

Newcomers Survival Kit

Meetings - Most experienced sponsors will recommend a minimum of 2-3 meetings per week for at least the first 90 days. You can't get it if you don't show up! Some people require 7 meetings every 7 days – or as some say 90 meetings in 90 days. When this is done, newcomers get their first moments of clarity.

- **Find a Sponsor** - Nothing of lasting value to recovery will happen until this action is taken. Find someone who has what you want and ask them.
- **Read SAA and AA Literature** - At a minimum buy the 12 Steps + 12 Traditions, The SAA Green Book (new) and a Big Book of AA. As soon as possible add a spiritual daily meditation/devotional book to your arsenal.
- **Start working the Steps** - ASAP with your sponsor's help start doing written step work, in order, beginning with number one!
- **Start praying ASAP**- Because this is a spiritual program it is imperative we begin the process of bringing our concept of God into our lives right away. Most of us who come in to the program do not have experience in prayer. Ask your sponsor to help you pray. If he/she can not help you you've got the wrong sponsor!

Do's and Don'ts

- **Do** - With your sponsor define acting out and physical sobriety for yourself.
- **Do** – Start a daily check by phone, not by email, with your sponsor. Check in the day's highlights and lowlights paying attention to the feelings that arose as you went about your day. The events are important but not nearly as much as your reactions and the feelings accompanying them.
- **Do** - Throw away all pornography including the deletion of all sexual related websites and links from your computer. Yes, Victoria Secret also!
- **Do** - Buy appropriate porn blocking software and acquaint yourself with the Internet safety guidelines posted on the SAA website.
- **Do** - Start a regular exercise program in a way that is healthy (**not** in health clubs if you acted out there or they were a part of your ritual).
- **Do** - Develop a healthy indoor or outdoor (preferred) hobby that will give you access to God's majestic creations. Fishing, golfing, camping, hiking, painting, singing, or woodworking are but a few examples.
- **Do** – Break all connections with acting out partners; include throwing away all photos. No exceptions! Believe it or not these are not healthy friendships! Do not keep any to satisfy your delusions that these are important people in your life. They are only important if you want to die a slow death.
- **Do** - Hang with the winners. You do not “get” this program by osmosis but it helps tremendously if you surround yourself with people in recovery instead of habitual slippers.
- **Do** – With the help of your sponsor you may create a three circles monitoring plan by following the instructions in the SAA pamphlet “The Three Circles”.

- **Do** - Listen, Listen, and Listen some more at meetings. Specially be attentive to those who have quality sobriety regardless of whether you like them or not. Please remember the addict in you will do anything to get you back in the disease.
- **Do** - Work on the solution, not the problem. Concentrate on doing the right thing.
- **Don't**- Listen to your head. It is a bad neighborhood and you shouldn't go there alone! Recovery comes from working on your heart and your soul not from your brain. Remember your best thinking got you here!
- **Don't contact ex-acting out partners.** If they should contact you firmly **demand** that they not call you or email you ever again. If you need to threaten them with contacting the police and turning them in for sexual harassment. Remember you are fighting for your life and they will kill you if you let them!
- **Do** - Forget the idea that there is the perfect spouse, lover, job, friendship, car or anything except for God that is going to "fix you" and make you whole.
- **Do** - Plan (with your sponsor's help) to eliminate as quickly as possible all destructive relationships. Destructive for an addict is anything that does not foster spiritual growth.
- **Don't**- Go in or near any old acting out places and stay away from areas that played **any** part in your acting out ritual. Do not cruise for anything!
- **Do** - Change you're driving habits to avoid going thru neighborhoods or area where you acted out even if it means taking a much longer route to get to where you are going. Do not fool yourself into thinking you can now handle it.
- **Do** - Avoid TV programming or movies that are on the edge and may act as triggers for your addiction to kick in.
- **Don't**- Look for the negatives in a meeting. Always look to relate to feelings, stories and experiences to bind you to the group not to separate you.

- **Don't**- Believe you are unique. Know that you suffer from Terminal Uniqueness!
- **Do** - Share about your life. Practice intimacy with your sponsor and others. When you check in with him/her speak of situations which created in you negative and positive feelings.
- **Do** - Become Centered- Check your breathing regularly. Is it shallow? Is it irregular? Are you stressed? Are you all up in your head? Recovery can not take place if you are off center. If you are driving pull over and take a few minutes for yourself. Then slow down, stay in the now, concentrate on your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. ***This is a key to long term recovery!*** Close your eyes and begin to take deep breaths. Picture yourself having the ability to cleanse yourself of all negativity existing in you right now. In with the good and out with the bad. Say a quick prayer asking for help to slow down this very moment.
- **Do** - Be very mindful of **H.A.L.T.** It stands for Hungry, Angry, Lonely and Tired. If you have 2 of those conditions working on you.... look out. If you have three or more you are in a critical situation; call the paramedics!
- **Do** - Remember that slips are avoidable and most of the time optional. You don't have to slip.....unless you want to! Remember: this disease is cunning baffling and powerful. **S.L.I.P.** - Sobriety Loses Its Priority. **S.L.I.P.**- Still Learning I'm Powerless
- **Do** - Live in the present. If you keep one foot in the future and one in the past you sh_t on the present.
- **Don't** – allow **FEAR** to keep you from living in recovery. Recovery takes courage. Remember that you can only fear something that **might** happen. It is physically impossible to fear anything that is going on this very second ... only what the consequences may be. If we stay in the present moment – there can be no fear. **F.E.A.R.** - False Evidence Appearing Real.

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