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WELCOME

Sex and Love Addicts
Anonymous



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

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Welcome

Each of us in Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (S.L.A.A.) knows the confusion and difficulty of walking into the first few meetings, feeling like a newcomer in new surroundings.

Whether we took this courageous step out of pain and hopelessness, sought relief from longing and emptiness or were directed to attend, we move toward recovery by being here. We hope you will feel free to share with the group why you came to S.L.A.A. You may also want to ask questions of individuals after the meeting.

Among the first questions we faced as we attended meetings were: “Am I an addict? Am I a sex and love addict? What is the nature of my addiction?” Please take the time to answer these questions for yourself. For more information, see the pamphlets *Introduction to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, *Questions Beginners Ask*, *40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis* and *Anorexia: Sexual, Social, Emotional* available at most meetings and from S.L.A.A.’s international office, Fellowship-Wide Services.

We suggest attending S.L.A.A. meetings as often as you can. Many of us chose to attend several meetings a week, or even daily. We discovered that we were not alone. We found support in the Fellowship and began to address our patterns of destructive behavior.

There are many kinds of meetings and each has its own personality. If you don’t find quite the right meeting the first time, we suggest attending other meetings: “Take what you like and leave the rest.”

You will hear a variety of stories from members in recovery from sex and love addiction. Our common denominator is our obsessive/compulsive behavior. We have found that recovery works best when we are willing to stop living out a pattern of addiction, even if we have not achieved sobriety yet. Our program stresses acceptance—acceptance of who we are, just as we are, wherever we may be in the recovery process.

In these meetings, we listen and let go of judgment.



Some Common Guidelines

The only requirement for membership in S.L.A.A. is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of S.L.A.A. provide tools and a framework for recovery. In support of that recovery, we have found certain guidelines useful.

Meeting Guidelines

- At S.L.A.A. meetings, We share our “experience, strength and hope” of recovery from sex and love addiction.
- For our group unity, we seek to provide an environment free from shame, judgment, criticism, manipulation and abuse where members can feel safe to share what they think and feel. We ask members to help maintain that supportive environment.
- We maintain confidentiality and refrain from disclosing names or identifying group members outside the meeting. We understand anonymity to be critical to the foundation of our recovery.
- We refrain from interruption or interaction while another is sharing. Some groups have procedures for respectfully maintaining order and focus.
- Cross-talk, in some areas also called “feedback,” is discouraged at our meetings. Cross-talk is sometimes defined as advice, making direct reference to what someone else has shared or otherwise drawing attention to another member’s story.

Newcomer Guidelines

- Focus on your own experiences and feelings. Remember to use “I” rather than “we” or “you” when you share.
- Participate only as you wish. It is also OK not to share.
- Listen to others; accept silence. Healing can happen when we listen as well as when we share.
- If you wish to, identify yourself by first name before you speak. Many of us say “My name is _____ and I’m a sex and love addict.” Generally, you are not required to identify yourself in this manner;



you may identify yourself in any way that feels safe and comfortable to you.

- Feel free to take a break from the meeting if you are feeling uncomfortable for any reason. You can also talk to someone about your feelings after the meeting.

What Kinds of S.L.A.A. Meetings Are There?

There are many meeting formats in S.L.A.A. Each meeting's format is decided by group conscience and is subject to change by that group. Here are some common meeting formats. Several of these formats may be combined in any meeting.

Speaker Meeting. One or more members of S.L.A.A. share experience, strength and hope by telling their "stories." Each speaker's story provides an opportunity to reflect on our own history, feeling and challenges.

Topic Discussion Meeting. A specific recovery topic is suggested by the members or taken from S.L.A.A. literature. When this type of meeting is combined with a Speaker format, members may also be invited to share how they relate to the speaker's story.

Step Meeting. The group focuses on one of the Twelve Steps, often reading out of the S.L.A.A. Basic Text, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. The group might also have one person speak on the Step. The meeting is then open for other members to share on that Step.

Getting Current Meeting. Members are encouraged to briefly share with the group the recent or ongoing emotional, physical and spiritual challenges to their sobriety or to ask for help if they are in danger of acting out. Sometimes an entire meeting is devoted to getting current.

Newcomer Meeting. The meeting addresses specific concerns of newcomers to S.L.A.A. or beginners on the road to recovery. Topics often revolve around the first three Steps, sponsorship, bottom lines, abstinence or withdrawal.

Other types of S.L.A.A. meetings also exist. If you have questions about a meeting, ask local members about it.



What Can I Expect at an S.L.A.A. Meeting?

S.L.A.A. meeting practices vary widely from region to region. Here are some relatively common practices, although not every meeting may be conducted in this fashion:

Who runs the meeting?

An S.L.A.A. meeting is run by its members. Typically, there is a member who guides the meeting, another who is entrusted with the group's finances and perhaps one who orders the literature for the group. These "trusted servants" are volunteers elected to regular service positions in the group by its members.

What do other people in the meeting do?

Many members take part in other aspects of the meeting as well. These service opportunities can involve helping to set up the meeting, identifying oneself as a sponsor, putting away chairs, talking with newcomers after the meeting or representing the group at the regional ("Intergroup") level.

When do I speak?

Typically, newcomers can speak at any point during the regular portion of the meeting. At some meetings, a specific time is reserved especially for newcomers. This is a time when newcomers can share why they have come to S.L.A.A. or ask questions about the program, which can be addressed after the meeting. Remember, you need not speak if you don't want to.

What's with the money basket?

S.L.A.A. groups are self-supporting, declining outside contributions. Our expenses, such as rent and literature, are paid by voluntary contributions from our members. We pass the basket, also known as "practicing the Seventh Tradition," and members are encouraged to donate as they are able. No one is ever required to make any donation at an S.L.A.A. meeting. Some of the money collected may be sent on to the local Intergroup and to S.L.A.A.'s Fellowship-Wide Services (F.W.S.) office which provide service to the Fellowship on a regional and Worldwide basis, respectively.



So, what's this God or Higher Power talk?

S.L.A.A. is based on spiritual (not religious) principles. The references to God or to a Higher Power acknowledge our powerlessness over this addiction; our faith that a power greater than ourselves, whom some call "God," can and will restore us to sanity; and our decision to trust this Higher Power to do just that. We have found that acknowledgment of some Higher Power is crucial to recovery from our self-destructive behaviors. Members are not required to adhere to any doctrine, either religious or secular. You are welcome in S.L.A.A. whether you are of any faith or of none.

The Language of Recovery

Many different terms are used during S.L.A.A. meetings. While many terms are used differently in various S.L.A.A. groups, we will attempt to define a few of these terms as commonly used in S.L.A.A.

Abstinence. A change in our behavior that involves stopping the addictive pattern—one day, sometimes one minute, at a time. Abstinence is a beginning point in sobriety.

Acting Out. To engage in addictive behavior. Engaging in a behavior which is on one's bottom line is often referred to as having a slip.

Anorexia. The compulsive avoidance of giving or receiving social, sexual or emotional nourishment.

Bottom-Line Behaviors. Generally, self-defined activities which we refrain from in order to experience our physical, mental, emotional, sexual and spiritual wholeness.

Boundaries. Self-defined, self-protective limits we use for interaction with persons, places, things or activities.

Cross-talk. Sometimes known as "feedback." To respond directly or indirectly to what someone has shared in a meeting; for example, to offer someone answers to his or her problems or to engage in dialogue during a meeting.

Group Conscience. A process of decision-making by the group. S.L.A.A. encourages all members to express their views.

Inventory or "Moral" Inventory. A list of qualities within a person, both positive and negative,



discovered through self-examination. Also, to take someone else's inventory: to judge another person's life or sobriety.

Isolation. To withdraw from the help and healing process of others, program support or our Higher Power. Isolation often leads to or accompanies a slip. Isolation may also be a form of acting out for anorectic members.

S.L.A.A. Member. Any S.L.A.A. participant who has a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction.

Sobriety. Initially, a state of abstinence from addictive bottom-line behaviors; often accompanied by the return of sanity, choice and personal dignity that comes from abstaining from bottom-line behaviors.

Sobriety Date. Generally, the date we stop engaging in our bottom-line behaviors.

Sponsor. A person who works closely with another member to provide individual support and guidance in applying the S.L.A.A. Twelve Step/Twelve Tradition program. A sponsor should be a person we are not in danger of acting out with nor are likely to find intrigue with.

Trigger. A person, place, thing or environment that sets off an urge to act out.

Withdrawal. The physical, mental, emotional and often spiritual upheaval which generally accompanies a break in our addictive pattern.

13th-Stepping. Manipulating another person in recovery, especially a newcomer, into a sexual, emotional or romantic relationship.

Open or Closed Meeting?

S.L.A.A. members highly value our traditions of anonymity. Group conscience determines whether a meeting shall be "open" or "closed." In general, the following guidelines are used:

Open Meeting. A meeting open to anyone who wants to find out more about recovery from sex and love addiction.

Closed Meeting. A meeting open only to those having a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction.



Signs of Recovery

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Individual patterns of sex and love addiction vary. Patterns of recovery also vary. Generally, recovery from our bottom-line behavior means the return of choice, sanity, and personal dignity through working the S.L.A.A. program of recovery. As we work the Steps and use the tools of the program—including meetings, our sponsor, S.L.A.A. literature, telephone contacts and giving service—we begin to notice some of the following signposts on our road to recovery:

1. We seek to develop a daily relationship with a Higher Power, knowing that we are not alone in our efforts to heal ourselves from our addiction.
2. We are willing to be vulnerable because the capacity to trust has been restored to us by our faith in a Higher Power.
3. We surrender, one day at a time, our whole life strategy of, and our obsession with, the pursuit of romantic and sexual intrigue and emotional dependency.
4. We learn to avoid situations that may put us at risk physically, morally, psychologically or spiritually.
5. We learn to accept and love ourselves, to take responsibility for our own lives and to take care of our own needs before involving ourselves with others.
6. We become willing to ask for help, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and learning to trust and accept others.
7. We allow ourselves to work through the pain of our low self-esteem and our fears of abandonment and responsibility. We learn to feel comfortable in solitude.
8. We begin to accept our imperfections and mistakes as part of being human, healing our shame and perfectionism while working on our character defects.
9. We begin to substitute honesty for self-destructive ways of expressing emotions and feelings.
10. We become honest in expressing who we are, developing true intimacy in our relationships with ourselves and others.
11. We learn to value sex as a by-product of sharing, commitment, trust and cooperation in a partnership.
12. We are restored to sanity, on a daily basis, by participating in the process of recovery.



Tools for the Newcomer

- Meeting list for meetings in the area
- Names and phone numbers of sober S.L.A.A. members
- Pamphlets:

An Introduction to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous
40 Questions for Self-Diagnosis
Questions Beginners Ask
Suggestions for Newcomers
Anorexia: Sexual, Social, Emotional
Addiction and Recovery
Sponsorship: A Return from Isolation
Withdrawal: Gateway to Freedom, Hope and Joy
Welcome

- Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, the basic text of S.L.A.A.
- Conference-approved literature and tapes
- The Journal, the bi-monthly magazine of S.L.A.A.
- Sponsor
- Prayer and meditation
- Study of the Twelve Steps
- Self-defined bottom line
- Personal journal
- The Serenity Prayer:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

- Slogans:

Progress, not Perfection
Take What You Like and Leave the Rest
Let Go, Let God
Keep It Simple
Easy Does It
First Things First
One Day at a Time
Principles, not Personalities
H.A.L.T.: Don't get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired
Honesty, Openness, Willingness (H.O.W.)
You are Not Alone
Keep Coming Back—It Works!



Tips for the Newcomer

- Attend a minimum of six meetings in as short a time as possible.
- Attend several different meetings to get a flavor of the variety of S.L.A.A. meetings in your area.
- If you have questions, speak with a group member after the meeting.
- Although hand-holding and hugging can be healing, physical contact is always optional, inside or outside the meeting.
- At times, you may perceive another member's response as coldness, avoidance or as a sign of personal rejection. That member may simply be unable to be present for you. Ask someone else.
- It's a good idea to have some phone numbers of sober members of S.L.A.A. before you leave the meeting. You may want to get a new phone number at every meeting you attend. If a phone list is not available, ask individual members whether they are willing to receive calls.
- In order to feel more connected to the group, you may want to talk with members or help put away chairs or find another way to share a few moments with others after the meeting. Some groups have an informal get-together after the meeting.
- Become open to the collective wisdom of the group. Through participation in S.L.A.A., we learn new ways to reduce alienation and isolation from others and to set healthier boundaries.
- Get a sponsor. A sponsor gives us individual support and guidance in applying the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to our lives. Many of us began practicing our first "healthy" relationship in recovery with our sponsor.
- Read the literature. Keep a journal. Share your feelings.
- Be patient with yourself and others. We didn't develop our sex and love addiction overnight—we won't heal overnight. You have your whole life to recover!
- Consider your priorities. We might be tempted to think that S.L.A.A. meetings are a good place to find a relationship. Those of us who have tried this soon found that, to recover, we needed to change our focus. We decided upon a specific period of time (usually several months or a year), in which we would



not be involved in any romantic and/or sexual relationships. We took this time to concentrate on our program of recovery.

- Developing these supportive qualities can be a great help, too:

*Hope, Understanding, Support
Gratitude*

A Sense of Humor

A Positive Attitude

S.L.A.A. Preamble

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Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition-oriented fellowship based on the model pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous.

The only qualification for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. S.L.A.A. is supported entirely through contributions of its membership, and is free to all who need it.

To counter the destructive consequences of sex and love addiction, we draw on five major resources:

1. **Sobriety.** Our willingness to stop acting out in our own personal bottom-line addictive behavior on a daily basis.
2. **Sponsorship/Meetings.** Our capacity to reach out for the supportive fellowship within S.L.A.A.
3. **Steps.** Our practice of the Twelve Step program of recovery to achieve sexual and emotional sobriety.
4. **Service.** Our giving back to the S.L.A.A. community what we continue to freely receive.
5. **Spirituality.** Our developing a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves which can guide and sustain us in recovery.

As a fellowship S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues and seeks no controversy. S.L.A.A. is not affiliated with any other organizations, movements



or causes, either religious or secular.

We are, however, united in a common focus: dealing with our addictive sexual and emotional behavior. We find a common denominator in our obsessive/compulsive patterns, which transcends any personal difference of sexual orientation or gender identity.

We need protect with special care the anonymity of every S.L.A.A. member. Additionally, we try to avoid drawing undue attention to S.L.A.A. as a whole from the public media.

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 understand 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 on 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.
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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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BOOKS

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous: Basic Text

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WORKBOOKS

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***For a full list of available S.L.A.A.
literature, visit our website at:***

