



FALL 2016

STEPPINGSTONE

*Newsletter of the Baltimore Area Intergroup
of Overeaters Anonymous*

HOTLINE 443-475-0443

BAIG Website: <http://www.oabaltimore.org>

Region Seven: <http://www.oaregion7.org>

How OA Changed My Life

Every year since I was thirteen years old, my new year's resolution was to lose weight. It wasn't until I was twenty-three that I altered my 2014 new year's resolution instead to heal my relationship with food. After hitting a bottom of bingeing every night on a wide variety of foods, my fear of change was over-powered by the pain of my compulsive over-eating. My resolution was still fresh in my mind, and it led me to my first OA meeting in February of 2014. This combination of a shifted perspective, fear and pain, gave me the willingness to get a sponsor, follow a food plan, and start working the steps.

Since I came into program over two years ago, not only have I healed my relationship with food, I have healed my relationship with myself, others, and the world around me. I have come to understand that I have an allergy of the body and an obsession of the mind, and that there are some foods that I cannot eat sanely (for example, I can't remember a time in my life when I was ever able to eat one cookie). I learned that I am worth caring for, and that I deserve to eat healthy, delicious food every day. I have lost about 45 pounds, and gained relationships with others beyond my wildest dreams. I can be present and available for my family when we get together (imperfectly!) because I'm not thinking about food, how to get it, or what they think about me every second. I'm a better friend because I'm not trying to fix everyone's problems and control the outcomes. I'm in the most kind, loving, and honest partnership of my life, and was only ready

to accept it when I had about a year of abstinence in program. With the help of my Higher Power, which is a miracle that I found as an agnostic, I'm able to accept that many things in the world around me are out of my control. The Serenity Prayer is my lifeline to my Higher Power.

I am very grateful to have found OA when I did. I'm also grateful for OA fellows of all ages around the world. Together we get better - this program has truly changed my life!

Joanna W.



Please submit your SteppingStone articles, quotes, poems, or stories on any OA related subject to www.steppingstone@oabaltimore.org.

The Twelve Concepts of OA Service

I've been asked to share with you about the Twelve Concepts of OA Service. I will do this over the next few issues of The SteppingStone. The twelve what?? I hear your question. We are all familiar with the Twelve Steps which are the foundation of our program. We are aware of the Twelve Traditions which are the backbone of our groups. The Twelve Concepts are a set (twelve – it's a program 'thing') of guiding principles that describe the way the World Service Office (specifically) is organized, that show how we fit into the big picture, and that provide structure as to how our service bodies can best provide the needed programs to support our groups and our individual recovery from compulsive overeating.

AA has its own Twelve Concepts. They are not the same as the Twelve Concepts of OA Service. While OA received permission to use the steps and traditions and to make the changes we are familiar with, when we started looking at the Twelve Concepts for use by OA, we quickly realized that the differences in our fellowships' service structures required that we make more significant changes to the concepts. These specific principles are unique to OA.

Let's take a look at Concepts One and Two:

1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for OA World Servicers reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.

2. The OA groups have delegated to the World Service Business Conference the active maintenance of our world services; thus the World Service Business Conference is the voice, authority and effective conscience of OA as a whole.

The basic tenet here is that there is no "them" and "us." The WSBC doesn't act as a governing body – it is a representative democracy of 200+ compulsive eaters from around the world who have been asked by their Intergroups, Service Boards, and/or Regions to act on behalf of the individual members and individual meetings to consider questions brought to the conference and to make the best choice for OA as a whole.

If you don't agree with a decision made by the WSBC (or your Region, your Intergroup or your meeting), you can always bring that question back to a later business meeting for further consideration (more on that at a later date – there's a Concept for that!).

What is being said here is this – we each need to take responsibility for decisions since the bottom line is that we are all part of the collective group conscience through the local and regional group conscience decisions made along the way.

The most basic way to get involved is to participate actively in your group conscience meetings. The same way we choose our individual food plans with the help of our healthcare professionals and our sponsors, we choose how our meetings are structured with the agreement of the members of our group.

If you have the time and inclination, consider attending an Intergroup meeting. You are welcome to attend as a group representative or as a visitor. In both cases you are welcome to participate in discussions and committee activities (although a visitor may not vote). Intergroup is where decisions are made regarding local events and activities. Additionally, Intergroups send representatives to Region Assemblies and the WSBC.

Once each year, the Intergroup reviews business items that have been submitted for consideration at the Conference. By expressing your opinion on proposed questions, you can affect the group conscience. More than once I have I something at the local level that I brought to a Region Assembly or the World Service Business Conference. Representatives and Delegates are just that – they represent their sponsoring service body which delegates the authority to present their opinions. One proviso – each representative is doing the same thing for its own sponsoring service body. During presentation of motions and pro and con statements, as well as possible amendments, a motion that was initially unacceptable sometimes becomes something that passes.

How does that happen? Here's an example. In 1995, an intergroup in California made a motion to the WSBC to remove abstinence as a tool of recovery. Their feeling was that abstinence is part of our primary purpose and it clearly states in the tools pamphlet that a tool may or may not be used by any member at their discretion. Members in my area were appalled. At a meeting where we were discussing these items, one of the said "Yes, I need a plan of eating to help me frame my abstinence." An amendment was crafted and we replaced the word abstinence with the words a plan of eating. While people were vehemently against the proposal as presented, with the amendment, the motion was adopted.

Yes, I'm a service junkie. I admit it readily. But participation in the group conscience of OA is what keeps me coming back. One day at a time.

Next time... Concepts 3-5.

Karen B., Intergroup Chair

2016 Service Positions

Chair Karen B.
Vice Chair Liz D.
Secretary Joanna W.
Treasurer Greg B.
SteppingStone Editor Nechama R.
Webmaster Mike B.
Outreach Committee Chair Sue B.
12th Step Within Chair Tania S.
By Laws Committee Chair Karen B.
Region 7 Representatives Nancy G., Blair I., Liz D.
WSBC Delegate Terri B.

Contact Information

Chair chair@oabaltimore.org
Vice Chair vicechair@oabaltimore.org
Secretary secretary@oabaltimore.org
Treasurer treasurer@oabaltimore.org
SteppingStone steppingstone@oabaltimore.org
Webmaster webmaster@oabaltimore.org
Outreach Chair outreach@oabaltimore.org
12th Step Within 12thStepWithin@oabaltimore.org
By Laws Committee bylaws@oabaltimore.org
Region 7 Reps region7rep@oabaltimore.org
WSBC Delegate wsbcdelagate@oabaltimore.org

Speaker Opportunity

Speakers needed on November 26 and December 31 for the Saturday 11:00 a.m. meeting in Lutherville. Please contact Robin, the Speaker Seeker for this meeting, @ 443-729-9359, if you have 3 months of abstinence and would like to perform this service.

2016 Baltimore Area Intergroup Meeting Schedule

Good Samaritan Hospital
5601 Loch Raven Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21239

Nov 20 - Conference Room 1

Dec 18 - Conference Room 1

Upcoming Events

OA Region Seven Convention

November 4 - 6, 2016

Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Join hundreds of fellow members from Region Seven and beyond for a beautiful weekend of recovery! Details will come soon.

Save the Date!

December 4, 2016

Baltimore Birthday Party

40th Anniversary Celebration

10:30am to 4:30pm

Keynote Speaker and Workshops

Bring a Lunch - Enjoy the Fellowship

Quarry Lake Clubhouse
2525 Quarry Lake Drive
Baltimore, MD 21209

For more information see
www.oabaltimore/events/

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“To extend the hand and heart of OA to all who still suffer, for this I am responsible.”

“Responsibility” was the theme of this year’s WSBC. I attended a workshop on the “Responsibility Pledge,” to “Extend the hand and heart of OA.” Below are the questions they posed. Perhaps you can use the questions as a personal writing exercise or for group discussion at a meeting.

Discussion Questions:

- What responsibility can we take to reach out to compulsive overeaters who do not know OA exists?
- Am I able to reach out to the struggling compulsive overeater already in the rooms (new or not) with compassion and without judgment?
- What is my responsibility to reach out to compulsive overeaters unlike me?

I don’t remember much about the workshop, but as I reflected on what I wanted to share with you in this article, the question of responsibility kept popping up: Do I take my responsibilities seriously?

1. RESPONSIBILITY for my own physical recovery: I don’t rely on anyone else to have the food I need to follow my food plan. It is not anyone else’s job to make my choices for me. I have the responsibility to say “no thank you” when someone wants me to eat something that I know would be toxic for me. I have the responsibility to take care of myself.

2. RESPONSIBILITY for my emotional recovery: I have a tendency to want to call a few supportive friends when I am feeling sad or anxious, and that may not be a bad thing, but I often want to talk the hurt away and not do the soul searching about what caused the hurt. What defect-fear, self-pity, selfishness, am I letting rob me of emotional sobriety? It takes quiet reflection and inventory to get honest with myself about my part. Often “our misery is of our own making.”

3. RESPONSIBILITY for spiritual recovery: I have been shirking my quiet time lately, it’s there but very superficial. I would spend more time

playing Words With Friends than doing my reading and writing!

4. RESPONSIBILITY to the group: Do I have a home meeting? Do I make it a priority? Do I focus on the positive message or what is wrong with the meeting? I live in a small town; a large meeting is when we have six members show up! A meeting isn’t “good” based on the number of people sitting in the room. As a matter of fact, there is no “bad” meeting.

5. RESPONSIBILITY to those I sponsor: Do I take our relationship seriously? Am I available when I say I will be? Do I share my experience strength and hope vs. trying to control them or have them do it “my way”? Sponsoring is a privilege, and a responsibility. I would not be where I am today without the helping hand of so many sponsors who have touched my life.

6. RESPONSIBILITY for service: It is not always convenient and, honestly, not often fun. The old saying “You can’t keep it unless you give it away” is also true. Service comes in many forms, and it is all important - going to a meeting, picking up the phone, giving someone a ride, writing an article for *The Stepping Stone* are just a few.

The bottom line is that I am responsible for my choices, my decisions and my actions; I am not responsible for the outcome.

I take the responsibility and privilege of being your WSBC representative very seriously. If you have any questions about the conference please let me know.

The full report of the conference can be found at <https://oa.org/files/pdf/FCR-16.pdf>.

Terri B.

Why Program is the Most Important Thing

I came into program a mess: unfocused, emotionally unstable, lacking discipline and good common sense. Program became my anchor, my rock, my touchstone, the compass that pointed me in the direction of true north.

The slogan “program, family, job,” initially seemed a bit outrageous. I came to learn that all it does is reminds us that when we change the order, all three suffer.

Program doesn’t ask us to be worse parents or employees. We’re being asked to honestly assess whether we’ve ever been more productive, more clear on why we do the things we do, or better able to take life in stride than when we’re working our program, committing daily to abstinence, and integrating our tools and step work as an essential part of learning how to face our resistance to change and consistently show up for life as it is.

We’re building spiritual muscles and listening to new voices (of reason) instead of the old one that promotes relief seeking. We’re learning how to put program messages ahead of impulsive, reactive behavior so we have the only reliable means of interrupting the terribly damaging but familiar ways that undermine our success in program - the very thing that brought us hope and guided us to a community of people who truly understand what’s wrong with us.

When we blow off a meeting – choose avoidance and/or isolation when presented with a setback or disappointment – the disease is licking its chops. It has us just where it wants us. Cut off, alone and hopeless. Like they say – the only thing you develop in a dark room is negatives.

So choosing program – choosing a simplified food plan – choosing something OTHER than self-will when we are not at our best – is a consistently reliable formula that enables us to hang on until “the fever passes” and we once again see clearly that program is not an unwanted chore -

it’s the part of us that was missing when we were young and frightened, and turned to relief- seeking and self-sabotaging behaviors instead of learning to cope with life in real-time.

Replacing old ways of thinking with “a plan” is what OA is all about. When we have a plan, it means that we have a starting point and a goal, and a means of arriving at that goal safely.

Sometimes that means doing something counter-intuitive, like choosing time with program people instead of family, because that insures that the quality of our time with family will vastly improve, even if the quantity of it has to temporarily diminish. Or sitting quietly before writing in order to gain the self-understanding or improved perspective to stay the course and get through a hard time.

Our OA program is a measurable, systematic way of living that affords us a way to change. Our resistance to change typically causes more pain than implementing the change itself. That’s why program is the most important thing in my life without exception.

Neil R.



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Baltimore Area Intergroup OA Meeting Directory*

October 23, 2016

Sunday

8:00 AM Rise and Shine Baltimore

Bnai Jacob Shaare Zion Synagogue
6602 Park Heights Avenue, Baltimore 21215
Neil (410-318-6737)
Dress Code: No revealing/provocative attire please.

5:15 PM Towson Speaker Meeting

Calvary Baptist Church
120 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Towson 21204
Side Entrance - Basement
Tania (443-660-8299)

7:00 PM "Hour of Power-Mixed Format" Bel Air

Upper Chesapeake Medical Center
500 Upper Chesapeake Drive, Bel Air 21014
Terri (410-459-9100)

Monday

7:00 AM Rise and Shine Baltimore

Good Samaritan Hospital
5601 Loch Raven Boulevard, Baltimore 21239
Conference Room 2 South
Joe (410-829-6307)

10:30 AM Columbia Medical Pavilion at Howard County

Health and Wellness Center
10710 Charter Drive, Columbia, MD 21044
Tricia (410-489-0033) or Ruth (410-740-6955)

6:00 PM Columbia Serenity Center

9650 Basket Ring Road
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway) 21045
Gar (301-829-8218) Gar@saccocpa.com - HA

7:30 PM "A Vision 4 You" Big Book Study

7310 Park Heights Avenue, Baltimore 21208
Parking and entrance on left side of building
Nechama R (443-717-1829) - HA

7:30 PM "Beginners and Strugglers" Bel Air

First Presbyterian Church
Main Street & Broadway, Bel Air 21014
(main building basement)
Michelle (410-937-7500) - Call about HA

7:30 PM Catonsville

Salem Lutheran Church
905 Frederick Road, Catonsville 21228
Naomi (443-838-7970) - Call about HA, Bus 2

Tuesday

11:30 AM Big Book Meeting

Etz Chaim Center
3702 Fords Lane, Baltimore 21215
Gail (410-456-4306 - HA, Bus M3 & M10)

12:00 Noon St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

7834 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore 21224
Bob (410-335-7748)

7:30 PM Pikesville "Abstinence First"

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Room 227
7401 Park Heights Avenue, Pikesville 21208
Parking lot on Slade Avenue
Neil (410-318-6737) - HA, Bus M5

Wednesday

6:15 PM "A Vision 4 You" Big Book Study

Columbia Serenity Center
9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway)
Bekah (617-966-2790) - HA

7:30 PM Columbia Serenity Center

9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway)
Naomi (443-838-7970) - HA

Thursday

7:30 PM Columbia Serenity Center

9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway) 21045
Carol (410-551-1149) - HA

8:00 PM Search for Serenity Group (Mixed Format)

Church of the Redeemer Room 41
5603 N. Charles Street off Norther Parkway
Towson, MD
Tania (443-660-8299) - Bus 11, 44

Friday

5:30 PM Baltimore City (speaker on first

Friday of month and post-meeting fellowship)
First English Lutheran Church
3807 N. Charles Street at 39th Street, Baltimore 21218
Enter on east side of building
Mandy (410-825-1782) HA Bus 8, 11

Saturday

9:30 AM Columbia Serenity Center

9650 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045
(off Stevens Forest off Broken Land Parkway) 21045
Kathy (410-312-2742) - HA

11:00 AM Baltimore City

First English Lutheran Church
3807 N. Charles Street at 39th Street, Baltimore 21218
Enter on east side of building
Annette (410-825-4639) - HA, Bus 3, 11, 22

11:00 AM Lutherville Step Meeting

St. John's Methodist Church
216 W Seminary Avenue, Lutherville 21093
Phyllis (410-653-2284) - HA
lucindaruby@gmail.com

*Subject to change:

Check oa.org for the most up-to-date meeting calendar.

*Please call contact person before attending any meeting for the first time.

Abbreviations: HA=Handicapped Accessible,
Bus Number=Accessible by MTA bus routes
For Online or Telephone Meetings: <http://www.oa.org/meetings/find-a-meeting-online.php>

If your meeting information changes, notify the World Service Office (WSO) at www.oa.org in the Meeting Registration/Change Information Section. In addition, call 443-475-0443 or email vicechair@oabaltimore.org.