

STEPPING UP

Overeaters Anonymous Region 4 held its first virtual convention July 10 and 11, 2020, with 150 registrants. Participants came from across the region, from several states outside the region and even one from Europe! Meg M, Region 4 Trustee, kicked off the convention on Friday evening with her keynote talk. Saturday morning, three speakers addressed the steps and Amy N guided us in a workshop on the senses. Attendees had an opportunity to be in breakout rooms during this workshop, as well as for a virtual lunch. The convention concluded Saturday afternoon with a panel discussion on sponsoring and a talk by Laurie C on living the OA program. Tidbits from all sessions are included in this newsletter.



First Region 4 Virtual Convention

KEYNOTE: Do I Work My Program or Live It?

Meg M, Region 4 Trustee

Meg envisioned recovery from the perspective of five levels of learning (taken from a book that is not an OA resource) and her experience of it.

Level 1: unconscious incompetence (~1st five years)

- Beginning of recovery – focus is physical recovery, putting down the food, working the steps
- A time for learning about addiction
- It's about surrender, continual surrender
- There's no amount of food that's going to help me with anything
- Need to rely on my sponsor, fellows, literature

Level 2: conscious incompetence (~next 5 years)

- Begin to look at emotional and spiritual recovery
- Recognize emotional responses
- New behavior stems from this awareness

Level 3: conscious competence

- Become aware of what I am good at
- Learn about relationships, learn to work with people
- Get into the spiritual aspect more deeply
- Want to learn, seek more depth
- Learn to step outside my group, broaden my service

Level 4: unconscious competence

- Have embraced living the program
- I automatically do things because they are "part of my program"
- I do what I need to do, I move out of self-serving, I challenge myself
- Spiritual longing deepens
- How am I using my recovery platform/base/cocoon to live my life?

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Keynote (continued from page one)

- Intuition comes more into play
- HP has a louder voice because I have bigger ears
- Address in prayer: Who am I when I walk into this day? Who is showing up?
- I work my program so as to be a teacher to others
- I incorporate the construct of program into my life
- Look at how I sponsor – recognize whether sponsees have a physical, emotional or spiritual focus
- Honor the journey



Level 5: Mastery/Flow

- We work toward this
- How can I work on being intertwined with HP?

Concluding Comments

- Work your program until you can live it
- Live your program so you are ready for going deeper
- This is how we become our pure selves
- Where am I living my program? Where am I rejoicing in it?
- Where can it use a little work?
- Where could it help someone else?
- What am I going to do to challenge my program that will crack my world open with joy?

Thank you, Meg!!

Three-Part Session: Reflections on the Steps

Shira Z (Steps 1-3)

Step 1 – Recovery is not just about eating, it's a whole package, about seeing my truth

Step 2 – This step is about beginning to heal

Step 3 – OA is about recovery of the whole person; my HP takes care of me – all I have to do is trust

Cecilia L (Steps 4-9)

Step 4 – Important to be thorough

Step 6 – One of the hardest steps, I am asking HP to change who I am

Step 7 – be willing and practice, let HP show me

Steps 8,9 – about forgiving myself and others

Arthur G (Steps 10-12)

Step 10 – Easier to do on ongoing basis throughout day, can make amends promptly

Step 11 – About listening and learning to listen; tells us what to pray for – HP's will and the power to carry it out

Step 12 – I'm not off the hook/done/graduated

1. I can't
2. God can
3. I'll let Him
4. Look within
5. Admit wrongs
6. Get ready to change
7. Seek God's help
8. Become willing
9. Make amends
10. Daily inventory
11. Pray and meditate
12. Give it away

Thank you!!



WORKSHOP: ADDING OUR SENSES TO THE STEPS

Amy N.



Amy began the workshop by taking us through a sensory experience of our disease – what does it look like? Taste like? Smell like? Feel like? Sound like? She followed this by explaining that adding sensory words helps her to be more present and giving examples such as the following...

- Sight – she uses “recovery colors” (e.g., coral=humility, purple=spiritual awareness), she envisions her will vs. HP’s will as puzzle pieces)
- Sounds – she hears God’s voice in others
- Smells – she likes the smell of something clean and fresh
- Feeling – hugs, willingness to touch self

After sharing her own examples, participants were sent to breakout rooms with the following task: to think about our sensory experience (feel, taste, smell, look, sound) of recovery and HP. Amy ended the workshop with a final reflection...

- What’s the point?
 - Literature is full of metaphors and images (see Voices of Recovery, p. 79)
 - Senses can help us to cue into healthy aspects of recovery
 - Recovery colors can remind us of the principles
 - This helps to build the muscle memory and make it automatic
 - Sensory experiences can keep us present
 - We can have recovery around us through sensory experiences
 - This can help us to have a spiritual experience
- What can we do? Use different color flowers, thinks of a screensaver that visualizes a recovery message, choose color of clothing to signify something
- How can I make something that is meaningful to me real through use of the senses?

Thank you, Amy!

SESSION: SPONSORING

Leigh M

- Without a sponsor, I would stay submerged in addiction
- A sponsor is a person who agrees to guide me on the journey, hold me accountable, and to whom I am accountable
- Sponsoring is the key that unlocks the puzzle
- Sponsors help us find and keep balance among 3 aspects of recovery: physical, emotional, spiritual
- The Big Book and 12&12 are not self-help books
- The gift of this program is the “bond of brotherhood”

A Sponsor is one that
Knows you as you are
understands where
 you have been *Accepts*
 what you have become
 and still gently *allows*
 you to grow.

- Help to fully accept powerlessness
- Help to set up plan of how to stay abstinent (action plan)
- Help to develop a network
- Help to be dependent on HP
- Take through steps as quickly as possible
- Prepare them to be a sponsor
- At the start: give them a sheet of guidelines, explain structure, have them write history of eating

Elizabeth

- Why do I sponsor: OA needs me, I learn from my sponsee, prevents isolation
- Tips:
 - Set boundaries – agree on the how
 - Many resources available on OA.org
 - Where do I start: Use newcomer packet
- It’s vitally important to have a sponsor

Marla (How I Sponsor)

- My role: guide, teacher
- Help to define abstinence and figure out food plan
- Help to understand the disease

Thank you!!!

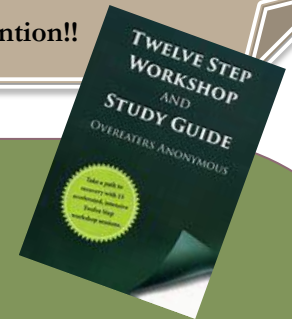
FINAL SPEAKER: "Living the OA Program" Lawrie C

- Living the program is living the twelve steps in all our affairs
- What have we learned?
 - We have defects of character
 - We are no different from anyone else
 - We have the capability/opportunity to change
- What does living the program mean?
 - We have to help others (Step 12)
 - We have to constantly think about our actions, watching for defects (Step 10)
 - We have to pray and have faith in God (Step 11)
- Living the program is living my life according to what I've learned
- Keep serene
- Keep a sense of "urgency"



Thank you, Lawrie!

Thank you, Mary C, and the convention committee, for an AWESOME convention!!



"The Importance of the 12 Steps, and a Study of Such Steps"

12 step study is grueling. It is work. A 12-step study takes over 3 months to complete.

Why would anyone want to do this? Good question. Here are my answers.

- 1) To remind me that others who have my disease are more like me than different. No matter our religion, whether we are male or female, or anything else. The common denominator is our addiction and various factors around a food addiction. Most people do not see food as an addiction. But those who have spent time in OA, and who have had even a bit of recovery, understand that food is a REAL addiction. One that does not go away. Ever.
- 2) Only others who have the same food addiction can understand us. To gather with someone else who understands you is like finding a spouse, or a family member. After some time, trust develops. Which, for some of us, doesn't come easily.
- 3) Although all human beings are flawed, there are many others we can turn to for help - for our disease, or any other common problems that come with being a food addict. We come to lean on our groups, our program, and the people that go to our program. After a while, we develop a loving relationship with our Higher Power. This Higher Power speaks to us all in many ways, many times through others in our 12-step program.
- 4) Although these steps are a man-made construct, they are divinely inspired. Even if each person may have a different religion, or NO religion...the effects of the steps brings harmony and love.
- 5) We eat for many different reasons. Fatigue, fear, anger, or you name it. We eat. It's our go-to. That's what we do. The steps and the willingness to take them, while relying on our Higher Power, go hand in hand with physical recovery. The steps also lead to spiritual recovery and growth; we realize we can be more helpful to others by taking the steps. Emotional recovery also comes after we have become abstinent. Abstinence allows us to examine our underlying problems that we need to fix, or get help with. We can only see these issues if we have abstinence because an addiction, no matter what kind, is always covering up our fears, our resentments, our mistakes. We have found that by working the steps, we can fix these mistakes, ask for forgiveness, live a life with courage.
- 6) A 12-step study group allows individuals to get to know each other better. On an intimate level. Ask each other for help. As, to be honest, only one food addict will understand another food addict. And, after a while, we find others, in other 12 step groups, that "speak" our language. We may not share the same addiction, but we share the 12 steps.
- 7) The steps allow us to use our natural God-given (or innate) gifts, to become our true selves, and then to help others. Realizing that we are not perfect, that we will make mistakes, and our abstinence may wobble sometimes, or we may even go into relapse. At least we have a place to go to/people to lean on.

We may finish a 12-step study, but we are never done. To do the 12 steps is a daily, sometimes hourly, sometimes more frequent "job". Kim B.

Things I Heard at the First OA Virtual Region Convention [“Many Languages, One Virtual Recovery”]

The weekend of June 20&21, 2020, the first virtual region convention was held on Zoom. This was my first attendance at a virtual region meeting of any kind, although they’ve been around since 1999, I believe. It was an awesome experience. I got to meet people from Russia, France, Italy, Portugal, and China who served as interpreters. It was really funny when a person from Portugal talked and her talk was interpreted into English. There were over a thousand registrants. I saw so many great examples of service and patience and kindness. So inspiring. The whole convention was recorded and will be available at least to participants.

I would like to share some of the gems I heard at the convention:

1. Circumstances never determine our abstinence. It is always due to our spiritual condition.
2. When I get jittery about food, I’m consumed with myself.
3. We don’t do the step work so our life will be perfect. We do the step work so we can get closer to our HP.
4. Anger and raging – if I keep the focus on others, I don’t have to look at myself.
5. People pleasing – if I am doing that, I don’t have to sit with the discomfort of saying no.
6. Talk to the disease as a reality when triggered to eat: Go ahead, give me all you’ve got. I’m not going to eat.
7. The most insane thing I’ll do today is take that first compulsive bite while I’m abstinent.
8. If I have to choose between eating and going crazy - choose crazy.
9. God can’t steer a truck that’s not moving.
10. Step 10 humor – when he was wrong, I promptly admitted it.

Hope you enjoyed sharing in my experience, strength and hope. Laura M.

Editor’s Note: Talks from the virtual region convention will eventually be posted on their website. You can find that (eventually) and info about other virtual events at <https://oavirtualregion.org/news-events/events/>

AEIOU Inventory Background Submitted by Tom S

A = Have I been Abstinent today?

E = Have I Exercised today?

I = What have I done for myself today?

O = What have I done for Others today?

U = Am I holding on to Unexpressed emotions today?

Is there anything I need to Uncover (What don't I want to think about? All I need to do today is write it down, get it out of myself.)? What do I have Unresolved (This could also include: what could I have done better? What areas would I like to improve upon?)? What Unfinished business or underlying issues do I need to deal with. Do I need to Uncover any hidden feelings, pain etc. U can also stand for HP and spiritual activities.

Y = Yeah (or Yippy!) What is something good that's happened today? And what is something good about others in my life?

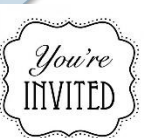


Meeting Invite

The Wednesday 7 pm Zoom Meeting (Omaha) is going gangbusters! It's currently a Speaker mtg and there have been awesome speakers sharing their experience, strength and hope at this meeting. Come join us, the more the merrier!

Teresa M.

Want to see your meeting recognized? Send me your info; email address on last page.





THIRD STEP PRAYER

God, I offer myself to You to build with me & to do with me as You will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy love & Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always!

All are welcome!
Friday, 6:00 p.m. –
Saturday, 5:00 p.m.



For more information:
oaregion4.org

Region 4 Fall 2020 'Virtual' Assembly

Fall Assembly: October 2 – 3, 2020 – the First-ever Virtual Assembly!

- Various OA Zoom Events**
- Posted on oaregion4.org
- St Louis Virtual Fall Retreat (Sept 11-12)
 - Kansas Day (Sept 12)
 - Iowa Big Book weekend (Sept 18-19)
 - Virtual Fall Assembly (Oct 2-3)
 - St. Louis Super Saturday, Step 10 (Oct 10)
- Other
- Central New Mexico retreat (Oct 17)
<https://oa-cnmi.org/pecos-retreat-2>
 - Multiple workshops, retreats
<https://www.oasouthbay.org/events.html>
 - Multiple workshops, retreats
<https://www.oaregion1.org/events.html>

Resources:

Greater Heartland Intergroup
Website: <https://omahaoa.org/>
Answering Service: (402) 516-4234
Email: omahaintergroup@gmail.com



Region IV Office
Website: www.oaregion4.org

World Service Office
Website: www.oa.org
Twitter: [overeatersanonymous_official](https://twitter.com/overeatersanonymous_official)
Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/overeatersanonymousofficial/>

Intergroup News

Intergroup meetings are the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at First Covenant Church (201 N. 90th Street, Omaha)/on Zoom. Meeting ID: 897 8419 5296 Password: 272998

New from WSO: OA Meeting Formats Revised, Plus a Brand New Format

Revisions have been made to many suggested meeting formats, including new welcoming statements and reading options.

OA has also released a new meeting format, *Suggested Reading and Writing Format*, which includes two periods of reading, writing, and sharing.

Find the new and revised formats at oa.org/documents under "Meeting Formats."

Do you have ideas for the newsletter? We welcome contributions! Please consider sending

- ✓ a story or other writing you would like to share,
- ✓ information that you want to get out to the OA community,
- ✓ **a meeting you would like featured,**
- ✓ information about a committee you are chairing,
- ✓ writings from a meeting or **notes from a workshop you attend**

Next Newsletter: October 2020?

Contribution Deadline: Monday, October 5

Please email Lynne S. at abundantmercy1010@gmail.com

THANK YOU!