

Some Definitions Used Within Overeaters Anonymous

Some of these items refer to practices and organizations within the Milwaukee Area Intergroup.

Abstinence and Recovery: Abstinence was redefined at the 2019 World Service Business Conference.

“Abstinence: The act of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working toward or maintaining a healthy body weight.

Recovery: Removal of the need to engage in compulsive eating behaviors. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is achieved through working and living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program.”

Anonymity: Because of Anonymity, it is safe to share at meetings. This means we honor each other’s privacy by never discussing who we have seen or what has been discussed at a meeting with anyone outside of that meeting.

Big Book: The Big Book refers to *Alcoholics Anonymous* which also is used in Overeaters Anonymous. It is our basic piece of literature and is used to help us recover from compulsive eating and to stay in recovery.

“Cocoon”: The bi-monthly newsletter of the Milwaukee Area Intergroup is *Out of the Cocoon*, more often referred to simply as “*The Cocoon*.” Anyone who is participating in the OA program can write his or her experiences, strengths and hopes. The deadline for each issue is set by the editor.

Convention: Traditionally, the Milwaukee Area Intergroup holds an annual weekend convention. It provides an opportunity to celebrate recovery with other OAers. Several keynotes, breakout sessions and workshops are held throughout the weekend. The convention is run by volunteers. All speakers at Convention have at least one year of abstinence.

Cross Talk: “Feedback, cross talk and advice-giving are discouraged during all Overeaters Anonymous meetings and events. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group and questioning or interrupting the person speaking/sharing at the time.” (from the OA website at “Suggested Meeting Formats”.)

Group Conscience: Group conscience is based on Tradition 2. When a group wishes to determine how best to conduct meetings, spend funds, organize special events, and deal with issues that affect the group or OA as a whole, business meetings are conducted by group conscience. Group conscience is the special way (unique to 12-step fellowships) in which the individuals in the meetings are inspired to enable the group to agree on best decision.

Holiday Marathon: In the Milwaukee area, special meetings are held on some major holidays to help deal with the challenges holidays may hold. MAI sponsors marathons which groups volunteer to host. The duration of a marathon may be from a few hours to all day. The group also chooses the theme and creates the publicity flyer for the event. The marathon may be a series of regular meetings, a specific topic workshop or other format that the host group chooses. The holidays on which marathons have typically

been held are New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

HOW meeting: This is a type of OA meeting designed for those who would like to have a more structured program to follow. HOW stands for Honesty, Open Mindedness and Willingness. Some aspects of HOW meetings include: recommendations about getting a food plan; a more structured use of the tools; and a suggested outline and questions for working on the 12 steps with a sponsor. It also suggests that members have at least seven days of abstinence to share at the meeting.

“Lifeline”: The national magazine of Overeaters Anonymous is *Lifeline*. Paper and e-subscriptions are available. Go to OA.org to subscribe.

Literature: Our basic OA pieces of literature are the *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, *For Today* and *Voices of Recovery*. In addition OA has other books and brochures dealing with compulsive eating. (See oa.org for a list.) We also use the Alcoholics Anonymous books *Alcoholics Anonymous* (also called the Big Book) and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*. When AA books are read at meetings, we often substitute *compulsive eater* and *food* for the words *alcoholic* and *alcohol*.

Meetings: A variety of meeting formats are held in the Milwaukee area including HOW, meditation, speaker, 12-step study, and Big Book study. A meeting list is available at oamilwaukee.org.

Milwaukee Area Intergroup (MAI): Milwaukee Area Intergroup, also known simply as Intergroup or MAI, is the service body that provides support for groups in the Milwaukee area and some surrounding areas. MAI coordinates and sponsors Conventions and Marathons and other gatherings. It shares information from the World Service Office (WSO), helps with group concerns, keeps track of meeting and contact lists. Each group is encouraged to have two Intergroup representatives who vote at Intergroup meetings, collect information from the meetings on changes of policy or general information and who bring it back to the home meeting which they represent. Representatives can attend in person or by Skype. There are no abstinence requirements to be an Intergroup representative. MAI meets on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

How to contact Milwaukee Area Intergroup:
phone 414-259-0640, or email info@oamilwaukee.org
Website: oamilwaukee.org

MAI Board of Directors: The Board of Directors consists of the Intergroup chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, Region 5 representatives and World Service Representative. Elections for board members are held at the October Intergroup meeting, with officers beginning their duties in November. Refer to the current issue of *Cocoon* for the current board roster.

Milwaukee Area Intergroup Bulletin: A monthly publication of current events, news and service opportunities available at meetings and on website oamilwaukee.org.

Milwaukee Area Intergroup emailblast: Information for the Milwaukee Area Intergroup can be obtained via email. Send an email with your first name, last initial, phone number (for contact purposes if there is an issue) and home meeting to emailblast@oamilwaukee.org to sign up for free monthly mailings of OA information including marathon/special event flyers, the newsletter and other relevant local OA information for yourself or your OA group. Your email address will not be distributed nor seen by other people receiving the mailings and your other information will remain anonymous.

Newcomer: A person new to OA and/or the 12-step program is considered a newcomer. There is no time limit on when someone may be considered or consider themselves a newcomer.

OAers: Those attending and participating in Overeaters Anonymous often are called OAers.

Outreach Calls: Calls to other OAers between meetings just to check in, to get support, or to discuss aspects of the program. It is suggested that more intense issues be discussed with one's sponsor.

Overeaters Anonymous: Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating.

Plan of Eating: A plan of eating is one of the tools members use to practice abstinence. The plan includes refraining from particular foods, especially binge foods and/or compulsive eating behaviors. It is our individual guide to nourishing foods in appropriate portions and at appropriate times. It helps us move toward achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight.

Region 5: OA has ten regions worldwide. We are in Region 5 which covers Wisconsin and other areas in the Midwest. There are three Region assemblies each year. Milwaukee has two representatives who have voting privileges at each Region assembly. The Region 5 website is region5oa.org.

Retreat: The Milwaukee Area Intergroup traditionally holds one weekend-long retreat each year. It is a spiritually-based opportunity to strengthen your recovery and build fellowship using one-on-one relationships, nature, speakers, and meditations—all based on a specific topic. Volunteers determine the topic, organize the sessions and ask for speakers who must have at least a year of abstinence.

Serenity Prayer: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.” This is the prayer that many groups use to begin and/or end meetings.

Service: Service is one of the tools of Overeaters Anonymous. Service is anything you can do for OA and is available at all levels of the program. For example, in group meetings service positions include secretary, treasurer and key holder. At Intergroup, positions include board members, intergroup representatives and several committee positions. Service at the Region and World Service levels are also available. Everyone is encouraged to do service.

Sponsorship: Sponsorship is one of the tools of OA. A sponsor is an OA member who helps another person work the 12-step program of recovery by sharing his/her own experience, strength and hope. Each person is encouraged to have a sponsor to answer questions about the program and to get help with working the Steps. Each person is encouraged to become a sponsor after completing the first three steps of the program. A member can sponsor to the level of his or her experience. There are several types of sponsors including Step (works with someone primarily on working the 12 steps), Food (works primarily with someone to hold to their food plan), Maintenance (for continuing to work the program after weight loss) or a combination of these.

Sponsee/Sponsee: A sponsee or sponsoree is person who is being sponsored/helped through the program. Each person is encouraged to be a sponsoree and to find a sponsor who has what he or she wants.

Tools: Tools help us to work the 12-Steps and abstain from compulsive eating. The tools are telephone, sponsor, anonymity, plan of eating, service, writing, literature, meetings, and action plan. See the OA pamphlet *The Tools of Recovery* for complete descriptions of the tools.

Twelve and Twelve: OA uses two 12 and 12 books—*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Twelve Steps: The OA program of recovery for individuals is based on the 12 Steps which are defined and explained in the literature listed at “Twelve and Twelve.”

Twelve Traditions: The 12 Traditions are a means by which groups remain unified in a common cause and community. They ensure smooth functioning, survival, and growth of the meetings.

12th Step Within: The Twelfth-Step-Within Committee was created to reach out to those in the Fellowship who still suffer and to address the relapse and recovery of our members. The MAI Twelfth-Step-Within Committee maintains a list of all available sponsors, temporary sponsors, or first contact people so that newcomers and long-timers can get direction and support right away from a member of the fellowship. Please add your name and phone number to the list so that you can help another member “Keep Coming Back.” If you need a sponsor, email 12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org with your contact information and any specific needs you have, including the type of sponsor you are seeking (i.e. Food, Step, late night calls, etc.). The chairperson will have a sponsor contact you.

We Care book: A voluntary meeting sign-in book with the attendees name, phone number and/or email is passed around at most meetings. Each member is encouraged to sign in and to use the book to obtain phone numbers of people he or she would like to contact between meetings.

WSO: The World Service Office (WSO) is the worldwide service body for OA. WSO helps clarify the use of the steps and traditions and reaches out to the public to attract newcomers. See www.oa.org for more information.