

FIRST FIND YOUR DR. BOB



Suggestions for Isolated SA Members and for Starting a Meeting

What is an Isolated Member?

In SA, an isolated member is someone with little or no face-to-face contact with other SA members. They may work in another country for part of the year, or they may live in a remote area where the closest meeting is hundreds of miles away. Whatever their circumstances, isolated members are unable to make the in-person connection that so many of us find necessary for our recovery. They are alone with the problem and need to connect to start recovering.

Because our literature and our experiences in recovery tell us we must connect with others in order to find sobriety, how can isolated members expect to recover?

There is Hope and Help

Do not despair! The experience of other isolated members who have been able to stay sober conveys hope to those who don't see how it's possible. These sober SA members have found and used several helpful resources that offer them a way to stay connected to the Fellowship and to their Higher Power in lieu of face-to-face meetings. Following is a list of resources and tools isolated members (and non-isolated members) have used to stay sober.



- Making daily phone calls;
- Reading Twelve Step program literature;
- Attending SA phone meetings;
- Making conscious contact with a Higher Power of your understanding;
- Getting an SA sponsor by mail or phone and working the 12 Steps;
- Attending open AA meetings or other open 12 Step meetings;
- Listening to recordings of SA speakers;
- Starting an SA meeting in your area;
- Joining the International Buddy List or the Sober Sisters List;
- Joining a sobriety renewal group;
- Joining an online SA meeting service;
- Going to international conventions and regional marathons;
- Making meeting another SA member (visitors, travelers, etc.) a high priority;
- Building long-term recovery-based relationships through a regular accountability partner;
- Praying and meditating.

Isolated Members Share

The following shares come from SA members responding to these questions:

What tools or resources have been most helpful in staying sober as an isolated member?

What suggestions would you offer other isolated members who want to stay sober?

1

What keeps me sober? Phone calls, phone calls, phone calls, phone calls.

- I talk to a sobriety partner at least once a day. We've held this commitment to each other for two years.
- I talk to four other members quite frequently. I probably make or receive 2-3 calls a day.
- I have a list of ten members I could call when I'm in a tight spot.
- I attend Daily Sobriety Renewal groups. I signed up online through the SA forum in Google. There are six groups of eight guys right now. We email each other our commitment to sobriety, share our struggles and victories.
- I sponsor other members.



- I attend phone groups (link on sa.org website).
- I'll say it again! I make lots of calls! But this, for me as a loner, must include certain people I am committed to calling. I have two members I have to call (or they call me) every day. I think this works better than simply having a list of members to call.

2

- I read SA Program literature. This includes AA literature as well. I read it over and over again to let it sink in and become part of my thinking and belief system.
- I asked for the "Buddy List" from the SA International Central Office. This is where I found a sponsor. I simply can't work the Steps without a sponsor. The International Buddy list for men and Sober Sisters list for women are invaluable.
- I practice my own religious/spiritual practice. SA is a spiritual program. I don't separate my SA life from my "other" life. It is all tied together. For me, God is a "loving God."
- I find that what helps me is to do a daily sobriety renewal written, verbal, or emailed to my sponsor, daily Step work (can also be emailed); meetings (phone/VoIP); and giving service.

Dear Loner,

If you have come to the point of despair and really want to stop, you are going to need to work the Steps. You can't work the Steps without a sponsor. Even though you may never meet your sponsor face-to-face, regular contact will help you to reconnect with the Higher Power of your understanding right now. This is a spiritual program. No matter how falteringly you do it at first, you need to learn to reconnect with a Higher Power because you have no hope without a power greater than yourself. So whatever and wherever you find your Higher Power, start connecting. Start praying for the miracle that the Higher Power will bring another SA to join you. You are probably going to need to take the risk of opening up to some people, so pray for courage to do that when opportunities present themselves. Then open your eyes and ears to what is being done for you to make that happen.

Yours in fellowship, another Loner.

3

- Anytime I feel I am in danger with my thinking, I phone my sponsor. This keeps my life in the light. I share from the heart what is really happening, what the temptation is, and my inability to overcome it alone.



- I pray every day in order to maintain my contact with my Higher Power. If I were to lust, I'd have to turn my back on my Higher Power. When I find myself doing that, it gives me the signal that I need to make a phone call to my sponsor.
- I avoid situations that would be tempting to me. When I feel drawn to excitement, I do something different. Lately it has been walks in the countryside to watch birds.
- When possible I attend open AA or Al-Anon meetings. I do service work for those meetings. I try to be open to any person who seems to be struggling with lust and with whom I might be able to share SA's message of hope.
- I read past issues of Essay or the SA White Book or other fellowship approved literature. I discipline myself to fit readings in every week.
- Finally, I release resentments and work Steps 10, 11, and 12 on a daily basis to stay current and healthy in my mind and spirit.

4

I'm the secretary of an SA meeting of one. My head and my heart say that I am alone. One Thursday night my Higher Power gave me a gift. I call it the Gratitude Attendance Check. I use this tool frequently to reveal loneliness as the deception it is. When I reach the point in

the meeting format that says, “Let’s take a moment to introduce ourselves,” I close my eyes and conjure the names and faces of the people I’ve met at meetings and conventions. In my mind I thank them for coming, make eye contact, and smile. What had been a room where I could hear the echo of my breath now becomes, within only a few minutes, cozy, warm and filled with recovering friends. My imagination, so long conscripted into service to my sex addiction, is now a channel for love and friendship.

For a little extra fun, I call up a few people after the meeting and let them know where they were. We have a good laugh as we talk about recovery and my head and my heart begin to understand that I am not alone.

Members share about starting a face-to-face meeting

There is an unwritten step underlying all twelve. Call it Step Zero: ‘We participated in the fellowship of the program.’ No one seems to be able to stay sober and progress in recovery without it, though some try. For most of us, without associating in some way with other recovering individuals, there is no lasting sobriety and none of the fringe benefits of recovery, growth, freedom, and joy. This holds true even for ‘loners’ (those without groups). We don’t try to explain this; it is simply a fact.”

Sexaholics Anonymous (63)



1

I am in the process of starting a face-to-face meeting in the town where I live and am preparing to approach institutions to request that they refer people to SA who might benefit from our solution. The list includes:

- Local clergy, ministers, rabbis, and faith leaders
- Local doctors' offices

2

One of the meetings I've been attending is held on Tuesday nights. Due to work-related issues, it has been very difficult for me to attend that meeting. I feel that I do best if I attend three SA meetings a week, and without Tuesday I was down to two. If I wanted to get my weekly meeting count back up to three, I needed to start a meeting—it was that simple.

3

For me, the best tool to stay sober was to start an SA group where I moved. For about three months, I would call one of several SA friends who would “keep me company” while I was in that meeting room alone. God finally blessed me with two or three members who needed recovery. Now we have meetings twice a week of three to four people and one call-in from a loner that I sponsor. The discipline of starting a group, knowing I had a responsibility to be there and to be sober for others, was the key to my staying sober for the first six months of that period!

It turned out to be a simple process. What it takes to start a meeting is two sexaholics, a place to meet, and SA literature. There are no sobriety requirements to start a meeting.

Someone starting a meeting can let the International Central Office in Nashville know, and SAICO will send a starter literature kit with a sample of all SA literature.

I called a local church and asked the secretary if they could host a 12 Step meeting on Mondays from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. The secretary said she needed to check with the pastor. A few days later I received a call telling me it would be no problem, except there would be a delay in the availability of the meeting room for about four weeks. I let our Intergroup and SAICO know about the new meeting, proceeded to announce it at other meetings, asking people to pass the word. Finding a meeting location proved to be a simple and straight-forward process.



In the German SA Fellowship we organized “Info Meetings” to get the word out to other 12 Step fellowships, such as AA, OA and NA. These meetings usually consisted of a panel of two or three sober SA members who told their stories. After we shared, we took questions from the attendees. We sometimes invited SA members from outside the area to tell



their stories. This gave other members a chance to tell their stories, and we got a steady stream of new members in this way. We also tried to set up meetings in treatment facilities. Through mailings we let helping professionals know that SA existed. We stayed in contact with SA members in other countries who we knew were sober, such as sponsors, and we travelled to all SA conventions, conferences and marathons that we could. We took the action and surrendered the results.

6

The only good reason for me to start a meeting is because I need a meeting. With a surrendered attitude, I am there for the newcomer, but I also need the newcomer for my own sobriety. I share what I have—even if I don't feel I have much more than the willingness to show up.

The sum of our collective experience suggests to those wanting to start a group

Find a place to meet that is receptive to having SA meetings. A church or other facility that is already hosting AA and/or NA meetings is a good place to start, as they are already familiar with 12 Step programs.

On request, the SA International Central Office in Nashville will post meeting locations and times online, and will send a “Starter Set” of literature. Extra

copies of the SA White Book and AA *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and some “SA for the Newcomer” brochures for distribution to newcomers is recommended if group finances will allow. Copies of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the “Big Book”) and other AA literature may be purchased at nearby AA meetings.

Members setting up new meetings may be able to set up a free email account using the group name or location as part of the user ID. This enables isolated members to screen curious or insincere inquirers and facilitates phone contact with potential newcomers to reassure them and prepare them for their first meeting.

Develop strong phone connections. Get numbers of willing SA members from around the country and overseas, and call them. They are there and eager to participate.

First Find Your Dr. Bob

The following is adapted from a letter by Roy K. on the question of isolated members. Roy’s reference to “finding Dr. Bob” is taken from a chapter in the AA Big Book entitled “A Vision for You,” which describes the circumstances surrounding the first meeting of Bill W. and Dr. Bob, co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous.



First, I've got to take responsibility for myself. Of the dozen or so loners in foreign countries I know of who have not been able to stay sober and where groups have not formed, there is one fact in common: They never found their Dr. Bob. That is, they never found one other sexaholic who wanted sobriety. They tried to do it on their own or have it done for them in a ready-made group. They did not come to the desperate willingness to reach out to another and try to help them. That's where the grace of God comes in to expel the obsession.

I now say to anyone, newcomer, old timer, and slipper alike: If you want what this program has to offer, you're going to have to give it away to someone else and keep giving it away. Find your Dr. Bob! This is what I had to do. If you're willing and seeking another, you will find.

How to find such a one? First pray and ask God. There's someone in your neighborhood who is probably dying of this thing. If you can't pray, talk to someone about your problem and ask to find someone like you. Just keep in mind that you need someone to share with.

"Near you, alcoholics are dying helplessly like people in a sinking ship. If you live in a large place, there are hundreds. High and low, rich and poor, these are future fellows of Alcoholics Anonymous. Among them you will make lifelong friends. You will be bound to them with new and wonderful ties, for you will escape

disaster together and you will commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey. Then you will know what it means to give of yourself that others may survive and rediscover life. You will learn the full meaning of ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself’” (*Alcoholics Anonymous* 152).

Go to priests, ministers, therapists. Tell them your story and hand them an SA brochure. Go to other Twelve Step meetings and dare tell the truth on yourself. You’ll be surprised that there are others just waiting for another member to spill the beans on their sexaholism, waiting for someone with whom they can identify. Sure, you will get laughter or rejection. So what? You’re doing this for yourself. For your own survival.

Then, when you find that one, you tell them your own story and stick with them in helping them—because you need this for yourself!

Read also from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, from the “Foreword to the First Edition”, and page 164:

“Still you may say: ‘But I will not have the benefit of contact with you who write this book.’ We cannot be sure. God will determine that, so you must remember that your real reliance is always upon Him. He will show you how to create the fellowship you crave.”



Also, see page 15 of the AA Big Book, and elsewhere: “My wife and I abandoned ourselves with enthusiasm to the idea of helping other alcoholics to a solution of their problems ... I was not too well at the time, and was plagued by waves of self-pity and resentment. This sometimes nearly drove me back to drink, but I soon found that when all other measures failed, work with another alcoholic would save the day ... It is a design for living that works in rough going.” This is the answer not only for loners, but for every single sexaholic, regardless of whether he has a group or not! This is the Twelve Step program!

Page 89 in “Working with Others”:

“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail.”

Roy K., CA, *Essay*, Issue Three, 1996

Suggestions for starting a meeting:

- Remember that Higher Power is in charge.
- Do not be discouraged. Keep at it.
- Find a second member, your “Dr. Bob.”
- Find a place to meet.

- Commit to being there for at least three months (some former isolated members recommend 12 months), even if no one comes
- Place information about the meeting, such as phone contact number and general location, on the nearest state or country intergroup list as well as with SA International Central Office.
- Contact therapists, ministers, rabbis, and appropriate helping professionals and make them aware of the meeting.
- In collaboration with an SA sponsor or other SA members, put an ad in the local weekly newspaper
- Begin with a White Book study meeting format
- Talk all this over with a sponsor

God will provide the people in His time if our own house is in order. Our experience suggests it is not necessarily going to be easy, but the Program does work for those who work it. If we persist, God will honor our search and we will connect with people who want our SA Program. Together we will develop lifelong spiritual fellowship and enjoy the limitless blessings of 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.

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SA 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. Online meetings and remote contacts are also available.

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

SAICO
P.O. Box 3565
Brentwood, TN 37024-3565
Phone: 615-370-6062
Fax: 615-370-0882
E-mail: saico@sa.org
Website: <http://www.sa.org>