reinforces more isolation. 12 step meetings stop the isolation part of the sex addiction cycle. You get to expose