

## TIPS FOR NEWCOMERS

Welcome! You may have just attended your first meeting, or you might have several months in our group already. We hope these tips will point you in the right direction. By no means are you required to take any of these actions. They are simply methods we tried that helped us find recovery. As we like to say, “Take what you’d like and leave the rest.”

### **Dry Out**

“Drying out” might mean different things to different people. In general, it’s the process of weaning our bodies and minds off the habitual need to sexually act out. For some, it might mean a temporary no-dating period or abstinence within a marriage or committed relationship. For others, it might mean avoiding those people, places, and situations that might trigger us to act out. Internet porn blockers, such as Net Nanny, Covenant Eyes, and accountability software like Accountable2You might also help. Drying out does not have to last forever, but it may feel that way. It is something done once and never again, unless there is a relapse. This process allows us to pump the brakes on our compulsive sexual behavior and redirect our energy to our spiritual recovery. We’ve found that we cannot gain any significant sobriety or begin our spiritual recovery until we “dry out.”

### **Go to Meetings**

Meetings help us stay connected to our community and to a power greater than ourselves. Our addiction can isolate us, in some cases, literally locking ourselves in a room with porn; meetings break the isolation. Meetings remind us that we are not alone—that there is always hope. Our community provides us with access to countless members who speak our language, share our struggle, and together, seek solutions to our common problem. Talk to members with years of sobriety and strong recovery. Talk to other newcomers. Go to ninety meetings in ninety days. Share your story with the group, but also listen—be open to solutions and support your fellows.

### **Make and Take Phone Calls**

Grab a phone list at a meeting then start to call members. Aim for at least three program calls per day. Share about your day and how you feel. Ask about their day and how their recovery is going. We only found recovery once we accepted that we don’t have all the answers. As with meetings, calls help us remain connected with our program and help us learn from fellow members.

### **Write Gratitude Lists**

All too often, many of us nurse our resentments, self-pity, and fears. Our tendency to hold onto these character defects has led us countless times to escape into sexual fantasy and to the loss of our sobriety. We find that the solution is gratitude. Each

morning on awakening, write down ten things for which you are grateful.

### **Get a Sponsor**

If you're like us, you likely tried to stop acting out on your own—and failed miserably. Sure, we cobbled together a few weeks or months. But long-lasting recovery? For that, we needed to accept that we were powerless over our addiction and ask for help from another human being: the fellowship and our sponsors. A sponsor is your guide on the climb to recovery. They can't carry you there, but can point you in the right direction. At a meeting, speak to the secretary or the sponsor coordinator about finding the right sponsor for you. Call your sponsor every day. Listen to their advice. Allow them to guide you through all 12 steps, so that you will gain recovery. Sponsors may not be available to return your call. If you need to speak to someone, call another member or text your sponsor about your urgent issue.

### **Pray**

The second step asks you to identify your Higher Power. In the process, many of us felt like we were grasping at smoke at first. But over time, we developed an understanding and connection to our higher power through daily prayer—specifically our program's Third Step Prayer (p.63), Seventh Step Prayer (p. 76), and "On Awakening" (p. 86 - 88). If you have an urge to act out, or just woke up, you might find it helpful to pray. Whenever sexual craving rears up, and you want to retreat from reality, try these prayers:

*God, I can't handle that thought. I'll give it to you.*

*God, please give that person I'm objectifying, their health, prosperity, and peace.*

*God, thank you for this program so I don't have to destroy my life with this drug.*

### **Be of Service**

A poet once said, "No man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself." Don't ask what you can get from the group; ask what you can bring to it. Volunteer for service positions at meetings. If asked to serve, say yes. Introduce yourself to newcomers and check in with your fellow members. Be of service at home. Many of us neglected our responsibilities at home because we were busy acting out. Do the dishes, clean the house, scoop the cat box, take the garbage out. Think of other acts of service that might be meaningful to those you care about and your community. Do something kind or thoughtful for another without "getting caught" and with no expectations.

### **Develop a Daily Ritual**

With your sponsor, develop a daily ritual, preferably first thing in the morning. It can be different for each person, but we suggest beginning and ending each day with a prayer and reading The Big Book (try pages 86 through 88). Prioritize moments in your day for self-care—including exercise, healthy food, good sleep, having fun with friends and family, meditation, and gratitude lists. And, of course, attending meetings and making and taking outreach calls with fellow members. On occasion, we told ourselves we were

too busy with our jobs or family to keep up with the Program. But it's been said that when we're busy, we don't have enough time *not* to pray. Our daily ritual prevents us from acting out and wasting time and energy we could devote to productive and useful activities. Our daily routines lay the foundation for increased stability in our lives, better discernment, and spiritual growth.

### **Read the Literature**

We're fortunate that we can turn to AA's conference-approved literature for insight and guidance. We suggest reading *Alcoholics Anonymous*, also known as "The Big Book"—an indispensable guide to recovery written in 1939 that has helped millions of alcoholics find a new life. Also, check out AA's *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*—a book that dives deep into the basic principles of the twelve steps and twelve traditions of AA, which are the cornerstones of our program. Both books sold on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and available for free at most local libraries.

### **Slogans**

Here are a few you might hear:

*Easy does it.*

*One day at a time.*

*Keep coming back.*

*It works if you work it.*

Remember, take responsibility for everything in your life. We tend toward self-pity and resentment—often blaming others for our setbacks. But once we stopped living in the problem, and began living in the solution, the problem went away. We hope these tips will point you the right way. They certainly worked for us. Together, we can do this.