

CONFERENCE APPROVED SUGGESTED S-ATEEN MEETING READINGS

THE S-ATEEN WELCOME

We welcome you to the _____ S-Ateen Group and hope that in this fellowship you will find the help and friendship that we have been privileged to enjoy. We would like you to feel that we understand as perhaps few can. We too were lonely and frustrated; but here we have found that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened. In S-Ateen we discover that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether or not the sexaholic or other family members are in recovery.

S-Ateen Groups consist of teenage relatives and friends of sexaholics who realize that by banding together they can better solve their common problems. We urge you to try our program. Without spiritual help, living with, or having lived with, a sexaholic is too much for most of us. So much depends on our own attitudes. As we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to rule our thoughts and our lives. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to peace in our lives. Rarely have we seen a young person who was not greatly benefited by working the S-Ateen program.

The Twelve Steps of S-Ateen, which we try to follow, are not easy. At first we may think that some of them are unnecessary, but when we try, one day at a time, to apply them to our lives along with the tools of the S-Ateen program, the benefits can be limitless. We will come to know God's gift of serenity.

S-ATEEN PREAMBLE TO THE TWELVE STEPS

S-Ateen is a fellowship of young people who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other so that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of sexaholism in a relative or friend.

There are no dues or fees for S-Ateen membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. We do not discuss religion in our meetings or become involved as a group with any outside organization. Our primary purpose is to recover from the effects upon us of another person's sexaholism and to help families and friends of sexaholics.

We believe sexaholism is a family disease because it affects all the members emotionally, spiritually, and sometimes physically. We cannot change or control our parents, family members, or friends. We can detach from their problems while continuing to love them and ourselves. By applying the Twelve Steps to ourselves, we begin to grow mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

S-ATEEN TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over sexaholism—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 Him*.
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 Him 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 Him*, praying only for knowledge of His 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 others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

(The Twelve Steps are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that AA has approved the contents of this work, nor that AA agrees with the views expressed therein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only. Use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs which are patterned after AA but which address other problems does not imply otherwise.)

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous: 1. We admitted we were powerless of alcohol—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 Him*. 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 Him 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 whenever 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 Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Step, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

S-ATEEN TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The teenage relatives of sexaholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an S-Ateen Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of sexaholism in a relative or friend.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting S-Ateen groups or S-Anon or SA as a whole.
5. Each S-Ateen group has but one purpose: to help other young people who have been affected by the sexaholism of a family member or friend. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of S-Ateen, by encouraging and understanding the members of our family, and by welcoming and giving comfort to the families and friends of sexaholics.
6. S-Ateens, being part of S-Anon Family Groups, ought never endorse, finance, or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Sexaholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. S-Ateen Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The S-Ateen Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our 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, TV, films, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all S-Ateen, S-Anon, and SA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

(The Twelve Traditions reprinted and adapted with permission of Al-Anon World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Traditions does not imply that Al-Anon is affiliated with this program. Al-Anon is a program of recovery from the effects of alcoholism. Use of this material in conjunction with programs which are patterned after Al-Anon, but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise.)

THE S-ATEEN PROBLEM

S-Ateen members have much in common with the friends and relatives of other addicted people. Most of us lived with or are living in families with secrets and we have believed that it was our responsibility to keep those secrets, no matter how destructive. We were not taught to think about our own needs and take positive action to meet them. We chose friends who could not or would not love and support us in a healthy way. We lived life from the standpoint of victims and perceived any personal criticism as a threat. For most of us, anger, fear, loneliness, and depression were nearly constant. We acquired some unhealthy beliefs about ourselves very early in our lives—that we were not worthwhile and lovable, that we were able to control other people's behavior, and that sex was the most important sign of love, affection, and self-worth.

We may have also felt the shame of thinking we were responsible for the sexaholic behavior of a parent, family member, or friend. Many of us felt responsible for the happiness and safety of our parents or our siblings as well. Our self-esteem dropped to low levels, and we doubted our worth, our emotions, and at times even our sanity. We have felt betrayed by those we loved the most. Some of us were sexually abused or knew that other family members were being abused. Others witnessed sexual behavior or participated in sexual behavior that made us ashamed of ourselves. Sometimes we were placed in physical danger. In some cases a parent or other family member shared inappropriate information with us in ways that made us feel uncomfortable. Many of us were ashamed of what was happening in the family, but we often did not ask for help, did not know where to find help, or were not believed if we did share about the problem.

Some of us, knowing we could not leave the situation, minimized the importance of the sexaholic behavior or denied it until we felt emotionally numb. Others kept the family secrets because we feared retaliation, hurting other family members, or causing a crisis by talking about the problem. Many of us focused on the behavior of the sexaholic or other family members to the point of obsession and tried every known method to control or escape from their behavior. Some of us misused drugs, alcohol, or food, and others kept so busy that we did not have time to feel our emotions. We often neglected our health, jobs, schoolwork, and our friendships. No matter how we tried to struggle against it, deny it, or minimize its effects, the failure of our efforts to cope with sexaholism brought us to the point of despair. This is what we mean when we say in the First Step, "our lives had become unmanageable."

KEYS TO S-ATEEN RECOVERY

Over time, S-Ateen members learn to accept a number of new ideas:

- Sexaholism is a disease very similar to alcoholism. At first, many of us could not accept this idea. For S-Ateen members, it means we see sexaholics as sick people, not bad people. They are powerless over lust.
- The actions of the sexaholic are not a result of something we did or did not do, and we do not have the power to control their behavior.
- The attempts of the non-sexaholic parent to control or ignore sexual addiction led to a decline in their emotional health and may have enabled the sexaholic to continue to practice his or her disease. The actions and attitudes of each parent concerning the sexaholism in the home affected every family member, including us.
- Our attempts to control sexual addiction and keep the family secrets led to a decline in our emotional health.
- When we first come to S-Ateen, we, too, may be spiritually and emotionally ill.
- Growing up in a sexaholic home will influence many of our life choices, including our choice of a partner, unless we identify and address our own unhealthy beliefs and behaviors that we have learned through living with the family disease of sexaholism.

As we work toward full acceptance of these ideas, we begin to see our problems in a new light, and the awareness dawns that we do have choices concerning our own actions. This is the beginning of our recovery.

We remind ourselves that we are powerless over the behavior caused by sexaholism. We ask a Higher Power to help us to stop blaming and trying to control the sexaholic and other family members. The sobriety of the sexaholic and the welfare of other family members are not our responsibility. We realize we cannot find serenity for ourselves if we continue to focus on someone else's recovery, so we commit ourselves to our own recovery. With the loving help of other S-Ateen members, our S-Ateen sponsors, and the God of our understanding, we take positive action to make our lives more serene and fulfilling. We attend as many meetings as we can, get support from other S-Ateens, and begin to apply the Twelve Steps to our lives. We use the telephone, S-Ateen Conference Approved Literature, and the S-Ateen slogans. Eventually we reach out to help others and try to carry the message of our own recovery. We do these things in our own way, one day at a time – striving for progress, not perfection. This is what is meant by “working the program.”

OBSTACLES TO RECOVERY

To ensure the success of our meetings in solving our common problems, we must recognize and overcome three obstacles to recovery that can destroy the group.

The first is the discussion of any religious denomination. Compulsive lusting respects no particular religion; therefore, our program is designed to help us regardless of our various beliefs. Let us not defeat our purpose by discussing any particular denomination.

The second is gossip. We are here to help ourselves and other group members. A belittling discussion of others, including the sexaholic, or a discussion of personal affairs other than those concerning ourselves, will eventually eliminate the group.

The third is dictatorship. We have no dominating authorities or self-appointed leaders. Our S-Ateen sponsors are but trusted servants, they do not govern our meetings. They are not here as professional counselors or parent substitutes. They are here as special people who offer us loving guidance and support as we learn to support each other. As S-Ateen members, we do not give advice; we suggest by telling how we solved similar problems through our experiences. The very essence of S-Ateen is that the whole program is "suggested."

We have no creed, charges, obligations, or anything that would tend to hinder you. Your progress can be made in your own time and in your own way. We merely invite your attendance in a common cause.

(Reprinted and adapted from *Alcoholism, the Family Disease*, page 35, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.)