

Are Your Sexual Behaviors Causing You Problems?



Literature Committee Approved

March 2021

PI/CPC Series

© 2021 International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

- Do you keep secrets about or hide your behaviors?
- Have your behaviors damaged important relationships?
- Has your avoidance of sex or intimacy damaged important relationships?
- Do you try to stop certain behaviors only to repeat them over and over again?
- Does your sexual behavior lack loving connection with self or others?

You are not alone – Sex Addicts Anonymous can help

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a fellowship whose members share their experience, strength, and hope with each other so that they may find freedom from addictive sexual behavior and help others recover from sexual addiction. SAA was founded in 1977 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Today SAA is an international fellowship with meetings in many countries.

Is sex addiction real?

This is a common question. We can definitely say that for us, sex addiction exists. It's true that not every person who has an affair, watches pornography, or uses a dating app is a sex addict. We have found most sex addicts experience one or both of these characteristics: once we start we cannot control our behaviors, or when we make up our mind to quit, sooner or later we return to those behaviors. We have also found that sex addiction is progressive, with the behaviors and their consequences usually becoming more severe over time.

Examples of addictive sexual behavior

- Porn addiction, cyber stalking or sex
- Compulsive sexting, using social media or dating apps for sexual gratification
- Infidelity/affairs
- Sexual/romantic obsession
- Intimacy avoidance/sexual anorexia
- Destructive or serial relationships
- Exhibitionism/voyeurism
- Risky, anonymous, or illegal sexual activity

What are potential consequences of sex addiction?

Not being able to control problematic sexual behaviors can often lead to painful results like:

- Relationship and/or family break-ups
- Financial difficulty
- Job/career loss
- STIs and other health problems
- Sexual or physical assault
- Jail or prison
- Suicide or homicide

The mental anguish of leading a secret or double life can be just as severe and can include:

- Depression, despair, loneliness
- Guilt, shame, remorse
- Fear, anxiety, hopelessness

SAA can help

If you can't quit when you want to or if you have no control of your sexual behaviors, you may have a sex addiction. If you want to stop the behaviors, and if you're like us, you won't be able to do it alone. Reaching out to SAA may make the difference for you, as it has made the difference for us. We invite you to attend one of our meetings.

What to expect in SAA

Acceptance and support. Many of us wondered if we would fit in because of our gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or something else, but what we found was acceptance and understanding. We met others who have experienced issues similar to ours. Many of us found the support and friendship of a caring recovery community. What we didn't find was criticism or judgment.

Recovery tools. The SAA twelve-step program provides tools and guidance needed to sustain abstinence from

compulsive sexual behaviors and to recover from sex addiction.

Hope. SAA offers hope of a new way of life, free from compulsive sexual behavior.

What members say

“After many years of struggling with unwanted sexual behavior, I found SAA. Obsessive sexual thoughts and behavior stopped being the center of my life, and I began to experience freedom from shame and self-hatred for the first time.”

-Carole, California

“Working the SAA program of recovery has healed the pain of my past. What surprised me the most is how my life has taken on a new purpose. To be useful, to help others and feel a sense of belonging among my brothers and sisters in recovery is an experience I never thought I would have.”

-Darren, Texas

“I always wondered what was wrong with me. Why couldn't I stop? I thought I was a bad person. Turns out I was wrong about that. When I came to SAA, I learned that I wasn't bad, I was an addict and I needed help. People in SAA didn't judge me and welcomed me with open arms. Today I'm free from the disturbing obsessions that haunted me.”

-Mike, North Carolina

“I initially didn't think this program would work. Being a gay Hispanic male in rooms full of white straight men - it took me a while before I opened up. After some time, I stopped listening for the differences and started hearing the similarities. I found a gay-friendly home group and sponsor. I no longer feel isolated and found a fellowship that can accept me as I am.”

- Joe, Texas

“I hit my sexual bottom as my untreated depression led to disturbing delusions involving sexual images which I couldn't control. The SAA program helped save my life. Today I know that mental health disorders can co-exist with my addiction to sexu-

al thoughts and behaviors. I have freedom from my obsessions, compulsions and old ways of living. I am no longer isolated and alone.”

- Carleen, British Columbia

FAQs

Who joins SAA?

Anyone who wants to stop problematic sexual behaviors may join Sex Addicts Anonymous. There is no other requirement. All are welcome.

Do I have to sign up for meetings in advance?

No. You are welcome to drop in at most meetings; however some meetings prefer you speak to the meeting contact person first.

Why is SAA anonymous?

Anonymity is what keeps the meetings safe for everyone. This allows addicts to attend meetings without fear of disclosure or discovery.

Do I have to believe in “God”?

No. While our program is of a spiritual nature, “SAA is not affiliated with any specific religion, creed or dogma” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, p. 21). Also, we “don’t need to believe in any particular concept of a Higher Power...” (ibid, p. 26). SAA welcomes people of any religious background as well as atheists and agnostics. All are welcome.

Is the goal to stop all sexual activity?

No. SAA has no specific definition of sexual sobriety. We each seek our own healthy form of sexuality.

Are there any dues or fees?

No. We are supported by the voluntary contributions of our members.

How does SAA Work?

At the heart of the SAA program are the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. They are suggestions that can help sex addicts achieve recovery. This typically includes going to meetings; working with another addict (a sponsor) and helping other addicts.

Do I have to speak at the meetings?

No, you are not required to speak. You are welcome to just listen.

Am I a sex addict?

1. Do I keep secrets about my sexual behavior or romantic fantasies from those important to me? Do I lead a double life?
2. Have my desires driven me to have sex in places or with people I would not normally choose?
3. Do I need greater variety, increased frequency, or more extreme sexual activities to achieve the same level of excitement or relief?
4. Does my use of pornography occupy large amounts of time and/or jeopardize my significant relationships or employment?
5. Do my relationships become distorted with sexual preoccupation? Does each new relationship have the same destructive pattern which prompted me to leave the last one?
6. Do I frequently want to get away from a partner after having sex? Do I feel remorse, shame, or guilt after a sexual encounter?
7. Have my sexual practices caused me legal problems? Could my sexual practices cause me legal problems?
8. Does my pursuit of sex or sexual fantasy conflict with my moral standards or interfere with my personal spiritual journey?

9. Do my sexual activities involve coercion, violence, or the threat of disease?
10. Has my sexual behavior or pursuit of sexual relationships ever left me feeling hopeless, alienated from others, or suicidal?
11. Does my preoccupation with sexual fantasies cause problems in any area of my life - even when I do not act out my fantasies?
12. Do I compulsively avoid sexual activity due to fear of sex or intimacy? Does my sexual avoidance consume me mentally?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions you might benefit from the SAA program.

How to contact SAA:

International Service Organization of SAA, Inc.

P. O. Box 70949

Houston, TX 77270

713-869-4902

info@saa-recovery.org

www.saa-recovery.org