

The Outer Circle Imperative

The SAA Abstinence Statement affirms that abstinence from our inner circle behaviors “lays the foundation for learning a new approach to the experience of sex and relationships which is non-compulsive and non-destructive.” We build on that foundation by consciously defining our outer circle sexuality.

As we create a vision of outer circle sexuality, we gain hope. We define a course of action. We erase the shame we have long held about our addictive sexual behaviors. We embrace our sexuality as a natural part of who we are.

Defining Outer Circle Sexuality

Developing a conscious definition of outer circle sexuality is a practice: it evolves with experience and reflection. Here are some suggestions to help you start this practice:

1. Don't do it alone. We highly recommend doing this with your sponsor or other sober friends.
2. Create a worksheet with two columns. Review the sample worksheet in this pamphlet.
3. In the first column, list some principles for outer circle sexuality that reflect your values. Gaining clarity about your principles will help guide your actions. We recommend creating a list of at least ten principles.
4. Use the second column to articulate a vision of what the principle looks like

in practice. Use as much detail as possible to build a clear vision.

5. Complete the worksheet trying to use positive rather than negative language.

Discussing Outer Circle Sexuality

Next, we begin to discuss these principles and behaviors with our sponsor and other sober friends in recovery. Again, here are some suggestions to help you start this practice.

Talk about your successes and struggles in your checkins with your sponsor and when you make program calls.

Share about your outer circle sexuality at meetings. This can be a valuable tool for recovery, but it is important to share in a manner which supports the recovery of everyone at the meeting.

- Talk to your sponsor before sharing about your outer circle sexuality at a meeting.
- Avoid talking about your sexuality in a provocative manner.
- Avoid talking about specific sexual acts, places and people.
- Attend SAA workshops on the topic of outer circle sexuality.
- Plan on revisiting your outer circle sexuality worksheet periodically as you develop a stronger sense of what works and doesn't work for you.

Many of us find this process to be difficult and confusing. Many of us are uncomfortable talking about our sexuality. Be gentle with yourself.

Bay Area Intergroup of SAA

Outer Circle Sexuality

A GUIDE TO DEFINING AND DISCUSSING HEALTHY SEXUALITY

Version 1.0 (June 2009)

*Send comments and feedback
to lit@bayareasaa.org*

© 2009 Bay Area
Intergroup of SAA

Outer Circle Sexuality Worksheet

Samples from some members of the Bay Area fellowship.

My Guiding Value, Belief or Principle	What it Looks Like in Practice
1. My physical health and safety are important to me.	My sexual partner and I practice safer sex so we don't exchange any sexual transmitted diseases. No one gets physically hurt.
2. Sex is fun and erotic.	All my senses are involved, including my "sense of humor". I feel comfortable with my partner and trust him/her enough to "let go".
3. Sex is consensual.	I am conscious of what works and doesn't work for me. I express to my partner when I want to stop, and I am attentive and respectful when my partner expresses the same.
4. Sex includes warmth and affection.	Hand-holding, hugging, snuggling, touching, kissing, caressing. My partner and I can lay next to each in bed and talk. My partner and I hold hands sitting on the sofa watching TV.
5. Sex is good.	I don't feel guilty or shameful for initiating or enjoying sex. My needs for sex and touch are healthy.
6. Spiritual compatibility	My partner and I have some shared ideals and values.
7. My sexuality is part of myself as a whole human being.	I do not focus on body parts.
8. I am strongest when I am mindful of my own boundaries.	I talk to my partner about what I want and what I don't want.
9. Make it a priority.	My partner and I make time for lovemaking when we have energy, not when we're tired. Plan romantic getaways.
10. Gratitude	I express appreciation for my partner's affection and time and energy. I thank my higher power for my body and my sexuality.