



Survey Results

A Note from our Chairperson

As you probably have heard, Central Mass. Intergroup has been undergoing a Renewal Process since March 2014 as a result of undergoing a self-inventory. It became apparent that CMI's value is measured only by its usefulness to members and meetings in the Central Mass. Area.

Since that time, we have published the *What is CMI?* brochure introducing you to "who we are and what we do."

As you know, in September CMI launched a 26-question Member Survey asking for your input on how we can best serve you. There were 32 respondents, and we thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey.

I cannot stress enough the value of this survey for the future of CMI and our member groups. It has provided:

- Information on the overall health of OA in the Central Mass. Area
- Members' ideas on workshops and events you feel would help your recovery
- Ideas on how to carry the message to the still suffering compulsive overeater
- Information that could help OA remain vital and growing in the area

Most importantly, the survey will clearly lay out CMI's goals and priorities for the next few years. It is now clear what members think our priorities should be; and we will get busy in January recruiting members from your meetings to assist us in carrying out your wishes. There will be

opportunities for service even if you're not an Intergroup rep.

There are two events already in the planning for 2015 which include a Unity Day event on February 28 and our yearly retreat on March 20-22. Registration is open and space to stay at the Edward's House is limited. See our registration flyer on the CMI website: www.centmassint.org.

Once again, thank you for participating in making your OA experience even better.

Yours in Service,

Nancy H.

"Any form of service-no matter how small-that helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery."

-Service

OA 12 and 12

Member Survey Results

How did people find us?

Over half got here through one-on-one referrals from friends or other 12-step members, hence the critical importance of 12-stepping in our program. Twenty-eight percent (28%) saw us in the newspaper or online. Ten percent (10%) came through health care professionals. There is significant opportunity to increase our visibility in the latter two.

How much time in OA?

Approximately the same percentages of people have been here less than 5 years (41%) and those who've been here more than 10 years (37%). Twenty-two percent (22%) are in the 6-10 year range.

What is the length of your abstinence?

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of members have been abstinent less than a year. This is clearly the number one opportunity for CMI. Can our members help individuals strengthen their abstinence and Program?

Are you working with a sponsor?

The fact that more than two-thirds of members are working with a sponsor is good, except the previous abstinence question shows that only two in ten members have any sustained abstinence. This raises the issue of sponsor experience. Is there anything that CMI can do to help sponsors improve their skills? This question is addressed later.

What brought you to OA?

Nearly 90% expressed some variation of out-of-control eating, desire to lose weight, desperation, unmanageable life, and being overwhelmed.

What keeps you coming back?

Highest responses in order: desire for recovery, fellowship/meetings; nowhere else to go; hope; and it works.

Have you ever left OA for reasons other than relapse?

Nearly three-fourths have never left OA for reasons other than relapse. Of those who did leave, the reasons were varied, including bariatric surgery; do it on my own; personalities; went to program.



What brought you back?

Many different reasons were given, but the majority of responses were some variation on being out-of-control again or not being able to do it on their own.

Have you ever relapsed?

Eight-seven percent (87%) have relapsed.

More about Relapse

There were a series of questions related to relapse and going to meetings. More people in relapse kept going to meetings versus those who stopped going to meetings. The reasons given by survey respondents were varied but mostly fell into: no other alternative; knew the answer was here; my only hope.

For people in relapse who left the meetings and came back, the reasons for coming back were not much different than the above: knew that it works, my only hope, life was better when attending, fellowship, and hitting bottom.

When asked if they would have come back sooner if they had received a phone call inviting them to a regular OA meeting versus a members-in-relapse meeting, the response was about evenly split.

When asked whether people in relapse would be more interested in a relapse *workshop* or an ongoing member-in-relapse *meeting*, the responses were about evenly split. A few people said they would like both.

What do you personally need to do to strengthen your recovery?

1. Increase my spirituality (prayer and meditation)
2. Work the steps
3. Go to more meetings
4. Other
 - get a sponsor;
 - use the tools
 - get honest with the food
 - increase my commitment
 - increase my willpower.

What is the size of the meetings you attend?

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of meetings have less than 10 attendees. This includes many with only 4-6 people.



What are your meeting strengths?

- Acceptance/intimacy/fellowship/honest sharing
- Recovery/abstinence
- Focus on working the steps, especially Big Book

What are your meetings weaknesses?

1. low and/or decreasing attendance
2. lack of recovery
3. lack of sponsors
4. lack of newcomers.

Newcomers

A series of questions asked about newcomers: do they come, do they return, if not, why?

The answers were varied, which suggests there may be wide variation between meetings. Some meetings get newcomers, some return. Others are not getting newcomers. This probably relates to the strong meeting characteristics noted above.

Why aren't newcomers coming back?

1. not ready.
2. meeting too small
3. intimidating/rigid
4. fear
5. too much like a support group of long timers
6. disappointed OA is not diet club
7. denial.

Since we know from another question that people come to OA in desperation because of their out-of-control eating, is it realistic to say that nearly 2/3 don't come back simply because they're not ready? What effect do the members in the meeting have on the newcomer's decision? Newcomers return because of "hope." What do they need to see and hear in a meeting to gain the hope that brings them back?



How can Intergroup Help?

What services would the fellowship most like Intergroup to offer?

1. Assist meeting in publicizing itself
2. Step Studies
3. Marathons/share-a-thons
4. Workshops

Suggested subjects that could be covered in future workshops

1. Being sponsored and becoming a sponsor
2. Attracting and retaining newcomers
3. Working Steps 4-7
4. Relapse recovery and prevention
5. Member retention
6. Working Steps 1-3
7. Working Steps 8-9
8. Using the tools
9. Working Steps 10-12
10. Plans of eating
11. Big Book Study

Suggested Topics for Newsletter

- Nurturing newcomers
- Characteristics of a great meeting
- Characteristics of a great sponsor
- What each of us can do to keep OA strong
- News and information from CMI
- Anonymity
- Fourth Step options

Lastly, members were asked if they were willing to do more service to help support OA. Two-thirds said they are already doing as much as they can. The other third said: yes or maybe

- Compiled by Don C.

Thank You for Your Service!



OUR MEMBER GROUPS (MEETINGS)

The meetings below are associated with our Central Mass Intergroup. If anything about your meeting is not correct, please contact the newsletter editor lisad.mendes@gmail.com AND also update the information on the OA.org website.

Town	Day	Time	Location Name	Special Topic/ Focus
<i>New!</i> Shrewsbury	Monday	11:30 AM	Fitness Asylum	Varies
Auburn	Monday	7:00 PM	Bethel Lutheran Church	Speaker/Topic
Millbury	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Millbury Federated Church	Big Book
Gardner	Tuesday	6:30 PM	Rehabilitation & Nursing Center	Varies
Worcester	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Adcare Hospital	For Today
Westboro	Tuesday	7:30 PM	St. Luke Evangelist Catholic Church	OA Steps and Traditions
Fitchburg	Wednesday	11:00 AM	Madonna Holy Rosary Church	Big Book
Milford	Wednesday	6:00 PM	Library	Literature Study
Shrewsbury	Thursday	7:00 PM	Veteran's Inc.	OA Steps and Traditions
Leominster	Thursday	7:00 PM	Our Lady of the Lake Church	Varies
Southborough	Friday	10:15 AM	Southboro Public Library	Big Book
Leominster	Saturday	8:30 AM	Leominster Hospital	None listed
Worcester	Saturday	7:30 AM	UU Church, Holden St	None listed
Leominster	Saturday	10:00 AM	Leominster Hospital	OA Steps and Traditions
Worcester	Sunday	7:00 PM	St. Michael's on the Heights	Speaker
Fitchburg	Sunday	7:00 PM	The Highlands	Literature Study

Meeting time and location for any OA meeting around the world can be found on the web at
<http://www.oa.org/membersgroups/find-a-meeting/>



*GOD grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot
change, the courage to
change the things I can, and
the wisdom to know the
difference*

- Serenity Prayer

<http://www.centmassint.org>