

Abstinence Statement

Our desire is to abstain from addictive sexual behaviours and to help others to recover from sexual addiction and dependency.

We define abstinence in terms of behaviour and obsessions rather than our passing thoughts. Addictive ways of thinking may take years to fade away: abstinence from destructive behaviours can, however, begin today. We are concerned when our thoughts become obsessive and take over our lives, but we do not punish ourselves for fleeting desires, occasional memories or the brief games played by our imaginations. We seek progress rather than perfection.

Abstinence will be different for each member of SAA. Some addicts can engage in sexual behaviours from which other addicts find they must abstain. In SAA each member must assess their own behaviour and experience. We take note when we identify with others, but we do not compare ourselves with others, and we do not judge ourselves by others' standards.

Think about those compulsive behaviours which leave you feeling hurt, confused and demoralised. Establish some boundaries around these now. They don't have to be perfect – you can always revise them. Talk about them with your sponsor and other members of the group. If any of your behaviours are particularly dangerous or abusive, then we recommend that you give first priority to stopping these.

We also need to take note if a desire for abstinence becomes obsessive, and we cut off completely from all sexual feelings. Abstinence does not mean complete elimination of sexuality from our lives, but a new approach to the experience of sex and relationships which is non-compulsive and non-destructive.

We seek through abstinence to give ourselves space simply to feel alive, so that our god-given understanding of healthy sexuality can emerge quite naturally.