

Difference between Abstinence and Plan of Eating Workshop- Handout

PAGE ONE; Workshop aim and objectives

Aim: To increase the fellowship's focus on actions required for abstinence because our **primary purpose** is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

Workshop objectives include OA members;

- Understanding the difference between Abstinence and a Plan of Eating
- Having a clear vision of their abstinence
- Writing the actions they need to take to make abstinence 1st in their life
- Understanding what A Plan of Eating is, and is not
- Knowing about relevant OA resources

Why is the difference between Abstinence and 'A Plan of Eating' important?

The definition of Abstinence is the same for all members but the details of the Plan of Eating for each member may differ depending on what compulsive food behaviors we engaged in while practicing our disease such as overeating, under-eating and purging. A Plan of Eating is a tool to help the OA member to maintain abstinence, i.e., to refrain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors and to work towards or maintain a healthy body weight. There are as many 'plans of eating' in OA as there are members and may change over time for each member. *Dignity of Choice* has samples of some of the many plans of eating OA members use.

Background

In 1981 the World Service Business Conference (WSBC) delegates approved 'The Tools of Recovery' pamphlet which included Abstinence as one of the original (7) tools of OA.

By 1995 the collective OA understanding of the importance of Abstinence meant that the delegates at WSBC removed Abstinence as a tool and replaced it with 'A Plan of Eating', leaving Abstinence as OA's primary purpose as outlined in the OA preamble. ("Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer").

Delegates to the 2011 WSBC approved changes to the Statement on Abstinence and Recovery which currently reads "Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program".

The results of a survey of the membership in 2013 showed that there was a lack of abstinence and of working all 12 Steps. The strategic plan theme for World Service for 2014-16 is "Our Primary Purpose." The goals for each of these three years are: 2014-Increase Awareness of the Importance of Abstinence; 2015-Increase Awareness of the Necessity of Working All 12 Steps; 2016-Increase Awareness of the Importance of Carrying the Message.

This Workshop was created as part of the 2014 goal.