



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Written with the COSA® Newcomer in Mind

The COSA Welcome

We extend a special welcome to newcomers. Although we are sorry for the circumstances which brought you here, we hope that we can share the privilege of being here together and that you find a combination of help and friendship, as we have. It is suggested that you try six meetings before you decide if the COSA program is for you.

A member phone list is available. People who put their names on this list are willing to take your calls and answer your questions. We encourage you to seek the support of the group.

◆How do I know if I belong here?

If someone else's sexual behavior is causing you pain, then you can find comfort and hope in COSA. It is suggested that you try six meetings to see if the COSA program is for you.

◆Why do I have to come to meetings when it's my loved one who has the problem?

When we come to COSA we are often spiritually and emotionally depleted. By focusing on ourselves and the part we have played in the dysfunction of our relationships, we can find healing. If we work the Twelve Steps of COSA for ourselves, we will learn to make better choices, set boundaries, speak our truth, and avoid behaviors that may have enabled the sex addict to continue to practice his or her disease. We realize we cannot find serenity if we continue to focus on someone else's recovery, so we commit ourselves to our own recovery.

◆Do I have to give my name?

COSA members identify themselves by first name only. Anonymity is the foundation of the COSA Traditions. We will treat your name and anything you say as confidential, and we ask that you do the same for us.

◆Do I have to talk at the meeting?

No one is required to talk or "share" at COSA meetings. We respect your right to decide when you feel comfortable to talk. It is appropriate just to listen until that time.

◆How much does the COSA program cost?

There are no dues or fees for COSA membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. Each member gives what he or she can when the basket is passed. COSA groups may choose to use contributions for rent, literature, scholarships to COSA events, or in support of Intergroups and our International Service Organization. We ask that you be our guest and not contribute until you feel you are a part of the COSA group.

◆What do people talk about at COSA meetings?

COSA members meet to share their experience, strength, and hope. There is a variety of **Experience** in COSA recovery that we find helpful to share with each other. This includes:

- working the *Twelve Steps of COSA*
- working with a sponsor or sponsoring other members
- setting boundaries
- practicing new, healthy behaviors
- reading COSA or other recovery literature
- sharing feelings
- discovering how we work our program

Sharing our **Strength** means we talk about how we're growing and lending our support to each other. We share our **Hope** by being an example of how life gets better in recovery.

The safety to share honestly during meetings creates a trust level that many of us have never before experienced. Sometimes the COSA meeting is the first safe place we have to talk about our lives. Other places we can share in this way are during COSA telemeetings and on message boards.

We also encourage you to call someone on the COSA phone list. Only members who are willing to take program calls put their names on the list, so you can be assured you won't be troubling the person you call. It is also very helpful to have a sponsor. Sometimes it is better to discuss some issues privately with a sponsor instead of taking them to a meeting.

Continued

◆ **What is a sponsor and why do I need one?**

A sponsor is another COSA member who agrees to help you work the program. Your sponsor will be there for you when you need someone to talk to or ask questions, as well as to guide you through working the Twelve Steps of COSA. The best way to choose a sponsor is to listen at meetings for someone who has what you want. When you've chosen someone all that's left is to ask, "Will you be my sponsor?"

◆ **Can I ask questions during the meeting?**

In order for everyone to feel safe, the format of our sharing is that one person speaks at a time without questions, interruptions, or cross-talk. Cross-talk is defined as "talking to, talking about or talking with someone else during the meeting." We'll be happy to answer questions after the meeting is over.

◆ **Can I ask about or comment on another person's sharing?**

If you want to talk about something someone else has said, please don't mention the person by name or point to him or her, or say "you said". We ask that you say, "I can relate to what I heard about..." "My situation is like this..." If you want to ask someone about what they've said, please do so after the meeting.

◆ **What is a "feelings check"?**

Some COSA meetings include a brief check-in, or "feelings check", at the beginning of the meeting. During introductions with a feelings check, members are invited to reflect on how they are feeling and share their emotions with the group in one or two sentences. Although brief, the "feelings check" gives each of us an opportunity to be aware of how we feel and to practice expressing our feelings. Like all sharing at COSA meetings, the "feelings check" is optional.

◆ **Is there a religious affiliation to COSA?**

It is not necessary to believe in a Higher Power or practice a religion to work the COSA program. The word "God" is used in our literature to mean "a power greater than ourselves." Members decide for themselves what or whom they will call their Higher Power.

An excerpt from Sobriety in COSA:

Following the Twelve Steps is a way of life leading to freedom, happiness, and serenity. Our stories are similar, but each individual defines his or her own COSA sobriety. Below are responses of COSA members to the question, "What does COSA sobriety mean to you?"

- *A state of independence resulting from a reliance and trust in myself and in my Higher Power*
- *Minding my own business*
- *The ability to see alternatives*
- *Making healthy choices*
- *Freedom to learn about my sexuality*
- *Freedom to accept who I am, and what my Higher Power has created*
- *Trusting my own reality. Affirming my own thoughts and feelings*
- *Letting go of outcomes*
- *Not needing to be in control of anyone other than myself*
- *Not taking responsibility for the addict's behavior. Letting the addict be responsible for his or her behavior*
- *Being honest about my need to work the COSA program*
- *Identifying my needs and learning to ask for them to be met.*
- *Focusing on my own program and not on the sex addict's program.*

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