



December 2020

Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

NEWS & NOTEWORTHY

INTERGROUP MEETING

Saturday, Dec. 12
12:30–2:30 pm on [Zoom](#)
ID: 810 4426 4132
PW: 12345

QUICK STEPS WORKSHOP

Saturdays, Jan. 16 & 30
9:00 am–12:30 pm on Zoom
Registration coming soon!

BODY IMAGE WORKSHOP

Saturday, Jan. 23
8:30 am–2:30 pm on Zoom
Registration coming soon!

OTHER VIRTUAL EVENTS

Find more OA events at
[OA Virtual Region](#)

OUR MAILING ADDRESS

Unity Intergroup
5115 Excelsior Blvd. # 325
St. Louis Park, MN 55416



This month's topic:

Staying abstinent throughout the holidays

January: How “The Promises” are coming true for you
(Big Book pp. 83–84)

February: What you love about recovery!

Short, long, anonymous or not, send us
your experience, strength and hope!
ExpressionsofUnity2020@gmail.com

ATTENTION ALL MEETINGS!

We're getting rid of our PDF meeting list and moving to a 2-page Google doc, a mobile-friendly format that can accommodate both in-person and virtual meeting information.

Make sure newcomers can find your meeting!
Please add your group to the Google doc
by Dec. 31, 2020.

[Page 1: Virtual/Phone Meetings](#)
[Page 2: In-Person Meetings](#)

Visit [Find a Meeting](#)

UNITY INTERGROUP BOARD

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ENJOYING THE HOLIDAYS WITH A PLAN IN PLACE*

Looking back at my childhood and our family holiday gatherings, both on my mother's and father's side, the kitchen would be filled with countless food options. It was seen as a free-for-all to go off your diet, to graze all day and to gorge yourself at the main meal, often times taking seconds or even thirds. Then dessert was served, and that too included seconds and even thirds. Eating until you were so full that it caused physical pain was not uncommon. Some family members would even come prepared by wearing clothes with extra 'give.'

I am coming into my fifth holiday season of abstinence through OA-HOW, and because it's become so normal to follow my prescribed food plan, these gatherings no longer phase me. I already know I will go to each get-together with a plan in place.

I plan to attend a few small gatherings of friends and family. They are all aware of the measures I take to be healthy and know that I follow a food plan, without *any* exception. In preparation, I will ask what will be served so I can plan accordingly. Sometimes I will simply bring my own meals or will make healthy options that align with my food plan to share with everyone else.

When I am asked what I am eating and why I, I share about the lifestyle changes I have made. If I feel it would be beneficial, I will share a bit more about my program. I have found nothing but acceptance, as they have also seen how much I have changed physically. I also don't judge others for what's on their plates as it is none of my business. Being at family gatherings now really is about being with

family, not about the food. I talk and listen to others to catch up on what's been going on in their lives.

Because my mind is no longer on the food, I find myself being of service out of genuine desire to do so. I help with setup, cleanup or simply by grabbing someone a napkin, utensil, or beverage—anything they may need to enjoy their meal. I have absolutely no desire to go off my plan as it just doesn't sound appealing.



This year I will continue to do what I have done the past five years. I will plan in advance, I will ask what is being served, and I will have food options with me that coincide with my food plan. I do not ask others to prepare foods specifically for me, but some will ask what foods would work.

The freedom I have been given from my compulsion around food through the work of this program has been nothing short of a miracle. I am indescribably grateful for all the blessings I have received and for the ability to be truly and genuinely present to my friends, family, fellows in recovery and to my life.

~ Jackie T, Wisconsin

**Written before the CDC updated its guidelines for holiday gatherings.*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR 12/12

Saturday, December 12th is Twelfth Step Within (TSW) Day—a day to reach out to the struggling overeaters already in our rooms. With so many of us staying home these days, this is a perfect time to consider what we can do. For example:

Make outreach calls to members:

- You haven't seen lately
- You know are struggling with the food
- Who are struggling in other ways

Do something special with your sponsees:

- Watch and discuss the OA video, [“Breaking Out of Relapse”](#)
- Work through the document [From-Slip-or-Relapse-to-Recovery](#)

Write an article on recovering from relapse for *Expressions of Unity* and send it to expressionsofunity2020@gmail.com.

Reflect on the strength of our own recovery using the [Strong Abstinence Checklist 2](#).

Explore other resources:

- [Relapse Prevention](#)
- [TSW Keep it Simple Ideas](#)
- [OA Holiday IDEA Workshop](#)
- [Recovery Insurance Policy](#)
- [Recovery From Relapse Meeting](#)

As for me, I will attend the Unity Intergroup meeting on Zoom (12:30–2:30 pm), reflect on the strength of my recovery, and make two or more outreach calls to struggling or missing members. I'm also thinking of starting a Recovery from Relapse virtual meeting. If that interests you, contact me at aprlovesoa@gmail.com or 763-447-5688.

What will you do to help the still-struggling overeater in our rooms?

~ Annette

CELEBRATING IN THE TIME OF COVID

Like millions of others, our family won't be getting together in person this year. But that doesn't mean we're snuffing out the sparkle—only that we'll have to get a little more creative to create a holiday mood!



Here are some ideas to toss around:

- Bundle up, wear a mask, and trim a tree outdoors with friends or neighbors
- Invite neighbors to build a family of snow-people in your front yard
- Prepare your holiday meal while Zooming with other OA fellows
- Create a list of beloved holiday flicks and plan virtual movie nights with pals
- Build a fire in a fire pit and invite friends to a toasty, masked gathering
- Zoom your holiday dinner with people you love and miss
- Open gifts together on Zoom
- Pull out your fancy clothes and dress up for virtual religious services
- Support local performers by watching your favorite holiday shows online
- Deliver baskets of non-perishable food to your local food pantry

~ Anonymous

The articles on pp. 4–6 were provided by Carolyn S on behalf of [OA in Action](#). “Thanks to Billie Jo, Carolyn S, Dianne H., Julie C, Kari H, Laura E, Meg M, Pat C, Sue W, and Tricia for their tips!”

12 STEPS TO A BETTER HOLIDAY SEASON

1. We admitted the holiday season has a deeper meaning than devouring food.
2. We came to believe a Power greater than ourselves could help us see and celebrate the true meaning of the season.
3. We came to believe our Higher Power could help us appreciate the joyfulness of the season as we understood it.
4. We made a searching and thorough examination of our relationship to food during the holidays and other things we enjoy about the season.
5. We admitted to our Higher Power the exact nature of our food habits during holiday seasons past.
6. We became entirely ready to allow our Higher Power to remove our attachment to food as a necessity of the holidays.
7. We humbly asked him to remove our desire to partake of holiday treats.
8. We made a list of all persons whose presence makes the holiday season joyful for us and with whom we would like to share our joy.
9. We made plans to spend time with those people whenever possible, except when to do so would remove us from our primary purpose of abstinence.
10. We continued to enjoy the company of friends and family and other non-food aspects of the season.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our appreciation of the season, praying for knowledge of its meaning and the joy we feel at this time.

12. Having realized that sharing the joy of this season with others far outlasts the fleeting pleasure of food, we gave ourselves the gift of abstinence throughout the holidays and gave others the gift of our full attention and appreciation.



ABSTINENT HOLIDAYS

Holidays can be the best of times and the worst of times. Family dynamics are hard—and harder when everyone is under the stress and excitement of the holidays. Traditions change, we lose family members, we gain others.

We can be the person we want to be if we come prepared and look for ways to be of love and service. We always have a choice. No person or food is an excuse to lose our abstinence.

GENERAL TIPS

Remember that we have a life or death disease. Abstinence matters at all times.

- Concentrate on beauty of the season...tree trimmings, gift wrapping, caroling, spiritual meaning and ceremonies.
- Renew your commitment to the program and food.
- Remember that your disease is not taking a vacation or holiday. This is like any other day for you food-wise.
- Remind yourself that you know what all these different foods taste like—you have eaten enough of them to buy stock in the companies.
- Increase meeting attendance and make more calls.
- Play it out: “If I have this, what will happen next? My history has proven that I’ll want more and then I’ll binge. It’s not worth it.
- Have an emergency kit in you car or have backup food with you.
- Service—what can I do, what fits, how can I be helpful to others while caring for self?
- Stay positive, accept what is, let go of what you cannot change, surrender.
- Ask for help from your OA fellows, friends and family.
- Pray and meditate a lot; especially before going to a social gathering.
- Keeping your phone handy for quick hook up calls if you need support.
- Think about what you can offer at this gathering, like being a good listener, offering to help clear the table, pass out food, clean up, watch the little ones, etc.

- If possible, comes in your own vehicle so if you need to leave, you can.



MEALS AT YOUR HOUSE

- Pick out abstinent, balanced meals that fit your food plan, and ask others to bring their favorite dish. If you are cooking, stick to recipes you’ve made before, so you don’t need to taste!
- Cook just what you’re going to need for that meal to avoid having leftovers.
- Don’t bake if this is a temptation or do it with someone else.
- Weigh/measure your plate in the kitchen if that feels more comfortable,

MEALS AWAY FROM HOME

- Eyeball your food for the meal if you aren’t comfortable weighing and measuring in front of others.
- Ask your sponsor and other fellows for suggestions.
- Build your plate reasonably, only once.
- Bring an abstinent dish to share.
- Bring your own ready-made meal in case the food there won’t work for you.
- Eat before you go and then focus on being of service.

MANAGING STRESS

- Balance can be more challenging during the holidays. Consider your calendar of events, to-do lists, and emotional triggers (avoid the *shoulds*).
- Don't get into the frenzy—do what you want to do and don't do things you don't want to do. Keep it simple.
- Do something nice for yourself: bubble bath, walk with a friend, Zoom calls!
- Work through your feelings using the 12 Steps.
- Call a HALT when you are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired.
- Skip functions that are not critical and those you just don't want to attend.
- Spend more time with your HP, read, journal, and keep yourself balanced.



- Clarity, literally and metaphorically: finances, time management, gifts, fears, trigger people, events and foods. Talk it over with your fellows and stay in the present!
- Keep your spending to a budget. Less time in stores, less opportunity to be exposed to food and manufactured smells in the malls.
- Selfcare: good sleep, nutritious meals, exercise, fresh air, tools of program.
- Have a plan and live it one day at a time!

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

- Stay in touch. Step up your contact with your fellows. Have phone numbers of fellows to call. Program into your phone or keep in your pocket or purse! Know who will be around at the time you may need them.
- Make at least one hookup call prior to the event.
- Bookend your event: call someone and commit an action or relay your fears before event, then call and report your actions.
- Go into the bathroom and make a call or text, pull out your "*For Today*" book and read, breathe, and pray!
- Ramp it up with your sponsor.
- And remember: service, service, service!

FAMILY, FRIENDS, COWORKERS

- Surround yourself with supportive people.
- Avoid food talk at work and elsewhere.
- A sense of humor can help: "Can't you have just one chip?" Me: "If I did, one bag would not be enough!"
- Focus on the people you are with.
- Holidays are about family and friends, but keep in mind that others may not understand our disease of compulsive eating—and that's OK!



*Wishing you all a healthy, sane,
and abstinent holiday—and
beyond!*