



We asked the question
“What Makes a Strong Meeting?”

Here are some responses we received:

Meetings can create a service position designed to help newcomers at their 1st meeting. The position could include personally welcoming them, handing them a newcomer packet and a welcome medallion, and answering all questions after the meeting and a follow-up call. This position would end confusion of looking for a person every meeting. The position could also be rotated.

Also, a designated person whose responsibility it is to go through all flyers and handouts and remove those that are out of date. This person would work with the IG rep. when new flyers or handouts are distributed at Intergroup. I believe an orderly and up to date literature table shows a sense of importance and respect to all the work behind the handouts and flyers.

Someone calling newcomers after their first few meetings.

Flemington has this meeting guide that they put on their table during each meeting. This guide can be adapted to *your* meeting.

WHICH LITERATURE WILL OUR MEETING BE USING TODAY?



| Which Saturday of the Month is it? | Meeting Reading Selection |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1st | Speaker Meeting (if no speaker, leader's choice from OA approved literature only) |
| 2nd | Choose reading from For Today, Voices of Recovery , or the pamphlet "Tools of Recovery" |
| 3rd | AA Big Book Readings |
| 4th | OA 12 & 12 (step for the corresponding month) |
| 5th | OA 12 & 12 (tradition for the corresponding month) |

** At literature meetings, members read selections from chosen literature and reflect on what they've read, grounding their shares in their own experiences.



Reminders for Group Sharing:

Our group conscience has decided on the following reminders to guide your sharing.

- As you share your experience and strength in OA, please also share your hope.
- Feedback and cross talk are discouraged during the meeting.
- Please do not give advice to other members or speak directly to another person when sharing as this disrupts the unity of the group and creates disharmony.
- Please only speak from your own experience using I and ME instead of YOU, US and WE.
- Please refrain from naming specific foods or ingredients during your share. Specific food questions can be handled after the meeting or with your sponsor.
- Please keep your share related to your recovery from compulsive eating and the ways you work your program.
- Please use OA literature approved only.
- If you are having difficulties, share how you use the program to deal with them.
- If you need to talk more about your difficulties and seek solutions, we suggest you speak to your sponsor and/or other members after the meeting.

Here are a few things that I believe helped invigorate the Thursday Night Hillsborough meeting:

- We pass around a calendar with the “We Care Book” and ask for two service volunteers to come a little bit early for the following meetings (usually for the next several weeks or so). We do this to make sure we have someone to be the Leader and also for a Set-Up Person. There was always a lot of confusion going on when the meeting was supposed to start like *Who’s leading? Where are the books?* It wasn’t good.
- Making sure someone is there approx. 15 minutes before the start of the Meeting helps. Having newcomers wait around by themselves looking for us to show up sends the wrong message. For our meeting, it’s the set-up person who gets there first (usually).
- We pick one book to read and stay with it until completed. We decide on the “next” book well in advance. There was a lot of weekly confusion here as well like *What book are we reading? What page?*
- Our group sends out a daily email. We have a weekly service position where each morning someone sends out an inspirational email to anyone in the group that would like it. You don’t have to respond, but usually a handful does. This has brought the regular members closer together and sends a good message to the newcomers.
- Take out your format every so often for some dusting & cleaning. As a group, decide if there are some things that can be condensed, updated, or cleaned up. We went through several versions on this in draft form (took almost a year) to see what folks were comfortable with. Also we have no abstinence requirement to be a leader.

Here are some factors which I think contribute to a strong meeting. A lot of my regular meetings are not that strong, but they fit well into my schedule.

Members with abstinence in attendance

Members with experience with the steps in attendance

Beginner's Kits available

Literature available for sale

Enough regular attendees and service positions filled to ensure that the meeting will take place regularly.

This is what some more of our members thought about *their* preferences:

What makes a strong meeting for me? To summarize "one that helps me work a strong program." Below are some of the attributes that I seek in a meeting or meetings in order to keep my program strong!

Welcoming meeting - this makes it feel like a safe place to share and one in which there is support .

Actions that make a meeting feel welcoming:

- Members that smile and acknowledge you when you walk in
- Members remember your name from meeting to meeting
- Members from the meeting reach out to each other via phone, e-mail or text during the week
- Members all welcome newcomers, have literature to share with newcomers, and offer newcomers phone numbers and names to call if they have questions
- Comfortable meeting place

Recovery in the meeting - this is what gets me to recovery and helps to keep me there

Actions that show there is recovery in the room:

- Available sponsors
- Shares that identify problems /struggles but also detail how the steps and tools help to manage the problems (a.k.a. "1 minute on the problem; 2 minutes on the solution)
- Meeting focuses on the way to get recovery - the Steps - either 12&12 or Big Book
- Available literature or at least information on resources that are available
- Information on other meetings, workshops, etc. available

Mentors that show how to live life in Recovery - this shows me how to use program to deal with life

Actions that show me how to use program to deal with life:

- Members who are willing to do service at both the group and intergroup level
- Members that are happy, joyous and free and you can feel it when they walk into the room
- Members that use the Traditions in their relationships at home, work and at the OA meetings
- Members that also attend different meetings, retreats, and marathons - this brings variety and insight into the shares

I have seen *The Strong Meeting Checklist* at a few meetings. It is available on OA.ORG here <http://www.oa.org/pdfs/strongmtgchecklist1.pdf>

I need to hear people sharing their experience on their recovery journey. I like to hear how people make it through each day. How they use the tools as a part of their action plan. When the sharing is in the "I" vs "we" it is more powerful for me as well. I am uncomfortable with 'we' language.

There are some meetings where there are timed shares, which I appreciate, although when attending a small meeting it is not realistic to time all shares.

For me I feel a meeting is going well when there is no judgment, but still honesty, anonymity, and a lot of humor.

To me, a strong meeting is where there is a lot of recovery & the group is healthy (following the traditions). I personally prefer the focus to be on the steps (big book or step book) & find that's where most of the recovery is.

Thanks for asking. Without a doubt, focus on the steps and traditions and a supportive atmosphere so people feel safe to share honestly. The essentials of recovery are Honesty, Open-Mindedness, and Willingness. As we share and hear others share about applying the steps to our real lives honestly and feel acceptance, we become open and willing. That's what I love about my home group. We base the meetings on the literature and share what that looks like in our personal lives.

Recovery among attendees

Supportive atmosphere during and after meeting

Traditions honored including tolerance, anonymity, discouragement of crosstalk and leaders respecting all opinions

I have given some thought as to what "I" think makes a strong meeting.

1. The literature is key. I think the Big Book and 12 and 12 are a draw into themselves. I think that Lifelines can be less of a draw...they can be hit or miss...the exception (to me) being the big Lifeline book.

2. Also (and I know many disagree with me) I think a time limit of 3 minutes per share is important. I have been in too many meetings with obsessive people who whirl and churn around a topic like body image, etc. I think the time share is a discipline that forces obsessive people (I am in this category) to focus on the main concept...a timed share, short circuits the churning and is an important skill to learn.

3. No cross talking or comment on another person's share is also key...and should be enforced gracefully. I realized that that is the beauty of the meeting. Everyone is in a different place in their recovery. Recently, in a business meeting, someone made a rude snarky comment when I offered to volunteer to do a phone list. I was shocked and then I realized that in a meeting, the structure did not allow for individuals to be mean to one another and that is what makes it safe.

Have some thoughts or ideas you'd like to add
to this document?

Email us at CJISECRETARY@YAHOO.COM
We'd like to hear from you!

