# SAA of New York City

Workshop Handout

## Garment District
## Sunday June 14th, 3:00 pm

# Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

By John CK

**NOTE:** SAA in NYC does not endorse, finance or oppose any of the above non-SAA material. The views reflected on this document are the ones of the SAA member who presented the workshop. The SAA member who presented the workshop does not speak for SAA.

## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

•Why do we use the **phone**?:

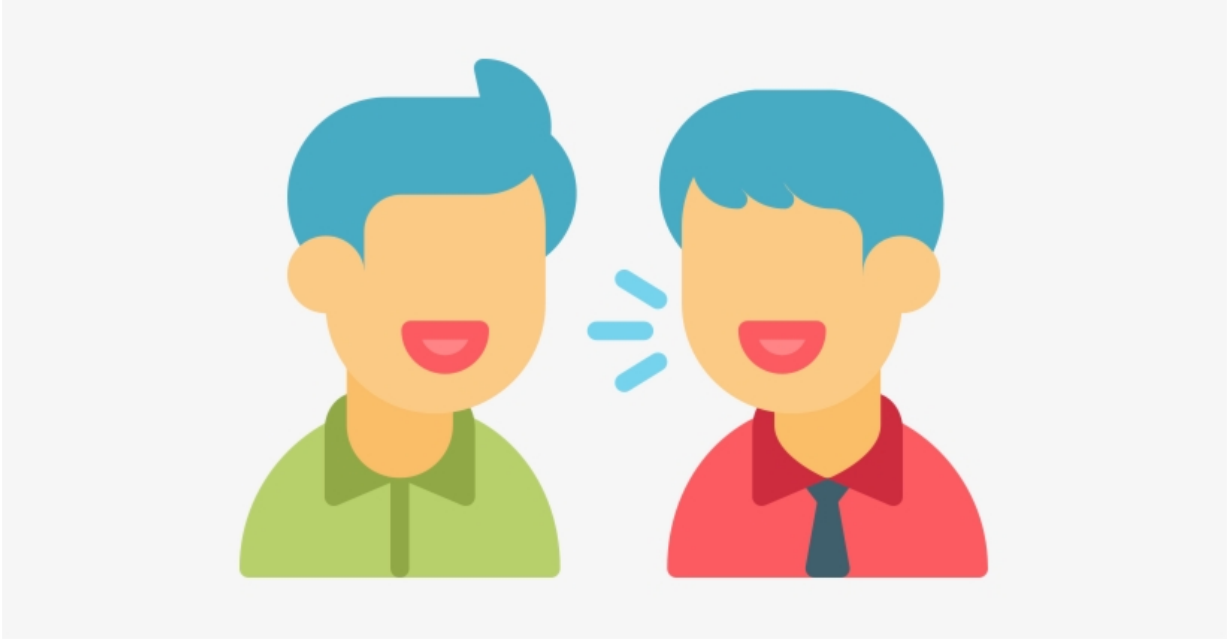
- **The phone** = 'meeting between meetings'
- "**Meetings** are the heart of the SAA fellowship. At meetings we emerge from our shame, secrecy, and fear, into a community of people who share the common goal of freedom from sex addiction." - GB, Our Fellowship.
- **Breaking isolation**: "As sex addicts, we are especially prone to isolating. Many of us acted out alone or in secret. Meetings are an important way of breaking this isolation. At meetings we discover that we are not unique. If we listen to the experiences and feelings we have in common, we will find that we are more alike than we are different. At meetings we learn that we can trust others to know who we really are, and still be accepted by them." - GB, Our fellowship.
- **Connection ≠ Addiction**
- **Service:**
  - "The fact is that we need each other to stay sober. The people we see at meetings are a lifeline for us. They understand in ways few people outside SAA do. Fellowship with people in the program helps to temper the isolation we experience in the addiction. Remember, talking to someone after a meeting may be as helpful for him or her as it is for you." -Tools of Recovery

## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

- **How do I get people's numbers?**
  - Phone lists.
  - Asking through other fellows with permission. "Remember to ask whether it's okay....some people don't reveal their SAA membership to the rest of their household." -Tools of Recovery
  - Asking/sharing at the end of meetings or during our share.
  - "We encourage you to keep reaching out. Do not take it personally if someone prefers not to give out a number. Nor should you feel obligated to give out yours. It is suggested that we each honor our own needs in this matter. It is also recommended that you not exchange phone numbers with people to whom you are sexually attracted." -Tools of Recovery

## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

- **What do we talk about?:**
  - "Sex Addicts Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience strength and hope with each-other so that they may find freedom from addictive sexual behaviors and help others to recover sex addiction as well."



## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

- **Talking about the Problem:**
  - Our experience and the nature of the addiction.
  - The inner circle (with caution)
  - The middle circle (getting honest + accountability).
    - "If you don't yet have a sponsor and are struggling to stay sober, we suggest you commit to staying current with a specific person about middle circle behavior. This is better than checking in with lots of different people." - Tools of Recovery
  - Asking for Support:
    - "Some of us have made a commitment to call a friend in recovery when we're in a slippery situation or when obsessive thinking and desires begin to arise." - GB, Tools of Recovery
    - "Another sex addict can bring us back to earth, supporting us in our recovery and reminding us of the consequences of relapse." - GB, Tools of Recovery
    - "We can make a phone call whenever we are exposed to a trigger, regardless of whether we feel like acting out. This gets us in the habit of turning away from a relapse even before the addictive craving kicks in." - GB, Withdrawal and Relapse
  - Listening:
    - "Sometimes all we need is for someone to ask us what is going on and to listen to the answer. Before long, we know what is bothering us, and once we know, the urge to act out usually passes." - GB, Withdrawal and Relapse

## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

- **Talking about the Solution:**
  - The program + the steps.
  - Tools and strategies for practicing the principles in our daily lives.
  - Progress/Hope. How the program is working for us and/or others.
  - The outer circle.
  - Feedback:
    - “feedback from sober individuals is a vital part of our program. On our own, it is difficult to get perspective on how we conducted our sex lives. A fellow recovering addict provides us with a more objective view of where we have been and where we are. He or she can also offer concrete suggestions for our recovery. As with any advice, we are always free to take it or leave it. In addition, we remind you that feedback also includes observations of strengths and recovery progress.”
  - Character Defects
    - “We can ask our sponsor and friends in recovery for help in identifying our character defects. We can ask them to tell us where we seem to be making choices that are not in our best interest. They can tell us where we seem to be repeating the same mistakes. Often they will point out the situations that cause us trouble, rather than tell us directly what they think our problems are.” - Green book, step 6
    - “Simply telling others about our defects can reduce their power over us.” -Greenbook step 7
  - Regular inventory. The 10th step:
    - “We can also work the Tenth step by checking in regularly with our sponsor or other members....In addition to honestly admitting our shortcomings and mistakes, many of us use these check-ins to assess how well we are working our program in general. We report honestly an slippery behavior we have been engaging in...” -Greenbook Step 10

## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

- **Things to avoid on calls:**
  - Gossip
  - Politics
  - Extreme negativity/circular complaining
  - Sexually explicit language
  - ‘War stories’ / sharing acting out ideas
  - Sexual advances/ intriguing
  - Therapy

- **Building good phone habits:**
  - 3 people a day. “The practice of making phone calls even when you don’t have any particular reason, will make it easier when you need support.” -Tools of Recovery
  - ‘Recovery buddies’
  - Setting daily calls at a specific time.
  - ‘Bookending’
  - The well balanced phone diet: (old-timers, mid-timers, new-comers)

## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

- **Other Tips n' Tricks:**
  - 'Night Owl' fellows and L.A. fellows.
  - Clear communication about availability
  - '3 on 3's'
  - Leaving Voicemails. "Calling someone on the phone, even if no one is there to answer the call, is a powerful act of surrender." -GB, Withdrawal and Relapse

## •Messaging:

- All this can be done through texting as well as:
  - Sharing readings + Reflections
  - Sharing gratitude lists

- WhatsApp group.

## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

**•Other kinds of Fellowship:**

- Fellowship room
- Hanging out with fellows outside of meetings.
- Meals, coffee, or movies before/after meetings.
- Shared hobbies (outer circle)
- Recovery Retreats

## Using the Phone: Fellowship in the Pandemic

- **In Closing:**
  - By doing all this we ‘carry the message.’

“Our message is simple and profound: that recovery from sex addiction is possible through working the Twelve Steps of SAA, and that the following program results in a spiritual awakening. Each of us carry this message by means of the wisdom gained through working the program ourselves, rather than through ideas or theories borrowed from someone else’s experience. We are not experts, only sex addicts sharing honestly with one another. Our authority comes from our experience.” - Greenbook Step 12

“No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.” - AA 9th step promises.

***NOW***

IT'S TIME FOR SHARES