

Member Survey Results

OA Sea to Sky Intergroup Renewal 2022



What is Intergroup Renewal?

Intergroup Renewal is a process by which an Intergroup examines how it can better support the OA groups and individual OA members in its area. It does this by:

- 1) Answers questions about how Intergroup runs (takes inventory).
- 2) **Sending a survey to members asking about their personal recovery and their group meetings.**
- 3) Examining the feedback from these two activities to find patterns in areas where support can be given.
- 4) Brainstorming to plan activities and making committees that exist to support member and group recovery.

Who responded to the survey?

News about the member survey was distributed to members via:

- Group representatives
- The Sea to Sky Google Group mailing list
- A pop-up button on the Sea to Sky website.

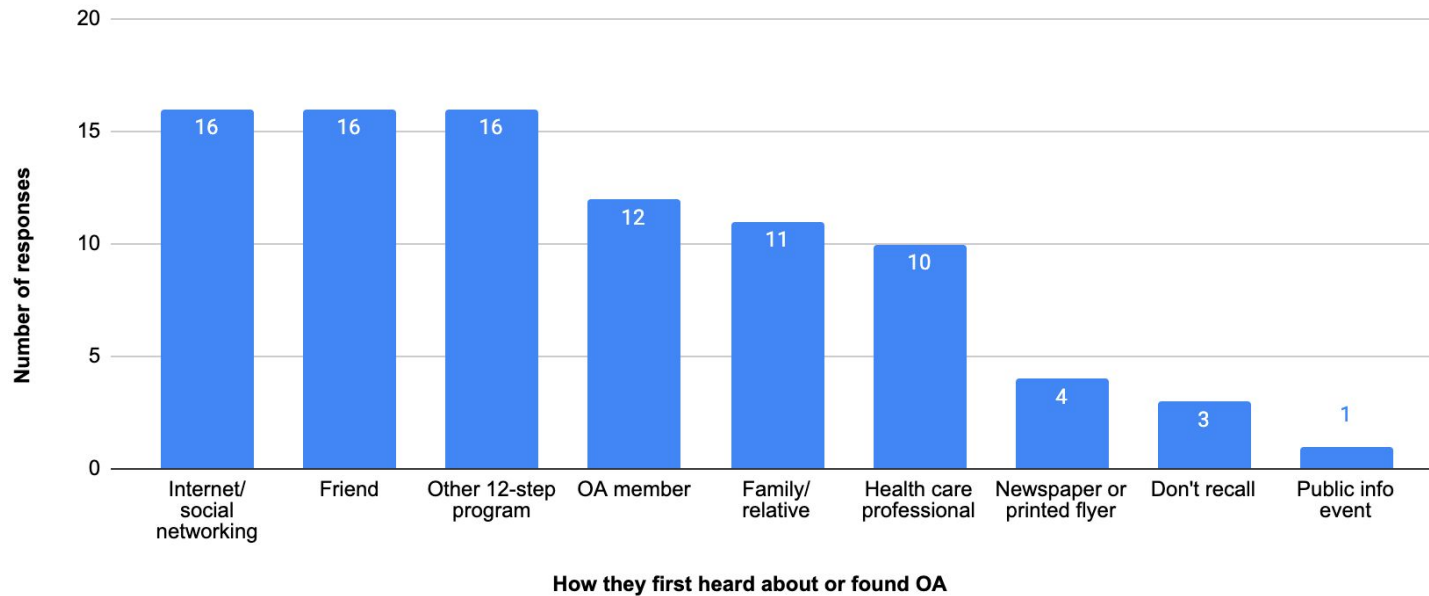
The survey was open for 43 days (April 1 - May 14, 2022).

A total of **69 OA members** responded to the survey.

The following presentation **outlines the findings** from the member's survey that can be used in the upcoming brainstorming sessions.

Getting to OA

How members first heard about or found OA (select all that apply)



Other avenues:

Saw an OA poster in an AA meeting.

Saw an OA book in a rehab center my son was at.

Radio interview on CBC.

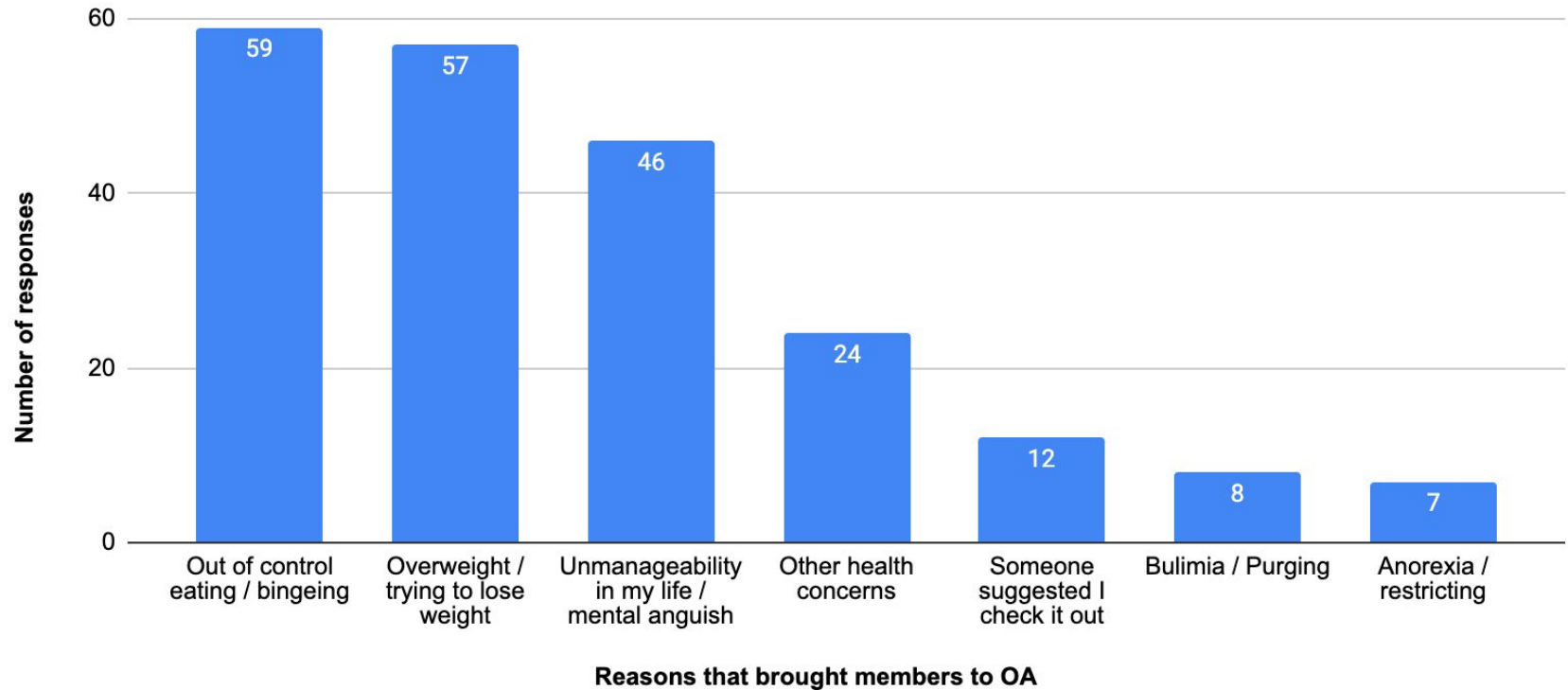
Reading, "Women who love too much."

Another support group I was in; a member was starting an OA meeting.

I saw the steps change a family member's life.

It is important we take **personal responsibility** in carrying the message of recovery to others.

Reasons that brought members to OA (select all that apply)



Member Recovery

Current length of abstinence

When asked their current length of abstinence, members reported as follows

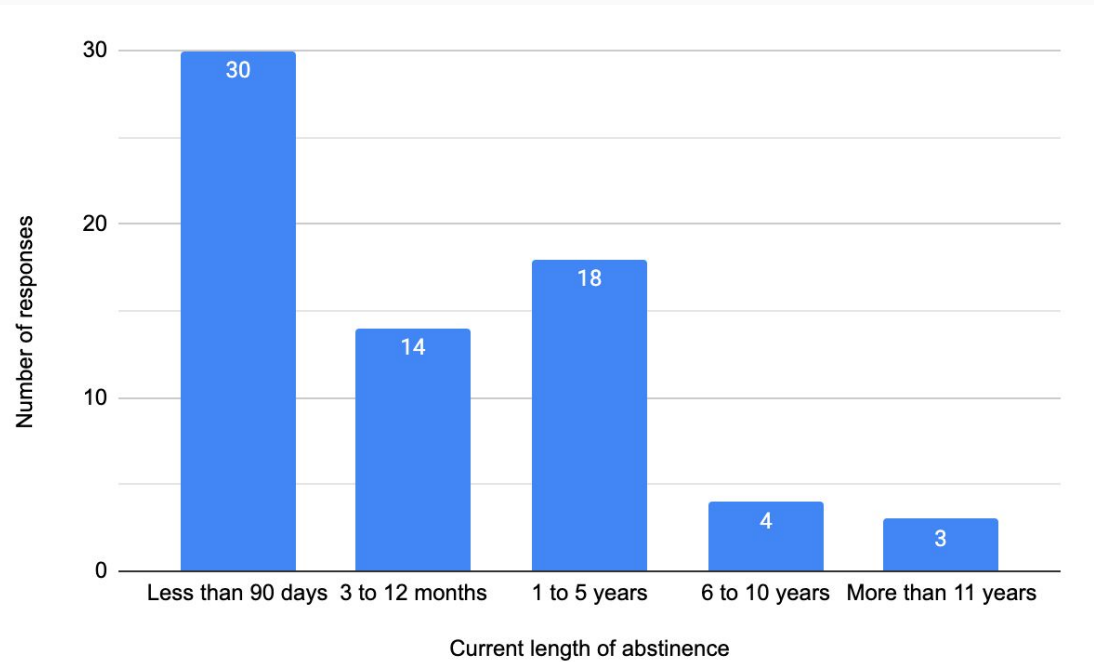
→

The category of “less than 90 days” **includes** those that are **not abstinent**.

When **all respondents** were asked if they were currently experiencing relapse:

- **10 said they were in relapse.**
- **13 said they were unsure.**

⚠ *These counts includes some members (6) who said they currently have 3+ months of abstinence.*



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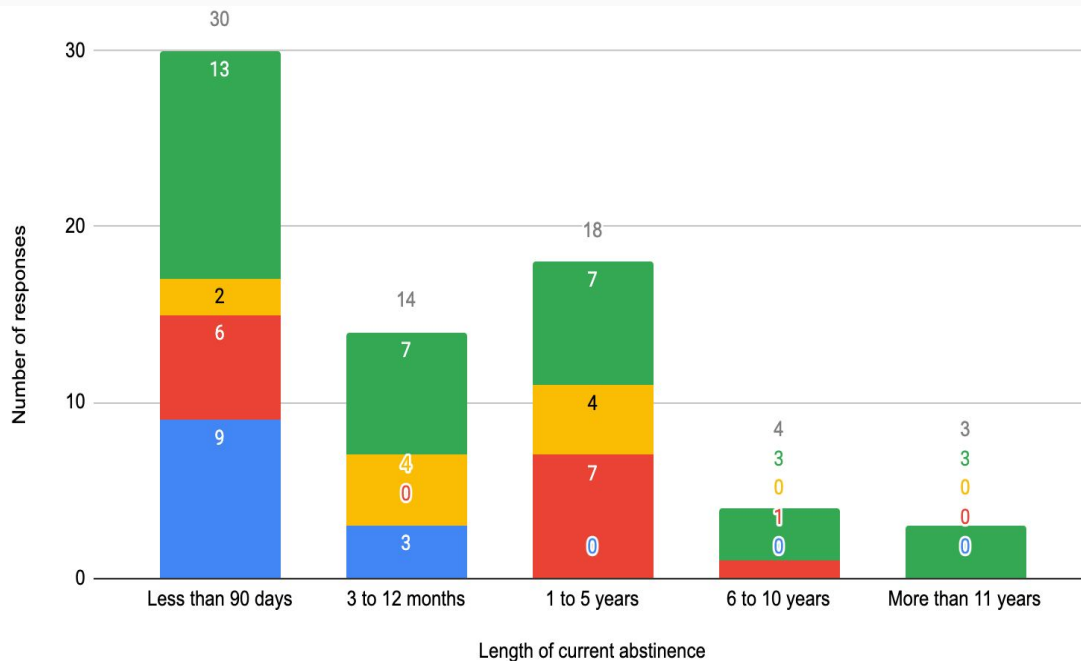
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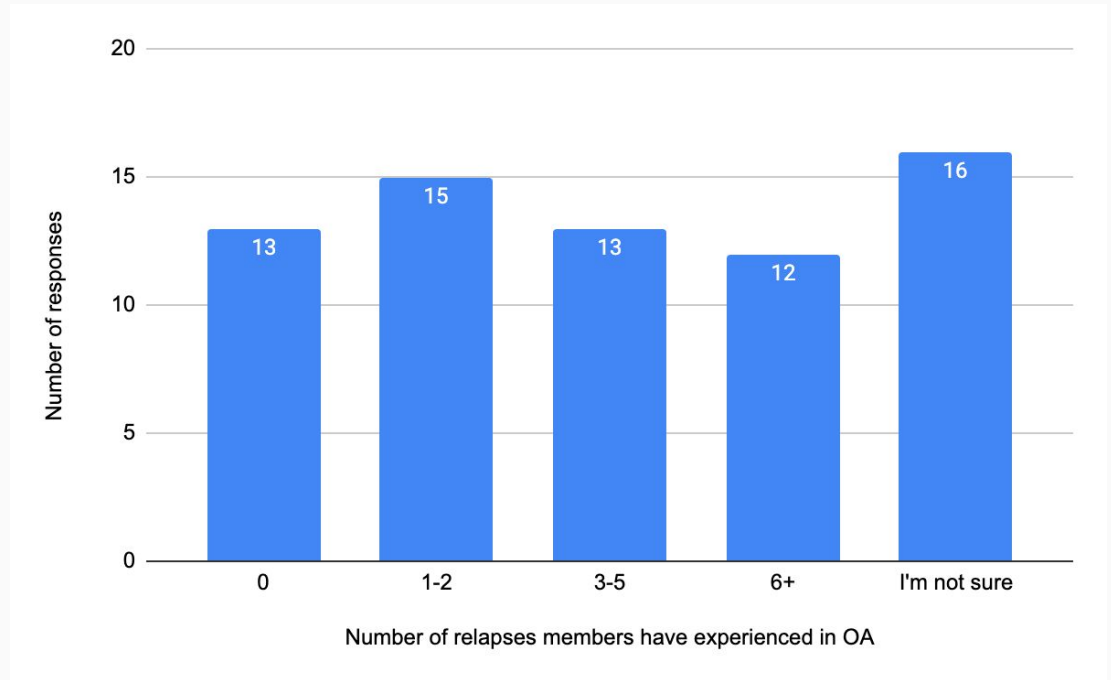
Same graph, now showing breakdown based on length of time in OA.

- more than 11 years
- 6 - 10 years
- 1 to 5 years
- Less than 1 year



Repeat Relapse

Members were asked, “how many times have you experienced relapse in OA?”, they responded →



Sponsors & Sponsoring

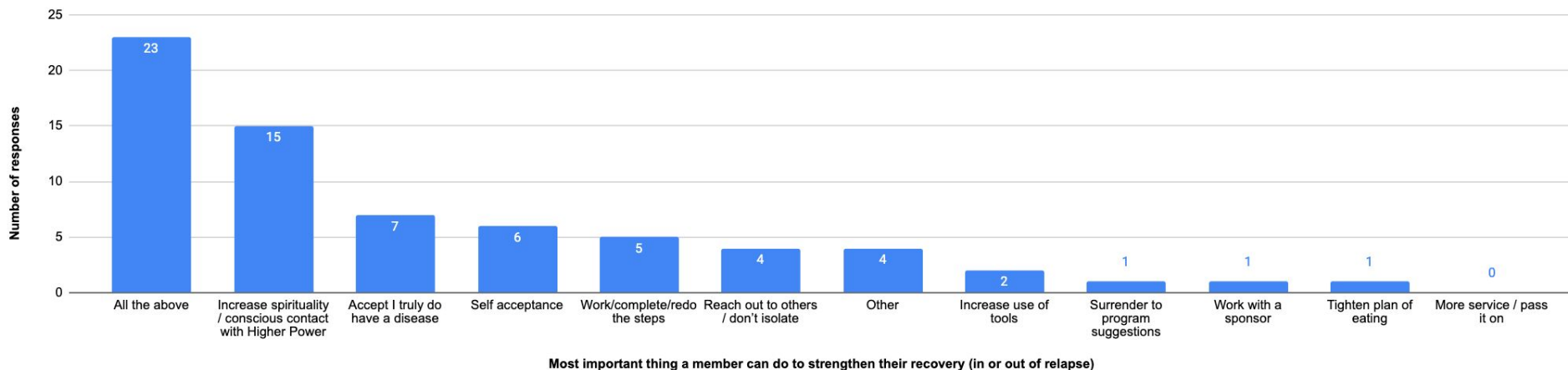
Top reasons why members don't have a sponsor:

1. In-between sponsors at the moment
2. Haven't looked for a sponsor
3. Bad experience with a previous sponsor

Top reasons why members aren't sponsors:

1. I haven't completed a full set of steps yet.
2. I'm not abstinent myself.
3. I don't feel prepared to sponsor (nervous, lack of experience, don't know how to "be" a sponsor)

Most important thing a member can do to strengthen their recovery, in or out of relapse (single choice)



Top responses:

- 1) All of the above
- 2) Increase spirituality / conscious contact with Higher Power

Other responses:

- Make abstinence the most important thing in my life
- Recognize there are 2 pathways in OA and stay on the addict / Big Book path

Group Meetings

Strengths of OA group meetings

Top strengths reported:

1. Atmosphere: friendly, accepting, supportive
2. Committed members
3. People in recovery
4. Opportunity to share
5. Good format

Other ideas

- Meeting focuses on Big Book literature
- Members stay in contact through WhatsApp outside of the meeting
- Journal time before shares (brings a richness to the shares)

Weaknesses of OA group meetings

Top weaknesses reported:

1. Lack of sponsors*
2. Low attendance**
3. Controllers, or lack of service rotation
4. Sharing not focused on recovery
5. Lack of recovery

Other ideas

- Members not willing to be of service
- Lack of variety; meeting feels stale
- Lack of newcomers

* **Only half** of our members that are currently abstinent are sponsors themselves.

** **One-third** of members reported regular attendance of between **2-10 members** at their meetings

Reasons (other than relapse) why 28 members left OA / meetings at some point in the past

Top reasons reported:

1. Thought I could do it on my own.
2. Lack of recovery in the meetings.
3. Personalities in the meetings.
4. Not ready/not unwilling.
5. Scheduling problem/busy schedule.
6. Family issues, including pregnancy.
7. I lost my faith in the God of my understanding.
8. Moved to an area that didn't have meetings and/or traveled.

Other responses

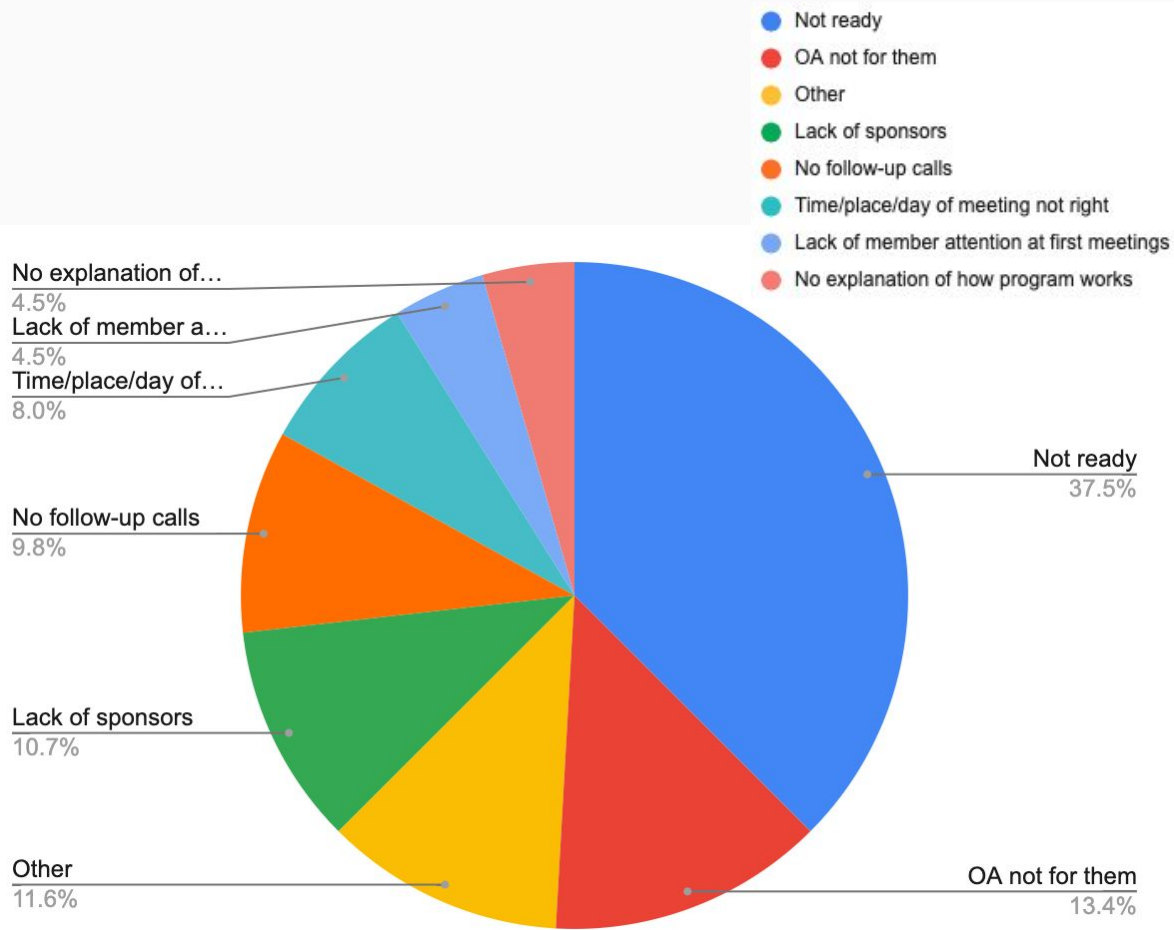
- Disappointed in the lack of fellowship and outreach.
- Prioritized trauma therapy / mental health issues / other addictions.
- It has been hard to find meetings that are strong, focused on the solution, and with folks in strong recovery. At times I find we are loving people to death; also, there is a lot of confusion expressed by long-term members about step 1 and abstinence.

Newcomers and repeat attendance

Most members report that their meetings **DO get newcomers**.

Most members report that **only 25-50% of them return** to the meeting.

When OA members were asked to speculate **why** newcomers may not be coming back to their meetings, these were their thoughts →



Some members suggested **other reasons** why newcomers did not return...

“Possibly finding other meetings they prefer?”

“Zoom has made it easier to bounce around to meetings all over the globe.”

“Perceived idea that a larger group is better; don't like focus on Big Book?”

“Not enough people at the meeting?”

“We're super welcoming, I wonder if some find it overwhelming?”

“The spiritual component of the program.”

“They can't find us. The WSO site has most of our Sea2Sky meetings listed as in-person still, though most meetings have been on Zoom or closed for the past 2 years. This was really sad info to learn.”

“I have no idea as we don't have a way to reach them if they don't share their contact info.”

“The OA idea of ‘ask some who has what you want how they are doing it.’ *We established members with recovery need to be actively reaching out to newcomers for contact info and to call them!* After all we are the ones with the solution. This is what the Big Book teaches alcoholics to do. We in OA need to do the same.”

Intergroup Services

Service Offerings

The right shows a listing of service offerings that could be provided to members and member groups.

Members rated these ideas by order of priority for themselves and their groups.

Items are ranked in descending order of priority.

HIGH priority

1. Website
2. List of available sponsors
3. Sponsorship training
4. Speaker events / workshops
5. Info phone line available 24/7
6. List of available speakers



This refers to our pre-recorded phone message; did members understand that?

MEDIUM priority

7. Offering OA literature for purchase
8. Phone buddies
9. Organizing weekend retreats
10. Organizing meeting marathons throughout the year
11. Training workshops for group servants (e.g. how to be a Group Treasurer)
12. Assisting groups w/ publicizing themselves
13. Organizing step studies for members

LOW priority

14. Monthly newsletter
15. Assisting groups with performing group inventories

Training / Workshop Ideas

The right shows a listing of training / workshop ideas that could be provided to members in-person or digitally via Zoom.

Members rated these ideas by order of priority for themselves and their groups.

Items are ranked in descending order of priority.

HIGH priority

1. Abstinence and recovery
2. Relapse recovery and prevention
3. Being sponsored and becoming a sponsor
4. Working steps 10-12
5. Practicing principles in all our affairs

MEDIUM priority

6. Working steps 1-3
7. Working steps 4-7
8. Working steps 8-9
9. Using the tools
10. Plans of eating
11. Big Book study
12. Attracting and retaining newcomers

LOW priority

13. 4th step workshops
14. Body image workshops
15. Twelve traditions
16. Member retention
17. Quick step studies
18. The value of slogans

Ideas for Written Materials

The right shows a listing of topics that could be provided to members in written format.

Members rated these topics by order of priority for themselves and their groups.

Items are ranked in descending order of priority.

HIGH

priority

1. Getting started: first things first
2. What each of us can do to keep OA strong
3. Characteristics of a great sponsor
4. Nurturing newcomers
5. Characteristics of a great meeting

MEDIUM

priority

6. Fourth step options
7. Anonymity: what it is, what it isn't
8. Group conscience: what it is
9. Taking a group inventory

LOW

priority

10. Conducting group business meetings
11. Meeting formats: OA recommendations

Other Survey Comments

Additional comments

Other topics, suggestions and feedback given by members →

Like-comments/suggestions were combined.

Some responses were altered to respect anonymity.

Topics

- **The importance of Service and Service Rotation in meetings.**
- **Forgiveness, Grief, Loss**
- **The difference between OA and therapy** or OA meetings versus group therapy meetings. / One's responsibility to their own recovery.
- **Food plans don't make you abstinent.** Compulsive eating is a three fold illness: physical, MENTAL, and spiritual.
- **The two functions of a sponsor:** guide the sponsee through the 12 steps and point out to the sponsee (who has yet to recognize their HP's previous and current involvement in their wellbeing) the evidence of a benevolent HP in their lives.
- **Telephone / outreach (as a form of service and as a tool of abstinence).** I make calls daily and am disheartened that so few people call me back (or at all). I left OA rooms to focus on a different program and NOBODY reached out to see if I was OK. This HURT.

Suggestions

- Learn more about **what other IGs are doing** that's working.
- **Focus**, by all IG members, on 1-3 actual measurable goals each year that reflect member group needs.
- **Check in on members** who haven't been at meetings lately.
- I may be wrong but people including me **tend not to read newsletters** no matter how well done they are.

Additional comments

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Intergroup Renewal Process Feedback

- Thanks so much for all who have continued to keep IG going through this crazy time. You are all rockstars. **(many like this)**
- Survey is a bit too long. I had no opinion on many of the rating questions but there wasn't an option for no opinion.
- While I knew where this was coming from because of my service time at Intergroup, however we need more time to let groups know the reason behind this renewal.
- The last renewal process I was involved in lacked commitment at both the group level.....intergroup reps did not bring info back to their groups for discussion.....and also those executive members bringing the process to intergroup did not include all intergroup members in committee meetings and in the decision making process. I hope that this time around things will be different.
- I am willing to help with ongoing Intergroup Renewal activities but Intergroup does not make it easy for non-technical/non-computer members to provide their input. Intergroup fails to include certain members in this category as fully functioning members of intergroup.

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Intergroup during COVID feedback

- Over the two years of COVID, Intergroup failed to ask members and groups what their needs were in regards to Intergroup returning to in person meeting. As well as it neglected to ask groups to really discern how Zoom was affecting members and was staying on Zoom making for healthier meetings or actually creating problems for meetings, especially those members who were new, in relapse or long time members still suffering in the disease. This was the reverse of the regular communication process OA uses: individual members voice concerns to their home groups, home group reps to Intergroup, Intergroups to Regions, Regions to WSO.

Through COVID, OA lost sight of our traditions and how our communication is to flow. Instead, WSO stayed locked down while it was in a different country and the state of California, Region One in a different province Alberta, our Intergroup in B.C. where our steps groups are, were given permission to return to, in person meetings (with proper health safety measures) in early fall of 2020 because Dr. Bonnie and the Minister of Health for B.C. saw the importance that 12 step groups played in saving the lives of BCers struggling with addiction, and in supporting their families. Yet, members were not asked what they wanted or needed at that time Zoom was our only option provided. So members overall lost their voice. Our Intergroup joined in this breach of our traditions.