

# Balance

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

Autumn Issue

September ~ October '06

## ~COSA Has 'Healthy Intimate Relationships' Meetings~ *Reporting from San Francisco East Bay; by Lindy T.*

**What is HIR?** HIR is Healthy Intimate Relationships. COSA has a meeting in the East Bay, California that has this focus.

**Who Can Attend?** This meeting is a closed COSA meeting for COSA's, whether partnered or single, *and their partners.*

**How Long have we been meeting?** We have been meeting for over 2 years. There is a strong core of people who attend.

**What is the Format of the HIR meeting?** Most of the meeting script is almost identical to our other COSA meetings. Every other week we have a speaker. The other weeks we have a Question and Response format. Anyone can pose a question related to recovery. There is time for about three

responses of three minutes each, for each question. As in other COSA meetings, the focus is on Experience, Strength and Hope (ESH) and we refrain from giving advice. An example of a question that has been posed is; "As I work on my 4th Step, I find myself getting stuck in my character defects. Does anyone have any ESH about how to put a positive spin on my work?"

**Do we have any particular COSA literature that we use?**

Since this is not a 'regular' COSA meeting, we do not have a full box of literature. We will have the *Newcomer Packets*. The *FAQ* sheet and the *Circles Worksheet* developed in the East Bay are also available at this meeting, as well as the *Balance* Newsletter.

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## 2007 Minneapolis Convention

As every year, the 2007 Minneapolis Convention runs concurrently with the Sex Addicts Anonymous annual convention over the Memorial Day Weekend. The day before the weekend starts, that Friday, we hold our ISO Annual Meeting, where all the delegates from COSA groups around the world meet with the ISO Board to make decisions and set goals for the coming year. Then, once our business is caught up and our vision is clear, we begin the Convention on Friday evening! The one in 2007 will be especially memorable. We will be welcomed to participate in cooperation with the first members of SAA in revisiting the founding moment of their fellowship with a walk around the lake.

### In this Issue:

COSA SPECIAL MEETINGS: **East Bay COSA Healthy Intimate Relationships Meeting, with COSA Voices**, by Lindy T.

~ **EMILAH D** ~ Our NEW ISO Coordinator introduces herself

**COSA VOICES**: 9th & 10th Step Shares ~ by *Shankari and Mavis B.*

9th & 10th Step Writing Exercises ~ by *Julie H.*

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An Overview of Ways to Use the **New Literature**

COSA Needs New Groups!

In every Issue:

**7th Traditions**

**Literature Order form**

~ NEW ~

**THANK YOU**



Give your COSA friends **Balance Gift** subscriptions to celebrate COSA Anniversaries, Birthdays, or other special occasions! It will be sure to bring the 'leaves' of recovery to their life the whole year through!!

**7th Traditions Individual**

Oakland—\$10

Please send your donations to the COSA mailing address listed on the envelope below!

**7th Traditions Groups**

Cincinnati, OH—\$75  
Dallas, TX—\$32  
Houston, TX (Sun)—\$32  
Kalamazoo, MI—\$18  
Mesa, AZ—\$20  
Minnetonka, MN—\$120  
McKinney, TX—\$30  
St. Cloud, MN—\$40  
St. Paul Gratitude Group—\$75

**SPREAD SOME SUNSHINE!  
GIVE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION OF**

**Balance**

**TO A COSA FRIEND!**

**See Literature Order form for details!**

**By the Fellowship, for the Fellowship!**



A shared vision of those who work on the production of the Balance is to have a folder overflowing with articles submitted from the membership, which can be used as topics for upcoming issues. For this to happen, we encourage every group, intergroup and member to submit articles that share your ESH (experience, strength, and hope). Also, articles and announcements that share upcoming events in your area; such as retreats, workshops, speakers etc. Articles that give a voice to your story. We also would love to hear your ideas for what you would like to see in future articles. The Balance is a newsletter for the membership, by the membership. Please send your articles to:

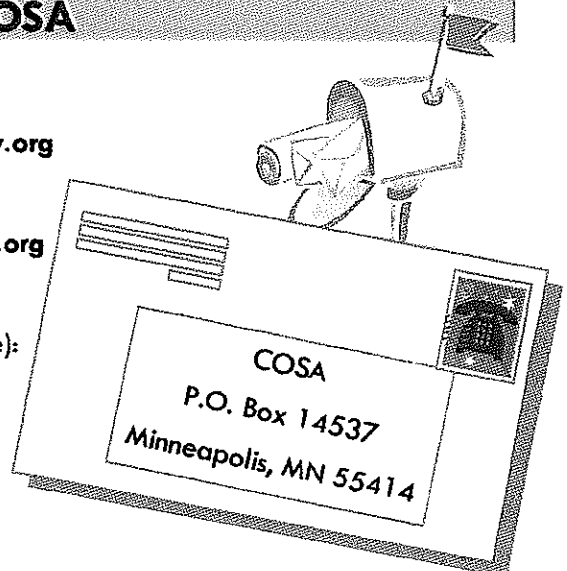
**COSACopy@yahoo.com**

or by snail mail to the COSA ISO PO Box listed on the envelope below.

**Contact the ISO of COSA**

**Balance, the newsletter of the International Service Organization of COSA, is published six times a year. The ISO holds the copyright to the newsletter. ~Edited by ~ COSA Literature Committee ~Production & Distribution ~ ISO Office Coordinator; Emilah D.**

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HEALTHY INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS, cont'd.

### COSA VOICES: SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

"I attend this meeting with my husband. It is one of the most powerful meetings that I am a part of. The meeting has been crucial to my recovery. I have learned to trust myself and my recovery process, and therefore feel very safe in this meeting." ~ LINDY T.

"As a two-year COSA member and just having left my home and relationship, I looked for additional COSA meetings to ramp up my support and recovery. I was shy about showing up single at Healthy Intimate Relationships meetings for COSAs and their partners, but soon saw it as an opportunity to learn healthy intimacy with myself. It was in these meetings that I first heard sex addicts' stories, and came to deeply understand the courage and commitment it takes to live a recovering life. Fellowship over a meal after the Friday night HIR meeting has been a fun way to practice the skills of honesty and setting boundaries in our relationships with each other." ~ MAUREEN P.

"The biggest highlight of this meeting is being in a room with SAA's and realizing that we are all similar. I have been getting to know and to love people from the 'other program' as well. I like sharing the ESH with people from SAA who come from the other end of action, but have had similar triggers for their behaviors to my own. Also, there is an opportunity to discuss intimacy with partners even though I don't have one myself" ~ KERSTIN H. (founding member of this meeting)

"The good thing about this meeting is that we are learning how to get better and to work through our recovery. We are learning how to live together -with Codependency and Addiction, and we are learning how to interact with each other." ~ ANONYMOUS

"...learned to trust myself..."

"...an opportunity to learn healthy intimacy with myself."

"I was shy about showing up single..."

"...we are all similar..."

### COSA VOICES STEP NINE Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

Over my time in recovery I've come to believe in coincidences less and less. Just this week while on the internet, I decided to punch in a woman's name I've owed amends to for quite awhile. Her name is an unusual one, so I thought I might have some luck. I found her email address quite easily. As is my habit, I left the computer on and minimized the information to deal with it later, after I'd written the amends. Well the days began to pass, and I was not becoming profoundly motivated to write the letter. Here is the "coincidence" I mentioned earlier: I went to a meeting, and was there asked whether I'd be willing to write a ninth step article for the Balance. Not only was this request made

just when I needed a little "push", but the article was requested of me within a few days.

This particular amends has been one that has troubled me for quite awhile. The fact is that I have had some extra challenges when it has come to making amends in my life. I have had trouble locating the people I need to do the ninth step with. This is not to say a couple; this has entailed a great number of them. And this has made me perhaps lazy, and I've even used this excuse where it has not applied. The truth is I've had this woman's mother's phone number all along and never called her. Now that I've written these amends, I'm not

surprised. The reality of my behavior is very painful to me. The extent of my jealousy, competitiveness and triangulating were so ugly to me that perhaps I wasn't yet ready to face them. For what it is worth my HP made it unavoidable this very week. As I spoke with the woman who asked me to write the article, it became clear to me that I needed to include the text of the amends in the article! Oh joy-- the opportunity to share some of my most painful, long-standing, and shameful character defects with the fellowship! Then I thought about the words near the end of the third step prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous (big book pg. 63) and I was comforted. It helps me to understand that

COSA VOICES STEP NINE, continued

my character defects, and other suffering, are not present solely for my growth, but in fact to help others as well. I hope that my history of co-sex addiction, very readily seen in this amends letter "may bear witness to those I would help of HP's power love and way of life."



Jane, I am writing to make amends to you for events that occurred between you, me, John, and also your Russian friend who attended University with you. It is important I be accountable for my behavior regardless of how long ago I did it. With regard to John-- I pursued him when you had already gone out with him. Part of my interest stemmed from a sense of competitiveness I was acting out. Thus began a triangular nature to

our relationship. I flirted with him in front of you once when all three of us went out to dinner, as well as during the class we all had together. It also played out in conversations that you and I had about him.

I continued this triangulated behavior one evening into morning with you and your Russian friend at your place. I was jealous of you already-- having wanted all of John's attention for myself. On this evening I wanted your Russian friend-- who was already in love with you-- to "choose me over you." It was a long insane night of competitiveness, jealousy, and disrespect on my part, and I am sorry. I no longer pursue men who are involved with other women. I commit to no longer setting out to make other women jealous based upon my own

insecurities and desire to somehow be "more important" to a man.

If there are any other ways in which I have harmed you I would appreciate your sharing them with me. Thank you for your time, Carolyn



I recently changed my own name, it is now Shankari, and I hope this letter and article will be of service to those who read it. The last thing I want to say is that my sponsor taught me never to send an amends letter without first having shared it with her to check my motives and to be certain I am not being harmful in any way, following the very important part of the ninth step which states (in my italics): *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.* ~ Shankari

COSA VOICES STEP TEN Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Today and lately, I have been working on remembering to work my 10th step. A new depth of awareness has opened up and I am feeling like I have a lot to learn with it in experience. This is my work continuing on the realization that every situation I find myself in, there was something I did to put myself there. In fact, when I remind myself of that, I usually almost instantly see it and it becomes simple. Then I can work my steps much more easily.

It is no longer a competition. Others may bear responsibility for their actions and my new thinking does not take away anything from them. Even if they think it does.

Another part I am working on is in the area of communication. Often, people

may not understand me. When that happens sometimes I look at how I could improve my communication to them. In the past I felt shame and said; 'They *should* have understood me,' or 'How was I supposed to know they were confused?'

I have been practicing ways to simplify my communication. Now I know that most times I will not know when I am confusing someone, that it is not my fault and that I am not intending it. So I apologize and clarify it, saying, I am sorry I did not make this clear for you. I no longer need to feel resentment and fear and wonder what is wrong with them that their brains did not work *my* way. I can be wrong without something being wrong with me.

The part of this work that is funny to me is that, to my old way of thinking someone doing 10th step work might be getting their lives close to perfect or everyone would look up to them or they'd be what we called 'goody-goodies' when I was a kid. Instead I am finding, as my old sponsor used to say, 'There is still no danger of that!' In fact, I still screw up a lot. What has changed is, while my conscience is stronger than ever, being wrong is not a big deal to me. I accept it as part of living. That is a 180 degree change from my old ways.

That's why I still love where it says in *How It Works* in the AA Big Book, "We are not saints."

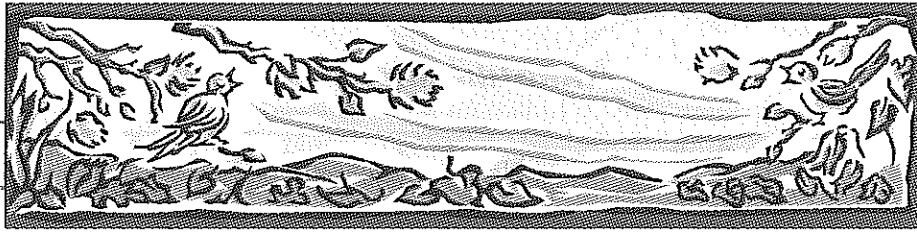
Love and respect, Mavis B.



STEP STUDY QUESTIONS~ FOR GROUP DISCUSSION OR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Step Nine Questions:

- How do I choose which amends to make first?
- When do I know if I am going to injure others?
- Should I discuss each amends with someone else before I make it directly?
- When making my amends how can I be sure I will not repeat my old behaviors?
- What is my self-care plan if my efforts are rejected or they don't forgive me?
- How will making amends improve my relationship with my HP?

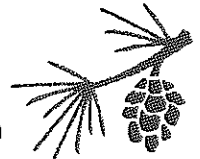


**Hi everyone!** My name is Emilah Dawn D. and I currently live in Albuquerque, NM. Some of you knew me as Dawn D. when I lived in Tucson. The name change story is a long one, so I'll spare you all! Anyway, I am the new Coordinator in the ISO of COSA Central Office.

I have been in COSA for just under five years and did a significant part of my recovery in Tucson. A year ago I moved to Albuquerque where there are no COSA meetings, so I attend the Tuesday telemeeting as my home group. After working some steps in COSA, I realized I also qualified for SAA (making me a Double Winner) and am quite active locally in that fellowship. I am grateful to have both in my life as they both assist me in being the person I am meant to be.

I live very close to my Higher Power, spending the beginning of each day in prayer and meditation and asking how I can serve throughout the day. These days, that often means pondering the expansion and functioning of the ISO of COSA central office. It also means learning how the office has functioned in the past, setting up QuickBooks so we can better track our finances, updating meeting contact info and creating a database so it can be easily tracked and updated, learning how to print, fold & staple all the new literature, getting to know the Board members, and visioning how the Central office can better serve the COSA fellowship.

When I'm not working for the ISO of COSA, I spend my time as an Intuitive Life/Wellness Coach and Spiritual Mentor – helping people get unstuck so they can move forward in their lives. It is my hope I can assist the COSA fellowship in doing the same. If you have any suggestions or questions, feel free to email me at: [iso@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:iso@cosa-recovery.org)



***Blessings in Recovery,*** **Emilah D**

### STEP STUDY QUESTIONS~ FOR GROUP DISCUSSION OR PERSONAL REFLECTION

#### Step Ten Questions:

What actions did I take that may have put me in spiritual isolation today?

Did I do anything to perpetuate my obsessions or compulsions and what affect did that have on others?

*THIS INTERVIEW GOT CUT OFF IN OUR CONVENTION ISSUE, SO WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AMENDS TO LINDY AND ALESSANDRO AND ALL OF OUR READERS AND PRINT THE INTERVIEW IN ITS ENTIRETY.*

#### ***What were the Highlights of the Convention for you?***

The best thing was the fellowship, the 'live' contact with people that have worked so hard. Also, time with 'old' friends was great, too. There were many wonderful private and public moments. The Delegate Meeting went very smoothly and I was impressed with the way we all worked together.

#### ***What were your favorite workshops?***

I really loved the Resentment Workshop (COSA). It opened a door that needed to be opened with the resentments that I had for my x-girlfriend. I worked out my resentment by writing a letter on my way home from the convention. Also, I enjoyed giving the Voices of Growth (the COSA Telemeeting workshop). I liked also the opening COSA meeting because of the great shares. The Saturday Night COSA and SAA speakers were very inspirational.

#### ***Would you come back to the Convention next year?***

Definitely! If there was another one tomorrow, I would go back!

-ALESSANDRO FROM CALIFORNIA



Fall

2006



## **NEW COSA literature and ways it can benefit your recovery program!**

**Taken together, these four pamphlets are making a hit as a Welcome Packet for Newcomers:**

### ***Welcome to the Sunlight***

#### **COSA FAQ**

#### **COSA Tools**—revised 2006

#### **A Program of Recovery** (with 16 Questions)

These pamphlets will introduce COSA, orient you and help get you started with COSA's terminology and the basic recovery concepts such as working a program.

**COSA Stories I & II** are always great reading and can help us to learn from others' examples. **A Question of Recovery** is a great tool to explore how you see and experience life in recovery. From the early feedback, we anticipate it will also become a favorite among COSA old-timers as a spot-check inventory!

As you become familiar with these concepts and are attending meetings regularly, you can start looking for a sponsor, practicing the COSA tools, and learning how to work your First Step. We have two pieces of COSA literature to help you with that:

#### ***Tips and Tools for A Strong 1st Step Foundation***

#### **COSA Step One** Booklet (with COSA Voices and workbook section)

Once you have completed a written First Step and reviewed it with your Group and/or a COSA sponsor, you may be ready to map out your three circles with the help of the **COSA Sobriety** booklet, and to work with some of COSA's other recovery literature:

#### **COSA Sobriety** Booklet (with workbook section)

#### ***Tips and Tools for A Strong 2nd Step Foundation***

#### **Caretaking** Booklet (with workbook section)

As you strengthen your foundation in recovery with your use of these tools, we hope you discover one of our most surprising and powerful tools; **SERVICE**. As co-addicts, so many of us had histories of caretaking that we were surprised to find that our service

work in COSA benefited us even more than the people we helped.

We publish the following **service literature** to assist groups and individuals in creating a deeper understanding of how to apply recovery principles to all areas of our lives:

#### **COSA 12 Traditions** Booklet (with commentary)

#### **12 Concepts for Groups** (with inventory questions)

#### **Media Information**

#### **How To Start A New Group** Packet— revised 2006

#### **What happened to the old Newcomer's Packet?**

When we looked to see how it needed to be revised, we found some pages from other fellowships which we removed in order to improve COSA's integrity. When we also removed the many pages now being printed elsewhere in COSA literature, we had one page left. We are working to get that out to you as part of a new format soon!

#### **What's coming next?**

Next year we plan to debut guides on **Sponsorship, Spirituality in COSA** and a **Second Step Workbook**. We also have a **Step Three** Booklet and a **Disclosure** pamphlet in the works.

**Anyone who would like to perform the service** of helping to create more COSA literature, or has **feedback** for us on how to improve our current publications, please write to us at: [cosacopy@yahoo.com](mailto:cosacopy@yahoo.com)

To order **COSA literature**, please mail the attached order form with payment, or place your order online via our secure website at [www.cosa-recovery.org](http://www.cosa-recovery.org). When you go to the literature ordering page, click on the SHOPPING CART link, and you will find the **new COSA store!** We have bulk ordering, a special on the new COSA literature, tapes and CDs of COSA speakers, and COSA T-Shirts, lapel pins, medallions, and more.

## **New COSA Groups Needed; Please Consider Starting One!**

COSA receives many requests for information on face-to-face (f2f) Groups in the US. However, in many parts of the country— and world, there are no Groups YET. The COSA Connections Coordinators (CCCs) who reply to these queries are eager to motivate the people to whom they reply (re: their request for the location of a nearby group), to consider joining together with others from their region to begin a home group there. For example, in the DC area, there are many who seek COSA f2f support, and still, there is no meeting in the region, yet.... But there are volunteers who would be willing to assist in the founding of a new group in this region. It is the hope of the CCCs that

those seeking support in their area will step up and offer to start a new group. The rewards of such an act are immeasurable. This 12th-step action will bring many COSAs, including new Group Founders, a lifetime of relief from despair, pain, etc. Thank you, Online and Telemeeting COSA Members, for contacting COSA for information about a group near you. And for now considering the opportunity of sharing your ESH (experience, strength and hope) with others, who also seek support in your region, by joining together to plan for the founding of a new f2f group near you!

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT  
[WWW.COSA-RECOVERY.ORG](http://WWW.COSA-RECOVERY.ORG)