

Balance

Newsletter of International Service Organization of COSA



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You have a story to tell.

The *Balance* will be starting a series of articles focused on COSA diversity and we extend an invitation to you to share your unique story.

- Are you a member of the LGBTQIA2S+ community?
- Are you a child, sibling, parent, co-parent, grandparent, or in-law of an addict?
- Do you see part of your COSA story represented in our Diversity Statement?

If you're interested in sharing, or just want to know more, please email us at balance@cosa-recovery.org.



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ISO of COSA Diversity Statement

- COSA Diversity is consistent with the Third Tradition of COSA, which states that the only requirement for COSA membership is that our lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior.
- The COSA Fellowship welcomes all genders, all varieties of relationship to the addict, all religious and spiritual preferences, all employment statuses, all marital statuses, all ethnicities, cultures, and languages. COSA does not discriminate on the basis of class, sexual orientation or gender identification, physical or mental challenges, race, financial status, or national origins.
- In COSA, we find hope whether or not there is a sexually addicted person currently in our lives.
- COSA Diversity is consistent with the First Tradition of COSA, which states that our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on COSA unity.



Why I Work the Steps

Why do I work the Steps and what brought me to them?

For many years I did not work the Steps. By the time I found COSA I had been brought to my knees by the dysfunction in me and the dysfunction in my spouse. Finding this group was a huge relief. I felt like I belonged there from the moment I entered the room on that dark, cold, and snowy night. I don't know what made me risk the drive in that snow storm to that area where I had never been, before the age of SIRI and Google Maps and all-wheel drive. I don't honestly know how I got there. I know I felt pain, desperation, and grief. I know the three other people there that night welcomed me, and although I can't remember what they talked about, I do remember how it felt being there, with people who understood, for maybe the first time in my life, what it was like to be me in my marriage. I stayed in that meeting. I kept coming back. The belonging was a cocoon I could sink into. For the first six months all I could do was cry during my two minutes of sharing. The grief came in waves. I was lost. Being in that group with others who were also lost or who had been lost in the same way as I was a relief and a joy. Finding my place in the family of Twelve Step fellowships was a revelation. But no one in the group had ever worked the Twelve Steps. No one knew how to work the Steps. So we didn't.

I was brought to my knees again. I was in a new town and in a new group, and I was just beginning to become willing to look at my marriage and the abuse I continued to suffer in it. I felt pain, desperation, and grief. This time I also felt anger. And hope. I knew I had to change. I knew I needed help. I had no idea what working the Steps would bring me, but I became willing to jump. There were five other group members who jumped with me. Four of us stayed together for a year and a half until we had worked all Twelve Steps. We had no leader or sponsor. We used a workbook that we found at a bookstore. I had no clue what I was doing or where I was going, but it didn't matter. We all went where we were supposed to go.

And that, to me, is at the heart of the transformation I keep experiencing when working the Steps. Just the act of letting go to face a future I cannot imagine, that terrifies me and that I don't trust—with the willingness to go anyway—has been miraculous.

What I found in that group of four was awful and hard and painful and not what I was looking for or expected. I didn't like it a lot. But somewhere along the way I recognized the adventure that I was in. I saw that each Step had a life of its own and when I could surrender to the life inside that Step, my life opened up in ways it never had before. The lessons were hard, I don't deny it. I still complain when my Higher Power is somewhat of a taskmaster, but I know I am a better

person to myself and to others because I have worked the Steps. It has been worth the journey. It has been worth the time and effort and pain and heartache, and also the love and the joy.

Working the Steps has brought me to the next stage of my life. It has brought me the courage to face the abuse I was living with and also perpetuating. It has brought me the courage to set boundaries around my spouse's abuse and my own. It brought me the courage to stick to my boundaries no matter what. It brought me the courage to learn to live without my spouse. Ultimately it brought me the courage to get a divorce.

I learned about my own addiction to my ex-husband. I learned about my dysfunctional attachments to many people and situations in my life. I changed jobs, changed friends, and faced myself in a way I had never done before. I hated a lot of it. But I did put some things to rest. I was able to move on.

Working the Steps has been an integral part of my COSA journey. I have needed to change my situations and how I treat others. Growth is available to me in this fellowship—as much as I need or want or can handle. I can grow in this fellowship and my life until I die, and that makes the adventure that started on a cold, snowy night with a group of four desperate people completely worthwhile.

~Anonymous



From the COSA Board

Dear COSA Fellowship,

It has been wonderful to dig in and really practice the principles of our programs and rely on our Higher Power to guide us. I am so grateful to have shared and been of service at our “It Takes Heart” COSA Convention held May 31–June 3 in Columbus, Ohio. Many of us experienced stormy challenges, but we made it! I really had to dig in and ask my Higher Power to remove my fears and anxiety over the weather, money, and technology issues. It was comforting to see I was not the only one with these struggles and that together we were able to do what we could not do alone.

This was followed by our Board Working Weekend which then was followed by our “annual” delegate meeting. It was a true demonstration of COSA Concepts in action. I want to thank each and every one of you who have stepped up to be of service with our awesome group of COSAs in recovery! Thank you all for your contributions, especially for sharing your experience, strength, and hope.

I have been reminded that by taking on too much service, not asking for help, and not letting others take responsibility, I was causing harm to myself and others. In other words, I was spiraling down into caretaking again. This showed up through bad behaviors such as being restless, impatient, and disagreeable, holding resentments, and wanting to point the finger and blame others. An additional irony: I had been showing up late and hungry to meetings. Time to practice HALT!

With renewed efforts to study the COSA Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, I see that we are building awareness, accepting what we cannot change, acknowledging difficult emotions and sensations, and mustering courage to change the things we can. I get to reflect more on being a trusted servant and not governing. I get to figure out what I can do to make direct amends “with a little help from my friends.” One of my amends is stepping back as co-chair and granting other willing and awesome COSAs the benefits of stepping into service. Isn’t this a wonderful way to empower members of our COSA family? Being of service has been an excellent opportunity to change my thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and get out of my stinking thinking that I am a bossy know-it-all.

I get to move away from past regrets, dissipate my fears, learn from mistakes rather than punish myself for them, and reduce my preoccupation with what people think. Instead, I can now focus on ways to hold space, co-inspire, motivate, help, collaborate, and learn from others compassionately. Even better, I get to practice the principles of our program in all areas of my life.

In grateful and joyful service,
Eveline



Service With A Smile



Interview 1: Martha Jean. Edited for brevity.

J: Welcome Martha Jean. I'm so happy to interview you! My name is Julana S. and I'm currently chair of the board. I reside in Houston and I'm interviewing Martha Jean. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

MJ: I have been in COSA since 2015. I live in Ohio and I love service because it keeps me sane.

J: Excellent! Which is why you are the first person that I'm going to interview for Service with a Smile. All right. Martha Jean, can you briefly—I know this is a big ask of you because you have quite a history—describe your service history?

MJ: My first service was simply reading in meetings and that was a really scary thing at first, but I also knew that it was an important thing for me to do. Probably the next thing that I did was to realize that I needed to have a better understanding of the slogans because they could work for me. I love to play with pictures and things so I essentially made a scrapbook that had the various slogans in it. I printed them and we took them to our meetings and set one up and that was our slogan for the day.

Let's see, then I became the delegate for the meeting which was a huge learning service and it was an opportunity. I'm really glad I did that because while I was there, my mentor was the next chairperson for the convention committee. So, I got to be on the convention committee and do Zoom for the convention. Eventually it led to board service and group service and you know, I just enjoy whatever I do.

J: Nice! Thank you. How would you say service has impacted your COSA sobriety and or your connectedness?

MJ: Oh, in both ways. My sobriety because I make sure that my service is giving and not escaping. Because workaholicism is in my inner circle, I have to be aware of the difference between trying to escape reality and

trying to serve reality. That's been a really good thing for me to work on.

J: So, you've done a lot of service. Why do you do it?

MJ: Because it keeps me sane. It really does. It gives me the opportunity to recognize that today I'm someplace where I can be a happy, healthy person and I was not a healthy, happy person when I started COSA, for sure.

J: So, you've kind of answered this already but what have you gained from taking on service tasks?

MJ: Friends! I wouldn't have known you had I not been in service with you on the board. I mean, some of my best friends have been in COSA. I'm closer to people in COSA than I am to friends that are physically closer to me. There is just an emotional closeness. If I need emotional support, I know who to go to. Absolutely. And I have a plethora of friends I can go to. It's not just one or two. It's a lot of people that I can say, "I need some support right now. Do you have time to support me?"

J: Nice. As you said, you started off just reading at meetings and you worked your way through several different opportunities. At each step, did you have fears before you started that service? If so, what were they and how did you resolve them?

MJ: Always there was fear because I would think, "Could I do this? Well, I don't know how to do it yet." But the resolution was always to trust that my Higher Power would show me what to do through other COSAs or through some other method; that somehow, I would learn to do what needed to be done and I would do it in a way that would be of service to other people.

J: All right. How has service that you've done in COSA benefited your life outside of COSA?

MJ: Oh my goodness! Just this last Sunday I had the opportunity to be in a meeting where someone said "you didn't do this, you didn't do that", and I was able to sit there and not retaliate and not even respond. I just took it in and thought, "this is about her, not about

me.” After the meeting I was able to call her and communicate in a positive way so that she knew that I still cared about her. But man, was I aware that I refuse to be a victim. I’m able to put up a shield that says this is not about me and that’s directly from what I’ve learned in COSA.

J: So, is there anything that you wish you’d done differently in your service work to COSA?

MJ: I wish I’d had a service sponsor sooner. There’s not much I would do differently because I thoroughly enjoy what I do. I’ve recently turned over some responsibilities to someone else and it’s been a real growing experience to sit back and watch somebody else do something that they’re just learning, and for me to just sit back and watch and know that HP is in charge. I think that Higher Power has led me and there’s not a whole lot I would do differently. A few things, but, you know, it’s a journey. I’m learning. I’m not too old to learn.

J: Never! Never too old to learn! You mentioned a service sponsor. Can you tell me more about that?

MJ: Because I have the ability to take on more than probably what I should or what is reasonable, I try to use my service sponsor to say all right, this is something I’ve been asked to do. Do you think it’s reasonable for me to do it and we’ll just talk about the service opportunity. The other thing I do is to wait for 24

hours or so and make sure that I talk to my Higher Power about it before I actually say yes, I will do this.

J: That’s a great idea. I haven’t heard of a service sponsor. I like that idea. Last question. What advice do you have for someone considering taking on a service task or a larger service role?

MJ: First of all, I believe that HP will guide us to those opportunities that will make us grow. And second of all, if there is a request it may or may not be HP inviting you to that which is one of the reasons I think it’s really important to sit back and say, “All right, Higher Power, is this the right thing for me to do at this time?” It’s recognizing what’s reasonable, recognizing what Higher Power is calling me to do today, and being reasonable about whatever it might be. Did that answer?

J: Yes, that was a great answer. I know this was brief but I have to tell you, I’ve known you for years and I have enjoyed this conversation because I learned more about you. I’m doing this series as a service and right off the bat I’m already getting benefits from it. So, thank you so much, Martha Jean, for being my first interviewee!

Please [click here to listen to the audio version](#) of this interview under the Resources tab on cosa-recovery.org.





Announcements

Convention Opinions

The COSA ISO Board serves YOU and all COSA members. Please share your opinions about ISO in-person conventions in this quick, anonymous [COSA-wide survey](#) to collect input regarding future in-person conventions.

[Take Survey](#)

2025 Convention Needs You!

Also, the 2025 virtual convention committee needs your experience, strength, hope, and talents! Please contact convention@cosa-recovery.org to be a part of this collaboration.

Your COSA Literature Committee needs editors.

We have assignments to fit every time budget, even if you only have 15 minutes per week.

We offer training, resources, and mentoring to complement your existing experience. Your service will be making a positive impact on our fellowship and help us carry the COSA message to those who still suffer. An extra perk is that editors get a first look at literature and communications as part of the behind-the-scenes team!

If you're interested or would like more information please email litcom@cosa-recovery.org

Become a Delegate

When your group participates in COSA as a whole by electing a year-round delegate, you help the ISO understand and serve your group's needs. You share your experience, strength, and hope with other meetings. Your ability to apply the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts deepens. You connect with COSA at the heart of it all!

Resources for Meeting

The Outreach committee is here to help you and your meeting obtain needed resources, such as the new *COSA Recovery* book, scholarships, and new meeting materials!

Contact us at outreachcommittee@cosa-recovery.org and let us know what you or your meeting needs, or any barriers you are facing in obtaining COSA literature. We hope to hear from you soon!

COSA Recovery

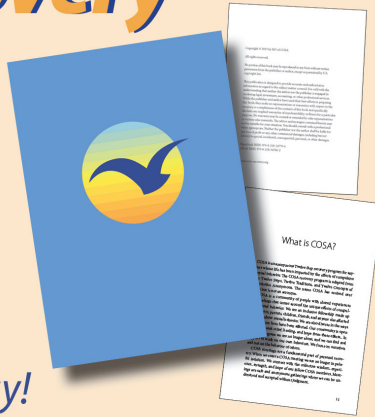
This beautiful book features all new, conference-approved writing on COSA's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts PLUS chapters on more than a dozen powerful COSA tools.

PRINT
US\$25.00

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US\$10.00

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Amazon

Get yours today!



WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE YOU RECOVERING?

As we grow in our recovery, we develop a new way of living that includes taking our recovery out into the world with us. Please send an anonymous photo to balance@cosa-recovery.org showing us where in the world you have taken your copy of *COSA Recovery*. This photo might include your favorite reading spot, a special pen you use for notes, or a sweet treat! Be sure to include the location of your *COSA Recovery* photo so we can see how far and wide the COSA message is being carried!

Jot Your Thought



*What's your favorite
COSA recovery quote or
slogan and why?*

Jot yours down and send it to:
balance@cosa-recovery.org and inform us
of whether you wish to remain anonymous.

I treasure every page of the COSA Recovery book. Here's a gem I read just today: "In recovery, anonymity takes a deeper, spiritual meaning. Practicing Tradition Twelve ensures that the COSA message, not the messenger, will always be our focus." Simple, but so powerful and humbling. This book is packed with ESH and I'm so grateful that I was in COSA when it was released! —Anonymous



COSA TOOLS OF RECOVERY

THE “WE” OF THE FELLOWSHIP— PROGRAM TOOLS AND TEXTS

When I started doing Step work in COSA, I was taught that the first word of the First Step is “We.” I spent a lot of time in my life thinking the only help available was if it was from “me.” While I had many friends and occasionally asked them for help, my focus was really on trying to do everything myself. The effects of compulsive sexual behavior in my life led me to seek help in COSA; I knew I was desperate because this was not what I would normally do.

One of the first tools I started to access as a new COSA was making program calls. I needed a lot of help and support, and I was so miserable! I called a lot of COSAs! Some people let me leave voice messages and some people answered, but whatever I got—it really helped! Sometimes I called eight different people and left eight different voicemails and then usually I felt better. The “we” of the program was working for me.

I mostly called people who were new like me. I was intimidated by people who had too much recovery! I thought they would tell me I didn’t do my circles right or tell me I was doing everything wrong and be judgmental of my newness in recovery. I had a terrible fear that I was doing everything wrong.

The “old-timers” seemed kind of mean to me but I now realize they just had boundaries. I only called them if I wanted to ask a question about service or Step work and even then, I found it hard!

Still, even when I only called my fellow newcomers, my program calls helped. We muddled through and hashed things out together. I got to benefit from the wisdom of their sponsors and their Step work, too! And I could be as insane as I needed to be without my fear of judgment. I was really in a lot of confusion, pain, self-hatred, and doubt when I was new. I was just beginning to find a Higher Power and I didn’t have a lot of tools. The Steps felt so hard!

I also called my sponsor, and he was very loving and helpful. My sponsor couldn’t take all my calls, though. I had a lot of insanity in my life from my poor coping mechanisms, a high tolerance for chaos, and so much grief—I needed a lot of support!

Working the Steps and using the tools and all the support really helped! It worked because I worked it!

Now, many years in COSA later, I still make program calls; not as many, but I do still make them. And, I take a lot of them! Usually they are scheduled, but I try to pick up the phone if I can. I also text with lots of folks, too, which is great when a call isn’t possible.

Most calls I make these days are Step Ten check-ins: what is going well/what isn’t; do I find myself in fear, resentment, or shame; am I having trouble setting boundaries? I have learned to make the call before things escalate. I have also learned that if I am on my way to a COSA meeting and I am feeling bad, I shouldn’t wait until the meeting to share. I need to text or call someone BEFORE I go to the meeting. I don’t need to go to meetings desperate anymore; I can reach out to others beforehand if I need to.

continued

I also do Step Eleven check-ins when I am unclear what God's will is for me and to make sure I am not focusing on my own self will. It also helps me to hear others share their experience, strength, and hope.

I still check in with my sponsor weekly. I also have a service co-sponsor who I talk with weekly to review my service commitments (in all areas of my life), and another program friend who I check in with regularly about self care and other matters in my life.

I learn a lot from my sponsees and I try to be available for them when I can. They frequently come to their own conclusions and that is such a gift to me! When I started giving it away was when I started to really get it!

The COSA fellowship has helped me in so many ways, I can't imagine where I would be without the "we" of our program. Trying to manage the effects of compulsive sexual behavior on my own was destroying my life. Having others who understand and can help guide me and remind me of our Twelve Step solution gives me a wonderful life today! I am so grateful for all of you. Thank you!

~ Anonymous



STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8· 9 ·10·11·12

MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.

When I found COSA, I knew there were amends and apologies to be made—not *by me*, but *to me*. I fully expected my recovering partner to immediately make detailed, remorseful amends to me. I had stern expectations of what my partner should be doing in recovery, but that shifted once I began to work the Steps for myself. I learned that the Twelve Steps *were for me*, for *my own personal recovery*, to restore and transform *me*. When my own defective character patterns came to light in working the Twelve Steps, it was quite a revelation.

Steps Four, Five, Six, Seven, and Eight revealed to me my personality problem, character flaws, and other relationship difficulties. I found many of my character flaws were deeply rooted in my family of origin experience and survival. Minor repairs as well as drastic changes were necessary.

Working towards Step Nine, the previous Steps helped me see my flawed patterns of behavior. This was well before I could know what amends I would be making. My habitual criticizing and judging were hurtful and offensive to others. *I expected others to “act or think my way”*, rather than expecting them to be exactly who they were. This uncovered my lack of acceptance and a pattern of selfishness and dishonesty, by expecting others to be like me. My self-righteousness created distrust and angst in my relationships. I had a serious case of “know-it-allism” which made things even worse.

In my earlier Step work, defiance and rebelliousness were uncovered. I thought I knew better (pride/self-righteousness), or I simply didn't like being told what to do (rebelliousness and defiance). I was not a team player; I wanted to be the star and the boss (self-centeredness, selfishness, and dishonesty were all part of that). Underlying it all was fear, fear, and more fear. Deeper reflection in Steps Four through Seven led me to see how my family of origin experience influenced how I acted at work. As a child, I was told (or ordered) what to do, and how to do it. I resented that as a kid. Unfortunately, I was still acting that way in my adult work life.

The list goes on. Impatience, intolerance, being sneaky (dishonest). It all related back to my family of origin's coping mechanisms. I learned when I was young not to ask for what I wanted, because the answer was “NO”. Therefore, to get what I wanted, I needed to be secretive (sneaky) about my needs. Unfortunately, I brought this behavior into my adult life, and it became pure dishonesty.

Was I scared when I saw all of this? Yes, but *I became willing to become willing to make amends (with the help of a good sponsor and my Higher Power)*.

My sponsor taught me to write a script for each amends to be made. We went over each one. This was invaluable; I was able to clean up the wording, make sure my wrongs were clear and precise, and remove statements that could put the other person on the defensive or potentially harm them. My script was very specific as to the harm I caused; not sugar-coated, just the facts. And they still are.

For example, my full amends to an old boss went something like this: *Jerold, I need to make amends to you. As your employee, I was defiant and did not follow the guidance and instructions you gave to me. I acted disrespectfully and selfishly through my lack of cooperation. I caused harm to the positive work environment you were building. I was wrong and I regret my behavior. If there is anything else I have done that has caused you or our office harm, I would like to know so I can make it right. With God's help, I will change my behavior moving forward and contribute in a more positive way.* (I later received a letter from this boss, letting me know that he never saw me as a problem, etc.)

In making amends, I do not make statements such as how I'd like to go for ice cream, spend more time together, become friends, how much I admire them, what a wonderful boss they are, etc. I make amends by admitting my wrongs using very specific language, and I sit with my Higher Power and the discomfort when I am done. I allow space for the recipient of my amends to say whatever they may want to say (or not say). That is it.

I was taught to never ask for anything when making an amends, not even forgiveness! I am not there to receive or get anything, I am there to OFFER my amends, period. If the person forgives me, great, but that is not a requirement. I am cleaning my side of the street; the outcome is 100% in my Higher Power's hands. If I am rejected, so be it; I still made the amends and can move on with my HP by my side.

Other amends-

To my mother: Unexpectedly, I received a written amends letter from my mother one month after I made my amends to her. It resolved a lot for me, validated me, and answered some questions.

To my stepson: He cried and hugged me when I admitted my wrong behaviors and my regret. We have a healthier, more loving relationship today because I owned my part.

To my old roommate: When I was done making the amends, we cried together, and then began to laugh together about that crazy time in both of our lives. Today we are very close, and I can look her in the eye and not feel shame.

To my brother and his wife for inserting myself into their marriage, etc. They immediately forgave me and didn't really see what the problem was.

Building upon the thoroughness of which I completed the previous Steps, I carried out my Step Nine amends with clarity and a genuine trust in my Higher Power. My willingness to go through the Step process has introduced me to a lighter, happier version of myself. I am not on a collision course with others as I used to be and have a greater awareness of my attitudes, behaviors, and feelings. The promises are coming true in my life. I feel a sense of freedom and peace today which is exactly what I was looking for when I came into recovery.

~A Grateful Anonymous Recovering COSA

STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9· **10** ·11·12

CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT.

It was only after completing the first nine Steps that I truly appreciated the impact of my work. I found a new sense of peace and purpose, and my thinking became clearer. I used to live reactively, feeling powerless and out of control, always seeking external solutions. However, as I progressed through the Steps, this way of living began to fade. At this point, I chose to entrust my will and life to the care of a Higher Power of my understanding. Trusting this Higher Power was a challenge, but as I continued on this spiritual journey and attended meetings, I found reassurance and hope from the stories of recovering COSAs. When I reached Step Four, I conducted a sincere and thorough examination of my life, peeling back layers of resistance and despair. Step Four set the stage for Step Ten, where I closely examined my thoughts, feelings, and behavior patterns. This fearless and gentle process allowed me to free myself from shame and guilt, and to move forward with greater freedom. This is the foundation for Step Ten, during which I closely examine my thoughts, feelings, and behavior patterns daily. This fearless and gentle process allowed me to release myself from shame and guilt and move forward more freely.

As I continued working on Steps Five through Nine, the process became clearer with these keywords: honesty, courage, willingness, humility, and trust. Being honest had many layers for me because acknowledging my strengths and weaknesses has been an ongoing challenge. I had to be constantly reminded that my attributes would bring me serenity and sanity rather than staying stuck in my old coping mechanisms.

The transformative power of Step Ten brought the “one day at a time” slogan to a centering mantra for me. As the Promises say, this was becoming more apparent and increasingly consistent. “No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.” I learned this from the beginning of this spiritual program at my first meeting and I had become hopeful. This spiritual way of life began to take root, flower, and ultimately bloom into less reactivity where I began to live my life with more sanity and ease. The tools of the COSA program reminded me to pause and reassess when challenges and uncertainty occur, because that does not just disappear. I learned to meet the reactivity and uncertainty with a more gentle and forgiving stance toward myself. The crashing waves of acting compulsively through abrupt responses and behaviors began to be more recognizable and more attainable to work through.

I began to nurture positive attributes of being mindful, humble, and accountable. Every day, I get to pause and take a personal inventory, and if I was wrong and needed to make amends to myself or another, I would promptly admit it with less guilt and shame. Once again, I could count on a Higher Power today and bask in this welcomed reality that the program has brought me the strength to live life more fully and serenely.

~ Stephanie H., California

TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

COSA, AS SUCH, OUGHT NEVER BE ORGANIZED; BUT WE MAY CREATE SERVICE BOARDS OR COMMITTEES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE

When I came into COSA, I was tired of the chaos in my life. Before recovery, I tried to control the chaos of sex addiction and mental illness by imposing organization on me and my family. I broke down our credit card statements into an elaborate spreadsheet, all the way down to a category labeled “expenses for pet toys,” as if my dog Elvis was going to reimburse us! I watched videos on how to fold a fitted bedsheet perfectly. I papered the house with Post-it notes about the correct position of the toilet seat. None of these attempts to control relieved the chaos in my life because they were not rooted in the *spiritual principles* of recovery. Tradition Nine gives us spiritual principles for living and working with others in a healthy way.

Tradition Nine states: “COSA, as such, should never be organized.” Sounds good but I have questions! How can COSA function without a hierarchy? How does a COSA group make decisions without a leader? How can a meeting stay sober if we can’t eject someone who is disruptive? I’ve learned the answers from seeing how COSA functions well with a Higher Power to guide us under Tradition Nine’s spiritual principles. Let’s see how that works with my questions.

COSA functions without a hierarchy because we are all equal members under Tradition Three—we each belong because we’ve been affected by compulsive sexual behavior. No one person has authority over meetings, conventions, or ISO. We have trusted servants who serve on boards or committees, or on their own, to follow the consensus of the fellowship inspired by COSA’s Higher Power. Our individual meetings aren’t presided over by the meeting secretary—that person has no greater authority than the newcomer in the room—they simply read the script. If a question comes up, the meeting secretary asks for a group conscience as inspired by our Higher Power. Even our ISO board members work together as equals and no one person has the final say on matters affecting COSA. As stated in Tradition Two, “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

Have you ever been to a meeting where someone shared something that was graphic, political, religious, or otherwise triggering? How do we prevent this or silence someone? We don’t. We gently remind members that COSA has no opinion on outside issues under Tradition Ten. We remember when we first came to COSA, we may have been in so much pain that we described inappropriate experiences in colorful terms. When I first came to COSA I swore up a storm. No one kicked me out. As I got more sober I saw that this was harmful to myself and the meeting. One person shared that swearing was triggering to them. They didn’t call me out or direct their share at me across the table. I’m grateful that we don’t have enforcers or bouncers! If something happens that disturbs the meeting, we can each take care of ourselves or take a group conscience on how to handle it. A group conscience is made up of equal votes.

When we leave a meeting, we can take the principles of Tradition Nine with us into our other groups and relationships. As our *COSA Recovery* book tells us, “[t]he lessons from Tradition Nine may teach us how to cultivate equality and healthy responsiveness in our personal relationships as well.” I can attest to this. In COSA I’ve made progress under Tradition Nine—I no longer keep spreadsheets or issue decrees to my family. In fact, my dog ignores all of my commands!

~Anonymous, Burlingame

TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

COSA HAS NO OPINION ON OUTSIDE ISSUES; HENCE THE COSA NAME OUGHT NEVER BE DRAWN INTO PUBLIC CONTROVERSY.

Many of us begin attending COSA meetings with one question: do I stay or do I go in my relationship with the sex addict?

Whether we have been affected by the compulsive sexual behavior of a partner, family member, or friend, or whether the acting out happened recently or long ago, we come to COSA because we want answers. According to our Tenth Tradition, the COSA fellowship and our group have “no opinion on outside issues.” While we seek to support and carry our message of hope to those who have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior and are suffering, we as a fellowship and we as a COSA meeting do not have an opinion on whether individual members of our meeting should stay or leave relationships.

There is no one “right” answer. Some of us are committed to staying; others leave right away, or exercise an option in between. We believe the choice is made between the COSA member and their Higher Power. Many of us struggle with understanding the difference between our will and our Higher Power’s will for us in relationship with a person with compulsive sexual behavior. We may not be sure how to best care for ourselves. We were relieved to hear other COSA members suggest that we did not have to decide today. We were welcome to just keep coming back while we found our own individual path.

We found comfort by regularly attending meetings, sharing with other members, reading literature, asking someone to sponsor us, doing Step work, taking on a service position, praying, and meditating. Over time, many of us found the answer we were seeking. Others of us found the question simply no longer mattered as much. We found peace, serenity, and gratitude from working our own COSA program.

~Anonymous



MAKING SEVENTH TRADITION DONATIONS



**COSA's
Tradition
Seven**

Every COSA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

There are no dues or fees for COSA membership. Our fellowship is supported entirely through our own members' voluntary contributions.

**Make Your Secure
Donation Today**

SENDING DONATIONS: *Include your Meeting Number*

When **making a donation** to the ISO of COSA, please include your meeting number so that we can record it properly and post it in the *Balance*. We thank you for your support!

To find your meeting number:

- Go to <http://www.cosa-recovery.org>, click on the "Meetings" tab, then on the appropriate sub-tab ("Local Meetings", "Online Meetings", or "Phone Meetings")
- Search for your meeting and note the meeting number in parentheses next to your meeting name.

RECURRING DONATIONS: *Keeping Payment Information Up-to-Date*

Thank you for your donations to the International Service Organization of COSA. Currently, our system is set to automatically update your credit card when it gets a new expiration date. If you need to increase, decrease, or cancel your recurring donations, please contact the ISO of COSA at iso@cosa-recovery.org. Your support is appreciated!

Seventh Tradition: Financial Report

June 2024

Individual Donations	\$ 155.00
Individual Recurring	\$ 1,001.00
CA-23	\$ 60.00
IN-06	\$ 50.00
MN-02	\$ 150.00
TEL-07	\$ 60.00
TX-04	\$ 20.00
TX-23	\$ 30.00
TX-Ft Worth COSA-NLM	\$ 1,214.05
Total	\$ 2,740.05

July 2024

Individual Donations	\$ 47.00
Individual Recurring	\$ 962.00
CA-26	\$ 20.00
CA-29	\$ 55.00
ONL-49	\$ 261.05
TX-22	\$ 30.00
Seventh Tradition Fund Drive	\$ 60.00
Total	\$ 1,460.05

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.

Guidelines for submitting literature:

<https://cosa-recovery.org/service/write-for-cosa/writing-guidelines-for-cosa-literature/>

Please send your articles and questions to: balance@cosa-recovery.org

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