

Introducing Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) to Faith Community Leaders



Literature Committee Approved

December 2025

PI/CPC Series

Members of SAA 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 society with meetings worldwide. The basic principles of recovery practiced by SAA members are found in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Although we are not affiliated with AA or with any other organization or agency, we are, indeed, grateful for permission to modify and apply the Steps and Traditions to sex addiction, making recovery possible for us.

You may already know someone in your congregation—or even a fellow leader—who’s quietly wrestling with destructive patterns of sexual behavior.

When heartfelt counsel and spiritual leadership haven’t brought lasting relief, Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) can offer a powerful complement. We are a fellowship that practices a Twelve-Step program modeled after the Alcoholics Anonymous program.

Many members report that despite regular prayer and religious practice, they were unable to stop their secret, destructive behaviors. When they attend SAA meetings, they connect with and get support from other members. This empowers them to open up and let go of their secrets and shame - to ask for help in a new way.

SAA does not replace a member’s religious beliefs and practices. Rather, members simply use the SAA program as an additional resource to strengthen their faith and recovery.

While SAA is not affiliated with a particular religion, spirituality is a crucial part of the program. The SAA program is a method of recovery based on spiritual principles, common to many faith traditions, such as honesty, courage, willingness, humility, responsibility, and faith. When the Twelve Steps are practiced diligently in the context of a member’s personal understanding of God, it has been our experience that the result is a spiritual transformation. This spiritual transformation is what allows us to stop our compulsive (addictive) sexual behavior.

How can SAA assist you?

SAA offers you cooperation and support. We can be a resource for you and your community members struggling with addictive sexual behaviors. We can provide you and those you are helping with relevant literature, contact with local SAA members, and information about SAA meetings. We can connect you with SAA members who are willing to meet with you to share their experience and answer questions about the program.

How does SAA work?

Members come together regularly to share their experience, discuss the challenges they face with addictive sexual behavior, and explain how they use program strategies to overcome these difficulties. They support each other by working the Twelve Steps alongside fellow addicts. We've discovered that, through this shared spiritual journey and mutual support, overcoming compulsive sexual behaviors and maintaining abstinence is absolutely achievable.

Are religious beliefs part of the SAA program?

SAA is a spiritual program not affiliated with any specific faith or religion. SAA uses the word "God" to refer to a "Higher Power." The understanding of God is left up to each individual member.

Is prayer practiced in SAA?

Yes. Prayer and meditation are important spiritual practices of the SAA program. In fact, one of the steps is that we have "sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out."

Are faith leaders welcome at SAA meetings?

In order to help participants feel safe, most SAA meetings are limited to those seeking to recover from sexual addiction. However, some SAA meetings are open to all. Faith community leaders are welcome at these. These can be found at <https://saa-recovery.org/meetings>.

What can faith leaders tell their members about SAA?

They are not alone. There is hope for healing and transformation. In SAA, they will find others with similar struggles who have found lasting freedom from addictive sexual behaviors. There are pamphlets and other literature that discuss in more detail what SAA offers its members. These can be accessed at <https://saa-recovery.org/literature>. Prospective members can find meetings that are convenient for them: <https://saa-recovery.org/meetings>.

We welcome your connections

We hope this pamphlet has explained the value of referring your members or colleagues to SAA as a complement to their religious and spiritual practices. We encourage you to take a look at our website <https://saa-recovery.org> to familiarize yourself with our program and take advantage of the resources that are there. We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

"I was raised in a mainline Protestant denomination. I got exposed to Christian missionaries while pursuing research as part of my graduate program. As a result, I became a member of a conservative Protestant fellowship. However, I was unable to stop my compulsive sexual behaviors, and eventually, I was directed to SAA. As I worked the program and became sexually abstinent, I became aware that I had never trusted God. Working the Twelve Steps helped open my mind to understand something that my faith community had been trying to tell me. Somehow, I had missed it all those years. I have learned that I'm right where I am supposed to be, and that God has my back."

- Member, Rhode Island

"I was raised in a strict religious community. I went to religious schools starting in preschool and continuing through college. I married someone in my faith community, attended services regularly, but continued to watch pornography

secretly until I was discovered by my partner. I ended up joining SAA. While working the SAA program, I realized that I had never trusted God. I talked a good game but had not truly surrendered my life to God. After working the Twelve Steps, I am finally learning to more fully trust God. I have been abstinent from my addictive sexual behaviors for many years now. I am still an active member of my faith community and believe I am more authentic in my spiritual life.”

- Member, North Carolina

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