What is Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous?

Current Definition:
“Abstinence 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.”

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Let’s look more closely.

- What does “refrain” mean to you?
- What does “compulsive food behaviors” mean to you?
- What does the word “obsession” mean to you?
- What does the word “compulsion” mean to you?

Can YOU be completely honest about the food?
I am struggling with my Plan of Eating. Now what?

• What if I have an extra piece of fruit after I have finished my meal?

• What if I am still frequently weighing myself and looking at myself in a mirror?

• What if I can’t make up my mind about what I am going to have at the next meal even though I had a plan for it?

• What if I am picking up the food (bingeing or slipping) about every three weeks with “abstinence” in between?

• How can I get out of this cycle?

“I” can’t! - this is the whole point of the program.
Each person defines his or her own plan of eating

• It’s suggested we define our own plan of eating? Does that work for you?

• What part does fear play in not liking the suggestions from your sponsor or health-care professional?

• What does “contempt prior to investigation” mean?

• Will it take more will power? More research?

Are you ready to “give up”? To Surrender?
We are either abstinent or we are not!

- How can we get true abstinence?
- Am I honest about my food and my food behaviors?
- Am I willing to go to any lengths to get abstinent and stay abstinent?

For true freedom from compulsive eating, honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness are essential!
Who should decide what you should eat?
What works for you and why?
Do you eat what your sponsor believes you eat?

Suggestions:
- Following your doctor/nutritionist’s plan.
- A plan from the *Dignity of Choice* pamphlet.
- Using a weighed and measured plan.
- Handing your plan over to HP each day.
- Making a plan for the day -- ahead of time.
- Other . . .
A plan of eating is more than just what you eat!

- What time do you have your meals? Do you have definite meal times?
- How much do you eat? Who is the judge of “moderate”?
- Do you sit or stand to eat?
- How fast do you eat?
- Are you enjoying the moment or do you read, listen to the radio, text or watch TV while you eat?
- Do you eat in your car? Or eat on the way to . . . ?
Do you determine your own “healthy body weight”?
Do you find yourself obsessing about your weight and body image?
How often do you weigh yourself?
Are you dissatisfied with your body image?
Do you find yourself regularly doing more exercise than you had planned?
How do you stop these thoughts?

Are you ready? Are you tired of the same thoughts week after week? Are you willing to hand them over?
Higher Power

- What if I haven’t got a Higher Power?
- How can I make contact with a Higher Power?
- What does “act as if” mean?
- Am I scared to let go my old ideas?

How can I turn my fear into faith?
The importance of a sponsor

- How can your sponsor help you with your abstinence?

- How can a sponsor help you with your plan of eating?

- Are you completely honest with your sponsor so they can help you?
The value of service

- Will service get you abstinent?
- How can doing service help you to stay abstinent?
- Can you think of a time when service helped you stay abstinent?
- What kind of service helps you stay abstinent?
The importance of meetings

- Why do you go to meetings?
- How can going to meetings help you to stay abstinent?
- Are you sometimes distracted when others are sharing?
- How can you help someone else with their abstinence in a meeting?
Action plan - HALT

• Why is it important not to get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired?

• How long does it take you to realize you are in this space and you need to take action?

• What can you do to take care of yourself (other than eat)?
Reasons why abstinence is important!

- Progressiveness of the disease - it gets worse!
- We die without it - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly!
- Helps emotional and spiritual recovery!
- Improves health - both physical and mental!
- So we can learn better attitudes and get a life that wasn’t possible while we were in the disease!
• How do you know you are abstinent?

• What do you do to prevent a slip or relapse?

• Was the worst day you had since you have been abstinent better that the best day you had when not in recovery?

• Do you thank your Higher Power for your abstinence?

• If you are not abstinent, will you have a better chance of becoming so if you keep coming back?
It doesn’t need to be uphill!

By working the steps, we get good recovery.