



Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous

SLAA Victorian Zoom Convention

Anorexia Workshop

26 September 2020

WELCOME

- What you hear at this workshop should remain here. We do not talk about another person's story or experiences to anyone. Please respect the anonymity of everyone who shares today.
- We do not cross talk during the sharing time. We accept without comment what other people say and focus on taking more responsibility for our lives, rather than giving advice to others. These two things endeavour to keep this space safe for all of us.
- Unless you are sharing, it is very important that your mic is turned off.
- We will have a time limit of 2 minutes to let as many people as possible to share.

WELCOME

- Recommendation: Get paper and pen.



WELCOME: SET ASIDE PRAYER

God,
please set aside everything I think I know
about anorexia, the 12 steps, recovery,
all spiritual matters and especially You, God,
so I may have an open mind
and new experience with all of these
and especially You, God
Amen

Workshop

1. Introduction
 - a. Sharing
 - b. Concepts
 - c. Characteristics
 - d. Causes
2. Top lines
3. Recovery tools
4. Recovery plan: twelve steps
5. Affirmations
6. Comments
7. Meditation
8. Close



Sharing



WHAT IS ANOREXIA?



Anorexia is a form of sex and love addiction that is often hard to detect.

- S.L.A.A. defines anorexia as ***“a compulsive avoidance of giving or receiving social, sexual, or emotional nourishment”***
- There are many types of anorexics; whether our anorexia is social, sexual or emotional, we awaken to the fact that we are not experiencing the **giving and receiving of love that we deserve and is so precious in life.**

Source: <https://slaafws.org/anorexia-questionnaire>

WHAT IS ANOREXIA?

1. The absence of closeness in certain areas of our lives.
2. Engaging in fixed patterns of fearing others and strategies to keep them at bay.
3. Beneath the surface, anorexia consists of intentionally not doing something. Not trusting, not committing, not surrendering.
4. Anorexia's symptoms are often obscure, and uneventful (not doing and not doing....).



Sources: Anorexia Recovery Tools 2017

SLAA Anorexia at slaafws.org/anorexia-questionnaire

CHARACTERISTICS (non-Conference approved)

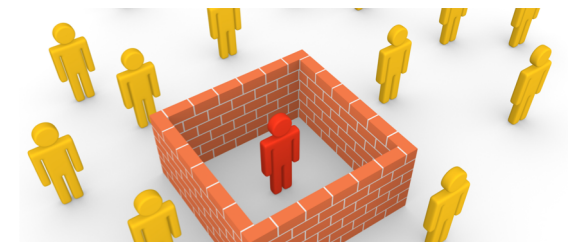
1. Having few healthy boundaries, we become sexually repulsed by and/or emotionally threatened by people without knowing them.
2. Fearing intimacy and vulnerability, we avoid closeness with others, concealing our dependency needs from ourselves and others, growing more isolated and alienated from friends and loved ones, ourselves and God.
3. Fearing emotional and/or sexual nurturing, we compulsively avoid and stay away from romantic and sexual relationships, sometimes going for years at a time without participating in dating or sustained relationships.
4. We over-idealize love and sex or conversely confuse love and sex with physical and sexual abuse, shame, immorality, engulfment, enmeshment, pity and/or the need to rescue or be rescued.
5. We retreat into the apparent safety of being alone. Even if we long for intimacy and commitment, we continually avoid relationships and sexual contacts.
6. We are deeply anxious and insecure but may cover feelings of stress, guilt, loneliness, anger, fear and envy with a persona of independence and self-sufficiency. We may use self-reliance, martyrdom and/or deprivation as substitutes for nurturing, care and support.

CHARACTERISTICS (non-Conference approved)

7. We judge others and/or project that others judge us. We employ distancing strategies and build emotional walls. We withhold love and sex to feel in control and/or to control and manipulate others.
8. We may substitute intimate relationships with romantic or sexual fantasies; and may use pornography, compulsive masturbation, anonymous sex and/or prostitutes to feed this fantasy world.
9. We avoid responsibility for ourselves by focusing on others, denying our own feelings, wants and needs and being emotionally unavailable in relationships.
10. We stay enslaved to isolation.
11. We may mask our fears of authentic connection and sexuality by involving ourselves in addictive romantic and sexual relationships with unavailable people.
12. We assign magical qualities to others. We idealise and fear them, then resent them for the power they hold over us.

Activity: “Am I Anorexic? – 50 Questions for Self-Diagnosis” - YES or NO

1. Do you go for long periods without being involved in a sexual or romantic relationship?
2. Do you go without social activities for extended periods of time?
3. Although in a relationship, have you found that, for a long while, you have not experienced: romance? sexuality? intimacy? friendship?
4. Are you alone more than you want, but feel unable to change that?
5. At work do you have trouble developing relationships?
6. Do you stay aloof when in groups?
7. Are you afraid of being noticed?
8. Do you habitually panic or push people away when they start getting close?
9. Do you usually try to withdraw from or completely control emotions?
10. Are you mainly attracted to unavailable people?



CAUSES: FEAR

Many anorexics share a fear of sexual pleasure and are full of fear and sexual self-doubt including:

1. Fear of intimacy of “connection” with others.
2. Fear of engulfment, “suffocation,” loss of self, or death.
3. Fear of intense feelings (which have been suppressed).
4. Fear of being visible or seen for one’s self.
5. Fear of one’s sexuality.
6. Fear of being attracted to someone.
7. Fear of starting or exiting a relationship.

Source: <https://slaafws.org/anorexia-questionnaire>

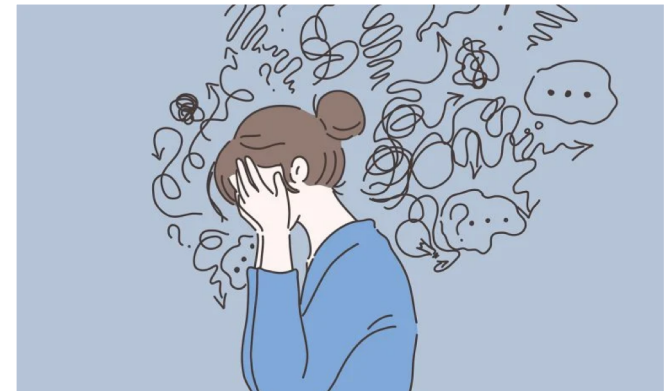


CAUSES: ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Like food anorexics, sexual anorexics starve themselves in the midst of plenty. Many of us feel a sense of **acute alienation and loss of self**. Common issues:

1. Deprivation (sexually, emotionally, etc.).
2. Self-belittling and judgment.
3. Perfectionism.
4. Grandiosity or inferiority extremes.
5. Hiding from life and light.
6. Loneliness.
7. Stuck emotions.

Source: <https://slaafws.org/anorexia-questionnaire>



CAUSES: TRAUMA IN EARLY FAMILY LIFE

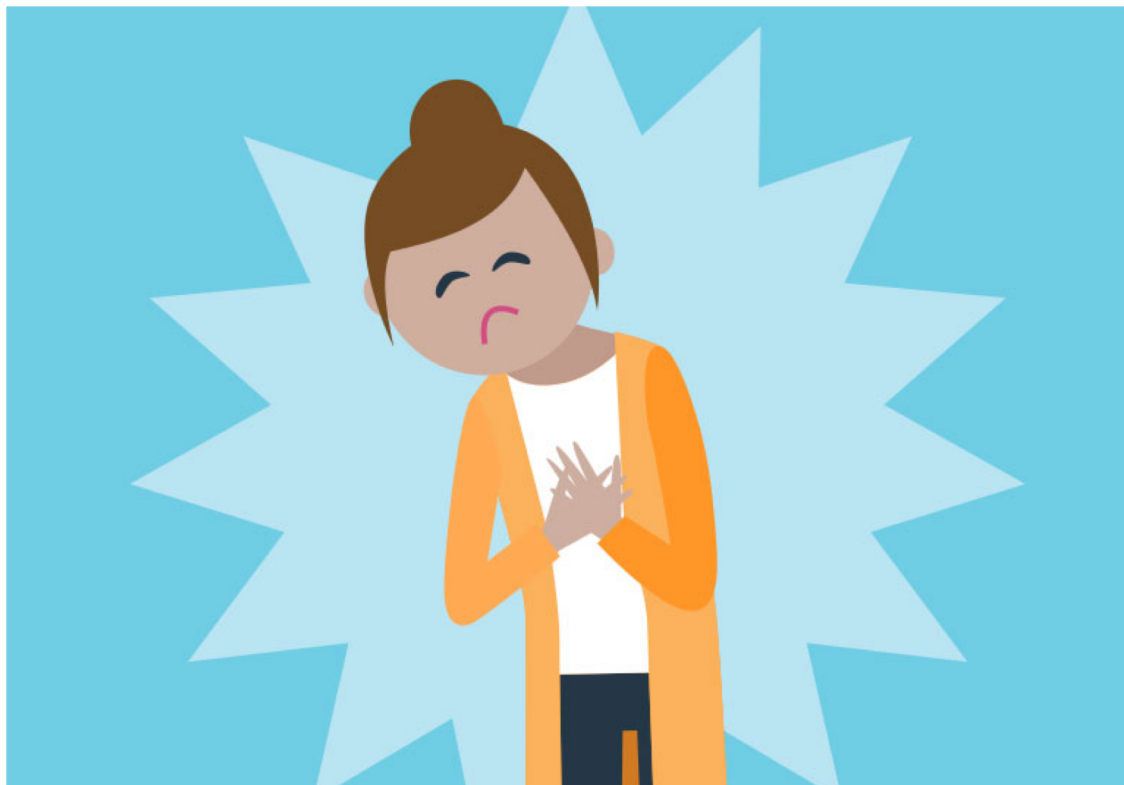
Both men and women anorexics indicate that trauma was present in their childhood histories, including the following:

1. Boundary violations.
2. Sexual shaming.
3. Emotional neglect and abuse (needs not met).
4. Sexual and/or physical abuse.
5. Deprivation leading to addictive strategies in later life.
6. Loss (death) of family members.

Source: <https://slaafws.org/anorexia-questionnaire>



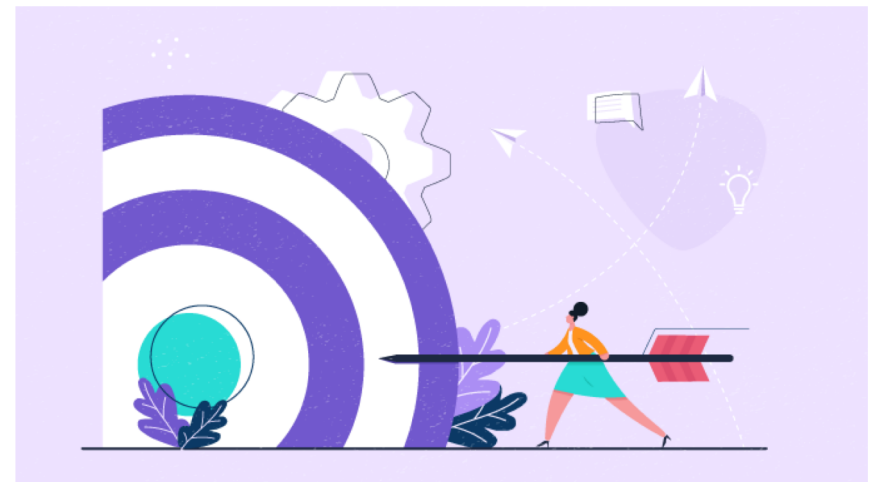
Activity: Pain?



TOP LINES

These are healthy actions to take care of ourselves or to change or compulsive habits. For anorexics, they are particularly important recovery tools because our “acting in” is often invisible to us. By building up top lines in our program we substitute self-nurturing behaviours for the self-harming, non-productive actions that are habitual.

Source: Anorexia 1, 2, 3



ANOREXIA RECOVERY TOOLS



- **Emotions**

We give great attention to our emotions and we take time and space to process and elaborate on them. Knowing what we are feeling is important for us; it is an essential guide to our recovery.

- **Tenderness**

We are gentle with ourselves. We learn to recognize and lovingly provide for our needs, as if we are the person that we love most on the Earth.

- **Self Care**

We take tender care of our body, our food, our possessions and clothes, our desires and dreams, our fun, our vacations, and our emotional and sexual needs. We dedicate time and energy to ourselves.

- **Balance**

We know that our anorexia pushes us toward extremes, therefore, we look for balance in our recovery and in every part of our lives.

ANOREXIA RECOVERY TOOLS



- **Go at Our Own Pace**

We go slowly in doing things that are healthy for us, knowing that we can still be overwhelmed by the emotions, whether positive or negative, caused by our healthy actions.

- **Authenticity**

Being true to our heart, provides our special path to recovery. We dare to be healthy in our own way.

- **Spirituality**

We develop, day by day, our own way of staying in touch with a Power greater than ourselves, which can lead us and gently support us in our recovery.

- **Service**

Through balanced service, we experience freedom from the anorexic self by giving back to the S.L.A.A. community what we continue to freely and lovingly receive.

ANOREXIA RECOVERY TOOLS



- **Friendship**

We enjoy the closeness and the affection of our friends, and we nourish our relationships with them, one day at a time.

- **Sponsorship**

Our sponsor is an S.L.A.A. member who has worked the Program, may be anorexic, has some recovery, and wants to share it with us. Our sponsor can be of great help with working the Steps and day-to-day decisions.

- **Steps**

We follow the Spiritual Program of the 12 Steps with confidence and openness.

Recovery is very different for each of us. That's why it is very important to find our own way to move through the Steps, no matter what our beliefs and ideas about the order in which we work them.

ANOREXIA RECOVERY TOOLS

- Activity: Anorexia recovery plan - Recovery tools



Recovery Tool	Summary	Positives the past week	Plans for next week
Emotions	<i>We give great attention to our emotions and we take time and space to process and elaborate on them. Knowing what we are feeling is important for us; it is an essential guide to our recovery.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy on Monday • Emotional outreach on Thursday • SLAA Meeting discussing feelings on Wednesday (ID) and Sunday (get current) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy on Monday • Journal more feelings • Use the SLAA Anorexia Recovery Tool to monitor my mood
Tenderness	<i>We are gentle with ourselves. We learn to recognize and lovingly provide for our needs, as if we are the person that we love most on the Earth.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet Saturday and Sunday at home • Realization I am not better than, but I am not LESS THAN XXXX or anyone else really filled me with love for everyone including me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach for the supportive fellowship of SLAA • Visit XXXXX once a week to walk and talk • Be less critical of myself internally. Try talking to my inner child

ANOREXIA RECOVERY PLAN: TWELVE STEPS

- Accept deeply, in your heart and mind, your anorexia. **(Step 1)**
- Feel you can receive the power to solve your issues, as a gift. **(Step 2)**
- Rely on this Faith. **(Step 3)**
- Look into the areas of your life where anorexia is present. Define those areas more clearly and accept your weaknesses. **(Step 4)**
- Share what you find with your sponsor, a friend in the Program, or someone outside S.L.A.A. **(Step 5)**
- Pass through the stages of grief. You are grieving the loss of your old behaviour and habits. You might pass through denial, bargaining, anger, and sadness. In time, you will arrive at the final stage of acceptance. **(Step 6)**



ANOREXIA RECOVERY PLAN: TWELVE STEPS

- Decide to go on, to humbly change your behaviour. Decide if you really want to be free and healthy. You will need to replace old habits with new ones, and only your Higher Power can remove your shortcomings. **(Step 7)**
- Examine your list of unhealthy behaviours and identify the people you have harmed with your anorexia. Your name is the first name on the list. **(Step 8)**
- Start replacing your unhealthy behaviours with your new healthy actions. Change can start with you, first of all. **(Step 9)**
- Continue to look for areas where anorexia is present in your life, and ask your Higher Power to heal those areas as well. Stay in touch with your recovery Program daily. **(Step 10)**
- Use meditation and prayer to better understand and nourish your recovery. **(Step 11)**
- Share your abundant life with friends, lovers, and beloved persons, both inside and outside the Program. **(Step 12)**

Source: SLAA Anorexia Recovery Tools (2017)



AFFIRMATIONS FOR ANOREXICS

- Activity: Write 1-2 affirmation for yourself.



Create an
"Affirmations Jar"!

FILL IT WITH:

- Mantras
- Compliments you receive
- Reminders of GLIMMERING MOMENTS
- Self-love + compassion

COMMENTS



Meditation on Step One



CLOSE

God,

I offer myself to Thee – To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.

Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.

Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I
would help of

Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life.