
Additional Readings

How to Stay Sober: Recovery without Religion by James Christopher (Prometheus Books, 1988).

Christopher describes his own “recovery without religion.” He focuses on the practical aspects of his triumph over alcoholism and includes guidelines for the formation of secular support groups. \$20.95.

Unhooked: Staying Sober and Drug-Free by James Christopher (Prometheus Books, 1989).

Christopher recounts the evolution of SOS, invites the reader to sit in on a fictionalized SOS meeting, and offers further strategies for achieving and maintaining sobriety and self-respect. \$18.95.

SOS Sobriety: The Proven Alternative to 12-Step Programs by James Christopher (Prometheus Books, 1992).

SOS Sobriety describes the proven methods of alcohol and drug abstinence advocated by Secular Organizations for Sobriety (or “Save Our Selves”), the world’s largest non-12-Step addiction-recovery program. \$18.95.

Prices include shipping and handling. You may order the above three books through the SOS Clearinghouse.

A large, stylized logo consisting of the letters 'SOS' in a bold, black, serif font. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a three-dimensional appearance as if they are floating above a light gray surface.

Secular Organizations for Sobriety

James Christopher, C.A.S., D.A.P.A., Founder and Executive Director

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Copies of this and other SOS brochures may be obtained from the SOS Clearinghouse. This brochure was updated February 2003.

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SOS International Clearinghouse

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*A self-empowerment
approach to recovery*

AN OVERVIEW OF SOS

A publication of the
Secular Organizations for Sobriety
(Save Our Selves)

What Is SOS?

SOS takes a self-empowerment approach to recovery and maintains that sobriety is a separate issue from all else. SOS addresses sobriety (abstinence) as “Priority One, no matter what!”

SOS credits the individual for achieving and maintaining his or her own sobriety.

SOS respects recovery in any form, regardless of the path by which it is achieved. It is not opposed to or in competition with any other recovery program.

SOS supports healthy skepticism and encourages the use of the scientific method to understand alcoholism.

SOS Groups

SOS is a nonprofit network of autonomous, nonprofessional local groups dedicated solely to helping individuals achieve and maintain sobriety. There are groups meeting in many cities throughout the world. For information about a group in your area, or if you would like to start a group, contact:

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General Principles of SOS

- All those who sincerely seek sobriety are welcome as members in any SOS Group.
- SOS is not a spin-off of any religious or secular group. There is no hidden agenda, as SOS is concerned with achieving and maintaining sobriety (abstinence).
- SOS seeks only to promote sobriety amongst those who suffer from addictions. As a group, SOS has no opinion on outside matters and does not wish to become entangled in outside controversy.
- Although sobriety is an individual responsibility, life does not have to be faced alone. The support of other alcoholics and addicts is a vital adjunct to recovery. In SOS, members share experiences, insights, information, strength, and encouragement in friendly, honest, anonymous, and supportive group meetings.
- To avoid unnecessary entanglements, each SOS group is self-supporting through contributions from its members and refuses outside support.
- Sobriety is the number-one priority in a recovering person’s life. As such, he or she must abstain from all drugs or alcohol.
- Honest, clear, and direct communication of feelings, thoughts, and knowledge aids in recovery and in choosing nondestructive, nondelusional, and rational approaches to living sober and rewarding lives.
- As knowledge of addiction might cause a person harm or embarrassment in the outside world, SOS guards the anonymity of its membership and the contents of its discussions from those not within the group.
- SOS encourages the scientific study of all aspects of alcoholism and addiction. SOS does not limit its outlook to one area of knowledge or theory of alcoholism and addiction.

Suggested Guidelines for Sobriety

These guidelines appear in *How to Stay Sober*

- To break the cycle of denial and achieve sobriety, we first acknowledge that we are alcoholics or addicts.
- We reaffirm this truth daily and acknowledge without reservation that, as clean and sober individuals, we cannot and do not drink or use, no matter what.
- Since drinking or using is not an option for us, we take whatever steps are necessary to continue our Sobriety Priority lifelong.
- A quality of life—“the good life”—can be achieved. However, life is also filled with uncertainties. Therefore, we do not drink or use regardless of feelings, circumstances, or conflicts.
- We share in confidence with each other our thoughts and feelings as sober, clean individuals.
- Sobriety is our Priority, and we are each responsible for our lives and our sobriety.

The Network

The autonomous SOS groups are linked through the Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is a center for the dissemination of information for individuals who may be looking for a secular program of recovery. SOS lends assistance in the formulation of new groups. The operational costs for the Clearinghouse are covered partially by subscriptions to the *SOS International Newsletter*, but mostly by the groups themselves donating a portion of the contributions they receive by “passing the hat” at local meetings, and by individual contributions to the Clearinghouse.

The History of SOS

The SOS movement began with an article in the Summer 1985 issue of *Free Inquiry* magazine, the leading humanist journal in the country.

James Christopher, the son of an alcoholic and a sober alcoholic himself, wrote “Sobriety without Superstition,” an account of the path he took to sobriety.

Christopher felt that there must be others who wanted to achieve and maintain sobriety through personal responsibility and self-reliance.

As a result of the tremendous response to the article from addicted individuals who wanted to maintain sobriety as a separate issue from all else, Jim Christopher founded the Secular Organizations for Sobriety / Save Our Selves.

Today there are SOS groups meeting nationally, as well as in other countries. SOS has gained recognition from rehabilitation professionals and the nation’s court systems. In November of 1987, the California courts recognized SOS as an alternative to AA in sentencing offenders to mandatory participation in a rehabilitation program. Also, the Veterans Administration has adopted a policy that prohibits mandatory participation in programs of a religious nature.

The SOS Newsletter

The SOS National Clearinghouse publishes a quarterly newsletter that is filled with items of interest to all recovering persons, to professionals, and to the families and friends of addicted persons.

The *SOS International Newsletter* serves as an information source for group conveners and as a forum for SOS members. Subscriptions: \$18 per year.