

Opening statement

S.A.A. is a fellowship of men and women who share our experience, strength and hope with each other so that we may stop our compulsive sexual behaviour and help others to recover from sexual addiction and dependency.

Our programme is based on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, but we are not affiliated with A.A. or any other organisation or agency.

We are not a religious organisation or aligned with any sect or denomination. Our only connection with the organisation that operates this building is that of a renter of meeting space.

Here we try to listen respectfully to what others have to say and to share our experience of Recovery. While we all strive for sexual sobriety, its achievement is not a requirement for attendance or participation.

We hope you will join in sharing the collective experience, strength and hope that is ours when we work the programme and trust our Higher Power to deliver the promises. If you are new or having a trying time remember that others of us have been there too. Keep coming back! It works!

How it works

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program. They cannot develop a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. There are those, too, who suffer from serious emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it, then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with addiction – cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power – that One is God. May you find God now! Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked God's protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive behaviour – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
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.
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.

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to the principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

1. That we were sexually addicted and could not manage our lives.
2. That probably no human power could have relieved our addiction.
3. That God could and would if God were sought.

Twelve Traditions

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 behaviour.
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 centres 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.

<Newcomer letter (if applicable)>

Welcome to SAA. 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 SAA 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 SAA 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.

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 if, for example, there is a risk of harming others.

It is suggested that you attend at least six meetings before you decide whether the programme is for you. We encourage you to read our literature, talk to others and exchange telephone numbers with those you relate to. We also suggest that you try to find a sponsor to assist you in working the steps.

We are happy that you are here, for it is the newcomer that keeps SAA alive and well. We encourage you to take it one day at a time, be gentle with yourself, and keep coming back.

Closing reading

We have shown how we got out from under. You say, “Yes, I’m willing. But am I to be consigned to a life where I shall be stupid, boring and glum, like some righteous people I see? I know I must get along without acting out, but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?”

Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Sex Addicts Anonymous. There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you.

“How is that to come about?” you ask. “Where am I to find these people?”

You are going to meet these new friends in your own community. Near you, sex addicts are dying helplessly like people in a sinking ship. If you live in a large place, there are hundreds. High and low, rich and poor, these are future fellows of Sex Addicts Anonymous.

Among them you will make lifelong friends. You will be bound to them with new and wonderful ties, for you will escape disaster together and you will commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey. Then you will know what it means to give of yourself that others may survive and rediscover life. You will learn the full meaning of “Love thy neighbor as thyself.”

It may seem incredible that these men and women are to become happy, respected, and useful once more. How can they rise out of such misery, bad repute and hopelessness? The practical answer is that since these things have happened among us, they can happen with you. Should you wish them above all else, and be willing to make use of our experience, we are sure they will come. The age of miracles is still with us. Our own recovery proves that!

Step 9 Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

Self-seeking will slip away.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? *We think not.* They are being fulfilled among us; sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

<Serenity Prayer>

God,

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can,

And Wisdom to know the difference.

Keep coming back,

it works if you work it

so work it

because you're worth it.