

To receive the OAsis by MAIL,
contact: oasis@njioa.org
To receive the OAsis by E-MAIL,
contact: secretary@njioa.org

OAsis

Fall 2024

OA Infoline:
(201) 528-3398
www.njioa.org

The quarterly newsletter of NJIOA — Northern Jersey Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous



How We Survive Hurricane Season

UPCOMING EVENTS

Full event details and all event flyers are posted here: www.NJIOA.ORG

OCTOBER 2024

Thursday Oct 10 — NJIOA Intergroup Zoom meeting 7:30pm

Sunday October 13 — Zoom Workshop 2:00-5:00pm
“A Journey Through The Steps: The Path To Recovery”

All 12 Steps in one afternoon. Incredible Speaker from out of town.

NOVEMBER 2024

Sat Nov 2 — Firelight Meeting, Outdoors in-person 7:00-9:00pm
Meet at The New Weis Center, 150 Snake Den Rd, Ringwood, NJ 07456

Thursday Nov 14 — NJIOA Intergroup Zoom meeting 7:30pm

Sun Nov 17 — IDEA Day 7:00-8:30pm, On Zoom
“A is for Abstinence” 2 Powerful speakers; Acceptance, Attitude, Abstinence.

Sunday Nov 23 — Zoom Workshop 3:00-5:00pm
“A Deep Dive Into Step 4 & Staying Abstinent through the Holidays”
Get ready for Thanksgiving with this powerful workshop.
2 Incredible Speakers join us from out of town.

Nov 1, 2, 3 — Region 7 Convention — In-Person, Ocean City MD
Flyer and Details on their website www.region7.org

DECEMBER 2024

Thursday Dec 5 — NJIOA Intergroup Zoom meeting 7:30pm

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday March 1, NJIOA Winter Retreat 9am-5pm, on Zoom. 12 Steps. Big Book. Topics. Keynote. Many speakers from out of town. Q&A. Open Sharing. Fellowship. Serenity. Check website for details

This time of year can be very emotional for me. Missing loved ones, the copious amounts of food all around, family drama, weather changing and the list goes on. What I have learned is to stay close to my HP, go to meetings make calls, and have a plan of the food I'm going to eat. I make calls, ask what's being served and bring my food. I do not leave anything up to chance. Food-wise I stick to my plan because I know it is what I need. I do something special to celebrate the holidays that is not about food. I watch funny movies, I write a extra long gratitude list, and I focus on the special day and not the food. For me planning and gratitude are the key to an abstinent hurricane season.

— Anonymous



Surviving Hurricane Season

For some communities, hurricanes happen with great frequency. If residents want to minimize the damage to their homes, property, and loved ones, they have a plan and know what to do before the hurricane hits. They listen to the news forecasts and get ready. They implement their plan. As a compulsive overeater, I need to have a plan for hurricane season. In OA, we refer to the period between Halloween and Easter as hurricane season because of the frequency and intensity of food-related celebrations we all must endure every year. Each holiday has a strong emotional connection to family, abundant food, and excessive drinking. In my 30 years in OA, I've developed the following strategies to come out this party season with my abstinence and sanity intact.

strategy 1: Let other people provide and handle "the goodies". This was especially important in early abstinence. In some cases I asked other people directly to deal with the purchase and preparation of desserts and other foods that were too tempting for me. When I was obligated to bring something to an event, I'd bring a vegetable and/or fruit tray. My goal was to keep my nose out of food that wasn't for me.

strategy 2: Sometimes I knew I wasn't going to be able to get the food I needed, so I brought my own. This can be kind of tricky but if I didn't make much fanfare about it, most people didn't notice. If someone questioned me, I'd comment that I'm working really hard to manage my weight. Another response might be that I have food allergies.

strategy 3: Phone ahead - Sometimes bringing my own food was just not going to be workable at affairs such as weddings. Most venues are used to dealing with special requests. It is ok to ask for food without sauces and other coatings. Remind the server when you arrive about your special request. They are always more than happy to accommodate.

strategy 4: "I'll take the love with which this was made and pass on the calories." This was probably the hardest situation to handle especially when it was made "just for you." It can be hard to say no because we don't want to hurt their feelings. Fortunately, I've never had to use this strategy with the same person twice.

strategy 5: In some instances, you can participate in the planning of the menu. This is ideal as it gives us an opportunity to make sure we get what we need. I may have to allow others to include food I don't eat; but as long as I don't have to prepare or serve it, I know I'll be ok.

strategy 6: Work the tools of the program before, during, or after the event. Write a prayer on an index card and put it in our pocket. My go-to prayer is "God, take this thought from my head. I am powerless over it." Works every time.

—Susan K



"We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives."

Big Book, "Into Action," p. 86



"To make this increasingly possible is the purpose of A.A.'s Twelve Steps, and Step Three opens the door."

AA 12&12 Step Three, p.40

Hurricane Season Requires Prep

When I think of Hurricane season, I think of atmospheric disturbances emanating in the Caribbean, gaining strength over warm waters heading to land to wreak havoc, destruction and devastation. If thought another way, isn't this what

uncontrolled compulsive overeating does also? Some synonyms for a hurricane which can be likened to this disease are Cyclone, typhoon, tornado storm, tempest, windstorm superstorm, gale, squall whirlwind — don't these sound like a binge?? In my past before OA, hurricane season started with Halloween and lasted until December 31st. January 1st was always a holy day, a day to finally get serious and buckle down on this eating problem. Inevitably there would be a new diet out there and with it new hopes and dreams for a successful attempt to get the weight off. This lasted a few days at best. The hurricane

force winds that blew through me were cold, dark, ripping to shreds my self esteem, and hopes for brighter days not caught in the throes of compulsive overheating or dieting. Like the next storm, the relapses during these high stress months kept

coming. Hurricane season requires preparations. Just like windows need to be boarded up and sandbags put down, OA preparations can be extra and careful planning around parties and events where food is all over bringing your own food when necessary, having a stocked refrigerator and an action plan. Calls and frequent contact are more important than ever during times of holiday stressors and office and family gatherings. Just like the "check engine light" or the dashboard, hurricane season is a warning that there is trouble

ahead unless immediate action is taken to ward off the potential damage from inadequate preparations. Enjoy the spirit of the holidays without the typhoon of food. There is so much more out there than an overfull plate.

—Ilene W



The Gift of Abstinence: Navigating The Holiday Season

As the holiday season approaches, a whirlwind of emotions and memories floods my mind. The twinkling lights, the festive music, friends around a dinner table, and the enticing aromas of holiday foods are more than just pleasures—they are the backdrop to a journey of personal transformation. For me, navigating the holidays without bingeing is not merely an act of abstinence but a profound testament to the strength and humility that recovery has bestowed upon me.

For years, the holidays were a period of severe over-indulgence, where the rhythm of celebrations seemed to sync perfectly with my food addiction. I would float through gatherings, a plate in my hand, feasting on holiday foods — the bingeing was a constant companion that both comforted and clouded my senses. The familiarity of it all was deceptive; beneath the festive veneer was a deep-seated reliance on substances to numb the pain and anxieties that lurked beneath the surface. Last year was my first holiday season after I got abstinent; and it was a daunting challenge. The anticipation of food gatherings filled me with dread rather than joy. The mere thought of facing Thanksgiving without the usual foods and overeating made me nervous — I felt out of place, embarrassed, disconnected from traditions that had once been so intertwined with my identity. My sponsor helped me shift from focusing on what I was giving up, to embracing what I was gaining. Abstinence offered clarity, and with it, the chance to build new memories—memories that were genuine and unmarred by the cloud of overeating. And, you know what? The season was different than I had imagined. I planned each event with my sponsor and with a sense of purpose — armed with the 12 Steps, with God, with all the tools from my recovery journey, and a new perspective on what the holidays could represent. One of the important steps I took was to redefine my relationship with my old holiday traditions. I decided to take an active role in planning and hosting Thanksgiving instead of just the usual *showing up for the food and drink*. I focused on being of service and getting “out” of myself; contributing abstinent foods was another trick, being involved in

creating the festive environment, finding new ways to connect to family members and friends — these new habits allowed me to shape the day in ways that felt meaningful and authentic to me.

I reached out to friends and family, reminding them of my recovery journey and asking for their support on the holiday itself. I tasked family members with different food jobs at the

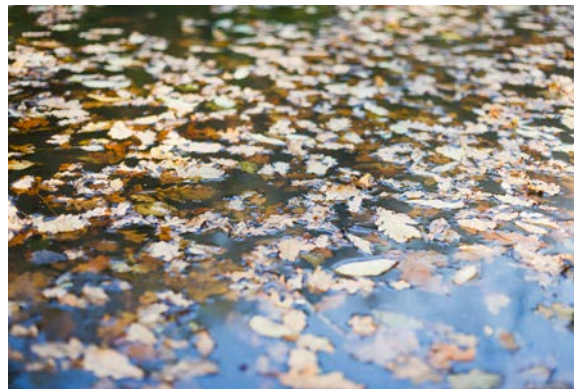


“Though Tradition Nine at first sight seems to deal with a purely practical matter, in its actual operation it discloses a society without organization, animated only by the spirit of service — a true fellowship.”

AA 12&12, Tradition Nine, p 175

big events: someone in charge of clearing plates, another in charge of dessert; someone else in charge of pouring wine. My job was neither food nor drink related. I focused instead on the warmth, the smiles, and the conversations. One particularly poignant moment came during a family birthday dinner. As we sat around the table, my husband raised a toast, and as I lifted my glass of sparkling water, and I noticed a new sensation: the pleasurable absence of the usual food-fueled haze. Instead of feeling left out, I felt completely present. The table conversation flowed more freely, and warmth and connection was palpable. In that moment, I realized that the true essence of the holiday season was not in the drinks or food consumed, or even in the party itself

— but in the genuine connections I forge and in the joy I find in a shared experience. Navigating the holiday season newly abstinent was not without its challenges. There were moments



“All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole.”

AA 12&12, Tradition Nine, p.191

of longing, when the ease of old habits beckoned. Yet, these moments were offset by the profound satisfaction of living in the present, fully engaged and deeply connected. Each day I remained abstinent, each holiday party I faced with a clear head and an open heart, was a testament to the strength and willingness that I found by completely relying on my higher power. This year, the holidays will be a celebration of more than just the season; they will be a celebration of my recovery journey, my spiritual growth, my dedication to the 12 Steps, and gratitude for the gift of abstinence. Embracing hurricane season with clarity and purpose will help me experience the holidays in a way I never would have thought possible in my old life — in a way that is deeply fulfilling.

—Anonymous



Surviving Hurricane Season: My Program is like FEMA

Every year during hurricane season I am reminded of September 12, 1995 when my husband and I were caught in one of the worst hurricanes of the US Virgin Islands. We still remark "Marilyn, whew she was no lady!" We were stuck on the island of St. Thomas, for 3 days, until rescued by FEMA. Funny how now I can now relate my food addiction to having the potential to tear my life apart just as this hurricane did these islands. And my program is much like FEMA.

Here are the things that come to mind:

The winds blew hard, and boy did it rain; people screamed loudly with fear and pain

But it didn't help, and with tears of dread

Marilyn left many without homes or a bed

I never thought a hurricane would teach me so much

About life, death, program and such
And the things that apply, are not new

*But here, my fellows a quick review:
Prepare for as much as you can in advance*

Never leave working your program to chance.

*Keep in your mind a way of escape,
If the risk of slipping gets too great.
Remember to pray no matter what
It keeps your thoughts from running amok.*

*When the fear is great, and you are nervous,
Look for ways to give others service.*

I was hungry and couldn't wash my hair

But people had lost their lives out there!

*This storm revealed my selfish attitude
Reminding of my need for gratitude
Marilyn was real, not a work of fiction
It took away lives much like my addiction
And one big thing Marilyn certainly taught me
Is "Acceptance dear fellows is always the key!"*

—Lori H

I Survive With Gratitude And God

I have survived the hurricane season gratefully by accepting who I am and thankfully remembering who I am and going to my HP to help me as on my own all I could do was over eat. I follow directions today and have found a wonderful way to live in peace and happiness for this one day and I'm so grateful. I just live each day in peace and serenity with G-D doing for me what, on my own, I could never do.

—Audrey C



"A.A.'s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.

AA 12&12, Foreword, p.15

through the holidays without participating in the food festivities that I waited for all year. As time in program went on, however,



"If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it — then you are ready to take certain steps."

Big Book, How It Works, p.58

Surviving Hurricane Season with Steps and Tools

When I first started in OA, going through the hurricane season without food felt like a nightmare. I was still waffling in my addiction and could not conceive of going

through the holidays without participating in the food festivities that I waited for all year. As time in program went on, however, hurricane season became less scary. I learned how to step into the holidays with a plan of action and support from my OA brothers and sisters — what a difference. Today hurricane season is just three days not three months, and on those days I do my best to stay in the solution by practicing all the Steps and tools that kept me on point the rest of the year. Thank goodness I stayed for the miracle. — Grace H

"Taking the book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps

Big Book Into Action p.7



Surviving Hurricane Season

Hurricane Season. To the world it means that period of time when major storms in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico develop into Atlantic hurricanes. But to me, as a food addict, Hurricane Season is that season of festivities that center around food, family, friends and holiday expectations.

Starting with Halloween in October, we have Thanksgiving in November, Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanza in December, along with New Year's Eve which straddles December and January. These are food-saturated holidays. For years, Halloween was the most exciting holiday. As a kid, I got free candy! Lots of it! Nothing could top that. As an adult, I got to sample the candy bought for trick or treaters and raid my child's spoils from her trick or treating adventures. Since becoming abstinent, I am able to hand out candy to adorably costumed little ones without feeling tempted. I know it's not mine so the thought of eating any of it is not an option.

I'm sure I don't need to elaborate on Thanksgiving Day feasts, which always seemed like an excuse to overindulge. How astonished I was when I was taught by OA fellows that Thanksgiving is just another Thursday and Thanksgiving dinner is just another meal.

Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanza are usually celebrated with food and often we celebrate them several times in the month-with friends, with coworkers, with family. That's a lot of food festivities. Like Thanksgiving, they also tend to come with pressure and expectations- pressure if you are hosting, pressure if you are traveling, the pressure of buying the right gifts, the pressure of our family's expectations, the pressure of our own expectations. That's why I find I need to have strategies in place to meet these holiday challenges. Some of them are: helping

to serve or clean up, stepping out for a breath of fresh air or a walk, popping into the bathroom to breathe or pray or read some literature or make a phone call.

I have found that well-meaning people will offer me something not on my food plan, something they may say they made just for me. I tell them that I'll have it later, or that I'll take some home with me. Often, they will forget about it sooner than if I insist that I can't have any. But if they don't, I will take it with me and give it away or if it's too tempting, throw it away. Nothing is more important than my abstinence. I worked too hard to get here to give it away so easily.

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



"An honest regret for harms done, a genuine gratitude for blessings received, and a willingness to try for better things tomorrow will be the permanent assets we shall seek."

AA 12&12, Step Ten, p.95

holiday for me. There were certain special snacks I would have as a kid and then, as an adult, I added an elaborate dinner prior to those treats, something I don't



"When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet."

Big Book, There Is A Solution, p.25

do anymore. I just have a regular dinner. Admittedly, I barely stay up till midnight these days, and I certainly wouldn't want to eat at such a late hour anyway, but I find the end of a year and the beginning of the next a beautiful time to commit to my self-care and growth. I'm grateful that I learned how to do that in OA, from the experience, strength and hope of my fellows and the wisdom and example of our founders shown

through our literature.

Happy Holidays to all. Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels!

—Judy I



Together We Can

The mornings have turned crisp with a slight chill in the air. Change is upon us. The leaves are falling a little already! A change of season always reminds me of different foods because I am a food addict. I immediately think of soup and warmer meals...the coffee shops boasting of pumpkin spice. When I was in the food, the beginning of fall was the start of finding all sorts of excuses to eat compulsively. By the Grace of God and the support of the fellowship I have experienced abstinence for over 12 years with a HOW food plan has given me the gift of a healthy eating habit and routine that I can rely upon each day. But it's important for me to remember that over 50 years the holidays in the fall and winter created an atmosphere that was dangerous for this compulsive overeater. I ate blindly and carelessly thinking I would be able to make that new year's resolution to go on a diet and exercise. These resolutions quickly failed each year. It's important for me to remember the fog and depression and despair that I felt in the food. Always binging in secret brought shame that kept the horrible cycle going. My recovery and the steps and tools - particularly being of service- are the key for healing the suffering of this addiction. I no longer miss the foods associated with this hurricane season. A true miracle that is available for all of us. Together we can.

OA Promise
I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady will-power. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

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—Nancy L

Surviving Hurricane Season

National Weather Bureau predicting hurricane season and so is OA. Oct 31, Nov 28, Dec 25, Jan 1, Feb 14.....getting the picture here? If I allow myself to pick up, EVERY month is an excuse. Think about it, and instead of, "I'll start Monday,"

it will be, "I'll start in August," with no holiday at all. Will I allow eleven months to keep me in this ongoing cycle of insanity? We said goodbye to August only days ago. Will August be my new Monday? God, for today, please, allow me to approach each holiday for what it is.....fun for children, gratitude for all I have, births of new babies filling us with hope and all good things for the remaining nine months of positivity, including beautiful, bountiful August. Amen.

—Claire G

Surviving Hurricane Season

Hurricane Season was always my favorite time of year. Those winter months of filling foods, treats, feasts and celebrations was a heady time, and I delighted in the over-indulgence: overeating, over drinking, and over-spending. And while the events themselves seemed, in my food-fueled haze, to be touching and memorable, in fact

they were stressful, tortuous and contentious — filled not with warmth and connection, but with a sense of restlessness, irritability, and discontent. I have now lived through three abstinent holidays, and they have been much more fulfilling. With planning, with the fellowship and with prayer I can handle anything that arises. When I work the Steps, maintain a tight food plan, and find ways to give service, God grants me abstinence and many, many blessings.

—Anonymous



"Offer him friendship and fellowship."

Big Book, Working With Others, p.95



"But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful."

Big Book, There Is A Solution, p.17

FELLOWSHIP

A Holiday To Remember

My entire outlook about holidays has changed and it's all for the better. First, I ask myself, what is the meaning of each holiday. I literally went online to look up what exactly was the meaning of each holiday and went on to read about its history and how it is typically celebrated. This is when I shifted my focus to the true meaning of a holiday and away from the commercialization of whatever holiday. For a compulsive over eater person, food is most likely the first thought after hearing the word holiday. Not so with a person without an eating disorder. Maybe they think of decorating, or spending money on gifts, or new outfits, or parties. I made the decision to not get swept up into the advertising frenzy and other's level of anxiety. I shared what I learned with my immediate family and then changes were made with the extended family also. It makes for very interesting conversation. For example, on the gift giving holidays, we only gave gifts to the children. We paired down the menu, and we keep it simple as well as more health conscious. If family is gathering, I give some thought about the people I will be with. I reexamine the location asking myself, is this where I want to spend this particular holiday?

The disease of COE is so much more than about using food for comfort. It says in the Big Book drinking is a problem with relationships. Keeping this in mind, in advance I give some thought, maybe share with my sponsor, a trusted friend, or a family member ahead of time if there are any issues. Halloween for many years was a first trigger of a very long COE winter season. I no longer have children at home and nobody comes to my street for many years so or that I have it easy. That is not to say I didn't spend several years buying some candy just in case someone were to suddenly pop up! Nope, it was all for me. Depending upon your neighborhood and your family situation, if you need to hand out whatever, find an easier creative way for kids to help themselves or just do not do it if it is going to be a temptation. Your health and abstinence is more important. Many people simply do not celebrate Halloween for whatever reason and so what. Thanksgiving meal can still be special and abstinent by planning ahead. Again, by reading about the holiday, thinking about the meaning of being grateful, and counting

our blessings, it is much harder to focus on the food vs the meaning of the day and truly enjoying who you are with. Think and plan ahead each person you will see that day. Have you ever asked Aunt Charlotte what is her day like now that she is 90 years old or does she have hobbies? Does your nephew have a car, what type of job does he have, etc. Maybe family has lost someone this year, a kind word to the person in mourning or a hug would be a nice gesture. I promise you with the focus on others, there will be much less focus on food. Christmas and major Jewish holidays have deep meaning even if you are not religious. Again, read and study the meaning and try to live the true message of love, giving, freedom, forgiveness, and get the focus off of food.

LORD,
take me
where You
want me
to go;
Let me
meet who
You want
me to meet;
Tell me
what You
want me to
say; and
Keep me
out of your
way.

There can be a special food on a holiday but it is not going to be one filled with sugar & flour. For example my sister who has roasted veggies is a treat for me. Sometimes I split my protein for 2 choices. I never enjoyed picking on food and walking around, so I sit down at some point and enjoy my dinner. There is never a good excuse to over eat. I plan to carry some special tea with me to sip on after dinner and stay well hydrated especially before dinner time. Valentine's Day is for couples, or some families celebrate with the whole family on this holiday.

Again, I do not get sucked into all the commercializing. Am I sad that I don't have a sweetheart? Maybe, sometimes. This can be a time for evaluating my love life and taking whatever action using the principles of the Twelve Steps. My recovery all begins with loving myself and that is where I am for now. Besides, Lidl has the best and longest lasting roses and I buy them for myself all year round! Lol. I get there are certain foods associated with certain holidays. In my recovery I have learned to think and plan so old unhealthy habits and choices needed to be evaluated. Some old traditions and food choices have been adjusted, some changed, but now I have my own planned and thought out holiday menu and choices. This eliminated any anxiety in the food department. Now because I focus on the meaning of the holiday and the people I am with, I promise you it is a way more fulfilling experience. — Gail S

GRATEFUL

Surviving Hurricane Season

When I thought about this topic, my thoughts immediately turned towards my 86-year-old father, who lives in Florida with my sister. I live in Southern New Jersey, which is literally 1,000 miles away. My heart is with them, but there is nothing I can do about Hurricane Helene dropping into their town and taking out the power for 36 hours. My sister describes the winds and the rain that flew straight across their home, which makes it really clear in my mind's eye, but it is not the same as being there to witness it.

This reminds me of my recovery. I spent years seeking the promises in the Big Book. I heard people describe what it was like to be abstinent or on a "pink cloud", but I never experienced it until I did the work. I followed my sponsor's directions. I read the Big Book one line at a time with her. I have side notes and highlighted passages in my extra large print BB! When I finally stopped being the director of my life and began to pray the prayer of a desperate woman, I began to feel the winds of change. It built slowly, but with practice and persistence, I began to feel the rain that washed my heart. I was able to kneel down and pray to God, The Universe, and The Committee instead of laying facedown on the pavement crying for something that I wasn't willing to allow to happen.

I feel blessed to have ridden out many hurricanes in my lifetime while I remain in a state of prayer. Seeking God's will and then standing back and watching the wind fly around me as God changes me into the woman they want me to be. Just as a hurricane transforms the landscape, recovery has reshaped my inner world. The process wasn't always gentle – sometimes it felt like I was in the eye of the storm, surrounded by chaos but finding an unexpected calm. Other times, I was battered by the winds of change, stripped of old habits and thought patterns that no longer served me. Like my family in Florida preparing for a hurricane, I had to ready myself for recovery. I boarded up the windows of my denial, stocked up on the supplies of fellowship and literature, and hunkered down for the long haul. And just as my sister and father emerge from

their home after the storm passes, I too have stepped out into a world that looks different – cleaner, fresher, full of new possibilities.

The distance between my old self and who I am now feels as vast as the thousand miles between New Jersey and Florida. But unlike the helplessness I feel when my family faces a natural disaster, in my recovery, I am an active participant. Every day, I choose to face the winds, to let the cleansing rain of honesty and humility wash over me.

Now, when I hear others describe their "pink cloud" moments, I can nod in understanding. I've felt that too – the sun-break after the storm, the rainbow of promise arching over a changed landscape. It didn't come easily or quickly, but it came.

As I continue on this journey, I'm reminded that recovery, like life, isn't about avoiding storms. It's about learning to dance in the rain, to find strength in the winds of change, and to trust in a power greater than myself to guide me through. Whether it's a hurricane in Florida or the turbulent winds of personal growth, I know now that I have the tools, the faith, and the fellowship to weather any storm that comes my way.

—Rebecca I

MY CREATOR

I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.

TRUST
GOD



CLEAN
HOUSE



HELP
OTHERS



OA REGION 7 CONVENTION 2024

November 1, 2, 3

Ocean City, MD

THE
Footwork
OF RECOVERY

Event Registration
is OPEN

Event Registration costs and all other event details are found on the events page on our website:

www.oaRegion7.org

\$60.00
ends 9/30/24

\$70.00
thru 10/31/24

\$80.00

\$87.00
Incl Lunch & Dinner Saturday

Hotel Registration
is OPEN

**Princess Royale
Oceanfront Resort**

9100 Coastal Highway
Ocean City MD 21842

(800) 476-9253

General Inquiries

Email us here:
conventionChair@oaregion7.org

Interested in being on the
Convention Planning
Committee?

Email us here:
conventionChair@oaregion7.org

ABSTINENCE

HURRICANE SURVIVAL TIPS

AT HOME

- Have food ready and prepared in advance
- Put signs/reminders in prominent places such as the refrigerator, bathroom, cabinets
- Incorporate program reminders into my décor such as "Give Thanks," "Grateful," The Serenity Prayer
- If food thoughts come along, change rooms, stay away from where the food is
- Create a comfortable "safe space" at home where I can go to connect
- Create an abstinent food plan for the day that feels good
- Dress up nicely, show up as my best self
- Share a dessert that works for me such as flavored tea or baked fruit
- Use an extra spoon or create a special place setting for my HP, so I know I am not alone
- Plan ahead for which meetings I will attend; visit a new meeting and meet new friends
- Check in with fellows
- Give away leftovers immediately or discard.

AT WORK

- Call ahead, get the menu, and plan your abstinent meal.
- If you can't get safe food, consider eating before you go, or bring components of your meal with you
- Be very clear when you order. Tell the wait staff exactly what foods you avoid.
- Don't be shy about telling others you're following a food plan, this will create a safe bubble for you
- When your food arrives, take just your portion, put the rest on a side plate and hand it back to the waiter to box up or discard.
- Socialize, distract yourself by talking to friends. Plan ahead some easy topics to talk about, ask others about themselves and listen
- Relax and enjoy, be present in the moment — put your fork down and chat
- Step outside and make phone calls or texts
- Go to bathroom during dessert, make a call and pray, remember you can access HP anywhere
- Picture your OA friends and fellowship around you, and you feeling safe.

DINNER PARTY

- Call your host and let them know you are on a food plan and ask what they are serving
- Bring your own food as a backup. At least bring components of your meal with you if you aren't sure you can get what or all you need
- Bring your own safe beverage.
- Be brave about telling others you're following a food plan, this will create a safe bubble around you
- Socialize, distract yourself by talking to others. Plan ahead some easy topics to talk about, ask others about themselves and listen
- Stay out of the kitchen, and stay away from food areas, buffets, hors d'oeuvre trays, bar snacks
- Do not offer to serve the food
- Do not clear the plates of food after the meal. Avoid being alone with leftovers on plates in the kitchen. Avoid the kitchen all together if possible.
- Relax and enjoy, be present in the moment — put your fork down and chat.
- Brush your teeth when the meal is finished.
- Step outside and make phone calls or texts
- Go to bathroom during dessert and make a call or pray, remember you can access your HP anywhere
- Wear an elastic band on your wrist or switch your jewelry around to remind yourself of being in OA.

ANYWHERE

- Survive Hurricane Season with extra OA meetings
- listen to OA podcasts, bring earbuds for your phone
- Make extra phone calls. Call newcomers and check on those you haven't seen at meetings in a while
- Carry literature and the OAsis Newsletter
- Wear something that reminds you of program (keep it frog-green!)
- "Book-end" your event or your meal, call someone both before, and after
- Make an extra long gratitude list
- Write yourself an encouraging letter from HP
- focus on what you are working towards
- REMEMBER: "We will know a new happiness"
- Try to bring your next meal along with you. Take 'safe food' in your car as a back up.
- Remember that you are important, you are part of a fellowship
- Wiggle your fingers and toes to your Higher Power,, and make conscious contact
- Take long deep breaths, keep your shoulders down, relax your face muscles, pause
- Focus on the positive, what can I "bring" to the table, what would HP have me be
- Keep doing REP's — Relax, Enjoy, Pray!

A Journey Through the 12 Steps: The Path to Recovery

Sunday
October 13
2pm - 5pm ET

Workshop Schedule:

- Steps 1-3 Presentation
Q&A and Sharing, followed by a short break
- Steps 4-9 Presentation
Q&A and Sharing, followed by a short break
- Steps 10-12 Presentation
Q&A and Open Sharing

ZOOM MEETING ID
813 4728 9091

PASSWORD
202410

DIAL IN
+1-929-205-6099

Contact Person:
ILENE W. (908) 803-4846



- 01 Honesty
- 02 Hope
- 03 Faith
- 04 Courage
- 05 Integrity
- 06 Willingness
- 07 Humility
- 08 Self-Discipline and Forgiveness
- 09 Love and Tolerance
- 10 Perseverance
- 11 Spiritual Awareness
- 12 Service

Firelight Meeting

FELLOWSHIP ★ GRATITUDE ★ LETTING GO

In-Person, under the stars

Saturday Nov 2nd

7:00 - 9:00 pm

Held outdoors at

The New Weis Center
150 Snake Den Rd, Ringwood, NJ

Please bring comfortable shoes, a flashlight, an upright folding chair, warm clothes, and any writings you want to burn in the fire.



Contact: Grace at 201-294-7445 for more info.
NJIOA.ORG

International Day of Experiencing Abstinence

A is For Abstinence™

Sunday Workshop
November 17
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm ET

Two Powerful speakers,
Abstinence, Attitude, Acceptance,
Q&A, Open Sharing, Fellowship,
Serenity, Freedom & Joy
Bring Your friends!

Zoom Info:

Meeting ID: 853 7359 6250

Password: 202416

Dial in: (929) 205 6099

Contact Person:
Ilene W. (908) 803-4846

IDEA Day Hosted by NJIOA

Staying Abstinent Through the Holidays & A Deep Dive Into Step 4

Get ready for Thanksgiving with this powerful 2-topic workshop.

Saturday, November 23
3:00 - 5:00 pm EST

Two recovered speakers from out of town.

Plenty of time for questions and discussion.

Open Sharing & Fellowship.

Meeting ID 828 6007 9975

Password 202411

Dial In +1 929 205 6099

Contact person: Ilene W. (908) 803 4846

Save The Date

Feeling Groovy

The NJIOA
Winter Retreat

Saturday March 1st

9:00am - 5:00pm ET

On Zoom

Fellowship

12 Steps

Big Book

Laughter

Abstinence

Miracles

Freedom

Joy

“We are sure God wants us to be
happy, joyous, and free.”

Serenity

— Big Book, The Family Afterwards, p155

Relapse Prevention Workshop

On June 24, NJIOA sponsored an outstanding Relapse Prevention Workshop. We were enthralled by the personal stories of our two incredible presenters who Zoomed in all the way from their homes in the UK to give their presentation. They shared how they each fell into relapse, sometimes slowly and sometimes quickly, their pitfalls and red flags, and how they found their way out. Participants were then asked to write their own red flags for relapse prevention and what immediate steps can be taken to find a way out. The suggestions were helpful and many wanted to share their ideas. This workshop was really beneficial to those struggling and served as a wonderful reminder that the Program works if its worked!

www.njioa.org/resources/podcasts

Sponsorship Day

The New Jersey Intergroups, North Jersey, Central Jersey and South Jersey, joined together to create a fantastic Sponsorship Day Workshop on Sunday, August 18. Over 60 fellows attended the 2-hour Zoom workshop, and heard four amazing speakers share their thoughts on the importance of Sponsorship, and on the event's main theme, Dr Bob's four reasons for giving service:

“I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. sense of duty.
2. It is a pleasure.
3. Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip.”

—Big Book, Doctor Bob's Nightmare, p180-181

Psychic Change

On July 14th, we had a wonderful and well-attended in-person workshop with 6 incredible presenters. Each speaker shared how working the steps had led them to a transformation of body, mind and soul. The stories were captivating and inspirational. There was sharing right up until the very end. It was a beautiful summer morning of program, fellowship, recovery, and hope — and we were reminded how working this program can lead to our living a life that is happy, joyous and free.

An Intergroup is a Service Board that provides support and representation for the OA meetings in a specific geographic area. NJIOA is the Intergroup for the Northern New Jersey group of OA meetings. The Intergroup Board acts as guardians of OA's 12 Steps, 12 Tradition and the 12 Concepts of OA Service. The NJIOA Intergroup meet monthly, plans Intergroup-wide events for all members, maintain the Intergroup treasury, receives donations from all the meetings in the Intergroup, decides how the donated funds are spent, maintain the NJIOA website, discusses issues and concerns affecting individual meetings, produces a quarterly newsletter called the OAsis, maintains a telephone Hotline as a public service, an includes a public information committee devoted to informing the general public about OA's existence and where to find OA meetings

Board positions are volunteer, and are kept for either one or two years. The following NJIOA Intergroup service positions are opening up in January 2025. Please consider doing service at the Intergroup Board level. No experience is necessary — only a desire to help carry the message of recovery, and to be of service to OA. Each individual OA meeting may send a Meeting Rep to the monthly Intergroup Board meeting, as a representative of their meeting, and to take back to their meeting news and information discussed at the Board meeting.

Why not come and observe the next NJIOA Intergroup meeting and see what goes on. NJIOA holds their Intergroup meetings once a month, at 7:30pm on the second Thursday of each month, and these meetings are wide open to anyone in fellowship. Find the meeting Zoom link on our website www.NJIOA.org. If you would like to get involved, or just get more information on one of the service positions, please contact the Intergroup Vice Chair, Susan S (201) 960-1995.

For more information and a detailed description of each position on the Intergroup Board please see the Policies Document posted on our website under the Intergroup tab.



You Can Start Today!

Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women from all walks of life who meet in order to help solve a common problem — compulsive overeating, which includes obesity, anorexia and bulimia. Whatever your problem with food, OA welcomes you. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer. www.oa.org.

GET STARTED HERE

You can stop overeating today. Here's how. Read "Our Invitation to You;" check out our website www.njioa.org; attend an OA meeting; and find yourself a sponsor to help get you started.

FIND A MEETING HERE

Link to a list of NJIOA meetings:

<https://www.njioa.org//meetings-events/meetinglist/>

Link to the full list of nationwide OA meetings:

www.oa.org/find-a-meeting

FIND A SPONSOR HERE

If you are ready to begin and would like to be matched with a sponsor, just go to our website and fill out the Find-A-Sponsor form linked here:

www.njioa.org/sponsorship/find-a-sponsor/



OUR INVITATION TO YOU

We of Overeaters Anonymous have made a discovery. At the very first meeting we attended, we learned that we were in the clutches of a dangerous illness and that willpower, emotional health, and self-confidence, which some of us had once possessed, were no defenses against it.

We have learned that the reasons for the illness are unimportant. What deserves the attention of the still-suffering compulsive overeater is this: There is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest our illness. The OA recovery program is patterned after that of Alcoholics Anonymous. As our personal stories attest, the Twelve Step program of recovery works as well for compulsive overeaters as it does for alcoholics.

Can we guarantee you this recovery? The answer is up to you. If you will honestly face the truth about yourself and the illness; if you will keep coming back to meetings to talk and listen to other recovering compulsive overeaters; if you will read our literature and that of Alcoholics Anonymous with an open mind; and, most important, if you are willing to rely on a power greater than yourself for direction in your life and to take the Twelve Steps to the best of your ability, we believe you can indeed join the ranks of those who recover. To remedy the emotional, physical, and spiritual illness of compulsive eating, we offer several suggestions, but keep in mind that the basis of the program is spiritual, as evidenced by the Twelve Steps.

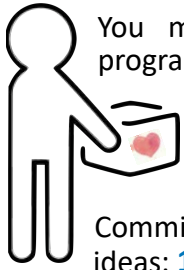
We are not a "diet" club. We do not endorse any particular plan of eating. In OA, abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards maintaining a healthy body weight. Once we become abstinent, the preoccupation with food diminishes and in many cases leaves us entirely. We then find that, to deal with our inner turmoil, we have to have a new way of thinking, of acting on life rather than reacting to it—in essence, a new way of living.


From this vantage point, we begin the Twelve Step program of recovery, moving beyond the food and the emotional havoc to a fuller living experience. As a result of practicing the Steps, the symptoms of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors are removed on a daily basis, achieved through the process of surrendering to something greater than ourselves; the more total our surrender, the more fully realized our freedom from food obsession.

"But I'm too weak. I'll never make it!" Don't worry; we have all thought and said the same thing. The amazing secret to the success of this program is just that: weakness. It is weakness, not strength that binds us to each other and to a higher power and somehow gives us an ability to do what we cannot do alone.

If you decide you are one of us, we welcome you with open arms. Whatever your circumstances, we offer you the gift of acceptance. You are not alone any more. Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous. Welcome home!

PLEASE CARRY THE MESSAGE



You might wish to tell someone about our program. Maybe send them a newcomer packet. Invite them to a meeting. We have beginner meetings and meetings to support members coming back from relapse. Contact the 12th Step Within Committee for more 12th Step information and ideas: 12stepwithin@njioa.org 

INTERGROUP MEETINGS

THE NJIOA INTERGROUP BOARD meets virtually, once a month, at 7:30pm, on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Anyone is welcome to attend these meetings — and we love first timers! The Board meets to discuss any NJIOA topics, Board business and finances are reviewed, and of course all our amazing workshops, retreats and events are planned at these meetings. To attend the next business meeting, just find the link on our website www.njioa.org on the Thursday Meetings page. If anyone would like to get a topic for discussion onto the agenda for the next Board meeting, please email our current Intergroup Chair, Jon K. at: chair@njioa.org

OUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

JON K Intergroup Chair	chair@njioa.org 973-652-1335
SUSAN S Intergroup Vice Chair	201-960-1995
GAIL S Corresponding Secretary	secretary@njioa.org 201-446-4519
OPEN POSITION Recording Secretary	
TONIANN A Intergroup Treasurer	treasury@njioa.org 973-945-0233
ILENE W Events Chair	events@njioa.org 908-803-4846
MARY ANN C OAsis Editor	oasis@njioa.org 973-568-2761
TONIANN A Website Chair	website@njioa.org 973-945-0233
ROBIN I InReach, 12th Step Within	12stepwithin@njioa.org 908-472-3735
TERRY P Public Information	publicinfo@njioa.org 862-812-4467
MARK H Telephone Hot Line	info@njioa.org 201-320-3025
ANDREA P PAARLIAMENTARIAN	973-985-8169
POLLY H B SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR	908-658-3390 TEXTS ONLY PLEASE

RECOVERY HELP LINE

Are you struggling and need to speak to someone? Do you live in a remote location and need contact? Please call our friendly volunteers below to remind you that you are not alone.

PLEASE try all these people until someone answers your call:

NAME	PHONE	AVAIL TIMES (ET)
ANDREA P	973-985-8169	4PM-6PM weekdays
ANDREA P	973-985-8169	8AM-6PM weekends
AUDREY C	201-819-5575	Texts only please
JANET B	201-248-8001	Until 9PM 
MARCY E	973-694-1274	ANYTIME
SUSAN L	973-704-6345	4PM-6PM weekdays
SUSAN S	201-960-1995	11AM-7PM
TERRY P	862-812-4467	9AM-11PM
TONIANN A	973-945-0233	Before 11PM

7th TRADITION

Thank you for your steady donations.

Your donations help our meetings, our Intergroup, our Region, and OA World Service. Email us here: treasury@njioa.org



Donate By Mail: To NJIOA
551 Valley Rd, PMB 206
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

Venmo or Zelle:
Search for [@NJIOA—Pay](https://venmo.com/NJIOA-Pay)

Paypal:
Go to www.NJIOA.org/donate

Donate on our Website:
www.NJIOA.org/donate

EDITORIAL NOTE

The Oasis is the quarterly newsletter of NJIOA (Northern Jersey Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous) published on our website. We receive wonderful submissions each month from our fellows. The opinions expressed in the publication are those of the authors, unaltered and in their own words, and do not represent those of OA as a whole. The theme for the Winter issue is: **“God and Me, Perfect Together.”** Deadline for submissions is December 1, 2021. Please email your articles to the Oasis Editors, here: OASIS@NJIOA.org. Or upload your articles electronically to the website here: www.NJIOA.org/submit-to-oasis.