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QUESTIONS BEGINNERS ASK

Sex and Love Addicts
Anonymous



THIS PAMPHLET IS S.L.A.A.
CONFERENCE-APPROVED LITERATURE

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What is Sex and Love Addiction?

S.L.A.A. believes that sex and love addiction is an illness, a progressive illness which cannot be cured but which, like many illnesses, can be arrested. It may take several forms—including (but not limited to) a compulsive need for sex, extreme dependency on one person (or many) and/or a chronic preoccupation with romance, intrigue, or fantasy. An obsessive/compulsive pattern, either sexual or emotional (or both) exists in which relationships or sexual activities have become increasingly destructive to career, family and sense of self-respect. Sex and love addiction always leads to worse and worse consequences if it continues unchecked.

Before coming to S.L.A.A., many sex and love addicts think of themselves as social outcasts, perverts, or just plain “weak-willed.” Still others feel they have only been pursuing what is “due” or “owed” them. They feel entitled to self-indulgence. The S.L.A.A. theory is that sex and love addicts are sick people who can recover if they will follow a simple program which has proven successful for scores of other men and women with the same illness.

What is S.L.A.A.?

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who help each other to stay sober. They offer the same help to anyone who has an addiction to sex and/or “love” and wants to do something about it. Since S.L.A.A.s are all addicts themselves, they have a special understanding of each other and the disease. They know what the illness feels like—and they have learned how to recover from it through S.L.A.A.

What is Sobriety?

Sobriety is the return of choice, sanity, and personal dignity which comes from surrender to sex and love addiction, followed by involvement with S.L.A.A.’s Twelve Step Program of recovery. There are no



absolutes for sobriety in S.L.A.A. as individual patterns of sex and love addiction vary. However, each S.L.A.A. identifies for him/herself major addictive behavior which is personally relevant, and becomes “sober” by abstaining from this behavior on a daily basis.

How Can I Tell if I Am a Sex and Love Addict?

Only you can tell if you are physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually addicted to sex and/or love. Going to several meetings will tell you if you can identify with other sex and love addicts. Obtaining the pamphlet *Sex and Love Addiction: 40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis* ©1985 will help you evaluate your sexual activities, romantic behavior, and emotional involvements.

What Suggestions Does S.L.A.A. Give New Members?

In S.L.A.A.’s experience, the people who recover from sex and love addiction are those who:

- A. Define their bottom-line and addictive behavior. They start now and add to it later if necessary. This is the sobriety definition.
- B. Don’t act out—just for today, this hour, this moment, no matter what.
- C. Attend S.L.A.A. meetings regularly. Other meetings of 12 Step-oriented fellowships may also be helpful.
- D. Join or start an S.L.A.A. group.
- E. Get active in an S.L.A.A. group and in S.L.A.A. as a whole.
- F. Seek out the people in S.L.A.A. who have successfully stayed sober for some time and establish relationships with these individuals based on mutual sharing of experience, strength, and hope.
- G. Get a sponsor or talk to an S.L.A.A. person on a frequent basis during the withdrawal period.
- H. Ask for help from a Power greater than



themselves on a daily basis, regardless of their belief or disbelief.

1. Set aside a time of prayer each morning, saying, "Help me to stay away from _____ just for today."
2. Set aside a time of prayer each night, expressing gratitude for the help received that day.

What is Acting Out?

Acting out is becoming involved (or reinvolved) with addictive bottom-line* behavior. Addictive indulgence is hallmarked by loss of control over rate, frequency, or duration of bottom-line behavior. This loss of control always leads to negative self-destructive consequences which, over time, continue to worsen. Acting out patterns, and therefore bottom-line behavior, can differ markedly among individual sex and love addicts. This acting out behavior can run the range from obvious promiscuity involving countless individuals, to solitary acts such as compulsive masturbation, voyeurism, and exhibitionism, to obsessive commitments to fantasy and romantic intrigue. It may include hyper-dependency problems involving one (or many) individuals. Some acting out patterns can involve all of the above, but more often a bottom-line acting out scenario highlights one or two major areas.

**See pamphlet: Setting Bottom Lines ©2006*

What Can I Do if I Am Worried About My Acting Out?

Seek help. S.L.A.A. can help. You can recover.

What Do I Do When the Craving to Act Out Hits?

Don't act out, go to meetings and ask for help. Breathe deeply, ask your Higher Power for help and reach for the phone to call another S.L.A.A. member. The urge to act out will pass and you will be stronger than ever before.



What is Withdrawal?

Withdrawal is a process sex and love addicts go through following the decision to break the addictive pattern. It may bring a variety of symptoms which must be waited out. This is more tolerable in the company of other S.L.A.A.s. Symptoms as painful as withdrawal from drugs or alcohol are common. Intense longing and anxiety emerge, and fear, suicidal thoughts, or obsession with sickness, denial and “pink clouding” may all occur in various combinations.

What Are Slips?

A slip is a return to addictive behavior, however brief. Experience has shown that slips don’t “just happen.” Most S.L.A.A.s who have been through these periods say that slips, which can lead to sudden loss of self, can be traced to specific causes. They say they forgot that they were sex and love addicts and became overconfident. Or they became too preoccupied with business or social affairs to remember the importance of abstaining from acting out. Or they let themselves become tired and were caught with their mental and emotional defenses down. In any event, they withdrew from taking advantage of the help available to them. They ceased maintaining their S.L.A.A. lifeline.

Getting honest and “current” with another S.L.A.A., and at an S.L.A.A. meeting, can help overcome the despair of slipping and put recovery back on track.

What is a Sponsor?

How do I Get a Sponsor?

A sponsor is an experienced, sober S.L.A.A. who has become seasoned in his/her new way of life, and is available to share his/her experience, strength and hope with an S.L.A.A. newcomer on an individual basis. A newcomer usually asks another sober S.L.A.A. if s/he will sponsor him/her. The prospective sponsor has the right to accept or refuse, and/



or may suggest another sober S.L.A.A. for this role whom s/he feels would be more suitable. The relationship of sponsorship is based on mutual trust, and may be terminated at any time by either the sponsor or the sponsee.

What is Denial?

Denying that a problem exists is a common form of resistance for beginners and others having trouble with recognizing their sex and love addiction. Various forms of denial include thinking: I'm not as bad as the others I see at meetings; I'm not a sex and love addict; I come from a good family; one more time won't hurt; I'll see him or her but I won't have sex; we'll just be friends; she or he won't leave me alone, therefore I can't get free.

Acceptance of the S.L.A.A. program on a daily basis eliminates denial.

What is 'Getting Current' and Keeping Current?

A practice at some S.L.A.A. meetings is the getting current period. Members who feel in danger of acting out can share these thoughts and feelings with the group as well as the situations which may be contributing to them. Getting current can be done with a sponsor or with individual members. Keeping current is best done on a daily basis.

What is Intrigue?

Intrigue is a preliminary to acting out. The addict attempts to arouse the interest of a prospective sexual or emotional partner by secret or underhanded schemes, looks, dress, etc. The payoff may be a sexual act involving another person directly, or may also be some solitary sexual or emotionally-based behavior.

What is Meant by a Power Greater than Ourselves?

Before they came to S.L.A.A., most sex and love



addicts had already realized that they couldn't control their sex and love addiction. Sex and love had become a power greater than themselves. S.L.A.A. experience has shown that to achieve and maintain sexual and emotional sobriety, the sex and love addict needs to accept and depend upon another Power which s/he acknowledges is greater than him/herself. Some S.L.A.A.s choose to consider the S.L.A.A. group itself as the Power greater than themselves, while others choose to accept still different interpretations of this Power. Most S.L.A.A.s adopt a concept of God, as God may be understood by the individual him/herself.

Can I Ever Expect to Have Sex and Love Again?

Love and sex within a true partnership does not seem to feed the addiction. This kind of relationship seems to embody much of what was sought so desperately and futilely elsewhere. The road to such partnership requires much self-undoing before building can commence.

First a sense of wholeness and dignity is developed through maintaining sobriety on a daily basis and from working the 12 Steps. Personal wholeness is a natural result of willingness to trust God, clean house, and help others.



Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.*

1. We admitted we were powerless over sex and love addiction—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 a Power greater than ourselves, 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 sex and love addicts and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.

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TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol—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 alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



Twelve Traditions of S.L.A.A.*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon S.L.A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as this Power may be expressed through our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. Any two or more persons gathered together for mutual aid in recovering from sex and love addiction may call themselves an S.L.A.A. group, provided that as a group they have no other affiliation.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or S.L.A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex and love addict who still suffers.
6. An S.L.A.A. group or S.L.A.A. as a whole ought never endorse, finance, or lend the S.L.A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every S.L.A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. S.L.A.A. should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. S.L.A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the S.L.A.A. 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, film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow S.L.A.A. members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



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TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. 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 A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. 5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. 7. Every A.A. group ought be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers. 9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. 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, and films. 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



Notes



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