

# 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

Winter 2024  
Issue No. 30 v1

**Out of the Fog retreat at Walker Creek Ranch in Marin County, March 15-17 - less than a month away!** - See page 6 for more details.

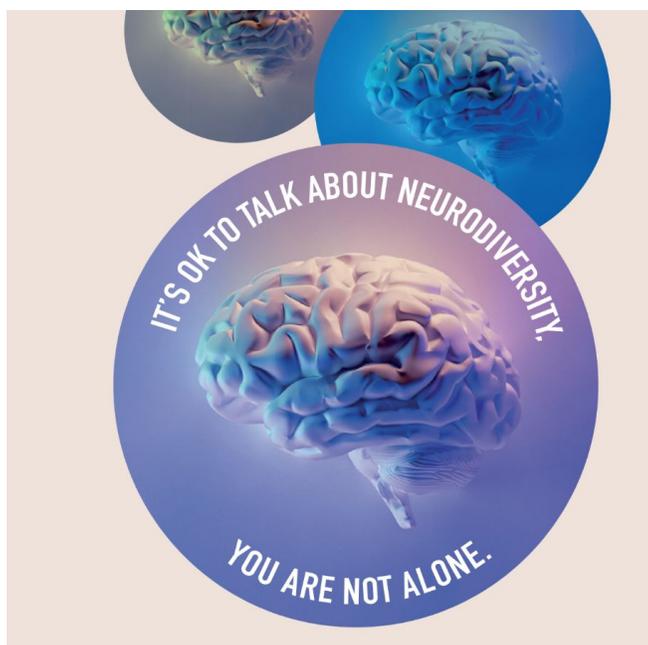
## Featured online meeting -

Neurodiversity Aware SAA meeting, out of the U.K.  
Thursday, 11:15 pacific time.  
Email [saa.neurodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:saa.neurodiversity@gmail.com) for Zoom login details and telephone number.

Neurodiversity can refer to a wide range of differences in brain patterns, the effects of which can be experienced as strengths as well as challenges. This group is a safe space for us to share our challenges and the solutions that we have found for engaging with the twelve steps of SAA.

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



# Out of the Fog

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## SAA is the first place I felt completely welcome as I am.

I am a trans woman who grew up in an anti-LGBTQ+ church: not the Bible-beating, rafter-shaking kind, but the kind where what was acceptable was that which was spoken. Which is how I, who lived in the silence, understood myself to be faulty, never questioning my environment. So I adapted, and stuffed down my difference into a tight box in my guts, and played the role of the dutiful son of God for the sake of everyone else.

It took years of self-neglect to the point of exhaustion to loose the lid on that box; I could no longer maintain the charade. I came out, and then came out again, each time opening the shame-box in order to pull out a deeper, more vulnerable piece of me—my sexuality, my gender—but never digging all the way to the bottom.

I discovered two ways of coping with what remained: first, through creating increasingly raw and visceral art; second, through sex addiction.

Per the first, not long after coming out as trans I finally left the church entirely and immersed myself into a rich LGBTQ+ tapestry of artists and activists. I swapped out the chapels and sanctuaries for bars and theaters, the spirituality for sensuality. I expressed myself in rehearsed performances about the pain I was in that failed to honestly face the depth of my problems. No matter how many times I endeavored to dig out my shame-box, I only allowed myself to scratch the surface. I called this vulnerability.

It seemed like we were always on the cutting edge of thought and discourse, our community, and to misstep meant the edge would cut you. I started to stuff down my doubts and questions about their often black-and-white morality into the box, too, for to deviate meant exile. Again, I never questioned my environment. I assumed my doubts were of the same fault I had learned in church. For the sake of my success and reputation I projected the image of an advocate and ally to all, even when I didn't understand what I was saying.

Per the second, all the while I met up with countless strangers for sex. It was a satisfying high, but short-lived, and over time my initial practices grew insufficient. When my barometer for safety forbade certain fantasies, I swapped it out for a cheaper one, and cheaper still. Acts I'd sworn off became commonplace, lost their thrill, birthing darker fantasies and pursuits in their wake. I allowed others to violate my boundaries during this time, and at times violated others.

And as inevitably happens with addicts, the thin line separating the two halves of my double life snapped. The tight box I'd always clenched and tried to control exploded. All the mess I'd forcefully ignored spilled out into my career and my communities. In a matter of weeks I lost my housing, friendships, profession, and image. All the lessons I'd learned since birth—*you are lacking, you are unspeakable, you are fundamentally wrong*—burst out into the light and cannibalized any good I believed I had. I hid. I relegated myself once more to silence, but not for the sake of a hateful congregation: simply because I did not deserve to be heard.

A couple months after rock bottom I finally took my new therapist's advice and attended a meeting of SAA. I was shocked at the candor with which people shared about the pain of their past—particularly the pieces for which they were responsible. A few months after that, I shared my First Step presentation with what was now my home group. And unlike every community I'd previously called home, they saw me in my totality—the hurt I'd both caused and experienced, the good I had to offer and the long road I had yet to travel. To my surprise, they did not ostracize me upon hearing my story. They thanked me for sharing. Gradually I learned to integrate my diffuse parts: the part I let myself see, the part I stuffed away, and the parts I had forgotten about. I was not the chosen trans savior I'd often fancied myself to be, nor the despicable monster some labeled me as during my excommunication, but rather a person.



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## SAA is the first place I felt completely welcome as I am, *continued.*

Suddenly I saw pendulums all over my life, swinging from one extreme to the other. Shame to grandiosity. Anonymous sex to celibacy. Scarcity to abundance. Binge, purge, repeat. What did it mean to exist in the middle?

Defenses lowered. [True] vulnerability emerged. I built friendships with people who looked nothing like me, who lived in faraway places, who believed in different things, who'd endured a different hell, and yet arrived on the same Zoom call. I sought out meetings for women and LGBTQ+ people at first, then gradually felt comfortable enough going to mixed meetings too. We all had so much more alike than different, despite enumerate differences. The life-or-death morality I'd been instructed to uphold faltered in the face of nuance, care, and understanding. The God I'd privately known as a child, incongruous with the one of my childhood church, returned. I worked the Steps. I learned what I called basic emotional arithmetic; took accountability for my actions; used tools to navigate triggering situations; felt my feelings instead of fixing them; showed up to my life and relationships.

It's been over three years in recovery now and the journey has been far from linear, but the growth is undeniable to those who walk with me. I have five sponsees and counting. All of whom, too, are LGBTQ+ individuals I have the privilege of guiding toward healing. To help them hopefully make a few less mistakes than I did.

Sometimes, when I think about my past, the many chapters that brought me here, it can feel like witnessing someone else's memories, not mine. After all, my life does not look remotely how I imagined it twenty years ago, or ten, let alone five. Which makes sense: for the longest time, it felt as though life were the equivalent of living in a basement room with a dirty window and a low ceiling, spine hunched over from necessity.

It took enormous loss and rebuilding to discover that I could simply walk upstairs to a spacious home with vaulted ceilings and sunshine. Gardens surrounding it all, so long as I tend to them. Slowly the wisdom of the Promises (in this case, borrowed from AA) take root:

*We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.*

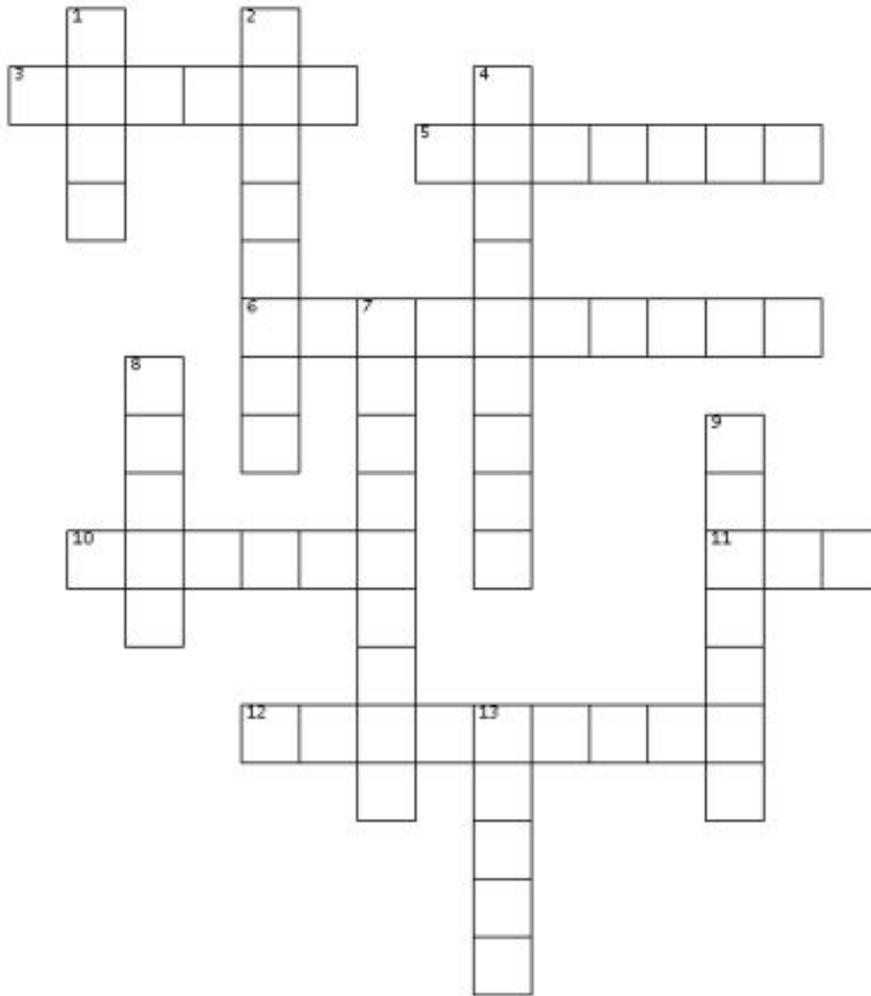


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## SAA Crossword Puzzle



### ACROSS

- 3. Type of higher power described in the second tradition
- 5. SAA member who helps you work the steps
- 6. SAA's term for not acting out
- 10. Membership requirement described in the third tradition
- 11. Color of the first step pamphlet
- 12. A metaphor for addictive sexual behavior (pamphlet title)

### DOWN

- 1. Spiritual principle behind the second step
- 2. What active sex addicts often avoid
- 4. Type of solution offered by SAA
- 7. Action taken in the third step
- 8. SAA extends a special welcome to this group in a pamphlet
- 9. Three tools we use to define our abstinence
- 13. Spiritual principle behind the first tradition



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## Reflections: Chess and Recovery.

“You sit at the board and suddenly your heart leaps. Your hand trembles to pick up the piece and move it. But what chess teaches you is that you must sit there calmly and think about whether it's really a good idea and whether there are other, better ideas.” -- Stanley Kubrick

Each day, we must choose which pieces to move on the chessboard of our lives. In life, as in chess, we must make our decisions carefully.

In the game of chess we learn quickly that all our actions have consequences, whether they be positive or negative. Chess teaches us to create our own opportunities and to never wait too long to make a move, because the best time may never come or come too late.

In recovery, we're fighting a war, within the battlefield of our mind, as we struggle to win our freedom from addiction in an existential chess match. While we fight for our freedom, one move at a time, our addict's goal is to force us into a losing position, destroy our sobriety, and demand we live, like pawns, in perpetual slavery.

At critical moments, addiction will try and overwhelm us with fear and anxiety as we search for ways to attack and counterattack our enemy. Still, we know, addiction will never overlook our mistakes or forgive any weakness.

However, with guidance from SAA, and the decision to seriously work our program, with support from our sponsor, we find the winning moves. We learn how to overcome self-destructive impulses, make wise choices, remain sober and checkmate addiction, one day at a time.

Although we may not win every battle, we can, and must, win the war against addiction. Therefore, we will never surrender. Instead, our mission is to defeat addiction, achieve a life-changing victory, and celebrate sobriety.

With God's grace, we are grateful for the many ways in which our Higher Power allows us to experience the priceless gifts of faith, family, freedom and sobriety.

Bill N.

We are not Saints

San Jose, CA.



# Out of the Fog

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## Join Us for the 2024 SAA 12-Step Online Workshop!

*Personally Working the Steps → Freedom from Addiction!*

**Saturdays, Mar 2-Nov 23, 2024 (38 weeks), 7:15-8:15 am PT, Online (Zoom)**

**Who can join?** Any addict, anywhere who is interested in getting sober.

### What's a workshop?

- **A bunch of us working the 12 steps of SAA together** - We follow a plan, hold ourselves accountable to show up, & experience real sobriety & joy in our lives.
- **1st Step (12 weeks)** - Introductions + read/discuss SAA literature + each participant will be encouraged/guided to write out & then tell their story & listen to others share theirs – this is a powerful, community-building thing. During this time, each person will need to have/find a sponsor.
- **2nd & 3rd Steps (6 weeks)** - Read/discuss SAA literature + each person will have the opportunity to work through the current state of their spirituality (not religion) using worksheets & talking to the group/their sponsor.
- **4th & 5th Steps (9 weeks)** - Read/discuss SAA literature + with worksheets & help from the group & their sponsor, each person will write out 3 inventories (resentments, fears, harm done others) & then present those inventories to their sponsor.
- **6th, 7th, 8th, & 9th Steps (8 weeks)** - Read/discuss SAA literature + with worksheets & help from group/sponsor, each person will work thru their own character defects as well as identify & begin to make amends to those they have harmed.
- **10th, 11th, & 12th Steps (3 weeks)** - Read/discuss SAA literature + each participant begin/continue a daily recovery program & consider serving other addicts.

### Interested or need more information?

- Signup / indicate interest → <https://bit.ly/2024-SAA-workshop-signup>
- Go to [www.indyrecovery.com](http://www.indyrecovery.com) and click on “Workshops”
- Email [sanjosaturdaymeeting@gmail.com](mailto:sanjosaturdaymeeting@gmail.com)
- Note: if you can't make the initial meeting(s), join us anyway when you can



# Out of the Fog

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## Out of the Fog retreat - at Walker Creek Ranch

It's now less than a month for our annual Out of the Fog retreat at Walker Creek Ranch in Marin County taking place on the weekend of March 15-17, 2024. We invite you to enrich your recovery with meetings, workshops, meditation, and fellowship. We will also enjoy all manner of outer circle activities including ping pong, drum circles, campfires, game night, talent/no talent show, and hiking among the rolling hills of West Marin.

**Registration for the Retreat is still open:**

<http://bit.ly/retreat2024link>

**For additional information, we have a few Sex Addicts Recovery Podcast episodes dedicated to the retreat:**

### Ep 082 Return of the Bay Area Retreat

Jason, Tim & Paul enthusiastically share their experiences around the Bay Area Retreat. To help enlighten newcomers to the SAA program we talk about what the retreat is, what we get out of a weekend of recovery, and what are some of the fears or questions that people new to the program might have. We were also joined by COSA member and Paul's wife Amy to share her perspective on what it's like to let a partner go to the retreat for the first time.

### Ep 089 The Sex Addicts Recovery Podcast Workshop

From the 2023 Bay Area Retreat, Jason presents The Sex Addicts Recovery Podcast Workshop. Join us as attendees take part in this recording of an interactive discussion for the SAA podcast to share our experiences of recovery with listeners around the world. Jason also shares some music from the Talent/No Talent Show at the Retreat.

### Ep 090 Women's Experiences at the Retreat

Join us in this episode for our group discussion as panel of women attendees of the Bay Area Retreat talk about their retreat experiences, sponsorship and what it's like being a woman in SAA. Also, more clips from the Talent/No Talent Show.

***We hope to see you there this year!***



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## Announcements & Events

- ❑ **Out of the Fog retreat** - March 15-17, register at <http://bit.ly/retreat2024link>
- ❑ **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
- ❑ **Sponsor Support Group - SSG** will hold meetings on the **first Saturday** of April, June, August, October, and December from 9:45-10:45 am at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 3151 Union Ave, San Jose.
- ❑ **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](mailto: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](mailto:women@bayareasaa.org)
- **GLBTQQI Seeking Recovery**  
[glbt@bayareasaa.org](mailto:glbt@bayareasaa.org)
- **Spanish Speaking Information**  
[espanol@bayareasaa.org](mailto:espanol@bayareasaa.org)
- **BIPOC Specific Recovery**  
[bit.ly/SBIPOCintergroup-welcome](http://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](#)