

# The Sunshiner Newsletter

Fall 2019 Edition, Volume 8

## Courage to Change

I attended the Cornwall Minithon on Saturday, September 28, 2019. What an event! I hadn't been to a Minithon in a very long time and forgot how powerful it is to have so many compulsive overeaters in one room sharing their experience, strength and hope. One of the themes of the Minithon was "The Difference between Abstinence and A Plan of Eating". To be honest, I hadn't given it much thought, the difference between the two. But I do now.

Abstinence for me is abstaining from compulsive overeating, i.e. bingeing, and compulsive overeating behaviours, and compulsive exercising, while working toward and maintaining a

healthy body weight. Whenever I eat, I ask God to help me not overeat, and I ask myself, am I peaceful and honest with my food choices. I eat sitting down in a calm environment; that includes not watching TV or reading. It also includes not saying bad things to or about myself when I don't do it perfectly. It feels like a balanced and sane approach I think I can maintain.

My Plan of Eating is actually a guideline for me. It gives me boundaries that I can follow. I have made a list of my red, yellow and green foods, and my compulsive overeating behaviours. The two often go together. The yellow and green foods are part of my food plan over all.

Those are the foods I eat. I am more comfortable with having loose boundaries around what and when I eat on any given day, because when I get too restrictive my disease can get triggered. Abstinence and Plan of Eating are intertwined. I need both to keep me on track. But my primary focus with both abstinence and a plan of eating is to develop and maintain a loving relationship with my Higher Power, and to work the 12 steps. If I don't have my Higher Power and the 12 Steps, it's just another diet.

With gratitude,  
Betsie R.

*Courage is  
knowing  
what not  
to Fear*

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**If nothing changes, nothing changes.**

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Can you believe that OA has offered a solution to the problems of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviours for nearly **sixty years? Amazing!**

I believe I'm divinely guided.  
I believe I will take the right  
road. When there is no road,  
God will help me  
find the road.



## **Tradition 5: Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.**

What is the message that your group is carrying? What does the compulsive overeater who still suffers hear and obtain after a meeting in your group? Although our meetings start off (generally) with the Serenity Prayer, and a reading of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, where does it go after that? Do members share the solution, or just the problem? Are we living the program, or just talking it?

OA World Service has created a Strong Meeting Checklist for this purpose. If we want the message of OA, a message of hope, to get to the compulsive overeater who still suffers, we need our group (and the members) to exude that. The Strong Meeting Checklist is a tool for groups to use to take inventory of how their group is doing; what's working and what may need improvement.

As it says in our Twelve and Twelve on p. 120, "Tradition Five reminds us that our recovery doesn't come from simply discussing our problems with each other. It is in the OA message – in our Steps and Traditions – that we find solutions to our problems. ...Principles rather than our problems, should be the focus of every OA meeting".

You can find OA's Strong Meeting Checklist on our website, [www.oa-ottawa.ca](http://www.oa-ottawa.ca) under "Group Support" (and in this newsletter). OA suggests going through this annually.

Bruce R.

Chair, Ottawa District Intergroup

# Strong Meeting Checklist

The *Strong Meeting Checklist* is part of OA's 2008–2013 Strategic Plan. It is not enough to make the public aware that OA exists and can be a solution to compulsive eating; meetings have to be strong and must function effectively for people to "stay for the miracle" and for OA to continue to grow and be there for those who need it in the future. Consider doing an inventory of your OA meeting using the checklist.

- 1. Does the meeting start and end on time?**
- 2. Are all attending, including newcomers, greeted and made to feel welcome and accepted?**
- 3. Does the meeting focus on OA recovery through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions?**
- 4. Do we offer our own experience, strength and hope, sharing the solution we have found?**
- 5. Is the group contributing financially to all levels of OA service as per our Seventh Tradition?**
- 6. Are sponsors available and identified at the meeting?**
- 7. Does the group practice anonymity by reminding members not to repeat who is seen or what personal sharing is heard at a meeting?**
- 8. Does the group follow a meeting format?**
- 9. Is only OA-approved literature on display and for sale?**
- 10. Are group conscience meetings held regularly?**
- 11. Are all service positions filled, and is rotation of service practiced?**
- 12. Is the meeting information readily available and the WSO informed of all meeting details and changes so that newcomers and visitors can find our meeting?**
- 13. Are cross talk and advice-giving avoided?**

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**The Sunshiner**—Winter Edition theme is: "What is powerlessness?". Deadline for submissions is January 6, 2020.



# OA Group Inventory

Use an entire meeting for an honest and fearless discussion of the group's weaknesses and strengths. This inventory is divided into two parts. Part 1 is an inventory of the group as a whole (same as the Strong Meeting Checklist on the opposite page). Part 2 is a personal inventory of a member's behaviour in the group.

## Part 2: Determine your part in the group

1. Do I make a point to welcome new members, talk with them, offer my phone number? Do I sponsor new members?
2. Do I interrupt speakers or other members who are sharing?
3. Do I give my full attention to the speakers, the secretary and other group members?
4. Do I ever repeat anything personal I have heard at meetings or from another member?
5. Do I put pressure on the group to accept my ideas because I have been in the Fellowship a long time?
6. Do I take part in meetings, or do I sit and listen?
7. Do I volunteer or willingly accept a group office (i.e. secretary, treasurer)? Do I offer to help set up, clean, etc.?
8. Do I criticize others in the group or gossip about them?
9. Do I try to give advice?
10. Is it difficult for me to realize that my point of view may not always be the group conscience? Can I accept disagreement?
11. Do I use the telephone to help myself and others, not just for complaints and gossip?
12. Do I make it a point to speak with newcomers who are having a difficult time in the program? Do I let them know they are welcome?
13. Do I monopolize the conversation and explain every tool, Tradition, etc.?
14. Do I feel no one can lead a meeting as well as I?
15. Do I go to meetings to learn instead of teach?
16. Do I cross talk and cause meetings to go off on tangents?
17. Do I wait until announcement time to make proper OA announcements?
18. Do I have a topic so everyone can participate at meetings I chair?
19. Do I try to cause dissension?
20. Do I follow the meeting format completely?
21. Do I commit myself to the OA program?
22. Do I have a sponsor and work the Steps?
23. Do I give service, promote group growth, and benefit my own growth as well?
24. Am I only interested in my own welfare, or am I concerned for my fellow OA members as well?

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## Region 6 Fall Assembly

**Region 6 of Overeaters Anonymous** supports communities in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Central and **Eastern Ontario**, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Bermuda.

I had the privilege to attend the Region 6 Assembly as a voting member for the Ottawa District Intergroup.

26 Intergroups, comprised of 70 board members, voting members, and visitors attended the Assembly held on September 21, 2019 in Albany, NY.

The positions of Region 6 Chair, Region 6 Coordinator, Web and Publications Coordinator and World Service Business Conference sub-committee were voted in. **Carmen D.** from Intergroupe français de l'Outaouais and French-English Liaison Officer on ODIG has been elected Region 6 Chair. Congratulations Carmen!

PI Blitz motions were accepted.

Nassau County IG: \$1,000 for Facebook advertisement.

Intergroupe français de l'Outaouais: \$19,000 for bus advertisement.

Region 6 finances are doing well to provide travel scholarships for Intergroup representatives to attend Assemblies.

Spring Assembly is April 18, 2020.

PI Blitz proposals and travel scholarship applications to attend Spring Assembly are due February 18, 2020.

### Intergroup Outreach Committee (IGOR)

As required, I joined the IGOR committee to support the Region 6 board members by:

- helping Region 6 serve each Intergroup;
- improving communication between Region 6 and Intergroups;
- administrating scholarship fund;
- increasing participation at Region 6 Assemblies; and
- promoting unity and cooperation among the Intergroups in Region 6.

### Goals for Spring Assembly:

- Liaise with Intergroup chairs and update Chair list if necessary.
- Promote application for scholarships to attend Spring Assembly.
- Allocate said scholarships.

### Bylaws Committee

Bruce attended the Region 6 Assembly as a voting member for ODIG. He attended the Bylaws Committee. Possible changes to the prior attendance requirements to become a Region 6 Officer were discussed, and the Bylaws Committee will be working on a possible motion to amend the Region 6 Bylaws to put forward at the Spring Assembly.

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## Intergroup Officers Training Workshop

I had the privilege of attending this training which is comprised of 11 hours of presentations and materials given by Don C., a knowledgeable long-time OA member.

### In a nutshell, Intergroup's mission:

To help others at their recovery (12<sup>th</sup> Step). The objective is to transform Intergroup into a proactive Tradition Five organization whose highest priority is providing opportunities for members to strengthen their personal recovery.

Intergroup's Greatest Service: **Show** people HOW to strengthen their PERSONAL RECOVERY. **Show** people HOW to work the Program.

## Convention Raffle ticket results

The total amount of sales for the Ottawa District is \$330.00. It represents an average of 66 OA members who bought tickets.

The Region 6 grand total is \$2800.

### Winners and Prizes

Lauri S., Long Island, NY

Convention, Hotel, Meals and Registration

Marc D., Montreal, QC

Recording of all workshops and speakers' sessions

Ann, Newfoundland and Labrador

Registration

Danielle G.

ODIG Region 6 representative

## My Experience at the Cornwall Minithon

I would like to share my experience at the Cornwall Minithon. As a relative newbie to OA, I found this Minithon very informative. I was warmly welcomed into a very full room. The posters with the quotes about abstinence were very helpful, as I had never heard about that book (Abstinence 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) before. The first speaker spoke about being a Sponsee. She was very engaging and gave a great perspective. Next was a workshop about the difference between Abstinence and A Plan of Eating. I realized through this workshop that I was confused about the differences. I gained clarity through the workshop and shared my answers from the workbook with my sponsor afterwards. I liked having a workbook in which to write my concrete answers. I'm still referring back to it now. We then had a final speaker who talked about being a Sponsor. It was very nice to hear her viewpoint. We wrapped up after that. It was very inspiring to be around so many like-minded people, and to get a better understanding of my journey with overcoming the disease of compulsive overeating. I highly recommend a Minithon to everyone. The one in Cornwall has given me the courage to change for the better.

Chantal M.

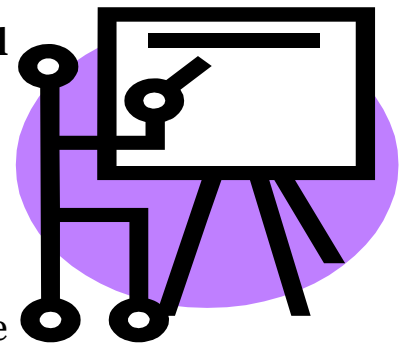
As Chair of your IG, I was privileged to attend a workshop on Intergroup Renewal led by Don C. from Connecticut. The workshop was as exhilarating as it was frightening. First, the frightening part:

- OA membership (U.S. numbers) decreased from about 41,000 in 2008 to 34,000 in 2013.
- The number of OA face-to-face meetings worldwide has decreased from about 6600 groups in 2013 to 5600 last year. Even with the creation of 600 virtual meetings, the overall number of meetings has decreased by 400 in five years.
- The number of Intergroups in OA decreased from 358 in 2013 to 327 last year. In our Region (Region 6), that number went from 42 to 38.
- Financially, OA is not currently “self-supporting”. About 2/3 of revenue comes from literature sales. There was a surplus last year because of the release of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the OA 12&12. The previous two years show deficits.
- There are currently eight different “splinter” organizations sprung from OA including “Grey Sheeters Anonymous”, “Food Addicts Anonymous”, “Anorexics and Bulimics Anonymous”.

The health of OA is in trouble. But there is hope. The workshop from Don C. demonstrated the ways that some intergroups in Region 6 have revamped their purpose and actions. Once struggling intergroups are now thriving, with active OA members conducting all sorts of workshops, retreats, and public information blitzes.

ODIG started this process with the creation of an ad-hoc IG Renewal Committee. This Committee conducted an IG Inventory and a Membership Survey. The results of the survey are now in, and we can look forward to the next phase of the process, which involves a re-creation of the Intergroup structure, and a more event-oriented action plan. At the last Intergroup, we adopted the following goals as part of a 3-year Strategic Plan:

- 1. Help members strengthen their physical, emotional and spiritual recovery.**
- 2. Increase the number of Sponsors.**
- 3. Increase retention of newcomers.**
- 4. Help those in relapse.**
- 5. Inspire people to give more service.**



In line with these goals, Intergroup has agreed to devote the entire October meeting to a brainstorming session to come up with ideas on how to implement them in the next year. It will be open to all members in the Ottawa District. If you love this program, which I am sure you do, I implore you to join us on this journey.

Bruce R.

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## 7 Principles of Life



1. Before prayer, believe
2. Before you speak, listen
3. Before you judge, understand
4. Before you write, pause
5. Before you spend, earn
6. Before you leave, try
7. Before you die, live



Connie R.

Be full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.

If I am unable to accept the fact that people make mistakes, am I not rejecting them as human beings? Even more to the point: does my inability to accept my own failings cause me to see myself as not measuring up?

For my own peace of mind, I need to forgive even the most damaging transgressions; but forgiveness of others can only come when I have learned to forgive myself.

To err human; to forgive divine. Alexander Pope

For today: I pray for a forgiving heart and the willingness to let go of bitterness.

For Today Sept 13

## **Faith Means Courage**

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# OTTAWA DISTRICT INTERGROUP ELECTIONS

**SERVICE**

Have you been thinking about doing service? How about your Sponsees? Here is a great opportunity to give back. The nominations and elections are to be held **Saturday, November 23, 2019** at 10:15am at McNabb Community Centre, 180 Percy St., Ottawa, Ont. **All** positions are up for election.

Intergroup Officer positions	Requirements
Chairperson	At least 1 year abstinence
Treasurer	At least 1 year abstinence
Secretary (currently vacant)	At least 6 months abstinence
Region 6	At least 6 months abstinence
WSO Delegate	At least 1 year current abstinence and at least 2 years of past or current experience beyond the group level

Intergroup Committee Chairs	Requirements
Bylaws	At least 6 months abstinence
Literature	At least 6 months abstinence
Newsletter	At least 6 months abstinence
Public Information	At least 6 months abstinence
Special Events	At least 6 months abstinence
Telephone Answering	At least 6 months abstinence

Members of an OA group can nominate one person per position. The nomination application form (Appendix B, p.20 of Bylaws) can be downloaded: [https://oa-ottawa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/OAbylaws\\_Ottawa\\_District\\_IG\\_July-2018.pdf](https://oa-ottawa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/OAbylaws_Ottawa_District_IG_July-2018.pdf).

Bring your completed and signed nomination application form to the Intergroup meeting on November 23rd, 2019.

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# Region 6 Convention October 23-25, 2020

## Super Early Bird Registration!

Only \$35 from October 20  
until November 20, 2019!  
(later price increases to \$55)

To be held at Boston  
Marriott Burlington  
One Burlington Mall Road  
Burlington, Massachusetts



2020

FOCUS ON

RECOVERY

BURLINGTON MA

Whether you are coming for one  
day or for the whole weekend,  
this will be your best price!

Hotel & Meal Plans available  
in January 2020

“As we join hands, we find love and  
understanding beyond our wildest dreams!”

**For more info or to register go to: [www.oaregion6.org/2020](http://www.oaregion6.org/2020)**

\*No transfers or refunds available. If you find that you are unable to attend, Region 6 appreciates your contribution to help us spread the message of recovery.

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The Ottawa District Intergroup Business meeting is typically held on the 4th Saturday of each month at McNabb Community Centre @ 10:15 AM. Please check the website to verify the dates. All members are welcome.

## OA RESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE

*“Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.”*

## EDITORIAL POLICY

**The Sunshiner** is the newsletter of Overeaters Anonymous Ottawa District Intergroup. All submissions to the publication chair must be signed and when published will appear with first name and last initial unless otherwise requested. Names will be withheld upon request.

Describe your OA experience. The focus should be on OA. References to other Twelve Step programs and outside support are considered outside issues and cannot be published.

The opinions expressed are those of the writer, not those of Ottawa District Intergroup or OA as a whole. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Please address all submissions and correspondence via email to:  
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