

Summer Newsletter 2021



Ohio Valley Intergroup

Inclusive Meetings

By Zach R.

"We welcome members regardless of any sexual identity..." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous pg. 2*)

Welcoming and remaining inclusive to members of the LGBTQIA2+ community are two very different endeavors. In recent months, member meetings of the Ohio Valley Intergroup have begun to learn from first-hand experience the importance of adapting the inclusivity practices of meetings to meet a growing diverse intersectionality of identities, expressions, and orientations. To that end, several questions have emerged including:

1. How do we welcome and ensure genderneutral language for the non-binary addict?

The social construct of gender is becoming a more and more fluid concept for individuals who are empowered to embrace a gender expression that does neatly fit into either "man" or "woman." As such, meetings (even those that are gender-specific) may consider adopting language of a greater neutrality and address in a group conscience how they want to handle welcoming and including someone who is non-binary. Even someone who presents as a woman may be transitioning and prefer to attend a meeting that matches their gender expressions - regardless of where they are on their transition journey. Remember, a meeting open to MEN and a meeting open to MALES are two very different statements.

2. How do we educate newcomers on all literature, including LGBT literature, regardless of how they present with regard to their sexuality?

Consider the newcomer who may engage in same-sex acting out or simply not be ready to be open with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. Would that newcomer walk up to a meeting chair and ask for an LGBT pamphlet or a list of LGBT contacts? Is your meeting prepared to make newcomers aware of ALL types of literature and materials without assuming they will or will not be interested in LGBT-specific reading? A comprehensive list of materials laid out on display or listed on a clipboard to be passed around is a great way to ensure all addicts can discreetly get the help they need.

3. What about sponsorship?

As we recall from our reading, the addict should not select someone they are attracted to as this is an unhealthy mix. Attraction, like gender expression and sexual orientation, however, is not always a simple this or that. For the addict attracted to all gender expressions, we must not assume that gender-based sponsorship is a given. As with any conversation around sponsorship, honesty and collaborative boundaries are the heart of a successful sponsor/sponsee relationship.

As with all things in our recovery, the idea of being inclusive to our fellows in the LGBTQIA2+

community is indeed an evolving process and does not require perfection. As you and your home group consider how to welcome the newcomer, doing so

with all types of diversity in mind help create a more immediate and lasting connection. Trust the process, use the traditions, and keep coming back!

What if I Don't Believe in "God"?

New Pamphlet from the ISO

“Some of us felt surprised or dismayed when we came to our first Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA) meeting, desperate to find relief – only to find ourselves recoiling from literature and discussions referring to God and spirituality. We feared SAA was a religious organization, and since we didn't believe in any deity, we questioned if the program would be a good fit for us. Nevertheless, as we kept coming back, we found ways to understand and successfully apply the principles of the Twelve Steps without adopting religious convictions.” (*Introduction to What if I don't believe in "God"?*)

The ISO's newest pamphlet "What if I don't believe in God?" gives the Atheist or Agnostic addict experience, strength, and hope for navigating a spiritual program. For those of us who do not believe in a deity or associate with any religion, this pamphlet eases us into the spiritual nature of SAA and lays the foundation for our discovery of a higher power of our own understanding. The pamphlet introduces us to topics such as:

- Dealing with the word "God"
- Why we need a power greater than ourselves
- Other sources of higher power, and
- Dealing with prayer

Each of us is in this program for the same reason – our lives were unmanageable, and we earnestly desire to stop our addictive sexual behavior. If the spirituality of the Twelve Steps has been an obstacle for you, don't lose hope. Recovery is possible for all of us, regardless of whether we adhere to a specific belief system. "The path is wide enough for everyone who wishes to walk it." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous, pg.21*)

Announcements

Convention Videos:

Our annual SAA Convention was held over Memorial Day Weekend, May 29-30th. If you were unable to attend the entire Convention, you will still be able to access session recordings through the SAA website (<https://saa-store.org/audio>). MP3s of the speakers and workshops will soon be available in the ISO store for \$2 each or \$1 each for an order of 10 or more.

Fall Retreat:

The OVIG Fall Retreat is back! Mark your calendars for a day of fellowship **at Linworth Rd. Church on Saturday, October 30, 2021**. We are currently in the planning process and looking for presenters and volunteers to help make this retreat a success. Reach out to your meeting's intergroup representative if you are interested.

