

2016 WSBC Workshop Summary

Forum: A Carry-On Message

Leaders:

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Summary

The Region Chairs Committee presented the 2016 Forum titled “A Carry-On Message.” The forum theme corresponded with the focus of OA’s 2016 Strategic Plan, our responsibility to carry the message. The forum approach involved giving each table situations (scenarios) where the recovery message of OA could be shared. The delegates at the table were asked to respond to a series of questions designed to help them develop the message. They were also asked to devise a role-play to “share” the message. Each table then shared their role-play with another table, capturing feedback to help them improve the message or approach. The pair of tables was asked to select one of the scenarios to be “performed” for all delegates.

Feedback was captured on the response sheet. A summary of the response sheets for specific scenarios is provided below. Two responses were not identifiable (no scenario # provided); this is an improvement we can make for future instructions.

The region chairs provided each delegate with a new pocket card, *Carrying the Message*, for their use after WSBC.

Summary of Responses

Scenario: Health Care Professional – You are visiting your family doctor. They look at your history and notice an 80lb. weight loss in the last two years. Do you tell your doctor about OA and your experience? What can you offer the doctor?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? Twelve-Step program, like AA, Fellowship, no cost, no diet.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Step Two, Tradition Three, courage, willingness, honesty.

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What OA materials could you use to develop your message? Big Book, OA 12&12, *Lifeline*, groups.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? *Lifeline*, *Courier*, *Professional Presentation Folder*, website, fifteen questions

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Anonymity, not a lot of time, clear and concise message; don't invest in an outcome, it's not personal.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Patient needs to be clear and concise, need to say OA has no dues or fees, most doctors would not prompt with so many questions.

Scenario: Health Care Professional – Your doctor's medical assistant weighs you for your visit. They note that you have really lost weight since your last visit. They ask you "what did you do?" How do you respond?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes/No. Fear of rejection, shame about being in OA.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? It works, there is a solution, not just another diet club, not religious but spiritual, this addresses not only what I'm eating but why I'm eating.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Responsibility, unity, service, courage.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? *Courier*, fifteen questions, *Introducing OA to the Health Care Professional*, show my pictures, PI poster for office, *Lifeline*.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Same.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Anonymity, attraction.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. We thought the message was right on.

Scenario: Health Care Professional – You visit a dietitian or nutritionist for help with a food plan. You explain what you can/can't eat. They suggest a food plan that includes foods you currently abstain from. How do you let them know about OA? What information do you share with them?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes.

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Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? There are certain foods that we can't stop eating if we eat them at all because we are compulsive eaters. Obesity and overeating are in the diagnosis manual now. Give them material like the fifteen questions. Compare to alcoholism. Describe our personal experience with our trigger foods. Give them clear parameters, stand firm, take care of yourself.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Honesty, courage, no opinion on outside issues, OA is nonprofessional.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? Do's and Don'ts for talking with medical professionals, packet for the medical community, fifteen questions.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Fifteen questions, *Professional Presentation Folder*, *Courier*, your own history.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Respect for medical professional and yourself, Tradition Eleven (attraction rather than promotion), share your story, experience, strength, and hope.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Good respecting each other, watch our time, have patient bring up the support not the dietician.

Scenario: Health Fair – You have an information stand in the health fair. You are showing a newcomer video that repeats every ten minutes. What information do you provide? How do you approach those who stop to view the video?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes, but the message is more of a “soft sell” for people to recommend OA to their clients, friends, or family members.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? OA is here to assist people with all manifestations of compulsive eating, including overeating, anorexia, bulimia, excessive exercise, or diuretics. Since OA, I don't have to use food to cope with life.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Step Twelve, Tradition One, Tradition Three, Tradition Eleven.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? Fifteen questions, “before” picture pin, video for newcomers, *OA Members Come in All Sizes*.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Fifteen questions, local outreach flyer, *Courier*, *Professional Presentation Folder*.

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What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Avoid making assumptions about that person, attract rather than promote, avoid fanaticism, include all manifestations of the disease (inclusive message).

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Copy of *Courier* with local outreach information, *Professional Presentation Folder*, “would you be willing to put this info in your office?”

Scenario: Health Fair – Your service body has a booth at a health fair. Someone who stops by to ask for information keeps telling you “their friend” needs OA information. You suspect it’s really for themselves. What do you say to them? What information do you give them?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? Go over the newcomer packet, welcome the friend, share the fifteen questions. Talk about own story so know it works. Put self in shoes. Don’t say too much. Talk the benefit of meetings. Offer to go with them to meeting.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Step Two, hope, anonymity, say that what you hear, who you see, what they say stays in the meeting, OA is a safe place.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? *Carrying the Message*.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Fifteen questions, *Is Food a Problem For You?* tear-off, have a card and local meeting list.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Talking about self, “I” rather than “you,” pay attention that the original request for the “friend.”

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Need before and after pictures. Why do you keep coming back? Did the OAer speak too much without listening? What does “problem with food” mean?

Scenario: In the Elevator – You are in an elevator and someone sees your “WSBC” badge and ask what it stands for. (There are other OAer’s in the elevator with you.) How do you respond?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? This may only be a request for information not help/curiosity. May break the anonymity of others. At this level of service this may not be an issue we would answer. This is a one-time scenario. If a concern, remove your badge.

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Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? That we exist and are available for all types of eating disorders.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Anonymity, Tradition Five, purpose to carry the message, Step One, honesty. Is it simply curiosity or a real request for knowledge?

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? What OA materials could you share with the other person? Mention oa.org, fifteen questions, cards, phone book.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Anonymity. They may only be curious. Focus on "I" messages.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message.

Scenario: Family Member – Your mom/dad tried OA; it doesn't work. Mom/dad still needs OA. Do you mention it again?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes. Be the message. It's not for those who need it, it's for those who want it.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? You know what I do, you see what I do. OA is for those who are desperate.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Principles, desire to stop (Tradition Three), love, neutrality, not being emotionally involved, Tradition Seven, bring my support.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? OA isn't the only way. It's the way that works for me.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Leave around the fifteen questions, oa.org, *Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite* pamphlet, Our Invitation to You, *For Today* reflections, *Plan of Eating*.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Be the message. Talk with them regarding what didn't work. When I changed, she wanted to know how/why I changed (emotional sobriety), working the Twelve Steps.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message.

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Scenario: Family Member – You continually see your siblings struggle with the food and the many diets they try and discard for the next fad. They know you are in the program and they say that it works for you, but they aren't into all of that God stuff, or they are fine with being fat, or they just aren't that interested. They don't want to have to eat all of that expensive "health" food. They don't have the time to shop for food either. They get irritated with you because when you go to a restaurant, it takes a long time for you to order that "healthy stuff." To them it seems like too much a hassle. What do you say or do?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? We are the message. Now abstinent easiest way to live. Attraction rather than promotion. You can't save them. If it works for you as is, great it didn't work for me. Attraction to be the example, especially with siblings. OA only thing that keeps it off. It works, changed my life. Offer and then shut up.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Take what you want and leave the rest. God of my understanding, Step Two. Powerless, Step One. Food and life. Don't endorse. Tradition Three, only desire to stop eating compulsively. No dues or fees. Tradition Eleven, attraction rather than promotion.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? Our Invitation to You, don't endorse any particular diet, *Dignity of Choice*.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Fifteen questions, OA cards with name/website/phone number, leave materials that I read out.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Don't defend OA, speak program Principles. Don't preach, share.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. When you want to talk to someone, I'll be there. Use what works for me.

Scenario: Family Member – Your brother-in-law is obese. Based on your experience of his eating habits, you think he may be a compulsive overeater. What can you do?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes, be able to relate to the brother-in-law.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? I have found a new way of dealing with food and I'd like to share it with you.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Step Twelve, anonymity, Step Nine, principle love for others, Step Two, principle hope.

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What OA materials could you use to develop your message? Newcomer kit, oa.org website, *Is Food a Problem for You?* pamphlet.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Newcomer packet the next day, OA pamphlet now, *For Today*.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Anonymity, relate personal story.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Mention anonymity and other men at meetings, call tomorrow and ask to come to meeting, bring home a newcomer packet.

Scenario: Newcomer – A newcomer comes to a meeting and asks about the diet. That’s what he/she really wants. What do you say to them?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes, this is my/our responsibility. They may not come back if we do not. Focus on the thinking about food not the weight. Variety, could connect with the solution whatever their weight. Qualify, “still working on it.”

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? There is a solution; it is a journey. Not a diet and calories club. It is a lifestyle change; progress. Share definition of abstinence, healthy. You don’t have to be drawn to food anymore. We think about food differently than normies, craziness. Our food plan should fit our lifestyle. May I call you?

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Honesty, hope, faith, humility (approach them gently), Tradition Three, the only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? “Before” button, share our pics, newcomer packet with phone numbers, meeting lists with contact names and addresses.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? *Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite*, newcomer packet (take it out and talk about it), copy of OA3 if there is a spare especially the appendices, meeting list, phone numbers of people to call (who is available at specific times).

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Do you have questions for me? Listen to the newcomer. Keep coming back, six different meetings.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Newcomer is an anorexic, old timer “do’s” I thought about food all the time, I am working toward a healthy body weight for me. Old timer “don’ts” do it anyway, I know what will work for you, I have a diet for you, yes you need to believe in God, etc.

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Scenario: Struggling Sponsee – You have a sponsee who wants to try another Twelve-step program instead of OA. What do you say to the sponsee?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? Ask why. What's going on? Do you have something that is missing? What do you hope to find in that program instead of OA? Do you feel you have worked this program?

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Willingness, what are you willing to do? Honesty, perseverance, spiritual awareness/not just a diet, hope faith. Tradition Three, do you still have the desire?

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? OA 12&12, preamble is easier/softer way, *Tools of Recovery* pamphlet, what are you doing/willingness/plan of eating, Our Invitation to You.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Same.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Active listening, do not try to fix, avoid judgement, don't give medical advice. What is telling you HP/addict.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message:

Scenario: Struggling Sponsee – You are on the phone with your sponsee. For the last month, they mentioned that they've screwed up again and again. They just can't seem to get it right. They do everything you ask and then some. What guidance can you offer?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes. We do carry the message but we do that in different ways. We share our experience, strength, and hope, what we do and what works for us. What they do with that information is up to them and their HP. Ask them if they are ready for recovery. We carry the message not the sponsee.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? We must abstain from the foods and eating behaviors that cause you problems and work the Twelve Steps in order to recover. If I can't moderate, I can't eliminate.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, need to work all Twelve Steps in order. Hope is critical. It begins with honesty.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? OA 12&12, Big Book, Slippin' & Slidin' questions.

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What OA materials could you share with the other person? Same.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Ask them what actions you can take that would be helpful? Show them love, tolerance, patience, and understanding.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. A program of action not thinking. Maybe I'm not the sponsor for you. This is a program of action, what can you do today? Hope. What Step do you think would be most helpful? You're not alone.

Scenario: Significant Other – Your partner met you when you were heavy. They fell in love with you and have been with you for years. Now that you are losing weight more people notice you. You're concerned your partner feels threatened. In fact, they have been unhappy with the amount of time you spend in OA. How do you talk to them about this?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes, we are going to carry the message because we are the message and are always carrying the message.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? The OA program works because it brings us physical/emotional/spiritual recovery and serenity. We become happy, joyous, and free. We learn to take responsibility and communicate effectively.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Tradition Eleven, attraction rather than promotion, anonymity. Tradition One and Concept One, unity. Concept Eleven, humility. Concept Seven, balance. Concept Five, consideration.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? *To the Family*, OA 12&12, newcomer packet, *OA Members Come in All Sizes*.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Same. Leave them out so the partner will see them.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Love and tolerance, live and let live, let go and let God, attraction rather than promotion.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Spend more time on the solution rather than the problem. Acknowledge the spouse's concerns kindly but don't engage in argument.

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Scenario: OA members who aren't enthused about giving service – Your spouses don't have time; they go to work, they have family and friends. Why bother giving service? What do you say?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? If you value your recovery, never say no when asked to give service. It's a tool, a Step, a Principle, a Tradition. What are you afraid of? You are good enough. Go to any lengths. Start small. Keep OA alive.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Steps Two, Three, Twelve; Traditions Five, Seven; Concept Six but really all, responsibility, courage, willingness, ability, humility (really all of them).

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? *Carrying the Message* card, guide for sponsors, *Sponsoring Through the Twelve Steps*.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? OA 12&12, stories in our literature that emphasize service.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Invite them to an event with you. "I just don't have time." Do service at a meeting you already go to or do service electronically, write for *Lifeline* or your newsletter.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Make context clear at start otherwise feedback was all favorable.

Scenario: OA members who aren't enthused about giving service – One of your OA friends tells you he/she loves doing service but won't come to intergroup or serve on a committee because he/she just hates working with others, especially some of those in OA who are "so hard to get along with." What do you tell him/her?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes, by empathizing and sharing my own experience, strength, hope, and encouragement.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? Tell our own stories, empathizing and sharing my own experience, strength, hope, and encouragement.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Carry the message, principles above personalities, humility, acceptance, compassion, service, attraction rather than promotion.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? *Carrying the Message* card, *The Twelve Traditions of OA* pamphlet, OA 12&12, Big Book chapter "Working with Others."

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What OA materials could you share with the other person? Same.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? Anonymity, opportunity for gossip, compassion, invitation, no preaching, this form of service is not for everyone, it's your decision.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message.

Scenario: Friend – You are at a local sporting event and a friend you haven't seen in quite a while notices your changed appearance. "How did you do it?" they ask. What do you reply?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes.

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? Focus on how to live, joined a Twelve-Step program for food called OA, not a diet.

What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Hope, Step Two; courage, willingness, anonymity, Tradition Twelve; Tradition Five; honesty, Step One.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? *Carrying the Message* card, OA prospect card.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Fifteen questions, newcomer packet, oa.org website (podcasts), new prospect card with phone number.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? I can take her to a meeting.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message.

Scenario: As a volunteer in the community – Other volunteers you serve with notice that you are changing, losing weight, happier, more engaged. Finally, one brave member of the group asks "what are you doing?" How do you reply?

Is this a situation where you choose to carry the message? If not, why not? Yes, I would love to share. Can we find a time to talk about it? (To protect my anonymity, I arrange a private time. I am proud to break my anonymity and share my program.)

Briefly, what is the OA message you want to share in this scenario? My success story, I "used" food like alcohol. But now I have peace of mind. It's a spiritual program (it's a God thing). I belong to an organization that has really helped me recover from my food problem.

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What Steps/Traditions/Concepts and/or Principles of each do you need to consider in your message? Step One and Tradition Twelve.

What OA materials could you use to develop your message? *Carrying the Message* card, OA prospect card, *Just for Today*.

What OA materials could you share with the other person? Business card from intergroup with intergroup phone number and our phone number, *Lifeline*.

What should you pay special attention to in this scenario? (ex., anonymity, attract rather than promote, etc.) How do you address these challenges effectively? attract by telling my story.

After sharing this scenario with another table, identify any improvements you can make to your message. Get to the point quicker, don't mention outside weight loss.