

Dignified Women Conquering Fear of Intimacy

ZOOM ROOM Etiquette

1. **Please mute your microphone** when a member is sharing.
2. **Please use earphones** if there is someone else in your vicinity.
3. **Think about your actions on camera.** Movements are distracting and can be disruptive or triggering. Please turn off video feed if you need to move around or lie down.
4. **Dress for a MEETING. Think "business casual."** To help create a sacred space that protects the sobriety of all recovering women, please wear something that covers your shoulders and chest.
5. **Think about the background** behind you. Is it appropriate for international viewing? Please protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the group members by turning off your screen if someone enters your space.

"Gallery View" will display everyone in same-size images.

"Speaker View" highlights the speaker in a large center screen

Dignified Women Conquering Fear of Intimacy

Meeting of SAA

Introduction

Welcome to the Dignified Women Conquering Fear of Intimacy Meeting of SAA. This meeting is for all who self-identify as a woman. Our focus in this meeting is to cultivate authentic closeness and connection with ourselves, our Higher Power, and others. The only requirement to join the meeting is a desire to stop avoiding intimacy in our lives by "acting in" or "acting out."

May we have a moment of silence for the addict in and out of these rooms who still suffers, followed by the Serenity Prayer?

(Everyone)

Higher Power / God,

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

The courage to change the things I can, and

The wisdom to know the difference.

Thank you. As a gentle reminder, please mute your microphone when you're not reading or sharing. Sometimes the meeting host or co-hosts may eliminate background noise by muting participants. This is to help maintain the safety and flow of the meeting and is not meant to be offensive. Participants can easily unmute themselves when they would like to share. (For phone-in participants, muting and unmuting happens by pressing *6.)

We will now read a few things to remind us of why we're here.

Note: The Trusted Servant may choose which parts of the script she would like to be read at the beginning of the meeting. (Influencing factors may include whether or not there are newcomers, or if what is planned for the rest of the meeting requires extra time.)

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.

Who will read the What is Intimacy?

What is Intimacy?

Many people use the words "sex" and "intimacy" interchangeably. However, they are not the same thing. Intimacy means a close, familiar, and usually affectionate personal relationship with self, others, or a Higher Power. A person can have friendships or relationships that are intimate but not sexual, and many sex addicts have learned that a person can have sex without being intimate. Using sex as a drug to medicate uncomfortable emotions does not promote connection. Anonymous sex is non-intimate, but even sex within a committed partnership can be non-intimate for someone who is relying on fantasy or other stimulation to accomplish a goal without becoming emotionally vulnerable. (First Step to Intimacy - A Guide for Working the First Step on Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance or Sexual Anorexia)

Who will read "18 Symptoms of Intimacy Avoidance" / Who will read the Symptoms numbers ____ - ____? (Could read all 18, or the #1-4 for the first week, #4-8 for the second week, #9-12 for the third week, #13-18 for the last week.)

18 Symptoms of Intimacy Avoidance

Symptoms of intimacy avoidance 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.

(This list can be found in the **SAA pamphlet: 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.

Who will read the 12 Steps of SAA? (Could read all 12, or the Step which corresponds to the current month.)

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.

Who will read the 12 Traditions of SAA and the anonymity statement?

(Could read all 12, or the Tradition which corresponds to the current month, and the Anonymity Statement.)

The Twelve Traditions of SAA

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.

A note about anonymity: Anonymity "means that the names of SAA members, and the details of what we share in meetings are kept confidential and not repeated outside of the meetings. It also means that in meetings, we "put aside our outside identities and act only as members of the fellowship." (Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 95)

Introductions

Now let's go around for introductions. To keep our meeting safe, we request that all callers please identify themselves. If you are not in a private place where you're able to speak freely, you can say a first name and "I qualify" or "I feel I belong here." If you are not comfortable introducing yourself by a first name, you're welcome to attend open meetings until you feel more comfortable sharing a name with us.

It is the custom of this group to share your first name, where you are from, and how you're feeling right now in a few words. You're also invited to share your length of sobriety if you wish, and if you're new to this meeting, let us know so we may welcome you. My name is _____ and I feel _____. (Optional: I have ____ time free from inner circle behaviors.)

Sharing Topic

Welcome, everyone! Now it's time for a reading or lead share that will give us our focus topic today. Will the volunteer who offered to read or share please introduce herself and begin sharing?

Suggested schedule:

First Saturday: Read for 10 minutes from SAA literature that has to do with an aspect of recovery from intimacy avoidance. (Suggested books: *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, the booklet *Tools of Recovery*, or the *Voices of Recovery* daily meditation book.)

Second Saturday: Read for 10 minutes from the SAA "green book" about a Step or a Tradition. (The Trusted Servant may choose which Step or Tradition we'll read, or may ask participants to recommend one. This way, if a member is working on a certain Step, she can hear shares regarding what she's working on.)

Third Saturday: Read for 10 minutes from *Sexual Anorexia – Overcoming Sexual Self-Hatred* by Patrick Carnes. (The Trusted Servant could suggest a chapter to read an excerpt from, or a

participant could choose. The selection provides information or ideas for sharing about a topic relating to avoidance Step work.)

Fourth Saturday: Speaker Share (A group member can volunteer to speak for 10 minutes on recovery victories or insights learned through avoidance Step work, or we could listen to an excerpt from past SAA Convention speakers or workshops.)

Fifth Saturday: Read for 10 minutes from SAA or Group Conscience-approved non-SAA literature

Thank you, _____.

Note to TS: if someone joins the meeting late, please welcome them and request they share a first name. "This is a closed women's meeting, open to all those who identify themselves."

Guidelines for Sharing

Our intention is to support one another in recovery from intimacy avoidance. To keep our meeting safe and to honor the 5th Tradition, which states that "each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers,"

- We use respectful language while sharing our experience, strength, and hope.
- We share own experience using "I," "me," or "my," instead of "you" or "we."
- During the meeting, we avoid commenting on someone else's share. (We can ask for feedback after the meeting, if desired.)
- Due to little SAA-approved literature on intimacy and sexual avoidance, the Group Conscience of this meeting has decided to allow the use of "outside" literature which supports our sharing on how applying the 12 Steps of SAA makes recovery from intimacy avoidance possible.
- To allow time for everyone who wishes to share, we request a volunteer to be our "friendly timekeeper." Who would like to offer this service today?

Thank you, _____. Let's keep our shares to ____ minutes. When one minute remains, please give us a gentle reminder, and a signal when time is up. If you're sharing, please acknowledge that you heard the friendly timekeeper's one-minute reminder, and wrap up your share in a few seconds when the time is finished.

The floor is now open for sharing. (Sharing continues until 5 minutes till the top of the hour)

Closing # 1

That's all the time we have for sharing during this portion of the meeting, but everyone is invited to stay for fellowship afterwards. That's a great time for exchanging phone numbers and for newcomers to ask questions.

- Who would like to lead next week's meeting?

- Who would like to bring the reading / be the speaker share?
- To honor the 7th Tradition, which states that “every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions,” we invite you to donate to the Intergroup who makes this meeting possible, by visiting , and to the ISO by visiting saa-recovery.org.
- Our Business Meeting is held on the last Saturday of the month. Is there any business for the group to discuss today? (Business meeting will occur directly following the closing prayers.)

Commented [1]: Placeholder for when it's finally decided what to do with the ISA ZOOM account...

The motto of SAA is “From Shame to Grace.” This is the Grace portion of the meeting.

Circle of Gratitude:

Each member states what they are grateful for followed by an affirmation.

I am grateful for _____. I am _____.

examples:

“I am a dignified woman.”

“I am a sexually confident, dignified woman.”

“I am a beloved human being.”

Closing Prayer

In closing, please help us move from shame to grace and join us in the Namaste Reflection and the Other Serenity Prayer.

Namaste Reflection

My soul honors your soul. I honor the place in you where the entire universe resides. I honor the light, love, truth, beauty, and peace within you; because it is also within me. In sharing these things, we are united, we are the same, we are one. Namaste.

Other Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to stop beating myself up for not doing things perfectly, the courage to forgive myself because I'm working on doing better, and the wisdom to know that you already love me just the way I am.

Keep Coming Back—It Works if you work it so work it because you're worth it!! And it sucks if you don't.

Alternate Closing

Who will read the Ottawa Promises?

The Ottawa Promises

Through a renewed relationship with our Higher Power, the healing force of recovery will take hold in our hearts. By giving ourselves over to our Higher Power and working our program, our lives will become manageable and we will be restored to sanity. We will receive the inner strength and support needed to face our anxieties and fears, and to deal with the painful feelings that feed our addiction.

Relations with others will improve as we learn to respect our boundaries and allow others freedom to be themselves. Reaching out in trust and connecting with others will come easier, dispelling our sense of isolation and loneliness. Degrading fantasies and obsessive sexual thinking will diminish.

In relating to ourselves, self-absorption will give way to self-discovery; secrecy to honesty; feelings of unworthiness to dignity; and shame to grace. A restored integrity will guide our behavior. We will feel more alive and regain a sense of happiness. We will hear ourselves laugh again and rediscover play. We will embrace change and will grow.

A spiritual awakening will free us from the tyranny of our addiction. An awareness of being guided by a Higher Power and supported by caring friends will sustain us. Regret for the past and worry for the future will give way to living for today. We will open ourselves to the amazing possibilities of a life worth living...our life.

Are these extravagant promises? "We think not!!" We have seen them fulfilled. They are ours, if we want them and work for them.

In closing, please join me in the Serenity Prayer. To the Higher Power of your understanding:

(Everyone)

Higher Power / God,

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

The courage to change the things I can, and

The wisdom to know the difference.

Business Meeting 4th Saturday

Record of edits

5-23-20 Added zoom etiquette and Ottawa Promises