

Misery Addicts and Self-Sabotagers Anonymous (MASSA) Meeting Guide

MASSA MEETING GUIDE - Updated 2/1/26

IF This Is Your First Time Using This UPDATED Guide; Read through it to become familiar with it.

Suggestions for the leader are in red. Do not read these during the meeting. This document is meant to be a guideline.

Please begin on time even if only 1-2 people are present so the meeting can end on time.

Welcome to the _____ meeting (specific group name, if one) of Misery Addicts and Self-Sabotagers Anonymous. (MASSA)

My name is _____. I am recovering from Misery Addiction and Self-Sabotage and the leader for today. This is an open meeting, and we are glad that you are here, especially newcomers.

Please join me in a moment of silence to reflect on the reasons we are here, followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Say: Serenity Prayer

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.**

MASSA is a fellowship where we share our experience, strength, and hope so that we may solve our common problem and help others recover from misery addiction. It is for anyone who is addicted to self-sabotage which results in unhappiness, joylessness, isolation, avoidance, amnesia, underachieving, sadness, depression, under-functioning, rebellion, resistance, hopelessness or anyone who may be fearful of success, happiness, joy, intimacy, or well-being.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop self-sabotage. Our primary purpose is to stay in recovery and to help other misery addicts find recovery.

A good tool for staying in recovery are the **Daily Practices** on page 196 in "When Misery Is Company". They help create a content and effective life.

Are there any visitors, returning members or anyone here who considers themselves new to MASSA? If so, please introduce yourself by your first name and last initial so that we can welcome you

Who will volunteer to read "How It Works?"

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How It Works (The 12 Steps for MASSA) – They are also on the MASSA website

1. We admitted we were powerless over self-sabotage and that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could bring us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understand our Higher Power.
4. Made a searching and thorough self-Inventory.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our choices.
6. Were entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove any unhealthy character traits and behaviors.
7. Humbly asked God to remove those traits and behaviors that no longer serve us.
8. Made a list of damage we had caused to ourselves and others and became willing to make amends to all.
9. Made direct amends, when possible, except when to do so would cause harm.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and took appropriate action as necessary.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand it; praying only for knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us and the power to carry it out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we carry this message to other misery addicts and practice these principals in all our affairs.

Many have exclaimed, ***“What an order! I can’t go through with this!”***

Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything close to perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines.

The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the self-sabotager and our personal adventures before and after starting recovery make clear three pertinent ideas:

1. That we were addicted to self-sabotage, misery and avoidance and could not manage our own lives.
2. That probably no human power, including our own, could have relieved our self-sabotage addiction.
3. That a Higher Power could and would relieve us of this addiction, if that Power were sought.

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The Twelve Traditions: **Read the Tradition for the current month**

1. Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon MASSA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God, as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for MASSA membership is a desire to stop self-sabotage.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups, or MASSA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the self-sabotager who still suffers.
6. A MASSA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the MASSA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every MASSA group out to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. MASSA should remain forever nonprofessional, but the fellowship may utilize special workers.
9. MASSA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. MASSA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the MASSA 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, films, and other media of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Ask for a volunteer to read “A Summary of MASSA” – if there is a newcomer Or if it is requested.

This is **A Summary of MASSA**, created by us, which comes from various portions of the book “When Misery is Company.”

When we say we are addicted to misery; it does not mean we enjoy being miserable. It means that we are addicted to a system of behaviors we have unconsciously developed to protect ourselves. At some point, possibly early in childhood, our wires got crossed and we ended up with a deeply ingrained pattern of choices, behaviors or blindness to choices, that do not serve our well-being.

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At the center of this pattern of behaviors we find avoidance, self-sabotage, and a fear of losing what we have. This pattern may create an amnesia like fog. In this fog we miss deadlines, waste opportunities, and see no point in accepting help offered to us. On a very basic level, a part of us has given up. Whatever the cause, today we are not like normal people when it comes to being kind to ourselves. We can't do it. A normal person, if he hurts himself, stops doing the thing that hurts. We are different. When we are hurtful to ourselves, we can't quit. We go on sabotaging ourselves and hesitate when positive action is needed.

We may have used other addictions or compulsions to create avoidance. These serve the dual purpose of giving us a security blanket which temporarily offers comfort and helps us avoid our misery, fear, and/or hopelessness. Some of our secondary addictions include excessive use of food, shopping, clutter, reading, illness, work, gambling, sex, exercise, religiosity, overspending, being in debt, over use of technology including TV, news, internet surfing, social media, and game playing.

Other avoidance behaviors include codependence, caretaking, self-abuse, self-denial, sleeping too much or too little, or addiction to alcohol, drugs, nicotine, caffeine, or any other chemical substance.

We crave avoidance like an alcoholic craves a drink.

We develop plans that would make our lives better and then forget or abandon them when our pattern of self-sabotage takes over. If this happens many times, we experience a loss of self-trust. As our lives become littered with more failures, we may become convinced that we ourselves are failures.

So, what's the use?

Here are some good reasons for facing this addiction: Because we were born, our lives have value. We deserve to reclaim our inner, authentic selves. Recovery from other addictions will be successful when the addiction to misery is addressed. We will be healthier, because as we heal emotionally and spiritually, our bodies will heal, too. By learning to access and embrace feelings of joy and happiness, we will be blessed with an abundance of intimacy, fulfillment, and serenity.

What do we do next?

Even if we can't fully embrace the MASSA concept yet, we can begin by working the steps, getting a sponsor, doing service by coming to meetings to listen and share, leading meetings, volunteering to read and by being the time keeper. All of these can aid in our recovery.

We finally have Hope. Together we can do this. Many have recovered and we can too.

This ends the MASSA Summary

MASSA is about living the solution not the problem. Only one of the 12 steps deals with the problem. The other 11 steps focus on a solution. We encourage speaking from your own experience, strength, and hope using the "I" first-person, form.

If you want to share a second time, please wait until everyone else has had a chance to share. At the end of your share, please say if you are available to sponsor. Anyone who wants contact info may ask for it in the Chat.

We support a No-Crosstalk policy. Crosstalk includes feedback, offering advice, commentary, judgements, or reactions to another person's share.

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Some members indicate their support of the person being here and sharing by using the American Sign Language for “love” or “like,” which looks like this:

Leader demonstrates the sign

Who will volunteer to be our time keeper for this meeting? Each share will be timed for _____ minutes. **The time keeper will (Verbally or by setting an alarm) indicating you have 30 seconds left to complete your thoughts.**

Leader sets the time according to the number of people in the meeting.

Before we begin sharing – We invite you to join us in a 20 second self-hug. Put your arms around yourself to give comfort. As you hug yourself, imagine these are the arms of someone who loves you.

You are invited to share on today's topic or anything that is on your heart.

Please consider turning on your camera so that we can see, recognize, accept and support each other. Also please mute yourself when not speaking.

Today's Topic Suggestions –

- If there is a newcomer present – Ask for sharing on “What brought you to MASSA” to share your experience, strength and hope
- Ask if anyone has a suggested topic they would like to discuss today?
- Leader's choice of topic
- Additional topics can be found on the last page of this guide
- Book Study –

If there is a newcomer, ask for one (1) volunteer to share what brought them to MASSA
Then begin the book study.

Leader: If you call on members by name; remind them they are not required to share
After everyone has shared, ask if anyone wants to share a second time OR do a round of Gratitudes

The meeting is now open for the topic and sharing.

Closing the meeting:

Start closing about 8-10 minutes before the end of the hour.

That is all the time we have for sharing. Thank you all for being here. We hope to see you next time. Remember that just by attending a meeting, you are doing a service for others.

If you did not get a chance to share everything you wanted to, please reach out to your sponsor or another member with your share.

Who is willing to volunteer to lead the meeting next week?

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The Seventh Tradition is “Every MASSA group ought to be fully self-supporting.” There are no dues or fees. Your contributions help keep our website open, maintained, and the Zoom platform running. Donations can be made by clicking on the donate tab on our miseryaddicts.org

Being self-supporting through our own contributions does not apply only to money. **Service is critical and aids in our recovery.**

Each meeting will have a short Group Conscience on the first week of the month immediately after the regular meeting to discuss items applicable to that meeting

If Group Conscience is at the end of this meeting – Please Announce:
If you consider this your home meeting, please consider staying. Your input for ideas or changes are important to this specific group meeting.

Is anyone celebrating their Anniversary of coming into MASSA this month?

Are there any MASSA announcements?

Who would like to read the “MASSA Promises”

The MASSA Promises written by us: They can also be found on the MASSA website.

- As we live the Twelve Steps, we find freedom from misery addiction, then discover and live our authentic selves.
- Self-sabotage, avoidance, and fear leave us as trust grows.
- Compassion increases as we love and accept ourselves *just as we are at this moment*.
- We no longer use guilt, shame, and regret to hurt or motivate ourselves or others.
- As we release perfection and control, we become more successful, secure, and happy.
- We find the dreams that are within us and the courage to live them.
- Recovery brings clarity, intimacy, and joy by drawing us into harmony with life.
- As good things happen again and again, we experience our Higher Power doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.
- Do we see these Promises coming true? **Altogether, YES, WE DO and/or YES, I DO!**

Remember that anonymity, like recovery, is a treasured possession. Who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here. **Altogether, HEAR! HEAR!**

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Connection with others is essential for recovery. Please let us all reach out by phone, text, email, or any other medium of communication to newcomers, returning members, each other, and someone you haven't seen here in a while. Together we get better.

Let us form a virtual circle and picture holding hands together!

I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone! No longer is there a sense of hopelessness. No longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours. And as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

A moment of silence for those who haven't heard the MASSA message yet. (Wait a few seconds)

Say: We version of the Serenity Prayer

**God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change,
The courage to change the things we can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.**

Remember that it works! AND WE ARE WORTH IT!

Let us say together: **WE ARE WORTH IT! I AM WORTH IT! YOU ARE WORTH IT!**

The meeting has now ended

If you have claimed "Meeting Host" on Zoom (not just the Leader for the meeting) and cannot stay after the meeting – Assign a new host so the meeting link will not be closed when you leave!

For Open Chat time: (Ask the following)

- Is there anyone wishing to stay after the meeting to chat?
- If Newcomers are present, do you want to stay to ask questions?

Additional Meeting Topics -

How I work my program
Abstinence
Surrender vs Compliance
Relapse & Recovery
Intimacy in Recovery
How to Avoid Avoidance
Feelings are Not Facts

Healthy Rewards
Tool Additions & Misery Vehicles
Daily Practices (the Tools of Recovery)
Use a topic suggested on WhatsApp
Pick a topic from the Index in the book "When Misery is Company" to read and discuss.