

Schizophrenia Alliance: Psychosis Support & Acceptance: SA Member Orientation



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What is SA?



SA stands for Schizophrenia Alliance: Psychosis Support and Acceptance, and refers to the free self-help, peer-led support groups managed by SARDAA, Schizophrenia And Related Disorders Alliance of America. SARDAA never pays for a leader or coleader, but recently decided that it is okay for a leader and/or coleader to receive payment by a third-party organization, like a peer support specialist.

Who is SA for?



SA groups are for people with schizophrenia or related disorders, including bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, depression with psychosis, or experience with psychosis. The groups are to provide support to members in their journey of recovery. Recovery is hard to define, but the Blue Book, which is used in the meetings and for personal use, states: “Perhaps the most obvious sign of recovering is the reduction and control of symptoms to the point of permitting one to have the ability to find and keep steady and structured activity.” (p.24) Members are at different levels of recovery, which is why feedback from members is so important.

SA Guiding Principles



1. The only requirement for SA membership is the desire to recover from a schizophrenia-related illness.
2. SA charges no dues for membership, although donations may be accepted to cover SA group expenses or special events.
3. Everything said at SA meetings is confidential.
4. SA members should remain anonymous, except those who wish to work on special issues or voluntarily reveal their membership in SA.
5. Each group may establish its own meeting format, subject to approval by Central SA Leadership.
6. Decisions affecting SA as a whole are derived from the group consciousness of its own members; we rely on our Higher Power to work through this process.

What can I expect?



In a SA group, there are different roles people play. Again, all members should have a diagnosis of schizophrenia or related disorders.

The SA Group Leader leads the group through the meeting format. Most leaders follow the format listed in the Blue Book on pages 10 - 16. Also, the leader facilitates the group, addressing any issues that might come up. There is also a coleader who assists the leader as needed. Finally there is a moderator on conference calls who is able to drop calls if needed.

We do not allow discussion of illicit drug use, sex, politics, or religion. If someone is behaving inappropriately they will be asked to leave.

SA 6 Steps of Recovery



- I SURRENDER... I admit I need help. I can't do it alone.
- I CHOOSE... I choose to be well. I take full responsibility for my choices and realize the choices I make directly influence the quality of my days.
- I BELIEVE... I now come to believe that I have been provided with great inner resources and I will use these resources to help myself and others.
- I FORGIVE... I forgive myself for all the mistakes I have made. I also forgive and release everyone who has injured or harmed me in any way.
- I UNDERSTAND... I now understand that erroneous, self-defeating thinking contributes to my problems, failures, unhappiness and fears. I am ready to have my belief system altered so my life can be transformed.
- I DECIDE... I make a decision to turn my life over to the care of a higher power/God, AS I UNDERSTAND that higher power/God, surrendering my will and false beliefs. I ask to be changed in depth.

Misconceptions about SA



1. SA group leaders and/or coleaders are counselors. This is FALSE! SA group leaders facilitate the meeting and occasionally provide feedback to members' comments. The feedback is based on the person's personal experience of recovery.
2. SA group leaders should make comments the same length for everybody. This is FALSE! Again, each of us has our own recovery experience, so that is why we appreciate it when members themselves provide feedback.
3. I am atheist, I can't attend meetings. This is FALSE again! Though we mention spirituality and the Higher Power in Step 6, it is how each of us decides it. That is why we don't allow people to discuss religion, since it is spirituality that we all have in common.



How do I complain about SA?

I want to help with SA meetings! What should I do?



- **Spirit of SA Conference Call for Group Leaders and Potential Group Leaders**
 - 1st Wed of each month
 - 7pm Eastern time
 - Toll free number – see SARDAA website

SARDAA Resources



- SARDAA SA Coordinator is the main contact for potential and new groups 240-423-9432
- SARDAA remains a resource for the life of the SA group: *e-Newsletter, member manuals, referrals to groups* etc.
- Workshops