

IDEA Day 2022

Heart of Canada Intergroup



Definitions

OA's Definition of Abstinence - The action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.

Refrain – stop oneself from doing something

Compulsive – resulting from or relating to an irresistible urge, especially one that is against one's conscious wishes.

Obsession – an idea or thought that continually preoccupies or intrudes on a person's mind.

Allergy - A highly sensitive reaction of the body to certain substances that are present in amounts that do not affect most people.

Notes from Speaker

Action Mindset – Either I am abstinent or not.

Habits/behaviors/thoughts that undermine abstinence.

- Have I broken my abstinence if I eat an extra piece of fruit after I finished my meal?
- What if I am constantly weighing myself and looking at myself in the mirror?
- What if I make a plan for my next meal but don't want to follow it?
- What if I am eating my trigger foods every few weeks with "abstinence" in between?

For true freedom from compulsive eating honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness are essential!

Am I willing to be completely honest with myself about the foods and behaviors that trigger me?

Yes

No

Am I willing to accept feedback from my sponsor and/or a professional?

Yes

No

Am I willing to go to any lengths to get abstinent and stay abstinent?

Yes

No

Do you accept you are addicted?

Yes

No

Do you accept that your addiction is life-or-death?

Yes

No

Reasons why abstinence is important to me.

Value of a Food Plan – How do I figure it out?

Start by going over your history of compulsive eating to figure out which foods and behaviors trigger the compulsion.

What foods am I obsessed with? Do they have one ingredient, or perhaps a combination of ingredients, in common with each other?

What compulsive behaviors do I want/need to stop?

What advice or feedback have I received from my sponsor or health professional?

What will be the most difficult thing for me to give up? And imagine the freedom of working the Steps and no longer caring whether you give that up or not!

If we fail to plan...

We plan to fail.

A plan of eating is more than just what I eat.

What time should I have my meals? Do I have definite mealtimes? If I don't, is that working for me?

How much do I eat? Do I need to have consistent portions by weighing and measuring in some way—by using actual measuring tools, or judging amounts in a more approximate way (plateful, hockey-puck size, etc.)?

Do I under eat by compulsive restricting?

Is it ok for me to eat when I am standing, or does this feel compulsive?

It takes time for our stomach to know it's full. Do I give my body enough time?

Do I overeat when I read, listen to the radio, drive, text, or watch TV while I eat?

Do I overeat by bingeing and then don't get enough nutrition by vomiting or intense exercise?

Going to any lengths for recovery

We need to do the steps to recover from compulsive eating. We are promised recovery when we are halfway through step 9. Steps 10 through 12 maintain and strengthen our recovery.

We must be honest with ourselves to work steps 4 through 9.

If we are not abstinent we are not being honest ourselves.

How do I get through the steps without breaking abstinence?

Suggestions—Using the Tools of Recovery:

- Sponsorship
 - Am I willing to be honest with my sponsor?
 - Will I actually call my sponsor before the first compulsive bite?
- Meetings
 - Do I look for common ground with other members?
 - Do I consider ways I can help someone else with abstinence or developing a food plan?
 - Can I get a “commitment buddy” with whom we can commit our meals?
- Being aware of emotional highs and lows
 - How long does it take for me to notice when I am feeling strong emotions like anxiety, anger, fear and shame?
 - What can I do to take care of myself when I feel overpowering emotions?
- Keeping busy
 - Am I progressing on my step work, or ignoring it?
 - Am I reading recovery literature or listening to OA podcasts?
 - What else can I do that will keep me busy in a healthy way?

List 10 things I can do to refrain from compulsive eating.

I commit to these as being things I will actually do BEFORE eating compulsively eating. If I break abstinence and don't do something/anything on the list, I commit to making a new list of things I will ACTUALLY do.

Final Thoughts

Remember that the definition of abstinence requires working toward a Healthy Body Weight. Abstaining from some foods or behaviours but NOT working toward a healthy Body Weight is NOT being abstinent according to the group conscience of OA.

A Healthy Body Weight is **NOT** a perfect body. Your health care professional and you should discuss what a Healthy Body Weight means for you.

Abstinence is refraining from compulsive eating and eating behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. A food plan is a tool to achieve and maintain abstinence.

To start, abstaining from our compulsive foods and eating behaviors is hard. Once we do the steps and recover we are no longer drawn to those foods and behaviors.

Thanks for joining us today!
