

Serenity on the Sound 2023

How to Thrive Guide: Tips and Ground Rules

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Overview

The 34th annual Puget Sound SAA and COSA Retreat will be held at a beautiful lakeside retreat center in Lacey, WA. Lodging consists of dormitory-style bunk rooms separated by gender and a limited number of private rooms for those who need personal lodging or for couples hoping to room together. Additionally,

there is outdoor space for tents, campers, and RVs. Food will be provided (dinner on Friday, 3 meals on Saturday, and breakfast on Sunday).

Our annual retreat focuses on recovery from sex addiction and its impact on the lives of loved ones. It is for adults aged 18 and older. Members from SAA, other S-programs, and COSA are welcome to attend.

The retreat features SAA and COSA speakers, workshops, Outer Circle Show and Tell, games, recreation, and fellowship in a peaceful wooded lakefront environment. Join us for a refreshing weekend of fellowship and recovery.

One of our chief goals is to provide a safe haven for recovery.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with suggestions, expectations and practical information so that you feel prepared for the weekend retreat. It is not comprehensive, so if you have additional questions after reading through this guide, please email info@soundretreat.org or call 425-272-5720.

Attire

Throughout the retreat, please dress the way you would for an in-person meeting. The exception to this would be when you are engaging in a water activity on the lake, during which we expect all to dress in attire appropriate for that activity.

Suggested items to bring

- Bedding, toiletries, and towels required *if staying overnight*
- Sunblock
- Bugspray
- Green Book / Big Book / COSA book / other recovery literature
- Journal & pen
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Musical instrument
- Life jackets for canoeing

Safety

We want all who participate in our retreat to feel emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually safe throughout the entire weekend.

Health and Safety

Although we are out of the COVID pandemic, we recognize that COVID still exists and that some groups of people are more impacted by it than others. In that spirit, please respect the choices of those who

choose to wear masks and take any precautions consistent with your beliefs to protect yourself and others. If you have COVID symptoms, please stay home. If you test positive for COVID during or shortly after the retreat, please alert the retreat planning committee at info@soundretreat.org so that retreat participants can be notified anonymously of a potential exposure during the retreat. Washington State's guidance on mask wearing is available here:

<https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19/masks-and-face-coverings>.

No One Stands Alone

Serenity on the Sound brings together a diverse group of people with widely varying experiences and histories. NOSA is a group of volunteers from SAA and COSA with years of sobriety and experience in peer support who have chosen to make themselves available to other retreat participants in order to answer questions, provide help, and offer support when requested. We want to provide a healthy environment for participants to learn and grow this weekend.

Our purpose is to promote a healthy and nurturing environment conducive to spiritual and emotional growth and recovery. Remember that we are people who are challenged with sexual issues. We choose today to bring boundaries and foresight into our lives as spiritual, sexual, emotional, and physical beings. Early in our recovery we often do not see or understand how our behavior or dress affects others. Later in our recovery we sometimes forget how behavior or dress used to trigger us. To make this retreat as healthy as possible for all who attend, we ask that you act and dress appropriately and conservatively. N.O.S.A. committee members and temporary sponsors are available this weekend. We encourage you to seek help if you feel triggered, uncomfortable or unsafe. If your concern requires action, two NOSA team members typically meet with you to decide what needs to be done.

NOSA members will be onsite and ready to help resolve any issues causing anyone to feel unsafe, triggered, or unwelcome for any reason. They will have "NOSA" written on their name badges so that you know who to approach if you want assistance.

Meeting safety statement

Adapted from pages 11-12 of the SAA "Green Book"

Over the years, our groups have developed different formats and customs. Although no detailed description is valid for all meetings, there are some general principles followed by most groups. We listen respectfully to what others have to say and share our experience as it seems appropriate. We use the words "I" or "we" instead of "you" and share our experience, strength and hope. We do not interrupt or give advice unless asked. We address our sharing to the whole group, not to one individual. A meeting is not a place to meet sexual partners nor is it group therapy. We try not to use offensive language or explicit descriptions. We avoid specific names or places associated with our acting out behavior. Because of the nature of our addiction, we are careful about touching or giving hugs to others without

permission. We strive to practice anonymity and confidentiality so meetings will be a safe place for each of us. We generally use only our first names. Who we meet or what is said in a meeting is treated as confidential and is not discussed with non-members.

A special note about safety

This note has been adapted from SAA literature.

As a newcomer in SAA, COSA, or to this retreat, please be aware that our 12-step programs have no governing authority except our Higher Power. This is a group of sex addicts, codependents, and co-addicts. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable, please contact a support person. Seek support from someone you know or a NOSA person. The support can come from a close friend, sponsor, or someone you trust. Together we can resolve the situation quickly and quietly. Our goal is to make sure you feel safe and comfortable at your retreat.

If any person you encounter within our fellowship tries to behave sexually with you, this is inappropriate. You may end the conversation/relationship immediately. Our 5th tradition states that our primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to the addict/co-addict who still suffers. Exploiting a new member is not in keeping with our Traditions and is inappropriate. This behavior, commonly referred to as “13th stepping,” is rare but unfortunately does happen.

Here are some suggestions some of us have found helpful for discerning and preventing “13th stepping”

1. Have a wide range of support. Reach out to several people for support, not just one or two people. If something doesn't feel right, question it. Do not hesitate to turn to another sober member for support if necessary.
2. Some groups have found it helpful to assign two temporary sponsors to each newcomer, that way the newcomer is never alone with another member.
3. Read the literature on Safe and Sober Meetings. Do not spend one-on-one time or have phone calls with people in our fellowships to whom you are attracted or have expressed an attraction to you.
4. Feel free to contact someone from NOSA (No One Stands Alone) to help resolve any situation that you find uncomfortable and/or unsafe.

Above all, sobriety is the goal. Honor yourself by surrounding yourself with people who support your recovery!

Suggestions on making this a safe retreat

- Always carry a flashlight at night. Avoid trails at night that are unlit. Ask for assistance if you are unsure of the trail.
- Do not swim alone or at night. Please be aware that no lifeguards will be present.

- There are many resources available to you during the retreat. NOSA (No One Stands Alone) members are available at any time to answer questions or provide assistance or support. Initial NOSA contacts are available at the registration desk.
- Many people are willing to be temporary sponsors for the weekend. Ask! Look for a list (or volunteer) at the registration table.
- Report injuries or safety issues immediately to the volunteer at the registration table, NOSA member or PSRC member.
- All participation during the retreat is strictly voluntary. Take time for yourself if you need it. If you are new to the camp and want some suggestions for places to spend some quiet time, ask a PSRC member.

Rules

Gwinwood retreat center rules

- No smoking/vaping allowed anywhere on Gwinwood property including lakefront, grounds, and parking lots.
- Alcohol is not permitted
- No animals allowed
- No water balloons
- Quiet hours are 10:00 pm - 7:00 am (e.g. no music); this does not mean lights out
- Wifi is available (although not guaranteed) in most buildings on our grounds
- Speed limit is 10 mph throughout the grounds
- Fires are not permitted due to the Thurston County burn ban. No open flames, candles, oil lamps, or smoking allowed, *except for our pre-approved candlelight ceremony*
- Do not enter a building other than the spaces indicated on our program

Other rules and etiquette

- **The retreat is only for adults 18 years or older**
- Avoid engaging in crosstalk during workshops and meetings. (SAA Online suggests, “During a share, we do not interrupt, give advice, or engage in crosstalk. Please restrict gestures of support during a share to two words or less” (e.g. “thank you”). COSARecovery.org defines crosstalk as “giving unsolicited feedback, giving advice, responding or referring to another person’s share in the meeting, making you and we statements, minimizing another person’s feeling or experiences, physical contact or touch, addressing another person present by name when you are sharing. So, to help keep our meeting a safe place, we do our best not to crosstalk or offer feedback in the meeting, instead we try to ‘learn to listen and listen to learn.’ We work toward taking responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others.”)
- Honor the anonymity and confidentiality of other participants

- Do not remove or damage any Gwinwood property, and remember to take all your personal belongings when you leave

Take care of yourself

The schedule includes breaks of varying lengths, but we can't schedule meal and rest breaks to accommodate everyone. Be present in your body and aware of what you need to be healthy and comfortable. It's common to skip a session here and there for self-care, solitude or fellowship. Eat, hydrate, stretch, meditate and rest when you need to. This is your time. Use it to refresh, connect, and learn. You're worth it. Get plenty of sleep each night so you have the mental focus and energy to fully participate in the day's activities.

Make personal connections

One of the best parts of a retreat is the opportunities for fellowship it offers. You'll see that the program includes fellowship events and breaks. You can request to exchange personal contact information with others. Be mindful that some people may choose to keep their contact information private. Please respond to those boundaries with grace and dignity. A simple "I understand" response will suffice.

2023 Program

Coming soon

Program descriptions

Coming soon

Outer Circle Show and Tell

One of the highlights of Serenity on the Sound is the Outer Circle Show and Tell on Friday night. Everyone gets five minutes to share something they do for fun. In the past, people have sung, played an instrument and read original poetry. One person showed us her elaborate, beautiful scrapbooks. Another shared pictures of his exotic cats. Another read us a favorite children's book, sharing the pictures as she went. Things don't always go as planned but we always have a good time and everyone gets applause.

Participation is optional, of course, but encouraged. So get ready! We're looking forward to seeing and hearing what you have to share.

Checking In

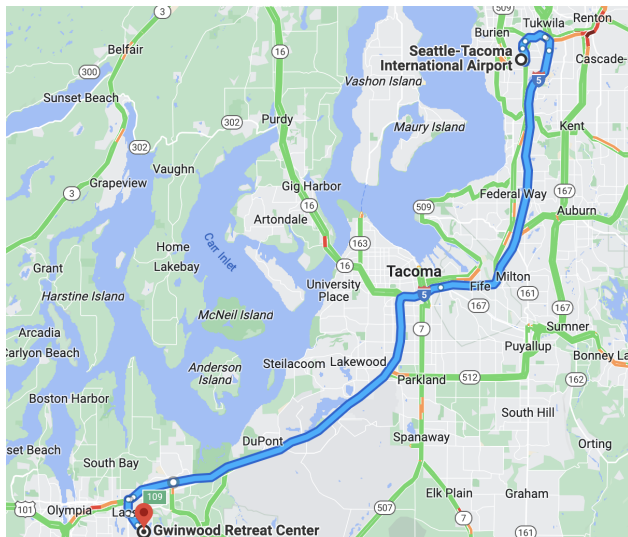
Please sign in at the registration desk upon arrival. You will receive your registration packet at that time. We will have name badges for you to wear and request that you display your name badge throughout the weekend.

Driving Directions

You are welcome to use [GoogleMaps](https://www.google.com/maps) or another map service provider. The address to Gwinwood Retreat Center is 6015 30th Ave SE, Lacey, WA 98503. If you prefer written directions, please see those provided below.

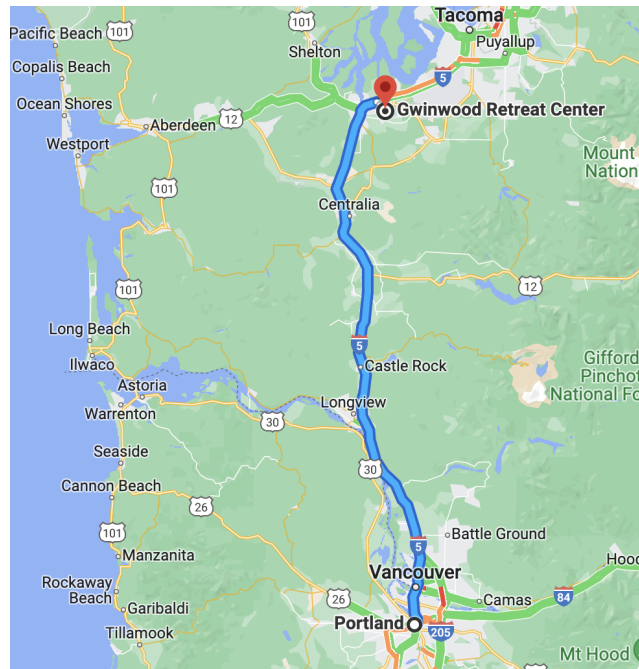
Directions from SeaTac Airport/Seattle (~1 hr with no traffic):

Follow signs to I-5 South. Take Exit 109. Turn R onto Martin Way. Turn L onto College St. Turn L onto Lacey Blvd. Turn R onto Ruddle Rd. Turn L onto 25th Ave. Turn R onto Hicks Lake Rd. Turn L onto 30th Ave. Gwinwood Retreat Center will be on your right at the end of the road.



Directions from Portland (~1 hr 50 min with no traffic):

Follow signs to I-5 North. Take Exit 108 and keep L at the fork toward College St. Turn R onto College St. Turn L onto Lacey Blvd. Turn R onto Ruddle Rd. Turn L onto 25th Ave. Turn R onto Hicks Lake Rd. Turn L onto 30th Ave. Gwinwood Retreat Center will be on your right at the end of the road.



Camp Map

