



Sea to Sky Intergroup Newsletter

Volume 163

March 2017

I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone.

WELCOME SPRING!

What's New

The White Rock Library meeting in Vancouver is closing at the end of March. Looking for a meeting? Check out the directory online at oaseaktosky.com for updates.

Did you attend the 2016 Fall Retreat with speaker Teryl? Share your best "take aways" for a future issue of the newsletter >> seatoskynews@gmail.com

INTERGROUP NEWS

A big THANK YOU to all members who did our intergroup survey and attended the **Intergroup Renewal workshop** is on **Saturday, February 25, 2017**.

Your Intergroup welcomes our new Secretary, April; literature coordinator, Mellissa R; and assistant lit coordinator, Diane, as well as assistant treasurer, Barbara, and meeting directory coordinator, Cindy D. Yay!

Do you have 3-4 hours a month? Intergroup open service positions: archivist, public information coordinator, and 12 Step Within coordinator. If you are interested in being of service, please attend the next Intergroup meeting on Saturday, March 25, 2017 at 10 am (1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster).

All OA members are welcome at Intergroup meetings. Join us!

REGION ONE NEWS...

North Cascades Intergroup Spring Renewal Retreat, April 7-9, 2017, Camp Casey Conference Center, Whidbey Island, WA. Registration details: http://oa-nci.org/images/2017_NCI_Retreat.pdf or contact Allen T at 360-678-9358 or allen@taylor635.com

The **OA Region 1 Convention** is in Seattle this year. Mark your calendars for **October 13-15, 2017**. www.oaregion1.org/region-1-convention.html

OTHER NEWS...

Looking to improve your knowledge of the Steps and the Big Book? The AA annual "Roundup" convention is April 14-16 at the Vancouver Convention Centre. Details are found here: www.northshoreroundup.com



WORLD SERVICE NEWS...

Sponsorship Success Marathon, Sunday, March 12, 2-5:30 pm EST. Nine experienced OA's from various regions will share on sponsorship, including what is a sponsor, why have a sponsor, why be a sponsor, the sponsor "job description," different sponsoring styles, and more. Join the call at 641-715-3818 (pin 925619#) or 641-715-0890 (pin 925619#). oa.org/sunday-march-12-sponsorship-success-marathon/

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ABSTINENCE AND PLANS OF EATING

In OA, abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Once we become abstinent, the preoccupation with food diminishes and in many cases leaves us entirely (*Our Invitation to You*). A Plan of Eating is one of our tools of recovery. And yet, "We are not a "diet" club. We do not endorse any particular plan of eating." Newcomers often ask their sponsors, "but what do I eat? What should my plan of eating be?" .../continued over...

Abstinence and Plans of Eating, continued

Learning about our compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviours is the starting point. In the OA podcast on Plans of Eating (below), the speaker suggests writing down everything you put in your mouth for several days. Look for your patterns and triggers. It may be certain foods. It may be emotional. It may be a time of day. The speaker gives the example of feeling angry and craving something crunchy to eat. **What are your patterns in your food log? What foods do you hoard? What foods do you only eat when you're alone? What do you eat when you're upset? When you're celebrating?** You're looking for where, when and what you eat mindlessly, compulsively.

Next, develop your plan of eating to minimize your cravings. **Your plan of eating needs to physically support your abstinence.** It must address your nutritional needs as well as support your body in a return to (or maintenance of) a healthy weight. OA encourages us to get professional guidance here if we need it.

We can learn from OA's past in terms of plans of eating. In 1962, Overeaters Anonymous made its first major decision as a group. Rozanne S., who was a dietician's daughter, had previously subscribed to the belief that calories were the most important factor for weight loss and weight maintenance. She later wrote that during this time, she believed "It didn't matter how much I ate or how often, as long as my total food count remained within the limits I had set for myself."

After attending an A.A. meeting that discussed the idea of abstinence, Rozanne decided that snacking between meals only reinforced her tendency to compulsively overeat. At the next meeting of Overeaters Anonymous, Rozanne introduced the idea of O.A.-sanctioned abstinence: three moderate meals with no snacking in between and only no-calorie beverages, such as black coffee and water. The new rules did make allowances for those whose doctors advised them to eat more frequently. This introduction of the first Overeaters Anonymous food plan sparked controversy that continued to unfold over the decades to come.

In 1963, the first so-called "Gold Sheet" was distributed among O.A. members. It was a food plan that recommended a diet for its members that included no refined carbohydrates; it was named after the color of paper on which it was printed. Initially it was distributed informally and was not officially recognized by Overeaters Anonymous. The next year the same plan with slight variations was distributed on green paper and was thus referred to as the "Green Sheet."

In May of 1966, the group as a whole, at their national conference, approved a pamphlet entitled, *To the Newcomer*. The pamphlet stated in part:

Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous means abstinence from compulsive overeating. An

eating plan is the method by which we abstain. The following is our suggested method of abstinence from compulsive overeating: (1) Three moderate meals a day with nothing in-between; and (2) Avoidance of all individual binge foods.

This was Overeaters Anonymous first officially sanctioned food plan, although many members lobbied the legislative body of O.A. to approve more stringent diet plans, like the Gold and Green Sheets.

In the late 1960s, the Gold and Green Sheets were superseded by a new plan on the cheapest color to print on at the time, grey. The Grey Sheet became one of the most popular and controversial of all food plans distributed in Overeaters Anonymous. The plan called for complete abstinence from man-made sugars and starches and from any foods with more than a 10-percent carbohydrate content.

In April of 1972, the founder of Overeaters Anonymous, Rozanne S., had gained back so much of the weight that she had lost in the program that she was fired from her position of O.A. National Secretary for not being a "physical example of recovery." The next month, O.A.'s National Conference approved three "disciplined" plans of eating. The first plan was the beloved "Grey Sheet," the no-refined-sugars, low-carbohydrates plan. The 1972 National Conference also approved a low-carbohydrates maintenance plan, as well as a second plan based on the four food groups helped developed by Marilyn Moore, a licensed nutritionist in East Los Angeles, California.

In 1977, Overeaters Anonymous dismissed all of the plans that had been distributed years earlier and released in their stead a blue sheet called "Suggested Abstinence Guide for Losing Weight." The Blue Sheet, as it came to be called, officially replaced the Grey Sheet, but many in the group were not happy with this change.

By 1978, O.A. was starting to realize that the constant changes in food plans and lack of flexibility were costing it members. In 1979 the group released a book called *The Dignity of Choice* that was intended to bring the splinter groups back to the fold by including eight different food plans. The book did not succeed in its mission, however, and was discontinued.

In 1986, not only did Overeaters Anonymous stop printing the book; the leadership requested that all groups return their unsold copies to the group's headquarters. At the same time that Overeaters Anonymous stopped using *The Dignity of Choice*, it decided as a body that to endorse any specific food plan would go against the aims of the group and that O.A. should instead focus on the 12 steps of recovery. This was seen as a great step towards ending the controversies that had so bitterly divided the O.A. membership.

By 1995, the collective OA understanding of the importance of Abstinence meant that the delegates at WSBC removed Abstinence as a Tool and replaced it with "A Plan of Eating,"

leaving abstinence as OA's primary purpose. In 1997, O.A. clarified this point when it released this statement:

The OA 1997 World Service Business Conference, after careful consideration, believes that although many individual OA members choose to follow a plan of eating for their personal plan of recovery, offering food plans at OA meetings is a violation of Tradition 10. While each OA member is free to choose a personal plan of eating to achieve abstinence, OA as a whole cannot print, endorse or distribute food plan information to members.

Nutrition is a most controversial outside issue... We ought best concern ourselves with our suggested program of recovery - the Twelve Steps.

For more than 25 years Overeaters Anonymous has not endorsed any specific food plan or diet, instead urging its members to create their own with the advice of their doctor. The definition of Abstinence is the same for all members but the Plan of Eating for each member may differ depending on what compulsive food behaviors we engaged in while practicing our disease, such as overeating, under-eating, and purging.

A Plan of Eating is a tool to help the OA member to maintain abstinence, i.e., to refrain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors and to work toward or maintain a healthy body weight. There are as many "plans of eating" in OA as there are members and a plan may change over time for each member. Pamphlet "Dignity of Choice" has samples of some of the many plans of eating OA members use.

In recent years, delegates to the 2011 WSBC approved changes to the Statement on Abstinence and Recovery, which currently reads, "Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program".

In 2013 at WSBC, our primary purpose was modified to say, "Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer."

The results of a survey of OA membership in 2013 showed that there was a lack of abstinence and of working all Twelve Steps.

It's 2017, how are we doing now? Is your plan of eating a tool that works for you?

[Sources: OA World Service on Abstinence and Plans of Eating; Goldberg, Lina, "Between the Sheets: The History of Overeaters Anonymous and its Food Plans," December, 2003]



Resources to Strengthen your Abstinence and Develop a Personal Plan of Eating:

OA World Service Abstinence Literature Guide: https://oa.org/files/pdf/abstinence_lit_guide.pdf

OA World Service handouts on Abstinence and Plans of Eating: https://oa.org/files/pdf/abstinence_and_plan_of_eating_handouts.pdf

History of the OA "Grey Sheet" Plan of Eating (including text of the plan): <http://greysheeters.blogspot.ca/p/text-of-grey-sheet-of-overeaters.html>

OA Podcast Workshop on Plans of Eating and Dignity of Choice (2014): https://oa.org/?powerpress_pinw=586-podcast