

Our Addiction (SAA Green Book P.3)

Before coming to Sex Addicts Anonymous, many of us never knew that our problem had a name. All we knew was that we couldn't control our sexual behavior. For us, sex was a consuming way of life. Although the details of our stories were different, our problem was the same. We were addicted to sexual behaviors that we returned to over and over, despite the consequences.

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*.

OUR PROGRAM (SAA Green Book P.20)

Attending SAA meetings starts us on a new way of life. But while the SAA fellowship supports our recovery, the actual work of recovery is described in the Twelve Steps. Meetings are forums for learning how to integrate the steps into our lives. Working the Twelve Steps leads to a spiritual transformation that results in sustainable relief from our addiction.

When we start attending meetings of Sex Addicts Anonymous, many of us are surprised to meet people who are enjoying life and experiencing freedom from the painful, compulsive behaviors that had brought them to SAA. Listening to other members share about their recovery, we gradually realize that in order to make the same kind of progress we need to be willing to do whatever it takes to get sexually abstinent, and to stay abstinent. We have learned from hard experience that we cannot achieve and maintain abstinence if we aren't willing to change our way of life. But if we can honestly face our problems, and are willing to change, the Twelve Steps of SAA will lead to an awakening that allows us to live a new way of life according to spiritual principles. Taking these Steps allows fundamental change to occur in our lives. They are the foundation of our recovery.

The Twelve Steps of Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA Green Book P.20-21)

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. Make 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 person 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 the knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the results of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

(after the 12step please read the paragraph below SAA Green Book P.21)

These steps are the heart of our program. They contain a depth that we could hardly have guessed when we started. Over time, we establish a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves, each of us coming to an understanding of a Higher Power that is personal for us. Although the steps use the word “God” to indicate this Power, SAA is not affiliated with any religion, creed, or dogma. The program offers a spiritual solution to our addiction, without requiring adherence to any specific set of beliefs or practices. The path is wide enough for everyone who wishes to walk it.

Defining Abstinence (SAA Green Book P.14)

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.

Most of us have no desire to stop being sexual altogether. It is not sex in and of itself that causes us problems, but the addiction to certain sexual behaviors. In SAA we will be better able to determine what behavior is addictive and what is healthy. However, the fellowship does not dictate to its members what is and isn't addictive sexual behavior. Instead we have found that it is necessary for each member to define his or her own abstinence.

9th Step Promises (SAA pamphlet/detail below)

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? (All together) **WE THINK NOT!** They are being fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

(Quoted from "Alcoholics Anonymous"—Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., Third Edition, pages 83-84)....This is from page 17 of SAA Getting Started in Sex Addicts Anonymous

SPONSORSHIP (SAA Green Book P.13)

One of the most vital aspects of the program is sponsorship. A sponsor is a person in the fellowship who acts as a guide to working the program of SAA, a fellow addict that we can rely upon for support. Ideally, a sponsor is abstinent from addictive sexual behavior, has worked the steps, and can teach us what he or she has learned from working the program. We can learn from a sponsor's experience, struggles, successes, and mistakes. Our sponsor can help explain program fundamentals, such as how to define our sexual sobriety. Most importantly, sponsors guide us through the Twelve Steps.

If we feel like acting out, we can call our sponsor to talk about it. A sponsor can help hold us accountable for our behavior. If we make a commitment to attend a meeting, our sponsor can note whether we got to the meeting or not. Sponsors can tell us if they think we are at risk of relapse. They can suggest when we are not being fully honest with ourselves. Often a sponsor is someone that knows us best.

NOTE: SAA Green Book-Literature Committee Approved August 2004 edition