

FOOD ADDICTS PHONE MEETING FORMAT

Please read slowly and clearly, for all to understand

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the _____(day) _____(time) group of Food Addicts. This meeting is one hour and fifteen minutes. My name is _____ from _____. I am a recovering food addict and your leader for this meeting. After a moment of silence, will those who wish to please join me in the **SERENITY PRAYER**.

The Coordinator will now place all callers on mute (*5). Please do not press STAR 6 on your phone to unmute until you are ready to speak, then press STAR 6 again to mute when you have finished speaking. When speaking, please announce your name and where you are calling from. When you are done speaking, please repeat your name and where you are calling from.

If you are dropped from the call and have trouble dialing back in, there is an alternate number you can try: 781-838-3229. The access code remains the same.

In order to keep our meeting safe for everyone, and avoid cross talk and confusion, we ask that you not interrupt the phone call for any reason. This includes questions about phone numbers, problems with volume level or background noise, or any advice or correction to the person speaking. The moderator and coordinator will handle any problems, and phone numbers will be given out at the end of the call. Thank you!

PREAMBLE

We are a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience and mutual support, are recovering from food addiction.

We welcome all who want to stop eating addictively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. We are not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology, or religious doctrine. We take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from addictive eating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer.

We would like to encourage those who do not yet have 90 days of abstinence to volunteer to read. To be a reader, just arrive 10 to 12 minutes early to the phone call and sign up. Please be sure to download the readings for this meeting from the *foodaddictsphonemeetings.org* website. Our readings are not identical to face-to-face meeting readings.

Would _____ (*name & location*) please read the **DEFINITION OF A FOOD ADDICT?**

DEFINITION OF A FOOD ADDICT

Food addiction is a disease of the mind, body and spirit for which there is no cure, but it can be arrested a day at a time by our adapting to a disciplined way of eating and a Twelve Step program. When we abuse food by using it as a drug, our lives become unmanageable.

Food addicts have an allergy to flour, sugar and quantities that sets up an uncontrollable craving. The problem can be arrested a day at a time by the action of our weighing and measuring our food and abstaining completely from all flour and sugar.

We define abstinence as weighed and measured meals with nothing in between, no flour, no sugar and the avoidance of any individual binge foods.

In a moment we will introduce ourselves.

Please make sure you are in a quiet place, so everyone can be heard.

Is there anyone on this call today for the first time? Please unmute with *6 and introduce yourself by your first name, and tell us where you are calling from. We would like to welcome you.

Would everyone who cares to, please say your name and where you are calling from? If you overlap with someone else, just repeat your information if you don't think we heard you.

Leader continues:

If you have not already done so, please be sure you are muted by pressing *6. Do not press *6 on your phone to unmute until you are ready to speak, and then return to mute when you are finished speaking.

Our food addiction recovery program is based upon the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. We will now read "How It Works" from page 58 of AA's BIG BOOK. AA has asked us to leave the text of "How It Works" intact, so the words "alcohol" and "alcoholic" remain.

Now _____ (*name & location*) will read "**How It Works**".

HOW IT WORKS

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it - then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember we deal with alcohol - cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power - that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon. Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery.

Now _____ (*name & location*) will read **THE TWELVE STEPS**, as adapted for our food addict group.

TWELVE STEPS

- 1. We admitted we were powerless over food- that our lives had become unmanageable.**
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.**
- 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**
- 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**
- 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**
- 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**
- 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.**
- 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**
- 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**
- 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**
- 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to food addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

(Leader continues): The following passage is from the Big Book, page 60:

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
- (c) That God could and would if He were sought.

Now _____ (*name & location*) will read THE TWELVE TRADITIONS, as adapted.

TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. **Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on unity.**
2. **For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.**
3. **The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating addictively.**
4. **Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or food addicts as a whole.**
5. **Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the food addict who still suffers.**
6. **A food addict group ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**
7. **Every food addict group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**
8. **We should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.**
9. **We ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.**
10. **Our group has no opinion on outside issues, hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**
11. **Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.**
12. **Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

The **DISCIPLINES** of this meeting are:

1. We suggest no smoking, food, drinks or gum, please.
2. This is a meeting. Although multi-tasking is a strong temptation, we ask that you set aside this time so you can focus on your recovery. In order to receive the gifts of living in recovery: physical, mental, and spiritual well-being; you will be helped by refraining from any activity that might distract you.
3. We suggest that you participate from a quiet, private location where you will not be interrupted by anyone, including, children, babies or pets. Please treat this as you would a face-to-face meeting. Any child who may have joined you on this call because they identify themselves as having a problem with food should be old enough to understand anonymity.
4. Please remember that naming specific foods, or even describing them without a name, may trigger cravings for some members.

SEVENTH TRADITION: As there are no expenses for this meeting, we suggest you contribute to your favorite face-to-face meetings.

Are there any Food Addicts or AWOL announcements?

(Leader pauses to see if anyone wishes to make an announcement.)

- We have a telephone meeting website which will list information on all telephone meetings. That website address is: www.foodaddictsphonemeetings.org. You can find out about AWOLS, which are a study of the Twelve Steps, at www.phoneawols.com.
- We have a telephone list for those at the telephone meetings. If you would like to be added to this list and to receive a copy of the list, please go to the website, choose 'phone list' and follow the directions.

SKYPE/VIBER LIST: There is a list for people who use Skype and/or Viber, which are apps that allow us to make free calls to other members around the world. To be added to this list, which contains contact information for members in over 20 countries, send an email with your details to Angela at angela@align-ed.co.za

Again, we remind you to please not interrupt the call for any reason, to avoid confusion and too many voices at once. Phone numbers will be given out at the end of the meeting. The moderator will handle any other issues that come up on the call. Thank you!

SERVICE

The readings and meeting format are posted on the website. Please go to www.foodaddictsphonemeetings.org and download Telephone Meeting documents. Please have these readings available so you can do service by volunteering to read. This is a wonderful way for those with less than 90 days of abstinence to do service. To volunteer to be a reader, just come on the call 10-12 minutes early. You do not need 90 days of abstinence to read.

If you have 90 days or more of continuous abstinence and are willing to do service as:

- A leader for this meeting, which means reading the format, as I'm doing now, OR
- If you have 90 days of continuous abstinence and would like to do service as a coordinator, who pushes the mute/unmute buttons, OR
- A speaker with 90 days of continuous abstinence, telling your recovery story at the meeting or sharing on a reading,

Then please stay on the call after the meeting and give us your contact information.

We would like to encourage everyone, especially those who do not yet have 90 days of continuous abstinence, to read one of the **TOOLS OF RECOVERY**.

TOOLS OF RECOVERY

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **ABSTINENCE: : We obtain abstinence from addictive eating by weighing, measuring, and committing our food to a qualified sponsor. We have found that we must abstain completely from all flour and sugar.**

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **SPONSORSHIP: We ask a qualified SPONSOR to guide us through the recovery program on all three levels: physical, mental, and spiritual. Sponsors are committed to abstinence and to living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their own experience. Ours is a program of attraction. Find a sponsor who has what you want and ask how it was achieved.**

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **MEETINGS: We attend meetings, which enable us to identify and share our experience, strength and hope with each other. We have found that unless we give to newcomers what we have received from the program, we cannot keep it for ourselves.**

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **TELEPHONE: Food addiction is a disease of isolation. The telephone is a means of communicating with another addict between meetings:**

- a. **We begin by committing our food daily to our sponsor.**
- b. **We share hope with each other.**
- c. **We have immediate contact with another Food Addict in times of stress.**
- d. **We call before we take the bite.**

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **ANONYMITY: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our program and is essential for our recovery. In order to get well, we must be able to speak openly and to trust one another. We reach out to help, but we do not gossip. What you hear at this meeting, stays at this meeting. Each person's story is his or hers to reveal. At the public level, we safeguard our anonymity by concealing our full names and faces.**

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **LITERATURE:** We read Twelve Step literature in order to strengthen and reinforce our program. When read on a daily basis, the literature impresses on us certain basic truths we have found vital to our growth. Literature is an ever available tool that gives us insight into our problem, strength to deal with it, and the very real hope that there is a solution for us.

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **WRITING:** In addition to writing our inventories and the list of people we have harmed, most of us have found that writing is an indispensable tool for working the Steps. Further, putting our thoughts and feelings down on paper, or describing a troubling incident, helps us to better understand our actions and reactions in a way that is often not revealed to us by simply thinking or talking about them. In the past, addictive eating was our most common reaction to life. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action.

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **QUIET TIME:** To maintain our abstinence, we must learn to rely on a Power greater than ourselves. We set aside a full half hour each day to sit quietly and relax. In this time with our Higher Power, we listen, seeking the perspective, serenity, and strength that will enable us to stay abstinent and respond sanely to the challenges and joys of the day.

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **GRATITUDE:** Food addiction is a disease of negativity. Our contented abstinence depends on our willingness to replace negative thoughts and feelings with thankful ones. In the past, we thought of gratitude as a feeling, but in this program, we practice it as an action.

_____ *(name & location)* has volunteered to read **SERVICE:** We do service by staying abstinent, giving us the freedom from compulsion and obsession with food to allow us to be available to others. Any service, no matter how small, that will help reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Calling others from this meeting, answering the phone, sharing at this meeting, leading this meeting, sponsoring, talking to newcomers, doing whatever needs to be done in a group, are ways we give back what we have so generously been given. Do what you can when you can. "A life of sane and happy usefulness" is what we are promised as a result of working the Twelve Steps. Service fulfills that promise.

Meeting Format Options

This meeting uses two formats: Qualification and Topic/Literature meeting. Today is a _____.

1. Qualification Meeting:

- a) Today/tonight we have a speaker, _____ from _____ (name & location).
- b) Today/tonight we do not have a speaker. Is there someone with 90 days of continuous abstinence, who would like to volunteer to share?

Continue for a) or b) Please share for 15-20 minutes your experience, strength and hope as a recovering food addict. If you wish, I can give you a 3- to 5-minute notice when it is time to wrap up. When you are finished, please give us a topic for sharing. You may also give us your phone number if you would like to.

2. Literature Meeting:

Today/tonight will be a literature meeting. I will read from _____. (*Twenty-Four Hours a Day*, *connection* magazine, *Tools of Recovery*, *Just for Today*, slogans, mottos, or from the *Big Book*, *Gray Book*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, or *Little Red Book*.)

Qualifier shares: My name is _____ from _____ and I am a recovering Food Addict.

At :40-:45 min past the hour, give the qualifier a 3-5 min warning to wrap up.

(At :45, the Coordinator presses *2 to get the number of participants).

At :45-:50 min past the hour:

Thank you for sharing your story. The meeting is now open for sharing from all those with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence, defined as “weighed and measured meals with nothing in between, no sugar, no flour, and avoidance of individual binge foods”. In order to allow time for all who wish to share, we ask that you keep your share to 2-3 minutes. The Leader may interrupt in order to address any distractions. Please be mindful of the selected topic and relate your sharing accordingly. Again, please do not press the *6 key to remove the mute feature until you are ready to share. Announce your name and where you are calling from before and after your share. Press *6 to mute your phone once you have finished sharing.

Is there anyone who just got his or her 90 days? (**Pause**) Anyone who doesn't usually share?

At :07 minutes past the hour, the Leader continues: Thank you all for sharing. Can the Coordinator tell us how many participants were on this meeting? (*2)

OPTIONAL SCRIPTS

IN CASE OF AN OVERLY LONG SHARE

We appreciate your sharing, and we would like for others to have a chance to share. Please take another minute and wrap up your share.

IN CASE OF A PARTICIPANT INTERRUPTING A SHARE

I would like to address the person who interrupted the share. We want this meeting to be safe for all participants. Please leave it to the coordinators of this call to address distractions or length of shares. Who would like to share next?

NEWCOMER GREETERS

Would someone with 90 days of abstinence volunteer to be a newcomer greeter for today? Please tell us your name, telephone number (with time zone) and the best time to call. The Fifth Tradition states that we are all responsible for greeting newcomers. If you are new, have questions, or are uncertain about our program, please reach out to one of the greeters. We encourage you to attend several meetings to gain an understanding of what the program offers.

SPONSOR ANNOUNCEMENT

Sponsors are members currently being sponsored and living the Twelve Steps. We recommend that a sponsor be six or more months abstinent. Sponsors help us begin the program and guide us in our recovery. We recommend that newcomers and anyone without a sponsor speak with one of these people. Would all qualified sponsors with time available please identify yourselves? Tell us your phone number (with time zone) and the best time to call.

CLOSING THE MEETING

It is time to close our meeting. Thank you for joining us today. We hope you will join us again next week at the same time. What you have heard here today are opinions expressed by particular individuals, and they do not represent our program as a whole. Ours is a program offering hope for every single person with the disease of food addiction. We provide support by helping one another as we work the Twelve Steps of Recovery. What you hear at this meeting stays at this meeting. We are especially grateful for the miracles of technology that enable us to share our experience, strength and hope with each other around the world.

The Leader will remain on the line for a few minutes at the close of the meeting.

Now _____ (*name & location*) will read **THE PROMISES OF THE PROGRAM**, from the BIG BOOK, page 83.

PROMISES OF THE PROGRAM

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

Will all those who wish to, unmute with *6, and join me in a moment of silence and the **SERENITY PRAYER.**

