

# The Check IN

Volume XXV-4

“... Spiritual Progress Not Spiritual Perfection ...”

Fall 2018



## Cardinal Principles

OF RECOVERY

### 24<sup>th</sup> Annual IISAA Fall Retreat October 19, 20, 21

If you intend to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> annual IISAA Fall Retreat and you have not yet registered, time is running out.

On-line registration is now closed. However, you can still register directly by calling **Ranga N.** at **317 362-8663**. The retreat brochure, with complete information about the weekend, is available at **indiana-saa.org**.

### Intergroup Officers Retained

At its July meeting, Intergroup voted to retain the 2017 - 2018 officers for another term. The upside to this decision is that we have a set of experienced officers who have proven their ability to lead IISAA. The downside is that the same few people continue to provide service to the fellowship. Every addict who works the 12-Steps is called to service in Step 12. Furthermore, Tradition 7 states that “*Every SAA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions*”. Generally, we tend to think of “*self-supporting*” and “*contributions*” only in monetary terms. In a broader context, both terms refer to our time and talents as well. How are you keeping SAA self-supporting? What contributions are you making?

#### 2018-2019 Officers

Chair	Jeff W.
Vice Chair	Jeff H.
Recording Secretary	Dan O.
Treasurer	Jim F.
Corresponding Secretary	Colin T.
Literature Chair	Mike C.

### Meeting Updates

The Indianapolis, Wednesday, Early Risers Meeting at St. Luke's UMC has disbanded.

The RCA meeting listed at the bottom of our directory has changed its schedule to meeting **weekly**. The time and location remain the same.



### December 15<sup>th</sup>

Intergroup will offer its 28<sup>th</sup> annual holiday pot-luck party on Saturday, December 18, at Lawrence United Methodist Church (5200 N. Shadeland Avenue in Indianapolis). The party is open to all SAA members and their adult guests (18 and older).

The social hour will begin at 6 p.m.; dinner will be served at 7 p.m.

Intergroup will provide the meat, drinks, tableware and decorations for the party. Each person/couple is asked to bring a salad, covered dish or dessert to share.

To avoid an overabundance of one dish and none of another, it is *suggested* that guests bring items based on their last initial:

A-I	Appetizer or Salad
J-R	Hot Dish
S-Z	Dessert

A flyer with complete details will be available following the November Intergroup meeting.

### Help Plan SAA Events

The annual Special Events planning meeting will precede the Holiday Party beginning at 5 p.m. at the church. All members of the SAA Fellowship are welcome to give their input.

From the Editor

## Truth as a Higher Power

*How do you know when an addict is lying?  
His or her lips are moving.*

There is a lot of wisdom in this popular adage. Addiction is secretive by its very nature; and, sex addiction is especially so. In order to actively pursue my addiction and lead the double life of an addict, I needed plausible explanations as to why I missed activities and events that were significant to my family, friends and co-workers. I also needed to justify the money I spent acting out. The easiest way to cover up for the time and money I spent in addiction was to lie. As an addict, I became adept at both lies of omission and commission. I conveniently left out import details or told out-and-out falsehoods.

And, while lying to the people closest to me endangered my reputation and the trust that we shared, my lying did not stop there. I also lied to myself. Those lies were in the form of **denial**. They were an attempt to justify my behaviors or to minimize the true consequences of my actions to myself. “I’m not hurting anyone”; “Everyone wastes time at work”; “I can quit this at any time”; “I’ll make it to my kid’s next school event.”

If lying is a core element of addiction, could truth be the antidote?

Step Two states that we “*Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*” Step Three says we “*Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.*” Who or what is this “Power greater than ourselves” and this “God” to whom the Steps refer?

One could argue that truth holds the potential of returning us to sanity; and, truth is something that we can turn our wills and our lives over to.

Christians can look to John 14:6 where Jesus says, “I am the way, and the **truth**, and the life” to see truth as a higher power and another name for God. Addicts of other faiths, or no faith, can accept truth as an abstract concept that is more powerful than lies; a force that sets us free.

Our program recommends “rigorous honesty”, another name for truth.

If I commit to being as honest as I can be (without causing harm to myself or others), life will become much simpler. I will no longer need to keep track of what I said or to whom I said it. The desire to be honest with others will become a strong motivator for me not to act out. Truth will also become the microscope through which I can examine my thoughts and actions. In the light of truth, my motives will become clear. When I turn my life and my will over to being truthful, the lying and deceit implicit in addiction will lose their grip.

If truth can have such a dramatic

impact on how I live my life, it sounds like a Higher Power to me.

Peace

Mike C.

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*Truth is like surgery.  
It hurts, but it cures.*

*Lying is like a pain killer.  
It gives immediate relief;  
but, has lasting side effects.*

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## Do We Need a Clubhouse?

As 12-Step groups grow in size and reach, it begins to make sense that they should have a central location from which to pursue the work of outreach and recovery. This type of facility may provide office space, meeting rooms, storage, a recovery library, and/or a snack bar/hang-out area. Many fellowships refer to such a facility as a “Clubhouse”.

Interest has been expressed locally in establishing an SAA clubhouse.

The sticking point in establishing a clubhouse is Tradition Six: *An SAA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SAA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest*

*See Clubhouse, page 6*

The **Check ** is the newsletter of the Indiana Intergroup of Sex Addicts Anonymous (IISAA) and is published quarterly.

The **Check ** is provided free of charge to SAA members and others upon request.

Material for inclusion in the newsletter, permission to copy all or part of the newsletter, or comments for improving this publication may be addressed to:

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## World Health Organization Weighs In

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued its latest *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-11).

In the latest revision, WHO lists *Compulsive Sexual Behavior Disorder* (CSB) as an impulse-control disorder. Does this classification mean that **sex addiction** is now recognized as a treatable mental-health condition?

No, WHO, which recognizes substance abuse, gambling and even gaming as addictions, believes that more research is needed to determine if compulsive sexual behavior rises to the standard of an addiction.

The publication says that Compulsive Sexual Disorder is "characterized by a persistent pattern of failure to control intense, repetitive sexual impulses or urges resulting in repetitive sexual behavior."

Compulsive Sexual Behavior Disorder manifests in:

- Repetitive sexual activities becoming a central focus of the person's life, to the point of neglecting health and personal care or other interests, activities and responsibilities.
- Numerous unsuccessful efforts to significantly reduce repetitive sexual behavior.
- Continued repetitive sexual behavior, despite adverse consequences or deriving little or no satisfaction from it.

While Compulsive Sexual Behavior Disorder exhibits some of the characteristics of other addictions, more research is needed to determine if it works in the same way as those addictions.

There is still vigorous disagreement among professionals about whether an obsession with sex could ever qualify as an addiction because it's not clear if it has the tell-tale signs of tolerance, dependence and physical withdrawal symptoms that activities like drinking and gambling display.

Christian Lindmeier, a communications officer with WHO, is quoted as saying that the inclusion of compulsive sexual disorders in the ICD-11 is meant to help people who might be seeking treatment for sex issues get better care.

The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists, has noted that there is not "sufficient empirical evidence to support the classification of sex addiction or porn addiction as a mental health disorder."

The term "sexual addiction" is also not in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the DSM-5), the go-to guide for American psychiatrists. The DSM-5 was updated to include gambling as a potentially addictive activity, however, because the cravings that people report for wagers are very similar to physical urges for drugs or stimulants.

This discussion is of concern to those of us who suffer from what we believe is an **addiction** to sex. Until and unless WHO and/or the American Psychiatric Association define compulsive sexual behavior as an addiction, most insurance companies will continue to withhold benefits to cover treatment.



## Strength in Numbers

*An SAA group consists of two or more individuals who, using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of SAA, meet regularly for the purpose of recovering from their addictive sexual behavior* (Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 10).

If you have attended a meeting where only two people showed up, you know that, while it meets the definition of an SAA group, there is limited opportunity for recovery.

The more experience, strength and hope that are shared, the greater the odds that someone will acquire a new insight or tool to aid in their recovery.

That is why it is encouraging that at the Inaugural Indiana SAA Area Assembly, there were 12 people in attendance; and, the Intergroup meeting that followed tallied 16 people representing 14 meeting groups as present.

To put these numbers in perspective, we have more representatives present at our business meetings than many states have face-to-face meetings.

Congratulations to those meetings that regularly send a representative to Intergroup and to those that are becoming involved in the new Area structure of our fellowship. You are practicing Tradition Five: ***Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex addict who still suffers.***

## What Are the Principles of Recovery?

*Principles of Recovery* is the IISAA 2018/2019 theme. Unlike the Steps and Traditions, the Twelve Principles exist in multiple forms and variations—all quite similar, but not strictly defined (*A Gentle Path through the Twelve Principles*, Carnes, 2012, p.4). The table below lists each Step and one or more terms that describe the principle revealed in that Step (AA's preferred terms are italicized). Individual perspective is reflected in the term(s) used to describe each principle. We will explore the Principles in *The Check-IN* and at the retreat and spring workshop.

STEP NO.	STEP	PRINCIPLE
ONE	We admitted we were powerless over addictive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable.	Acceptance <i>Honesty</i>
TWO	Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.	Awareness <i>Hope</i> Surrender
THREE	Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.	Commitment <i>Faith</i> Spirituality Trust
FOUR	Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.	<i>Courage</i> Honesty Responsibility
FIVE	Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.	<i>Integrity</i> Openness Truth
SIX	Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.	Honesty <i>Willingness</i>
SEVEN	Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.	Courage <i>Humility</i>
EIGHT	Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.	<i>Brotherly Love</i> Commitment Justice Reflection
NINE	Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.	Accountability Amendment <i>Discipline</i> Responsiveness
TEN	Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.	Commitment Patience <i>Perseverance</i> Trust Vigilance
ELEVEN	Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.	Attunement Faith Meaning <i>Spiritual Awareness</i> <i>Spirituality</i>
TWELVE	Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.	Charity Generativity <i>Service</i>

## The Principles Found in Steps Four, Five and Six

Step Four, *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves*, is rooted in a principle that can be described using terms like **courage**, **honesty** and **responsibility**.

“No-fault” recovery does not exist. Most addicts live in the state of denial. We want to believe that whatever faults and failings we have are attributable to others: our non-nurturing parents, the people who led us into temptation, the person(s) who molested us, the bosses who do not appreciate our contributions, spouses who have become frigid or uncaring. The reality is that each of us has **responsibility** for our own decisions, actions, and outcomes.

Facing our own faults and failings is not easy. It takes great **courage** to complete a moral inventory of ourselves.

Step Four requires that we take an **honest** look at ourselves—the good, the bad, and the ugly. It calls us to accept personal responsibility for whatever our part has been in our addiction to sex.

Does that mean that we are solely responsible, that there were no other actors in the drama of our lives? Of course not. Many other people may have played roles, large or small, in how we matured—or, failed to mature—throughout our lives. Our parents may have failed to follow the course outline for Parenting 101. They may have been emotionally, physically, or sexually abusive. Other family member may have mistreated us, or been unavailable when we needed them. The authority figures in our lives;

teachers, coaches, clergy, bosses may have taken advantage of us.

Whatever those people did, or failed to do, is their responsibility. Step Four calls us to look at our lives through the wide end of the telescope and to focus narrowly on what we could have done, what we did, and what the consequences of our behaviors have been.

Step Five: *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs*, stems from a principle that includes **integrity**, **openness**, and **truth**.

Addicts more often than not live lives of dissonance; our actions do not reflect our moral beliefs. It is this dissonance that produces the shame that robs our lives of joy and meaning.

Many of us employ denial as a way of not having to face the dissonance and the shame it produces. The pain of being **truthful** with ourselves is so great that we simply choose not to accept it. Step Five calls us to **open** ourselves to the **truth** of our reality. Every time we introduce ourselves in a meeting by stating our name and then adding “and I am a sex addict”, we are stating, in a general way, our **truth**.

Step Five does not let us stop there, though; rather, it calls us to admit our specific shortcomings first to ourselves—we have to break free of our denial. Then, we are required to acknowledge to the God of our understanding that we are aware that what we have done was wrong. Finally, we are called to share the details of our abhorrent behaviors with another human being.

This three-part process of admitting fault addresses the critical harm we have caused to ourselves, to the relationship we have with our Higher Power(s) and to the surrogate, “another human being”, to which the Step refers. This process helps to reintegrate us into society; it begins to restore our **integrity**.

The first five Steps break down our denial and lead us to a deep understanding of the cost of our addiction to ourselves and others. Step Six is where the healing begins. It states that we “*Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*” In this Step, we begin to put the pieces of our lives back together, this time in a healthy, honest, humble and congruent way. The touchstones of Step Six are **honesty** and **willingness**. Our goal here is the ideal of once again becoming principled people.

The work we have done in Steps Five and Six has exposed our need to change. We have become **honest** with ourselves, God and others concerning the exact nature of our faults. The crucial question that Step Six poses is, “Are we **willing** to let go of our defects so as to embrace life on life’s terms.”

Our journey through the earlier Steps has prepared us to let go of the harmful behaviors that have caused so much pain in our lives and the lives of our loved ones.

Before we can begin rebuilding our lives, we must clear away the remaining debris so as to give us a clear foundation on which to build our recovery.

## Intimacy

*Matt T.*

Until I got into SAA and started growing as a man, I equated intimacy with sex. "They were intimate" is a euphemism for "they had sex". However, I have learned that intimacy and sex are not at all the same thing.

And I have learned that true intimacy is core to my recovery and well-being. True intimacy involves a deep, honest, caring knowledge.

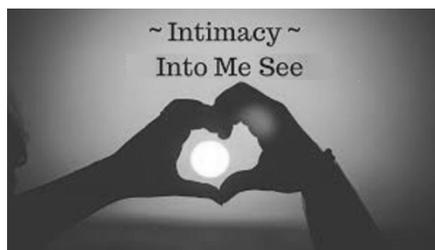
The problem was that I learned from an early age to be fearful of that kind of intimacy -- letting others know about the real me. Fearful, because that kind of intimacy requires my sharing not only hopes and dreams, but weakness and failings. It requires my being transparent, and transparency is scary and requires courage -- what if others reject me? What if others see the me I am ashamed of being?

I learned that men are supposed to be tough, that crying and lack of certainty are weak, that I should not show weakness. And these learnings meant that my inner self -- that scared self that longs to be known and for a safe place -- must try to find intimacy in the false safety of isolation. Yet I could not find true intimacy in isolation, so I searched for it in fake situations (e.g. online chatting, sex outside of a committed relationship) that I hoped would provide the intimacy I craved. But those fake situations only made me feel ashamed and even more isolated. The isolation and lack of intimacy required dishonesty which brought with it further shame. And that feeling of shame was not safe, and so I had to build up my

protective wall of isolation and dishonesty even higher.

I was searching for intimacy and safety, yet I was scared to be honest and show weakness. It was a no-win situation that led to more isolation, self-loathing, and depression -- a miserable existence.

Getting into the SAA program and learning to be honest introduced me to the power and promise of true intimacy. The growth of true intimacy in my life has closely tracked with my recovery.



**Intimacy with other men --** Hearing others be honest about who they really were, at my first SAA meetings, gave me the strength to share honestly about myself. It led me to write and share my First Step with my sponsor and then a group of men in an SAA meeting. And when I shared my good, bad, and ugly, I heard clapping and encouragement. Honest sharing with other men has built up an intimacy -- and true friendship -- that I never realized could exist.

**Intimacy with my wife --** I never imagined that I would ever be truly honest with my wife, that I would love her more as time went on, and that sex could be optional when we were intimate. Yet, as I share my fears and failings, as I do the work of listening to her even when I might want to do something else, and as I say "no" to other women so that I can say a

full "yes" to my wife, I am experiencing a constantly growing intimacy and deep friendship with my life partner -- and this relationship is life-affirming for both of us. Sex without intimacy was shallow, dangerous, destructive, costly, dishonest, and completely unfulfilling. Sex with intimacy is deeply spiritual, joyful, honest, and life-affirming -- it is truly "making love".

**Intimacy with myself --** There is no doubt for me that intimacy with myself -- which includes intimacy with my Higher Power -- is the absolute bedrock of my recovery and well-being. This intimacy has so many facets to it including acceptance, prayer, journaling, meditation, wonder, following through on commitments, vision, hope, and so much more. I continue to pour time and energy into this intimate relationship with myself and my Higher Power, and that effort is always rewarded.

True intimacy requires courage -- and true intimacy is more than worth the effort -- it is life changing.

**Clubhouse**, from page 2  
*problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose*

Therefore, IISAA **cannot** own and operate a clubhouse.

Members who would like to have such a facility can contact John Y. (443 799-7783). They would have to form a non-profit 501C-3 corporation totally separate from IISAA, to own and operate a clubhouse. IISAA and SAA meeting groups would then be free to rent space at the club-house as they do now from churches and other meeting venues.

## YOU Can Carry the Message

Chris C.

The summer issue of *The Check-IN* carried a well thought out article concerning the 17% decrease in the number of Indiana SAA meetings in the previous year. It noted the vital role that meetings have in welcoming the SAA newcomer and, rightly, worried that we may not reach people who need us. Its title asked, “Who Will Carry the Message?”

As a partial response to this probing question, I would like to tell of an accidental “experiment” I conducted over the last two years. My daily recovery plan for years has included calling three SAA members per day. In 2016, I came to see that I needed to increase the number of calls for my own spiritual benefit. So, over the next 18 months (that is, from the fall of 2016 until the spring of 2018) I sought out newcomers, got their phone numbers, and began calling each of them two to three times per week, in addition to my regular calls. (For the record, I continue to make these calls and to call additional newcomers.)

I was not systematic in picking which newcomers to call; some I met at their first meeting, while others had been in SAA for a few months. In those 18 months, I connected with ten new members to our fellowship. So we have been talking now for six to twenty-four months. I was the temporary sponsor for only one of them, and he has since gotten a permanent sponsor.



While I take no credit for the results, here is a little of their progress so far:

- I am still in touch with 9 of the 10 and they attend meetings regularly; the tenth still shows up occasionally. Some are making calls themselves.
- The first person recently marked two years of abstinence in recovery and others are developing significant clean time.
- Many of them are working the 12 Steps, either in workshops or with their sponsors.
- Some of them have said that my calling them was vital to their seeing that SAA is a place where they can get help and support. They said that it was often the only regular program contact they had outside of meetings, and it helped them decide to keep coming back.

If there is a fifth bullet point to be added to the list, it is that my recovery has deepened considerably from making more calls and extending the hand of SAA to newcomers. I experience far less fantasy and a deeper sense of connection to all of the people in my meetings. I take no credit for this result, either; it is a gift the fellowship has given me by challenging me to live out Step 12--carrying the SAA message to other sex addicts.

From this accidental experiment, I would offer that a partial answer to the question of “Who Will Carry the Message?” is *Each of Us*. Every individual in SAA can call newcomers to extend the welcome and support of the fellowship. If even a handful of members in each meeting call the newcomers weekly, we will likely see our fellowship grow and new meetings flourish again.

To build this into our meetings, I would suggest that instead of offering newcomers a list of members’ phone numbers, groups ask newcomers for their phone numbers during the meeting and distribute the numbers to attendees before the meeting ends. That may sound radical but, honestly, I have probably had no more than five newcomers call me off those lists in the last 20 years. In contrast, each of the ten people in my experiment has called me many times.

I want to close by telling you one humble truth about myself: though I have been in SAA for decades, I dread making phone calls. Each call is an exercise in surrendering my fear. As much as I struggle, though, it is always worth it for my recovery and for the fellowship.

Thanks for reading. I hope you and your meetings will call newcomers and offer them the gift that has been freely given to each of us—the SAA message of recovery, welcome, and support.

Intergroup has been informed of the passing of **James L.** who attended several Indianapolis meetings.

May he rest in peace.

## Inaugural Area Assembly Takes Action

The implementation of the new SAA Area Representation model is slated to take effect in 2020, even though the process of developing the new model has been ongoing for several years.

As with many innovations within the SAA fellowship, Indiana has helped pioneer this change.

On September 8, 12 representatives from 11 Hoosier groups assembled in Indianapolis for the inaugural Indiana Area Assembly. Five of those present have already registered as **Group Service Representatives** with the ISO of SAA.

A twofold discussion was held. The concept of Area Representation was reviewed and the timeline for implementing the change was discussed. Then, the group reviewed the business items that are scheduled to be discussed at this year's SAA Conference, which will be held in Houston over the second weekend of October.

The main functions that have been identified for Areas are to:

1. Hold a minimum of one Area Assembly each year.
2. Discuss and come to a group conscious on the business items to be discussed at the ISO International Conference.
3. Elect a delegate to the ISO International Conference to vote the Area's conscience.
4. Fund the expenses of the Area's conference delegate.

Indiana can check-off item number one for 2018.

The Assembly also reviewed and came to a group conscience on the four business motions currently on the agenda for the 2018 Conference:

### **D00001:**

Seeks to push back the date of implementing the new structure until 2021.

The Area conscience was to approve this motion only if Motion D00002 is defeated.

### **D00002:**

Moves to affirm the work of the Area Coordinating Committee and to continue with the scheduled implementation timeline.

The Area conscience was to affirm this motion.

### **D00004**

Moves to affirm the work that has been done by the 12 Concepts committee and to have it continue its work.

The Area conscience was to affirm this motion.

### **D00006:**

Moves to allow extended discussion of the work being done by the Conference Steering Committee in developing a proposal for ongoing trusted servant leadership of the ISO conference.

The Area conscience was to affirm this motion.

Although Areas cannot elect an official **Area Delegate** this year, the group agreed to have Jeff W. continue serving as our **Area Coordinator** for the coming year.

Because Jeff W. will be attending the Conference as IISAA's elected delegate, there is no need for the Indiana Area to fund his expenses.

The Indiana Area Assembly informally completed all of the functions it will be asked to perform in coming years. And, we did so with two years to spare.

Additionally, based on the scheduling of the annual ISO Conference for the second weekend in October and the release of motions in July, it was agreed that the Indiana Area Assembly in 2019 should be scheduled for August, rather than September.

The tentative date for our second annual Indiana Area Assembly is Saturday, August 10, 2019.



## 2018 - 2019

### October

**13** IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

**19-21** Fall Retreat:

*Cardinal Principles*

### November

**10** IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

### December

**8** IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.

**15** *Holiday Party*

**30** **Check **IN**** Deadline

### January

**12** IISAA Meeting, 4 p.m.