

Defining Abstinence

In order to gain sobriety, we found it helpful to define what that means. Each member of Sex Addicts Anonymous defines what behaviors are acting out for them. SAA leaves this definition up to the individual member with the aid of their sponsor.

For many of us, the concept of the “Three Circles” has proven very helpful to define abstinence for ourselves.

- In the Inner Circle, we write down the activities that we want to stop. These are the addictive sexual behaviors that brought us to SAA. Acting out is defined as engaging in activities in our inner circle.
 - In the Middle Circle, we place behaviors that are “slippery” for us, or about which we are uncertain. These are typically things which may make us vulnerable to acting out. We want to be aware of those behaviors, so that we can recognize them as a warning sign before we go further.
 - The Outer Circle contains behaviors that are safe and which aid us in our recovery. They include items such as working the program, our spiritual life, and connecting with others. They also include healthy sexuality.
- In order to learn more about the concept of the “Three Circles”, you may want to read the section “Defining Abstinence” in the SAA Green Book and/or the tri-fold “The Three Circles”.

Get Started Now

Take some time to fill in this worksheet. You do not have to do it perfectly or completely in one sitting: any effort you make is legitimate. Today you are examining where you are and where you hope to go. Start to measure yourself today by what you write here.

Work With a Sponsor

In our experience, the help of a sponsor is vital. A sponsor is a member of our fellowship who has already worked the steps and who can guide you on your journey. A sponsor will be helpful to you in developing your plan.

Review and Revisit

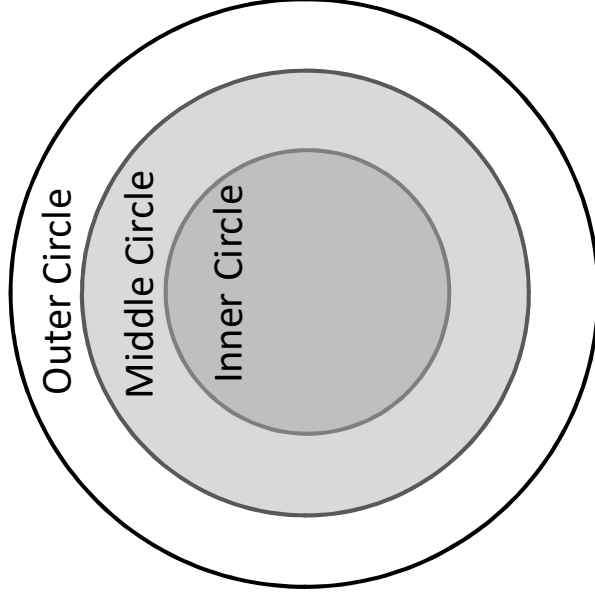
As you progress in your program of recovery, you may discover new things that you want to add to your circles or that you wish to change. While the contents of your circles are not permanently set for all time, it is not a good idea to move or remove items without consulting with your sponsor and/or other experienced members of SAA. Sharing your proposed changes in a meeting and asking for feedback later may also bring you clarity.

Filling out this worksheet is not meant to be a one-time-only process. As you grow in recovery, we encourage you to work this process regularly. Remember, you are not alone.

For more information and support in your recovery, you may want to visit the Houston Area Intergroup website www.houstonjaa.org

Three Circles Worksheet

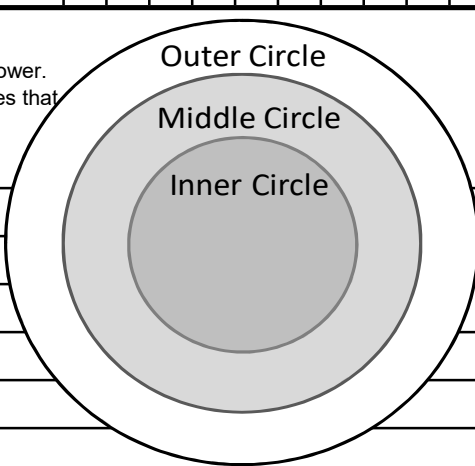
A supplement to the SAA Green Book’s chapter on “Defining Abstinence”



Houston Area Intergroup Approved

With thanks to the Mountain Shadows SAA group, Longmont, Colorado, USA, for generously sharing their original work at the 2010 Annual Conference.

Three Circles Worksheet

		Consequences									
		Other:	Victimizes Someone?	Life/Health Threatening?	A Jeopardy to SAA?	Illegal Activity?	Hurts Relationships?	Financially Damaging?	Threatens Job?	Damages Self-Esteem?	Spiritually Damaging?
Inner Circle Behaviors Inner Circle behaviors. Unmanageable behaviors that I feel powerless over. Behaviors that harm myself or others and that I am determined to stop. Doing any of these is a break or "slip" in my SAA sobriety. <u>Suggestion:</u> Simplify your list until your addictive behaviors are easy to remember and share with others.											
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
Middle Circle Boundary behaviors. Warning Signs. Obsessions and rituals that lead to acting out or acting in. Behaviors that need more clarity.											
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
Outer Circle Goals Outer Circle behaviors. What my life could become with the help of my Higher Power. Sexually healthy behaviors, as well as other creative, enriching, nurturing activities that support to displace my obsessive and compulsive behaviors											
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
	▪										
											
Actions	What I will do to implement these goals	Start Date:		Who could help me?							
▪											
▪											
▪											
▪											
▪											

Personal growth is likely to cause this picture to change