

SA IS  
FOR WOMEN



Sexaholics Anonymous has always welcomed all members, men and women alike, who seek a way out of our sexually destructive thinking and behavior. Since the Fellowship's inception in the early 1970s, women have made an essential contribution to the growth and development of the SA Fellowship and program of recovery. Many of the early pillars of SA recovery were women members. Women continue to participate at every level of service in SA, from welcoming and sponsoring newcomers to participating in their local groups to serving at the intergroup, national, and international levels. From the beginning, women have faithfully been carrying the SA message of recovery to the greater community.

As the Fellowship grows in numbers and in sexual recovery, so too, is the number of women in SA and their depth of recovery growing. Those who seek recovery are finding in SA the help and a spiritual solution to overcome our once-hopeless addiction.

*How to know if SA is right for you:*

- If something is chronically wrong with your sex and love life
- If you have sexual and romantic thoughts and behaviors, you cannot control



- If you feel shame and self-loathing after a sexual encounter
- If you have done something that went against your values because you wanted it so badly or could not say, “No”

*In Sexaholics Anonymous, women have found a way to stay stopped from:*

- Jumping from one relationship or lover to another
- Having emotional and/or sexual affairs, adulterous or otherwise
- Being promiscuous
- Masturbating compulsively
- Engaging in stalking behavior
- Deliberately or strategically enticing others into sexual or romantic encounters
- Prostituting themselves, or exhibiting their bodies for attention or money
- Being sexually or lustfully addicted to a person as one would be to a drug
- Wasting time in sexual or romantic fantasy
- Being attracted to inappropriate people or things

- Being preoccupied or obsessed with sex
- Risking relationships, careers, and lives over the compulsive pursuit of sex or romance
- Viewing pornography

If you relate to these or other sexually-related behaviors and tendencies, you are not alone. There is hope for freedom by working the program of SA. “Working the program of SA,” means we suggest that you:

1. *Go to as many meetings as you can, especially at the beginning.* It is important to try several different meetings, if you have the option. Every meeting has a different feel which can change from week to week. The more meetings you attend, the more consistently you attend those meetings, and the more you get to know others in SA by attending meetings, the easier it will be to decide which meeting is best for you to regularly attend.
2. *Find a Home Group.* This is the meeting you attend no matter what. Meetings are important as is being consistent in a meeting. You may certainly attend other meetings sporadically, but there should be one meeting a week that you attend faithfully.



3. *Get a female sponsor.* It is recommended that women sponsor women and men sponsor men. If there is not someone available in your local group to sponsor you, you can connect with SA women around the world by calling the SA Central Office at 1-866-424-8777 or emailing at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org) and asking for help getting connected with other women in SA or by attending SA events, particularly the international conventions.
4. *Work the Twelve Steps.* The Steps are the path to the vital spiritual experience that sets us free, and the primary function of a sponsor is to show you how to work them. This is not to be taken lightly. SA is a 12 Step program so it is vital that you find a sponsor who has worked the Steps and can guide you in doing so.
5. *Exchange phone numbers with other women in the fellowship and call them.* We can't do this alone. The people in your area who attend your local meetings will form the core of your support group. If there aren't enough women to call, talk to your sponsor to get suggestions on whom to call, including possibly calling sober men from your meetings with whom you feel comfortable.
6. *Read the literature of our program.* You can purchase a copy of *Sexaholics Anonymous*, otherwise known as the

“White Book,” at meetings or online. It’s also suggested to get copies of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the Big Book), *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous* as well as *Step into Action* from SA as soon as possible, and use these great resources to work the 12 Step Program.

Statistically, women may still be a minority in the fellowship, but do not let that deter you. Our contributions as individuals are immeasurable. You are welcome in SA.

### ‘Identify In’

As a woman, you may have difficulty “identifying in” or feeling “part of” an SA group which is predominantly made up of men. You may feel you cannot or do not want to relate to men in an SA meeting or even find their presence triggers lust. Hang in there. In recovery, many men and women have discovered that issues with others go beyond those who trigger our sexaholism—and that the sexual obsession has damaged our ability to relate to all people in ways we were not even aware of. In recovery, each member has the opportunity to re-learn entirely new and non-sexual ways of relating to all others, and attending a mixed meeting is a sound place to start.

For most SA members, mixed meetings start to feel safe as members participate



regularly and get to know others in the Fellowship. However, as you would in any situation, use common sense, trust your instincts, and talk to sober members of your meeting about any safety concerns you may experience. Many SA members have been victims of sexual abuse, so meetings may be triggering. As you keep coming back, you will be amazed at the healing that is possible in this seemingly very unlikely place.

For further information and reflection, read the section titled “Mixed Meetings” on pages 178-179 of the SA White Book.

It is often said at the end of SA gatherings, “Keep coming back.” If you identify with the SA problem and you want SA’s solution, then SA welcomes you with open arms.

## **Members Share**

*‘The more I listened and identified, the less I objectified’*

When I found the rooms of SA, my marriage was a wreck and I was miserable from revolving affairs that left me angry and ashamed. At the time, I considered most men my “type” and a target for lust, so the idea of a room full of men was daunting. When I came in, I kept my head down, looking at everyone’s shoes so I would not be triggered. I did this for weeks as I listened to men share their stories and feelings and I shared mine, surprised

by how similar we were. The more I listened and identified, the better I could relate to them and the more I appreciated other perspectives. I began to interact more appropriately. I could see men as human beings, not as lust targets, but as people. The rooms gave me a safe place to practice healthy boundaries, communication and connection. Today I feel more comfortable in SA rooms full of men than elsewhere because of our shared focus on recovery.

*'Without SA, I would not have a life'*

I was terrified to come to my first SA meeting knowing it would be full of men, for I had been abused by men. Yet my fear of continuing to live without SA far outweighed my fear of men. Lust had taken over my thoughts. I could not stop masturbating. Even though I was sure I could not relate to the men in SA, I found our individual actions did not have to be identical. I could relate to our underlying lust. I learned to focus on our similarities rather than our differences.

I make it a point to connect with other women in SA primarily over the phone and at SA sponsored events. Though sometimes I feel I am alone, often being the only woman in my meetings, I have found the opposite to be true. I have found the gift of knowing SA women around the country as well as from around the world.



Without SA, I would not have a life. Today, SA is my family, which I define as a group of people who accept me after they get to know me. And those scary men? They are now my brothers in recovery. Like in any family, life is not always rosy, yet I find being a part of the SA family an opportunity I would not trade for the world.

*'SA is a place where I am accepted'*

After my husband insisted I tell the truth, I confessed to a seven-year affair. Had it not been for my husband finding SA's twenty test questions online, I may have continued blindly acting out my feelings with masturbation or affairs to fill my empty soul. Years of therapy failed to help; however, in SA, I am continuing to grow. SA is a place where I am accepted and connect with people who know my pain, often seen in the nodding of heads as I share. Together, we are able to rise above the shame of our disease and look to the future with hope and health. SA has taught me to replace "taking" with "giving" which I do by regularly giving my time to serving SA women around the world. If I could describe SA in one word, that word would be "hope."

*'I knew that I was safe'*

I came in fear and trembling as a newcomer to SA. My first meeting did not really happen. I arrived 15 minutes early, and the door was still locked. So I sat in my car. I waited and watched as one, two, three,

four, five men arrived, one at a time. No women. I was too frightened to go in. After being encouraged to try again, I came back the next week and this time made it inside. After I was already seated, another newcomer walked in and sat down across the table from me. He looked strangely familiar, except he was haggard and disheveled. I was dismayed. I didn't want anyone to know I had been to such a meeting. I thought about bolting for the door. And then I thought, "No, it has taken so much effort to gain the courage to get here." So I stayed, still trembling inside. As a few men shared their stories for the two newcomers, I knew I belonged, although I didn't want to, at first. At the end of the meeting, God gave me some desperately needed reassurance. We stood up around the table, held hands, and recited a prayer together. As I listened to those male voices praying aloud, I suddenly knew I was safe with these men. I later learned about the Twelve Traditions, particularly about anonymity, which gave me further assurance of my safety.

*'I have found a Higher Power who loves me'*

As a single child in an alcoholic family, I felt disconnected and unlovable. I decided to trust no one and not allow anyone to get close to me. On the outside, I was the good girl and on the inside I was full



of rage and rebellion. As a young girl, I discovered pornography at a neighbor's house and was immediately attracted. I stored the pictures deep inside of me and started creating a fantasy world. Later, I also used romantic novels. I would either fantasize being saved by a man or using sex to dominate others. I sexualized my father's violence and fantasized sexually in church. The guilt and shame was huge and I could not stop.

I withdrew from my drinking father and instead started to flirt with, stalk, and objectify my uncle, feeling attracted to him yet pushing him away. At school, instead of relating to my classmates, I withdrew further into my fantasy world at eleven years old. In high school, I became convinced I could not get a boyfriend because I was fat and ugly, which led me to being an anorexic at sixteen years old. I then began to replace my food rituals with masturbation, using porn magazines and films, which quickly led to being out of control and my being filled with fear and shame. I wanted to stop but could not.

At 28 years old, I went into treatment for anorexia, focusing on the men in my therapy group. With the encouragement of my therapist, I went out and started having sexual experiences, mostly in the form of affairs. I was dependent and could not leave, did not protect myself and lived in fear, including agonizing about having

a sexual disease and becoming suicidal. I started relationships with sex and used sex to manipulate and get revenge. I switched between attraction and repulsion and was in a lot of pain.

I came to SA in 1995 while still in a relationship. I got sober and started working the Steps with a sponsor while still emotionally dependent on the man I was with. I was unwilling to go to any length. After five years, I let go of the relationship, but felt lost. Although I still went to meetings, I did not have a sponsor and relapsed in masturbation. My obsession came back and I could not stop even though I thought I had tried everything. I was desperate and at age 41 prayed for help.

At last, I was finally able to admit I was powerless and once again got a sponsor in SA. I learned that my problem was lust and I needed to surrender daily. Surrender is painful, but I have found a Higher Power who loves me and helps me through the challenges of life. By working the Steps, I become more willing to listen and rely upon God. I am grateful for SA. Doing service in SA gets me out of myself and connecting with other women from around the world contributes a lot to my recovery.



## **The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous**

1. We admitted we were powerless over lust – 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 Him*.
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 Him 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 Him*, praying only for knowledge of His 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 sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## **The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous**

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on SA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Sexaholics Anonymous as a whole.

5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.
6. An SA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sexaholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sexaholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SA 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, films, and TV.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

*The Twelve Steps and Traditions are adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (“AAWS”).*

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## Statement of Principle

We have a solution. We don't claim it's for everybody, but for us, it works. If you identify with us and think you may share our problem, we'd like to share our solution with you (*Sexaholics Anonymous*, 2).

In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those outside Sexaholics Anonymous. We can only speak for ourselves. Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust (*Sexaholics Anonymous*, 191-192).

The only requirement for SA membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober according to the SA sobriety definition.

Any two or more sexaholics gathered together for SA sobriety according to the SA sobriety definition may call themselves an SA group.

Meetings that do not adhere to and follow Sexaholics Anonymous' sobriety statement as set forth in the foregoing Statement of Principle adopted by the General Delegate Assembly in 2010 are not SA meetings and shall not call themselves SA meetings.



I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of SA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

If you think you may have problems with sex or lust addiction, we invite you to join us at an SA meeting. Look for Sexaholics Anonymous in your local phone directory, call SA International Central Office toll free (in the USA) at 866-424-8777, or visit our web site at [sa.org](http://sa.org). Online meetings and remote contacts are also available.

Additional copies of this pamphlet and a literature list can be ordered from:

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