

Out of the Fog



News, events, outreach, and support for the Bay Area Fellowship of SAA
A publication of the San Francisco Bay Area Intergroup

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What is SAA?

Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other so they may overcome their sexual addiction and help others recover from sexual addiction and dependency.

A Woman's Walk through SAA

July 30, 2017, I am a 38-year-old white woman walking into an SAA meeting for the first time. My attire and closet, full of traditional and non-traditional sexually appealing fashion. My mind, seemingly filled with the most recent magnetic man that showed interest in me.

It's Sunday evening, quite the drive over the mountain. About 40-miles away from home but I'm desperate. I'll do ANYTHING to understand why suicide seems to be the only option left. I'm torn between ending my misery and staying in this body to be with my young kids. The invasive thoughts are getting stronger, "they will be better off without you", countered by my weakening spirit, "they need you to be an example of strength through their own lineage".

Scared that someone will see me trying to find the "Sex Addicts" meeting room at the church, as I'm reminding myself why I'm here. Finally, a man opens the door, a place to get out of public view. We walk into the room, the relief and fear confuse me, I'm alone with a strange man who's a sex addict. Another man is walking in and my internal conflict is growing, am I going to be raped?

The meeting is starting and with myself and strange 3-men. It's only been minutes and I've already heard a share that has brought me to tears and the inner knowing, this is where I need to be.

– Anonymous Woman

Annual Los Altos Holiday Music Jam

Enjoy hanging out with others and listening to, singing with, and/or playing an instrument? Join us on December 14th after the [Thursday night Los Altos meeting](#) (United Methodist Church, 655 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos, CA 94024 - Live Oak Room).

Bring an instrument, your voice, and/or a dessert. Hope to see you there!

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Aim your smartphone camera at this, tap on it, and view this newsletter online



The Other Side of Fear

I am now seventy. I see more young people join. My heart sings and I applaud their courage. Their new life has begun. It is rare to find a group more accepting, without condemnation. We openly speak honestly of our truth, things you only thought were only whispered, until now. The first meeting I went to I thought, and felt, "I'm home". The beauty of SAA is its simplicity. To avoid the steps. To avoid getting a sponsor. To avoid being honest. I robbed myself of growing, of finding myself.

When I first came to SAA, I wondered when the pain would stop. I cannot tell you when my life changed. I was looking for "the pill" that would stop my pain. I would, still "act out", then hide it by lying. In my head I knew what not to do. Slowly my stubbornness gave way. I found a new way of acting. After "acting as if", my acting turned into true belief. I was no longer "acting out". Accepting and admitting my faults, I found how others overcome the pain.

I found my answer. The answer was so obvious, so simple. Why did it take so long? Acceptance IS the answer. I learned to speak honestly. I learned to accept my faults. Over enough time, I learned to actually love myself. Go figure.

I was molested by my father at the age of 7 – I had to write about my "silent scream" I heard in my head. It lasted for decades then went away. Instead, I wrote about what I went through since I opened the door. After 35 years of marriage, I found something different than what I sought. It's not about sex. I thought it was.

I started like a caterpillar, ugly, something that the world stepped on. Now I am like a butterfly. The ugliness transformed. I found what was on the other side of fear. If I changed, so can you. It's simple, BUT NOT EASY.

- John Mc



Up a Down Escalator

In a meeting I attended earlier, the reading was from Voices of Recovery, April 4. In that reading, it mentions "the downward escalator of addiction will then carry me back into unmanageability pretty quickly." This reminded me of my early years in recovery when I was looking for major efforts to overcome addiction vs. one day at a time. I have learned that "daily" is the key word for me - journaling, outer circle efforts, going to meetings, gratitude, doing the little things, getting sleep, talking to friends in the program... doing the next right thing. If I sit still, my addiction escalator will take me back to the bottom.



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Reflections: Hope and Sobriety

"Hope is a good breakfast but a bad supper." -- Francis Bacon

Answers in the Heart, December 25, focuses on the critical issue of hope and why hope helps addicts "come back to life."

If, for example, we are struggling to overcome another slip or relapse, it's important for addicts to hope that sobriety is, indeed, possible. Addicts may say to themselves, "I hope I'll find a way to stop acting out." Or, "I hope I'll have the strength to get sober, once and for all."

However, hope is not a strategy. In order to get sober, and stay sober, we need to have a clear and consistent strategy to defeat sex addiction, one day at a time. SAA gives us the "battle plan" to win our war against addiction.

Based upon fifteen years in program, and over twelve years of continuous sobriety, this is the "battle plan" I've learned is an effective strategy for recovery:

Attend meetings on a regular basis. Listen carefully to what others say about their stories. Find a sponsor and work to complete the twelve steps. Be rigorously honest with ourselves and others. Embrace reality and reject denial. Face our fears with courage. Heal our emotional wounds. Spend time enjoying outer circle behaviors. Reject and eliminate inner circle behaviors.

Furthermore, it's essential to ask our Higher Power for strength, courage and wisdom. With God's grace, we can overcome pain, fear, anger, guilt, shame, depression, sorrow and hopelessness.

We must never forget that we're fighting a war; a spiritual, emotional and physical war against addiction. Freedom vs Slavery. Good vs Evil. Life vs Death.

With God as our witness, when we defeat addiction, one day at a time, we achieve a life-changing victory. We turn hope into reality. We turn hope into sobriety and serenity.

Finally, as a wise soul once said, "Pray like it all depends on God but work like it all depends on you."

– Bill N – We are not Saints, San Jose

Steps 10, 11, & 12

Step 10 - Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

By the time I get to step 10, I've done the hard work. Step 10 is about applying what I've learned on a daily basis. The [Green Book](#) encourages "We set aside time to review our behavior, our dealings with others, our emotions, and our spiritual condition". The key is to try to do something daily so I stay in touch w/ my recovery. This "[Unpopular Guide to Step 10](#)" has many helpful insights to working step 10.

Step 11 - 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.

In addition to my SAA community of fellow recovering addicts, meditation and journaling have been critical friends in my recovery. I often count my breaths up to 10 over and over while sitting, laying in bed, walking, or driving - besides calming me, I get valuable insights into what my mind is doing. And journaling has been so huge in my recovery – I have many books compiled over the past 15 years – what a blessing. Don't miss out on the value of prayer, meditation, and journaling. See this [step 11 guide](#) for more info.

Step 12 - Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

Once I had worked steps 1-11, I realized that I needed to and wanted to serve other addicts if I was going to stay sober and become the person I wanted to become. I started sponsoring when I was early in the program and stumbled often - yet I believe I was a blessing as I was blessed. You can make a difference in other recovery addicts' lives simply by showing up at meetings and listening to others. If you are intimidated by being a full fledged sponsor, try being a temporary sponsor. You can do it, and - not only that - service is critical to long term sobriety. Houston SAA has a comprehensive [12th Step Workbook](#) you can use.



A Grateful Recovering Addict

Recently, I worked a 1st step with a sponsee using the 1st Step Guide.

Invariably, self-reflection about the depths of my sex addiction all came to the surface and I was able to share my experience on occasion. I believe the process of one addict helping another is unparalleled and helps to let others know they are not the only ones who ever did the things we do.

To me, it doesn't matter what anyone's acting out behaviors were, but only what they want to do about their problem, and how I can help.

I love the 1st Step because it breaks the denial and rationalizations and justifications that have kept us in our addiction. We have hopefully had that moment of clarity where our Higher Power paralyzes the Liar in us just long enough to hear the truth.

My truth was I was either going to work this program, or I was going to die. I don't just say that lightly because there were several instances in my active addiction and a couple of times in my recovery from drugs and alcohol that I had contemplated suicide. It wasn't that I necessarily wanted to die, but I didn't know how to go on living feeling the way that I felt about myself inside – filled with shame and regret for the things I had done.

If I could have unzipped my skin and stepped out of myself, I would have. My self-hatred was mostly invisible to others as I had all the trappings of success on the outside. I had turned to drugs and alcohol to change the way I felt for years and had found another 12 step recovery program to deal with that.

The sexual acting out continued as it had most of my life until the pain I had caused myself and others became too great to ignore, and I had that moment of clarity. I saw myself as I truly was in my brokenness, and for a moment I was instilled with self-compassion. That is when I admitted I had a problem and needed help and found an SAA meeting.

It has taken time and a few relapses, but by going to meetings, working steps with a sponsor and being of service, I have found an equanimity that I have always sought. I have been able to make amends to those I have harmed, especially myself, so that I don't have to live in shame and regret anymore.

Thank you to SAA and all those who have helped save this sex addict along the path, I am grateful...

– Chad S.





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A Liar & A Thief

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” - President Franklin Roosevelt

When I think of all the things I have done or not done in my life due to fear, I get angry and sad. Yes, there is clearly a legitimate place for fear in my life – as a warning against real harm - physical, financial, etc. However, much more often, fear is lying to me.

“Don’t try that because you will fail, and it will feel bad” or “Everyone is judging you, so hide and don’t reach out” or “What you do doesn’t matter and won’t hurt anyone else, so go ahead and do it - no one will know or care” or “You are weak and a loser, so give up” – these are all lies.

And because I have believed these lies in my life way too often, I have either done something that I wish I hadn’t done... or more often, I didn’t do or continue doing something beneficial because fear scared me. In this way, fear gains its more profound title of “thief”. Fear steals things from me - and I let it!

In recent years in recovery, I have been working to battle fear using these 4 steps:

1. Recognizing that fear is behind an emotion, thought, and/or desired action or inaction
2. Identifying the specific thing(s) I’m fearing in the moment
3. Acting (or not acting) despite the fear
4. Afterwards, when I acted/didn’t act despite fear, reminding myself that the fear was lying to me

Every time I do this, I learn something. And there are now fears that still come up that I laugh at because they are so clearly lying to me – I have so much proof of the reality in my own life. Keep going, my friends... I wish you progress today over any fears which are not serving you.

– Matt T - Seattle

Recovery Quotes

- Every worthy act is difficult. Ascent is always difficult. Descent is easy and often slippery.
– Mahatma Gandhi
- Serenity is not freedom from the storm, but peace amid the storm
- I got to come here and get warmed by a fire I didn’t start
- To see miracles happen, we need to let go of expectations
- Our history is not our destiny
- Humility just means you are still teachable



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Add/Update Your Meeting Info

With all the changes that have occurred over the past couple years with COVID and moves to online and then back to in-person meetings, now is a great time to make sure the information for your meeting(s) is correct.

1. Go find your meeting at <https://bayareasaa.org/meetings/>

Time	Meeting	Location / Group	Address	Region
Sunday, 7:15 am	Sunday Sunrise Spiritual Solutions Meeting	Emeryville Marina In-person and Online	3310 Powell St	Emeryville
Sunday, 9:00 am	Answers In the Heart	Online		San Francisco

2. Click on your meeting's name in the list to see the details, and verify those details are correct

We are not Saints (In Person)
In-person

Get Directions

Meeting Information
Saturday, 8:30 am to 9:30 am
 In-person
 Closed
 Big Book, 12 & 12, Green Book, Speaker last Saturday

3. If any updates are needed, please click on **Contact** in the header (<https://bayareasaa.org/contact/> – choose “Add or Update Meetings” as the Subject) and let us know what changes are needed.

Contact

Please contact Bay Area SAA with any questions you may have using the contact form or the telephone numbers below.

General Voicemail: [\(415\) 456-1063](tel:4154561063)

Men's newcomer line: [\(510\) 906-1644](tel:5109061644)

Women's newcomer line: [\(510\) 426-6420](tel:5104266420)

Intergroup email: bayareasaa-intergroup@groups.io

Newcomer lines are answered by member-volunteers when available.

Postal Mail:
Bay Area Intergroup
P.O. Box 14754

Name *

Email *

Phone (Optional)

- General Information About SAA
- Información General en Español
- Add or Update Events
- Add or Update Meetings
- Newsletter Submissions
- Women Seeking Recovery



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Announcements & Events

- ❑ **Annual Los Altos Holiday Music Jam** - Thu, Dec 14, after the [Thursday night Los Altos meeting](#) (United Methodist Church, 655 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos, CA 94024 - Live Oak Room). Bring an instrument, your voice, and/or a dessert.
- ❑ **Sponsors Helping Sponsors** - Thursdays, 11 am US EST / 8 am PST
Zoom ID: 419880404, pass code: 123456 Phone: 646 558-8656
Contact: Christine C. 260 209-4445
- ❑ **Bay Area SAA Intergroup** - Serve our 90+ Bay Area meetings!
2nd Saturday of each month 11:15am - 12:45pm
Online: <https://zoom.us/j/87065412456> Password: Admitted
- ❑ **Bay Area SAA Website Development Committee**
Fridays 10am - Contact Gil R. for more information (831 419-3342)
- ❑ **Please Submit Group Donations via Website** – this ensures we know which group is donating. Use this link: <https://bayareasaa.org/contribute>
- ❑ **Printable Bay Area Meeting List**
<https://bit.ly/bayarea-inperson-meetings>

California-wide Prisoner Outreach

More than half of the thirty prisoner requests arriving every week in the ISO Office come from California. Filling these sponsor requests always has a backlog, especially for Spanish speakers. Rey G from the Southern California Intergroup of SAA (SCISAA) thinks California SAA Fellows can/should take care of our own. He is building a coalition of SAA Fellows throughout California doing, and willing to do, Step 12 service to these SAA Fellows and new-comers in prisons.

For more information: <https://scisaa.org/prisoner-outreach>
Rey G - prisoneroutreach@proton.me 818.486.4053 (text first)

ISO Donations

If SAA has helped, consider becoming a LifeLine Partner to support ISO either as an [individual](#) or as a [group](#).

Resources & Links

- **Women’s Newcomer Line**
510 426-6420
- **Men’s Newcomer Line**
510 906-1644
- **Women Seeking Recovery**
women@bayareasaa.org
- **GLBTQQI Seeking Recovery**
glbt@bayareasaa.org
- **Spanish Speaking Information**
espanol@bayareasaa.org
- **BIPOC Specific Recovery**
bit.ly/SBIPOCintergroup-welcome
- **Bay Area SAA website**
 - [Bay Area Meetings List](#) ★
 - [Bay Area Events](#)
 - [Bay Area Meeting Updates & Intergroup Info](#)
 - [Intergroup Orientation](#)
 - [GSR Info](#)
- **Worldwide SAA website**
 - [Global Meeting Finder](#) ★
 - [SAA Literature](#)
- **Sex Addicts Recovery Podcast**
 - [Listen Directly](#)
 - [Podcast YouTube Playlist](#)
- **San Jose Recovery website**
 - [Step Guides & Worksheets](#)

Feedback / Submissions

- [Newsletter Submission](#)