



Balance



NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

Fall Issue

September-October 2009

COSA Parents



THE COSA Parents Step Study, a new face-to-face recovery meeting in Houston, opened its doors on July 1st. It is an ISO registered COSA meeting for parents whose lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior. While the meeting is available for all COSAs, it was created with the intention of supporting parents who are raising teens who are recovering from sex addiction.

One member recently expressed her own perspective as a COSA parent this way: “I can say to my spouse, ‘You’re an adult, I think you can figure this out,’ but I can’t really say the same thing to my 15-year old son. He’s not an adult.” The *COSA Parents in Recovery* booklet, which is ISO conference approved, helps group members discern their true level of responsibility towards their children as they grow up. The COSA member continues, “The tricky part is that I need to let go of more and more responsibility as [my son] grows up and gradually learns to take more responsibility for his own life. But what I can *never* be responsible for are his choices or the consequences of his choices – either positive or negative.”

The COSA parents’ booklet also suggests that parents establish and maintain boundaries in their households.



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7th Traditions Individuals

Holt MI	\$ 9.00
New York NY	\$ 18.00
Redonda Beach CA	\$ 10.00
Rosharon TX	\$ 10.00
TOTAL	\$ 47.00

Thank You!

Recurring Donations
Total for
6/30/09-7/24/09
\$365.21

7th Traditions Groups

CA-09	\$ 100.00
CA-13	\$ 24.79
IA-01	\$ 50.00
MN-02	\$ 100.00
MN-06	\$ 100.00
MN-17	\$ 20.00
NM-01	\$ 50.00
OH-04	\$ 15.00
TX-01	\$ 75.00
TX-04	\$ 45.00
TX-28	\$ 33.00
WI-04	\$ 30.00
TOTAL	\$642.79

Welcome NEW COSA Groups!

CA-24
CA-25
OH-06
NV-03
TEL-03
TN-03
TX-32
TX-33
TX-34
TX-35

COSA Telemeetings www.cosacall.com

Telephone Number: 1-906-481-2100
Passcode: 679461

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. Pacific Time
(8 Mountain, 9 Central, 10 Eastern)

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time
(4 Pacific, 5 Mountain, 6 Central)

Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time
(7 Mountain, 8 Central, 9 Eastern)



By the Fellowship, For the Fellowship

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 COSA events** in your area; such as retreats, workshops, speakers etc. 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

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SOME COSA parents have chosen boundaries such as “This is a porn-free home,” or “The members of this family obey the law.” These boundaries are then expressed in a written contract, which also contains accountability measures, rewards and consequences.

One COSA Mom says of herself, “I had enabled my son so many times by explaining away his behavior, and not following through on boundaries in our home, that he didn’t even blink when I threatened this or that consequence. We both knew I would say one thing and later do another...I was *powerless!* My COSA recovery work was totally about asking my Higher Power to help me follow through on the boundaries in our home - not just about the porn, but also about things like school and lying.”

Parents in the group support one another while they do the hard work that flows from working the Steps. For instance, one couple made the decision to send their child to a recovery boarding school. The COSA Dad remembers, “Other people in our family were judging us as parents, like there was something wrong with us because we needed help. Most of them had no idea what we were really dealing with. [My wife] and I just had to know deep inside ourselves that this was the next right thing. We had no way of knowing whether the school could help [our son] stay sober – but that part wasn’t up to us. It was so hard to let go, and trust God.”

The Step Study format was chosen to encourage parents to focus on the Twelve Steps of COSA. Parents also use tools of recovery such as defining their COSA sobriety using the “Three Circles” model, practicing healthy self-care, and journaling. But the heart of a parent’s COSA program is the same as for all COSAs, establishing a relationship with the God of their understanding and learning to live a new way.

—Carol Ann R.

For information on how to attend the COSA Parents Step Study in Houston, or how to start a COSA parents' meeting in your local area, you are welcome to send an email to: hellocarolann@yahoo.com.



Recovery with Children in the House

These shares are from COSA's that attended a workshop at the Oakland, CA COSA Convention this year. We hope that you find these shares helpful, and encourage other COSA's to share how it is for you.

Working on recovery from co-sex addiction with a pre-teen in the house started to bring up some challenges and questions, so I was excited to attend the workshop that addressed this issue at the COSA Convention.

One of the big questions I had was how to protect my child from the details of my and my partner's recovery, yet not feel like I'm perpetuating a secret, which could also be harmful. I learned that other parents are open about going to meetings and, if their child asks about the purpose of the meeting, they say it's a support group that helps them to be a better person. Like with other questions that kids ask in life, parents need only give them the amount of information that is appropriate for them. Everyone on the panel said their children weren't that interested in the details anyway, so a short answer like the one above satisfies them. It also models that seeking help with your personal growth is a healthy thing to do.

Another way that parents have protected their children is to keep the program literature in a private place. With our house being only 800 square feet finding a private place for anything is a challenge but I've moved the books from near our bed to our dresser drawers for now.

The other message that I took away from the workshop was the reminder that our children have their own path to follow in their lives. While we can do our best to raise them in a healthy way, they are their own people with their own set of life lessons to learn. —D.D.

Working the COSA program with kids in the house is not an easy task. When I first found out about my qualifier's addiction, we sprung into recovery. At first we attended meetings on opposite nights so we wouldn't have to find a sitter for our two young children. He seemed to have no problem attending meetings. He started with two a week and seemed happy when he'd return. I, on the other hand, was TERRIFIED. It was painful for me to go to my first meeting.

Upon entering recovery, I jumped into finding a sponsor, and read all the literature I could get my hands on. I started with Step 1, and told my story to a lot of recovery and non-recovery people. I quickly realized that non-recovery people didn't understand. I had no sense of purpose when I found out. I felt absolutely worthless. I understood that I needed more meetings. With the help of my Higher Power and my COSA fellowship, I've started two meetings in my area. Given that my kids were one and three years old at the time, it was difficult to adjust my schedule accordingly but I made it work. Starting a meeting gave me a renewed sense of purpose in life. It had an amazing affect on my recovery. Yes, it took time away from working my Steps, but it opened me up and took me out of isolation.

My children know that certain nights are designated as Mommy nights, certain nights are Daddy nights, and certain nights the baby sitter will be putting them to bed, because Mommy and Daddy both have a meeting on that night. It is not easy for me to make program calls with the children around, so I either have to wait until they are involved in something where I can step away, or I use e-mail to reach out to my COSA fellows. It really helps me to pick up the phone and "chat" with my program fellows. It makes it much easier to pick up the phone to check in, knowing the call doesn't have to have an insane amount of details and that I can "spell speak" so the children won't understand. I know that tactic won't last forever though.

It is now almost three years into my recovery work and I can see that I am a much stronger person and a better mother to my two kids.

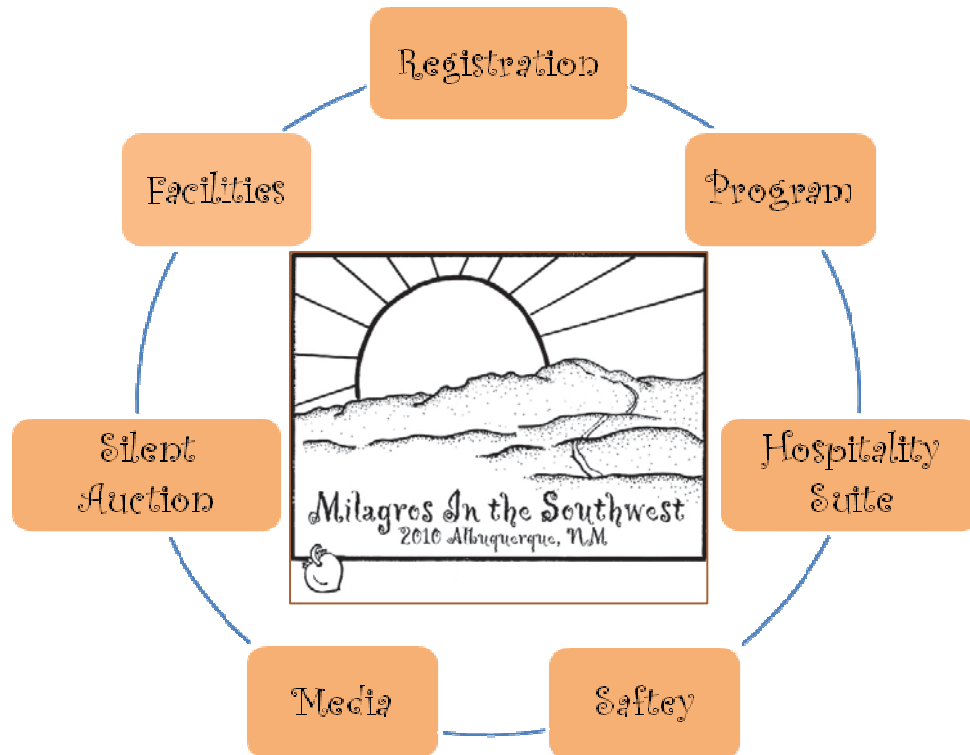
- Laura G.

Milagros in the Southwest-2010 Albuquerque, N. M.

Save the Date: May 28th - May 30th

Website: www.cosa-recovery.org/abq2010

Login: Milagros Password: abq2010



All of the committees have openings and would **LOVE your ideas and creativity!**

Contact convention@cosa-recovery.org to let us know which committees you would like to join!

The Convention Committee conference calls are held on the 2nd Sunday of every month

Time: 12:30pm (Pacific); 1:30pm (Mountain); 2:30pm (Central); 3:30pm (East coast)

2009 Meeting Dates:

Sept 13, 2009; Oct 11, 2009; Nov 8, 2009; Dec 13, 2009

2010 Meeting Dates:

Jan 10, 2010; Feb 14, 2010; Mar 14, 2010; Apr 11, 2010; May 9, 2010

Conference Call number:

616-712-8000 Access Code: 352988# *(please note these numbers are subject to change)*

"We are so excited to have the Convention come to the LAND OF ENCHANTMENT so that we can find new connections through hope strength and experience"

Brittany



Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

The **Ninth Step** will cure faintness of heart, or at least it did for me. It is the last cleaning-house step before we get to those that maintain our sobriety, which are so important in and of themselves. I believe only the courage realized from doing the best Ninth Step I could do at the time allowed me to continue the maintenance steps as a lifelong recovering COSA.

Realizing that I needed to make amends to those who, in my view, had caused me so much pain resulted in initial resentment toward the program and the steps. I felt I had been tricked into the Eighth Step by the Fourth and that the Ninth called for more than I had to give.

But then there were those promises: I was going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. I would not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. Fear of people and of economic insecurity would leave me! Okay, that was enough enticement for me.

Then I heard an amend included, according to my sponsor and many others, asking the “amendee” if there was anything they wanted to say to me OR anything I could do to make things right.

Well most people on my Eighth Step list said that they believed I was being too hard on myself and didn’t even feel I owed an amends and there was nothing they needed from me. However, one sibling did have a need to tell me some “you always ...” statements that had nothing to do with what my amends to her were. And by the way, my amends was for my judgmental attitude toward her our entire lives. So I got back what I had been dishing out (in my mind), and learned she had lots of the same on her mind, which was probably very healing to vent, although I’ve never heard her say so. I was able to listen without comment then, but it is only now in writing this that I realize I did make it right by allowing her to vent and not turning it back on her. I love the way I always receive so much more from service than I give. Will that cause me to write more for The Balance?? (Thinking out loud.)

At this year’s COSA convention, I asked a presenter how we take care of ourselves during this part of the Ninth Step — if someone, *not in recovery*, wants to vent. (Notice I still have judgment issues to work on and yet I believe there is a boundary need if we are making amends to an active addict, to protect ourselves.)

I loved the presenter’s response. He said first, *always* put God between you and the person you are making amends to, and remember you can simply turn sideways and watch the comments go right on by you. In other words, turn the other cheek, or take what you need and leave the rest. When I do that I find that sometimes, later, I am more receptive to what might be a gold nugget, or two, from the feedback I invited and received from those to whom I make amends. This is especially true when I know I have the steps and HP’s guidance to determine what might be useful to me for maintaining my program and keeping my side of the street clean, not to mention further realization of those glorious promises!!

Thanks for letting me share!

- Lisa W.





Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong admitted it.

In each of the Twelve steps, I have learned a new freedom from old ways that no longer serve me or my recovery. For me, the tenth step was a lesson in the freedom of balance. Originally, I thought well, this step is going to be a cake walk! It sounds like I just have to run around and say I'm sorry to everyone. Sounds good to me! I am very used to that! While I have found that I need to acknowledge my transgressions against others, intentional or not, more importantly, I need to acknowledge my transgressions against myself in this step! WOW! This is really something I've never done before. In my ninth step, I wrote my letter of amends to myself and it was very hard and gave me insomnia for three days and that was very difficult, but now I have to promptly admit it! REALLY!!!??? I said the serenity prayer and began the real work of the Tenth Step.

A well-known Twelve Step book calls us to meditate daily on various aspects of our lives, i.e. Happiness, Growth, Peace of Mind, Intimacy, etc. Intimacy? What do you mean INTIMACY? I broke up with my addict. I have no one to be intimate with! My dog? Well we are already very close and I do not need to do this step. I will say I'm sorry a few times and move on to Step Eleven, thank you very much! How very wrong I was. On day seven, the author asks us to review intimacy in terms of our ourselves and if we sell ourselves out to others and how do we feel about that?

In previous steps, I learned that I am very quick to beat up on myself and that I should just do it everybody else's way because they know better and because they are smarter than me, and better than me. In my fourth step, I also learned that the lion's share of my resentments were because I did not listen to myself and my HP given intuition. This step was very good for me. It helped me define my happiness, my serenity, what achievement means to me and how I've let others control those parts of me for far too long. It defined my heart and my mind and my courage so now that will be on my radar rather than the thoughts and feelings of others. I learned that if it is not for me, I can say no. If I see achievement in my life, it doesn't really matter what my father thinks. I learned we each have our set of circumstances and we each must define them and approach them in our own unique ways, even though each of us believes that our way is best. Of course, it is best for the person doing the thinking!

In step Ten, I was confronted by character defects once again. But this time, I was in maintenance mode. I was fine-tuning, rather than surviving. The Tenth Step is a lot like wearing braces for the first time. It can be very uncomfortable and really awkward learning these new circumstances but the payoff is ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL SMILE & PEACE of MIND!

Brian K.

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 them 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 (Higher Power)?

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?

