



## Action Alliance Foundation

### Safe Recovery Residences

# Meet Sonja

Growing up in Huntington Beach, Sonja was exposed to alcohol at an early age due to her father's alcoholism. He often left beer cans around the house with small amounts still inside, which she began sipping at the young age of four.

By age 16, Sonja was drinking regularly. By 19, she had added methamphetamine, PCP, pills, and heroin to the mix. That same year, she received her first drug-related offense and was able to maintain sobriety while incarcerated. After her release, however, she relapsed, and the years that followed were marked by repeated cycles of incarceration, homelessness, and sexual trauma.

Now sober since November 13, 2024, Sonja is deeply grateful for the role Alcoholics Anonymous and Action Alliance have played in her recovery. "This is my first time working a 12-step program, and it's made all the difference," she explains. "Action Alliance has also given me an amazing place to live. The stability and basic necessities I have now are such a blessing. It's wild to think about how I used to live."

"I was used to chaos," Sonja continues, "but healthy is peaceful. I'm working on myself and building a solid foundation of sobriety."

Today, Sonja is a Registered Alcohol and Drug Technician (RADT) working at Anaheim Lighthouse, where she helps facilitate groups, distribute medication, and support clients in early recovery. Her long-term goal is to become an addiction counselor. "It's very fulfilling and satisfying," she says, "but it's also a lot of work. I have a whole new appreciation for recovery staff."

Sonja's advice for someone newly sober is simple and heartfelt: "Be where your feet are. Do what those who came before you did. Get a sponsor, work the steps, and lean into a higher power. For me, that's Jesus Christ. By allowing Him to work through my life, I've been able to forgive myself and others."

Sonja has reconnected with her mother and is in a healthy romantic relationship with a man who has been sober for more than a year and shares her commitment to Christianity. "Self-esteem is built on esteemable acts," Sonja says. "It took me 15 years to get sober - but I did it!"