

Suggestions for Public Outreach

Suggestions for Public Outreach are actions that an Intergroup or Lone Group might do to carry the message to the sex and love addict who still suffers, while observing *The Twelve Traditions of S.L.A.A.* and the *12 Recommended Guidelines for Dealing with Media or Public Relations Opportunities*. Any group or Intergroup doing public outreach should consider Tradition 11, which states:

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow S.L.A.A. members.

When doing public outreach, the question often comes up “what is attraction, and what is promotion?” Each member of the Fellowship of S.L.A.A. may have different answers, so it can be difficult to get a clear understanding of the differences. It can be tempting to label any public outreach activity as “promotion” out of fear of violating the 11th Tradition. However, we cannot attract people to the Fellowship if they do not know that S.L.A.A. exists. At a minimum, we are allowed to tell the public that S.L.A.A. exists and it can help with problems of sex and love addiction.

An Intergroup or Lone Group might consider the following activities for public outreach:

1. Create a Public Outreach Coordinator service position or committee.
2. Provide an inviting and supportive initial experience to newcomers at the Intergroup and group levels.
3. Create a local S.L.A.A. web site.
4. Make S.L.A.A. information available online, in print, and via mobile technologies.
5. Connect with local S.L.A.A. groups.
6. Make current meeting information available to those seeking recovery.
7. Encourage members to carry and give out S.L.A.A. information to people in need.
8. Encourage the use of S.L.A.A. Conference-approved literature (i.e., the Basic Text, pamphlets and the Journal).
9. Get to know your local professional community.
10. Help the local professional community learn about S.L.A.A. resources.
11. Provide S.L.A.A. information to the local recovery community (A.A., N.A., etc).
12. Post anonymous videos about sex and love addiction and recovery on the Internet.
13. Establish a local policy for handling inquiries from non-members.
14. Continually seek new and innovative ways to make S.L.A.A. accessible to those who might benefit from its resources.
15. Publish information in a weekly newspaper.

The following *General Outreach Principles* are useful tips that apply to all of the above activities.

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General Outreach Principles

Here are some principles to consider when doing S.L.A.A. outreach:

1. When dealing with those who are not S.L.A.A. members, try to place yourself in the other person's shoes. Try thinking like they think, asking yourself, "If I were that person, what would I care about? Why would I be interested in a 12-Step program for sex and love addicts? What would motivate me to use S.L.A.A. resources? What might cause me to dismiss S.L.A.A. as a resource?"
2. Get people excited about outreach, reminding them that the Twelfth Step ties outreach with personal recovery and the Fifth Tradition states carrying the S.L.A.A. message of recovery as our primary purpose.
3. Study S.L.A.A.'s Twelve Traditions and *12 Recommended Guidelines for Dealing with Media or Public Relations Opportunities*.
4. Have open discussions about outreach at your home group or Intergroup business meetings. Try to understand and clarify Tradition 11's statement of "attraction rather than promotion".
5. These suggestions are both spiritual and practical in nature. It is recommended that all outreach balance the primary purpose of Tradition Five, the principle of anonymity, and the safety of each S.L.A.A. member and the Fellowship as a whole.

The Outreach How-tos that follow include specific methods that have worked for other groups and Intergroups for people who are new to outreach or want to learn more.

Outreach How-tos

These are specific How-tos that further clarify each of the *Suggestions for Public Outreach* above.

1. Create a Public Outreach Coordinator service position or Committee.
Move to create a committee or role that handles public outreach, fill the position or positions with willing and capable members. Help them to connect with the Conference Public Information Committee and Conference Prison Outreach Committee.
2. Provide an inviting and supportive initial experience to newcomers at the Intergroup and group levels.
Groups can make meeting environments as inviting and supportive for the newcomer as possible. It's common for newcomers to be scared at their first meeting. If they feel welcome, they are much more likely to come back. The simplest way to do this is to greet every newcomer personally when they arrive and talk to them at the end of the meeting. Other ways to accomplish this can include:
 - a) current phone lists with sponsorship availability for members only,
 - b) current meeting lists,
 - c) a full range of literature (i.e., the Basic Text, pamphlets, and *The Journal*),
 - d) giving newcomers a newcomer chip,
 - e) develop the service position of official greeters
 - f) welcoming introductory announcements in the meeting format,

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- g) an open invitation to socialize with other S.L.A.A. members after or between meetings,
- h) events designed specifically for those seeking a solution who are not yet members.

Intergroups can make initial and subsequent contacts with the Intergroup's website, literature, and contact people, as inviting and supportive as possible through these ways:

- a) provide clear and well organized information online about local S.L.A.A. resources and meetings,
- b) ensure that those who have contact information listed to the public know how to handle incoming requests from those in crisis, family members, media producers, mental health professionals, clergy, and others.

3. Create a local S.L.A.A. web site.

Create a web site containing local S.L.A.A. information, optimize them for search terms that addicts are likely to use, cross-link the site with other S.L.A.A. sites, and register the site with top search engines. Submit the web site's address to Fellowship-Wide Services, so people can find it from the FWS web site (slaafws.org). Intergroups, Lone Groups, and members can also encourage groups to provide up-to-date information such as its location, the night of the week they meet, the start and end times of the meeting, and contact information. Some groups prefer a screening process. The process and how to initiate it should be available to newcomers.

4. Make S.L.A.A. information available online, in print, and via mobile technologies.

Place local S.L.A.A. contact information and meeting information in local printed, online, and mobile listings and publications. This can be accomplished by writing a press release that mentions the benefits of S.L.A.A. participation, what measures S.L.A.A. groups use to guard against addictive behavior at meetings, and the common practice of anonymously deleting last names or using pseudonyms for confidentiality.

5. Connect with local S.L.A.A. groups.

Make sure local S.L.A.A. groups have current meeting lists and literature. Keep them informed of what's happening at the Intergroup and Fellowship-Wide level. Encourage the groups to pick Representatives to regularly attend the Intergroup meetings.

6. Make current meeting information available to those seeking recovery.

Create and maintain a web page listing of current local meetings, written, formatted, and sorted in a way that is user friendly, especially to newcomers.

7. Encourage members to carry and give out S.L.A.A. information to people in need.

Create and distribute business cards or other types of printed materials designed for non-members briefly stating the benefits of S.L.A.A. and the local web site, help line, and the time and place of meetings for beginners (F.W.S. sells printed business cards in the online store at slaafws.org).

8. Encourage the use of S.L.A.A. Conference-approved literature (i.e., the Basic Text, pamphlets and *the Journal*).

Recommend to each group that they select Literature Reps and Journal Reps.

Literature Reps:

- a) ensure that S.L.A.A. literature is available at their group's meetings,

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- b) actively show literature items to their group members,
- c) talk about how S.L.A.A. literature is important for personal recovery.

Journal Reps:

- a) make sure the group has copies of *the Journal* available,
- b) encourage subscribing to *the Journal*,
- c) talk about interesting articles within each issue with their group members,
- d) communicate with *the Journal* Production Team,
- e) ensure that Journal subscription cards are always available to members.

9. Get to know your local professional community.

The professional community includes anyone who may work with sex and love addicts, including:

- a) those who work with jail and prison inmates
- b) drug and alcohol treatment center staff
- c) therapists, psychiatrists, and other mental health professionals
- d) clergy
- e) mental health workers in hospitals

Gather and maintain a database of contact information about the local professional community. Sources for the name and contact information of potential recipients will vary by county, state, province, and country. Research can be conducted via the web and through public records.

Potential sources include:

- a) licensing boards that make licensees and contact information public
- b) department of health
- c) online directories
- d) library resources
- e) professional associations
- f) organizations that specialize in mailing lists

10. Help the local professional community learn about S.L.A.A. resources.

Publish a monthly bulletin, e-bulletin, or newsletter that shows local professionals the potential benefits to them of utilizing S.L.A.A. resources for their work.

Let local professionals know that you would be glad to answer any questions or entertain any ideas that they may have about the use of S.L.A.A. resources to enhance their services.

Find ways to provide complementary copies of meeting lists, *the Journal* or other S.L.A.A. conference approved literature to these professionals.

11. Provide S.L.A.A. information to the local recovery community.

Provide fliers about local S.L.A.A. resources and the symptoms of sex and love addiction to local recovery clubs and facilities in ways that abide by their rules for postings.

12. Post anonymous videos about sex and love addiction and recovery on the Internet.

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Produce and post anonymous videos that share real S.L.A.A. stories of the insanity of addiction and the serenity of recovery. One way to keep the videos anonymous is to use a text-only format, such as a slideshow presentation. Below is a list of other guidelines to protect anonymity in videos.

- Don't use full names or faces
- Don't post the video using an account name or email address that's used to post other materials.
- Don't show scenes of identifiable locations so they aren't publicly associated with sex and love addicts.

13. Establish a local policy for handling inquiries from non-members.

Some guidelines for such a policy are:

- a) Develop an understanding of the Board Outreach Committee and the Conference Public Information Committee and annually contact each committee through the F.W.S. web site ([slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org)) for support and to coordinate outreach efforts.
- b) Arrive at and maintain a list of names (usually by nomination and election) of qualified S.L.A.A. members who are willing to assist educators, mental health professionals, media producers and other non-members find proper and legitimate resources for their work. Always ensure that these willing members have read and understand the Twelve Traditions and the 12 Recommended Guidelines for Dealing with Media or Public Relations Opportunities. Also ensure that they are committed to refer inquires to the Board Outreach Committee if there is a likelihood that S.L.A.A. as a whole could be affected.
- c) Predetermine and document the policy for routing inquiries of different types.
- d) To whom an inquiry is routed depends on the nature of the inquiry. For instance, an inquiry from a student might be handled by the Intergroup Public Information Rep, whereas an inquiry from a syndicated news broadcaster might be routed to the Board Outreach Committee Chair:
[http://www.slaafws.org/contact/Requests from Media & Professionals](http://www.slaafws.org/contact/Requests_from_Media_&_Professionals)
An inquiry from a Justice, Probation Officer, or a jail or prison inmate might be routed to a local C.P.O.C. Representative or the Conference Prison Outreach Committee:
<http://www.slaafws.org/cpoc>
- e) Document any guidelines that the Intergroup has developed for the handling of inquiries.
- f) Publish and maintain this inquiry routing and handling policy internally (within the membership of the Intergroup). And forward a copy to the Board Outreach Committee to help develop resources for the Fellowship, by sharing your experience, strength, and hope about what works.
- g) Determine how much of the policy should be published on the Internet. This is not just a question of how visible the policy should be outside the Intergroup's membership, it is also a question of legal risk, and it is a question of anonymity and confidentiality.
- h) It is recommended not to publish a policy that states that the Intergroup will do anything or not do anything that has not first been scrutinized by a qualified attorney

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- i) It is also recommended that the contact information of individuals does not identify them uniquely by using their full last name and that each such person is informed of the risks of publication and has given permission in advance.
 - j) Some Intergroups may develop training materials or mini-courses to prepare members for inquiries of various types.
14. Continually seek new and innovative ways to make S.L.A.A. accessible to those who might benefit from its resources.

Think about who could benefit from S.L.A.A. and what might be blocking them from experiencing it for the first time. Imagine ways to open the door for them, try these new ideas out. Determine what works and what does not, and share your results with the Conference Public Information Committee at <http://www.slaafws.org/cpic> and other Intergroups via the Conference Intergroup Communication Committee (CICC) using the link <http://www.slaafws.org/cicc>; this way, the outreach experience you have gained will be made available to other Intergroups, Lone Groups, and Committees.

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