

Balance

Newsletter of International Service Organization of COSA



A Fellowship Beyond Borders: The Gift of COSA

From the depths of insanity and confusion, I was led into a club that no one wants to join. That’s how I felt when I first found COSA. I was angry, frustrated, confused, and completely at rock bottom. I had never felt so alone. I told myself that I was a strong, independent woman who could handle anything, and I think that’s how I appeared to others. But inside, I was falling apart, struggling to keep it together, and the emotional toll was starting to manifest physically.

One cold, rainy evening, I mustered up the courage to drive 30 minutes to my nearest COSA meeting. When I arrived, I found a woman about to lock the door, thinking no one else was coming. As we went inside, I felt relieved that it wasn’t a big group. We read a chapter from a recovery book, but it wasn’t COSA literature. I was resistant, convinced that if I attended long enough, I could prove to our therapist that he was the crazy one, and I was completely fine—he was the problem. Despite my resistance, I kept coming back, and slowly, I started to listen.

Soon after, I took on a service role at the meetings, driven by an urge to “fix” things, even though I was new. I went to the ISO website, ordered COSA literature, and began to truly relate to what I was reading. Over time, I found a sponsor, started working the Steps, and continued doing service. The meetings grew from once a month to weekly, and I felt like I was part of something important. My loneliness disappeared as my connections to people in the fellowship grew, and I never have to be alone again, no matter what time of day. It was the first time in my life that I felt safe, a place where I could learn to be myself, just as I am.

One of my service roles was updating the website. I’ve always loved a project, and I saw areas that needed improvement. I spent a lot of time emailing info@cosa with countless questions—about the literature, sponsorship, and starting new meetings. The fellowship in the UK was very small at the time, and I eventually outpaced my sponsor in the Steps, so I had to part ways and read the rest of my Step work to my

In 2025, the *Balance* is featuring a series called *Diversity in COSA*. Each of these stories, written by a COSA, shares their own unique experience, strength, and hope. We hope these words bring encouragement and inspiration to your journey.

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therapist, as I couldn't find anyone else in the UK who had completed all Twelve Steps of COSA.

Through those emails, I developed a connection with someone from the USA, and I had the chance to meet her in person. Her story resonated with me deeply, and I was inspired by her journey through the Twelve Steps and her service in COSA. I asked her to be my sponsor, despite the 8-hour time difference. I valued her experience, strength, and hope—it was unlike anything I had experienced in the UK. We both committed to making it work, and I felt overjoyed to have a connection with someone across the world. This is one of the things I love most about COSA: when I'm willing to work the program, I find connections beyond my wildest dreams. The fellowship transcends age, race, gender, and orientation—if we connect, we connect. I'm forever grateful for this worldwide community.

I worked the Twelve Steps with my sponsor and learned even more about myself. However, distance made it hard to stay connected, and eventually Higher Power had a different plan and our relationship ended. By then, I was on a mission to make COSA literature more accessible in the UK. During my efforts, I met another COSA member who shared my passion for literature. She became my next sponsor, and though we still had an 8-hour time difference, we made it work through willingness and Zoom.

With her guidance and encouragement, I was given the most fantastic opportunities, including becoming a board member. The thought of this terrified me, especially as I felt like an outsider, being the only one from the UK. But with the support of my sponsor, fellows, and Higher Power, I did it. It was only fear standing in my way. I now believe that I can do anything when the time is right, as long as I'm working this program to the best of my ability. Even getting on a plane from London Heathrow to Atlanta for the convention, and to Florida for the board working weekend, was terrifying. But I knew I was flying to a safe place, because we were all COSAs—it felt like going home to the most loving and accepting family. I had never experienced this before.

From doing board service and attending more international meetings, I met fellows who inspired new beginnings here in the UK, such as our annual retreat. We now have our third retreat booked for May 2025. This has been absolutely wonderful, with international participation not only in attendance but also on the planning committee. I also love the Twelve Days of COSA event, which is always full of people from all over the world. I take any numbers left in the chat box during the Zoom calls because I know how connecting with others benefits my recovery.

Being part of the board and serving on international committees has deepened my recovery beyond words. I've learned so much from my COSA fellows and feel truly blessed to be part of this global community.

I'm so grateful to my current sponsor. We connect regularly, and as long as I'm committed to my recovery, everything else falls into place. Working the Steps and following the path my Higher Power laid before me has connected me to COSA members all over the world. Living on a small island doesn't matter—I feel the worldwide fellowship with me no matter where they are. The connections I've made have enriched my recovery and given me opportunities to serve in unexpected ways, helping me grow and carry the message to those still suffering. What a gift!

The willingness of others makes COSA a safe and inspiring place for me, helping me become the best version of myself. Though we are all different, we share a common goal. My Higher Power is with me today, and the Steps have changed my life, guiding me through fear and giving me the courage to change.

I will always be grateful for COSA and the people in this program, near and far.

~ An Anonymous UK COSA Member



From the COSA Board

Report from the Chair

I love it when a website offers a list of FAQs. These Frequently Asked Questions usually contain answers to the very things I'm wondering about. Direct and to the point. One thing new board members almost always says is something to the effect of, "Wow, I never knew there was this much going on!" So, what do we do on the board? Here are some FAQs that might help answer that overall question.

What positions are on the board? There is a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, committee chairs, as well as liaisons to committees, and members-at-large. According to the COSA ISO bylaws, we are required to have 7-12 members.

How does each person get their role? Sometimes a person has a specific skill, such as accounting, that makes them ideally suited for a certain role. Most of the time, though, people gravitate toward what interests them, where the needs are, and where they believe they can contribute the most. Position holders must have approval from the rest of the board.

What does it take to be on the board? The minimum requirements are at least two years in COSA, completion of the Twelve Steps, currently attending meetings, and working with a sponsor. And a heart for service and a bit of experience, of course!

How do you actually get on the board? You can nominate yourself or you can nominate someone else. <https://cosa-recovery.org/service/iso-of-cosa/> has more details about board service and a link to the nomination form. The nomination form goes to the Nomination Committee which will interview applicants and share the information with the board. The delegates make the final decision at a delegate meeting.

How long does a person serve? Each appointment is for two years. After that, a person can be voted in for up to two more terms if they would like to continue in service (six years total). The term limit is to honor our Traditions and the principle of rotation of service.

What are specific needs for the board right now? Because of term limits, there is always a need for new members. At this moment, we are in need of someone to take the secretary role.

Who does the board work with? The board works with all standing committees (Convention, Technology, Literature, Outreach, Budget and Finance, Nominations), temporary committees (meeting update task force, delegate-board ad hoc for example), Delegate Liaison, the Central Office, and any outside people or organizations such as the bank that holds our accounts, or the company that publishes our book.

What are some things that are happening right now? How can I get plugged in? Here are some highlights.

- *Outreach Committee* – Spanish translations of the Twelve Step booklets are ready for editing. Scholarships and grants are still available. Anyone can help with Outreach in small and big ways from sharing informational materials to putting on a retreat to setting up an informational booth at an event. Email outreachcommittee@cosa-recovery.org to find out more.
- *Literature Committee* – Four of the chapters for the upcoming *COSA Recovery* book's companion workbook are now ready for fellowship comments. They always need more writers, eyes to review, hands to transfer information, and creative layout and design talent. litcom@cosa-recovery.org
- *Convention Committee* – The committee has a chair and has begun the planning process for the upcoming virtual convention. They are in need of presenters, room hosts, speakers, and can always use help in the planning process. convention@cosa-recovery.org
- *Nominations Committee* – This is the place to start for board nominations and those are always welcome! nominations@cosa-recovery.org

Want to learn more? All contact emails can be found at <https://cosa-recovery.org/resources/contact-us/>.

We can do together what we could not do alone!

Peace always,

~Julana S.

ISO Board Chair



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.



Committee Announcements

Attention Delegates!

Please put these important dates on your calendars.

April 9, 2025

April 9 is the deadline for proposals to be submitted to the board. This allows time for the board to determine if the proposal meets requirements, gain clarification if needed from the author, and help with revisions if necessary. The proposal is then sent to the Literature Committee's Editorial Review, who completes the editing process and sends it back to the board. The board forwards the proposal to TechCom and the Delegate Liaison. The proposal is then posted on the website and emailed to all the delegates.

April 24 and April 26, 2025

The next Quarterly Update meetings will be held on Thursday, April 24, and Saturday, April 26, 2025. These are one-hour meetings and you are welcome to attend one or both.

May 21, 2025

The agenda, proposals, literature for voting, board nominee information, and the annual report will be posted on the website on May 21 or before. This date is necessary to meet the requirement that business items be posted 30 days before the meeting to allow the delegates time to review and share with the fellowship.

June 21, 2025

The Biannual Delegate Meeting will be held on June 21, 2025. This date was chosen based on the Delegate Spring/Summer survey results.

Thank you for your service!

~Audrey G.

Resources for Meetings: Outreach Support

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!



Announcements continued



Greetings COSA members,

Your Literature Committee continues its work on its newest project, the *COSA Recovery Workbook*, and we invite you to be part of this work!

The workbook will be a companion to the *COSA Recovery* book and will contain questions for each chapter that will help deepen our members' understanding of the Steps, Traditions, Concepts, and COSA tools.

How you can help: please review the draft chapters linked below and give your feedback using the instructions provided.

Feedback for these chapters is due April 12, 2025:

- [Step Two](#)
- [Tradition One](#)
- [Concept One](#)
- [Sobriety Tool](#)

Please read through each draft chapter and send us your comments and suggestions. It may also be supportive and helpful to review it with your meeting or group! All feedback is appreciated and the Literature Committee will make final editing decisions. Please use the feedback guidelines below to help us apply your feedback efficiently.

After the feedback has been considered and applied to these drafts, final revised versions will be posted on the COSA website for all fellowship members and delegates to review. These proposed chapters will then be voted on for approval by the delegates at the **2025 Biannual Delegate Meeting on June 21, 2025**.

- Once you have answered the questions in a chapter, please send your feedback to us at litcom@cosa-recovery.org no later than **April 12, 2025**.
- Include your first name and last initial, and your email address, in the event we need to reach you for a clarification.
- Please send your feedback on each chapter to us as soon as possible. You can submit feedback on one or a few chapters when you have it, and then submit the rest later. It is helpful when feedback comes in at a steady rate instead of all at the deadline.
- We would appreciate your feedback in a table format or written out in a statement.

If you are new to COSA, this workbook will be a valuable resource offering insight into the COSA Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, and a variety of tools. In order to ensure the workbook accurately reflects the diversity of COSA perspectives, as well as our common understanding of the COSA program, we welcome feedback from the entire fellowship.

Here is an example of written field testing feedback:

- Concept 1, Question 1: The words in the question, “What do I need to understand about the differences and similarities surrounding the words responsibility and authority?” may be better phrased as, “To better understand the differences and similarities surrounding the words, responsibility, and authority, I will reflect on my past and current service.”
- Step 1, Question 1: Change “Where have I tried to exert control where I have none?” to “In what ways have I tried to control people or circumstances in my life?”

Here is an example of field testing feedback in a table:

Chapter & Question Number	Omit	Add: Exercises, other questions, and suggestions	Because	So it would read
Concept 1, Q. 5		“my current circumstances” to the phrase “and future situations”	need to be present and future-oriented	Is there a recovery tool I could apply in my current circumstances and future situations to help me avoid taking on inappropriate levels of responsibility?
Concept 1, Q. 7		Add a rating scale activity	To have a spectrum of options and help me understand where I am.	On a scale of 1-5 rate (insert text regarding the topic).

COSA Recovery

PRINT
US\$25.00

eBOOK
US\$9.99

*Get
yours
today!*

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.

Over 1,000 purchased!





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!



Saguaro National Park
Tucson, Arizona

Photographs Wanted

Thank you to those who submitted photos! We continue to welcome your for photos (reminder: protect anonymity) for inclusion in future issues of *Balance*. We especially invite photos from non-US COSA residents. We would like to identify the location (city or landmark and country). Send photos to balance@cosa-recovery.org along with your first name, last initial, and email address.

COSA Authors Wanted

Writing for COSA's *Balance* newsletter is now as easy as picking your favorite recovery topic from a menu! The new online sign-up sheet is user-friendly and allows you to choose which Step, Tradition, or Tool you'd like to write about. We still need writers for a few Traditions in 2025. Sharing your experience, strength, and hope with the fellowship is just a few clicks away! Click [here](#) to sign up today!

International Diversity in Writing Statement

As the *Balance* receives more articles from our members from around the world, you may notice different spelling and word usage. We want to maintain the original voice of each author, so that we can benefit from COSA's beautiful diversity.

COSA TOOLS OF RECOVERY

WRITING AND JOURNALING

Journaling: If you can reveal it, you can heal it.

In the early days after the discovery of my spouse's sexual addiction, I realized I didn't have a healthy way to experience or process my anger over my spouse's betrayal. My anger was spilling out in all kinds of destructive ways, including toward myself. One of the tools my sponsor encouraged me to try was journaling, or as I came to think of it, "rage on the page."

I bristled a bit, thinking journaling would be too lightweight of a tool for the feelings I was overwhelmed with. Ironically, my emotions were normally very shut down and stifled from an unhealthy upbringing. This clash of rage and repression had me struggling to focus on the exact feelings and the "why" behind them. My sponsor continued to encourage me to dig deep to identify and connect words to all the feelings trapped under the anger. I stuck with it and began to feel some relief just from releasing my thoughts, feelings, and very spicy language out onto the safety of paper. In my search for the right words for the feelings, I looked up definitions, synonyms, and sometimes the origin of the words to help me see greater meaning and impact. I also looked up back issues of the *Balance* newsletter for articles on dealing with difficult emotions and on journaling.

As I continued to journal, my writing began to shift from rage to reasoning. I found that by rewriting an angry thought or episode over and over and removing a bit of the anger each time, I was able to distill it down and get greater clarity. The anger was a veil masking the truth of the matter. As I got past the veil I began to recognize grief as I faced the loss of the life I thought I had known. I acknowledged my fear of the uncertain future, and I was even afraid of trusting myself. I found I had intense shame. Initially I assumed that shame was pretty easy to figure out. Or was it? More digging and defining revealed that I was embarrassed at having been fooled and betrayed, but the shame was much more complex. Going more vulnerably into my writing revealed that the shame was attached to a deep childhood wound—the fear of being unlovable. Journaling was not only helping me deal with my spouse's betrayal, it was uncovering deeper issues. While those issues were not caused by my spouse, the betrayal poured salt on old, buried wounds that I could now attend to separately. As a wise COSA friend of mine says; if you can reveal it, you can heal it.

Getting to know myself better through journaling was a transformative experience. This improved self-knowledge and new catalog of words to define my feelings proved invaluable as I worked the Steps with my sponsor.

Journaling is still one of my favorite go-to recovery tools. It gives me a healthy way to process my feelings and get clarity. It helps me gain perspective and keep things right-sized. It's a cathartic and healing self-care tool for me. A natural progression of my journaling habit evolved into my gratitude practice. I start the day meditating on, and writing a list of things I'm grateful for. It sets me up to look for the positives throughout the day. The practice of journaling has helped me become the best version of myself: the version my Higher Power created.

Today I'm grateful for my sponsor's guidance, my Higher Power's care for me, and the tools of COSA. Journaling helps me reveal it, and COSA helps me heal it.

~Anonymous

My Recovery Letter to Me

Dear Rebecca,

February 27, 2020, your mother dies. February 28, 2020, you find out your husband is a sex addict. His disclosure is the most painful and deeply traumatic time of your life. But you will cope, you will survive. You will go on the most amazing journey. You will learn more than you ever have before about living a life. You will find yourself. You will find your voice. There will be dark times when you will be on your knees, you will have panic attacks, rage attacks, and be crippled with pain. You will feel overwhelmed by your many losses, you will want to die. But you will survive. You will be in shock and will feel its effects—you won't be able to sleep or eat. You will have high anxiety and catastrophic thinking. Your mind will be racing, never stopping. You will become paranoid, you will question your reality, you will withdraw, you will struggle with everyday tasks. But you will survive.

Your relationship with your husband, amidst COVID lockdown, will become insane—you will have lots of reclaiming sex, you will have endless questions and endless rage and endless fear and endless pain. But you will survive. You will survive because you now know for the first time in your life you have to ask for help. You have to recover. And recover you will! You will learn that recovery is not linear. There are bumps and twists and wrong paths and dead ends. There are loops that take you back to the beginning. But once you take that first step, you are aware and you cannot take away your knowledge, your faith, or your strength. You will learn to feel your feelings—they will engulf you to the point that you want to die, but they will ultimately liberate you. They will give you a sense of deep joy, of being you, of loving and being loved. They will give you serenity and peace and calm and sanity. You will understand that they are a biological and mental necessity for living a life.

You will learn to challenge your unhealthy behaviours—you will become aware of your dysfunction, from your family of origin to your present day and your surroundings. You will learn about triggers and retraumatising yourself and you will grow stronger, be more aware, and continue to learn. You will learn gratitude and acceptance. You will learn that your husband loves you deeply and you will open up and trust him. You will finally receive his love like you should have done so many times before. You will learn of the gifts from your mother—her strong enquiring mind, her courage and compassion for the world. And the gifts from your father—his strength, dignity, calmness, and unconditional love. You will accept your losses and be at peace.

You will discover your passion for writing, you will look to your future. You will plan and be excited, you will challenge and face your fears, you will be a better mum. You will have fights in your mind with your inlaws, but you will move to awareness and acceptance. You cannot change them, but you can change the way you think and react to them. They are here to teach you a lesson that will strengthen you, and tell you to focus on you and to look after you!

You will find love and a sense of being held, of things going to plan. You will thrive. You will be living a new, better life. You will find happiness. You will be okay. You will protect you. You will be stronger. You will be a better mother. You will be a better wife. You will be a better you. So much good will come from this darkness—and Rebecca, you always look for the good.

You have much to be grateful for, and the future is yours for the taking.

Love yourself, Rebecca. You deserve it.

Love from the new you x

STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD GOD.

I don't always know where God wants me. My Step Three practice is about making a decision to ask, though, even if I don't know.

When I first came to COSA, I really wanted to know how to feel better. I wanted to know how to stop the effects of compulsive sexual behavior from making me miserable. I remember feeling afraid of making the wrong decisions about everything. Even what to wear in the morning induced panic attacks!

My sponsor encouraged me to ask God for help, especially for the smallest things when I felt stuck. This helped tremendously and was the beginning of my work on Step Three, even though I was not yet even on Step Three!

Later, as I did work Step Three, I needed to look at some of the ways in which I struggled with decision-making. One of my biggest problems in decision-making has been giving myself enough time and space to make a thoughtful decision without feeling pressure or becoming overwhelmed.

Another problem I have had in decision-making has been focusing on making decisions in ways that benefit others without considering myself. I have struggled to make decisions that don't overly compromise my comfort. It can be challenging for me to see the intersection of where healthy compromise, service, self-care, and selfishness meet. That is where I really need God and the support of fellows to guide me.

I've also struggled with decision-making in the context of people pleasing and ideas I have about who I am supposed to be. For example, thoughts like:

"If I was a good person/friend/wife, then I would..."

"If I was a good COSA member, then I would..."

"If I was a responsible employee, then I would..."

I know when I am making decisions with my Higher Power because I am at peace. It feels simple, not forced, frustrating, and overly-complicated. I believe there is a better way and God wants me to turn these things over to God's care. My experience has been it generally works better when I look at things like:

"If I was taking care of myself, then I would..."

"If I was my own best friend, then I would..."

"If I was having the most fun and joy today, then I would..."

"If I knew God was in charge and it wasn't my problem to solve, then I would..."

I am a planner, so I like to feel like I am in charge. Remembering my past and where I have gotten in trouble in my own will is helpful. Working with others, being in fellowship and sponsorship helps me see where turning things over is helpful. Being in COSA recovery has increased my capacity to tolerate sitting with uncertainty.

Step Three helps me turn others' lives over to the care of their God. Their God (who is also my God) wants them

to be happy, joyous, and free. It helps me to let them have their own recovery journey. They are not in my care; they are in God's care.

I like the prayer "Bless them, change me. Bless them, help me." I learned this from the COSA "old-timers." I can't change others. I can only change myself. Going to meetings is helpful. Seeing others right where they are at and trusting that each one has a Higher Power helps me see other people more as how I believe God sees them.

~ Anonymous



STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

My journey leading up to Step Four was quite challenging. It took many years for me to feel ready to engage with the Twelve Steps as part of my early recovery.

After several attempts to work through Steps One to Three with a couple of sponsors, I eventually found a sponsor who gently guided me. With her support, I methodically and succinctly went through all Twelve Steps for the first time.

Over the past year, I have revisited my Steps, and this time, Step Four brought about a transformative experience. Previously, I approached this Step with dread because it required me to look deeply at myself, often leading to denial or self-loathing. I remembered that my disease can be cunning and baffling. I felt unsettled and isolated, questioning the validity of this process. However, through persistence and my sponsor's gentle guidance, I came to understand that "God is doing for me what I could not do for myself."

I worked through my first three Steps with much more humility and gentleness than I previously had. I realized that I had reached a point of stagnation. To move forward from this phase of my spiritual journey, the path of recovery opened up for me once again. I was willing and ready to take this action Step anew. I recognized that the unmanageability and powerlessness I experienced had once again brought me to my knees, leading me to accept that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.

I have come to understand that Step Four offers a valuable opportunity to examine my thought patterns, feelings, beliefs, and behaviors honestly. It allows me to identify the healthy aspects I want to nurture and maintain while also recognizing the destructive ones I need to confront and release. Throughout this process, I gained insights and began to face the profound truth about how I can improve my life.

Initially, I was afraid of being judged by my Step study peers and my sponsor. However, I found the courage to share the traumas I experienced and connected those experiences to the coping mechanisms I developed to protect myself from pain. I realized that I no longer needed to keep the secrets of my past. I started to view those experiences with renewed optimism, understanding that the ways I learned to cope were essential for my survival.

When I began my inventories, I found the work difficult and slow. I faced a grieving process that I had previously been unable to experience until I revisited this Step. I discovered comfort in realizing I was not alone in sharing my struggles with others, and I was moved by the trust that others placed in me as they shared their challenges. I began to see that the promises of recovery would continue to manifest as I allowed my Higher Power to guide me.

Summarizing my Fourth Step in three sentences:

I commit to creating a comprehensive Fourth Step inventory by honestly examining my history of past behaviors and coping mechanisms, including denial and dissociation, as well as addressing the trauma and events that I have yet to explore fully.

I understand that I cannot change my past or control the events that occurred during my childhood, but I accept that I was not ready before and am now willing to walk this path today bravely.

If I could change anything, it would be to gently encourage my younger self along this journey without criticism or judgment.

~Stephanie H.
California, US



TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR COSA MEMBERSHIP IS THAT OUR LIVES HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR. THE MEMBERS MAY CALL THEMSELVES A COSA GROUP, PROVIDED THAT, AS A GROUP, THEY HAVE NO OTHER AFFILIATION.

The Third Tradition is foundational to our COSA program, as it spells out who can be a part of COSA and how our groups can be identified as COSA groups. Anyone who believes that their lives have been affected by a problem of compulsive sexual behavior in a family member, a friend, or anyone else in their lives (current or past) may participate in and benefit from the COSA program.

The words “as a group...have no other affiliation” are also very important. Avoiding group affiliation with any group, therapy, religion, or other cause outside of COSA does not limit in any way what other outside sources of healing or spiritual comfort we as individuals may choose to pursue. It does keep the COSA program undiluted and available to all, regardless of the group members’ individual religious or therapeutic affiliations (or even if they have no such affiliations). While we as individuals may avail ourselves of outside resources, such as psychotherapies or specific spiritual paths, the discussion or announcement of these things within an official COSA meeting or event might easily be interpreted as endorsement or affiliation, so it is therefore best to avoid this.

It is comforting to know there is no “eligibility test”; we need not fear that our fellows in COSA will judge or exclude us. That is comforting indeed for someone like me who has always felt “out of place” in life. COSA is the first group I have truly felt a “part of.” We welcome newcomers of all stripes and allow them to determine for themselves if their lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior.

This Tradition reminds me of the importance of welcoming newcomers into COSA whether their life circumstances resemble mine or not. I first came to COSA due to my current husband’s sex addiction, but over time I realized that my life had been affected by compulsive sexual behavior many times over. I saw clearly my historical pattern of attracting partners who were sex addicts. After delving into my family-of-origin history, I came to believe that my father had been a sex addict, and I came to see the evidence of sex addiction throughout my family tree. I realized that my personal history of sexual assault (and how I had buried that memory and dissociated from those feelings) was another example of how my life had been deeply affected by compulsive sexual behavior. I carried the effects of those experiences (and the necessity of focusing on my own healing) long after most of those people were no longer in my life.

I now see that the effects of compulsive sexual behavior on others’ lives are more similar to than different from the effects in my own life. Even when another person’s circumstances are very different from mine—different gender, gender identity, ethnicity, background, age, or sexual orientation—if I focus on our similarities rather than our differences, I benefit greatly and learn so much from my fellow COSAs. I have the priceless gift of

friendship, fellowship, help, guidance, and support from a wider range of people than I otherwise would have had the opportunity to know—and love!

The importance of welcoming all whose lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior and of keeping the COSA program undiluted and available to all is foundational to my personal sobriety, as well as to the sobriety of my meetings and my fellowship. I am grateful for the spiritual guidance of the Third Tradition.

~Linda P.
Northern California

This article originally appeared in the March-April 2019 *Balance*. It is reprinted here with Linda P's permission.



TRADITION 1·2·3··5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

EACH GROUP SHOULD BE AUTONOMOUS EXCEPT IN MATTERS AFFECTING OTHER GROUPS OR COSA AS A WHOLE.

This Tradition offers guidance about autonomy and the whole. Within COSA each group is autonomous and has the freedom to develop content or focus appropriate to that meeting. Within the COSA fellowship there is a wide diversity of groups. Some meetings focus on the Steps, or on the Traditions, while others focus on Anorexia/Avoidance, Adult Children of Sex Addicts (ACOSA), LGBTQIA2s+, Teens in COSA, to name just a few.

There is a freedom within COSA for groups to come together around a particular experience of being affected by compulsive sexual behaviour. A script can be developed or the meeting content adapted to specific needs. The Traditions Study group includes the Diversity Statement in its script and is field-testing questions for the Literature Committee's new workbook. Each group has the freedom to decide when they will have business meetings and to elect trusted servants to represent them at Intergroup meetings or as delegates.

The other side of freedom is responsibility. Groups are responsible to COSA as a whole to be sure that they are not diluting the COSA message or purpose to help those who still suffer. For example, the Anorexia/Avoidance group decided by group conscience to use non-COSA literature in some of their meetings until more COSA literature is available. However, the group is responsible for ensuring that this practice does not negatively affect other groups or COSA as a whole.

Tradition Four has also given me guidance in my personal life and relationships outside of meetings. The whole issue of developing autonomy and being autonomous in my life is an important part of my recovery. When I am exposed to dysfunction, I need to remain autonomous and remember I always have options. Setting boundaries and practicing detachment are COSA tools which have helped me in living this Tradition. I stay on my side of the street and determine what is not my responsibility. I am free to decide what and how much I will share about my past. I have the right to confidentiality and I choose to be safe. I used to be so enmeshed with others in relationships that I didn't know where they ended and I began. Autonomy is necessary for relationships and for me to be healthy.

This Tradition reminds me, though, that I am not an island. My actions and behaviours have an impact on others. I need to balance my autonomy with concern for how I am affecting my family, my friends, or my workplace. I am responsible for healthy relationships both within and outside of COSA. I do my part for the health of the whole.

~Margie Z.

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

December 2024

Individual Donations	\$	566.00
Individual Recurring.....	\$	1,05.00
AZ-01 (Thousand Cranes, Tucson)	\$	100.00
TEL-08 (Telemeeting Intergroup).....	\$	500.00
Total	\$	2,224.00

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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