



**OVEREATERS  
ANONYMOUS®**

**Virtual Services Committee**

## **OA VIRTUAL NEWS**

**4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2017 – Vol. 4**

### **Virtual Community**

This has been a very busy quarter for the Virtual Services Trustee. I've attended our monthly Virtual Services Conference Committee Meetings, sharing news from World Service and bringing our concerns to them. The Board of Trustees meeting took place in August, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I substituted for another trustee as the liaison to the Region Chairs Committee. It became so clear to me that virtual groups and service boards are missing a valuable layer of service, because we don't have a region or a chair. Much work is placed on the conference committee and the trustee that face-to-face service bodies handle.

The exciting news is that we will be able to present a bylaw amendment motion at the 2018 WSBC and ask the fellowship to allow a region-like entity for virtual OA. We will keep you posted on our progress. If you have thoughts on this, please let me know; your input is valuable and appreciated.

I also attended the 'A Vision For You' convention in Newark, NJ in September. I was so impressed that somewhere between 750 and 800 OA members were there, and the recovery was amazing. They have many meetings and their primary focus is *to carry the message of*

recovery through the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Their meetings are listed on the OA website under phone meetings.

There is a huge opportunity for OA presence on social media. The first group to register on Facebook is "Overeaters Anonymous Heart to Heart Meeting" (99023), and I anticipate that more will follow suit. They post a periodic topic and members share on that topic.

The region chairs have requested to be notified whenever a meeting registers or deregisters at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org). Since we have no 'region chair', the conference committee is assisting with this task, welcoming new meetings and extending our hand to help in whatever way possible. The growth of OA via virtual meetings is amazing!

Please remind your groups that while they may not have noticeable expenses, OA does. Virtual services also maintains a website which we hope you visit often, it features good, usable information for our members.

Remember that the goal of OA's strategic plan is to promote OA's unity worldwide. We are diverse in our meetings, but unified in the Twelve Steps as a pathway to recovery! What can we all do as individuals and a group to promote unity worldwide?

Gerri H.—Virtual Services Trustee

**"OA Virtual News"** is the quarterly newsletter of the Virtual Service Conference Committee of Overeaters Anonymous. The newsletter presents experiences and opinions of individual OA members and is not to be attributed to Overeaters Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Overeaters Anonymous or by the VSCC. Comments, suggestions, and articles sharing your personal experience, strength, and hope of recovery in the OA fellowship are encouraged. Articles submitted will not be returned and are subject to editing for clarity, brevity and anonymity.

# We Are a World Fellowship

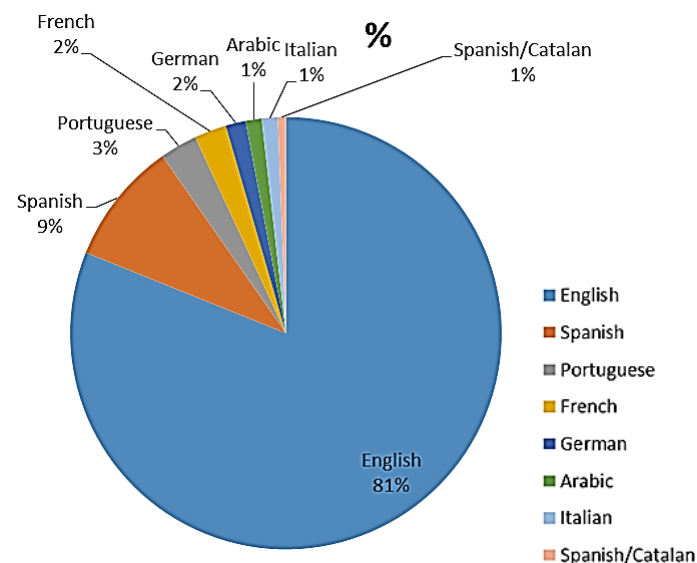
How many virtual meetings does OA have worldwide? What languages do we speak at our meetings? Remembering that our strategic plan is about “Growing Recovery Worldwide” it is important to know about the languages that we speak at phone and online meetings.

## Phone Meetings Around The World

As of October 1<sup>st</sup> of 2017 we had 327 phone meetings in eight languages, the most frequent language is English with 265 meetings (81%) of all phone meetings, second is Spanish with 30 meetings (9,2%) and third is Portuguese with 9 meetings (2,8%).

Dora P.—VSCC Delegate Co-Chair

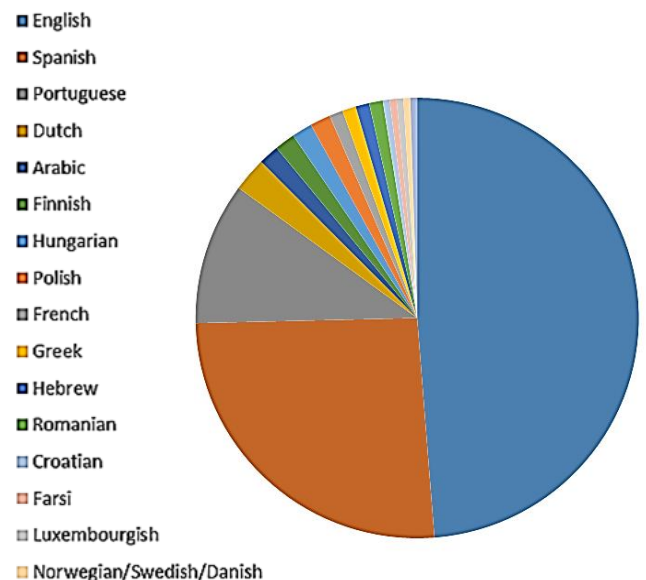
| Language        | Number of Meetings | Percentage |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| English         | 265                | 81%        |
| Spanish         | 30                 | 9.2%       |
| Portuguese      | 9                  | 2.8%       |
| French          | 8                  | 2.4%       |
| German          | 5                  | 1.5%       |
| Arabic          | 4                  | 1.2%       |
| Italian         | 4                  | 1.2%       |
| Spanish/Catalan | 2                  | 0.6%       |



## Online Meetings Around The World

As of October 1<sup>st</sup> of 2017 we had 201 online meetings in 16 languages, the most frequent language is English with 98 meetings (49%) of all phone meetings, second is Spanish with 52 meetings (26%) and third is Portuguese with 21 meetings (10%).

| Language          | Number of Meetings | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| English           | 98                 | 49%        |
| Spanish           | 52                 | 26%        |
| Portuguese        | 21                 | 10%        |
| Dutch             | 5                  | 2 %        |
| Arabic            | 3                  | 1 %        |
| Finnish           | 3                  | 1 %        |
| Hungarian         | 3                  | 1 %        |
| Polish            | 3                  | 1%         |
| French            | 2                  | 1%         |
| Greek             | 2                  | 1%         |
| Hebrew            | 2                  | 1%         |
| Romanian          | 2                  | 1%         |
| Croatian          | 1                  | 0.5%       |
| Farsi             | 1                  | 0.5%       |
| Luxembourgish     | 1                  | 0.5%       |
| Norwegian/Swedosh | 1                  | 0.5%       |
| Spanish/English   | 1                  | 0.5%       |



# What to Do When Someone Isn't Honoring Traditions

## At an OA Meeting

Virtual meetings are my home at Overeaters anonymous. I know that I am alive because these meetings were there for me when I was desperately looking for help. I was fat, suffering with lung problems and I could not stop eating. I know that I needed these meetings for my recovery, and also need to take care of the meetings that I attend.

I need to remember how to respect the traditions, and my part in protecting them. When I was a newcomer to OA service, I found a free downloadable document, with helpful guidelines for disruptive members. You can find it at [https://oa.org/files/pdf/disruptive\\_behavior.pdf](https://oa.org/files/pdf/disruptive_behavior.pdf). It has many helpful suggestions for difficulties at virtual meetings!

Sometimes a newcomer comes to a virtual meeting and doesn't know about our group conscience. If a group doesn't mention particular foods, give advice or crosstalk, they may not understand. The second tradition means that God is in charge, but occasionally we need to step up and help the newcomer to understand about unity. When someone

unintentionally doesn't honor a tradition, we can call for the serenity prayer and remind members of the group conscience. Sometimes the person isn't a newcomer but we never know when we are in a 'virtual room'. Everyone is welcome, but a disruptive member can be removed as a last resort.

While we may have received help with other addictions through other fellowships, I need to remember that we *carry the message* of OA recovery in OA meetings. When someone does speak of other things, I can gently remind them of OA's singleness of purpose; it is the responsibility of all to defend the traditions with love and respect.

Tradition Seven reminds us all that we are self-supporting through membership contributions. There are many ways a virtual meeting can provide an opportunity for members to easily contribute. If I don't help my meeting to be self-supporting, I'm not honoring Tradition Seven.

Actually writing this allows me to practice Tradition Five by helping newcomers and carrying the message, our primary purpose. And remember, we all need to keep OA alive. There are many documents on OA's website to help us with our recovery, service and strong meetings.

Thanks—Dora



**Want to share your 'virtual stories' of experience, strength and hope in OA Virtual News? Or do you need to announce Virtual Events? Please email [oavsc@hotmail.com](mailto:oavsc@hotmail.com)**



# Phone Meeting Formats

## An Example of Meeting Autonomy

Phone meetings, like face-to-face meetings, need a format to keep the meeting running smoothly. Phone meetings can have different formats based on the type of meeting (OA literature, speaker, Big Book, relapse, etc.) and the ideas of the people involved. Finding a format that works for a given phone meeting can be a bit like herding cats because the people who attend the phone meeting and attend the business meeting/group conscience meeting (usually a small subgroup of the membership) have definite ideas of what they want in the format: changes in wording, adding service positions, tweaking something to get more time for sharing, etc. Sometimes the request for changes comes from hearing something on another meeting that they like or something on their meeting that they don't like. Some make sense logically, like asking for volunteer newcomer greeters before you ask newcomers to introduce themselves rather than the other way around.

As a meeting leader and secretary of a phone meeting myself, I've been on a lot of these business meetings and have helped several phone meetings edit their formats. Some of the changes are routine language updates (like to the OA Preamble) from World Service that meetings are not aware of because they are not individually represented at World Service; this is an area where having a Virtual Services Trustee and the VSCC can be helpful in getting the word out. Of course, that assumes that the

phone meeting keeps World Service advised on who their contact person is (typically the meeting secretary) and the meeting secretary is on the meeting when the business meeting is scheduled (which can mean rescheduling the business meeting).



There was a time when I agreed to lead a business meeting for a meeting that was between secretaries, and I ended up editing their format for them; they had several problems they agreed needed fixing. We could come to agreement quickly because there were only three of us on the business meeting.

One issue that comes up is trying to get more time for sharing into a one-hour meeting. As a twelve-step meeting, we want to keep the Steps and Traditions as part of the format, mention 7<sup>th</sup> tradition donations to WSO, sponsors, newcomers,

and then there are readings that each meeting wants. I know several phone meetings that looked at and rejected the WSO's suggested phone meeting format because it didn't allow enough time for sharing.

Suggestions to phone meetings:

Keep WSO updated on your meeting secretary contact info! See [OA.org](http://OA.org) for meeting secretary info that can be helpful (link below).

Have regular business/group conscience meetings (monthly or quarterly) and ask if people want any format changes. Sometimes members don't know they have a say. Ask meeting moderators if anything is clunky or could be streamlined or reworded.

Jean B.—Monday Night Phone Meeting

<https://oa.org/groupsservice-bodies/groups/secretary-materials>

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## WhatsApp in Region 9

Region 9 is very excited about starting two virtual meetings conducted via "WhatsApp." These meetings are serving the members in our region and others in the virtual world of OA. Each meeting starts with readings (serenity prayer, suggestions for newcomers, Steps and Traditions, guidelines, 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, sharing instructions).

Then the leader for the week shares their experience, strength, and hope on a topic they've chosen. Each meeting is then "open" for 24 hours. During that time, sharing can be done via text or via voice message. There is a mixture of both types of sharing.

We have administrators for each meeting who help with questions or concerns during and after the meeting time. Because the app itself limits the group number, each meeting can have only 256 members at any one time. But some people come into and out of the "group" during the meetings.

We are trying out a "group conscience" method where we have a smaller group of chosen representatives who take suggestions and ideas from all members. Then they discuss and arrive at a group conscience decision for the meetings. We are trying this as we realized conducting a GC meeting with 256 people would be quite a feat.

After the sharing ends, there is a closing. We do not use the group for any "chatting" between meetings.

We have had a few glitches and some issues to deal with, but those have been handled well by the meeting administrators. We are all learning together about this process as it unfolds.

The responses we've received about these two meetings have been very positive and encouraging.

We plan on sharing more about the particulars of what we've learned about conducting these types of meetings once we have more experience.

What an amazing experience to attend two meetings a week with so many others in our region and around the OA world. These virtual meetings "at one's fingertips" offer a wonderful opportunity for carrying, sharing, and receiving the message of OA recovery.

Anonymous





## Carrying the Message Via Social Media

I love service! I do, and one of the things I love most is helping people make new connections. In 2015 the World Service Business Conference made changes to OA's Social Media Policy allowing us *to carry the message* in new places and spaces around the world, and I jumped in with both feet by creating not one, but two informational Facebook Pages. This service has had some challenging moments, but more so, it has been a wonderful experience to have front row seats in this new adventure.

The initial concerns from others seemed to be focused on having to moderate conversations, but in more than a year I have only have to act as a moderator two times. Our main focus is to offer up information to newcomers and old-timers alike—one link at a time that can be read and shared. This is a program of attraction not promotion, so we seek to provide helpful pathways to both pages and documents hosted on OA.org. One of the many wonders of this service has been to see what people choose to share, and where.

In this service I've also found a good many surprises. Questions from people around the world: 'How to find meetings?' 'How does OA work?' And then there's the occasional, 'How can my group or service body create a page?' Some inquiries are general while others have been quite specific. Once I received a note from someone trying to find a sponsor in Region 9 and with a bit of research I was able to direct them to the region website's link for finding sponsors. Cool. They thanked me and it was a wonderful way to give service.

Another time we were contacted by someone who was in poor health and had not been able to get to a meeting in a long while. During this interaction I was able to introduce them to telephone and online meetings. Unfortunately in some places OA's Virtual Services are a well-kept secret. This internet conversation just so happened to fall on the day of one of our Holiday Marathons, so I encouraged them to dial in, and so did I. Our HP loves this sort of serendipity in service, and so do I.



Recently I was contacted by someone who had been doing service as a moderator in a Facebook Group, and wanted to know more about OA Virtual Services. Things in this corner of the world have been changing so quickly that we have had ongoing conversations filled with revelations. They had a desire to create a Facebook Group Meeting, and it was my great honor to introduce them to our trusted servant and Trustee Gerri—and now we have the very first registered OA Facebook Meeting “[Overeaters Anonymous Heart to Heart Meeting](#)” (group #99023).

OA truly is a worldwide fellowship, and I am continually amazed and humbled to be part of it. Thank you for giving me a place to serve.

Dawn K.

[Overeaters Anonymous YP](#)

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## 2017 OA Holiday Marathons

8:00 am EST (-4:00 GMT) until midnight  
Phone Bridge 712-432-5200; Pin 4285115#

### Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup> – Columbus Day

Experiencing Adventure in the Program

### Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup> – Halloween

A Clean Program Means Nothing to Hide

### Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> – Veteran's Day

Respecting the Power of Our Disease

### Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> – I.D.E.A Day

Intl Day of Experiencing Abstinence–We Are Not Alone

### Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> – Thanksgiving

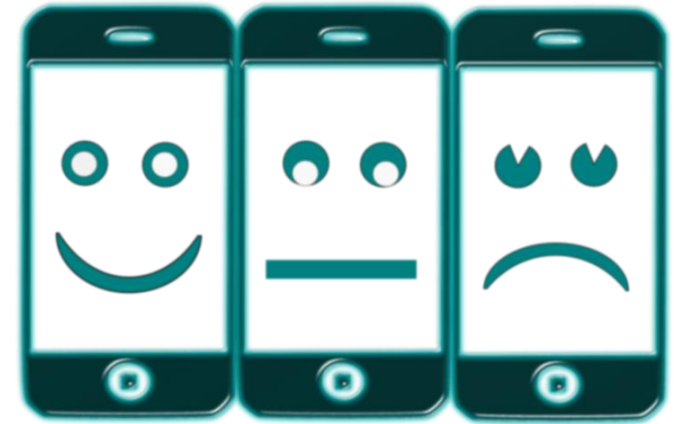
Grateful for Everyday to Be the First Day of the Rest of Our Lives

### Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Step Within Day & Hanukkah Begins

Shining the Light on Those Who Still Suffer in Program

### Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve

Honoring Our Birth in Recovery



### Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Day

Experience Life with Joy

### Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup> – Kwanzaa & Boxing Day

The Happiness of Sharing and Building a Community of Recovery

### Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> – New Year's Eve

Looking Back and Being Accountable for Our Actions

### Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup> – New Year's Day

Embracing and Celebrating Another Great Year to Be Healthy



**OVEREATERS  
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**Virtual Services Committee**

Visit our webpage : <http://www.oavirtualservices.org/>

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**The OA Responsibility Pledge: “Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all those who share my compulsion; for this, I am responsible.**

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## Do you want to subscribe to OA Virtual News?

<http://www.oavirtualservices.org/newsletter-2/>

## Why form a Virtual Service Board?

- Virtual Service Boards allow virtual groups to have a voice and a vote in what happens to OA as a whole by attending the World Service Business Conference (WSBC)
- Send motions to WSBC
- Set up website presence ·Member phone list
- Moderator training
- Communication – Keep WSO current about meetings and act as liaison to WSO
- Let people know your meeting exists with bulletin boards / community calendars / newspapers
- Sponsor and arrange workshops, marathons, and other special events
- Deal with common problems
- Help to create and support a newsletter
- Allow the Fellowship as a whole to see that members of virtual meetings have strong recovery and are a part of Overeaters Anonymous

## VIRTUAL SERVICE BOARDS

| VSB                                  | WEBPAGE   | E MAIL   | NUMBER of MEETINGS | LANGUAGE   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------|------------|
| 12step4coes                          | <a href="http://www.oa12step4coes.org">http://www.oa12step4coes.org</a>                                   | <a href="mailto:marianne.praise.him3@gmail.com">marianne.praise.him3@gmail.com</a> | 41                 | English    |
| OA HOW Two Hour Format Phone Meeting | <a href="http://oahowmeetings.squarespace.com">http://oahowmeetings.squarespace.com</a>                   | <a href="mailto:oahowmeetings@gmail.com">oahowmeetings@gmail.com</a>               | 4                  | English    |
| Spiritual Fitness & Serenity VSB     | <a href="http://www.spiritualfitnessandserenity-oa.com">http://www.spiritualfitnessandserenity-oa.com</a> | <a href="mailto:sfsvsboa@gmail.com">sfsvsboa@gmail.com</a>                         | 10                 | English    |
| Perseverancia VSB                    |   | <a href="mailto:anasofiavelez@gmail.com">anasofiavelez@gmail.com</a>               | 3                  | Spanish    |
| Global Online VSB                    |   | <a href="mailto:emmajanelek@gmail.com">emmajanelek@gmail.com</a>                   | 4                  | English    |
| CCA Online VSB                       | <a href="http://www.ccaonline.com.br">http://www.ccaonline.com.br</a>                                     | <a href="mailto:doramap@hotmail.com">doramap@hotmail.com</a>                       | 8                  | Portuguese |
| 712 VSB of Overeaters Anonymous      | <a href="http://oaphonemeetings.org">http://oaphonemeetings.org</a>                                       | <a href="mailto:chair@oaphonemeetings.org">chair@oaphonemeetings.org</a>           | 56                 | English    |
| Ebony OA VSB                         |   | <a href="mailto:surfsupnowgirl@yahoo.com">surfsupnowgirl@yahoo.com</a>             | 2                  | English    |

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