



# **TOOLS**

## ***for Working a Strong COSA® Program***

### **COSA TOOLS**

The tools listed here are those many of us have found helpful in our individual recoveries. Used and applied in our daily lives, these tools help us to achieve sanity and serenity, whether or not the sex addict chooses recovery.

#### ***MEETINGS ~***

COSA members gathering in a program of recovery, either face-to-face or at a scheduled online or by telephone. Other Twelve-Step group meetings may be useful— many addicts have more than one addiction, and members can substitute "sexual behavior" when another addiction is mentioned. Members give and receive support, work the Steps, and share Experience, Strength and Hope in a safe environment. When participating on the online message board, members are encouraged to share about their Step work or the weekly focus topic. In face-to-face, online or telephone meetings, there are opportunities to hear and share our Experience, Strength, and Hope with one another. For information on meetings and online resources go to the COSA website [www.COSA-recovery.org](http://www.COSA-recovery.org)

#### ***The TWELVE STEPS of COSA ~***

Working the Steps is the foundation of recovery in COSA; they are a set of spiritual practices COSA members use for personal growth and recovery. Many members suggest purchasing a guide to working the Twelve Steps and using it as a way to get started. It can be helpful to have a COSA Sponsor, Cosponsor to go through the Steps with, especially the first time. Listening to others share about their own experience working the Steps is often helpful to get the ball rolling. We also use written step-guides.

#### ***The TWELVE TRADITIONS of COSA ~***

A set of guidelines which suggest how COSA groups conduct themselves. Studying the Twelve Traditions and applying them to interpersonal relationships, COSA groups, and COSA as a whole promotes our own growth.

#### ***COSA LITERATURE ~***

Newcomer packets and other literature may be ordered at [www.COSA-Recovery.org](http://www.COSA-Recovery.org). COSA produces a newsletter called Balance, a valuable resource for recovery and news about the COSA fellowship, conferences, retreats, etc.

#### ***GIFTS AND PROMISES OF COSA ~***

These are the "results" any member of COSA can expect from working the COSA Twelve-Step program. By holding on to these promises, many members have found hope and strength, as well as help to focus on their program. Reading the Promises is often helpful when we feel hopeless or like we'll never make it through the pain and turmoil we feel. Knowing that those who have gone before us have found the peace and serenity found in the Gifts and Promises helps us to know that the program works "if we work it."

#### ***The SERENITY PRAYER ~***

Simple but profound appeal to a Higher Power to assist us in the process of receiving the "priceless gift of serenity." Many people utilize this COSA tool as a method to get through difficult experiences, or the obsession about the sex addict that is so common to COSA members. By repeating the prayer, either silently or aloud, whenever we are faced with a person, situation or issue that we need to let go of, we find that we are able to let go of our need to control and/or our worries— if only for a moment.

#### ***SPONSORS ~***

A person who serves as a guide through the Twelve Step process; after you have been attending a meeting for a bit, you may find that there are people who have a story similar to yours, and also people who have the serenity you seek for your own life. It is your responsibility to ask another COSA member to be your sponsor; they will not come to you. A sponsor is someone who agrees to be your sponsor, can be honest with you and support you, knows your whole story, holds you accountable for working

your COSA program, and helps you focus on how the Steps apply to your life. This relationship often becomes the life-line that we seek, and we can form a healthy nurturing bond with our sponsors, who share their Experience, Strength, and Hope with us in working the Steps of COSA, and realizing the Promises and Gifts that COSA recovery can bring. Those of us who serve as sponsors most often find that our own recovery is enhanced by the experience.

### **SUPPORT NETWORK ~**

Communicating with other COSA members, either by phone, private email, internet messenger, or in person; asking for support when needed; corresponding with other COSA members; all can be especially important if there are no face-to-face meetings you can attend. This network is best cultivated in non-crisis times, so members often make a practice of calling or emailing their support people on a regular basis. Some groups encourage newcomers to make “practice” calls right away, in order to avoid the common problem of the “two ton phone” and continuing to isolate, if only between meetings.

### **SLOGANS ~**

Quick references to important Twelve Step program concepts, i.e.: "One Day at a Time," "Progress, Not Perfection." "It works if you work it."

### **PRAYER AND MEDITATION ~**

To some, prayer is talking to our Higher Power and meditation is listening to our Higher Power. Both can be difficult when we first come to the program. We may feel disconnected or even angry at our Higher Power and therefore resist or even avoid prayer. Meditation is a tool that may be difficult at first as well, as our minds are often spinning with the pain and anger we feel toward our loved one's compulsive sexual behaviors. Through patience and practice, both tools can become trusted allies on our recovery journey.

### **HONESTY ~**

Striving to eliminate denial, half-truths, white lies, partial truths and overt dishonesty with others and ourselves. This includes denying or lying about our feelings. Learning to be rigorously honest with ourselves and others is a journey.

### **JOURNALING ~**

This can be a very important part of recovery, helping us to investigate and examine our lives and record our thoughts, feelings and insights. Journaling can be any reflective writing and Step work, including poetry, letters (which we don't intend to send) to our Higher Power and people we have issues with, lists and stream-of consciousness-writing, to name a few.

### **SERVICE ~**

Participating in activities that support the COSA group or COSA as a whole. There are many different opportunities, such as: cleaning out a coffee mug; leading the meeting as the secretary or trusted servant; setting up the room or putting chairs away at the end; Sponsoring another COSA member; serving on a planning committee; welcoming newcomers; sharing at meetings. There are no professionals at our meetings— we are all equal. Working together ensures the health and well-being of our group, ourselves, and COSA as a whole.

### **COSA CONVENTIONS AND RETREATS ~**

These provide COSA members with opportunities to spend more time focused on the COSA program and issues, and build a support network. Most members find conventions and retreats to be an essential part of their recovery program, and feel that missing out on an opportunity to attend would be missing out on an important part of their recovery journey.

### **ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY ~**

What is said here, stays here. That sounds so simple, and yet, it is this simple rule that helps us all to feel safe discussing the sensitive issues we face as co-sex addicts.

### **DEFINING OUR SOBRIETY and INNER CIRCLE BEHAVIORS ~**

In defining our own sobriety, we make a list of those behaviors we engaged in that made us, and the situation, worse. Most COSA members report that they find that their definition of their COSA sobriety evolves over time, and includes both those behaviors

we choose to no longer engage in, as well as those new behaviors we begin to embrace that are self-nurturing.

### **CELIBACY ~**

Some find that periods of celibacy can help couples focus on communication and intimacy, by taking the focus off being sexual and placing it on growth and true intimacy.

### **SETTING BOUNDARIES ~**

Boundaries are personal choices, and no one in COSA will decide what your boundaries need to be. You can ask a COSA friend or your sponsor about the kinds of boundaries they have set and how they discovered their own boundaries, to get ideas and inspiration for discovering your own personal boundaries.

If this literature has supported your recovery, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution today. This is an important step you can take to help carry the message of hope to others who still suffer.

**Please visit the COSA website at**

<http://www.cosa-recovery.org/donations.html>

for information on how to support our fellowship.

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