SIA WELCOME

We welcome you to Survivors of Incest Anonymous and hope you will find here the hope, camaraderie, and recovery that we have been privileged to experience. We are a self-help group of women and men, 18 years or older, who are guided by a set of 12 Suggested Steps and 12 Traditions, along with some slogans and the Serenity Prayer. There are no dues or fees. Everything that is said here, in the group meeting and member to member, must be held in strict confidence. We do not have any professional therapist working in our group. SIA is not a replacement for therapy or any other professional service when needed. The only requirement for membership is that you are a victim of childhood sexual abuse, and that you are not abusing any child, and that you have not abused any child as an adult.

We learn in SIA not to deny, that we did not imagine the incest, nor was it our fault in any way. The abuser will go to any length to shift the responsibility to the defenseless child, often accusing the child of being seductive. We had healthy, natural needs for love, attention, and acceptance, and we often paid high prices to get those needs met, but we did not seduce our abuser. Physical coercion is rarely necessary with a child since the child is already intimidated. The more gentle the assault, the more guilt the victim inappropriately carries. We also learn not to accept any responsibility for the assaults even if these occurred over a prolonged period of time. Some of us are still being sexually assaulted.

In SIA we share our experiences and common feelings. You will not be discounted because what happened to you seems too minor, and you will not be rejected because you think your abuse was too horrible. We realize that we had to protect our caretakers from this horrible secret, as if they were not participants. We felt alienated from the non-abusive family members. Often, greater anger is directed toward them. We became caretakers in order to maintain an image of a nurturing family. Our feelings of betrayal by our families are immeasurable. We need to mourn the death of the ideal family that many of us created in our own imaginations.

In dealing with this pain, it feels as if we are pulling the scab off a wound that never healed properly, AND IT HURTS. However, it is easier to cry when we have friends who are not afraid of our tears. We CAN be comforted - that is why we are here. Our pain is no longer in vain. We will never forget, but we can, in time, end the regretting that accompanies destructive remembering. We can learn, on day at a time, that we are incest SURVIVORS, rather than incest victims.
SIA CLOSING

As we close this meeting, it is important for us to realize that no one here can tell us what we should or should not do. We must each decide our own course of recovery. In SIA we do not give advice. Take what you like and leave the rest. Let there be no judgment or criticism of one another.

Because we come together for support, it is important that we share, but let us always remember that what is said in the room must also stay in this room. Confidentiality is CENTRAL to this program. Who you see here, what you hear here, let it stay here.

SIA is an anonymous program; therefore we must remain unidentified at the level of press, television, radio and films. If we meet outside a meeting, we must not jeopardize anyone’s anonymity by acknowledging each other as SIA members.

We want to remind those who have recently joined us at SIA that each of us is a creative, courageous and caring person. Each day we deal with our incest experience we will become stronger people, and we will come to recognize ourselves as survivors. We are sorry that suffering brought us together. We hope that you will feel the love we already have in our hearts for you. We know your pain. We want you to believe that you are not to blame, and you are not alone. We have come to the awesome realization that our pain is temporary, but denial and its consequences are forever. And if any one of us can recover, than so can all of us.

Will all who care to join me in the serenity prayer?
THE ADAPTED 12-STEPS OF SIA

1. We admitted that we were powerless over the abuse, the effects of the abuse and that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a loving Higher Power, greater than ourselves, could restore hope, healing and sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to that loving Higher Power, as we understood Her/Him.

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, the abuse and its effects on our lives. We had no more secrets.

5. Admitted to a loving Higher Power, to ourselves, and to another human being our strengths and weaknesses.

6. We were entirely ready to have a loving Higher Power help us remove all the debilitating consequences of the abuse and became willing to treat ourselves with respect, compassion and acceptance.

7. Humbly and honestly asked a loving Higher Power to remove the unhealthy and self-defeating consequences stemming from the abuse.

8. Made a list of all the persons we may have harmed (of our own free will), especially ourselves and our inner child(ren) and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made amends to such persons whenever possible except when to do so would result in physical, mental, emotional or spiritual harm to ourselves or others.

10. Continued to take responsibility for our own recovery and when we found ourselves behaving in patterns still dictated by the abuse, promptly admitted it. When we succeeded, we promptly enjoyed it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a loving Higher Power as we understood Her/Him, praying only for knowledge of Her/His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other survivors and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF SIA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on SIA unity.

2. For our group purpose there is but one authority - a loving God as S/He may express her/himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

3. The only requirement for membership is that you are a victim of child sexual abuse and that you desire to recover from it.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting another group or SIA as a whole.

5. Each SIA group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the incest survivor who still suffers.

6. Our SIA group ought never to endorse, finance, or lend the SIA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim.

7. SIA strives to be fully self-supporting and will not accept contributions that compromise SIA's autonomy or mission.

8. SIA work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. SIA as such ought never to be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Survivors of Incest Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SIA 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 television.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.