

WELCOME TO SCA

We acknowledge your courage in coming to this meeting. We are here especially for you as others have been here for us.

Sexual Compulsives Anonymous is a twelve-step fellowship inclusive of all sexual orientations, open to anyone with a desire to recover from sexual compulsion. We are not group therapy, but a spiritual program that provides a safe environment for working on problems of sexual addiction and sexual sobriety. Our program is one of suggestions – not of rules. Each member is invited to “take what you like and leave the rest.” This means that you are free to use any tools and suggestions from SCA that work best for you.

SCA is a spiritual program not affiliated with any religious organization. Reference is made in the steps and in meetings to God or a Higher Power. All individuals define this concept for themselves. Many people who speak of a Higher Power simply mean “some power greater than themselves.” For example, this power might be the collective experience of the fellowship or meetings. Those of us who came to the program with religious beliefs have found that the twelve steps do not interfere with those beliefs.

THE TWELVE STEPS

The Twelve Steps are the backbone of SCA. They outline a simple program of action that results in recovery from the agony of our sexual addiction. All other tools of recovery operate in support of “working the Steps.” A sponsor who is sexually sober and has experience working the Steps guides the newcomer through this program of change and growth.

The Steps begin with the admission that we have lost control of our sexual behaviors and the acknowledgment that we cannot stop our addictive behaviors without help from a power greater than ourselves (Step 1). We come to believe that a Higher Power can restore us to sanity, and make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God (Steps 2 & 3).

We then embark on an effort to face and let go of the parts of ourselves that had been blocking us from God (as we understand God), from ourselves, and from other human beings. We examine the defects in our character that have caused pain to ourselves and others and ultimately drove us to act out with compulsive sex (Steps 4 & 5).

With the support of our sponsors and others recovering from sexual compulsion, we demonstrate our willingness to change by taking new, “sober” actions and by asking our Higher Power to remove the defects of character that continue to impede our growth (Steps 6 & 7).

We make a list of people our behaviors have harmed and then make amends and restitution wherever possible (Steps 8 & 9).

We continue to grow by examining our behavior, admitting our mistakes, making amends, and using prayer and meditation to receive guidance and courage from the God of our understanding (Steps 10 & 11). As a result, we undergo a profound transformation in our responses to the world, and find we have tapped a powerful resource that truly works for our good. We continue this process of spiritual awakening by helping newcomers to work the Steps and thereby achieve sexual sobriety (Step 12).

MEETINGS

Meetings are a safe place to express our feelings and listen to the experience of others. We keep meetings safe by practicing anonymity. We identify ourselves by first name only and we do not reveal outside the meetings those whom we've seen or what we've heard at meetings. Most meetings ask that we do not use graphic sexual language while sharing and that we do not reveal the names and locations of places where people frequently have compulsive sex.

Speaking at meetings, sometimes called "sharing," can be an opportunity for you to talk about what is going on in your life or about your compulsive behavior. You're not required to speak at any SCA meeting. Furthermore, you may pass if asked to participate in any reading aloud that may occur at a meeting. At some meetings "sharing" is timed. This means that a meeting member is appointed to let the person who is talking know when to begin to wrap up their comments. Meetings with a "qualification" or "long share" are ones where an individual leads off the sharing by relating the experiences which qualify him or her to be a member, along with the strength and hope gained in recovery.

The way meetings are conducted varies from meeting to meeting. However, each is led by an individual who explains the meeting format. A voluntary donation to offset expenses is usually asked for by a treasurer at a time for announcements. SCA literature is usually available from the meeting's literature person.

Many meetings also have a brief social break after announcements. Most of us have felt anxious or uncomfortable from time to time during these social breaks. We have found that in time these feelings pass. Isolation is a characteristic of our disease. We encourage you to introduce yourself to others at meetings if possible. You may also ask for and exchange phone numbers. After meetings people often get together for "fellowship," which gives members a chance to socialize over coffee or dinner in a safe environment.

SEXUAL RECOVERY PLAN

SCA does not provide individuals with a definition of sexual sobriety. Sobriety is generally understood as adherence to a sexual recovery plan which the individual member wrote for himself or herself. This plan is usually developed in consultation with another member of SCA, often one's sponsor. "Counting of days" and announcements of SCA anniversaries in meetings usually refers to the amount of time one has remained on a plan.

SPONSORS

Interim sponsors are SCA members who have experience in recovery in SCA and who are willing to work with you as a temporary sponsor. Sponsorship is two people with the same problem helping each other to work the program. Some meetings have interim sponsor coordinators who can help you to find a temporary sponsor. Another way of obtaining a sponsor is to personally ask a member of SCA to be your sponsor.

CONFERENCES AND RETREATS

Conferences are gatherings that often last for one or more days and may include meetings, workshops and social events. Some cities also hold retreats that focus on the 12 Steps. Announcements about conferences and retreats are made in meetings.

LITERATURE

The following literature, suggested for the newcomer, is available at most meetings. These items are either free or can be purchased at cost. For information on meetings and literature, please visit SCA's International website, <http://sca-recovery.org>.

A current meeting schedule. This is revised as needed. Please read the meeting list and note meetings that are designated as especially for beginners. Beginners, however, are welcome to attend any SCA meeting, since the only requirement for SCA membership is a desire to stop having compulsive sex.

Q&A (Questions & Answers). This is a guide for newcomers to SCA and is included at the end of this "Welcome to SCA" pamphlet.

The Four-Fold. This contains the SCA statement of purpose, a list of 14 characteristics which most of us seem to have in common, the 12 Suggested Steps and Traditions (adapted with permission from Alcoholics Anonymous, which is not affiliated with SCA), a list of tools for recovery, twenty questions about sexually compulsive behavior and a closing statement that may be used at meetings. It is included in this package.

Sexual Compulsives Anonymous: A Program of Recovery. This is our basic text, and has a more detailed description of the program of SCA.

The Tool of Writing. We work on many of the Twelve Steps through writing and find that it provides a way to measure our progress. We use a journal to express our thoughts and feelings so that we can better understand ourselves, our values, and our motives. We frequently write out a gratitude list as a way to recognize all the good things that we have in our lives.

The SCanner. Our newsletter, though not official conference-approved literature, has information of interest to members of the Fellowship. You can order "The Best of the SCanner" in print. The online version of the SCanner is at <http://SCannerOnline.org>.

Additional literature may be available at meetings for purchase at cost. We also make use of AA's and other twelve step programs' conference-approved literature, as well as other appropriate materials. Many of these may be purchased in the recovery sections of local bookstores or online.

All SCA members are invited to participate in SCA activities. We extend to you a warm welcome as you begin this new path.

Contact Information:

Meetings and Literature Information

SCA International Service Organization
P.O. Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10011

SCA Information Line

1-800-977-HEAL (U.S. & Canada)
+1-212-606-3778 (international)

Web address: <http://www.sca-recovery.org>

The following pages list some core elements of the SCA Program from the *Four-Fold*..

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

SEXUAL COMPULSIVES ANONYMOUS is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other, that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from sexual compulsion. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop having compulsive sex. There are no dues or fees for SCA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. SCA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober and to help others to achieve sexual sobriety. Members are encouraged to develop their own sexual recovery plan, and to define sexual sobriety for themselves. We are not here to repress our God-given sexuality, but to learn how to express it in ways that will not make unreasonable demands on our time and energy, place us in legal jeopardy, or endanger our mental, physical or spiritual health.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

1. Do you frequently experience remorse, depression, or guilt about your sexual activity?
2. Do you feel your sexual drive and activity are getting out of control? Have you repeatedly tried to stop or reduce certain sexual behaviors but inevitably found that you could not?
3. Are you unable to resist sexual advances or turn down sexual propositions when offered?
4. Do you use sex to escape from uncomfortable feelings such as anxiety, fear, anger, resentment, guilt, etc., which seem to disappear when the sexual obsession starts?
5. Do you spend excessive time obsessing about sex or engaged in sexual activity?
6. Have you neglected your family, friends, spouse, or relationship because of the time you spend on sexual activity?
7. Do your sexual pursuits interfere with your work or professional development?
8. Is your sexual life secretive, a source of shame, and not in keeping with your values? Do you lie to others to cover up your sexual activity?
9. Are you afraid of sex? Do you avoid romantic and sexual relationships with others and restrict your sexual activity to fantasy, masturbation, and solitary or anonymous online activity?
10. Are you increasingly unable to perform sexually without other stimuli such as pornography, videos, “poppers,” drugs/alcohol, “toys,” etc.?
11. Do you have to increasingly resort to abusive, humiliating, or painful sexual fantasies or behaviors to get sexually aroused?
12. Has your sexual activity prevented you from developing a close, loving relationship with a partner? Or have you developed a pattern of intense romantic or sexual relationships that never seem to last once the excitement wears off?
13. Do you only have anonymous sex or one-night stands? Do you usually want to get away from your sex partner after the encounter?
14. Do you have sex with people with whom you normally would not associate?
15. Do you frequent apps, websites, clubs, bars, adult bookstores, restrooms, parks, and other public places searching for sex partners?
16. Have you ever been arrested or placed yourself in legal jeopardy for your sexual activity?
17. Have you ever risked your physical health with exposure to sexually transmitted diseases by engaging in “unsafe” sexual activity?
18. Has the money you spent on pornography, videos, web-camming, apps, phone sex, or hustlers/prostitutes strained your financial resources?
19. Have people you trust expressed concern about your sexual activity?
20. Does life seem meaningless and hopeless without a romantic or sexual relationship?

THESE ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS MOST OF US SEEM TO HAVE IN COMMON

1. As adolescents, we used fantasy and compulsive masturbation to avoid feelings, and continued this tendency into our adult lives with compulsive sex.
2. Compulsive sex became a drug, which we used to escape from feelings such as anxiety, loneliness, anger and self-hatred, as well as joy.
3. We tended to become immobilized by romantic obsessions. We became addicted to the search for sex and love; as a result, we neglected our lives.
4. We sought oblivion in fantasy and masturbation, and lost ourselves in compulsive sex. Sex became a reward, punishment, distraction and time-killer.
5. Because of our low self-esteem, we used sex to feel validated and complete.
6. We tried to bring intensity and excitement into our lives through sex, but felt ourselves growing steadily emptier.
7. Sex was compartmentalized instead of integrated into our lives as a healthy element.
8. We became addicted to people, and were unable to distinguish among sex, love and affection.
9. We searched for some “magical” quality in others to make us feel complete. Other people were idealized and endowed with a powerful symbolism, which often disappeared after we had sex with them.
10. We were drawn to people who were not available to us, or who would reject or abuse us.
11. We were sexually anorexic: in despair about our lack of physical and emotional intimacy with ourselves and others, yet unaware of how much we feared and avoided it.
12. We feared relationships, but continually searched for them. In a relationship, we feared abandonment and rejection, but out of one, we felt empty and incomplete.
13. While constantly seeking intimacy with another person, we found that the desperate quality of our need made true intimacy with anyone impossible, and we often developed unhealthy dependency relationships that eventually became unbearable.
14. Even when we got the love of another person, it never seemed enough, and we were unable to stop lusting after others.
15. Trying to conceal our dependency demands, we grew more isolated from ourselves, from God and from the very people we longed to be close to.

THE TOOLS THAT HELP US GET BETTER

Meetings are where we share our experience, strength and hope with each other to better understand our common problem and work together towards the solution.

The Telephone is our meeting between meetings. By making contact with others, we begin to break out of the isolation that is so strongly a part of the disease.

Sponsorship is two people with the same problem helping each other to work the program. It can provide a framework for a Sexual Recovery Plan and for doing the Twelve Steps, and can bring emotional support at difficult times.

Literature is our portable program. We use SCA's Conference-approved literature, as well as that of AA and other Twelve Step programs. We may also make use of other appropriate materials.

The Twelve Steps are a suggested program of recovery based on the Twelve Steps of AA.

Prayer and Meditation are a means of establishing conscious contact with a Power greater than ourselves.

A Sexual Recovery Plan is a predetermined way of expressing our sexuality consistent with our values, so that even when confused, we will have a written guideline to help us.

Abstention (partial or total) We get support in SCA by abstaining from people, places, or things that we consider harmful.

Socializing is a way of breaking down our isolation and getting to know other people in a non-sexual context: at fellowship after meetings, in supportive organizations and groups, and the community at large.

Dating is a way of changing the instant gratification habit and getting to know more about ourselves and another person before committing ourselves to any sexual decisions.

The Slogans are simple statements that can be used in crisis situations so that we have some basic guidelines.

Service is a way of helping ourselves by helping others.

Writing provides a way to become honest with ourselves and our Higher Power. By writing in journals, gratitude lists, emails and letters, we can measure our progress, values, motives, and 12 Step work.

THE TWELVE SUGGESTED STEPS OF SCA¹

1. We admitted we were powerless over sexual compulsion — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to sexually compulsive people and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

¹ The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt does not mean that Alcoholics Anonymous is in any way affiliated with this program. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism. The use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in connection with other programs which are patterned after AA, but address other problems, does not imply otherwise.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF SCA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SCA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority — a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SCA membership is a desire to stop having compulsive sex.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or SCA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the sexual compulsive who still suffers.
6. An SCA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the SCA name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SCA group ought to be fully self- supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sexual Compulsives Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SCA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. SCA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SCA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, television and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

CLOSING STATEMENT

The opinions expressed here today are strictly those of the individuals who gave them. The things you have heard here are given and spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. If you try to absorb what you have heard, you are bound to gain a better understanding of the way to handle your problems.

In the spirit of recovery from sexual compulsion, we suggest that sex between members not be treated lightly. Sex between people new to the fellowship and other members is discouraged. Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but only love, understanding and companionship.

SERENITY PRAYER

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

Q&A – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR NEWCOMERS

1. Q: What is SCA?

A: Sexual Compulsives Anonymous is a spiritual program of recovery from the problem of sexual compulsion or addiction based upon the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Members of the SCA program work toward achieving sexual sobriety and recovery by attending SCA meetings, reading literature about sexual compulsion and recovery, talking to other SCA members, writing, prayer, and working the Steps, among other actions suggested by the program.

2. Q: If SCA is a spiritual program, do I have to belong to a church or believe in God to be in SCA?

A: SCA's recovery program is spiritual rather than religious, and we believe there's a difference. SCA does not affiliate with any religious denomination. No member of SCA is required to be a member of *any* religion, to believe in God, or not to believe in God. Members have come into the program as atheists, agnostics, and practicing members of many denominations. Some members find that their beliefs change as they work the program; others continue to hold fast to their beliefs. SCA sets no requirements for such things. We only recommend that there be no discussion of specific religious beliefs at meetings.

3. Q: How do I handle this “Higher Power” business if I’m an atheist or agnostic?

A: In SCA, we each define for ourselves what the concept of a “Higher Power” means to us. Many of us use our SCA group as a Higher Power. Some people discover that they do have a spiritual connection through working the program. Whatever works is appropriate. There may be other members with shared beliefs who can provide some guidance.

4. Q: If I have compulsive and addictive sexual problems, how do I know I’ll be safe in a room full of sex addicts?

A: While members are encouraged to help newcomers feel safe as they begin to deal with their sexual compulsion, there is no guarantee that someone in the program won't make sexual overtures. By and large, each of us is here for our recovery, not to find addictive sexual encounters. We're here to get a handle on responsible sexuality, not to make our sexuality even more compulsive and addictive. If something like that does happen, please feel free to say “No.”

5. Q: When I see a person to whom I’m attracted - and this could happen at a meeting - I’m afraid I’ll forget where I am and come on strong. Any advice on that?

A: We're all human. We just happen to be human and sexually compulsive as well. If this happens at a meeting, we encourage sharing our feelings with trusted members or a sponsor. Many members find that sharing it with their groups, without identifying the person involved, is also helpful.

6. Q: Are meetings a place to meet people?

A: Yes, meetings are places to meet supportive people who share their problems and desire to stop compulsive sexual behavior. Meetings are not for connecting with partners to “act out” our sexual compulsion. Such activity is discouraged. Occasionally it does occur, but most people come to meetings to deal with their compulsion, not fuel it. Many sexual compulsives are attractive and sexually stimulating people. It is natural to be turned on sexually or “triggered” by such people. We have learned that these feelings tend to lose their power over us when shared openly, honestly, and appropriately with others.

7. Q: What is compulsive sex?

A: Compulsive sex takes many forms. It is sexual behavior that we feel is out of control. Part of the problem is our delusion that we have power over such behavior. It might be that we can't stop checking out the apps, internet porn, webcams, and hookup sites or phone sex lines. Perhaps we can't avoid parks, restrooms, bathhouses, bookstores, or sex parties, no matter how hard we try. We may spend rent and food money on prostitutes, pornography, and sex toys. Maybe we can't keep our eyes and our attention off certain body parts of others. Excessive, repeated, or painful masturbation may be a problem for us. We may end up having sex with just about anyone, no matter how dangerous, unattractive, abusive, or unhealthy, just because we feel we need to have sex. We feel we can't stop ourselves. Sexual compulsion could be an inability to stop saying things that have a sexual connotation, make suggestions and innuendos to others, or persistently misuse sexual humor. It may take a variety of other forms as well. It may even be an obsession with avoiding anything sexual. The variations are endless.

8. Q: How do I know SCA is for me?

A: Attending meetings can help determine if SCA is a good fit for us. We suggest attending six different meetings before deciding if SCA is the right place to pursue recovery. We recommend looking over the list of *The Characteristics That Most of us Seem to Have in Common* and the self-test *Twenty Questions*. If there is identification with a number of those characteristics or traits, then working the SCA program may help. It may feel uncomfortable with a particular group even after a few meetings. If so, and if there are others in the area, try other meetings or even meetings of other 12-Step sexual recovery fellowships. If there is a desire to stop having compulsive sex, a program that works will surface.

9. Q: What is a Sexual Recovery Plan, and do I have to stick to a list of SCA “rules” in making one up?

A: A Sexual Recovery Plan is a *personal* listing of sexually-related behaviors that we believe to be unhealthy, self-destructive, dangerous, obsessive, degrading, or simply unwise. This list may include things that fuel our addiction or trigger us and make us want to act out our compulsion. It is a list of our bottom-line compulsive behaviors that we wish to abstain from one day at a time. These are the things we are ready and willing to give up and which we attempt to turn over to our Higher Power.

On the other side, we balance the list by those things we want to reward ourselves with and add to our lives in recovery. These rewards are an essential aspect of the plan. They may consist of personal, professional, and spiritual goals that we sacrificed through acting out our compulsive patterns. They may be as specific or as general as desired. Many members, especially newcomers, find this side of the recovery plan incredibly difficult because they are accustomed to thinking of themselves as unworthy and undeserving of rewards, but the rewards are necessary. They are the things that make staying in recovery worthwhile.

The plan may be unwritten or written. However, the program suggests that we prepare a written Sexual Recovery Plan. A written plan is more precise, more concrete, easier to remember, and helps us measure our sobriety. There are no rules to follow in developing a plan. The best question to ask is, “What works best for me?” Our SCA: A Program of Recovery book has some examples of plans. A group or sponsor may have some suggestions. It's up to each of us to set our boundaries of responsible sexuality that are comfortable for us. If the first plan doesn't work, there's nothing wrong with changing it. We expect revisions as members grow in recovery.

10. Q: What is a “slip?”

A: In the SCA Program, a “slip” is a violation of one’s Sexual Recovery Plan: that is, engaging in an act defined as an unhealthy, compulsive problem, a behavior no longer serving a healthier life. Engaging in such activity is a slip.

11. Q: What does “counting days” mean?

A: It simply means keeping track of the time we’ve been abstinent from our bottom-line behaviors and being sexually sober according to *our* Sexual Recovery Plan. Some members consider their time very important and are proud of even a relatively short time in sobriety. Being abstinent for even a single day may seem like a miracle at first. Others may have difficulty in avoiding acting out, and counting days might be too intimidating. Counting days is only a tool some people find useful in staying sober. If it works, use it. If not, concentrate more on the rewards of recovery on the other side of the plan. We don’t count days as a way to beat ourselves up for acting out.

12. Q: Can I go to meetings even though I may still be acting out?

A: Acting out is probably the best reason to continue going to meetings. In the meetings, find a sponsor or another trusted member. Talk with other members about acting out and the feelings behind it, both before and after the slip. The next time the desire to act out arises, call someone in the program right away and share these feelings, rather than waiting for a meeting. Talking about our problem with loving, supportive people is one of the most valuable things we can do for ourselves in the program. Acknowledging the shame and reducing its impact interrupts the addictive cycle and keeps us on the road of recovery.

13. Q: How many meetings do I have to attend?

A: As with everything else in SCA, the number of meetings to attend is a personal choice. We do not require that anyone attend a specific number of meetings. Eventually, we learn that the SCA program works not for those who *need* it, but for those who *want* it. We do not pressure members to feel they have to go to meetings. They go because they know it is one of the best ways to deal with sexual compulsion. Many members feel that not wanting to go to a meeting is the best reason to go, and they often share that they feel better because they resisted the temptation not to go. Going to meetings is an essential tool in working the program and taking care of ourselves. It’s as simple as the ending statement at most meetings: “Keep coming back; it works when you work it!”

14. Q: Must I speak during sharing or at any other time during a meeting?

A: There are no requirements to speak or to participate in any SCA meeting. We suggest that members speak only during the time allotted for general sharing; that there be no crosstalk or criticism of one another, and that they raise their hands and wait to be recognized by the meeting leader. We ask that everyone stick to SCA issues since that’s why we’re here. Most SCA members find that sharing at meetings on SCA-related problems or issues helps them in recovery. Some meeting formats suggest that the appropriate time to get questions answered is after the meeting. Directing questions to individuals during the sharing portion of the meeting tends to encourage crosstalk.

15. Q: Are newcomers identified at meetings?

A: At some point in most meetings, we invite newcomers to state their first names. We do this not to embarrass newcomers but to allow other longer-term members to welcome them, introduce themselves, answer questions, and be supportive. SCA members understand that newcomers are often uncertain of themselves at their first meeting. They may not even feel comfortable with giving their names. We've heard things like, "I don't want to tell my name, and I don't even know why I'm here." We have no problem with that.

16. Q: What am I required to do at a meeting?

A: Nothing at all. If things get uncomfortable, anyone is free to leave at any time. We hope that moving through any discomfort is possible, but if not, we understand. We've all been there. The hardest part is getting through the door the first time. Most of us feel very much at home after that.

17. Q: In addition to going to meetings, what else can I do to help myself?

A: If the meeting has a phone list, pick one up and take it home. Another option is to ask other SCA members for their phone numbers. As suggested in *The Tools That Help Us Get Better*, the telephone is our meeting away from meetings. It may be challenging to make those first few calls, but it helps others when we make them. Also, get a Sponsor as soon as possible. We may ask a member with whom we identify. If that person doesn't feel comfortable with it, ask another. It needn't be a permanent arrangement. It helps to talk openly with someone who has similar problems and understands. We don't, however, expect any sponsor to "fix" us. Recovery is the responsibility of each individual. Being there to listen and give support is all another person can do. Pick up SCA literature available at the meetings. Most of our literature is also available in e-book form, and some may be on our website. Program literature will always be there, even when we can't contact someone on the phone or attend a meeting. We prepare a Sexual Recovery Plan, even a basic one at first, to get us started on a commitment to recovery. Setting some responsible boundaries is a vital first step.

18. Q: I'm scared I'll act out again. What should I do?

A: When the urges start, make a call, get to a meeting, read literature, do something nurturing, or do all of the above. We've all had these problems, and we know from experience - painful experience at times - that it's more difficult to handle them alone. It's OK to want help. Help and support are available: we have only to ask. When we learn to use that support, as uncomfortable as it may be and as resistant as we may be at first, we find the strength to start on the road of recovery.

19. Q: Will other members judge me if I have a slip?

A: This program is not about judging people or putting them down: it's about support. We feel it is vital to share the slip, no matter how horrendous, with someone else as soon as possible - on the phone, privately, or at a meeting. If we try to handle it alone, the shame and guilt, and sense of worthlessness may build up quickly, possibly leading to another slip. Don't forget: we've all been there. We're not alone.

20. Q: I'm ashamed of myself and of the things I'm doing or have done in acting out. I'm afraid if I talk about all this stuff to members, I'll be laughed at or kicked out. Will I?

A: No! We all know that talking about our troubles and stories lifts the shame and guilt and helps us be honest with ourselves. We try to break the cycle of shame, low self-esteem, and acting out to heal from our compulsive behaviors. The support and love of our groups is a significant and effective way to break it.

21. Q: Can I speak frankly about sexual experiences at meetings?

A: Yes, members are encouraged to be open and honest in sharing their sexual experiences. Rigorous honesty is an integral part of the program. We always remember that we are in a room full of other people trying to recover from *their* sexual compulsion. Therefore, talking about specific acting-out places is highly discouraged. Learning about new acting-out locations can be very destructive to our recovery. General types of acting out places may be mentioned (bars, the baths, the park, the apps, online bookstores, sex clubs, etc.) without identifying the specific name or location. Graphic descriptions of our acting-out behavior can trigger some members and be destructive to another's recovery. Acting out behaviors can be discussed in a general way without using specific, graphic, or sensational language. One may speak of voyeurism, fetishism, masturbation, anonymous sexual experiences, porn use, phone sex, etc., without explicitly describing the act. The critical thing is to talk about what we felt when we acted out, get our shame out in the open, and get rid of it. Sometimes there's a fine line about how detailed our sharing can be. Members may provide some helpful feedback after a meeting if the sharing has been too explicit.

22. Q: What is a "Qualification" (a pitch, story, long-share)?

A: When we do a "qualification" (pitch, story, or long-share), we may speak for 15 or 20 minutes regarding our experience, strength, and hope on our personal history of sexual compulsion. We might explain how we came to SCA and talk about how our recovery is going and what it means to us.

23. Q: Does my sexual orientation or gender identity make any difference in SCA?

A: Although a group of gay men founded SCA, it is a recovery program for all sexual orientations and gender identities. Our Third Tradition states, "The only requirement for SCA membership is a desire to stop having compulsive sex."

24. Q: I'm HIV positive. Will that make any difference with the members?

A: No. Some of our members are HIV positive or have other sexually transmitted infections, and they find the same support and love as any other member.

25. Q: How do I know others won't blab my name or spread my story around the group?

A: Confidentiality is of utmost importance in our program, as with all 12-Step programs. Each of us has a reason to be in a meeting; each of us would suffer if we failed to maintain confidentiality. Gossip and judgment of others are very damaging to both individual and collective recovery and are actively discouraged.

26. Q: I hurt inside, and sometimes I hurt so much I can't help breaking down. Will I be judged for this?

A: Expressing our hurt and pain is an integral part of recovery, and many of our members experience it in varying degrees. Fellow members support those who can share their tears and anguish with others.

27. Q: Do I have to give up sex entirely?

A: SCA is a sex-positive program of recovery. We are not here to repress our God-given sexuality but to learn how to express it in ways that will not make unreasonable demands on our time and energy, place us in legal jeopardy, or endanger our mental, physical or spiritual health. Some members use SCA's *Tool of Abstinence (partial or total)* for some time in their recovery but abstinence is a tool and not our goal.

28. Q: Do I have to stop masturbation?

A: In general, no. If masturbation fuels more serious acting out behaviors or becomes obsessive to the point where it interferes with our health, we may wish to abstain for a while. Others may view masturbation as a means of harm reduction. Masturbation may be a healthy outlet while dealing with more severe aspects of sexual compulsion. It's a subject that can be brought up at meetings and discussed openly to get input from other members.

29. Q: I hear the word “sobriety” used in the program. What does it mean?

A: We use the term “sobriety” to describe adherence to our Sexual Recovery Plan. Members are encouraged to develop their Sexual Recovery Plan and to define sexual sobriety for themselves. A Sexual Recovery Plan is a written plan, shared with our Higher Power and another member of the SCA program, preferably a sponsor, and is measurable one day at a time.

30. Q: If SCA members define their sobriety and boundaries, couldn't that end up being self-deceiving?

A: Yes, it could. But we've found that usually, it doesn't. As sexual compulsives, each of us has behaviors that we can no longer practice *and* remain healthy and responsible. These vary considerably from member to member. There may be, and usually are, other behaviors that we'd like to be free from eventually, but which we allow ourselves for now since they aren't so damaging to us and may act as a safety valve. At the same time, we work on our more serious problems. What is dangerous for one person could very well be harmless for others. If we allow ourselves behaviors that really are bottom-line, we'll soon realize that for ourselves. Rigorous honesty is an integral part of the program. Through sharing honestly with others, we learn to recognize if what we're doing is self-deceiving.

31. Q: Will I get cured of my sexual compulsion by participating in SCA?

A: Most of us accept as reality that we may always have the urge to be sexually compulsive: but it gets easier not to follow through on the urges. We may never be “cured,” but we're not discouraged by that. Through participation in and working the program, we reach a point where we can express our sexuality in healthy and responsible ways. We've found it does work - when we work it.

32. Q: How long do I need to work the program?

A: In SCA, we learn we can work on our recovery more effectively when we focus on today, rather than on regrets about the past or worries for the future. We work our program one day at a time, knowing that just as our compulsion has no time limit, there is no limit to the growth we can attain.

33. Q: Is there a time limit for me to get through all the Twelve Steps?

A: Members work the program in their own way and at their own pace. A sponsor can guide this process. There are many ways to work the Steps. The point is to do them in such a way that they produce some benefit. There is no schedule and no time limit involved.

34. Q: I have to show the Judge that I've been going to meetings. What's the best way to do this?

A: Many courts provide their forms. If not, some groups have forms available. The meeting Secretary or other group officer will be happy to sign these forms at each meeting. Please check with the local SCA Intergroup for more information.

35. Q: How long are the meetings?

A: Most SCA meetings last for an hour to an hour and a half. There is usually time, either before or after meetings, where members may talk informally. We call this fellowship. As part of their format, many meetings announce fellowship at a nearby restaurant where members may discuss issues in an informal and relaxed setting or they just socialize.

36. Q: Are there different kinds of meetings?

A: Each meeting varies a little in its format. Many have speakers (qualifications or long shares), and most have a period set aside for individual sharing. Some devote some time at each meeting or once a month to studying a Step or a Tradition. Some meetings are open to all, and others are closed - that is, limited only to those who identify as SCA members or think they might have a problem with sexual compulsion. A few meetings specialize in recovery topics. It all depends on the group and the group conscience of the members.

37. Q: How much does SCA cost? Do I have to contribute?

A: There are no dues or fees for SCA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. Each group relies on donations to pay its rent and other expenses, but no one is excluded or turned away because of their inability to contribute.

38. Q: Is literature available about my problem?

A: Meetings generally have SCA literature available, either free or at cost. Our website provides some of it free of charge. Other SCA literature is available in e-book or print format at a nominal cost.

39. Q: I'm a long way from the nearest SCA meeting, so it's hard for me to get to one. Any suggestions?

A: SCA has both phone and online meetings. Some of our meetings may take place using videoconferencing platforms. These meetings are generally accessible for anyone with a phone or internet service. Please check <https://sca-recovery.org> for more meeting information. Another alternative is to start a new SCA group. SCA can supply formats and other meeting information to help out. It only takes two people to have a meeting. When one's life or sanity is at stake, meetings can make all the difference in the world. There is a slogan, *Meeting Makers Make It*.

40. Q: Who is in charge of the meeting? Of SCA?

A: SCA is governed by the Twelve Traditions, as adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. The Second Tradition of SCA states: "For our group purpose there is but one authority - a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." Each group elects volunteers to serve for a specific period. Someone usually volunteers or is asked by the Secretary to facilitate the meeting. Everything affecting a group is put to the group conscience (i.e., voted on) during a meeting or at a business meeting after the regular meeting. Intergroups are service boards formed by meetings in a particular area to address common issues. In 1990, the meetings and intergroups approved the formation of the SCA International Service Organization (ISO) to work on world-wide projects such as formulating Conference-approved literature, SCA general policy, and related matters.