

# SELF-MUTILATORS ANONYMOUS

By physical self-mutilation, we mean deliberately causing injury to our bodies without the intention of ending our lives. This includes cutting ourselves, tearing out body hair, burning ourselves, scratching until blood is drawn, reopening wounds, swallowing objects, banging our heads against the wall, breaking bones or teeth, tearing or severely biting cuticles or nails, chewing the inside of the mouth, compulsive body-tattooing, excessive cosmetic surgeries, body-piercing, acne mutilation, etc.

## SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT

### 1. PREAMBLE: \*\*

Self-Mutilators Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other, that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from physical self-mutilation. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop mutilating oneself physically. There are no dues or fees for SMA membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. SMA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stop mutilating ourselves and to help others to recover from self-mutilation.

### 2. OPENING STATEMENT:

We believe that we are as sick as our secrets and that self-disclosure and honesty with others is the key to recovery. However, we ask members not to elaborate about specific episodes of self-mutilation. There is no crosstalk and no advice is given.

### 3. READ THE 12 STEPS.

### 4. READ THE TOOLS OF RECOVERY.

### 5. SPEAKER QUALIFIES.

### 6. TIMED/ UNTIMED SHARES.

### 7. AFFIRMATIONS.

### 8. CLOSING STATEMENT:

The opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest. Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened. The things you heard here were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time. Will all who care to, join in the closing prayer?

## 15 AFFIRMATIONS

I let my body heal.

I stay conscious of my feelings and write them down.

I have the right to be abstinent, no matter what.

I applaud my willingness.

I'm free to spend my time as I choose.

My body is beautiful; I want to take care of it.

I deserve to come into the inheritance of my own beauty.

Life is safe.

I accept myself exactly how and who I am today.

I am willing to become increasingly more gentle and loving to myself.

I joyfully say, "No."

I have survived my childhood.

I deserve to be the (man/ woman) I am.

My humor is a sign of my recovery.

If at first I don't succeed, I lower my expectations.

## THE 12 STEPS OF S.M.A.\*

1. We admitted we were powerless over physical self-mutilation---that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to self-mutilators, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

\*A.A.'s 12 Steps and 12 Traditions were adapted with permission of A.A.'s World Services, Inc.

## THE 12 TRADITIONS OF S.M.A.\*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon S.M.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for S.M.A. membership is a desire to stop self-mutilating.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or S.M.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the self-mutilator who still suffers.
6. An S.M.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the S.M.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every S.M.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. S.M.A. should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. S.M.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. S.M.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the S.M.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## THE TOOLS OF RECOVERY

- \* Make attendance at meetings your first priority.
  - \* Disclose what you do to mutilate and identify it as an addiction.
  - \* Study 12-Step Literature (SMA's and other programs') to remind yourself of your powerlessness.
  - \* Be aware of your triggers.
  - \* Exercise regularly to relieve stress.
  - \* Talk to another self-mutilator to short-circuit the behavior.
  - \* Draw or write down your feelings; don't take them out on yourself.
  - \* Break out of your routine.
  - \* Find a constructive outlet for your anger.
  - \* Find a creative use for your free time.
  - \* Write your own recovery plan.
  - \* Use these tools to abstain from secondary mutilation behaviors too.
- \*\*The Preamble adapted with permission of the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.