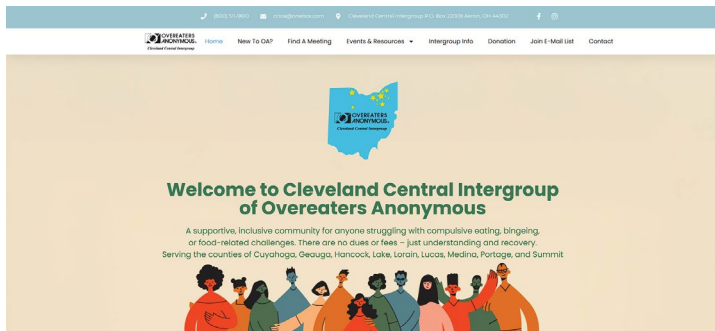


**CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY**

❄️ **Happy, Healthy Holiday Gift: *Tips & Tricks to dash abstinently through the holidays*** ❄️

We are pleased to share with you this PDF of “Grab and Go Ideas.” The following pages contain easy-to-use strategies that we have gathered and use to support our recovery journey- one step and sometimes one moment at a time.

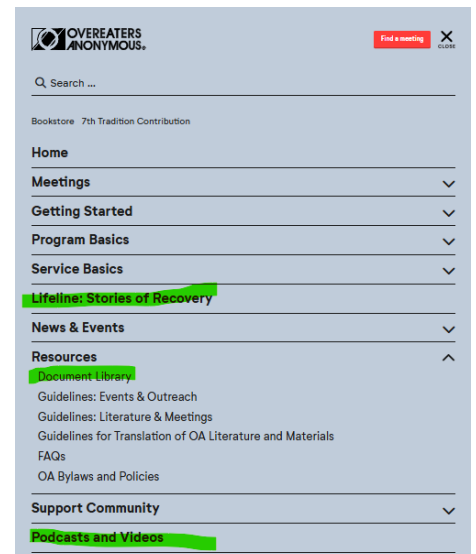
1. **Close to home, visit the CCI website for many resources.**
[Overeaters Anonymous Cleveland – Food Addiction/Recovery](#)



2. Find a wealth of tips and tricks at your fingertips on <https://oa.org/>

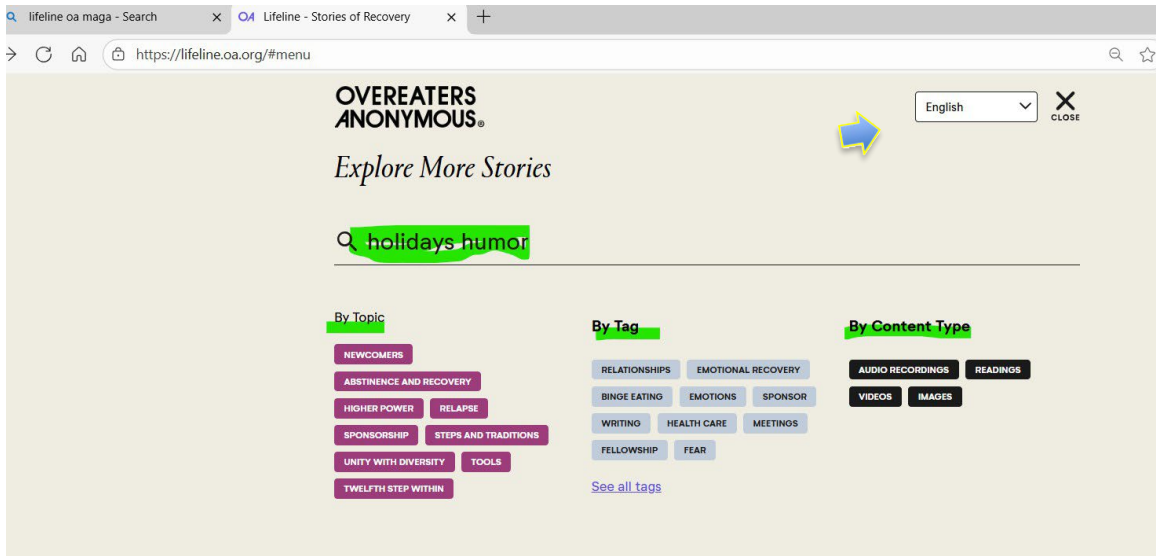
[Lifeline - Stories of Recovery](#)

[Document Library - Overeaters Anonymous](#)



**CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY**

3. Stay afloat of holiday stress with a little help from Lifeline.org [Lifeline - Stories of Recovery](https://lifeline.oa.org/)
Lifeline is a magazine of real stories written by OA members sharing their experience, strength and hope. From the Lifeline.org website you can search by subjects, by topics, by tags and format type with a filter for needed Language 



4. Please enjoy below six holiday stories from past issues of the *Lifeline* magazine:

1. ABC OF SAYING NO, May 2010.
2. HOLIDAY SURVIVAL PLAN, Nov./Dec. 2015.
3. HOLIDAY MAGIC, Nov./Dec. 2015.
4. ABSTINENT HOLIDAY, Nov. 2014.
5. HOLIDAY HELPERS, Dec. 2008.
6. HOLIDAY ESSENTIALS, Dec. 2008.

- Back issues may be purchased at OA.org bookstore.
<https://bookstore.oa.org/lifeline.asp>
- Current *Lifeline* articles are free on the website <https://lifeline.oa.org/>

**CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY**

ABC's to Saying NO

Things to do before you take that first compulsive bite.

- A** Make an amend. Ask for help. Accept a person, place or thing.
- B** Buy yourself flowers.
- C** Call someone. Clean something. Change the things you can.
- D** Dust something. Dead head the plants. Make a trip to the Dump.
- E** Email or text someone in program. Exercise no matter how small the activity.
- F** File paperwork or your nails. Floss your teeth. Schedule a Facial.
- G** Go to a meeting. Make a Gratitude list.
- H** Make contact with your Higher Power. Schedule a Haircut.
- I** Look for Inspiration around you.
- J** Remember you are on a Journey.
- K** Get down on your Knees.
- L** Light a candle. Listen to a favorite CD. Fold Laundry
- M** Make a bed. Mow the lawn. Meditate.
- N** Take a Nap. Call a Newcomer.
- O** Do something for Others.
- P** Prune bushes. Pray. Make a Powerless list.
- Q** Be Quiet and listen for guidance.
- R** Rake leaves. Read OA Literature.
- S** Call your Sponsor. Take a Shower. Do some Service.
- T** Turn it over. Use the Telephone. Focus on Today.
- U** Use the tools of recovery. Buy some new Underwear.
- V** Vacuum a room or the car. Take your daily Vitamins.
- W** Water plants. Weed out old clothes. Write. Take a Walk.
- X** Anything eXtra you need to do?
- Y** Do some Yard work.
- Z** Get some Zzzzzz. Has the compulsion been lifted?

I am grateful in New Hampshire! Nancy S, Windham, New Hampshire

May 2010 Lifeline

**CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY**

(or smaller) after the holidays and not having to endure food hangovers.

Have a great abstinent season. Remember, we do together what we could never do alone.

— *Edited and reprinted from Sail newsletter, Syracuse Area Intergroup, Fall 2006*

Holiday Survival Plan

Our rule is not to avoid a place where there is eating if we have a legitimate reason for being there. "Go or stay away, whichever seems best. But be sure you are on solid spiritual ground before you start and that your motive in going is thoroughly good. Do not think of what you will get out of the occasion. Think of what you can bring to it" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 102). Just for today, you can take the positive action

*Just for today,
you can take
positive action.*

that is needed to align yourself with your Higher Power and stay abstinent.

- Reach out and ask your Higher Power to keep binge foods from entering your body, to remove the obsession to compulsively eat, and to help you refrain from other behaviors. Just for today, this action can be done repeatedly while following the rest of this survival plan.
- Stay present and aware of your surroundings.
- Have a food plan that doesn't include binge foods. Allow it to be okay that your food choices do not include binge foods.
- Call abstinent people. Hopefully you

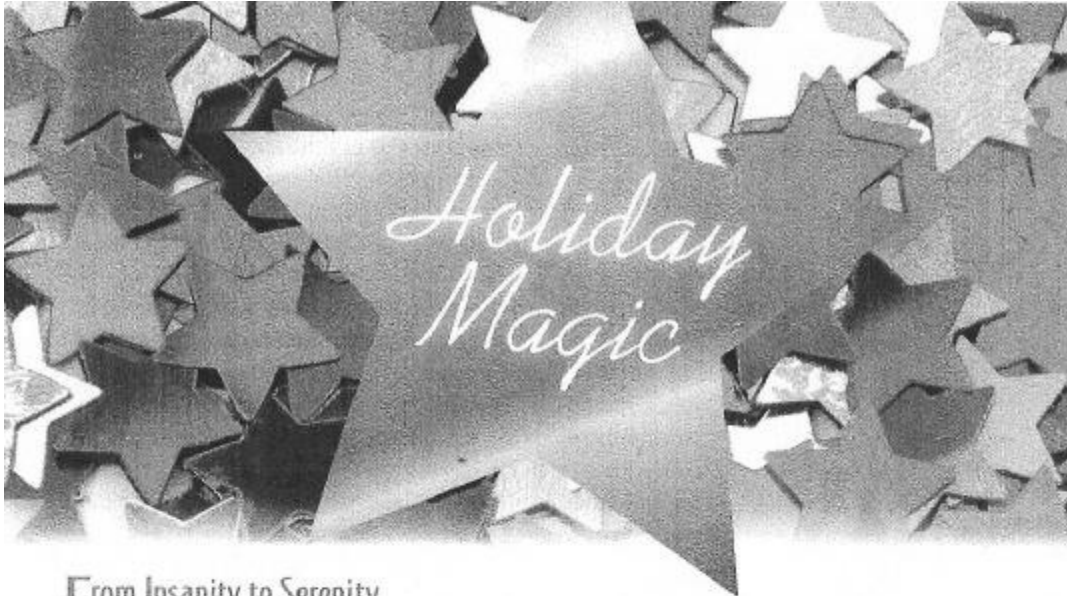
have been collecting phone numbers and saving phone lists from meetings. If not, get some numbers now.

- Go to an OA meeting and share how you are doing. If you are going out of town, check out oa.org to find meetings in that area before you leave.
- Read OA literature. Just for today, you can learn more through our literature about the solution to all our problems.
- Use online meetings, phone meetings, and podcasts.
- Write a gratitude list.
- Write a harms prediction. If you take that first binge bite, who is going to get hurt? Take an honest appraisal and write your predictions of the harms that are likely to take place.
- Write a benefits list for not taking that first compulsive bite. Are you really ready to throw away your chances for peace through abstinence for a binge bite or behavior? Write down all the positive benefits of abstinence.
- Do an anonymous kindness. Lots of people, including those who are not a part of our wonderful program, have a harder time around the holidays.
- Ask your sponsor for support. Whether you are a newcomer or longtimer in our program, chances are your sponsor has some great support he or she can give you for surviving your disease during the holiday season. Take advantage of the fact that when you get to OA you are not alone anymore.

It is not only possible to survive our disease through the holidays, we can thrive in spite of our disease with help from our Higher Power, our fellows in OA, and our Twelve Steps for recovery. We can learn a new way of living and be truly happy, joyous, and free.

— *Laura K.*

CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY



From Insanity to Serenity

It's hard to believe the holidays are here, and the year has just about ended. As I look back on the holidays of my life, the song seems to ring more true as the most *insane* time of the year. I worried about all I needed to do: buying the perfect gift, presenting the best holiday memories for my child, and of course, providing the most exaggerated amount of food ever.

I remember taking pictures of my Thanksgiving meal to compare with those in magazines. I recall endless hours of baking with recipes collected from famous chefs. I never could enjoy or even understand what the holidays were about.

OA and the Twelve Steps have brought me from insanity to serenity in the holidays. I have been blessed with three years of recovery, and this time of year has taken on a new meaning. I have come to enjoy people I've known for years but have never had a relationship with. I've learned to take each moment of the season and celebrate what it offers: listening to a song, feeling a cool breeze, enjoying a late sunrise and early sunset, window shopping with friends, and hearing the familiar ring of the bell in front of the department store. Now it is one of the most wonderful times of the year.

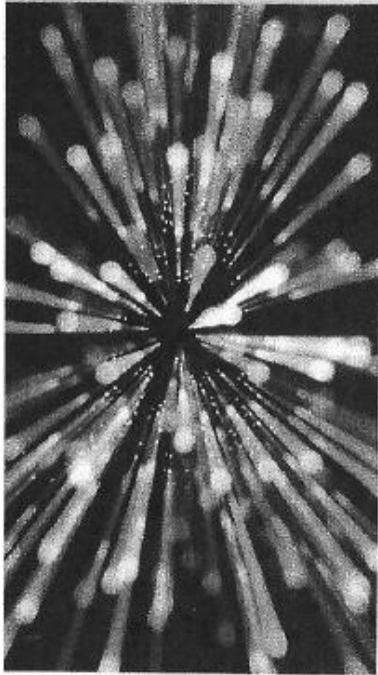
December also causes me to reflect on

the Twelfth Step. I have spent extra time reading chapter 7 in the Big Book, and it reminds me of the importance of working with others. "Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., p. 89).

I cannot do this alone. When I start thinking the world revolves around me and the day is about my happiness, I am consumed in self-will and my disease. When I work the Steps with others and share my experience, strength, and hope, I am doing my Higher Power's will.

I hope this season brings you all the joy your Higher Power has planned for you.

— Edited and reprinted from Serenity Press newsletter, *Arizona in the Desert Intergroup*, December 2010



Abstinent Holidays

I have maintained a more than 100-pound (45-kg) weight loss for twenty-four years of back-to-back abstinence and been blessed to experience over two decades of holidays and celebrations without eating compulsively. I have compiled tips and strategies for abstinence through the holidays based on my experience and that of others in recovery.

Planning is the key factor in maintaining abstinence through the holidays. It is asking for disaster to rely upon others, no matter how dear they are, to meet our needs. We must plan for family expectations about how the holidays are properly celebrated, for the special foods that make their once-a-year appearance, and for meals that are served at odd times. In addition, we must plan for the magnification of the existing stresses of family interactions.

We can avoid food-focused activities and instead plan abstinent ways to celebrate. Baking, purchasing food gifts, or seeking out holiday recipe books and other food-focused media only indulges our disease. Why not instead create new holiday traditions and gatherings that don't involve food? These can be based on holiday decorating and crafts, movies, music, or gift-giving. We can also celebrate the entire season instead of a single day filled with high expectations. We can treat others or ourselves to some pampering or volunteer to help children or those

in need. We can avoid unstructured time and not allow emotions or boredom to lead us to food.

For the times when it's necessary to attend a food-focused gathering, there are many strategies and tools to stay abstinent. The first is to remember that a food plan is a choice, not a punishment. Plan for the meal to include foods that allow you to remain abstinent, even if that means bringing backup foods. Avoid taking servings from a communal dish; weigh and measure in the kitchen instead. *Enough* is a feast, and now is a good time to offer gratitude for our physical needs being met. It's also a wonderful time to focus on the company and not the accompaniments.

To stay abstinent, we can also plan to respond from our portfolio of polite refusals: "No, thank you, I don't care for any right now." "I'm not hungry." "I'm still full." "That food upsets my stomach." "I have food allergies/dietary restrictions/problems with my blood sugar." "I prefer not to eat between meals." Some may ask

**CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY**

about our abstinence. We can use this opportunity to carry the message.

We can plan to use the OA Tools before, during, and after holiday gatherings. Keep a list of OA contacts to telephone. Carry an issue of *Lifeline* or memorize passages to recite out loud. Go to meetings. Stay connected with sponsors and sponsees, including committing our food. Even if we commit generic choices, we will still demonstrate willingness and will feel accountable. Pray and meditate, even if a bathroom break is the only alone time. Write using an alphabetical, holiday-themed gratitude list or write a letter

asking for a recovery present or write a thank-you note in advance to HP for the gift of an abstinent holiday.

I have a lifetime of regrets from eating compulsively; however, I have never regretted ending the day knowing I have been abstinent. And I don't have to make New Year's resolutions to start a diet, begin exercising, or get my abstinence back. With my food, a holiday is just another date on the calendar, and this attitude means I have something to celebrate every single day.

Happy holiday! Happy every day!

— Ellen S., Laredo, TX USA

Top 10 . . .

Ways I Make My Program My Daily Routine

1. When the alarm goes off, I ask God for the willingness to get out of bed and recite Steps One, Two, and Three as I walk to the bathroom.

2. Before breakfast, I meditate for fifteen minutes. I rest in HP's arms or focus on my breath or listen to a guided meditation. If my mind wanders, I remember progress, not perfection.

3. I spend five minutes preparing a hot, abstinent breakfast and pray before I eat. I like to say the Third and Seventh Step prayers and ask HP to show me what abstinence is since my abstinence is always evolving on all levels.

4. I spend fifteen minutes reading *For Today* and a paragraph from the *Twelve and Twelve* and writing a letter to HP.

5. I pray on the way to work, which

takes no time since I am on the road anyway.

6. At lunch, I take two minutes to thank HP for my abstinence and say my program prayers before I eat my planned, abstinent lunch.

7. After work, I take forty-five minutes to an hour to walk, do yoga, or do some type of movement to get out of my head and connect with the here and now.

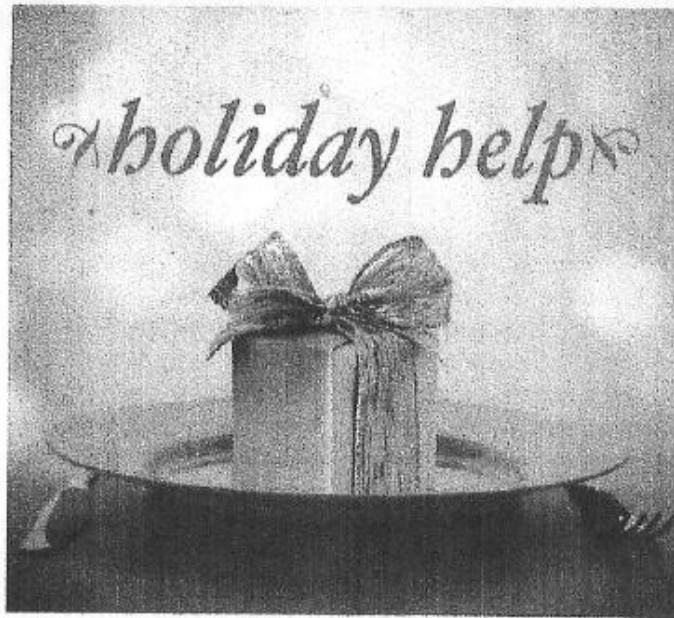
8. Before eating dinner, I take a minute to thank HP for my abstinence, our food, all of the hands that prepared it, and for my husband.

9. After dinner, I talk to my sponsor, a sponsee, or an OA friend or go to a meeting, which can take fifteen to ninety minutes.

10. Before bed, I spend five minutes doing a Tenth Step in my journal.

— Lisa B., St. Louis, Missouri USA

CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY



Grace-Full Breakup

I never thought I could or would even be willing to have an abstinent holiday season, but by the grace of God and what I've learned in this Fellowship over the past year, I did. Not that I didn't gaze lovingly at some of my binge foods, but at each moment I had a choice to make: the choice between living with real hope for recovery or going back to the old way of medicating emotions with food.

When I gave up my binge foods, it was like the very painful breakup of an unhealthy, addictive relationship. I longed for my binge foods. I dreamed of them. The smell of them would bring me to tears. It was only through the suggestion of other OA members to use the Tools that I made it through that first detox period. The cravings lessened, and the fond looks I gave those items, which were everywhere from television ads to

other people's lunches to store displays, became briefer and less wistful.

Then the really hard part started. Without "medication," I had to feel my real feelings. I really do have feelings of rejection, inadequacy, and shame. I really am lonely and want friendships with women. I really do regret some of the past, and I can no longer shut the door on it. I really do need a new relationship with God and even a new understanding of God, now that I am free of my drug, my lover, my friend, and my companion.

I began working the Steps with a sponsor and came to see these Steps as an expression of God's wisdom and grace. I see how blessed I am, even in the middle of pain, or growing pains, to have God's direction given by human voices through the members of Overeaters Anonymous, from his heart to mine.

Abstinence has led to the journey of a lifetime, and today, by the grace of God, I choose to continue.

— Edited and reprinted from *The Transformation newsletter, Central Ohio Service Intergroup, January 2009*

CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY

Binge season is here again. It used to be my favorite time of year, when all the holiday goodies came out. How I used to look forward to stuffing myself with my favorite treats.

Our brains are funny, aren't they? The only thing I could remember from year to year was how good my favorite treats tasted. My convenient brain always forgot the misery, pain and weight gain these goodies caused. It made me forget my vows of "I'll eat just one; I'll go on a diet tomorrow; I'll skip supper."

I could remember only the joy of getting my hands on the goods and snarfing them down. I felt good at the time, until all the food and crazy behavior caught up with me. Then I paid the price.

Year after year, I carried on this crazy behavior of bingeing followed by remorse. Only when I reached my top weight, was miserable and hated myself was I willing to do something about the insanity. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I had hit bottom and needed help.

I had heard about Overeaters Anonymous through friends in another Twelve-Step program. I decided to give it a try. I went to OA for eight months and knew I'd come home. This place was for me. But I was not willing to be abstinent through that time and give up my binge foods. Who would I be? How would I act? How could I live without my junk food? I'd die if I couldn't eat



what I wanted when I wanted it. The very thought of abstaining was scary.

After I'd binged through another holiday season, God finally said, "I know you are ready to be abstinent, so just set the date." Uh oh. A direct order from God. He told me clearly to stop messing around. So I chose January 1, 1992, as my first abstinent date (a week after I got my orders from God).

Boy, I had the mother of all binges that New Year's Eve. I ate it all. If I were never going to eat any of this again, I would go out in a blaze of glory.

By God's grace, I've never felt the need to do that again. I have surrendered my food to God and let him guide me through 12 Halloweens, 12 Thanksgivings, 12 Christmases, 12 birthdays and 4,331 days of living without excess food.

God can do for me what I can never do for myself: abstain from compulsive eating and enjoy life. Today I choose God and the abstinence that comes with him. I can't, God can, and just for today, I'm going to let him.

I've never regretted becoming abstinent. Having a normal weight and feeling good is better than any food can ever taste. One day at a time.

— Denise H., Ottumwa, Iowa USA

**CLEVELAND CENTRAL INTERGROUP PREMEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM CST
PRESENTED BY THE OLMSTEAD FALLS
SATURDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY**

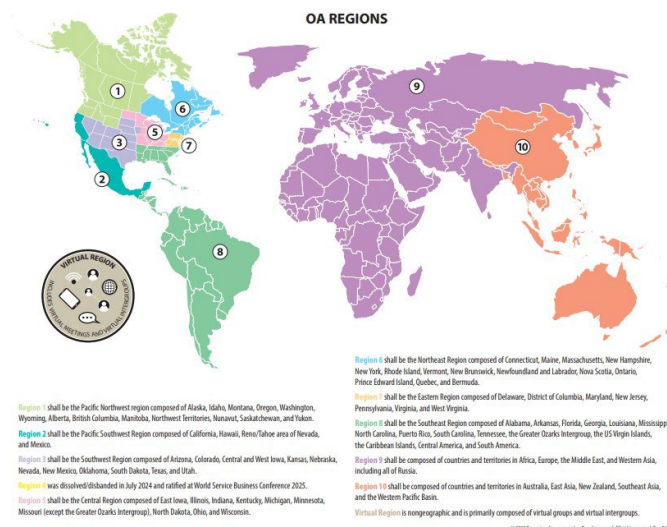
5. Want more? Check out these resources!

❄ Meetings (i.e. speaker meetings, writing meetings, meditation meetings, creative meetings, etc.) [Find a meeting - Overeaters Anonymous](#)

❄ [Video: Breaking Out of Relapse - Overeaters Anonymous](#)

❄ **Meditation from another OA Intergroup website**
[Morning Meditation — Central Ontario Intergroup](#)

❄ **OA.org Regional Websites have an abundance of resources too.**
<https://oa.org/service-bodies/regions/>



Lastly, Keep it Simple/Attitude of Gratitude:

[**The Simplicity Project - Overeaters Anonymous**](#)

Share your favorite tool/gift you use to stay in the PRESENT:

Together we get better!

