

## **Saturday Open Sexual Avoidance Telephone Meeting Script and Readings**

**Time:** 3:00 PM Pacific Time / 4:00 PM Mountain / 5:00 PM Central / 6:00 PM Eastern

**Makeup:** Mixed / this meeting is for both men and women.

**Access:** Open to anyone interested in learning about SAA and/or Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance, whether or not he or she has a problem with sex addiction. Family members, spouses, significant others, and visitors may attend.

**CALL-IN NUMBER:** 712-770-4160, passcode 599840

**Not Conference-Approved:** Adapted through Group Conscience from the *Group Guide: Handbook for SAA Groups*, p 11-39.

For "Trusted Servant Tips" and other service information, click [HERE](#)

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the Saturday Open Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance or Anorexia Tele-Meeting of SAA. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am from \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm your trusted servant for this meeting. This is an open meeting, and all interested parties are welcome to attend. It is our intention to give each other support in working the Steps around Avoidance. Anyone who may be new to the program or Sexual Anorexia is welcome to share thoughts, and any questions you have can be asked after the meeting during fellowship.

May we have a moment of silence for the addict in and out of these rooms who still suffers, followed by the serenity prayer? (Pause.) All together:

*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.*

### **Regarding Literature**

Due to little SAA approved literature around intimacy and sexual avoidance, in this meeting we may use outside literature for discussion on the topic of intimacy and sexual avoidance and sexual anorexia. As a group we do believe that using the approved literature of SAA is essential for working the SAA program. The format and readings for this meeting can be found at [www.saataalk.info](http://www.saataalk.info). On the left side, click on "Find a Telemeeting," scroll to the Open Intimacy & Sexual Avoidance meeting for this day and time. Click on it, and you'll see "document download." Who on the call has access to the script and would be willing to help with the readings?

Who will read the Meeting Preamble?

### **Meeting Preamble**

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a spiritual program based on the principles and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our primary purpose is to stop our addictive sexual behavior, and to help others recover from sexual addiction. We find a new way of living through the SAA program, and carry our message to others seeking recovery. (Introduction, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*)

The focus of this meeting is on recovering from the compulsive avoidance of sex and closeness with others. As we come to understand our fear of intimacy and work the Steps around it, our lives change for the better.

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Who will read "Sex Addiction: Acting Out and Acting In"?

### **Sex Addiction: Acting Out and Acting In**

"Sex addiction is a disease affecting the mind, body, and spirit. It is progressive, with the behavior and its consequences usually becoming more severe over time. We experience it as compulsion, which is an urge that is stronger than our will to resist, and as obsession, which is a mental preoccupation with sexual behavior and fantasies. In SAA, we have come to call our addictive sexual behavior 'acting out.'" (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 3)

"Most of us came to our first Sex Addicts Anonymous meeting when we could no longer deny that we had a problem. [Acting out behaviors] seemed like the part of an iceberg that we could see above the waterline, and they deserved our immediate attention. Over time, though, other more subtle forms of sex addiction known as "acting in" behaviors that may have been lurking below come to the surface. "Acting in" is any compulsive sexual behavior that serves to avoid or block sexual, emotional, or spiritual intimacy with others, ourselves, or our Higher Power." (Adapted from the SAA pamphlet *Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance: A Return to Intimacy*)

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Who will read "Sexual Anorexia"?

### **Sexual Anorexia**

Some of us note the close parallels between food disorders and sexual disorders. "Sexual anorexia is an obsessive state in which the physical, mental, and emotional task of avoiding sex dominates one's life. Like self-starvation with food or compulsive debting or hoarding with money, deprivation with sex can make one feel powerful and defended against all hurts." (*Sexual Anorexia: Overcoming Sexual Self-Hatred*, Dr. Patrick Carnes, Ph.D.)

"For some of us, the compulsive avoidance of sex and intimacy became a destructive pattern, dominating our thoughts and actions. We may always have felt unable or unwilling to be sexual. Or we may have experienced periods of feeling 'shut down' alternating with other periods of sexual acting out. We have come to realize that both extremes represent symptoms of the same disease. Whether we were acting out or not being sexual at all, our addiction involved being emotionally unavailable." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 6)

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Who will read "Symptoms of Intimacy Avoidance/Sexual Anorexia"?

## **18 Symptoms of Intimacy Avoidance (or Sexual Anorexia)**

Symptoms some of us have experienced include, but are not limited to:

1. Practicing avoidance of sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
2. Obsessive sexual thoughts (about having sex and/or avoiding it).
3. A feeling that our sexuality is inherently bad and something we should feel ashamed of and guilty about.
4. Pretending that flirtation and sexual advances aren't really happening to us and acting uninterested purely based on fear of taking risks.
5. A pattern of sex and relationships with active sex addicts and/or other unavailable people.
6. A pattern of addictive sexual behavior (acting out), followed by a pattern of compulsive sexual avoidance (acting in).
7. Extreme fear of combining emotional intimacy with sexuality.
8. Finding fault or starting fights with a spouse or partner to avoid sexual relations.
9. Being emotionally unavailable – in sexual and non-sexual relationships.
10. Only socializing in groups to avoid one-on-one relationships.
11. Avoiding social situations altogether due to extreme discomfort.
12. Only being sexual in non-intimate situations.
13. An inability to accept nurturing and care from ourselves, our Higher Power and others.
14. An inability to trust and rely on others, believing that people will always let us down and it is safer if we just do things on our own.
15. The compulsive use of masturbation, with fantasy and/or pornography, as a way to avoid intimacy with others, and prevent sexual abandonment.
16. Mistaking compulsive sexual avoidance for recovery and/or healthy sexuality.
17. Preferring fantasy over interacting with the people in our lives; so much that fantasy creates a wall between ourselves and the real world.
18. Hiding the joys and pains of our life from people we know and trust, due to self-pity, false-pride and/or fear.

*(Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance: A Return to Intimacy)*. This list is not meant to be diagnostic. Each person must determine their own pattern of avoidant behavior, with the help of a sponsor or others in the program. If you need a sponsor, please talk to someone after the meeting.

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## Who will read "Abstinence and Recovery"?

### **Abstinence and Recovery**

For many of us, our goal when entering the SAA program is abstinence from one or more specific sexual behaviors. But unlike programs for recovering alcoholics or drug addicts, Sex Addicts Anonymous does not have a universal definition of abstinence. Since different addicts suffer from different behaviors, and since our sexuality is experienced in so many different ways, it is necessary that SAA members define for themselves, with the help of their sponsors or others in recovery, which of their sexual behaviors they consider to be "acting out." (Excerpted from *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, pages 14-15)

In addition to abstaining from acting-out behaviors, recovery for many of us includes recognizing and abstaining from "acting-in." At first, this seemed to "highlight more of what was absent in our lives than what was present." But we "gradually became aware of a range of subtle but overt behaviors that enabled us to avoid authentic closeness or intimacy." (Adapted from *Recovery from Compulsive Sexual Avoidance: A Return to Intimacy*)

One of the most dangerous aspects of intimacy avoidance is our inability to see it for what it is. This difficulty recognizing what we are doing, how risky and serious it is, and how much harm it may cause, we call denial. (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 8) Working the Twelve Steps of SAA will lead to an awakening that allows us to live a new way of life according to spiritual principles. (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 20)

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Who will read The Twelve Steps of Sex Addicts Anonymous, from page 20 of the SAA green book?

### **The Twelve Steps of SAA**

1. We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior—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.

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Who will read the Tradition of the month, and the Twelfth Tradition, from the SAA Green Book pg. 77?

### **The Twelve Traditions of SAA**

*(Read the Tradition for the current month: 1 for January, 2 for February, etc. and then the 12th Tradition)*

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 behavior.
  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. SAA should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers 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. SAA 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.
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## **Introductions:**

Now let's go around for introductions. It is the custom of this group to share your first name, where you're from, and how you're feeling right now in a few words. You are invited to share your length of sobriety if you wish, and if you are new to this meeting, let us know so we may properly welcome you. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a sex addict/intimacy avoidant from \_\_\_\_\_ and I feel \_\_\_\_\_. (Optional: I have \_\_\_\_\_ days/weeks/months/years free from my inner circle behaviors.)

## **Boundaries for Discussion**

Due to the sensitive nature of our addiction, please avoid sharing details of your acting out behaviors in this meeting. Instead, focus on today's reading or what's on your mind and heart so that we can support one another in recovery from intimacy avoidance. Please limit your shares so that all can participate. If you feel triggered by someone's share, please put down the phone and say the Serenity Prayer to yourself.

We don't comment on another's share or give advice. To keep the virtual room quiet, we mute our phones when not reading or sharing. We also avoid mentioning the name of literature that is not SAA-approved or of specific treatment centers and therapies since doing so might be construed as promotion.

(Note to Trusted Servant: Suggested time limit 3-4 minutes, at the discretion of the Trusted Servant. \*2 indicates how many participants are on the call. In the event that it is a large group, ask for a volunteer to keep time. To mute/unmute, press \*6 or use the phone's "mute" feature.)

## **Meeting Focus**

This is a Topic, Speaker, or 1st Step meeting of SAA. If you would like to be a speaker or give your First Step on your Sexual Avoidance or Anorexia, please talk to the trusted servant after the meeting. (If there is a Speaker or a 1st Step, see information at the end of this format)

## **If someone has brought a reading:**

I would like thank \_\_\_\_\_ for volunteering to bring a 5-minute reading today. I will now turn the meeting over to them. (Move to Discussion Section after thanking the reader.)

If nobody brought a reading, the Trusted Servant can:

1. choose a reading from SAA literature, or outside literature on Sexual Avoidance or
2. ask if anyone else would like to choose a reading, or
3. suggest a topic for discussion or ask for a suggestion for a discussion topic.

Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_, for the reading. The floor is now open for sharing. I will help moderate...who would like to begin?

## (Discussion Portion)

**Closing** - Five minutes to the hour (3:55 Pac / 4:55 Mtn / 5:55 Cen / 6:55 Est)

That's all the time we have for discussion. Everyone is invited to stay on the line after the meeting where we will have a period of continued fellowship. Newcomers may also feel free to ask any questions at that time.

Our business meeting is held on the last Saturday of the month after the regular meeting.

*(If so, announce that business meeting will start immediately after the meeting.)*

### **Service Opportunities**

We need volunteers to do service on this meeting. The only requirements are a desire to stop addictive sexual behavior and a desire to give back to the fellowship. **Who will do the following next week?**

**Greeter:** Arrives a couple of minutes early to welcome participants.

**Bring a Reading:** Provide a reading from SAA literature or outside literature for discussion on the topic of intimacy and sexual avoidance and sexual anorexia. The "reading" for the first Saturday is devoted a broadcast of a cut from the tape "Healthy Sexual Focus" by Patrick Carnes – broadcasting requires access to the conference call website.

**Trusted Servant:** Leads the meeting by reading the script. (For TS tips, see link at beginning of script)

Our business meeting is held on the last Saturday of the month after the regular meeting.

*(If so, announce that business meeting will start immediately after the meeting.)*

Are there any SAA-related [announcements](#)? (←Click link)

### **The 7th Tradition**

"Every SAA group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions." The Telemeeting Intergroup relies on our donations to pay for the saataalk.info site and phone lines, and helps support the ISO. To donate, you can send a check to SAA Telemeeting Intergroup, PO Box 62, Windsor, CO 80550 or use a credit or debit card or PayPal at [www.saataalk.info](http://www.saataalk.info). To obtain literature or donate to the International Service Organization (ISO), call 1-800-477-8191 or visit [www.saa-recovery.org](http://www.saa-recovery.org).

### **Closing Reading**

**Would someone please read The Twelve Rewards of Recovery?**

## **The Twelve Rewards of Recovery**

1. Hope instead of desperation.
2. Faith instead of despair.
3. Courage instead of fear.
4. Peace of mind instead of confusion.
5. Self-respect instead of self-contempt.
6. Self-confidence instead of helplessness.
7. The respect of others instead of their pity and contempt.
8. A clean conscience instead of a sense of guilt.
9. Real friendships instead of loneliness.
10. A clean pattern of life instead of a purposeless existence.
11. The love and understanding of our families instead of their doubts and fears.
12. The freedom of a happy life instead of the bondage of sexual obsession.

Originally by Ann C. (sober April 1, 1948) of Niles, Ohio and presented at the 1985 AA International Convention in Montreal, Canada

### **Closing Prayer**

In closing, please help us move from shame to grace and join us in the Serenity Prayer or the Unity Prayer. *(For words, [click here.](#))*

Keep Coming Back—It Works!

### **Continued Fellowship**

For those who wish to exchange phone numbers, please go to the website at [www.saatalk.info](http://www.saatalk.info) and register yourself as a member by clicking on "Members" in the left-hand column.

Once you are registered, you can choose to share your contact information with "others on the shared list." This will give you access to the contact information of other members. By putting the word "anorexia" in the keyword column, you'll be able to find others dealing with sexual avoidance issues.

The phone line is now open for Fellowship. Please state your name before your share. If there are any newcomers on the line, you're welcome to ask questions at this time. (Pause; If no newcomers, announce that the line is open for general fellowship.)

**BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA [the last Saturday of the month]**

Welcome to the Saturday Sexual Avoidance business meeting. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ , and I'm your trusted servant for this meeting.

Who will read The Twelve Traditions from the SAA Green Book pg. 77?

### **Old Business**

In keeping with our traditions, do we have any old business to discuss?

### **Reports**

Now is the time for reports. Will all trusted servants, starting with the Intergroup Rep. give their reports now?

### **New Business**

Do we have any new business to discuss?

### **Closing Prayer**

Please help me close this meeting with the 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.*

**Continued Fellowship** The phone line is now open for Fellowship. Please state your name before your share.

## **Information regarding Speaker or First Step guidelines:**

The speaker can share for approximately 10 Minutes on his or her recovery from Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance or Anorexia.

Persons giving 1<sup>st</sup> Step presentations will have 20 Minutes to speak, but will need to review their 1<sup>st</sup> Step with the trusted servant or meeting representative to help focus their 1<sup>st</sup> step on their avoidance of sex and intimacy rather than their history of acting out.

To allow all the meeting attendees to have their needs met, the group conscience has agreed to allow the meeting to extend beyond the 1 Hour scheduled meeting time, if necessary.

### **If there is a Speaker:**

May we have a volunteer to keep time?

I would like thank \_\_\_\_\_ for volunteering to be our Speaker today. I will now turn the meeting over to them.

(Move to Discussion section after thanking the speaker.)

### **If there is a First Step:**

If the person's sponsor isn't present, the Trusted Servant can read the intro section to First Steps from the SAA pamphlet, *First Step to Intimacy: A Guide to Working the First Step on Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance or Sexual Anorexia*.

(After First Step Presentation)

We would like to thank \_\_\_\_\_ for sharing his/her First Step with us today. \_\_\_\_\_, are you open to receiving feedback? (If yes): We will now open the meeting for feedback for \_\_\_\_\_ (person who gave First Step). Examples of feedback include sharing what you identified with or liked about the presentation, or feelings it brought up for you. If you wish to get current or share about an issue you are dealing with, there will be time for check-ins after feedback or during fellowship. Who would like to begin the feedback for \_\_\_\_\_?

As feedback is winding down, ask the person who gave their First Step how they're feeling and if there's anything they'd like to share about their experience today.

(When discussion is finished, move to Closing portion of the script.)

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Record of Edits and Group Conscience:

February 22, 2014 – script changes, including Appendix A, and new phone number starting March 1

March, 2014 Consolidation of "introductions" and "Topic/Speaker/First Step" sections, clearer saataalk.info signup instructions

August, 2014 – Trusted Servant changes, eliminate Appendix A

October, 2014: return reading *The Dimensions of Healthy Sexuality* for month, add playing the *Healthy Sexuality* tape on first Saturday of month

November, 2014: remove "Trusted Service Position" from Business meeting and add "Service Opportunities" to Closing.

April, 2015: added First Step Introduction to end of format

June, 2015: changed 7th Tradition wording and added link to TS tips page

Nov 2016: removed Unity prayer reference