

S-ATEEN: INFORMATION ABOUT SPONSORSHIP AND MEETINGS

"We believe sexaholism is a family disease because it affects all the members emotionally, spiritually, and sometimes physically. We cannot change or control our parents, family members, or friends. We can detach from their problems while continuing to love them and ourselves. By applying the Twelve Steps to our lives, we begin to grow mentally, emotionally, and spiritually."

—S-Ateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps

WHAT IS S-ATEEN?

S-Ateen is a fellowship of young people, ages 12 to 19, whose lives have been affected by sexaholism in a family member or friend. While S-Ateen is a separate fellowship from S-Anon, both fall under the umbrella of the S-Anon International Family Groups, Inc. Meetings follow the S-Ateen Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and are separate from S-Anon meetings. They are guided by adult S-Anon members certified as S-Ateen Group Sponsors.

WHAT HAPPENS AT AN S-ATEEN MEETING?

We recommend using the Suggested S-Ateen Meeting Format published in the S-Anon/S-Ateen Service Manual and provided as a download at member.sanon.org. The meeting format may be adapted to suit the needs of an individual group, as long as the Conference Approved readings are not altered. The complete Meeting Guidelines are to be read at each meeting. After the readings, S-Ateen members are given the opportunity to share individually.

WHO CAN START AN S-ATEEN GROUP?

An S-Ateen group may be started by any adult S-Anon member certified as an S-Ateen Group Sponsor interested in extending the hand of recovery to young people. While a family member (parent, sibling, grandparents, etc.) may help with initiating a new S-Ateen group, recruiting S-Ateen Group Sponsors, acquiring meeting literature, or securing a meeting location and schedule, parents of S-Ateen members may not serve as an S-Ateen Group Sponsor for the meeting their own children attend.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO HAVE AN S-ATEEN MEETING?

Any day and time that works for the teens and the Group Sponsors is best. Some groups plan the S-Ateen meeting to coincide with an S-Anon meeting. Some groups schedule the S-Ateen meeting one hour before the S-Anon meeting, which allows the S-Ateen Group Sponsors to attend the subsequent S-Anon meeting. S-Ateen virtual meetings are

also offered weekly on the S-Ateen Online Community with two Group Sponsors attending.

WHAT IF AN S-ATEEN MEMBER ASKS FOR FEEDBACK OR AN OPINION DURING THE MEETING?

For meeting safety, the Group Sponsors ensure that there is no crosstalk during the meeting. Each individual member has his or her own time to share without being interrupted. We share with the group as a whole rather than addressing comments or questions to individual members. If an S-Ateen member would like feedback after the meeting closes, they may state this during their sharing. After the meeting, those wishing to share their experience, strength, and hope may stay to do so.

DOES IT WORK TO HAVE SIBLINGS ATTEND THE SAME MEETING?

Yes, historically siblings have attended together without a problem. S-Ateen members have the option of one sibling stepping out of the meeting room while the other shares, but this is generally not required.

SPONSORSHIP IN S-ATEEN

WHAT ARE THE SUGGESTED REQUIREMENTS TO BE AN S-ATEEN GROUP SPONSOR?

S-Ateen meetings are conducted separately from those of S-Anon and are guided by adult S-Anon members serving as S-Ateen Group Sponsors. An S-Ateen Group Sponsor is currently certified through the S-Ateen service training process, which includes a criminal background check. An S-Ateen Group Sponsor makes a commitment to be of service to a local or virtual S-Ateen meeting on a regular basis, or for a specific local or regional S-Ateen event or international convention.

Additionally, S-Ateen Group Sponsors must:

- Be an S-Anon member regularly attending S-Anon meetings
- Have completed or be working the S-Anon Twelve Steps with an S-Anon sponsor
- Have at least two years in S-Anon, in addition to any time spent in S-Ateen
- Be at least 21 years old
- Not have been convicted of a felony
- Not have been charged with child abuse or any other inappropriate sexual behavior or convicted of any

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- offense involving sexual misconduct or physical violence against children or adults
- Be willing to complete the steps and training necessary to be certified by the S-Ateen Committee, including a background check

IS IT NECESSARY TO HAVE TWO S-ATEEN GROUP SPONSORS AT EACH S-ATEEN MEETING?

Yes, though it is important to remember that the S-Ateen meeting belongs to the teens. The meetings are for the teens and run by them, and the S-Ateen Group Sponsors act as "guides" to ensure the Meeting Guidelines and Traditions are followed. Additionally, the S-Ateen Group Sponsors' roles are to ensure the meetings remain a safe place for the teens.

Most S-Ateen groups start with two S-Anon members willing to become certified S-Ateen Group Sponsors. It is beneficial for S-Ateen groups to have four or more Group Sponsors, allowing for rotating schedules. This helps ensure two Group Sponsors attend each meeting and provides each Group Sponsor flexibility in case of illness or other commitments. It also gives the teens the opportunity to hear other Group Sponsors' shares.

CAN PARENTS OF S-ATEEN MEMBERS BE GROUP SPONSORS?

Parents of S-Ateen members may serve as certified S-Ateen Group Sponsors, but they do not serve in meetings their own children attend. Even if the parent insists there are no family secrets, a teen might not feel free to share in the meeting with their parent in the room.

DO S-ATEEN GROUP SPONSORS SHARE DURING THE MEETING?

Yes. S-Ateen Group Sponsors take their turn during the meeting to share on the topic, Step, or Tradition along with the teens. The Group Sponsors share from their "teen years" and what they may remember growing up. This is a very rewarding part of S-Ateen Group Sponsorship service work. It gives the Group Sponsors an opportunity to look back at some of the issues they encountered growing up, and then to share how gaining experience, strength, and hope by working the program has helped.

DO I NEED TO BE A PARENT MYSELF TO BE AN S-ATEEN GROUP SPONSOR?

No. S-Anon members with many different backgrounds enjoy this service work, from grandmothers to young adult members, with or without children. We have all been teens!

DO THE S-ATEEN GROUP SPONSORS HEAR PERSONAL DETAILS OF FAMILY MEMBERS' "ACTING OUT" BEHAVIOR?

No. Most S-Anon members who had this concern found that the issue did not arise. The teens seldom talk about the acting out issues of the addiction. They soon realize S-Ateen is for them and about them, not the sexaholic or other family members. They are more interested in talking about their relationships with peers, pressures at school, and why they feel the way they do. They are excited to learn that the S-Ateen program and tools can help them make their lives more manageable and more serene, whether or not other family members are in recovery.

ARE THERE ANY LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR S-ATEEN GROUP SPONSORS?

For the safety of the S-Ateen group members, and as part of the Meeting Guidelines which are read at every meeting, we inform all S-Ateen members that if there is any ongoing, unresolved sexual abuse of a minor that has not been dealt with previously and this is shared in the S-Ateen meeting, it is the legal responsibility of the S-Ateen Group Sponsors to report this to the proper local authorities.

DO S-ATEEN MEMBERS SPONSOR EACH OTHER?

Ideally, yes. S-Ateen individual sponsorship is a mutual and confidential one-on-one sharing between two fellow S-Ateen members who wish to discuss their personal problems or issues in more detail than is shared during a meeting or who would like to work the Steps with a sponsor. S-Ateen individual sponsors are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope gained from working the S-Ateen program. S-Ateen Group Sponsors may sponsor individual S-Ateen members, if there are not enough experienced S-Ateen members to serve as sponsors. S-Ateen members can visit the S-Ateen Online Community for more information on sponsorship.

S-ATEEN MEETING TOPICS

WHAT TOPICS ARE SUGGESTED FOR AN S-ATEEN MEETING?

Some groups find it helpful to have a schedule of topics for the month. This may include a Step, a Tradition, one of the S-Ateen readings, or any other topic found in S-Ateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

It is usually suggested that the teens share on the chosen topic, but they are also encouraged to share something "off topic" if they feel the need. Generally, the S-Ateen

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meeting is not just about discussing problems related to sexaholism. The teens are encouraged to focus on the solution by applying the S-Ateen program tools and principles in all areas of their lives (i.e., setting healthy boundaries, overcoming fear, understanding what it means to "focus on yourself" rather than on family members or school friends).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR S-ATEEN

Additional resources include the following pieces of S-Ateen Service Literature which are free downloads at sanon.org:

S-ATEEN: INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP SPONSORSHIP (L-23ST)

S-ATEEN: SUGGESTIONS FOR MEETING TOPICS (P-2ST)

S-ATEEN: SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT (L-24ST)

S-ATEEN: RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENT (L-22ST)

The following Alateen resources are available as well as other helpful Alateen literature at al-anon.alateen.org.

ALATEEN SAFETY GUIDELINES (G-34)

A GUIDE FOR SPONSORS OF ALATEEN GROUPS (P-29)

Please contact the WSO for new or updated pieces of S-Ateen Literature that may not have been available when this piece was published.



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