



SA As a Resource for the Health & Helping Professional

*A Twelve Step recovery
program for those who
have problems with
sexual thinking and
behavior*

What is Sexaholics Anonymous?

Sexaholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover.

- The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober. There are no dues or fees for SA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.
- SA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.
- Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober and help others to achieve sexual sobriety.

(Adapted with permission from the AA Grapevine, Inc.)

Sexaholics Anonymous is a recovery program based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous.

A Resource for You

In your practice as a helping professional, you may have occasion to counsel someone who is experiencing unmanageability in his or her life due to sexually destructive thinking and behavior.

Sexaholics Anonymous is a Twelve Step program of recovery for men and women based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. When based on a foundation of sexual sobriety and personal action, the Twelve Steps and Traditions of SA become the beginning of a whole new way of life.

Professionals who work with individuals who experience these issues may find SA to be a valuable resource because it complements the work they are doing with their clients. It is not treatment or therapy of any kind. Meetings are open only to those who want to stop their sexually destructive thinking and behavior and are seeking help for their own problems through our program of recovery.

Those professionals, who work with sex addicts, or sexaholics, share a common purpose with Sexaholics Anonymous—to help the sexaholics recover and lead healthy, productive lives.

How the Program Works

SA is a fellowship of men and women helping one another recover from addiction to lust, sex, and/or relationships. SA was started by those who found the spiritual program of Alcoholics Anonymous provided recovery when nothing else worked. Each group's primary purpose is to stay sexually sober and help others to achieve sexual sobriety.

Meetings

Central to the fellowship are its meetings which are conducted autonomously by SA groups in cities and towns around the USA, Canada, and the world. The majority of SA meetings are open only to those who have the problem and want to try SA's solution. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.

Anonymity

What is said in meetings and in private conversations among members is kept confidential. Members are protective of this anonymity due to the sensitive nature of sexual addiction. Members openly share the program of recovery but not the names of the individuals in it.

SA and Sexaholism

There is still considerable controversy over the nature of sexual addiction. Many professionals do not believe that it exists or that calling it an addiction may confuse or cause harm to their clients. The trend of research on the subject reveals that the concept of what constitutes addiction is evolving.

We speak from our own experience in recovery. In many respects, we identify strongly with those who are alcoholic or drug addicted. That is, when dealing with sex or lust, we undergo a personality change and persist in offensive or dangerous behaviors despite negative consequences. Hence, we call ourselves “sex drunks” or “sexaholics.” Like the alcoholic, who is powerless over alcohol, we cannot stop once we are exposed to lust. Lust, for us, may include any sexual behavior. Lust also may be a mindset in which fantasy replaces our awareness of reality and in which an intense longing impels us to shape the world around us to our inner desires.

Some common characteristics of male and female sexaholics include isolation, depression, guilt, and a deep sense of emptiness. Our common behaviors include fantasizing about sexual and other self-centered desires,

harmful co-dependent relationships, compulsive masturbation, use of pornography, including the Internet, promiscuous sexual relationships, adulterous affairs, and compulsive pursuit of exhibitionism or sexually abusive relationships, regardless of legal consequences.

We find that we cannot successfully recover without a fellowship of other sexaholics gathered for support. We find that we must first stop our sexual acting-out in all forms and seek a spiritual solution for our problem. We find that we must thoroughly examine our character and progressively seek to change those patterns which led us to resort to fantasy and sexual misbehavior in the first place. Our goal is healing from a life-long practice of unhealthy thoughts and actions. Our experience leads us to believe that participation in Sexaholics Anonymous can complement your therapeutic efforts with your clients suffering from sexual compulsions.

What Some Health and Helping Professionals Have Learned

Naturally, there may be skeptics about the need for, as well as the effectiveness of, a program of recovery for sexual addiction. However, increasing numbers of therapists, clergy, physicians, and health and helping professionals of all types are finding that these programs offer their clients the help and support that a spiritual program based on the Twelve Steps can provide.

Sharing our experience with peers is the special benefit Sexaholics Anonymous offers.

Some Common Objections to SA

“What do you mean, ‘You have an addiction’? Are you crazy?”

Regardless of whether you characterize this as a problem, compulsive disorder, or addiction, the destructive effects are the same. For the program of Sexaholics Anonymous, we don’t get carried away analyzing what caused our behavior or attitudes. We focus on finding solutions to the problem behaviors.

“It’s too religious.”

In fact, SA is not a religious but a spiritual program. It refers to a “Higher Power” and “God as we understand Him,” but no belief in God is necessary to become a member; atheists and agnostics find others like themselves in this and other Twelve Step programs of recovery.

“I don’t want to be associated with sick people like that. I have my reputation to consider!”

People in SA come from all walks of life, like the AA adage—“from Park Avenue to park bench.” Although our stories may be different, the unmanageability and progressive negative effects in multiple areas of our lives (personal, family, marital, legal, financial, occupational, and spiritual) are devastating.

“If I have to stand up and share this problem with other people, I think I would rather die!”

Sharing at SA meetings is not compulsory. We have found that secrecy and isolation only perpetuate and compound these issues.

“Leading with our weakness” keeps members on the path of recovery.

Attending the First SA Meeting

When professionals recommend SA, we suggest they advise their clients to attend at least six meetings.

We recommend that newcomers identify themselves at the beginning of the meeting, using their first names only. In meetings, members share their own experience, strength, and hope. Fellowship before, after, and between meetings is an important part of our recovery.

Obtaining a temporary sponsor is also recommended because most newcomers will have many questions. The sponsor can answer these questions and reassure the newcomer that others have experienced the same reluctance and fear in taking the first step toward recovery.

Summary

As members of SA, we are very practical about why we work this program of recovery—because it works! We look forward to being a resource to health and helping professionals.

How to Contact SA

Our literature, including copies of this brochure, may be ordered from Central Office or from the website.

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