

# The SCAnner

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**The SCA NEWSLETTER**

International Service Organization

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**VOLUME 13, Number 1**

**Winter 2003**

**\$2.00**

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***In This Double Issue:***

## **The SRP:**



## **Sexual Recovery Plan**

**Experience, Strength & Hope  
from SCA members worldwide.**

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*Plan: (noun) 1: a series of steps to be carried out or goals to be accomplished; [syn: program, programme] 2: an arrangement scheme; "it was an excellent design for living"; [syn: design] 3: scale drawing of a structure; (verb) 1: have the will and intention to carry out some action; [syn: be after] 2: make plans for something; 3: make or work out a plan for; devise; [syn: project, contrive, design] 4: make a design of; plan out in systematic, often graphic form; "design a better mousetrap".*

*Source: Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, © 1996, 1998 MICRA, Inc.*

**Editor's Note:**

Welcome to the “*Sexual Recovery Plan*” double edition of the SCAnner!

This issue started out as an idea last year during the SCA International Service Organization (ISO) meeting in Los Angeles, California. We were discussing the possibility of re-writing the section in SCA's “Little Blue Book” that has to do with the Sexual Recovery Plan (SRP). It dawned on me that it would be helpful to ask members worldwide what works for them, and use that invaluable experience, strength and hope (ES&H) to come up with ideas for this project.

Of course, it can be quite difficult to motivate members to share their ES&H, let alone their SRP, in a text format that will be shared with other SCA members. I wondered how we could get a representative sample of Plans from SCA members, and how all of these Plans could be shared with the rest of the SCA fellowship.

That is where the idea for this edition of the SCAnner was born. I've attempted to gather as many different Plan formats and as much ES&H on developing a Sexual Recovery Plan as possible. The bulk of it comes from SCA, but some is shared from other 12-step fellowship.

I hope that this issue will help others as they progress in their recovery. Whether or not you have a Sexual Recovery Plan now, and whether or not you intend to develop one, I think you'll find that the ES&H contained in these pages has something to offer everyone.

Enjoy!!

Deanna R, SCAnner Editor and Proud Canadian, eh!

**Websites of interest to SCA members:**

SCA home page (maintained by ISO): [www.sca-recovery.org](http://www.sca-recovery.org)

SCAnner on the web: [www.sca-recovery.org/scanner](http://www.sca-recovery.org/scanner)

SCA Online Intergroup: [www.sca-recovery.org/private](http://www.sca-recovery.org/private)

- Note: all Intergroup web-pages are maintained by the Online Intergroup and are “closed” – only those who are sexually compulsive or believe they may be sexually compulsive may access these sites. If you qualify under Tradition Three, you can access these web pages (including online meetings) using the username SCA and the password HEAL (case sensitive).

*A Sexual Recovery Plan* is a predetermined way of expressing our sexuality consistent with our values, so that even when confused, we will have a written guideline to help us.

## The Sexual Recovery Plan: What SCA Says About It

Excerpts from “SCA: A Program of Recovery” (©2002, ISO SCA), pp. 19-27:

### *What is a Sexual Recovery Plan?*

*It is a “statement of intent” of what a member will or will not do sexually. For many of us, the sexual recovery plan is the very core of the SCA program – a commitment to recovery. It’s both a practical means of getting a good hard look at our compulsion, and a giant step in breaking away from it.*

*Newcomers tend to fear the recovery plan as a repressive measure. But SCA exists to free us from the constraints of sexual compulsion, and the purpose of the sexual recovery plan is not to make our sex lives more rigid, but to liberate them.*

*The nature of the compulsion is to veil our true sexual desires with fantasy and confusion. A sexual recovery plan enables us to break through the chaos and make decisions about how we want to handle this sensitive part of our lives. It is essentially a process of “peeling the onion” to find what our desires really are, and then of deciding what action must be taken to realize them.*

*By setting guidelines for our behavior, the plan frees us from having to make anxiety-provoking choices in the confusion of sexual excitement, and frees us for honest interaction with another person.*

*Beginners often stress the don’ts, and start off with ideals that prove impossible to realize. We learn through working on the recovery plan to beware of putting too many restrictions on ourselves. We are also mindful that in our new life of recovery we need to replace our old attitudes, sexual and related activity with new activity, people, places and things. These are vital elements of our life which we neglected or never sought in our addictive past. Gradually we are able to add more and more positive sexual activities, and for most SCA members, the sexual recovery plan is continually deepening and evolving.*

*Many are able to alter their behavior immediately through the use of a*

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Meetings are where we share our experience, strength and hope with each other to better understand our common problem and work together towards the solution.

*sexual recovery plan; others wean themselves away from practices they decide are negative. Often we decide on a bottom line of activities we do not indulge in under any circumstances. But while one purpose of a sexual recovery plan is to keep us from “negotiating” with our sexuality, some keep a “gray area” of sexual activity we can sometimes permit ourselves.*

*Some of us decide on a period of complete abstinence, either at the beginning or at some time during our recovery, when other plans didn't work.*

*Many of us learn in sobriety that we are in fact deeply afraid of non-compulsive sex. The sexual recovery plan can be a means of reviewing these fears and of giving ourselves permission to truly enjoy our sexuality – perhaps for the first time.*

### ***Why a Written Sexual Recovery Plan?***

*The majority of members have found it most effective to put their sexual recovery plans in writing, working up a list of do's and don'ts for future behavior. For those who are having trouble with an unwritten plan, a written one may be the solution. The very act of committing a plan to paper seems to clarify thinking about sex and romantic obsessions; indeed some members have stated that only when they began writing a formal sexual recovery plan did they realize what they wanted their sex lives to be.*

*It is important to decide on which practices are peculiarly destructive to us, and for some the starting point of a sexual recovery plan is some particular activity they want to alter. Others need to rethink every aspect of their sexuality.*

*Having a written plan also prevents our denial system from rationalizing changes in our recovery plan on the spot, as a sexual encounter presents itself.*

### ***What about Discussing My Sexual Recovery Plan with Others?***

*Most of us find this helpful. From the very beginning of our sex lives, most sexual compulsives have felt unable to discuss with other people the things that were causing us the most pain. We felt ineligible for the help and guidance available to “normal” people, and many of us still tend to regard sex as a very lonely business.*

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**The Telephone** is our meeting between meetings. By making contact with others, we begin to break out of the isolation that is so strongly a part of the disease.

*We have allowed this basic instinct to become so shrouded over with mystery and emotion – or with a reactionary cynicism – that we are unable to trust our own sexual and romantic value systems. It is important for us to break these destructive patterns of isolation and self-pity by learning to share with others who will understand.*

*It's not a good idea to make random changes in a sexual recovery plan: most of us discuss them first with another member or a sponsor. Sharing our sexual recovery plan gets it out of our heads and makes it a living, growing thing. We discuss our plan with people in the program we have learned to trust. This could be at meetings, or over coffee with a group or a sponsor. Nobody knows more about our sexuality – its problems and potentials – than we ourselves. But we can't get to that knowledge without the help of other people. Then, too, many of us are overly scrupulous, and discussing the details of our plan can give us a more objective outlook.*

### ***What If Others Don't Like My Sexual Recovery Plan?***

*Nobody has the right to approve or disapprove of anybody else's sexual recovery plan. The SCA Statement of Purpose specifically states that members define sexual sobriety for themselves. This is why it is important for us to learn to become honest with ourselves, which we are best able to do in an atmosphere of love and support. These are the healing elements in this program. We discourage gossip and criticism.*

*We learn to support our fellow members even if our sexual recovery plans differ. And by doing so we come to feel their support for us as well.*

### ***What will a Sexual Recovery Plan Do for Me?***

*A sexual recovery plan both provides a guideline for changing sexual behavior, and gives us some kind of reassurance that, as other members are finding a path out of their initial fear and confusion, we will find one, too.*

*Most of us discover that following a sexual recovery plan frees us to make full use of the Twelve Steps, and the other tools of SCA.*

*(...continued)*

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**Sponsorship** is two people with the same problem helping each other to work the program. It can provide a framework for a sexual recovery plan and for doing the Twelve Steps.

### ***How Do I Write a Sexual Recovery Plan?***

*Writing and utilizing a sexual recovery plan is based on the fourth and fifth steps. In making a fearless moral inventory of our sexual behavior we ask our Higher Power's help in evaluating all aspects of our sexual past. The AA Big Book addresses this rigorous honesty about sexuality: "In this way we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subjected each relation to this test – was it selfish or not? We asked God to mold our ideals and help us live up to them. We remembered always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised and loathed." (p. 69, The AA Big Book).*

*By looking for God's will in each sexual decision, we look for release from the actions, people, places and things which have made our lives unmanageable.*

*But unlike completely giving up drinking as in AA, we do not strive for abstinence and celibacy as an end. In SCA, members define sobriety for themselves. Abstinence, partial or total, is a tool of the program which enables members to gain clarity about the choices they want to make with their sexuality. The goal is not to eliminate or repress sexuality, but rather to integrate it into our lives as God intends. Like the compulsive over eater, our aim is to achieve freedom and responsibility in using a fundamental human process. Since both food and sex are good, we seek God's guidance in determining which sexual actions, relationships, environments, and things are appropriate for our lives.*

*The characteristics most of us seem to have in common indicate the sexual activity that is obsessive, compulsive, dishonest, manipulative, exploitative and abusive; that has made our lives unmanageable. Sexuality that is honest, caring, life-affirming and enriching is freeing, integrated into our lives, and enables us to deal with life on life's terms.*

*A sexual recovery plan is based on the principle that by identifying the facets of our compulsion and asking for assistance from our Higher Power, we can replace an unacceptable lifestyle with a positive, progressive, enriched one.*

*(...continued)*

***Here is a suggested format for writing a sexual recovery plan. Use it to write your own plan:***

*A Sexual Recovery Plan is a written guideline of those people, places and things that do and do not work for us as sexual compulsives. The purpose of this plan is to make clear to ourselves on paper the ways that we wish to express ourselves. Having a clearly defined written plan frees us to conduct ourselves in ways that are personally appropriate.*

*Any plan is valid which is written down, shared with another person and followed to the best of one's ability. The suggested outline below is based on the idea that we can act upon our compulsions without thought:*

*Here's how it works:*

- 1. Identify the acts, places and people from which you would like to be freed.*
- 2. Identify the times these compulsions most frequently occur.*
- 3. List the people, places or things you are willing to commit yourself to adding to your life in recovery (be realistic by adding things that you are willing to do – not things you think you should do).*

### ***Examples of Sexual Recovery Plans***

#### **Recovery Plan One**

Those people, places and things I pray to my Higher Power to be freed from:

Hustlers.

Love addictions and romantic obsessions.

Compulsive cruising.

Use of sex as a drug to escape from feelings.

These are the times I am most likely to act out:

Early morning before or on my way to work.

When I am home alone at night.

Those acts, people, places, and things I want to reward myself with and add to my new life of recovery:

A period of healing and of professional, emotional and spiritual growth.

An improved ability to keep my attention in the present moment.

One more day of sobriety on this plan.

*(...continued)*

**Recovery Plan Two**

Those people, places and things I pray to my Higher Power to be freed from:

- Compulsive masturbation.
- Sex on the first encounter.
- Sex as the sole activity of the encounter.
- Sex as the primary activity of the encounter.
- Sex as the reason for the encounter.
- Sex outside of a caring relationship.

Those acts, people, places and things I want to reward myself with and add to my new life of recovery:

For today, healthy sexual behavior for me must be part of an ongoing building of intimacy – an expression of an already existing intimacy. I must be comfortable including the person with family and friends; interested in just necking with him; interested in sleeping with him; have already spent time with him with a non-sexual focus; interested in the person as a friend; willing to be a friend only.

**Recovery Plan Three**

Those people, places and things I pray to my Higher Power to be freed from:

- Anonymous sex.
- Hustlers.
- Poppers.
- Pornography.
- Obsessive/compulsive thinking.

These are the times I am most likely to act out:

Morning      Noon      Late Night

Those acts, people, places and things I want to reward myself with and add to my new life of recovery:

Meetings	Program calls	Prayer
Clarity	Journalizing	Exercise
Sleep	Healthy eating	Music
Truth	Dating	

*(...continued)*

**Recovery Plan Four**

After three years on a liberal plan I had a massive one-day slip. Since then, I have had a 90-day period committed to total abstinence and a two-month relationship. I am now comfortably and completely abstinent, but interested in a committed relationship. My current plan:

Sex only with someone in whom I have an emotional and social interest, and with whom there is a possibility of mutual commitment.

No masturbation.

Try to get to know people I might be interested in. Join groups and go to dances where I might meet potential mates.

Make dates with people on the street, but no instant sex.

No cruising at the piers, bookstores, tea-rooms – don't even go in rest areas.

No pornography or personal ads.

Pray for God's help every morning; thank Him every night.

**Recovery Plan Five**

No sex at all. And no alcohol or drugs.

I started in SCA and AA at the same time. I knew that my sexual acting out was related to my drinking and drugging. After nine successful months with this plan, I decided to change it to allow sex under certain conditions and have been in a monogamous relationship for four months.

**Recovery Plan Six**

After staying sober on a loose sex plan (I could do anything so long as I didn't do it compulsively), I entered a relationship with another member and have since worked this plan:

No sex except with my partner. No masturbation.

When I discovered that many personality problems were inhibiting me sexually, I added a number of new things to my plan. Some examples:

Watch out for expectations and demands that are bound to be disappointing. Try to distinguish the desire for affection from the desire for sex.

Pray for the grace to learn to trust: myself, other people, my partner, the relationship, God.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SCA Members Share Their Sexual Recovery Plans

### Barry C's Sexual Recovery Plan:

Barry C (California, USA) sent in not only a Sexual Recovery Plan that he uses, but also some other forms of Plans that help with his recovery. First, here's his SRP:

#### Sexual Recovery Plan

I pray to be freed from these people, places & things that are unmanageable for me:

- manipulative sex partners (controlling, coercive, pushy)
- lust triggers such as young "surfer" types
- restrooms in parks, malls & colleges
- adult bookstores and theatres
- unprotected sex, unsafe sex, illegal sex, and/or sex in public

I allow myself to be in contact with these people, places and things with the desire to eventually be free of them:

- rage-aholics (like my Dad), negative-aholics (like my co-worker "M"), work-aholics (like co-volunteers "S" and "B"), and/or control-aholics (like fellow church members "C" and "G")
- beaches, sex clubs, and/or sex toys
- adult books, magazines & videos
- sexy clothing & jewelry
- anonymous sex

I want to reward myself with these people, places & things that make my life positive:

- family members (like my nephew "A" and grandfather)
- co-workers who are real (like "S")
- friends (like "M")
- evenings at home with a book or listening to a CD
- hiking & camping in the wilderness
- travelling and photography (especially on trains)
- volunteering at church and at the museum
- positive sexual activity (sex with someone I know or want to be in a relationship with; sex with myself when it isn't abusive; safer sex with condom use, no fluid exchanges, mutual affirming, without exchange of money or favors, and sex which does not break laws or place me in danger)

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*As we grow in the program we give up any illusions about attaining perfection, including "perfect sobriety."*

Barry also sent in a “**Dating Plan**” that outlines three basic goals for him:

<p><u>Follow program wisdom:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• social dating preferred</li> <li>• delaying sexual decisions</li> <li>• heed sponsor’s advice</li> <li>• follow sexual recovery plan</li> </ul>	<p><u>Honesty:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• define &amp; set limits</li> <li>• be clear about romantic attraction</li> <li>• be clear about reasons to date</li> </ul>	<p><u>Spirituality:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain conscious contact with Higher Power</li> <li>• clarity on what I have to offer; what I’m looking for</li> <li>• negotiables &amp; non-negotiables</li> </ul>
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The third thing that Barry sent in to the SCAnner is an outline of “People, Places & Things” that make his life positive, and that make his life unmanageable:

<p><b>People, Places &amp; Things That Make My Life Positive</b></p>	<p><b>People, Places &amp; Things That Make My Life Unmanageable</b></p>
<p><u>People</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• my nephew, “A” – the best kid on the planet</li> <li>• my grandfather – positive &amp; affirming</li> <li>• my coworker, “S” – emotionally real person</li> <li>• my friend, “M” – faithful &amp; loving</li> </ul> <p><u>Places</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• my studio apartment – cozy &amp; warm</li> <li>• Fullerton train station – I love to ride trains</li> <li>• Carbon Canyon &amp; Chino Hills – favorite wilderness escape</li> </ul> <p><u>Things</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• my CD player – I love to listen to music</li> <li>• my camera – I love to take photos</li> <li>• my library – I love to read</li> </ul> <p><u>Positive Sexual Activity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sex with someone I know, someone I want to be in a relationship with</li> <li>• sex which is safer, including condom use &amp; no fluid exchanges</li> <li>• sex which affirms both of us, doesn’t exchange money or favors</li> <li>• sex which doesn’t break any laws or place me in danger</li> <li>• sex with self that isn’t abusive</li> </ul>	<p><u>People</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• my Dad – rage-aholic</li> <li>• my coworker, “M” – negative-aholic</li> <li>• co-volunteers, “S” &amp; “B” – work-aholics</li> <li>• church members, “C” &amp; “G” – control-aholics</li> <li>• young “surfer” type guys – lust trigger</li> <li>• manipulative sex partners</li> </ul> <p><u>Places</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restrooms in parks, malls &amp; colleges</li> <li>• beaches</li> <li>• adult bookstores &amp; theatres</li> <li>• sex clubs</li> </ul> <p><u>Things</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sex toys</li> <li>• adult books, magazines, videos</li> <li>• sexy clothing &amp; jewelry</li> </ul> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anonymous, unsafe, or unprotected sex</li> <li>• sex in public</li> <li>• illegal sexual acts</li> </ul> <p><u>Activities &amp; Hobbies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hiking &amp; camping</li> <li>• traveling</li> <li>• museum volunteer</li> <li>• church volunteer</li> </ul>

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*Socializing* is a way of breaking down our isolation and getting to know other people in a nonsexual context.

I began coming to SCA at the end of this past October, and wrote my first plan on November 1. I've gone to the Sunday evening Plan Meeting almost every week since then, and during that time my plan has definitely evolved.

In the first column it began with very general and kind of high fallutin' statements like "romantic obsession" and "masturbation when it's driven by feelings I want to change." At the second meeting I attended, someone said he found it helpful to be really specific about what he put down. That was good to hear. After giving some thought to what I was really prepared to give up, I put down "unsafe sex." By unsafe sex for me I include not only physical acts, but also having sex under unsafe circumstances, whatever those might be.

After that, I didn't add anything for a while because I didn't want to put anything down that I really wasn't committed to giving up. So, for instance, putting down "masturbation" would have been a mistake, because it would be setting myself up for failure. It's been very helpful to be reminded that this is a "gentle" program, and I can go at the pace that's right for me. The second thing I added after some weeks was limiting the amount of phone sex. That's something I may ultimately give up entirely, but I'm not quite ready to do that just yet.

The second column was harder to identify because my acting out impulses can be triggered by so many things and just about anytime. Seeing someone who's attractive, being bored, sad, happy (all kinds of feelings), time on my hands, sleeplessness – the list goes on and on.

When I started to get specific about the third column, it included accomplishing work that is important to me, having willingness, and having a photo taken of myself that I would be happy to look at. Another time, I thought of some new things, and I experienced very strong shame about them. The hardest one to say aloud was that I want to sing. Singing is something I do when I'm alone or bike riding – something just in my head. What I want is to sing out loud, and maybe even take some lessons. I want to be free to express that part of myself.

What I see as the weeks and months have passed is that the evolution of the plan reflects changes in me as I loosen up in the program. Sometimes I think I'm not giving up enough things quickly enough, or that I'm not doing the program "right." Along with remembering that this is a gentle program, my sponsor, whom I speak to every morning, assures me that I'm "on my way."

Andrew V, New York, USA

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*Dating* is a way of changing the instant gratification habit and getting to know more about ourselves and another person, before committing to any sexual decisions.

Some members have a Sexual Recovery Plan that is concise, and that works very well for them. For example, here is the Plan that Will B submitted (New York, USA):

**Sexual Recovery Plan for Will B.**

Sexual health for Will is experiencing loving, mutually agreed upon, safe sex in an agreed upon private location.

Recovery is rigorously working the tools of the program.

(I) Plan daily to engage in those activities that will promote my mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health.

-Will B-

**Vanessa H's Sexual Recovery Plan:**

**Bottom Lines:**

- ***No pornography: magazines, internet or movies\****
- *No chat rooms except SCA, SLAA and SAA*
- *No strip clubs*
- *Masturbation no more than twice and week and then with rigorous honesty about the fantasies used*
- *No intercourse*

**Gray Areas:**

- Phone or chat room conversations that if continued would lead to a slip
- Sexually explicit conversations unless at a f2f, with sponsor, recovery partners, or at an online meeting and then only if sharing or making a point
- Bars may only be attended with another recovering SA with more sobriety than me
- Sexual contact of any kind (such as touches, looks, conversation)
- Being alone outside any bar
- Looking at people in other cars while stopped at traffic lights

**Triggers:**

- Anger or loneliness
- Feeling inferior or "not good enough for..."

*The Slogans* are simple statements that can be used in crisis situations, so that we have some basic guidelines.

- Stress
- Beautiful women dressed provocatively, or beautiful men
- Any person with beautiful eyes
- Teenage boys and girls (16-18)
- Being alone in the house
- Being alone outside a bar
- Therapy

### **Responses to triggers:**

- Call sponsor
- Call recovery partners or try to reach on online
- Walk away from trigger
- Use the 3 second rule and pray for anyone I am objectifying
- Review recovery plan
- Take a five minute time out from whatever I was doing when triggered
- Read recovery or self-help books, do step work
- Read the Bible and/or pray
- Recite the 3rd step and Serenity Prayers upon waking each day and as needed throughout the day
- Go to a meeting (f2f or online--need not be S related)
- Read and review my first step and history

### **Goals:**

- Experience & work through feelings rather than escaping or medicate them
- Have a healthy emotional and physical relationship with someone
- To become a sponsor
- Work the 12 steps and incorporate these into my daily life
- Learn to accept myself as I am
- Respect mine and other's boundaries
- Use the slogans and promises to live my life

\*That is, porn for porn's sake in a movie. Nudity or sexual content in an R rated movie would not be a violation of my bottom line.

**NO changes to this plan without first checking with my sponsor and then only after a 24 hour waiting period.**

This plan started out with total abstinence. My modus operandi (MO) was that of acting out with others as well as internet pornography and chat. I also have trouble with using phone sex as a means of acting out.

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Service is a way of helping ourselves by helping others.

There were a few things that helped me early on when creating my plan. First, understanding that the plan as written early on is NOT the plan that I will have forever. As I stated, I had total abstinence on this plan for 18 months. After that time frame, I began to feel healthy enough in recovery that masturbation was allowed. (It's noteworthy, though, that I took it off at the 15 month mark and got in trouble, so I put it back on for 3 more months.) It seemed overwhelming at first to think that I had "this plan" to follow. But time in the program allowed me to understand that, as a recovering addict, I needed this structure early on.

Second, I used this format because I did not feel that the "3 circle" idea allowed for triggers and response to triggers. This Plan was "my Bible" very early on. I cut out the response to triggers, laminated it, and carried it with me always. It helped me on more than one occasion when the addict mind could not remember one thing on the list.

The third helpful thing was having the disclaimer at the bottom. The only time I've wanted to change my plan "right now" has been when it was getting in the way of my acting out. I found that calling and talking with my sponsor about why I wanted the change, then waiting 24 hours before instituting changes allowed me to see where the addict was trying so hard to get his foot in the door.

Vanessa H, Alabama, USA

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*Things that I pray to my Higher Power to be freed from:*

**BOTTOM LINE (*Actions*)**

Actions I abstain from on a daily basis, no matter what! These are specific, clearly defined behaviors (I either did them or I didn't) for which I can honestly count sobriety – one day at a time.

This definitely includes any behavior that puts me in legal or physical jeopardy, or is generally destroying my life. It can also include anything that triggers my addiction and drives me to inevitably act out on a sexual binge.

Keep it simple – overwhelming plans lead to scarcity, then entitlement and rationalization. Remember, this isn't about giving up sex – it's about stopping harmful sexual behavior that I don't want to make room for healthy sexual behavior that I do want in my life.

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*Four Obstacles to Success: (1) Discussion of Religion – let us not defeat our purpose by entering into discussions concerning specific religious beliefs.*

## **GREY AREA (*Goals*)**

Character defects I hope to remove from my life, striving for progress not perfection. These include less definable behaviors (healthy masturbation, cruising vs. flirting) or any chronic behavior that undermines my recovery and prohibits me from integrating sex into my life as a healthy element.

It can also include people, places and things that are Secret, Abusive of myself or others, used to medicate or are a source of painful Feelings, and are Empty of a caring relationship (SAFE).

Gray area does not mean permission to act out or bargain with my sex plan – “If it’s gray, then it’s O.K.” However it can identify behavior I am unable to let go of, until I am willing to add it to my bottom line.

*Things that I pray to my Higher Power to bring into my life:*

## **ACTION PLAN (*Actions*)**

Actions I take on a daily basis in order to stay sober. Every day, my addiction attacks me physically, mentally, and spiritually. Every day, I must take the appropriate action to treat each part of this disease.

Physically, I need the power of the fellowship (meetings, telephone, service).  
Mentally, I need the clarity of the steps (surrender, inventory, amends),  
Spiritually I need a power greater than myself (prayer, reflection, meditation).

I’ll never be cured of sexual addiction, but I can insure a daily reprieve contingent on maintaining these actions. Like the diabetic who must have insulin to lead a normal life, I must have a daily dose of Fellowship, Steps and Spirituality to stay in sobriety.

## **VISION PLAN (*Goals*)**

Character assets I hope to bring into my life as a result of taking these actions. These are my hopes and dreams of new life experiences made possible by recovery.

They include my basic human needs for Comfort: self (self esteem, freedom from shame); social (sense of community, close friendships); material (shelter, food financial stability); emotional (being nurtured, feeling needed) and sexual

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*Four Obstacles to Success:* (2) Gossip – let us be ever vigilant in resisting the temptation to criticize others, to judge others, or to make comparisons to others.

(intimacy, companion, soul mate).

They also include my inherent human desire for Joy: growing into diverse life experiences, expanding my horizons with new people, places and things. Most of all it includes the warm embrace of conscious contact with my higher power.

Peter C, California, USA

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### **My Sexual Recovery Plan: *Honesty through Abstinence***

Maintaining absolute honesty is a basic premise of my recovery today. To believe that I can be honest without a total commitment to abstinence from all sexually compulsive behaviors simply won't work. For me, "MORE" was the common denominator in all my active addiction. In sobriety, I cannot engage in "gray" behavior. It is better left to those who can handle it.

After a few years on my sexual recovery plan, I decided that I would purchase a porno flick; this was not prohibited by my plan. I was in the checkout line at the store when I looked down and saw three tapes in my hand! I simply laughed at myself, took all three tapes back, and put "no porno flicks" on my sexual recovery plan.

When I came into SCA 15 years ago, the plan was called a sex plan, not a sexual recovery plan. My sponsor gave me three double-sided sheets which had examples of the sex plans of other members. He asked me to go home and write a plan for myself so that I would be able to tell whether I was sober or not. It all consisted of "NO's": no bathhouses, no porno movies, etc.

When I shared my plan with my sponsor, one of the items on it was "No phone sex initiated by me". He asked me, "What is this 'initiated by me' stuff? I answered, "Well, if my phone rings in the middle of the night, and there's someone there who wants to have sex, I don't want to have to hang up." He asked me if that was what I really wanted. How would I feel after an experience like that? He helped me to admit that phone sex, for me, was filled with lying about my age, my physical characteristics, my job, etc. It was all about fulfilling illusions.

The abstinence behaviors that I wound up putting on my plan are still the abstinence behaviors that are on my plan 15 sober years later. They are really all the behaviors that led me to recovery in the first place. I have added a few behaviors, but have never removed any. It is a very important part of my plan that I cannot remove an item without consulting with my sponsor before so doing.

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*Four Obstacles to Success:* (3) Dominance – our leaders are chosen not to govern, but to serve. Any attempt to manage/direct is likely to have disastrous results on group harmony.

I have never felt the necessity of writing a second or third column. If I practiced the behaviors that most people put in these columns, I wouldn't be able to preserve the abstinence that I demand of myself in the first column.

In conclusion, I know that I cannot control my addiction, but I can let go of it with God's help. I define my abstinence on my sexual recovery plan with this in mind. When I create a unity between honest feeling, honest thinking and honest action, I have become an honest person.

Joe S, New York, USA

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My written recovery plan has helped my recovery in the sense that I have it memorized. I do refer to it on occasion but it is not something I refer to often enough. In reality, I have the bottom lines and grey areas memorized, but the rest is well - shall I say - memorized by selective memory. When I am in a bad place, I prefer not to do or take action on the recovery items listed on the plan. This document is probably the most important tool in my recovery toolbox but yet I use it very little. It is always nice to get it out and read it. It is a great tool. I am glad to be contributing this to the SCanner ... it made me more aware of my Plan, and also the fact that the disk on which I kept all my recovery documents was wiped out. I'm glad I could "Recover" it! Here is what my Plan looks like today:

### **PHIL'S SEX ADDICTION RECOVERY PLAN**

#### **Bottom Lines:**

- Pornography: magazines, internet, movies\*, phone sex, any form of pornography
- Chat rooms except SCA, SLAA and SAA
- Strip clubs
- Sex shows
  - Live entertainment that is geared towards sex
  - Radio shows – Howard Stern, Don & Mike, etc.
  - Concerts or Shows such as Dr Dirty
- Masturbation
- Addictive sex with wife

\*That is, porn for porn's sake in a movie. Nudity or sexual content in an R rated movie would not be a violation of my bottom line.

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*Four Obstacles to Success:* (4) Sensational Language – it cannot help our common efforts to use language or descriptions calculated to arouse sexual desire.

**Grey Areas:**

- Phone or chat room conversations that if continued would lead to a slip
- Sexually explicit conversations unless at a f2f, with sponsor, recovery partners, or at an online meeting and then only if sharing or making a point
- Sexual contact of any kind (such as touches, looks, conversation)
- Surfing TV late night for the purposes of finding sexual content
- Drinking with friends for the sake of drinking – partying
- Objectifying women any place any where
- Sexually explicit music
- Being alone with “J”
- Contact with “K”

**Triggers:**

- Stress, anger, loneliness, or control issues
- Boredom-nothing to do or change in work schedule that leaves blank time
- Beautiful women dressed provocatively
- Beautiful Women’s panty lines
- Beautiful Women who have any undergarment showing on purpose or accidentally
- Victoria’s secret and or any store of the type
- Panties
- Teenage girls (13-19)
- Being alone in the house
- Being alone in hotel
- Therapy

**Responses to triggers:**

- Call sponsor; Call recovery partners or try to reach on online
- Walk away from trigger
- Use the 3 second rule and pray for anyone I am objectifying
- Review recovery plan
- Take a five minute time out from whatever I was doing when triggered
- Read recovery or self-help books, do step work
- Read the Bible and/or pray
- Recite the 3rd step and Serenity Prayers upon waking each day and as needed throughout the day
- Go to a meeting (f2f or online--need not be S related)
- Read and review my first step and history

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*Until I could accept my sexual compulsion, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy.*

**Goals:**

- Experience and work through feelings rather than escaping or medicate them
- Keep recovery a part of daily life-do something every day for the sake of recovery
- Attend SCA online recovery meetings
- Attend f2f SIAA/SA meetings
- Stay rigorously honest with sponsor
- Become a sponsor
- Work the 12 steps and incorporate these into my daily life
- Learn to accept myself as I am
- Respect mine and other's boundaries
- Use the slogans and promises to live my life
- Keep GOD as the power that will guide recovery

***NO changes to this plan without first checking with my sponsor and then only after a 24 hour waiting period.***

Phil

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Before I came into the program, I knew nothing about the concept of boundaries. That was a foreign idea and one that I had never practiced in my life. Soon after attending SCA meetings, I began to hear about a sexual recovery plan (SRP). I had no idea what that was at first, but I finally purchased the Little Blue Book (LBB) and learned about the SRP in SCA literature. However, I really didn't do anything with that information until two things happened. First, I went to my first NY SCA conference where I learned more about the SCA program and the SRP specifically. Second, I asked someone in the program to be my sponsor. In my first meeting with my sponsor, he asked me what I wanted out of this relationship and I told him that I wanted to work on my SRP and I wanted to work the steps. So we started to work on my plan.

I looked at the examples in the LBB and I found them helpful, but it did not complete the picture for me. I needed to define for myself what my bottom line behaviors were. SCA does not proscribe a universal definition of sexual sobriety as one can find in other 12-step recovery programs (such as AA). In SCA, each person needs to define sexual sobriety for himself or herself. So, for me, I needed to draw that line in the sand that tells me in no uncertain terms if I have acted out and have broken my sobriety. So I added a third section to my plan and called it bottom line behaviors.

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*SCA meetings are an ongoing process, where we develop a new sense of identity, feelings of belonging, more understanding of our problem and the hope of recovery.*

My bottom line behaviors were simple but very clear. Since having anonymous sex was the major way in which I had acted out, one of my bottom line behaviors was to abstain from anonymous sex. I was also in a committed relationship and I realized early on in the program that I valued monogamy and fidelity; I also knew that my partner held those same values. So my other bottom line behavior was not having sex outside of my primary relationship. But I needed language that was more concrete so that my bottom line was not ambiguous. I decided that I needed to define what sex means. My definition of sex, as I see it for myself, is intentionally touching another person for sexual gratification.

With this definition, I found that my core sexual boundaries were clear and unambiguous.

Yet, as I worked with my sponsor, I knew I needed a plan that was more encompassing than just spelling out my bottom line behavior. I needed to identify those triggers and grey area behaviors that would lead me to breaking my bottom line(s) if I were to spend much time in this area. I also needed to identify “top-line behaviors”, those things and activities in my life that are healthy, enjoyable and fun.

So all other unhealthy sexual behaviors went into my grey area. In the beginning, these included several behaviors: pornography, cyber-sex, nudist events, visiting acting out places at malls, parks, & bathrooms, reading sexual graffiti on bathroom walls, going to gay bars on my own, spending time in the wet areas of the gym, and cruising others. I found that when I engaged in one or more of these behaviors, especially in early recovery, it did not take long for me to find myself teetering on the edge of my bottom line. As I gained more time in my recovery, some of these triggers have been less of an issue in my life. I find that today, at most gyms, I can go into the shower or sauna areas of the gym without having it become a tremendous trigger. I find that I can go to a nude beach with my partner and enjoy that without sexualizing it. Nevertheless, other behaviors will forever stay in my grey area of things to avoid.

What is important for me to grasp is that I treat the “grey area” part of my plan as a signal - a yellow flag that tells me that something is amiss. When I consciously or unconsciously partake in these behaviors, it indicates to me that I am using one or more of these grey area behaviors as medication. It often indicates that there is something deeper going on in my life; some pain that I want to suppress and avoid. Now if I pay attention and attend to what my body or psyche is telling me, I can address the real issue and quickly move out of the grey area. So I find that the grey area is a real gift for me. It acts as a buffer zone or a “first alert” system.

The one thing that I try to avoid is to judge myself harshly anytime I engage in any of

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*We learn to treat ourselves as patiently as we would a child, affirming our values even when we're not always sure we have them.*

my grey area behaviors. I find that self-judgment is the quickest way for me to move from grey area to bottom line behaviors. The slogan “Be Gentle With Yourself” helps me. It reminds me not to condemn myself, and to realize that I am a human being; being imperfect is part of the territory.

I also realize that defining my grey area behaviors separate from my bottom line behaviors does not give me permission to live out most of my time in the grey areas. The grey area is a tool that I use to let me know when deeper issues in my life are troubling me. If I “plow” into my grey area behaviors, it serves as a buffer so that I have time to react and use the tools of the program before I might resort to my bottom-line behaviors.

Finally, I define my “top-line behaviors”; those acts, people, places and things that I want in my life that are healthy and enjoyable. These include: playing my guitar, journaling, exercising, attending meetings, working the steps, having a healthy sex life with my partner, maintaining rigorous honesty with others (especially with my sponsor and my partner), going to the movies and theatre, entertaining friends at my home, and so on. I find that this area of my sexual recovery plan is the most challenging area over the long term.

My sexual recovery plan has evolved over time. Although my bottom line hasn’t changed, I have been able to add and delete things from my grey area and top-line area over time. When I make these changes, especially in the grey area, I try to “reason things out with someone else” and talk with my sponsor about these changes before making them. Sometimes I find that tough to do because that requires me to show willingness to change my mind based on my sponsor’s feedback. My initial thought is “I know what’s best for me” and resist having to subject my decision to my sponsor’s questioning. Yet I have always found that when I do invite my sponsor into the decision-making process of changing my plan, I always come up with a better plan in the end.

Today, not only do I now know what boundaries are, but I also have appropriate and healthy boundaries in my life. With these boundaries in place, I experience freedom from my sexual compulsion, one day at a time, and I now have more choices for my life than I have ever had before.

Rod F, Washington DC, USA

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My name is Jim and I’m sexually compulsive. I came to this program 8 years ago after many dangerous and unsatisfying sexual liaisons. I attended my first meeting shortly

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*In the SCA Statement of Purpose, we indicate that our goal is sexual sobriety ... to integrate our sexuality into our lives as a healthy element.*

after having picked up a young man off the street who was under the influence of alcohol and drugs. I took him to my car. We began to make out. Then he freaked out and shattered my windshield with his foot. The police got involved. The next day, my parents and co-workers saw my damaged car and asked me what had happened. I had no satisfactory explanation. I only know my two worlds had collided. My shattered windshield was a powerful metaphor for my shattered life.

After several years of going in and out of the program, I got a sponsor. Three years ago, with his help, I came up with a sexual recovery plan. I am grateful now for the opportunity to update and revise the plan. I'm also grateful to have 15 months of sobriety, which I define as abstaining from bottom line behaviors. I hope that my experience benefits at least one other person in SCA. I know I am receiving tremendous benefit from sharing.

## **MY SEXUAL RECOVERY PLAN**

### **Bottom Line Behavior (to be absolutely avoided)**

Sexual behavior that would put my life at risk (i.e., sex with an unknown person picked up off the street)

- Sexual behaviors that would put my health at risk, i.e., unsafe sex, sex with a hustler/prostitute.
- Sexual behavior that would place me in legal jeopardy, i.e., sex in public places and/or sex with a minor
- Behavior that would put my employment at risk, i.e., propositioning a co-worker

### **Dark Gray Areas (behavior that takes me close to breaking my bottom line)**

- Cruising for sex
- Spending time with a minor, especially alone
- Picking up an unknown person off the street

### **Light Gray Areas (not the best use of my time and energy; could lead to more serious acting out behavior if unchecked)**

- Having sex with someone with whom I would not otherwise associate
- Staring at or flirting with a co-worker
- Starting at or flirting with someone in a locker room
- Use of pornography
- Masturbation

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*We change our behavior as a result of the freedom we experience in the spiritual path of this program.*

**Top Line Behavior (I pray for the willingness to spend more time and energy doing these things)**

- Tools of the program: meetings, the telephone, sponsorship, literature, working the steps, prayer and meditation, working on my plan, abstinence (partial or total), socializing, dating, saying the slogans, service, writing.
- Also gainful employment, volunteering, exercise, taking walks, reading, spending time with appropriate people, sleeping, eating, breathing, going to therapy sessions (group and individual), attending theater and movies alone or with appropriate people, non-sexual massage, haircuts, seeing doctors/dentists, taking detoxification treatments, going on retreats, romantic and/or sexual behavior with someone in a mature, mutually nurturing and appropriate way.

Jim S, Washington DC, USA

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Hi, I'm Marabel, a sexual compulsive, relationship addict/anorexic and just plain addict. Here are two of my recovery plans. I keep both of them around on my computer and with me to remind me of where I need to be, where I am, and where I've been. Like me, my plan is always a work in progress. The day I don't have a recovery plan is a day that I'm either in relapse, I've fed it to the neighbor's dog, or I've kept an appointment with my HP to meet in eternity. In other words, this girl's going to have a Plan, no matter what!

Right now, I am between sponsors. I am finding that if ever there was a crucial time to have a recovery plan, it is now! A "recovery plan" gives me guidelines on what I need to do to stay sober and avoid going back to active addiction. It's always a good idea to put together a recovery plan to help stay on course in my own recovery and to give me a blueprint as to just what "sober" means for me. I use both of my plans as a "sponsor in my pocket", when the "sponsor in my head" is out to lunch or somewhere in the ether.

My plan has changed over time to reflect situations that have come up and behaviors that have especially troubled me. In fact, given my current circumstances, I know that my plan may need some tweaking. Before doing anything, though, I will have to really examine myself, and talk with HP and my recovery partners first. I don't want to recover in a vacuum, which is a great danger while I'm in between sponsors. In addition, I realize that my recovery plan is a very crucial part of my recovery so anything I do with it has to be carefully considered.

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*Sexual sobriety is defined in terms of an individual abiding by his or her sexual recovery plan.*

When I first came into recovery, my very first sponsor helped me to put together a recovery plan that is very much like my second plan. Looking back, I would have to say that I needed a fairly strict plan for at least the very beginning of my recovery. I needed this in order to get me to think and work in a recovery mindset. I needed this also to get me to do one very simple and basic thing – to let me know what I needed to do to keep from acting out. As I changed sponsors, I tweaked that plan with my sponsor's help a number of times. It was and is a very good plan, and fairly detailed for me. If it helps any of you to go with that format, then certainly try it.

As I went along in my recovery, I felt very uncomfortable with the focus of the previous plan and felt the need to change it to the current plan. The difference between the two plans is this: it isn't so much about behaviors now as it is about what is going on in my head. I felt frustrated and "micro-managed" by my own plan, and wanted something that spoke to me and spoke to how I wanted to work my recovery.

I was finding that fear of relapse (if I didn't follow my plan) could only keep my attention on sobriety for so long. After a while, the fear of active addiction was replaced by indifference and a feeling of "damned if I do and damned if I don't". I wasn't sure which was worse – being sober and not having much to look forward to, or being in active addiction and following the course to my death. By putting a positive spin on my plan, I am reminded that I have good reason to wake up in the morning, that there are far more satisfying things to do in life other than acting out – like living life!

I did keep my First Step in mind when I did the rewrite, and I inverted my plan by listing the top lines on top, and the bottom lines on the bottom. I also kept in mind these facts about myself. First, my Plan must look, feel and work for me as a positive reinforcement, and as a list of "healthy behaviors" instead of a list of "shouldn'ts" (when it was all "shouldn'ts", I would discount it). Second, that shame, fear, and the forbidden have been major triggers, and that positive action is needed to address those issues. And third, being raised with a lack of boundaries presents a huge opportunity in my recovery to explore what boundaries I need. I should not be afraid to either draw up new boundaries or enforce current boundaries in relationship to others and myself.

By keeping the focus on healthy behaviors, I am finding that acting out looks a lot less attractive. I'm too busy trying to live healthier. If I need to be reminded how unattractive acting out is, I can look at my First and Fourth Steps, or even my old recovery plan!

I like my new plan, and it works for me. It allows for growth and change, and does not leave me feeling micro-managed. I keep the second plan around just in case I find myself in such a space that I absolutely need to go back to a more strict form of

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*The purpose of the sexual recovery plan is not to make our sex lives more rigid,  
but to liberate them.*

recovery. I like to have as many recovery tools available as possible!

The only other thing I will say about recovery plans is this. If it keeps you sober and accountable, then it is a good plan. Your plan is your plan. No one else's plan is better than your plan, just different. It has to fit YOU and no one else, because it's YOUR recovery. That's my two and a half cents on recovery plans!

I am sharing my current recovery plan first, followed by the plan before the current plan. Take what works, and leave what doesn't.

### ***Marabel's Current Recovery Plan***

*Changes* - A gentle reminder of how this Plan is to work.

*Goals* - The Goals of my recovery, outlined by what I hope to achieve in relationships to God, self and others.

*Top Lines* - Acceptable mindset and behaviors that help me to achieve my Goals.

*Triggers* - "Red flags" that warn me when I am going in a direction away from my Goals.

*Bottom lines* - Mindset and/or behaviors that lead to self-destructive action and thwart achievement of my Goals

Changes are allowable to this plan as long as both God and I see that the changes are to be of positive impact to my recovery and my mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical health. Input from my sponsor (or recovery partners, if without sponsor) and God, as well as a 24-hour period to "sit and think on it" is strongly advised before placing any changes on my Plan. The final decision is mine as to what changes are allowed, since it is MY recovery plan, and this Plan is an outline of how I take ownership of my recovery.

**Goals** - What I hope to achieve in relationships to God, others and self.

Sobriety = Living a life that encompasses these Goals.

- to have healthy relationships with God, with myself and with other people;
- to be able to have sex with self and others, as an expression of love for myself and other people, that affirms and cherishes the selfhood of both myself and of others as gifts of God;
- to learn healthy boundaries in relationship with self and others, and learn how to enforce them in a way that is healthy for me;
- to learn how to deal with stress in a positive way;
- to be able to live out my Program and always grow in recovery;
- to be able to share the Program with others, and sponsor others as HP

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*It's not a good idea to make random changes in a sexual recovery plan:  
most of us discuss them first with another member or a sponsor.*

- presents the opportunity to do so;
- to be able to take care of my responsibilities and commitments to others or myself.

**Top Lines** - Acceptable mindset and behaviors that help me to achieve my goals. Healthy people = People who want to help you recover and help you to maintain your recovery and sobriety, and allow you to do the same with them.

- keep in conscious contact with my HP through prayer and study of Scripture and recovery readings;
- write my feelings in my journal to keep in touch with myself;
- keep in conscious and healthy contact with recovery partners and others. If a conversation leaves me feeling unhealthy, I can walk away from that scene and seek out someone who IS healthy;
- eat if I'm hungry, talk to someone healthy if I'm angry or stressed, find a hobby or help someone else if I am lonely, and go to bed to sleep if I am tired;
- go to IRC meetings, SCA boards, and any other recovery "meetings" as much as possible;
- if I feel like isolating, do a healthy thing that will take me out of myself. It may be calling someone in recovery, it may be going out with friends, or it may be going out to do something new and/or social;
- give the computer a rest sometime and pick up a good book or watch a good movie instead;
- if I am feeling like I am in an uneasy space for any reason, accept it, let the feelings pass, and do something that is kind to yourself that is not sexual that allows for a sense of accomplishment. It could be housework, it could be going for a walk, or it could be taking a bubble bath or spending time with a healthy friend or doing service work;
- if a person I desire to be in relationship with is in a "committed relationship" with someone else, the loving thing to do is to respect their commitment and back off. A "committed relationship" is any relationship where one is in an engagement, marriage, or marriage type situation with another;
- in relationships, whenever the need for a sexual boundary arises, define boundaries as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior and let my partner(s) know. If it feels "ick," feel free to say so, declare a boundary and honor it, and ask that my partner(s) honor my boundary. If something is right, feel free to reinforce and nourish it, and let my partner(s) know it's ok;
- read my sexual history as needed to remind me of my need for recovery.

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*Let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but only love, understanding and companionship.*

**Triggers** - "Red flags" that warn me when I am going in a direction away from my goals.

- Spending less and less time with God.
- Isolation and secretiveness toward the people who care for me, especially recovery people.
- Not acknowledging my emotional, spiritual, physical or mental needs to another in relationship to self and to another.
- Feeling the need to use sex purely as a "drug" to avoid feelings, instead of a way of expressing love to another or myself.
- Feeling the need to cross the boundary of those in committed relationships to get my "forbidden fruit" fix.

**Bottom lines** - Mindset and/or behaviors that lead to self-destructive action and thwart achievement of my goals. Acting out = Living a life that runs counter to my goals.

- Neglecting self-care emotionally, spiritually, physically and mentally in a relationship to the point of serious damage in any of the above areas.
- Using sex with self or others in a way that denies and violates my selfhood and the selfhood of others by not cherishing myself or others as gifts of God.
- Using sex as a "drug" to avoid feelings instead of expressing love to myself or another.
- Not respecting the boundaries of others who are in committed relationships.

### *Marabel's Recovery Plan, Version 3.0*

#### **Bottom lines**

- *Pornography* – Defined for me as pictures designed solely to create sexual desire for a person as a sex object, either online, TV, films or printed form. (This does not apply to images that just happen to "pop up" incidentally, as will happen in an R or even PG rated film or TV show, or an online pop-up ad, unless my intent is to continue to visit the image to objectify). Also, I am now including erotic stories, defined as stories written for the specific purpose of sexual arousal.
- *Sex chatting* – Defined for me as being engaged in sexual "acting-out" chat in any chat room or private messaging with someone that I am not currently in a committed relationship with. "Acting-out chat" means chatting solely for the purpose of bringing oneself and/or someone else to orgasm.
- *Sex outside of a committed relationship with someone*. A "committed relationship" is defined as being in relationship with someone who is

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*Often, experiencing a plan over a period of time is the only true test we know that tells us if we are on a good track for ourselves.*

available for me and who desires to move toward a more serious relationship, such as engagement or marriage with me. ("Available" means "not married, engaged to, or dating someone else!") I must also be available for the other person, too

- *Masturbation* – Becomes a bottom line only when used with pornography or sex chatting as defined above.

### **Gray areas**

- Staring at people with a desire to objectify them.
- Touching people in a way that suggests I desire sexual contact with them.
- Conversations and jokes that suggest being sexual with the person I am speaking with.

### **Triggers**

- Neglecting contact with my HP
- Being Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired
- Secretiveness, or saying too much at an inappropriate time or to an inappropriate person.
- TV shows, movies, magazine articles, books, internet sites, and advertisements that have pictures or language that stimulate objectifying.
- Isolation from people, especially recovery people.
- Lingering in euphoric recall or dreams of acting out situations (fantasy or real) or of acting out partners.
- Being near others who are trying to engage me in flirting with them.

### **Responses to Triggers**

- Keep in conscious contact with my HP through prayer and Bible study.
- Write my feelings in my journal to keep in touch with myself.
- Call or write sponsor and/or recovery partners to keep in touch with recovery.
- Read recovery literature.
- Read sexual history to remind me why I am in recovery.
- Eat if I'm hungry, talk to someone "neutral" if I'm angry, talk to someone, find a hobby or help someone else if I am lonely, go to bed/sleep if I am tired.
- Post to the feedback board to check-in.
- Go to IRC meetings as much as possible.
- If I feel like isolating, force myself to call or e-mail someone.
- Turn off the computer ASAP and walk away if I am feeling triggerry or feel like I want to engage in triggerry chat.

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*Many have found it helpful that for every boundary, every act or thing we abstain from, we replace the negative with loving, supportive behavior.*

- If turning off the computer doesn't work, leave the house!
- Keep mind active with positive things, like hobbies, service work, going out with friends, or learning something new.
- If I am involved in flirting, observe the "three second rule".
- Walk away from trigger conversations.
- If I am in euphoric recall, go do something to keep my mind busy with something other than euphoric recall.

### **Goals**

- To have healthy relationships with God, with myself and with other people.
- To be able to have sex as an expression of love for myself and another person, instead of an act to cover up other feelings.
- To learn healthy boundaries and learn how to enforce them in a way that is healthy for me.
- To learn how to deal with stress in a positive way.
- To be able to live out my Program and always grow in recovery.
- To be able to share the Program with others.
- To be able to sponsor others when the appropriate time comes.

### **Disclaimer**

No changes to my recovery plan unless my HP and I agree that the change will be a positive change for my mental, physical and spiritual health and growth.

For any long-term changes, discuss with sponsor with 24 hours notice.

For any short term/emergency situations, call my sponsor ASAP!

Marabel, Georgia, USA

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Why a Recovery Plan? For me it is to remind me of what I'm here for, where I've been, and what works for me in my recovery.

My Recovery Plan began pretty much as it reads today. The only additional thing that was in my Recovery Plan at the very beginning was a commitment to 90 days of celibacy, free from sex with others or myself. I think I completed that 90-day period somewhere around 14 months into recovery, which began June 11, 2002. This was probably one of the most important things in my Recovery Plan from the start. The 90 day celibacy period taught me several things. It taught me that I could get along without any sexual fulfillment for a significant period of time, (i.e., I didn't *have* to have it!). It taught me that much of my thinking about sex was made up of myth, disinformation, and some outright lies. Some of those lies includes things like "I will explode without

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*SCA members discover at some point clear differences between acting out and loving sexual behavior.*

sex,” or “I cannot get aroused without getting a case of ‘blue balls’.” It taught me that I could live life without the adrenalin high of acting out and begin to function "normally". In addition, it taught me that a sexual relationship with my wife could, and would be much more fulfilling in active recovery than it was in active addiction.

Now with over a year-and-a-half in recovery and 9 months active recovery without a slip, I must say that most of my recovery plan has become second nature to me. It has made me very aware many things including:

- That I enter into a danger zone when I’m in H.A.L.T. (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired).
- When I'm lingering too long on "looking."
- When other portions of my life are becoming ways of escape from reality.
- Physical relations with my wife, and whether or not they are addictive or healthy.
- When others’ shares are a danger to me because of anger, resentment, or simply that they are triggering to me.

### **Dave M’s Recovery Plan (Effective: February 25, 2003)**

#### ***BOTTOM LINES***

- No sexual body to body contact or intercourse with any man or woman with the exception of my wife, and intercourse/mutual masturbation with my wife, only.
- No acting out (a/o) with my wife, (i.e., fantasies of others, forcing myself to get off, my satisfaction being what it’s all about). If I’m having difficulty being there for her, talk about it, communicate what I’m feeling – BE Rigorously HONEST!
- No dwelling on triggering thoughts (i.e. taking arousal to an additional intensity with fantasy, thoughts, pictures or words, to take myself to the teetering razor’s edge of gratification—teasing my addict.)
- No masturbation/self-gratification.
- No pornography magazines, internet, books, TV, or movies. This includes teasing, taunting, & sensual non-nude and model sites. Do not read program descriptions of adult sites on satellite TV menu. **(IT IS ALL SEXUAL CONTENT FOR ME!)**
- No chat rooms, friend-finders, adult message boards, except SCA, SLAA, SAA (no sexually explicit conversations with ANYONE in these rooms except sponsor and then only if completely necessary)
- Do not read shares from [person X], no matter the nickname (whether toxic or not they too easily cause frustration, anger, resentment)

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*SCA is a program of self-diagnosis and so it encourages individuals to be guided by their own recovery process and the principles of honesty, openness and willingness.*

**GRAY AREAS**

- Looking at beautiful women past first glance.
- Listening to jokes that might trigger.
- Reading or watching books/programs with minimal sexual content.
- Do not read program descriptions of adult sites on satellite TV menu.
- Surfing TV channels known for borderline sexual content with the intention of glimpsing sexual content.
- Bypassing *We-blocker* to read blocked shares.
- Be wary of all female newcomers shares.
- Being on the internet when my wife is napping or out-of-the-house.
- Being on the internet without specific intent not related to sexual issues.
- Being alone at home, at the office, or elsewhere.

**TRIGGERS**

- Hungry
- Angry
- Lonely
- Tired
- Morning arousal with erection.
- Arousal with fantasy.
- Whole body sexual sensitivity in withdrawal.
- Lying in bed past wake-up.
- Stress at work or at home.
- Dealing with recovery issues.
- Dealing with family of origin issues.
- Women/girls of any age (visual/mental obsessing/euphoric recall).
- Away from home, off schedule, not in control of my time.
- Surfing TV channels known for borderline sexual content.

**RESPONSES TO TRIGGERS/GREY AREAS:**

- Hungry – Insure I’m getting the nutrition necessary for lifestyle and health.
- Angry – Look at what’s making me angry/resentful, journal, let go of the anger, Serenity Prayer/Third Step Prayer
- Lonely – Check out the feeling—Where’s it coming from? Is it real, or perceived?
- Tired – Insure I’m getting the sleep necessary for lifestyle and health. Insure I’m getting the exercise necessary for lifestyle and health.
- Laying in bed past wakeup – OK, if intentional and no urge/trigger to a/o (i.e., overtired, sick, or truly making love to my wife).

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*Total abstinence is merely a tool of recovery, not a prize, not a way of winning a romantic relationship, not a better sobriety than somebody else’s.*

- **\*\*No dwelling on triggering thoughts** ((ie: taking myself to heights of arousal, bordering on the teetering razor's edge of gratification with fantasy thoughts, pictures or words, teasing my addict). The minute these things are triggered, get up, do something positive, and get moving. Engage my mind in something that requires different energy.
- Morning Arousal – Get up! Get out of bed! Go for a walk!
- Whole body sexual sensitivity in withdrawal. Physically move, get up, do something constructive. **DO NOT TOUCH!**
- Stress at home or at work: Dealing with recovery issues - Take time out! Slow down! Set priorities! Look at Time Management!
- Being alone at home, at the office, or elsewhere – If alone, do something constructive: hobbies, housework; “Honey Do’s;” work outside.
- Women/girls of any age – Stop looking after first glance. Do not lust. Pray for and ask to see what Jesus sees in them.
- Away from home, off schedule, or out of control: Remember I’m not in control anyway, and seek God’s help to prioritize and continue to do the things I need to do. Be intentional about doing the healthy, healing things I need to do to progress in recovery and to be delivered from habitual sexual sin/addiction.
- Surfing TV channels known for borderline sexual content - Do my best to be intentional before surfing so as not to use surfing for “sneak peaks.”
- Bypassing *We-blocker* to read blocked shares - Be aware of share content and motive for reading. Move on from shares that are possibly triggering. Watch subject lines.
- Get off the internet at the first subtle indication that I’m getting ready to point & click my way to porn.
- Take a 5 minute time out—walk away-- from whatever I was doing when triggered/triggering.

### ***OTHER DISCIPLINES THAT WILL HELP***

- Read the Bible and pray daily; read recovery or self-help books
- Work the steps
- Walk away
- Call sponsor
- Tell the Truth
- Call other support people
- Review recovery plan
- Do step work
- Provide E, S, & H to others in recovery
- Go to a meeting (online or face-to-face)

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*It can come as a shock to discover that the general malaise so familiar to us – the “hole in the soul” we felt we were born with – is shame.*

## **GOALS**

- To experience and work through feelings rather than escape or numb them
- Have a healthy emotional and physical relationship with my wife
- Trust my God to fill the holes in my life with good things
- Work the 12 steps
- Respect other's boundaries and mine
- To learn the feelings/emotions/nature of healthy sexual identity
- To learn to live sexually healthy
- Remember the 12 steps, slogans and promises as I live my life.
- No changes to this plan without first checking with my sponsor and then, after a 24 hour waiting period.
- Don't be afraid of what God may have for me and His call on my life as I walk in holiness and purity of life.

Dave M, Texas, USA

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Here is Lindasu's recovery Plan:

### **Sexual Recovery Plan for a Married Person**

#### ***1- Bottom Line Behaviors (what I will NOT do):***

I will not engage in sexual activity of any kind with persons outside my marriage, including:

- cybersex
- phone sex
- in-person sex
- pornography (viewing, reading, writing, creating)
- sexual fantasy involving another person besides my husband

#### ***2- Middle Line Behaviors (precautionary measures to enhance my sobriety):***

- no personal emails to or from men
- no personal phone conversations with men
- no online conversations involving sexual innuendo or intrigue
- discontinue contact with anyone who does not honor my boundaries
- each day yield my will and my life to the care of God
- maintain open and honest communication with my husband
- get enough sleep

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*SCA is not psychotherapy, nor a "get well quick" self-improvement scheme. Ours is a spiritual program that gradually loosens the compulsion's grip.*

**3- Top Line Behaviors (healthy and creative activities i will pursue because i enjoy them):**

- paint... seek outlets for showing my work
- write... seek outlets for publishing my work
- explore the art world... visit galleries etc.
- make my home more inviting and aesthetically pleasing
- explore new creative endeavors, such as leatherworking

Ok, that is basically it in a nutshell. I hope you can use it. Blessings!

Lindasu, Georgia, USA

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**What Works For Me.**

Seventeen months & 8 days ago I landed here. Online SCA. My life was out of control. At first I thought that only my sex life was out of control, but at another level I knew that my entire life was out of whack. Each day I wondered what would come first: bankruptcy or divorce, jail or suicide.

At first, my recovery plan was simple: use online resources to cure sex addiction. Online felt safe and easy. No public exposure, no fall in community standing. After about 3 weeks online, I came to realize that I needed a sponsor. So I got an 'e-sponsor'. Several months later I came to realize that I needed face-to-face (f2f) meetings. So I started to attend f2f meetings. What had started out as a way for me to stay anonymous in recovery evolved into a tool that helps me get local resources.

A bit about what life was like then may help you to understand what recovery tools were needed for me. Three hundred pound. \$20,000 in credit card debt. Ninety-plus days behind on most bills. Collection agency calling. Checkbook over drawn. Six cans of cola a day. Hours and hours each day numbed out in front of pornography. Five or more civic meetings a week. Church youth chaperone. Political party treasurer. Bible camp board of directors. Fundraising board for the largest local charity. Everything was out of whack.

The first thing I needed to do was to get a public reason to be in recovery. Alcoholism seems more socially acceptable than sex addiction. So the first thing I did was to stop drinking – this gave anyone around me an easy explanation if they saw any recovery work or heard any recovery sayings from me. The stress of being found out was now eased up.

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*In SCA we're not required to "believe" anything. It's more often the case that we stop believing that by applying will power, we can somehow pull our lives together on our own.*

Next, I needed to get my sleep in balance. It isn't rocket science to understand the connections between stress and sleep – sleep and caffeine – caffeine and stress. My caffeine habit was next. No more cans of cola on the way to bed – no more cans of caffeine at all. No cola, no coffee. Also, 8 hours of sleep a night. Well, 8 hours of bed time anyhow. Within days, I started to have dreams. I suppose that I had been having dreams for years without realizing it, but for the first time in my life I consistently started to have dreams that I could remember.

Checkbook. I had to slay the checkbook dragon. It was the next largest stressor in my life. It took me a few days and several 'book-ending' posts on the SCA site, but eventually I knew how much money we had. Since that day, I have not bounced a single check. I still cringe at mail from my bank after years of fearing those darn notes that they would send out. The stress of wondering if this check will be the one that causes me to go over drawn is now gone.

Budget. Again, it was the next largest stressor in my life. The first month was really rocky, and the next couple of months weren't much better. Our income is a given each month – so that part was easy. House and car payments were set in stone so that was easy too. The largest roadblock was my wife thinking that I was going to use the budget as a tool to control her spending. That wasn't the case at all. I wanted it as a tool to track where our money was going. Organizing the bills was part of this process (that took a couple of days to do too). I made a list of exactly what we owed to each place – seems there were about 10 of them. Some were small enough to pay off right away. Every bill got something – and a few even got a phone call from me explaining that they were getting \$xyx and that next month I would do the same again. In about 3 months, we were current on our entire over due bill pile. I still owe lots of money to the credit card and to my bank, but those accounts are current and will be paid off in the next couple of years. It took me years to dig myself into debt and it will take me a couple to get back out – but the stress of the bill pile is gone.

Next some of my civic involvement had to be cut back. I let some commitments expire at the end of their terms and a couple more I turned in a resignation with an explanation about spending more time with my family. I was successful in those ventures, but at this point in my recovery, I really don't need the stress of other people's projects.

My cluttered house was the next thing to be taken care of. In recovery, every surface was piled with old bills, kid's art papers or material that I wanted to read some day. I started organizing, filing, and tossing. Again with lots of book-ending at the SCA web site. I never tried to take on too large of a pile and never started out to tackle a whole room. I just spent some time organizing one area of one room at a time. Each day I

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*When recovery begins, it's amazing the levels of emotion we uncover. Slowly we learn to recognize genuine feeling, and to trust it.*

would decide on what area of the house stressed me out the most and I would spend a little time working in that area. Now if you came to my house you would think it looked about average – more dust than my mother’s house, but less dust than my collage apartment. This project is ongoing with the last room being tackled at this time. It is nice to be able to sit down in a room and not face piles of crud that I can’t decide how to handle.

So, that gives you a feel for the kinds of things that I have had to do to maintain serenity. There were other things that happened and tools that I have used to make all of this happen. One of those tools is posting on the SCA website daily. It reminds me that I am an addict. I have seen too many people leave the group – fly high for a short time and then come back. For me and for today I’ll keep posting every day.

Another important tool for me is to e-mail my sponsor every day. Again, it keeps me from forgetting that I am an addict. His insight into my life has been amazing. He helps me to look at my life as an outsider might see it – without my built-in resistance to change.

Books-on-tape are another tool that helps me. I listen to these every day in the car. I am a regular at the local lending library; the ladies at the desk know me by name. I have now gained more knowledge after listening to hundreds of hours of tapes. I take what helps and I leave the rest.

Journaling also helps. Often this starts out as my daily e-mail to my sponsor but then I get on a roll and a few pages later I realize that I have been journaling. Once in a while I will sit down to journal about a particular topic, but usually it is just whatever comes to mind.

Yet another tool that helps me is music; loud music of my religious preference. If there is any doubt weather or not the music is too loud, I turn it up a notch. Even though I can’t sing to save my soul I have joined the choir at church and I have even started to take guitar lessons. Music is the exact opposite of what I was before. Somehow, it moves my soul. The choir keeps me connected with people outside of recovery and gives me a chance to learn new music that I don’t get to pick. Those are good things.

Finally, I also find that reading the book of my religious preference helps. I am continually amazed about how reading a page from this book can settle an otherwise hectic day.

Peace, Randy S.

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*To receive loving attention heals shame. To bestow it does, too. Giving someone else a hug means getting one yourself.*

Hi I am George K (U) from Buda Hungary. I used to be an active member in 98-00, but then I stopped for a while (had only face-to-face meetings). This is my recovery Plan:

I do not do things that are shameful, that cause me to hide, or that harm me or anyone else (I include abstinence in alcohol and drugs and nicotine here, all of which were harmful for me formerly). I do not do sex with strangers any more or others except my wife. But in order to stop being anorexic (joy-killer) I do allow myself orgasm (in a so called Taoist way that spares the seed and is non-ejaculatory) either with my wife or alone (or while watching net porn, even gay ones). This is a symbolic act of restraint which helps me to develop inner discipline that enhances self-respect. I do hope that after a while I will not need even this last remnant of my hurt sexuality.

George U, Buda, Hungary

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### **My evolving sexual recovery plan:**

As a member of SCA and SAA for almost 16 years I have had a number of sexual recovery plans. Most of these Plans were developed during the time I attended our Thursday night Plan meeting and had a steady sponsor.

I have had varying lengths of sober time on these plans from 30 days to a year. For a while I considered myself a 30-day slipper. The one common denominator in all of my plans was to move beyond “purely” anonymous sexual encounters which wouldn’t further my desire to realize an intimate relationship. Although I slipped often, the nature of my experiences slowly improved to become somewhat more intimate and less clandestine. Eventually I outgrew the desire to simply act out for the sake of acting out. My plans, modeled on the left side/right side SCA plan, basically started out like this:

No anonymous sex in public bathrooms, bath houses, sex clubs, parks or through internet connections	Use the “24 hour” rule
No unprotected anal sex	A “one night stand” is OK
Avoid obvious cruisey places and situations	Always use condoms for anal sex
Avoid using triggering or sensational language	90 meetings in 90 days
Avoid pornography	Start to count sobriety days
Avoid overly-masturbating	Daily Prayer and Meditation
Avoid sexual massages	Daily outreach phone calls to sponsor
	2 outreach phone calls to other members per week
	Fellowship in and out of program
	Writing in my journal

At first, I placed pornography and sexual massages on the left side of my plan not because they were “issues” per say but because they could potentially be replacements to my “regular” acting out behaviors. The most difficult part of my plan to stick to has been “always” using condoms for anal sex. I have also tried to use the most “liberal” definition of “anonymity”. Now my feeling is that if I don’t want to know the person as a person then I don’t want to have sex with them. One thing I am conscious of is balancing my plan. For every activity or behavior I avoid engaging in, I replace it with an activity in recovery.

Daniel C, California, USA

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### **What acting out does to my life:**

*Acting out ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS brings regret.* Right now, I probably feel like this time will be different, like it will make me feel good and happy without any negative consequences but this is a lie! After I act out I feel like a failure. I feel ashamed and disappointed in myself. I have NEVER acted out and felt good about it — this time would be no different. Afterwards I will suffer another withdrawal and suffer a loss of self-esteem. I will suffer emotional stress by going from my acting out high to the depths of regret.

*Acting out hurts my relationships with others and myself.* It teaches me to look at people as objects and ignore their worth as human beings. After I act out I feel worthless and unlovable and this causes me to hide from others. It keeps me from representing myself truthfully because I have to keep my behaviors a secret. It causes me to live a double life. My mind gets filled with garbage and I am no longer able to be mentally present for the people in my life.

*Acting out hurts my relationship with God.* When I choose to act out, it is like telling God that I know better than He does how to live my life (rejecting God and His will for me). Because of my relationship with Christ, I am no longer my own boss and when I act like I am, it is rebellion. This rebellion puts a block in the relationship and makes me feel distant and alone. I find it hard to pray and I start to doubt what I believe to be the truth. Living in a way that is contrary to my values leaves me fearful and confused. I am miserable.

*Acting out puts the future that I want for myself in jeopardy.* I want to live a life that I do not have to be ashamed of. I want to live in a way so that when I die God will say to me “Well done, my good and faithful servant.” I also hope to have a good relationship where I am able to be totally open with my significant other about my life without

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*Little by little, we stop trying to “reform” the frightened child inside us, & learn to love it instead.*

having to keep secrets or living in fear that one day he will find out what I'm really like and leave me. I want to experience sex as God created it, as a loving union between two monogamous persons. I don't want there to be anything sick or dirty about it. I don't want thoughts of other people or situations floating around in my head. I don't want to give away the intimacy that only my significant other should have to other people. These hopes for the future are absolutely incompatible with acting out.

*Acting out hurts others.* This is NOT a harmless activity. It's not harmless to me and it's not harmless to others. People's lives are being ruined! The person I look at when I view porn is most likely miserable. They probably have been abused and mistreated by many people and now feel like the only worth they have is in their body. This is a destructive lie and I DON'T want to have ANY part of it. The person I cyber with may not be who they say they are. Without realizing it, I may be talking to somebody else's spouse. In this case I would be hindering intimacy between the husband and wife and might be contributing to the breakup of a marriage. This would cause pain for not only the couple but also for their children, parents, in-laws, etc. I also have to realize that the person who says they are 28 or 29, might be 13 or 14. They may be looking to find out what sex is all about. If so, I certainly don't want them to get the idea that what goes on in a chat room is good, acceptable or normal. There are many more scenarios but regardless of the scenario, someone is getting hurt and when I participate in the activity, it makes me partially responsible for the hurt. This is not a responsibility I want to have.

*Acting out takes away from other more valuable things.* One day I will have to give an account for how I used the time, money and talents that God has given me. I do not want to waste these things on acting out.

### **What staying sober does to my life:**

*Staying sober allows me to live with a clearer conscious before God.* I will no longer want to avoid Him and the relationship will grow stronger and stronger. I will find it easier to pray, read the Bible, and worship. When I do these things, my whole life will improve. I will be able to talk to others about God without feeling like a hypocrite who is bringing dishonor to God's name by calling myself a Christian.

*Staying sober makes me feel happy.* Instead of having to look back with regret, I am able to look back and feel like I did the right thing. Feelings of self-hatred, self-pity and confusion will eventually fade away.

*Staying sober takes away the need for lies and secrets.* When I am sober I no longer have to feel like I am living a double life. It allows me to live with more self-respect and integrity.

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*The fundamental service we all give is coming to meetings and not acting out; further participation in the fellowship makes a significant difference in how we feel about ourselves.*

*Staying sober allows me to develop greater friendships* because I will no longer have to live in fear of the other person finding out about my secret life.

*Staying sober allows me to be at greater peace* with others and myself. It teaches me to have more respect for human life.

*Staying sober gives me hope for the future.*

*Staying sober makes me stronger.* Each time I resist temptation I am strengthening my ability to do so. Eventually saying no will become much easier.

“In maintaining my sobriety, I find it more useful to keep in mind what I call my top line rather than my bottom line. My top line is what I do want for myself, my program goals. I want to integrate myself physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually; to relate to others from a state of wholeness; to live making decisions from a place of freedom and clarity rather than compulsion and confusion; to feel sufficiently safe to stay open enough to find the little realities of life moving, rather than needing to get dropped off a cliff to get a thrill. I want to be present, see things the way they are, and be glad to be alive. These things are beginning to happen for me.” ©1986 Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous p. 270

*Staying sober brings THE PROMISES.* “If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. — Are these extravagant promises? We think not! They are being fulfilled among us. Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize IF WE WORK FOR THEM!” ©1939 Alcoholics Anonymous pp. 83-84

Tim F,

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My Name is Corey and I am a sexual compulsive.

My sexual recovery plan has been an invaluable tool for my recovery, and for me. I cannot think of a way that it has hindered my recovery. Rather, it has helped it on a daily basis and often times on an hourly basis.

When I first came crawling into recovery after hitting a real “bottoming out,” my recovery plan was a road map of what was not tolerable any longer. It gave me an idea of the immediate steps I could take when addictive actions seemed desirable and even unstoppable. Often times, I could realize on the phone with my sponsor or recovery partners WHY an action was inappropriate for me. But when I was out in the world and facing my temptations and triggers, I often forgot the WHY’s and could quickly justify that an action was okay. In referring to my plan as often as possible or when triggered, I could see that I had set boundaries for myself (when I was in a more rational and non-addictive state). When I hit a triggered state, I would have this concrete evidence of what my rational thinking truly was. And this rational thinking was laid out on my plan for the betterment of not only my immediate life, but also my life in the long run.

I use a modified version of the column recovery plan. I adapted the format from my sponsor who adapted it from her sponsor and so on. It has five columns and they are labeled: Bottom Lines, Gray Areas, Triggers, Response to Triggers, and Goals.

In the beginning of my recovery, everything was all about my bottom lines. “Just don’t cross a bottom line” was my thinking. What supported this most was my “Response to Triggers” column as this reminded me as often as necessary what actions to take when I was close to acting out. It was an everyday struggle and most often an hourly struggle to stay away from bottom lines. I kept my plan in my wallet and read it several times a day every day.

Currently, my program is more focused on “Gray Areas” and “Triggers” though the focus is of course not taken away from the “Bottom Lines.” But after several months on this plan, I am learning to work to try to prevent the items on the “Gray Areas” and “Triggers” columns. I know that if I am up playing with “Gray Area” items, I am toying with things that fuel the addict and put me in the “trance.” Once this occurs, though I have not acted out officially, it really is another form of acting out for me.

I have also made several changes to my recovery plan since I first wrote it nearly 10 months ago. I have not yet taken anything off my plan, but have added to it as new things and new ways to act out have manifested themselves. There are many things that were never a problem for me in the past or at least not a problem while I was in active addiction. But, once I cut off all channels for the addict to act out, I found more and

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*Many find that frequent attendance at meetings is the single most important factor in breaking compulsive sexual habits.*

more ways to act out without violating my plan.

For example, my DOC (drug of choice) revolved around anonymous encounters. So being in certain areas alone, areas that can often be cruisey, were bottom line areas. I established that it is not healthy for me to be in these areas alone and established this on my plan. So once I stopped attending these public areas, I found myself lingering outside of them or near them watching who came and went. This acted as my new “hit” and led me directly into the addict trance. Therefore, this issue needed to be addressed and placed in the bottom lines column as well. It has been my experience thus far that even the subtlest change to my plan can make a huge difference.

I believe and trust that as my recovery develops, my focus will be more on my “Goals” column. This column states where I would like to be spiritually and mentally as well as actions that I could take to enhance the quality of my everyday life.

My plan is as follows:

### **Bottom Lines**

No sex outside my relationship.

No public restrooms while alone.

No bath houses, sex clubs, saunas.

No wet areas of the gym.

No gay bars alone.

No shopping centers alone.

No areas that I know or assume to be cruisey.

No parks while alone.

No masturbation.

No sex with partner & without explicit honesty about fantasies used.

No sex with him to avoid feelings or situations.

No talking to strangers in Car

### **Gray Areas**

Internet porn and porn magazines.

Looking at people in other cars or on the street while stopped at traffic lights.

Looking at people on the metro system.

Observing guys who I know or assume are cruising.

No pursuing of people that are triggers, i.e., in cars, at the train station, on the streets.

### **Triggers**

Anger, loneliness, or stress.

Tiredness.

Feeling inferior or "not good enough for..."

Feeling I have no control.

Shirtless men; Beautiful men.

Masculine or muscular men.

Being cruised or looked at by men.

Too much free time alone.

Porn

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*We often don't want to admit that sexual compulsion has permeated our work life, emotional development, social relationships and spiritual endeavors.*

**Responses to triggers**

Call sponsor.  
 Call recovery partners or try to reach on  
 online.  
 Call a friend locally to shift my  
 focus/energy.  
 Call my partner to shift my  
 focus/energy.  
 Walk away from trigger.  
 Go to McDonalds and get some ice-  
 cream.  
 Use the 3 second rule and pray for  
 anyone I am objectifying.  
 Review recovery plan.  
 Take a five minute time-out from  
 whatever I was doing when triggered.

Read recovery or self-help books.  
 Do step work.  
 Read the Bible or book of Buddha or  
 Spiritual books.  
 Pray.  
 Recite the 3rd step and Serenity Prayers  
 upon waking each day and as needed  
 throughout the day.  
 Meditate.  
 Go to a meeting (f2f or online-need not  
 be S related).  
 Read and review my first step and  
 history.  
 Listen to uplifting music.

**Goals**

Experience and work through feelings rather than escaping or medicate them.  
 Have a healthy emotional and physical relationship with my partner.  
 To increase intimacy with myself and my partner.  
 To have a constant, ever-growing relationship with God.  
 To become a sponsor.  
 Work the 12 steps and incorporate these into my daily life.  
 Learn to accept myself as I am, and others as they are.  
 To enjoy living life without fear of myself .  
 To release my anger.  
 To be an honest man at all times.  
 To forgive myself and others.  
 To complete my first book.  
 Learn Portuguese.

Corey D

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***For more examples of recovery plans, see the following websites:***

<http://www.sca-recovery.org/scanner/winter2000.html#plan>  
<http://www.slaaonline.org/member/plan1.html>

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*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the  
 things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

## List of ISO Officers (current up until the February 2003 ISO meeting)

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Term Expires in:</u>
Chair – <i>Rod F*</i>	2005*
Secretary – <i>Vanessa H*</i>	2004*
Treasurer – <i>John S</i>	2005
National Coordinator – <i>Joe S</i>	2005
Literature Distribution Coordinator – <i>Daniel C*</i>	2005*
SCanner Editor – <i>Deanna R</i>	2005
Literature Development Coordinator – <i>Dan W*</i>	2004*
1-800 Coordinator – <i>Jarvis</i>	2004
Electronic Communications Coordinator – <i>Bill E</i>	2004

\*NOTE: *These officers are serving as interim officers. A vote held at the 2004 ISO Business Meeting (February 21-22) will determine if they continue in that office, or if another will step in. For an up-to-date list of current ISO officers, please visit [www.sca-recovery.org/iso](http://www.sca-recovery.org/iso).*

**If you are interested in doing service at the Intergroup or ISO level, contact your Intergroup Representative and/or an ISO officer for more details.**

### Upcoming SCA Events:

- *February 20-22, 2004 -- [ISO Annual Meeting](#) - New York, NY*
- *May 28-30, 2004 -- [LA Intergroup Retreat](#), Santa Barbara, CA*
- *Contact Intergroups for more information & for Retreats not listed here*

### NOTES:

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For a list of upcoming SCA events, see the calendar at [www.sca-recovery.org/calendar.html](http://www.sca-recovery.org/calendar.html).

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The SCAnner is published twice a year (in the summer and in the winter) by ISO, the International Service Organization of SCA. It is meant to serve as a Forum for SCA members who want to share their ES&H (Experience, Strength & Hope) with other members. This is particularly applicable for those who may be isolated and cannot reach a meeting easily or regularly. Your contributions and comments are greatly encouraged, and always sincerely invited.

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*The SCAnner is published once or twice a year (summer & winter) by SCA ISO, PO Box 1585, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY, 10011. Editor: Deanna R. Distribution: Daniel C. Printed by Staples: The Business Depot in Guelph, ON, Canada. The opinions expressed here are those of the individual who gave them and do not necessarily reflect SCA as a whole. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of SCA ISO. © 2003, SCA ISO*