

A = Abstinence

To obtain and maintain a healthy body weight.

Abstinence is life & death; black & white; it does not change!

Overeaters Anonymous Amended definition of abstinence and recovery:

(<https://www.oa.org/frequently-asked-questions/#7>)

WSBC Policy 1988b, Amended 2002, 2009 and 2011)

“Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program.”

Prior to amendments: Abstinence was a tool and then amended to the primary purpose.

This is from a June 9, 1995 letter, addressed to meeting secretaries from a delegate from the San Fernando Valley Intergroup.

“Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.”

“Abstinence is to the compulsive overeater what sobriety is to the alcoholic.

Abstinence is the goal of the program, not a tool.”

From the Big Book; pg. XXX = pg. 30 4th edition (or pg. xxviii = pg. 28 3rd edition),

5th paragraph “The Doctor’s Opinion.” Dr. Silkworth “The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence.

Then the very next paragraph sentence states;

This immediately precipitates us into a seething caldron of debate.” (Geez... We were warned!)

Bill Wilson stated, We must be ever vigilant to maintain the purity of our message,

"if AA is ever destroyed, it will be from within."

From the Big Book; pg. 39 & 43 If you want relief from cravings, you must abstain; if you want to remove the obsession, you must surrender to a Higher Power. “The overeater will be absolutely unable to stop compulsive-overeating on the basis of self-knowledge. His defense must come from a Higher Power.” Therefore, it’s Food out, God in. Otherwise it’s a diet.

Additional forms & recordings are available at ABCsofAbstinence.com they may be distributed freely so long as they are not sold or changed.

Outreach Contact: Cherie@ABCsofAbstinence.com Cell: 818~456~7710

Revised August 2016

This is my Definition of a diet: from the Big Book; pg. 31 Chapter 3 More About Alcoholism

“brief recovery, followed always by a still worse relapse.”

There is a bottom below the bottom you know!

- The disease centers in our minds, not our bodies.
- Alcoholics Anonymous celebrates 365 days of continuous (perfect) sobriety.
- Overeaters Anonymous presents candles for 365 days of continuous (perfect) abstinence (with an imperfect food plan).
- Abstinence is to be maintained perfectly like sobriety.
- It is life and death; black and white.
- It should only be changed after serious and lengthy discussion with your sponsor.
- Abstinence is **how** we eat. A food plan is **what** we eat.

Excerpt from; *Our Invitation to you*; “ We are not a “diet and calories” club. We do not endorse any particular plan of eating. We practice abstinence by staying away from eating between planned meals and from all individual binge foods. 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.”

- **Examples of successful abstinence for compulsive overeaters are:**
 - 3 meals a day, with Life in between.
 - 3 meals a day, and a floating fruit with Life in between.
 - 3 meals a day up to 2 snacks with Life in between.
 - No eating after dinner.
- **An example of abstinence for a bulimic may include:** No vomiting or binging.
- **An example of abstinence for an anorexic may include:** No skipping meals.

Note: As some members evolve in their recovery they may choose to add some of their alcoholic foods to their abstinence.

Create an abstinence YOU can live with under any circumstance Life will present to YOU. Be painfully realistic with YOUR abstinence that it is attainable, sustainable, and maintainable through the roller coaster of life. Remember we live Life on Life’s terms. Make it easy. YOUR Abstinence must be something you can do any place in the entire world, at any time under any circumstance. We can’t put the plug in the jug but we can slow the down the flow through Abstinence. Abstinence is our Primary Purpose; it is not a tool. When you are ready to apply *A Plan of Eating* this powerful tool is where you create your: weight-gaining, weight-maintaining, weight-losing meals. Please do exchange one prison for another.

After we have reviewed all 3 A,B, C forms you will have _____ minutes to complete each section.

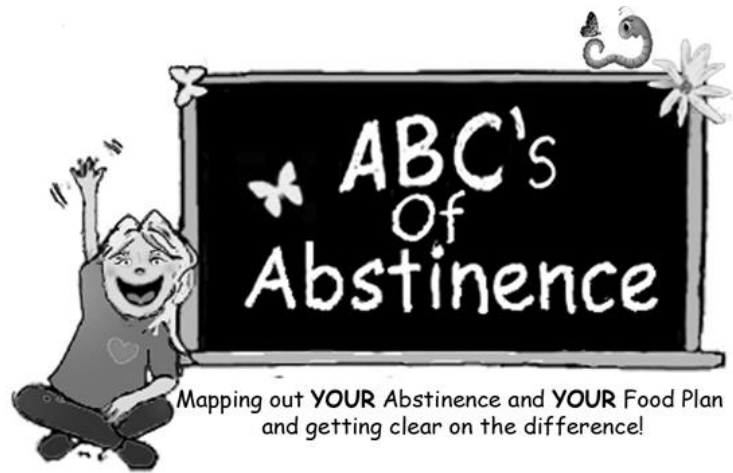
You will have the opportunity to share it later in the workshop and to ask questions.

It is strongly suggested that you discuss YOUR choices with your sponsor.

Please date and write YOUR abstinence in inside the back cover of your Big Book.

My abstinence began on: (Date) _____

My abstinence is:



B = Bowls, Bags, Baskets, Bars, & Boxes: Compulsive Foods and Behaviors

Alcoholic foods and behaviors; Foods and behaviors that make me crazy!
Foods and behaviors that set off the eater in me!

*From the Big Book; pg. XXX = pg. 30 4th edition (or pg. xxviii = pg. 28 3rd edition)
The Doctor's Opinion --Dr. Silkworth*

"They cannot start drinking [eating their "alcoholic" foods] without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity."

Definition of an Allergy:

An abnormal reaction to a normal substance.

Definition of an Obsession:

An idea that overcomes all other ideas to the contrary. An obsession makes you believe the lie.

From the Big Book; pg. 31 - 32 Chapter 3 More About Alcoholism

"We do not like to pronounce any individual as alcoholic (a compulsive overeater), but you can quickly diagnose yourself. Try some *controlled eating of your alcoholic foods and behaviors*. Try to eat them and stop abruptly. Try it more than once. It will not take long for you to decide, if you are honest with yourself about it. It may be worth a bad case of the jitters if you get a full knowledge of your condition."

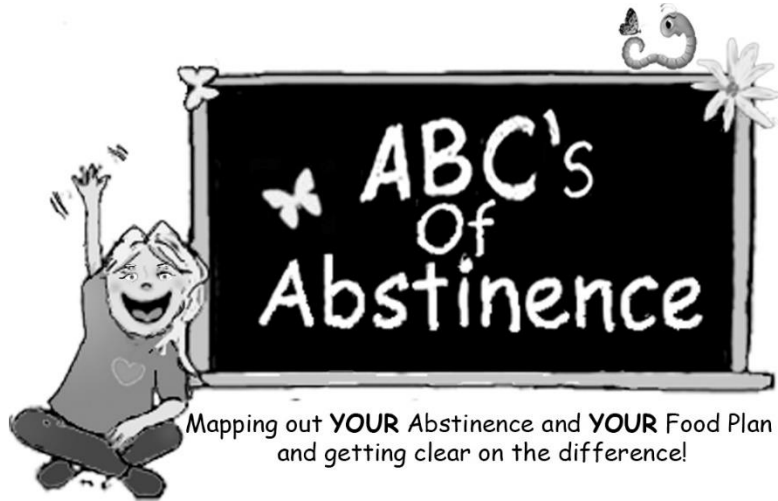
Identify and list all your alcoholic foods and behaviors;

Foods and Behaviors that make you crazy and sets off your addiction of compulsive overeating.

Just because we are talking about it doesn't mean that we have to change it.

We are just taking a "look". Obviously the list could continue forever, without limit!

List the Foods; that take you out of right here right now. Foods that make you crazy and sets off the eater in you. Foods that you can't stop thinking about. Foods that make you numb. Foods that coat your nerves. Foods that take the edge off. Only YOU know YOUR unique drug of choice!



C = Create YOUR Plan of Eating “Dignity of Choice”

To Obtain and Maintain a Healthy Body Weight for Life!

From the Overeaters Anonymous Pamphlet Dignity of Choice pg. 2

A plan of eating—our individual guide to nourishing foods in appropriate portions—is a tool that moves us toward achieving and maintain a healthy body weight. Using a plan allows us to deal with food in a calm, rational and balanced manner. We follow our plan one meal at a time, one day at a time.

In this way, we begin to eat according to our physical needs rather than our whims or feelings.

A plan, however, is only the beginning. No matter how good our plan of eating is and how supportive our meetings and OA friends are, we will experience lasting recovery only if we work the Twelve Steps.

Remember Abstinence is...

“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.”

Easiest to remember; **Abstinence is how we eat.** Refer back to “A” form for full definition of Abstinence

Plan of Eating is; A Tool

It is the first of the nine tools;

A Plan of Eating, Sponsorship, Meetings, Telephone, Writing, Literature, Action Plan, Anonymity, Service

“Some members refrain from certain foods, some eat all foods more moderately.”

“Only you, with proper guidance, can honestly appraise your own eating habits.”

A food plan is what you eat.

The food plan is ever-changing.

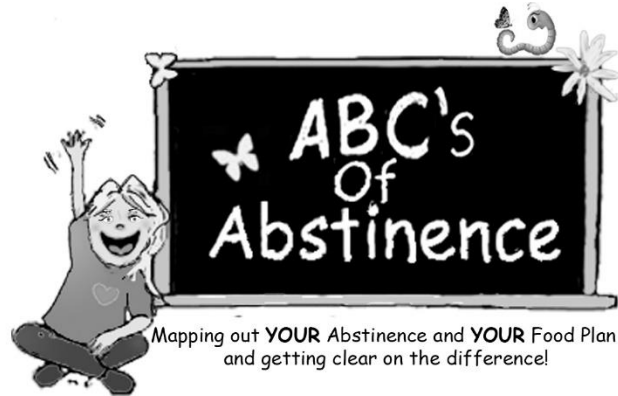
The food plan is weight-gaining, weight-losing, or weight-maintaining.

A plan of eating is a powerful tool that will aid you in obtaining and maintaining a healthy body weight for life.

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Revised August 2016



C = Create YOUR Plan of Eating “Dignity of Choice”

To Obtain and Maintain a Healthy Body Weight for Life!

A Plan of Eating:

“A plan of eating is a tool. It is an aid to achieving our goal. Ultimately in OA we determine our own plan of eating.” --*From the letter addressed to meeting secretaries on June 9, 1995.*

Honesty:

Honesty begins with the food on your plate. This program works for those who have the ability to be honest with themselves. It is our experience that honesty begins with the food on our plate. Is your plate a weight-gaining, weight-losing, or weight-maintaining plate?

Create:

Create a plan of eating that works for YOU: weight-gaining, weight-maintaining, weight-losing. Choose a plan of eating that allows you to participate in life without setting off your addiction of compulsive overeating. Select a plan of eating that supports your goal of obtaining and maintaining a healthy body weight.

From Tools of Recovery

There are no specific requirements for a plan of eating;
OA does not endorse or recommend any specific plan of eating, nor does it exclude the personal use of one. See the pamphlets Dignity of Choice and A Plan of Eating for more information visit the OA Bookstore at: <http://bookstore.oa.org/>)

Examples of successful food plans to obtain and maintain a healthy body weight are:

Dignity of Choice (OA pamphlet; brief description pg. 8)
Commercial food plans
Nutritionist food plan
Diabetic food plan
Sponsor suggested food plan

Dignity of Choice

Sample Plans of Eating

3-0-1 PLAN

- Three moderate, nutritious meals per day, with nothing in between, one day at a time.
- Don't eat those foods and food ingredients that you identify as causing cravings.
- Stop those eating behaviors that you identify as causing cravings.

BASIC PLAN #1

Breakfast

2 ounces protein
2 starch/grain servings
1 fruit serving
2 cups milk
or milk substitute

Lunch

4 ounces protein
2 starch/grain servings
1 fruit serving
2 vegetable servings
2 fat servings
(10-12 grams fat total)

Dinner

4 ounces protein
2 starch/grain servings
1 fruit serving
3 vegetable servings
2 fat servings (10-12 grams total)

BASIC PLAN #2

Breakfast

2 ounces protein
1 starch/grain serving
1 fruit serving
1 cup milk
or milk substitute

Lunch

3 ounces protein
1 starch/grain serving
1 fruit serving
3 vegetable servings
2 fat servings
(10-12 grams fat total)

Dinner

3 ounces protein
1 starch/grain serving
1 fruit serving
3 vegetable servings
2 fat servings
(10-12 grams total)

Bedtime

1 starch/grain serving
1 fruit serving
1 cup milk
or milk substitute

HIGH-CARBOHYDRATE PLAN

Breakfast

2 starch/grain servings
1 fruit serving
1 cup milk
or milk substitute

Lunch

2 ounces protein
2 starch/grain servings
1 fruit serving
3 vegetable servings
2 fat servings
(10-12 grams total)

Dinner

2 ounces protein
2 starch/grain serving
1 fruit serving
3 vegetable servings
2 fat servings
(10-12 grams total)

Bedtime

2 starch/grain servings
1 fruit serving
1 cup milk
or milk substitute

HIGH-PROTEIN PLAN

Breakfast

4 ounces protein
1 starch/grain serving
1 fruit serving
1 cup milk
or milk substitute

Lunch

4 ounces protein
4 vegetable servings
3 fat servings
(14-16 grams fat total)

Dinner

4 ounces protein
4 vegetable servings
3 fat servings
(14-16 grams total)

Bedtime

1 fruit serving
1 cup milk
or milk substitute

VERY LOW CARBOHYDRATE PLAN

Breakfast

4 ounces protein
1 fruit serving

Lunch

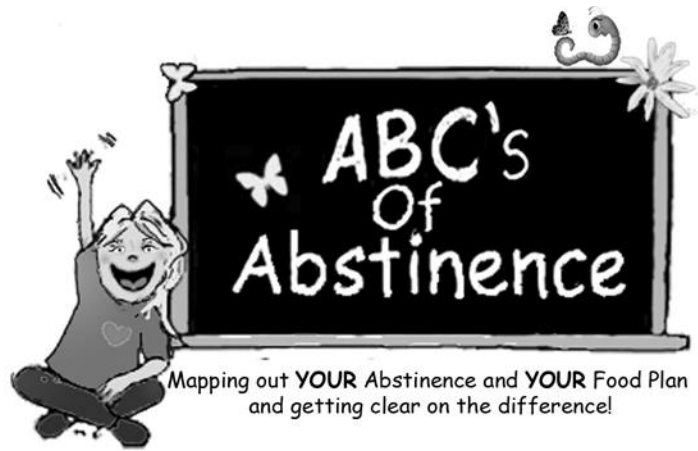
4 ounces protein
1 cup cooked vegetables
2 cups raw vegetables

Dinner

4 ounces protein
1 cup cooked vegetables
2 cups raw vegetables

3 fat servings (14-16 grams) throughout the day

Before choosing any of these plans, we urge you to consult with your sponsor and a health-care professional.



Part II: Disconnecting from YOUR Ego and Addiction and Connecting to YOUR Higher Power

Irritated vs Bitterly Discouraged

Big Book of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS – Chapter 3 MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM pg. 35 “So we shall describe some of the mental states that precede a relapse into drinking, for obviously this is the crux of the problem.”

Big Book of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS – Chapter 2 THERE IS A SOLUTION pg. 23 “Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body.”

We have just read the “Irritated” and “Bitterly discouraged” stories. (See reverse side of this page for reference). Break into small groups. What are the key feelings, thoughts, actions, attitudes, processes, etc. which lead to disaster again for Jim versus the miracle of Bill Wilson and the billions of people he continues to help today. Discuss, brainstorm and list our mental states that precede the wins and the relapses. Select one person to write down the groups comments. Have a group member share your group’s findings with the rest of the workshop.

Jim:

Bill W:

Our mental states that precede our wins and relapses:

Yet he got drunk again. We asked him to tell us exactly how it happened. This is his story: "I came to work on Tuesday morning. I remember I felt irritated that I had to be a salesman for a concern I once owned. I had a few words with the brass, but nothing serious. Then I decided to drive to the country and see one of my prospects for a car. On the way I felt hungry so I stopped at a roadside place where they have a bar. I had no intention of drinking. I just thought I would get a sandwich. I also had the notion that I might find a customer for a car at this place, which was familiar for I had been going to it for years. I had eaten there many times during the months I was sober. I sat down at a table and ordered a sandwich and a glass of milk. Still no thought of drinking. I ordered another sandwich and decided to have another glass of milk."

"Suddenly the thought crossed my mind that if I were to put an ounce of whiskey in my milk it couldn't hurt me on a full stomach. I ordered a whiskey and poured it into the milk. I vaguely sense I was not being any too smart, but I reassured as I was taking the whiskey on a full stomach. The experiment went so well that I ordered another whiskey and poured it into more milk. That didn't seem to bother me so I tried another."

Thus started one more journey to the asylum for Jim. Here was the threat of commitment, the loss of family and position, to say nothing of that intense mental and physical suffering which drinking always caused him. He had much knowledge about himself as an alcoholic. Yet all reasons for not drinking were easily pushed aside in favor of the foolish idea that he could take whiskey if only he mixed it with milk!

Whatever the precise definition of the word may be, we call this plain insanity. How can such a lack of proportion, of the ability to think straight, be called anything else?

You may think this an extreme case. To us it is not far-fetched, for this kind of thinking has been characteristic of every single one of us. We have sometimes reflected more than Jim did upon the consequences. But there was always the curious mental phenomenon that parallel with our sound reasoning there inevitably ran some insanely trivial excuse for taking the first drink. Our sound reasoning failed to hold us in check. The insane idea won out. Next day we would ask ourselves, in all earnestness and sincerity, how it could have happened.

Big Book of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS – Chapter 11 A VISION FOR YOU

pgs. 154-155pgs.

Bitterly discouraged, he found himself in a strange place, discredited and almost broke. Still physically weak, and sober but a few months, he saw that his predicament was dangerous. He wanted so much to talk with someone, but whom?

One dismal afternoon he paced a hotel lobby wondering how his bill was to be paid. At the end of the room stood a glass covered directory of local churches. Down the lobby a door opened into an attractive bar. He could see the gay crowd inside. In there he would find companionship and release. Unless he took some drinks, he might not have the courage to scrape an acquaintance and would have a lonely week-end.

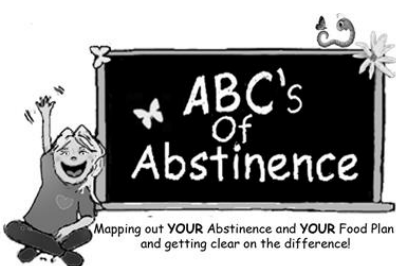
Of course he couldn't drink, but why not sit hopefully at a table, a bottle of ginger ale before him? After all, had he not been sober six months now? Perhaps he could handle, say, three drinks-no more! Fear gripped him. He was on thin ice. Again it was the old, insidious insanity-that first drink. With a shiver, he turned away and walked down the lobby to the church directory. Music and gay chatter still floated to him from the bar.

But what about his responsibilities-his family and the men who would die because they would not know how to get well, ah-yes, those other alcoholics? There must be many such in this town. He would phone a clergyman. His sanity returned and he thanked God. Selecting a church at random from the directory, he stepped into a booth and lifted the receiver.

His call to the clergyman led him presently to a certain resident of the town, who, though formerly able and respected, was then nearing the nadir of alcoholic despair. It was the usual situation; home in jeopardy, wife ill, children distracted, bills in arrears and standing damaged. He had a desperate desire to stop, but saw no way out, for he had earnestly tried many avenues of escape. Painfully aware of being somehow abnormal, the man did not fully realize what it meant to be alcoholic.*



*this refers to Bill's first visit with Dr. Bob. These men later became co-founders of A.A.



...Life's a dance when you learn the 12 Steps!

Identify a situation in your personal or work life that is currently a source of resentment, fear, sadness or anger. Write a **brief** statement describing the situation and indicate why it concerns you.

Step 1: *We admitted we were powerless over food – that our lives had become unmanageable.*

In what ways were you powerless over the situation or condition, and how is it showing you the unmanageability of your life?

Step 2: *Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

How do you see your Higher Power as assisting you in being restored to sanity?

Step 3: *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God **as we understood him**.*

How does being willing to turn your life over to the care of God assist you in dealing with this?

Step 4: *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

What character traits have surfaced (e.g., fear of abandonment or authority figures, control, seeking approval, rescuing, taking appropriate responsibility, not expressing feelings)?

Step 5: *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

Admit your wrongs to God, yourself and another human being.

Step 6: *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*

Are you entirely ready to work in partnership with God to remove your ineffective behaviors? If not, explain why.

Step 7: *Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.*

Can you humbly ask God for help in removing your shortcomings? If not, what stands in your way?

Step 8: *Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.*

Make a list of people being harmed.

Step 9: *Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

What amends are necessary and how will you make them?

Step 10: *Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.*

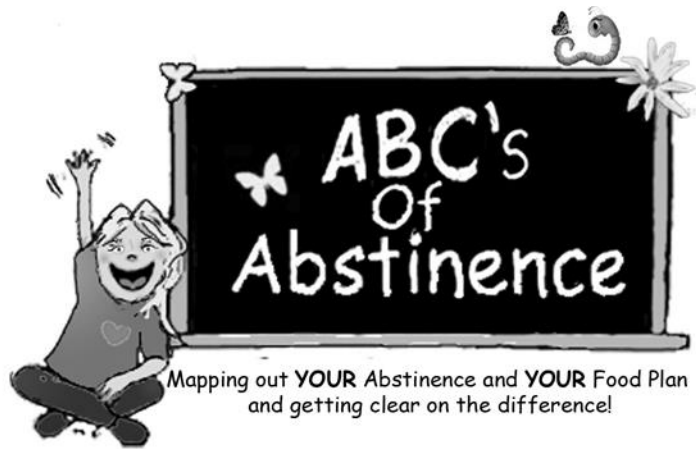
Review the above steps to make sure nothing has been overlooked.

Step 11: *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God **as we understood him**, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.*

Take a moment for prayer and meditation, asking for knowledge of God's will for you. What did you discover?

Step 12: *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

How can your understanding and spiritual guidance assist you in dealing with this problem? How can you working through this problem help others? _____



ABC's Recovery Quotient

Safe from Relapse with Your Personal Recovery Quotient

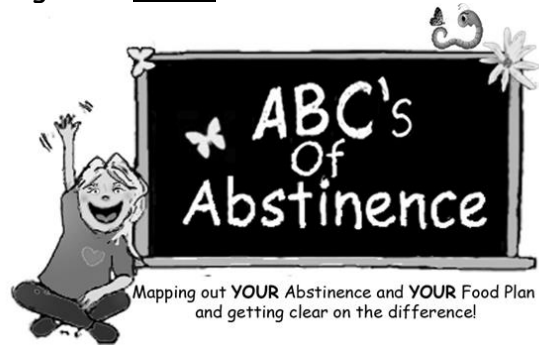
List of what needs to be done to WIN!

Are you doing all you can, Or Are you doing all that's required?

List	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
12 Steps							
9 Tools (A plan of eating, Sponsorship, meetings, Telephone, Writing, Literature, Action Plan, Anonymity, Service.) OR 12 Tools (Exercise, Crying, Rest, Weigh-in)							
Minimum of 5 - 7 meetings per Week							
Call Sponsor							
Be a Sponsor							
Talk to New Comers / Thank Speaker							
Pitch, Lead, Speak at meetings							
Workshops: Go to / Give one							
Prayer & Meditation (timed)							
Service Positions (always have one)							
7 Day Food Plan							
Tell someone what I'm keeping to myself							
Weigh once a week							
Listen to tapes							
Grocery Shop							

Weigh & Measure Food							
Write down food/ Commit (to someone, e-mail)							
No Padding meals							
Exercise 3 times per week							
Don't listen to my Disease Insane ideas coming to me in the form of common sense							
Identify and plan for high-risk situations. Plan what you will say, do, and have several back-up strategies in case one doesn't work.							
Statements to defend and reinforce my recovery when my disease starts talking.							
Identify the situations and places that are dangerous for your recovery: Movies, fast food, unplanned food, airplanes, vacations, restaurants. Plan ahead how you will cope with each of the above situations							
3 people I've committed to call when my food gets weird.							
Focus on the End Result; Do not look at wear your feet are at!!!							
To me my recovery took and to this day TAKES A VILLAGE i.e.; 12-steps, seminars, workshops, therapist, self-help books, church, gym, nutritionist, T.V. shows. Web forums, commercial weight loss programs, doctor, lawyer, Indian chiefs! Everyone's village is different. It TAKES A VILLAGE! Who is in your village; _____ _____ _____							

The "ABC's" of Mapping out YOUR Abstinence and YOUR Food Plan and getting clear on the difference!
The ABC's of disconnecting from YOUR addiction and connecting to YOUR Higher Power



Help Me Carry a Better 12 Step Message

Your opinion and feedback is very important to me.

Please take a few minutes to fill out this form, as your responses will enable me to provide the best possible experience to future participants. THANK YOU!

What hopes did you have when you came here today? _____

Was the information beneficial? How? _____

What did you like *least* about the workshop? _____

What did you like *best* about the workshop? _____

How can the workshop be improved? _____

Do you feel the workshop was worth your time and money? _____

Would you refer this and future workshops to others? _____

Would you like to be notified of future OA workshops & events? _____

Would you like to be reminded (with recording access) of **Team 12 Step Outreach Calls with Cherie M.**? _____

NAME: _____ EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

Date: _____ Location: _____ Intergroup: _____

Please feel free to write additional comments on the back of this form. I welcome all feedback! THANK YOU! ~Cherie M.

<p>"Team 12 Step Outreach Call with Cherie M".</p> <p>Is a weekly standing time that I have set aside so that I am easy to get a hold of and be there for YOU in any way that I can be of service. It's small, intimate, safe. Details are noted below.</p> <p>Hope YOU join us! YOU are always in my thoughts, ~Cherie M.</p> <p>To attend the next Team 12th Step Group Outreach call with Cherie M. Dial: 1-712-432-3100 Listen for instructions then enter Code: 208497 Every Monday at 5:00-5:30pm (PST). All will be notified via the BCC (blind copy) reminder email loop of recordings, dates & schedule changes. To join the email loop email your request at Cherie@ABCsofAbstinence.com To mute or unmute your own line; Use the mute button on your cell phone. For land lines enter 4* to mute or unmute. Shortly after each call I will make the Team 12th Step Group Outreach calls with Cherie M. recording available to those on the email loop. There are currently over 70+ recordings</p>	<p>"Team 12 Step Outreach Call with Cherie M".</p> <p>Is a weekly standing time that I have set aside so that I am easy to get a hold of and be there for YOU in any way that I can be of service. It's small, intimate, safe. Details are noted below.</p> <p>Hope YOU join us! YOU are always in my thoughts, ~Cherie M.</p> <p>To attend the next Team 12th Step Group Outreach call with Cherie M. Dial: 1-712-432-3100 Listen for instructions then enter Code: 208497 Every Monday at 5:00-5:30pm (PST). All will be notified via the BCC (blind copy) reminder email loop of recordings, dates & schedule changes. To join the email loop email your request at Cherie@ABCsofAbstinence.com To mute or unmute your own line; Use the mute button on your cell phone. For land lines enter 4* to mute or unmute. Shortly after each call I will make the Team 12th Step Group Outreach calls with Cherie M. recording available to those on the email loop. There are currently over 70+ recordings</p>
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