

# COSA LITERATURE: CURRENT WRITING GUIDELINES

Thank you for contributing your time and insights to the COSA literature. Please find below a set of guidelines to make the review, editing and publishing processes easier for all. This document is equivalent to a procedure log. The Literature Committee will strive to update it as needed. These guidelines represent our current understanding of best practice in compiling 12-step-fellowship literature in general and COSA Literature in particular.

All pieces of COSA literature should be submitted via [cosacopy@yahoo.com](mailto:cosacopy@yahoo.com). If the author is submitting directly to a member of the literature committee, please cc the committee at [cosacopy@yahoo.com](mailto:cosacopy@yahoo.com) for archiving purposes.

Once we receive your submission, we will send an acknowledgment of receipt. The submission will be forwarded to the members of the literature committee.

The literature committee may or may not use the piece of submitted literature immediately depending on the numbers of submissions, the priority of the topic addressed, and the space and resources available to publish the written material. All literature that cannot be used immediately is archived for potential later publication.

Submissions that will be used immediately may need editorial changes. As in any Twelve-Step fellowship, the main copy-editing responsibility of the Literature Committee is to ensure that all published materials adhere to COSA's guidelines for its written work and to our Twelve Traditions. In addition, the Literature Committee may ask the authors to revise their text to improve the clarity of their message. We see the kinds of questions we get from readers and we ask our writers to trust us when we say some people might be confused.

## **Contact information**

1. We state how we want to be identified, e.g. name and last initial, initials only, city and/or state, and/or 'anonymous.'
2. We supply an email address and a phone number as contact information, for editing questions and for written consent to edit and print.

## **Style**

1. The official acronym for the service organization is: ISO of COSA, and the full name is International Service Organization of COSA. COSA is spelled in capital letters without periods. Please note that we do not currently use COSA itself as an acronym. For more information about the COSA name, see <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/acronym.html>.
2. Numbers: Whole numbers from one to ten are written out. When referring to Steps and Traditions, all numbers are written out (one to twelve). Variations are accepted, e.g. Step One or First Step, Tradition One or First Tradition, are acceptable. References to a Step with the numeric name, or to the Steps in general without the numeric name, should be capitalized.
3. Using forms of "the Twelve Steps" as a verb or adjective: Numbers should be written out and not capitalized, and hyphens should be used where appropriate. Preferred usages in the following examples: (Verb) to twelve-step someone, twelve-stepping someone; (Adjective) twelve-step meeting, twelve-step fellowship, making a twelfth-step call.
4. Spelling of other terms for consistency: email, internet, intergroup, okay (spelled out), catalog, co-worker.
5. Commas and periods should appear inside quotations: e.g. "I'm in recovery," s/he said.
6. Single space should be used after periods.

## **Content**

1. The shares are intended to be about our recovery experience (experience, strength and hope or ESH) so we use "I" terms only. Our purpose is to encourage, build up and strengthen our recovery from codependency/co-addiction, through sharing positive messages of truth, courage and the overcoming of adversity. We can feel free to share our problems and their solutions as we work on our recoveries.
2. We keep the focus on ourselves. As codependents of sex addicts, we sometimes find that we focus on the addict and all the

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- dishonesty and sexual acting out that has caused us feelings of anger, pain and distrust. When we focus on the addict's behaviors (past or present), we don't pay much attention to what is going on with ourselves, our thoughts and feelings.
3. We do not shame, blame or judge one another or ourselves.
  4. We maintain and protect anonymity of ourselves and one another. We avoid compromising anyone's confidentiality, particularly second or third parties.
  5. We respect one another's differences including differences in religious belief, background, opinion and sexual orientation.
  6. Please refrain from using specific religious references. We also use the term Higher Power, or HP, or God of our understanding. We refer to the hand-out entitled *COSA Spirituality*.
  7. We do not give advice.
  8. We do not gossip.
  9. We take responsibility for ourselves.
  10. We do not promote, solicit, advertise or sell outside causes or issues.
  11. No COSA literature uses the actual name of any other business, venture, organization and event, besides COSA. Any postings made which promote or advertise any outside entity would be in violation of our traditions. We're not here to advertise anything but our Experience, Strength and Hope in the COSA program
  12. Please refrain from using outside sources, i.e.; anything other than COSA Literature.
  13. With respect to our Traditions, we avoid referring to other fellowships by name, and say something like "another fellowship." The ISO of COSA website acknowledges that COSA is based on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholic Anonymous (AA), and we include a copy of the original AA Steps and Traditions along with their disclaimer wherever we print our own revised versions. ISO of COSA has agreed, with the approval of AA, that this is sufficient testimony to our gratitude for the great gift of AA. Therefore when otherwise referring to AA, as for any other fellowships, we refer to "another fellowship."
  14. We need to be aware of boundaries – both ours and others.' Because of this, please refrain from using explicit language or sexual content. This information is best shared with a sponsor, or "COSA buddy."
  15. Please avoid swearing or using explicit sexual language as this may be triggering to others.
  16. "COSA Voices" are intended to help carry the message to the COSA member who still suffers. We should avoid presenting unnecessarily triggering or provocative content. The stories should provide sobering details of unmanageability and offer the hope of recovery for COSA members. We should try to balance telling a person's story in his or her words with avoiding triggering specifics or graphic details. We should preserve the voice of the narrator as much as possible. It is less important that the story sticks to our usage guidelines than that the story be understandable. We can preserve the narrator's voice while editing or removing descriptions that might make the story triggering or go against the Traditions. We can also preserve the narrator's personal perspectives while removing stereotypes and/or disparaging language that might put our literature into public controversy.

### **COSA booklets**

The focus in COSA booklets stays on "The Solution." As a result, when referring to the active disease, we prefer clear, simple summary statements and only clean dramatizations that are illustrations of our own behaviors. The outline for COSA Booklets is:

1. Part One (Text) represents the collective wisdom so it isn't written from one person's voice to the reader. This is the general overview of how recovery works in reference to the specific topic. COSA Pamphlets also follow this format.
2. Part Two ("COSA Voices") format is individual COSA members sharing their personal experiences of recovery on the topic.
3. Part Three: Workbook exercises/questions.