

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



What is SAA?

Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) is a fellowship of men and women 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.

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Save the trees by signing up to receive each quarterly issue of *Out of the Fog* by email.

Send your request to:

newsletter@bayareasaa.org

Looking for a meeting?

A complete list of current Bay Area SAA meetings can be found at:

www.bayareasaa.org/meetings.php

If you can't make a meeting in person, a complete list of electronic meetings can be found at:

www.saa-recovery.org/Meetings/ElectronicMeetings/

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GATEWAY to RECOVERY

ISO CONVENTION
May 25-28, 2018- San Francisco

The International Service Organization (ISO) will be holding its annual convention in the SF Bay Area this year, May 25 – 28, 2018.. For more info on the event, how to register on line, and/or do service by volunteering, please send an email to:

saaconvention2018@gmail.com

This #Me2 Moment

It seems like almost every other day since an Oct. 5 New York Times investigation by Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey revealed sexual harassment allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein there have been new revelations about other luminaries in the worlds of media, sports, business, and politics who had used their positions of power to sexually exploit and demean women and men. Charlie Rose, Roy Moore, Al Franken, Louis CK, Matt Lauer, Kevin Spacey and a host of others have been 'outed' and a veritable groundswell of new accusations has brought the issues of sexual harassment and exploitation [predominately of women, although not exclusively] to the fore in a way not seen before.

At first, almost automatically, the sex addict in me greeted each new revelation with silent anticipation, searching for any salacious details in the news stories that I could get a 'hit' from. Thanks to the SAA program, these diversions towards my middle circle were quickly derailed by my

daily applications of Step 10 (*"continued to take daily inventory..."*) and Step 11 (*"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with [our Higher Power]..."*) and I instead was able to observe the current headlines in a more contemplative, and yes, sober way.

On the one hand, the illumination of scores of instances of behind-the-scenes sexual predation was not very surprising. The existence of such an underbelly to our society has always been apparent, revealed intermittently by isolated high profile accusations, about Roman Polanski, about Woody Allen, about Bill Clinton. But we knew, didn't we, that beyond these individual stories lay a broader system and countless other instances of men exploiting women and vice versa, adults exploiting children, etc.

Until this moment in time, we could hide behind the comfy narratives: 'Oh, it's just the priests,' or 'It's just casting couch machinations,' or 'It's just entitled sports stars,' or 'Hey, sex, drugs and rock and roll, Yeah!' But it feels different this time, doesn't it? As

the #Me2's pile up, we can own up finally and admit that we knew all along what was going on. And perhaps, as Oprah Winfrey intoned in her remarkable acceptance speech at the Golden Globes, "Their time is up!"

"...as we try to navigate these complicated times...what I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have. And I'm especially proud and inspired by all the women who have felt strong enough and empowered enough to speak up and share their personal stories..." – Oprah Winfrey, 2017 Golden Globes

As self-acknowledged sex addicts, what are we to make of all this? Well, without assuming that all these recently revealed perpetrators are sex addicts (though some no doubt are) we can take heart in the un-assailable truth that we, by virtue of entering these rooms, and working the Steps, and working towards our spiritual awakening, decided long ago we didn't want to continue to live the lie. Thanks to the existence of this fellowship, our time was up long ago.

Me3 – Editor



Gratitude List

Many recovering sex addicts have found that taking the time to identify and acknowledge things in their life that they are grateful for, helps them to avoid succumbing to self-pity and despair and keep their life in perspective. Each issue we will share some examples from fellowship members who have, or are beginning to, employ this tool in their recovery practices.

Today, I am grateful for:

- ✓ *My sponsor*
- ✓ *Fresh, tasty food*
- ✓ *Warriors vs. Thunder tonight*
- ✓ *Last night's speaker – an inspiring message*
- ✓ *For a great weekend away in Mendocino*
- ✓ *The newest episode of The Crown on Netflix*
- ✓ *The chance to clean my studio and have it back in order*

What are you grateful for? Submit your suggestions to:

newsletter@bayaresaa.org

Women in SAA

Out of the Fog asked Kristina N. a female member of the fellowship about efforts to increase the participation of women in the Bay Area SAA.

1. What is the status of women's outreach in the fellowship?

Currently the only project (that I know of) is the creation of the "Women's Contact List." This is a list of sober women across the bay area that have volunteered to assist newcomer women that call/text/email them. This list is organized by intergroup and will be given to meetings quarterly. The secretary will then hand out the lists to newcomer women. The goal of this project was to offer newcomer women fellowship, promote sponsorship, and let them know they are not alone. The lists will be distributed to groups starting in early 2018.

2. What unique issues/challenges do women face that impact their ability to participate fully in SAA?

I think the answer to this question varies from woman to woman. I can only speak for myself. There are internal struggles I have had to face. The age old question of "will I trigger them/will they trigger me" worried me a lot when I was new. But as I fellowshiped and grew friends with the men this dissipated. Honestly that is not a concern of mine now.

The next, more structural challenge to women is the lack of women's meetings. There are 20 to 30 women in the bay area SAA fellowship. But we struggle to form even one women's

meeting. One was formed about 2 years ago in San Francisco and quickly died. An LGBTQ and women's meeting in Berkeley started this year and still continues – although it is primarily carried by the gay men. A handful of women newcomers have asked me about women's meetings this year and sadly I have little I can offer them.

3. Is there anything that local groups can do to support the participation of women in SAA?

First of all, the solution is in the twelve steps, but I, personally, keep coming back for the fellowship. It is important to remember that we are all addicts in recovery and need each other to recover. We are brothers and sisters. That said, women need to be invited to fellowship. Bonfires, brunch, meditations -- by just inviting a women they feel more included. We all know the life of recovery is in the outer circle, so make women welcome in joining these activities.

Secondly, because of the lack of women in general, the lack of female sponsors is a huge problem. Without the steps, an addict is mostly a spectator in recovery, and it is then very difficult to tackle the steps on your own. Gay men make appropriate sponsors for women. Remember, the primary purpose is to help the addict who still suffers, and in that spirit I encourage all gay men to offer themselves as sponsors to women. Explain to the newcomer that, if she is comfortable, you or another gay man

can sponsor her. Make sure to give her options.

4. How were you welcomed in SAA, why did you stay?

I was welcomed to the Saturday 8:15 am meeting by a very kind gay man. After the meeting he welcomed me to fellowship at a coffee shop where we discussed my troubles and the program. He gave me a woman's number and that night I called her and asked her to be my sponsor. A few important things have happened along

"...so it is up to MOSTLY men to make the women feel like they belong. I was blessed by interactions with some of the great men of SAA throughout my recovery. In the end, the people in SAA were why I stayed..."—Kristina N.

the way. Early on I was the greeter at Answers in the Heart. My co-greeter was a straight man. This is the first time I had full conversations with a straight man in SAA. We talked a lot about program, and I greatly valued our conversations. Then there was the retreat. At my first retreat I talked about prostitution on a group level. SAA men, straight and gay alike, approached me with praise and compassion and I really felt like I belonged somewhere. I have now developed strong friendships beyond program with some gay members. I cherish these relationships.

Most of SAA is men – no way around it -- so it is up to MOSTLY men to make the women feel like they belong. I was blessed by interactions with some of the great men of SAA throughout my recovery. In the end, the people in SAA were why I stayed. We can all, men, women, and anyone else, be the people that encourage any newcomer to stay.

* - For more info on women in the fellowship contact:
women@bayareasaa.org

Submissions Needed!!!

Our recovery is bolstered by the words of other sex addicts sharing their stories of experience, strength, and hope. Share a part of your story?

Please submit your content or ideas to the Editor at:

newsletter@bayareasaa.org

The Step Corner

Every quarter we'll publish experiences, hope, and hints about completing one or more of the Steps. In this issue, we take a look at the Steps as a whole from 10,000 feet, providing an overarching view of how they relate to each other.

"...Taking the [Twelve] Steps...allows fundamental change to occur in our lives...Each Step presents a significant action...linked to the other steps, in a process that establishes our new life of recovery on spiritual principles..." – SAA Green Book, pp20-22

Whether you are actively working the Steps or not, it may be useful to step back and examine them as a whole system in a way that puts each individual Step in a broader context. One recovering sex addict with almost 20 years of sobriety looks at the 12 Steps as a continuum consisting of 4 Phases:

Phase1: The Stabilization Phase STEPS 1, 2, and 3

When we first come into the program, we walk into these rooms on shaky legs, disoriented, as if half-waking up from a bad dream, but still living the nightmare life of sexual addiction. The 1st three Steps help us begin to get grounded in a different reality than what we have

been living. They will set the stage for all those that follow.

In the 1st 3 Steps we begin by acknowledging our disease, defining it somewhat by establishing our 3 Circles, and most importantly, by *surrendering* to the idea that we were powerless without outside help. But we also *surrender* to the notion that there is help available to us – a Higher Power – and a solution to our disease if we *surrender* our faith, will, and actions to that Higher Power.

Phase2: The Cleaning House Phase STEPS 4, 5, 6, and 7

In these 4 Steps "...we begin the process of clearing away the debris on our insides to make room for our [Higher Power]...." During these Steps we begin to build our *honesty* and *humility* muscles, first with ourselves, by rejecting long held excuses and rationalizations for our behaviors and then by holding only ourselves as responsible for our character defects.

We then take our *honesty* and *humility* 'live' with our sponsor or other trusted person. And finally, we place our will and decision-making in our Higher Power's hands, humbly resolving to change and act in ways different than the past.

Phase3: The Amends Phase STEPS 8 and 9.

The power of the honesty and humility that we practiced in the previous Steps will be put to good use here as we bravely share the truths of our past lives with those we have harmed.

By making amends we state to all who need to hear, "This is who I was and who I am committed to no longer be."

Phase4: The Maintenance Phase STEPS 10, 11, and 12.

Having rejected that past life of deceit, of self-indulgence, of "compulsive behaviors that lead to pitiful, incomprehensible demoralization," we use these final Steps to nurture, grow and maintain our moral selves.

By continually checking in on how we are doing on our spiritual path (progress, not perfection), by maintaining through meditation and prayer consistent communication with our higher power, and by being of service to others rather than to ourselves, we strengthen and maintain our sobriety and our recovery.

Concepts in this piece adapted from, "The Circle of Life – Process of Sexual Recovery Workbook, KJ Nivin/Anonymous, 2009

SF Bay Area Intergroup of SAA - www.bayareasaa.org

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The SF Bay Area Intergroup of SAA (BAISAA) manages the business of SAA in the SF Bay Area. Each SAA group is encouraged to elect a representative to provide input to the Intergroup and relay relevant info back to their group.

Monthly Intergroup Meeting

The Bay Area Intergroup Meeting is held on the second Saturday of each month from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the Lutheran Church of the Cross located at 1744 University Ave., Berkeley, upstairs in room 210.

DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions contained in *Out of the Fog* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Bay Area SAA or the Int'l Service Org. [ISO]

