



Sea to Sky Intergroup Newsletter

November 2018

We [addicts] are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined. But this is not all. There is action and more action.

SPECIAL EDITION ON ACTION PLANS

INTERGROUP NEWS & EVENTS

Recent highlights from the Sea to Sky Intergroup:

→ Our Intergroup will be hosting a **Big Book Intensive weekend** in March or April, likely at the Hyatt at Metrotown in Burnaby. Plans are underway! If you're interested in helping out, contact our 12 Step Within Coordinator, Cheri, at 604.773.1232.

→ **New email addresses at Intergroup!** Many of the email addresses for members of the Intergroup board are now in the form of [position].oaseatosky@gmail.com to help with continuity and preserve the anonymity of the office holders. Check out the new email addresses in the **meeting directory**.

→ **Two Tuesday night meetings are looking for support:** Plan to visit **People in Recovery meeting** (7 pm, Three Bridges, 1128 Hornby Street) and **Soul Food on Five** (7:15 pm, Trinity Pacific Church, Richmond). Take your home group on the road this fall!

→ **Sponsors are available** at the Stepping Out 1030 am Saturday meeting at Fairview Baptist (1708 West 16th, Vancouver).



The Cloverdale Meeting's annual Candlelight Meeting is Thursday, December 13th at Cloverdale United Church, 17575 – 58A Avenue. Friends and family are welcome.

All members are welcome to attend our **Intergroup meeting** on **Saturday, November 24, 2018** at 10 am, 1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster. Accessible with ample free street parking.

Join our "OA Study Hall" meeting and focus on the tools of Literature and Writing, **Tuesday nights, 7:30 pm** at the Alano Club in North Vancouver. 📖✍️

Recent abstinence milestones were celebrated by **Maureen** in Coquitlam (15 years on October 4) and coming up in November, three White Rock birthdays: **Courtenay** (3 years) and one year for **Rayna** and **Caroline!** Congratulations!! Is someone in your home group celebrating a milestone in their abstinence? Send your good news to seatoskynews@gmail.com.

I.D.E.A. Day! Celebrate the International Day Experiencing Abstinence on **November 17–18**. Join OA members worldwide as we begin or affirm our abstinence from compulsive eating.

REGION 1 EVENTS & NEWS

Seattle Intergroup is having their Winter Retreat, **February 1-3** and details will be posted at <http://www.seattleoa.org/events/>.

Oregon Intergroup's Serenity Retreat at Twin Rocks in Rockaway Beach, will be **March 15-17, 2019**. See www.oregon-oa.org for more information.

WORLD SERVICE NEWS

Upcoming phone marathons can be found at the new **OA Virtual Services website**. Check out the "Virtual Events" tab here: <http://www.oavirtualseervices.org>.

Read the latest news from **World Service – the 4th Quarter edition of A Step Ahead** has great suggestions for **strengthening our meetings**, including: go hybrid by adding a phone-in option to in-person meetings add podcasts to serve as "speakers" visit other meetings designate someone to follow up with newcomers each week refocus the meeting format (try something new! E.g. the Recovery Club Sunday meeting has someone read and share on the *For Today* entry) schedule Big Book studies have the meeting chair take the lead to make shares focus on the solution. Read *A Step Ahead* here: <https://oa.org/files/pdf/asa-q4-2018.pdf>

ACTION PLANS? A FOCUS ON TOOLS

One of our Tools of Recovery (which help us work the Steps) is an Action Plan. How many times have you heard the list of Tools in a meeting and wondered what an Action Plan actually is? OA defines an Action Plan as "the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual and physical recovery."

Our Action Plan is a daily framework to help us work the Steps and to bring structure, balance and manageability into our lives. It helps develop a feeling of serenity: we continue to grow emotionally and spiritually while we make measurable progress one day at a time. We use it to set out our daily work in recovery. After all, "God is not my arms and legs. It is up to me to do the footwork. Ours is a program of action" [*For Today*, May 15].

How do you decide what needs to be in your Action Plan? Some of the basics are a **daily** Plan of Eating, meditation or prayer (Step 11), and reading OA literature. I also include a nightly Step 10 inventory as part of my Action Plan for each day. **Weekly** and **monthly** actions like attending home group, Intergroup, calls with sponsors/sponsees, or taking the "We Care" list to make outreach calls, etc. may be in an Action Plan too. **I find it helps to include things I don't do to support my recovery in my Action Plan.** It's common to list "red" foods and behaviours too. Here's an Action Plan with these components: <https://seacoastoa.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/sample-plan-of-action-4-27-2014.pdf>

What else goes in your Action Plan? This is when it helps to get personal – what is getting in the way of your recovery? Start there. Remember all the work you did in your Step 4? How "more

self-examination revealed many areas in which our lives were out of balance" [OA 12&12, p.11]

If you're anything like me, you are probably thinking, "But how do you break down the monolith of my unmanageable life into manageable goals I can actually do day in and day out?!" [And the overwhelm that comes with that: "I'm afraid I will fail again."]

One way to approach an Action Plan is to take the Serenity Prayer and make a list of things you need to work on either accepting or changing. Here's an example:

Serenity to Accept

My time, energy and resources are limited.

I need to work smart if I'm going to fit everything I need for my recovery into my busy life.

Courage to Change

➔ Meal planning and preparation to maximize nutrition, time and budget

➔ Time used for Netflix or surfing the internet I could use instead for exercise

➔ Conflict over something I cannot control (or cannot try to control without risking my abstinence or a resentment).

Then, create a personal Action Plan of the defined ACTIONS you will take to implement changes. Your planned actions may take the form of concrete plans: "I will plan my meals for the week and do a major grocery shop and meal prep on Sundays". **It may be a personal rule:** "I will not watch TV unless I am on a treadmill or exercise bike or I have already done 30 minutes of exercise today." **Equally, it may be deciding in advance to use another OA tool to work on a character defect you have asked your HP to help remove:** e.g. "I will pray for guidance or call a fellow before starting another argument about laundry with my spouse."

It helps if your Action Plan items are SMART: Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-based. Ask yourself:

Strategic: Does my Action Plan item support my recovery? If I consistently meet this goal, will I advance my emotional, spiritual or physical healing from the disease of compulsive eating? How?

Measurable: How do I know I have taken that action on an ongoing basis (not the outcome! The action, itself)?

Achievable: Could I REALLY do this or am I setting myself up? Should I work up to a big goal by starting with small steps first?

Realistic: Is it realistic? Do I need other resources (other people, money, time, or expertise)? Make a list what I need to make this happen. Maybe my goal needs to be broken into smaller ones until I have enough money, gained the required expertise, or the people I need to help me are available. I have to have a plan for how to get to that state of readiness.

Time-Based: Each item on my Action Plan needs to be time-based. I include an element like "each day" or "Monday, Wednesday and Friday" or "each week on Sunday." I include in my plan a day, a few months in the future, when I plan to review the effectiveness of my Action Plan with my sponsor too.

Example: Daily OA reading and writing is something I need to continually focus myself on recovery. My goal is to read *For Today* and write on that day's entry for 10 minutes each morning while the coffee brews. This goal is SMART: I already have a copy of the reader; I've built in a behavioural cue (while the coffee brews) that happens every morning so this becomes a habit; the measurement is dead simple - it's a "yes I did it today / no, I didn't" assessment (wiggly room doesn't work for me!); and the time for the task is limited so it is realistic and easily doable.

I also focus my Action Plan on managing circumstances where I tend to slip and slide in my abstinence. For example, I choose to have my Action Plan address what I will do each day so I don't get too hungry, angry, lonely or tired (HALT). The HALT acronym is often used in OA as a warning to beware of certain emotions that may trigger compulsive overeating. One of my triggers for bingeing is if I get overtired. I am much more likely to say, "scr*w my Plan of Eating" and get take-out or junk food if I'm exhausted. I've addressed this in my Action Plan with a very defined Plan of Eating, a food buddy I commit my food to each morning, weekly grocery trips so impulsive trips to the store just don't happen, and a set bed-time and wake time each day for the best possible sleep hygiene. That's how my Action Plan supports my recovery from bingeing by preventing exhaustion.

My Action Plan changes over time as I grow in my recovery and build up daily anchors as part of my program. When I first started, my Action Plan was focused on planning, shopping for and preparing non-binge foods, one phone call a week with my sponsor and attending my home group. Later, I added daily reading and writing while the coffee brews! Then I added a nightly Step 10 plus prayer using a Region 1 journal as a guide. **As my experience, strength and hope grew, I also made room in my Action Plan for service.** At first, it was as treasurer of my home group – a smart goal because it got me in the room each week and it was of service. Later still, my sponsor encouraged me to sponsor so I added putting my hand up in meetings to my Action Plan. Soon, my Action Plan included time each week to work with others! Still later, I volunteered to edit the Intergroup newsletter, partly because it connects me with OA even more and partly because there is an abstinence requirement to the position that helps keep me honest. Smart!

Show your Work! My experience is what I track gets done. Otherwise, my Action Plan goals capture my attention for a few days but then lie abandoned once the novelty wears off. I use a chart to keep track throughout the day whether I have hit the items on my Action Plan. Some people use the Region 1 journal for this purpose. **There's no magic to it. Use a chart, a spreadsheet, an app, reminders in your phone, a Bullet journal, whatever work for you! But have a system.**

Review your work. I use my monthly abstinence birthday to review the state of my recovery and the effectiveness of my Action Plan. If something is off kilter or I slip, I talk to my sponsor and review. I review the OA Tools. I rebuild my Action Plan.

After all, this program works (only if I work it). My Action Plan helps me make sure I'm doing the daily work necessary for my recovery. – Jennifer, North Vancouver



OA Sound Bites

This month's question...

"What do you love about your home meeting?"

🗣️ I love how big our meeting is and the beautiful neighbourhood that it's in! So many warm, welcoming members and so much recovery! We alternate between the large group and splitting up into smaller groups each week, which I think makes us unique. - Emily, Monday, 7:30 pm, Fairview Baptist Church, Vancouver

🗣️ The Richmond group is very supportive and diverse. It doesn't matter where you are in this journey of recovery. Whether you are trying to get abstinent or working in long-term recovery, you will find someone to share your journey. - Carlos, Tuesday, 7:15 pm, Trinity Pacific Church, Richmond

🗣️ I love the wisdom and diversity of the members. - Serena, Sunday, 2pm, Vancouver Recovery Club, Vancouver

🗣️ There are lots of men to relate with and they are a very loving family. - Raj, Wednesday, 7:45 pm, Britannia Community Centre, Vancouver

🗣️ It was the first meeting that I went to when I joined OA. Every time I go there, it reminds me that this is where I belong and this is the place that saved me. - Shirin, Tuesday, 7:15 pm, King of Life Church, Coquitlam