

What is Sexaholics Anonymous?

Sexaholics Anonymous (SA) is an unincorporated association of individuals and groups offering a Twelve Step recovery programme to people who are addicted to lust, sex, dependency relationships and various forms of self-destructive sexual thinking and behaviour.

SA is a relatively new Twelve Step fellowship. The first regular SA meeting was started in 1981 in the USA. In 1997 there are c.1200 SA groups in twelve countries around the world. SA came to the UK in 1991 and there are now sixteen groups throughout the country.

How does SA differ from other sex-related fellowships?

Sexaholics Anonymous is different to other sex-related fellowships because it has a definition of sobriety. In SA a person is sober today if they have not had sex with him/herself or a partner other than a spouse. In other S-fellowships members determine their own definition of sobriety. SA has no opinions on the benefits or physiological effects of sexual abstinence. In SA members stop the behaviour and then seek progressive victory over lust.

What kind of problems does SA address?

SA members come from all walks of life, with a wide variety of compulsive sexual behaviours - ranging from compulsive masturbation to prostitution and from pornography to dependent relationships. In some cases the behaviour is extreme. The common thread is an obsession with sex to the extent that normal life has become unmanageable. In effect, the sexaholic has lost control, no longer has the power of choice and is not free to stop their self-destructive behaviour.

SA does not claim to solve these problems, merely that members presenting these symptoms have been able to stop for open-ended periods of time by working the SA programme of recovery. Also, SA has no opinion as to whether people with these kind of problems are sexaholics or not.

How do people recover in SA?

SA recovery starts with stopping the particular sexual behaviour(s). After “getting sober” members follow a series of personal activities known as the Twelve Steps in order to recover. They are adapted from the original Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. These “Steps” involve: admitting there is a problem, seeking help, self-appraisal, confidential self-disclosure, making amends where harm has been done and working with other sexaholics who want to recover. Central to the programme is the idea of a “spiritual awakening” emphasising its practical value rather than its philosophical or metaphysical understanding.

There are no counsellors or therapists in SA, members meet at regular “meetings” where people share their own experience, strength and hope in overcoming their addiction. SA provides no vocational, legal, financial, psychiatric, medical or professional services.

What happens at an SA meeting?

Generally meetings last 1-2 hours and are held in public places such as a church or local community building. Members gather, there is usually some kind of reading from literature or a guest speaker may tell his/her story. After that members talk about how they relate to what has been read or said. People may also use the time to talk through some particular difficulty which may be troubling them. Tea & coffee is generally served before or after the meeting.

Is Sexaholics Anonymous a religious organisation?

No. SA has no religious affiliations. Although the recovery programme is “spiritual”, it is essentially practical. SA members include: Atheists, Agnostics, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims. In fact almost every denomination.

Do men and women attend meetings?

Yes. SA meetings are open to both men and women, married or single, gay or straight. Sometimes, in areas where SA is more developed, members have started “men's” and “women's” meetings.

Who funds SA?

Sexaholics Anonymous is entirely self-supporting from members' contributions. It is policy to turn down financial offers from external bodies or individuals.

Can people representing SA advise on external committees and boards relating to sexual addiction?

No. One SA Tradition states that “SA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SA name ought never be drawn into public controversy”. There is nothing to stop an individual SA member expressing opinions on external issues, but no one can speak for SA.

How does SA work with professionals?

SA has a tradition of co-operation rather than affiliation with the professional community. Sexaholics Anonymous welcomes the co-operation of those in government, the clergy, the helping professions and voluntary organisations. In turn SA is happy to co-operate with others interested in Sexaholics Anonymous by: providing information, speakers, literature and contact information about recovery through the SA fellowship. SA's non-sexaholic friends have been instrumental in helping SA to grow around the world.

How is anonymity preserved?

Personal anonymity is the safeguard of each individual SA member. First names are generally used at meetings.

Please turn over for contact details

