

## Tradition Eleven

*Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and other public media of communication. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all Program members.*

COSA is a bountiful source of support, freely available to anyone and everyone who seeks relief from the effects of compulsive sexual behavior. In order to spread information about our resources, we must engage in various means of public relations. We approach this with care; the well-being of our fellowship depends on it.

Some of us have been tempted to share the gift of recovery by trying to convince people of COSA's potential usefulness in their lives. We can let go of this caretaking approach. There is no need to promote, recruit, chase, or coax. The outward signs of our inner transformations are persuasive enough for anyone seeking relief.

If the word *attraction* indicates evoking interest in or drawing attention to, what is attractive about COSA recovery? Each member of the fellowship may answer this differently. Here are some examples of what we have experienced in COSA or seen in others who have worked the COSA Twelve Steps:

- The feeling of relief upon finding a community of people who can relate to our experiences and who do not shame or judge us nor tell us what to do.
- A sense of empowerment and serenity that comes from our learning to let go of what we cannot control and from making life-nourishing choices for ourselves.
- The newly found self-awareness and self-compassion that develop with Step work.
- A growing ability to set appropriate boundaries around our sexuality and to make progress toward achieving healthy sexual intimacy.
- A way of honoring self-care and speaking our truth to others, giving rise to mutual respect and healthier personal relationships.
- The feeling of usefulness and purpose that stems from respectfully serving others in a way that supports healthy boundaries and connection to a Higher Power.

None of us needs to point out or promote the gifts of recovery; they are unquestionably present. Recovery is naturally noticeable, modeled by us in the way we live our lives. As we trust the process and work the Steps, the COSA program of recovery materializes in a unique way for each of us. The concept of "attraction rather than promotion" reminds us that we reveal the gifts of COSA to others by simply continuing to work on our own recovery.

What we have learned in our interpersonal relationships is also true in our public relations: no amount of effort on our part will spur change in others, unless and until they are ready. Change for each of us comes from within, with the help of Higher Power.

While we do not promote COSA, we do have gratitude for what COSA has done for us, and we wish to share with others that COSA is here for them as well. We desire to carry the message about COSA, to make the abundance of the fellowship available to those who want it. The key words here are “those who want it.”

It is not our place to convince anyone that they need the COSA program. Instead, we trust Higher Power’s plan and timing, and when others do reach out, we can then actively provide support. If someone brings us their issue about being affected by compulsive sexual behavior, we can choose to share with them how we have been greatly helped through COSA. We can give them information on the program and meetings, and perhaps offer to go with them to a meeting.

The fellowship’s presence is made known when we do our part, such as when we ensure our meeting’s listing on the COSA website is up to date or obtain permission to leave COSA materials in our doctor’s or therapist’s office. Providing information about the program—by way of pamphlets, articles, books, public listings, or the website—is not “promoting.” We are not forcing anyone to do or give anything. We are simply offering a connection to recovery resources.

COSA may use public message boards and social media pages to raise awareness about the fellowship and share information on the benefits of recovery. COSA’s Outreach Committee seeks ways to reach the diverse population of individuals who are suffering from the effects of compulsive sexual behavior. However, the use of public platforms for outreach or any public media of communication is to be treated with great caution. Tradition Eleven reminds us that COSA is an anonymous fellowship. Anonymity plays a significant role in both our personal and public interactions.

When we protect the anonymity of ourselves and others and honor principles before personalities, it helps to ensure a clear separation between our participation in COSA and any personal or professional roles we play outside of COSA. Anonymity allows us to be our authentic selves without concern that people will judge us or interact with us based on our titles, jobs, roles, or professions. There are no COSA experts or teachers; we simply have trusted servants, who are themselves in the process of recovering. We carefully maintain anonymity for all COSA members to ensure that participation in COSA does not disrupt our public lives.

Perhaps most obvious is the sensitivity of the issues surrounding compulsive sexual behavior. Anonymity means that at no time should we ever expose another member of our fellowship. This seems straightforward, but we must remain mindful of our everyday actions that could inadvertently call public attention to our recovery friends. For example, we refrain from making COSA-related phone calls in public places or acknowledging COSA members when we are out in public with others who are not in the program. We also practice caution and consideration when placing photos and videos on social media because these platforms are not anonymous.

We also exercise restraint in personally publicizing our own recovery, such as when writing a book, lecturing to groups, or participating in media coverage of COSA. We wish to make known COSA as a fellowship but maintain personal anonymity as COSA members. Tradition Twelve urges us to ensure that personalities do not overtake principles. We serve the fellowship and our own recovery by carrying the recovery message humbly, freely, and without personal tribute or celebrity. We recognize this as integral to upholding Traditions Six and Eleven.

In addition to our own anonymity and that of other COSA members, we consider how our public interactions may affect those close to us. Given that it is often family members or friends who are struggling with sexual compulsions, our connection with COSA has the potential to implicate them by association. When we choose to break our own anonymity, even if it might be appropriate and helpful to do so, we may also be breaking the anonymity of those close to us. This could cause damage. It is important to have thorough communication with and consideration for others who may be affected, especially when we serve COSA in a public capacity.

Each time we interact publicly, we aim to keep the COSA Traditions in mind. They guide our one-on-one dialogues with people, such as in conversations with acquaintances or with a contact person for a potential meeting site. The Traditions also guide us when we represent the fellowship in a public capacity, such as when writing a public service announcement or making a flyer for a local retreat. In such instances, we are trusted servants of the fellowship, and we strive to embody the Traditions as best we can. We endeavor to protect the anonymity of our COSA fellows at all times.

When we honor anonymity, we foster an environment that allows us to safely share our experience, strength, and hope without fear of judgment or criticism. Tradition Eleven reminds us not to recruit, advise, or promote. We simply work our recovery program and uphold the Traditions to ensure that the fellowship is available to all who want recovery, while maintaining anonymity at all times. We trust Higher Power to do the rest.