

WORKSHOP - ABSTINENCE

This workshop was used during the 2012 Region 9 Assembly. It is on Abstinence and contains 2 parts - a Skit, and Questions. The skit is something new (2012). The questions come from the RCC Files. These 2 parts are included here for your use.

Two OA members played the parts in the skit. Then, we broke up into small groups (approximately 5 per group). We discussed in our groups which ever questions we wanted to. We then heard 1 person in each group give feedback from what was discussed in their individual groups.

This is a workshop that can easily be done in a meeting, a convention, or any form of OA gathering.

ABSTINENCE SKIT

Debbie : Hi Tom. How are you? Just calling to see how you're feeling.

Tom : Thanks. I'm feeling okay.

Debbie : How's your program going?

Tom : Well... I'm trying to make it to the Tuesday night meeting. Most of the time I get there.

Debbie : Yeh, I know what you mean. Life gets in the way of things sometimes, but I do believe that going to my home meeting every week is one of the best ways to give service. It's helped me so much to realize that I'm not alone in the food problem of mine. But you know what's even a bigger service - keeping my abstinence!

Tom : What do you mean... abstinence is service? The whole idea of abstinence still confuses me!

Debbie : Abstinence is service. If I'm abstinent, there's no limit in how I can be useful in OA, not to mention in my daily life outside of OA. I can sponsor other OA'ers - to help them with their food plan, just like my sponsor helps me with my food plan. I can be a speaker at meetings - I know, if I listen, I can always go home having learned something that will help me. I just hope that I pass on my experience to others, but speaking actually strengthens my abstinence. It reminds me of where I was, and where I am -working the program. I can even go on to service positions in Region & WSBC level - what a privilege that is!! So much recovery there. Wow. And at home, work, family and friends - I've also realized the importance of service. I think I do a lot more today to help out at home.

Tom : But how do you get yourself to stay abstinent?

Debbie : The program has so many things which help me with this. First of all, to not go to the food because of my emotions. Not to do things/behaviors that I once did, like eating my meal standing up, or eating because I'm tired. I make a commitment to my abstinence everyday, by writing my food plan down and turning it over to my sponsor and my H.P. Also, my body image and weight hang-ups have improved so much since working the program. Tom, how is your food plan working?

Tom : Well, I do write it down sometimes. And I try to follow it. But the evening is so hard for me. I find that that's when I can have a slip easily. Sometimes it works for me, Sometimes it doesn't.

Debbie : I have to say that the program works for me all the time - it's me that doesn't work it all the time. But that's why I work the 12 Steps - to help me physically, emotionally, and spiritually. After all these years in the program, I still seek help. And I'm so glad that I do because I need that help. You said you have a problem at night with your food plan. What do you do when you want to pick up the food?

Tom : To tell you the truth, I usually eat! I'm a compulsive overeater!!

Debbie : Right, but think about what the program offers us... to make that outreach call. When I do that for myself, and I'm willing to listen, it helps me so much. When I open up OA literature and read exactly what I need to hear at that moment. And writing for me is such a gift. It helps me to be more self aware. All the tools of the program help in keeping my abstinence. The traditions teach me so much about getting along with others. The concepts, the principles, anonymity - I could go on and on with what helps me in keeping my abstinence. But the steps have so many answers for me - when I work them.

Tom : It all sounds so easy when you say it.

Debbie : No, it's not easy, but it is simple. You know what - today is Tuesday. Let's meet at the meeting tonight. I would love to call a group conscience ... let's talk about starting a Step's Meeting before or after our regular meeting. I bet you there are more than just the 2 of us from our meeting who would appreciate working more in depth with the steps. How does that sound,

Tom?

Tom : You know what, Debbie, I think that might be just the thing I need to help me with my abstinence and recovery. I'm really excited. I'll see you tonight. Thank you!

Debbie : No, thank YOU!

ABSTINENCE QUESTIONS

1. **The definition of Abstinence** is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program. What is compulsive eating for you? What are compulsive food behaviors for you and how can you avoid these?
2. **Commitment to abstinence.** What can you do just for today to help you be Abstinent? What kind of commitment are you willing to make to someone else?
3. **Working the steps.** Are you? Explore how the Steps will help you to be abstinent.
4. **Plans of eating.** What works for you and why? **SUGGESTIONS.** 3 meals a day, nothing in between. A weighed and measured plan. Following your doctor/ nutritionist's plan. Praying before you eat. Making a plan for the day ahead of time. Reporting what you ate at the end of the day. Writing down everything you eat. Eating with someone else. Eating alone. **OTHER.**
5. **HP.** What is your relationship with your Higher Power? How can your HP help you with your eating?
6. **Body Image and weight.** Do you find yourself obsessing about your weight and body image (How often do you weigh yourself?) What would be a sane plan for you for dealing with your body image and weight?
7. **There is more to a plan of eating** than just what you eat: where, when, how much, with whom, sitting or stand, how fast you eat, the kind of place setting (dishes, silverware, table cloth, etc.), the kind and volume of music, whether you read, listen to the radio, text, or watch TV while you eat, eat in your car. What choices will help you to get and stay abstinent?
8. **Imagine enjoying an abstinent meal.** What would that look like (What do you eat, where, with whom)? How do you feel eating your abstinent meal?
9. **Action Plan HALT:** Why is it important not to get too hungry, angry, lonely or tired? What can you do to take care of yourself (that is not food) when you get too hungry, too angry, too lonely, or too tired?
10. **The importance of a sponsor.** How can your sponsor help you with your abstinence? How can a sponsor help you with your plan of eating?
11. **The value of service.** How can doing service help you to stay abstinent? Give an example where service helped you.

12. **The importance of meetings.** Why does going to meetings help you to stay abstinent? Give an example where going to a meeting helped you stay abstinent.
13. **The stability of writing.** How can you use writing to help you stay abstinent? Share experience on using writing to stay abstinent.
14. **Literature.** How can you use literature to be abstinent? What literature have you used to help you be abstinent?
15. **YOUR plan of eating.** What do you need to do to keep to your plan? What is your resistance? What can you do to increase your willingness to create a plan?
16. **Communication.** How can you use the telephone and other forms of communication to help you stay abstinent?
17. **Anonymity.** Will practicing Anonymity help you stay abstinent? Share an experience where anonymity helped you stay abstinent. (Think about confidentiality and principles before personalities.)
18. **For today:** What will you plan to do to get / keep your abstinent today?
19. **Compulsive food behaviors Prevention Plan:** what can you do to maintain you abstinence (when you are hungry and it is not time to eat, or when you are craving extra food, or wanting to starve yourself)? Create a list of actions you can take: For example, get out of the kitchen, make a phone call, pray, go for a walk, write, etc.
20. **Triggers and Binges:** Make a list of your binge foods and trigger situations (pot lucks, restaurants, bakeries, family gatherings, etc). What is the best way for you to deal with each of your binge foods and triggers so you can stay abstinent?