

Stepping into Service: A Sponsors Guide

June 21, 2018

Dedication*

To all those who have lived and struggled and the untold numbers who had no program.

Introduction

The Green Book states that the steps are the spiritual solution to our addiction and the authors of this booklet have found that service is a key to recovery.

We often hear about the value of service. Some of us wonder just what it is. Is a certain level of service required for our recovery? Is a certain amount of recovery required for service? These are questions many members ask themselves. The simple answer is that service is not required but is essential to recovery because as we help others we are also helping ourselves. Any member can serve at any time.

The work within this booklet contains our experience, strength, and hope. We have tried to give ideas that you can use to help your sponsees. Although this booklet is for you, the sponsor, the ideas are addressed to the sponsees. They are offered as service opportunities. As a sponsor, your story is your gift of service. You are there to inspire them to keep working and coming to meetings. You can give insights into possible ways to change. Service is one of those ways to guide them down the path to serenity, recovery and sobriety.

Remember, these service concepts are only a small part of what service can look like. The best resource for your sponsees are other individuals in recovery.

It is our hope that these ideas will lead you and your sponsees to serenity. Service keeps us sober.

** While this guide may be of great help to sponsors, it is however not Literature Committee approved and as such does not officially represent the views of the ISO of SAA. It was written by members of the fellowship for use by other members of the fellowship. We hope you find it beneficial.*

New Beginnings an Introduction to Service

Reflect back to when you came into recovery and remember how broken you were. Your sponsee's main goal at this point is to start the healing process that the Twelve Steps were designed to bring. Your objective as a sponsor is to nurture that development through sharing your experience, strength, and hope as well as introducing your sponsee to service.

Stepping into Service

"I heard and saw others recovering from sexual addiction, and I began to see the possibility of a gentle caring God working in and through the fellowship." (Voices of Recovery, p. 17)

Steps 1-3:

Step One is the perfect time to start turning service concepts into action. There is no need to wait until the sponsee's are further along. Encourage new members to do service work early. It will become easier as the program changes them. Start simple, keeping the focus on your sponsee and the local group.

The following service concepts are focused on Steps One through Three. As you lead your sponsee's through these early steps, monitor their growth and add these concepts as you work through the steps together. These concepts are in no certain order and may be used as a group or employed individually. You as a sponsor, know your sponsee best; apply them or your own ideas as you see fit. As your sponsee progresses through the steps ask yourself how successful your sponsee has been in applying service in their recovery. We think it is important to try to match service with growth. Step work + Service = Recovery.

- Go to meetings.
 - We go to the meetings for ourselves and for the others in the room.
 - Attend meetings regularly. Don't skip and make excuses.
 - Find a regular meeting. Have a "home group."
 - Share at the meetings honestly, seeking solutions.

- Encourage sponsee to commit to attending 90 meetings in 90 days
- Assist at meetings.
 - Set up chairs before the meeting. Help put them away after the meeting is over.
 - Set up a table with literature, water, coffee, and snacks.
 - Groups are usually in borrowed space. Help take care of it. Leaving it clean (or dirty) reflects upon your group and the fellowship as a whole.
- Share your First Step with the group.
 - Quite often many local groups have members do a First Step presentation.
 - This is a service to all the members. It reminds the older ones of their past and the new ones see how supportive the group can be.
- Keep in contact outside the meeting.
 - Add your contact information (some groups use tel. #'s, emails and texts for communication) to the call list.)
 - Make calls to other members. Show others you support them.
 - Make three calls each day, especially for the first thirty days.
 - Accept calls, emails or texts from other members. Don't feel obligated to answer at inconvenient times. However, don't make excuses to ignore someone.
 - Return missed calls.
- Be willing to keep an open mind.
 - Recognize that others are in a different place than you. You may disagree with someone's recovery efforts, religious or spiritual beliefs.

- Speak to people, and most importantly, listen. You do not have to agree with them, but you may learn from them.
- Share smartly.
 - Pay attention and listen to other's shares.
 - Share your concept of a Higher Power with others.
 - Share your daily, practical experiences in recovery and healing.
 - If your group allows cross-talk, be respectful. Remember that the meeting is not the place to convert others to your way of recovery.
- God helps us to help others.
 - Be willing to provide rides so others can attend meetings.
 - When attending retreats, volunteer to clean up or work in the kitchen.
- Stay after the meeting has closed.
 - Discover fellow group members by making a friend who is trying to find their way.
 - Talk to others and find ways that you can help them.
 - If your group goes to a restaurant or coffee bar after the meeting, join them.
- Support the group financially.
 - Add a little money when the basket is passed around.
 - Give a donation for literature, even when it is free.
 - Become a Life Line partner.
- Join in "group stuff."
 - Attend monthly business meetings.
 - Participate in group conscience discussions.
 - Pay attention and give proper respect to the minority view.

- Remember to focus on the group's needs rather than your own personal desires.
- Create a welcome place for newcomers.
 - Ensure that a place is available in the fellowship for anyone seeking help for sexual addiction.
 - Welcome and open yourself up to newcomers. Listen to their stories.
 - Have meeting lists that help the newcomer find meetings in the area that may be more convenient or focused on their needs.
 - Greet newcomers and shake their hands; have them sit by you.
 - Explore ways to make our meetings safe, accessible, and welcoming.
 - Talk to them after the meeting and ask to make an outreach call during the week.
 - Call them within a day or two.
 - Affirm the newcomers' problem. Do not tell them that they do not have a problem.
- Engage in meaningful and prudent sharing.
 - Always be honest. A strong group is built on a foundation of honesty and trust. People can sense when you're not being honest.
 - Be respectful in our sharing and listening.
 - Do not speak for others, only for yourself.
 - Keep your personal opinions to yourself when speaking.
 - Don't let your emotions negatively impact your words or actions at the meetings.
 - Step out of the room quietly and briefly if you get triggered or upset.
 - Listen carefully and learn from what others say.
 - Turn off or silence your cell phone during the meeting.
- Foster a safe environment for all.
 - Encourage everyone to follow the rules concerning appropriate behavior.

- Lead by example.
- Remember that we must not stand in judgment over any of our members.
- Make sure that everyone is aware of the group conscience on cross-talk. Some groups allow cross-talk, some others only when requested by members, while others do not. Do not assume that a visitor or newcomer will know. A simple statement in the introduction can prevent a negative experience.
- What is said in a meeting stays at the meeting.

New Awakenings - Opportunities for Service

Steps 4-9:

Continue the service concepts covered above. The ideas below will strengthen your sponsee's recovery. Carry on monitoring your sponsee's progress and adapt the type of service that is appropriate to their growth in recovery. Other members will be helped by their example.

As our sponsees progress into Steps Four through Nine their focus starts to transition from self and towards others. In the process more opportunities for service evolve. Being a sponsor, it is fair to ask if your sponsee has enough growth in recovery to take on a particular task. When service starts to expand, it is important to introduce your sponsee to a working knowledge of the Traditions. Again, introduce these concepts into your sponsee's recovery as you feel they are ready for them.

- Carry the message of recovery to your meetings.
 - Seek the solution as shared in our Twelve Steps and Traditions.
 - Strive to ensure that we share the message of recovery. █
 - Ensure that SAA literature and meeting lists are available. Try to include both local and telemeeting schedules.
 - Make available a contact list of members including those willing to sponsor and those willing to sponsor temporarily

- Use consistent formats and meeting etiquette.
- Educate and develop outreach opportunities for your group.

- Help one another.
 - Find someone else who is working on their Fourth Step.
 - Work with and support the other person.
 - Let the other person help and support you.
 - You can also find a person who has already worked the step to help you.
 - Keep in contact with many members of the group. The Fourth Step can be emotionally taxing.
 - Listen to the needs of others around you throughout your day.
 - Self-seeking must slip away.

- Be active in your groups.
 - Don't just be present at the meetings, be present in the meetings.
 - Lead your meeting for a month.
 - Take a service position in the group.
 - Share openly and actively. Listen to others.
 - Take an active interest in a group member. Share your work in the fellowship. Learn from each other.
 - Be sure that you can be reached by other members you've exchanged contact information
 - Ask others to discuss with you what character defects they see in you. Be open to honest criticism and thank them.
 - Become the liaison between the group and the host site (church, library, etc.).
 - Create or help maintain a website for the group or intergroup.
 - Serve in accordance with your abilities.
 - Keep a positive attitude.
 - Promote LifeLine memberships to others in the group.

- Print off LifeLine fliers and place them with the literature.
- Having a healthy and quality meeting.
 - We do not make socializing or therapy our main purpose in coming together.
 - Encourage your group to do a Group Inventory at least once a year. A sample inventory can be found in the Group Guide at www.saa-recovery.org.
 - Start and end the meeting on time.
 - Be supportive of others who are working the Eighth Step. Accept support from others.
 - Support the group and take ownership for its common welfare.
 - Keep the group strong. When members leave, encourage others to fill leadership roles. Stay in contact and reach out to those who haven't been coming.
 - Hold a group conscience to discuss what is (and is not) your core message. Use the Green Book, the Steps, and the Traditions for reference.
 - Encourage others to read and study the Steps and Traditions.
 - Support good relations with other groups.
- Think outside the group.
 - Become a representative to the intergroup; be involved in your intergroup activities; Coordinate activities with your intergroup.
 - Visit electronic or telemeetings.
 - Volunteer to lead telemeetings. The moderators need a break and appreciate the help.
 - Find out if your local area or intergroup has a Speakers Meeting. These are where speakers can share their experience, strength, or hope.
 - Attend the annual convention, possibly as your group's representative.

- Attend retreats, seminars, and talks.
 - Visit other groups in the area.
 - Call on members other than those from your home group.
 - Contact the ISO for outreach contact lists for men and women.
 - Attend or initiate workshops at the area or intergroup level. Consider, for example, a workshop on sponsorship.
 - Until the transition to Area Assemblies, participate in regional midyear caucuses to elect officers. Discuss affairs that affect the groups across many states or provinces.
 - As our fellowship moves towards area formation, discuss with your group the responsibilities of the Group Service Representative (GSR). Make sure that your group has one to represent them at the Area Assembly. That person could be you.
- Outreach
 - Encourage group outreach.
 - Plan a retreat, seminar, or talk.
 - Look for ways to help others both in and out of the fellowship.
 - Look for ways to reach the still suffering addict in your community.
 - Work with other groups, the intergroup, within the area, and the ISO outreach coordinator.
 - Participate in one of the outreach committees.

A Life Reborn - A Commitment to Service

Steps 10-12:

Continue the service concepts covered above. The ideas below will strengthen your sponsee's recovery. Carry on monitoring your sponsee's progress and adapt the type of service that is appropriate to their growth in recovery. Other members will be helped their example.

Service work helps us to see our place and value in this world. We learn to not look at it as if we are better in some way. Rather, we learn to serve others as a humble servant. We do not seek praise for the ability to serve. It is an important part of our recovery. As your sponsees work Steps Ten through Twelve we should remember that the Traditions give us the guidance and the framework needed to carry our message effectively. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to be familiar with them and practice them diligently as we seek to share our message of recovery.

“Communicating only SAA’s unique message, we stay on the simple path of service to our fellow sex addict” (Green Book, 87).

- One simple task: “Offer our program as an option for anyone who is suffering negative consequences for addictive behavior and is looking for help” (Green Book, p. 94).

- Become a trusted servant in the group (Please note: Groups have their own qualifications. Some groups may require you to work through all Twelve Steps before serving as a leader. Types of leaders and titles may vary.)
 - Become a sponsor
 - The trusted servant or chair leads the meeting.
 - A greeter welcomes people to the meeting.
 - A literature chair makes sure that literature and chips are available.
 - The group treasurer receives donations, pays rent, and donates funds to the intergroup or ISO.
 - Others may assist the trusted servant or chair in running the meeting, timing shares so those attending are given the opportunity to share, ensuring that the meeting stays on topic, etc.
 - Other roles include checking the mail, the email, and answering the group’s phone line or voice mail.
 - Encourage others to become sponsors

- If there is a Speakers Meeting, attend it. If there isn't one, start it.
 - Create an intergroup with other meetings if no intergroup exists.
 - Start looking into areas that might benefit from a new meeting.
 - Become the outreach coordinator. If there is no coordinator, volunteer to be one.
 - Start writing to prisoners through the Prisoner Outreach program.
- Be a positive influence in your group.
 - Ask others in recovery to share their stories with you, a “mini First Step.” This can be done one-on-one, or it can be a topic for a meeting.
 - Share your progress at meetings.
 - Smile at people in the group, and to everyone you meet. Serenity begins with a smile.
- Boundaries
 - Discuss with your group members how to set and maintain healthy boundaries when carrying the message. Remember to know and study the Traditions.
- Create an “open system” in your life that lets you grow.
 - Get involved in an SAA committee or sub-committee to help with the work they do.
 - Get involved in a higher service level than you are at currently.
 - Be open minded.
 - Be willing to hear all views.
 - Be respectful of other opinions.
 - Sponsor someone. Share your experience, strength, and hope. Work with your sponsor on tools and tips for becoming a more effective sponsor.
 - Attend retreats and seminars focused on sponsorship.
 - Be aware that diversity of people, thoughts and actions strengthens our Fellowship

- Carry the Message
 - Check your local library and see if any Green Books are in their holdings. If not, anonymously donate some.
 - The Public Information Handbook on the Service Website is a resource. (<https://www.saa-iso.org/>) Please contact the ISO Office at 1-800-477-8191 for user name and password information.

- Seek chances to share your experience, strength, and hope with others.
 - Help at retreats (meals, set up, clean up, etc.).
 - With ISO approval, participate in speaker panels.
 - Contact the ISO for guidance regarding interview requests.
 - Consider taking the training available for public speaker. Contact the ISO office to set up a time to take the class.
 - Maintain the SAA message.

- Anonymity
 - Spread the message but remember to remain anonymous.
 - Respect the confidentiality of other members.

- Seek service at the International level.
 - Attend SAA Conventions.
 - Help plan the Convention. You do not need to be from the host city.
 - Share your experience, strength, and hope at the Annual Business Conference.
 - Join a committee or sub-committee. Serve your fellow addict by serving on committees such as Women's Outreach, Prisoner Outreach, etc.
 - Some may wish to consider service on the ISO Board of Trustees or Literature Committee.
 - Contact the ISO for information on other committees.

Conclusion

It is our hope that as you work with your sponsees, you will come to understand that service is essential. Remember, everyone chooses a level of service based on his or her strengths. Do not force your sponsees to serve exactly the way you did. However, do encourage them to become a sponsor. Remind them of the different options of service. These include being a sponsor, serving on committees, or being a public speaker. They can be the people in the group who reach out to newcomers. How your sponsees serve is up to them, not you. Encourage them to keep an open mind. They seek the will of their Higher Power. Finally, remind them that service always benefits both the server and the person being served.

From Shame to Grace

Service is a double win!

Note: Those of us who created this information know that our service is never complete. We do not reach a destination. It is after walking the journey that we are given a new day. We have tried to be of service to each of you in the creation of this booklet. Use what fits for you now and leave the rest for later. There is no magic in this information. We are only striving to impact lives in a positive way. We thank you for your service by reading and using this information.