

YOUNG PERSONS IN OA

Dear Intergroups, Service Boards and Regions,

We are very excited to introduce ourselves: The WSBC Young Persons in OA Committee. We are committed to acting as a resource to our fellows by carrying the message to those under 30 who suffer from compulsive eating.

At the 2013 World Service Business Conference, we asked ourselves, "How can we be of maximum service to the Fellowship and to Overeaters Anonymous as a whole?" After sharing our experiences, reviewing literature, and asking our Higher Power, we believe it is paramount to view young people not only as the future of OA, but as fully part of the growing Fellowship. It is vital that current abstinent young members receive ample opportunity and encouragement to serve in all areas of recovery. Through service and working the Steps, we get better. And with every active young member, there is greater opportunity for young persons still suffering not only to hear the message of recovery, but to hear it from someone going through the similar struggles of growing into adulthood and doing it abstinently.

We hope the following suggestions and resources will create a cohesive foundation for young persons in OA with a message that carries both depth and credibility. We are excited to see what the Fellowship has to offer the young adult and more importantly, what we can gain from each other's experiences as we move toward a deeper level of recovery in Overeaters Anonymous.

SUGGESTIONS AND RESOURCES

- ✓ **First Things First.**
Carrying the message to young adults, including those still in college. This is a great place to start and most likely to yield results. College-age students will be best able to carry the message to other young members entering the Fellowship down the road.
- ✓ **Keep it Simple.**
Consider one action your intergroup/service board can take to carry the message to young people rather than trying five and having nothing stick. We hope to see all intergroups/service boards start one meeting at or near a college campus as a first step.
- ✓ **Easy Does It.**
Be gentle with the process. It will take time to reach a younger demographic. Take the actions, and put the rest in your Higher Power's hands.
- ✓ **Live and Let Live.**
Encourage open mindedness when young people share what they are abstaining through or eating over. These are formative years, filled with experimentation, growth and tons of life questions.
- ✓ **It works if you work it.**

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Carry the message as it was carried to you. Trust that the message crosses all barriers and does not need to be watered down for a younger newcomer.

- ✓ Make the Young Person's Packet available at your meetings.
This packet is addressed to those under 30 and includes a cover letter, a selection of Lifeline stories related to young people and the pamphlets *To the Teen, A Plan of Eating, To Parents and Concerned Adults*, and *Many Symptoms, One Solution*. Keep in mind, all available literature is just as helpful.
- ✓ Share your experience.
Did you join the Fellowship at a younger age? Consider your experience coming in young as an asset to a younger newcomer and identify that in your share when you see a young person at a meeting.
- ✓ Service is its own reward.
If a young member meets the abstinence requirements, consider nominating him or her for a position at the different levels of service. Utilize the experience of a younger member for a fresh perspective at workshops or retreats, and on panels and service committees.
- ✓ Carrying the message.
Put an ad in a young persons' local college or university paper or online publication. Use your public information resources and put a special focus on young persons. If you feature stories in your OA newsletter, feature a recovered young person. Use the Internet and smartphones by keeping the website up-to-date and user friendly. On your speaker list, consider creating a code for those who came into program as young adults.

TRADITIONS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In the spirit of the Traditions, we are all equal members of the Fellowship. While we may be quick to see age as a lack of experience, keep in mind that we are a growing Fellowship that can benefit from the voice of a younger member's experience in all aspects of service and recovery.

While we may be tempted to say, "thank goodness you got it young," remember that relief for a young newcomer starts with relating to a fellow about their present pain and the courage it takes to face one's disease, not in the relief of the years of suffering they may have prevented.

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers. Enough said.

Recovery is not contingent on age, but on one's willingness to work the program honestly to the best of their ability. As a Fellowship, it is important that we do not water down the message to suit personalities, but rather share our experience as it was carried to us.

If you have any ideas to pass on, please share with us what is working for you at the email address youngpersons@oa.org. Feel free to contact us via this email regarding any questions or resources you may need to help you carry the message of recovery.

In the spirit of service,
Young Persons in OA Committee