

ence 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? What precipitated it? Identify your specific feelings and thought patterns before, during, and after the incident. What attempts did you make to stop or control the behavior? 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

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"

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)

Tri County Recovery

Welcome to the Newcomer First Steps to Recovery

v.1.0.0.4



SAA

From Shame to Grace
Path to Healing and Recovery
<http://tcr.p2har.org>
info@tcr.p2har.org

Tel : 1-844-523-8676, ext 10827

First Step Experiences

"We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior that our lives had become unmanageable." (page 22, Sex 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 unman-

ageable. 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 before 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 activity)? 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?"
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 influ-