

OA Outreach Committee – CJI

NJ Integrated Mental Health Conference

June 19 & 20, 2024

The second annual New Jersey Integrated Mental Health Conference (NJIMHC) was held at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, NJ on Thursday, June 20, 2024, with a Kick Off event the evening before on June 19, 2024. There were 35 other Exhibitor Sponsors and over 200 attendees from the mental health community projected to be there.

Our table location was excellent as we were just off to the right of the reception desk in the main lobby. There was a variety of medical, mental health, and other related professionals in attendance. They included psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, mental health professionals, state agency professionals, addiction specialists, certified therapists, mind/body practitioners, nutritionists, dieticians, and health coaches. It was truly an incredible opportunity to reach out to a large mixture of professionals who deal with eating disorders and food addiction issues. At least 26 people visited our table and took information about OA.

There were seven (7) sessions offered pertaining to integrated mental health and related topics, both in the morning and afternoon. Exhibitor Sponsors were permitted to attend any session they wanted in the AM and PM. I chose to attend the morning session called You Are (Mentally) What You Eat, which was presented by a medical doctor. Dr. Pogran was amazing and her presentation was incredible. I couldn't write fast enough while trying to take notes and thankfully she agreed to forward me the actual presentation. She essentially explained why the gut is considered our 'second brain' and now that really makes sense, especially for a food addict like me.

During the afternoon sessions I took the opportunity to visit the other Exhibitor Sponsors and was happy to see several of them dealt with eating disorders, especially for young women. Below are several of the organizations that I spoke to who agreed to advertise OA on their bulletin boards:

Tree of Life (counseling center) – private counseling with offices in Freehold and Princeton, NJ. This person was excited to post our "STOP" poster in their office.

Stockton University – located in Galloway, NJ. This individual was very interested in getting the word out about OA because she said they deal with many bulimics and restrictors (mostly females) whose grades suffer as a result of their eating disorder.

Balance (eating disorder treatment center) – in New York City. This organization offers a variety of in-patient, out-patient, webinars, support groups, etc., for individuals who suffer from eating disorders.

We have a list of all the Exhibitor Sponsors and should discuss potential follow-up with the ones who most closely align with our program.

OA CJI received advertising on the conference website, as well as a one-half page ad in the documentation provided to attendees, as part of the registration fee. The registration fee, which includes one person, was \$750 but OA obtained a \$250 discount since we are a non-profit organization so we paid \$500. Additional attendees (Mikey and Ross) were \$75 each, for an additional \$150 and I couldn't have done it without them.

We did need to purchase 500 OA business cards including CJI's website and phone number, both as giveaways for the attendees' gift bags (250), and also to have and give out to people who visited our table (250) and there are many remaining for future use. We also bought more flyers through the OA Reduced Cost Literature program at a discount of 50% as follows:

Professional Presentation Folder (200)	\$1.78 each = \$356.00
15 Questions Flyer (200)	\$.43 each = \$86.00
Many Symptoms One Solution (200)	\$.35 each = \$70.00
Where Do I Start (100)	\$1.00 each = \$100.00

Total cost with shipping was \$649.95, but this literature was not just for the NJIMHC as it will be used at other events and presentations in the future.

In my opinion, this was an excellent event for the CJI Outreach Committee and I would definitely recommend that we plan to attend again next year. We may want to consider asking the North Jersey and South Jersey intergroups if they would also like to attend next year in order to defray some of the cost. Regardless, I sincerely believe it was money well spent and that at this event OA was truly reaching an audience that totally understands and works to help those who suffer from the disease of compulsive overeating and other eating disorders.