

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

Spring 2024
Issue No. 31 v1

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.

Reflections: Hardship and Loss

*"We learn to accept that reality is not tailored to the limitations of self, and that hardship and loss are as valid a part of life as joy and pleasure."
– Voices of Recovery, September 22*

Hardships and losses can help us to find the strength, courage and wisdom to heal our wounded hearts. As a wise soul once said: "To be alive at all is to have scars." An inspirational minister reminds us: "Every person carries a sorrow and struggle. We each hurt in our own unique ways and when we give voice to this pain, we begin to heal it."

In SAA, we can heal our pain and rebuild our lives by creating strong relationships with our Higher Power, sponsors, and brothers and sisters in program. We rebuild our lives when we attend meetings and listen carefully to one another's stories. And, we rebuild our lives by thoughtfully completing the Twelve Steps of recovery with guidance from our sponsors.

There is a profound poem, which reads: "Be gentle with one another. It is a cry from the lives of people battered by thoughtless words and brutal deeds. Who of us can look inside another and know what is there, of hope and hurt or promise and pain. Our lives are like fragile eggs, they crack and the substance escapes, handle with care, handle with exceeding tender care, for there are human beings there, human beings who feel as we feel and who hurt as we hurt. Be gentle with one another."

The only person we're destined to become is the person we choose to be. In recovery, we make life-changing decisions. We are rigorously honest with ourselves and others. We embrace reality and reject denial. We face our fears with courage and heal our emotional wounds. We make amends to those we have harmed. We overcome self-destructive impulses and make wise choices, one day at a time. And, as a result of these decisions, we can live meaningful, healthy and sober lives.

Moreover, if we change the way we look at things, the things we look at may change. For example, let us reflect upon the wisdom of Civil War President Abraham Lincoln, whose life was filled with hardship, loss, and tragedy. He said, "We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."

When all is said and done, our Higher Power will help us to find the strength, courage and wisdom to cross the bridge to freedom, sobriety and serenity and to burn the bridge to slavery, addiction and self-destruction.

- Bill N. - We are not saints - San Jose, CA

Contents

What is SAA?	1
Reflections: Hardship and Loss	1
Me & My Addict	2
Self-care & Connection: Importance of nurturing in sex addiction recovery	3-6
Recovery Quotes	7
Crossword	8
Announcements & Events	9
Donations, Resources, & Links	9
California-wide Prisoner Outreach	9



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



Out of the Fog

Spring 2024



Me & My Addict

Early in my recovery, I was encouraged to give my addict a name. Doing this would allow me to view my addict separate from my authentic self. My addict's name is "JJ" which is short for Jerky Junior because my addict is a jerk. In the years since, I have encouraged my sponsees to name their addict and have heard names like Adam and Seth. Sometimes a sponsee will say something like "Adam has been talking to me lately" to let me know things weren't going well.

I recently spent some time describing the relationship between my authentic self, Matt, and my addict, JJ:

- ❖ When JJ and Matt appear as 1 person to Matt is when Matt is deep in active addiction
- ❖ When Matt tries to control JJ, JJ gains power
- ❖ The more Matt focuses on JJ, the more power JJ gets
- ❖ JJ doesn't care about Matt and is fine if Matt's life is destroyed
- ❖ JJ can gain as much power as Matt is willing to give him
- ❖ JJ is cunning and skillful at making Matt feel small and getting Matt to do whatever JJ wants
- ❖ JJ is never silent and never sleeps
- ❖ JJ acts like Matt's friend when JJ wants something, but JJ has no goodness inside - only destruction
- ❖ Trying to control JJ by putting borders around him, arguing with him, appeasing him, etc. only gives JJ more power to cause havoc in Matt's life
- ❖ JJ wants to meet an authentic need in Matt's life with a solution that costs Matt dearly
- ❖ There is no hard time in Matt's life that JJ can't make worse
- ❖ Step 1 is about bringing JJ into the light, acknowledging JJ's power over Matt, acknowledging Matt's inability to control JJ, and describing how having JJ in Matt's life has hurt Matt
- ❖ JJ will tell Matt that bringing JJ into the light will embarrass Matt - which turns out to be a lie
- ❖ JJ never leaves; however, JJ loses power as Matt brings him into the light and stops resisting JJ
- ❖ Even in recovery, Matt has to deal with the consequences of JJ's past influence in Matt's life
- ❖ The longer Matt is in recovery, the more clear, separate, and distant JJ becomes
- ❖ Matt, my authentic self, is good; and JJ, my addict, is my authentic self's sworn enemy
- ❖ The more I get in touch with my authentic self and show it grace and feed it, the less power JJ has
- ❖ All addicts have their own JJs and their authentic selves
- ❖ It is easier for me to see another addict's authentic self and their JJ than to see my own
- ❖ Serving other addicts includes helping them see their authentic self and their JJ more clearly
- ❖ Encouraging other addicts' authentic selves can empower them to separate from their own JJ and thus give their JJ less energy

- *Matt T, Seattle*



Out of the Fog

Spring 2024



Self-Care and Connection

The importance of nurturing in sex addiction recovery

Something was missing

Most of us join the fellowship of Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) in fear and pain. We tried to stop our behaviors by ourselves, and found we could not. So, in desperation, we started attending meetings and learning about the Twelve Steps of SAA.

Although it brought some comfort to hear members' stories of healing, growth, and success in living without destructive sexual behavior, quite a few of us were dismayed or overwhelmed at the amount of work and time it seemed like it might take to achieve these same results in our own lives, maybe doubting it was even possible for us. We may have wished there was one simple thing to focus on at first that would quickly produce noticeable change.

Those of us who struggled with frequent relapses – maybe even despite attending meetings and working the Twelve Steps with a sponsor – may also have been searching for something we were missing in our program. Even some of us with years of abstinence from addictive sexual behaviors may not have experienced a strong sense of belonging or fulfillment. We, too, were looking for something to add to our recovery program that would enhance our lives and bring greater happiness and satisfaction into our sobriety.

A “secret ingredient” to boost recovery

Whether we were new, struggling, or had years of abstinence, one of the most powerful tools for many of us in recovery from sex addiction has been nurturing ourselves and receiving nurturing from others – even if that's not what we call it. In this pamphlet, we will explore the meaning of nurturing and how it's an important element of recovery from compulsive sexual behaviors.

The word “nurture” may bring to mind things we do for plants or babies, and we may not realize that adults also need nurturing. Instead, we may believe we need to be “tough.” But the truth is, every human being needs to eat and sleep, needs protection, needs safety, needs connection with another person, and much more. Everybody needs respect and gentleness and support. All of these things are examples of nurturing – and are essential for survival. It is not weakness to need these life-sustaining things. But what does any of this have to do with recovery from sex addiction?

Harshness does not help recovery

First of all, many of us have attempted to shame or beat ourselves into abstinence from our compulsive sexual behaviors. But we were unsuccessful at permanently stopping our addiction through harshness. Perhaps it's understandable that we would try to threaten or force ourselves into sobriety, considering what many of us have experienced in the past.

A great number of us did not receive encouragement to feel or express our emotions as we were growing up. Perhaps we were told what to do and who to be, instead of being allowed to explore what felt right for us. Some of us received unkind messages about ourselves and the world around us. Many of us felt unseen or uncared for. If this is what was modeled for us as children, it makes sense that we might struggle to be respectful and understanding towards ourselves as adults in recovery.

(continued)



Out of the Fog

Spring 2024



Self-Care and Connection (continued)

For most of us, being treated with unkindness, unfairness, or inconsideration contributed to our becoming sex addicts. So, it makes sense that treating ourselves the opposite way – with gentleness and respect – would lead to recovery. Though we may have feared being gentle would cause us to become weaker, most of us found that the more we nurture ourselves, the more mature, spiritually strong, and emotionally resilient we become! It was also a surprise to some of us that nurturing was an essential element for our healthier sexuality.

However, nurturing ourselves and receiving nurture from others is often easier said than done. Often, the whole concept of accepting nurturing was foreign to us at the beginning of recovery. Perhaps we were unconsciously afraid of it. Many of us were so used to “going it alone” that we weren’t even aware of our lack of understanding of the importance of nurturing. Small wonder, then, that we didn’t realize we were starving for it!

What is nurturing?

Before recovery, many of us had some distorted views of what nurturing was, often choosing very unhealthy things to do. Self-hating thoughts and humiliating behaviors were common for most of us in active addiction. *“Addictive sexual behavior increased our loneliness and insecurity, damaged our self-worth, estranged us from our spiritual nature, and often resulted in emotional trauma. All of these consequences added up to an unmanageable life.”* (Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 24)

However, recovery enabled us to start treating ourselves with gentleness in our thoughts and actions. Our first step was to admit that we have a problem that we cannot fix by ourselves, but that was only the beginning of the journey. We learned that if we don’t accept help and let people support us, we could not recover. We needed to give ourselves permission to be compassionate with ourselves, which allowed us to welcome someone into our lives to help us. It is healing and nurturing to accept the help and support that other recovering sex addicts offer.

Ways we apply the principle of nurturing in recovery

One of the first ways we began allowing others to compassionately care for us was to begin sharing honestly in meetings, trusting that we wouldn’t be judged. Many of us started making phone calls, giving fellow recovering sex addicts opportunities to listen to our feelings and struggles, and offer support. Quite a few of us have benefited from opening up to a sponsor and listening to their guidance.

“We also begin to learn how to ask for and receive help from other recovering sex addicts. Asking for help releases us from the toxic isolation that drives our addiction. As we receive help, we learn to let the walls down and to accept nurturing and care from others. Learning to be vulnerable, admitting that we don’t have all the answers, and asking for and receiving help are all essential to our recovery.”

(Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 25)

(continued)



Out of the Fog

Spring 2024



Self-Care and Connection (continued)

In addition, most recovering sex addicts have found that prioritizing self-care is a good way to start practicing some of the spiritual principles of the program. Acting out sexually may have eaten away at the time and energy we might otherwise have spent taking care of our bodies. So, in recovery, we prioritized getting adequate rest, eating nourishing food, drinking a healthy amount of water, and getting physical exercise.

For some of us, our needs for physical or emotional nurturing have been met through seeking the support of a professional. This could mean visiting a medical specialist, nutritionist, therapist, personal trainer, etc. Taking care of our physical health increased our ability to think clearly, helped us heal, helped us be more accepting of and present in our bodies, and helped us feel better about ourselves.

Self-nurture may also have included changes in our physical presentation, such as choosing properly-fitting clothing that we feel comfortable wearing. We may have begun paying closer attention to personal hygiene. An internal shift started to happen as we trimmed our hair or nails and wore clean, pleasant clothes as a way to show care and respect for ourselves instead of dressing to attract an acting-out partner.

Many of us may have done something to make our living space more attractive or cozy. As we did, we may have started becoming aware of the affect our surroundings had on our emotions. As one recovering addict remarked, "As my brain cleared, I began to discover the ability to organize things, which brings me peace."

Taking better care of ourselves and our environment cultivated a belief that we were worth recovery, which motivated further actions that supported our recovery. As we sent the message to ourselves that we were worthy of love, we shifted from self-centeredness to self-love. We stopped hating ourselves or treating ourselves with disrespect. We replaced behaviors that caused harm to ourselves and others with actions that were more in alignment with our Higher Power's care and guidance, which helped move us into more prolonged abstinence and deeper sobriety.

Many of us connected with ourselves and highlighted our own inherent value by journaling, music, artwork, poetry, or other creative outlets. Helping others was another way we connected with ourselves and others. Many of us found that offering service in our groups or to the SAA fellowship helped us develop our talents and skills as well as connect with sober members.

Many who use the Three Circles tool (Three Circles – Defining Sexual Sobriety in SAA, Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 14) have found it most beneficial when used as a snack table offering many different options, rather than a checklist. Being addicts, though, we may find ourselves using outer-circle behaviors to excess, when they can become addictive and detrimental. For example, reading a book might be nurturing, unless one loses sleep to do it.

Our outer circle may include nurturing things like hobbies, being in nature, and participating in healthy social gatherings. Things that sustain our life and increase our physical and mental health belong in the outer circle. Most of us include activities that nurture and support our healing, personal development, and help us connect with ourselves, others, and the God or source of higher power.

(continued)



Out of the Fog

Spring 2024



Self-Care and Connection (continued)

We found these outer-circle behaviors supported our long-term abstinence from addictive sexual behaviors. At first, outer-circle behaviors may have distracted us from the urges to act out. Over time, however, we often discovered that these behaviors also met some of the needs we were often subconsciously trying to meet with acting out.

The more outer-circle activities and practices we regularly do, the more we create a foundation upon which a healthier life can be built. Nurturing ourselves and letting others care for and support us helped us cultivate a more profound connection with our Higher Power, which makes recovery possible. As our sexual experiences became more nurturing in recovery, many of us have found loving sex to be more fulfilling than the transactional sex we may have experienced in active addiction.

Here are some other examples of ways members of SAA are nurturing themselves in recovery:

- ❖ Daily affirmations and thinking positive thoughts instead of negative ones
- ❖ Surrounding ourselves with positive people
- ❖ Accepting invitations instead of isolating
- ❖ Pausing to pray, even in front of or with others
- ❖ Scheduling time to do nothing but relax
- ❖ Allowing ourselves to cry
- ❖ Changing a recovery routine to prevent boredom
- ❖ Cleaning and taking care of overlooked areas, such as toes and feet
- ❖ Spending time in peaceful, beautiful surroundings
- ❖ Traveling
- ❖ Viewing stage plays, live sporting events, or concerts
- ❖ Feeling and expressing gratitude for food before consuming it
- ❖ Substituting nurturing activities for what was removed from my life as a result of acting out
- ❖ Pausing step work, making phone calls, and practicing healthy self-calming activities when emotions become difficult or confusing
- ❖ Examining feelings and needs in inventory work

As one member put it, “Nurturing can be anything that reconnects me with myself and brings me back to my true way of living.” Another member said, “I didn’t know it was even an option for me, as a man, to increase self-esteem and relax through nurturing myself. I thought sitting in front of the television watching a game and drinking a beverage was the extent of it.”

“I have learned that it is appropriate and in the spirit of recovery to identify my needs and to honour them,” someone shared in a meeting. “I have learned that it is appropriate to voice my needs to others, especially those close to me.”

- *This article was drafted by the SAA Authors’ Group for eventual inclusion in an SAA pamphlet. If you would like to learn more about the SAA Authors’ Group to potentially help work on this and future SAA literature, please email info@saa-recovery.org and ask to be put in touch with the Authors’ Group.*



Out of the Fog

Spring 2024



Recovery Quotes

- Recovery is not for those who need it, it's for those who want it.
- For recovery from anything, we need to give up the hope of a better past.
- The clouds of discouragement and suffering only temporarily veil the sunlight.
- Change comes from practicing something different.
- What you think about yourself is far more important than what others think of you.
- Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars. (Kahlil Gibran)
- Honesty heals... secrecy kills
- Pain is the touchstone of all spiritual progress.
- Sponsee: "How long do I have to keep coming to these meetings?!" Sponsor: "Only until you want to come to these meetings"
- Acceptance is mandatory - understanding is optional.
- The truth will not die because I bury it
- Don't believe everything you think.
- Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes (Carl Jung)
- Action precedes motivation
- I don't have to see the entire staircase to take the first step
- Meetings = Relief... Step Work = Recovery
- Don't look where you fell, look where you slipped.
- Nothing to hide, nothing to prove, nothing to lose
- There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance – that principle is contempt prior to investigation. (Herbert Spencer)
- It's never too late to become what I might have been.
- Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived out to be understood.

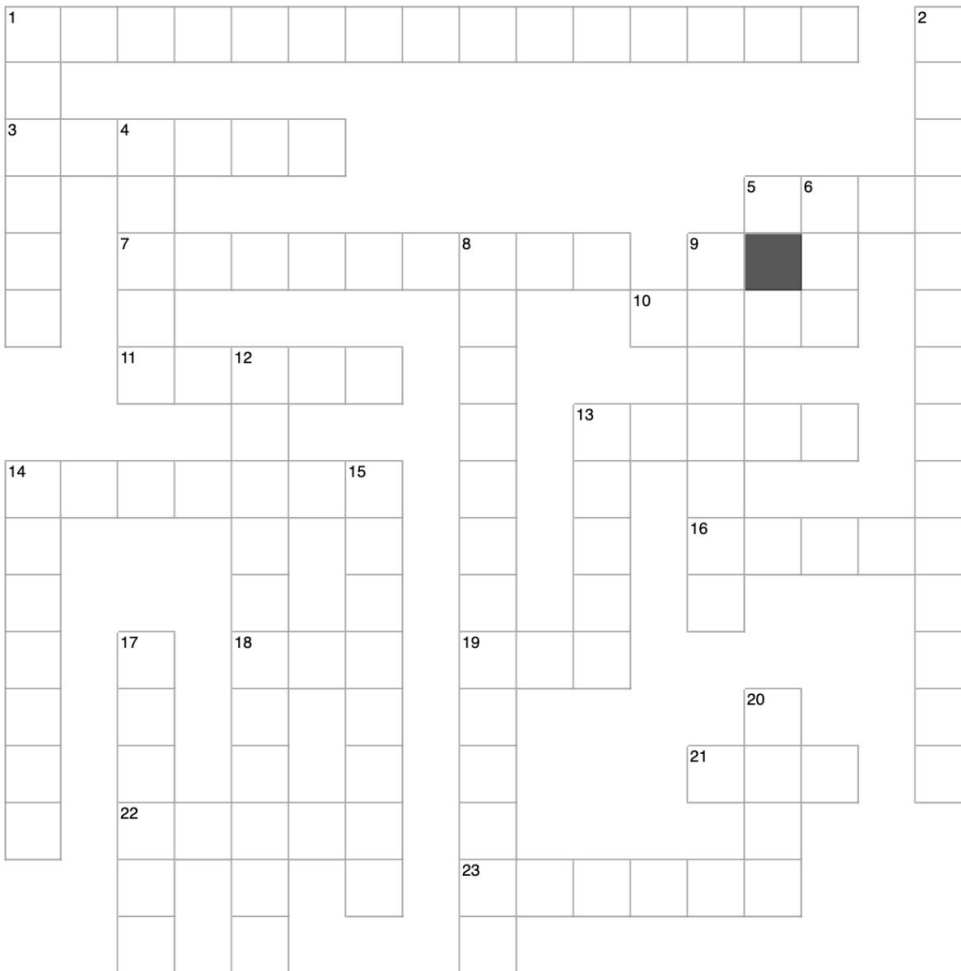


Out of the Fog

Spring 2024



Spring 2024 Crossword



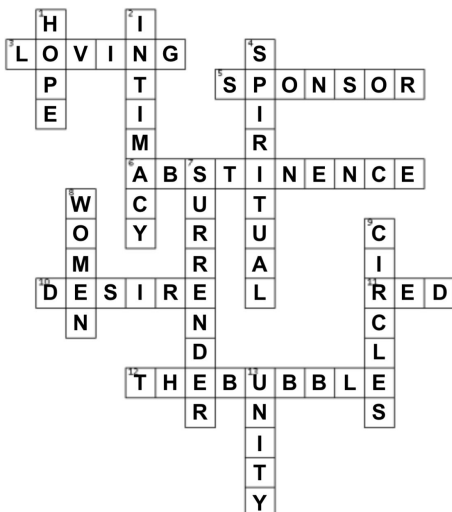
ACROSS

- 1 the other AA reference of steps and traditions (3 words)
- 3 step ___ - sought
- 5 step ___ - made a searching
- 7 the SAA reference (2 words)
- 10 step ___ - admitted to
- 11 step ___ - made a decision
- 13 when I'm not acting out
- 14 my guide in recovery
- 16 the part of the circle that is the opposite of my addict
- 18 step ___ - came to believe
- 19 step ___ - continued
- 21 step ___ - were entirely
- 22 acting out in terms of the 3 circles
- 23 the slippery slope part of the 3 circles

DOWN

- 1 step ___ - having had
- 2 URL (without dashes and dots) for SAA's worldwide website
- 4 step ___ - made a list
- 6 step ___ - we admitted
- 8 reminder that I cannot rush recovery (5 words)
- 9 the AA reference (2 words)
- 12 one of the step 4 inventories
- 13 step ___ - humbly asked
- 14 a fellow addict I serve through encouragement
- 15 my SAA goal
- 17 what I am even in recovery
- 20 step ___ - made direct

Winter 2024 Crossword Answers





Out of the Fog

Spring 2024



Announcements & Events

- ❑ **SAA International Online Recovery Day - June 1, 2024**
Starts: 09.00 BST, 1am PAC, 4am EST
Ends: 01.00 BST (Sunday 6/2), 5pm PAC, 8pm EST
For more information: saa-convention.org/zoom pwd: keepcomingback
- ❑ **Quarterly Santa Cruz Beach Burn - July 26th**
For more information: Mark T (408) 607-8186
- ❑ **HELP NEEDED: Have experience in web design and/or WordPress?**
If so, please contact bradinrecovery@outlook.com – there is a service opportunity for 1 or more people to help with the Bay Area SAA website.
- ❑ **Podcast listener? Check out the Sex Addicts Recovery Podcast**
Available on [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#), [Bay Area website](#)
127 episodes downloaded and listened to around the world.
For more information: jason@sexaddictsreciverypod.com
- ❑ **Sponsor Support Group - 9:45 - 10:45 am, Saturdays: 6/1, 8/3, 10/5, 12/7**
Trinity Presbyterian Church, 3151 Union Ave., San Jose
For more information: Bill N (408) 568-9702
- ❑ **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 @ noon - 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>

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](#)
- **Printable Bay Area Meeting List**
- **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](#)