

Overeaters Anonymous: Welcoming Inventory

This is a tool originally created by the New York Metro Intergroup of OA with the original name of Welcoming ACTION PLAN Quiz. We contacted them twice to discuss sharing this tool at the World level. They were honored and claimed no intellectual rights to the document.

The Unity with Diversity In -Reach sub committee looked at the document over several meetings to edited portions of the document and changed the name to a Welcoming Inventory.

What follows in these slides are screen shots of the latest draft with feedback for each scenario.

Unity with Diversity 2020

Intention for this tool

Our intention was to have the Board of Trustees to look at this tool for tradition breaks.

We wanted it to be posted on OA.org in the Document Library as a resource for Intergroups and meetings.

The original plan was to have the Welcoming Inventory interactive by means of a Google Form but it can be done through Survey Monkey as well. This app allows members to select their answers, receive feedback, and also generates data for the Intergroups that are sending out the form. However, it appears at this time that each intergroup will need to create their own Google Form by copying and pasting from the final form once approved by the BOT.

The data then generated from the responses at the Intergroup level would then inform the Intergroups on areas for growth.

Tradition 10 Workshop

The New York Metro Intergroup used the data generated from the responses to the Welcoming ACTION PLAN Quiz to develop a Tradition 10 workshop as a follow up to their ACTION PLAN QUIZ.

Tradition 10 states OA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Their focus was on educating members on the difference between sharing feelings in a meeting and bringing in an outside issue. Their focus was on creating acceptance around diverse shares and hearing the common thread of compulsive eating.

The NY Metro IG warned against creating a workshop on “welcoming” since members tend to see themselves as welcoming already.

The Unity with Diversity In-Reach committee seeks to increase the level of comfort members have when sitting in a group of people that they would not normally mix. We were not able to develop a suggested format during this time but would encourage the new Unity with Diversity Committee to entertain the thought. Any workshop focusing on increasing acceptance rather than avoidance is worthwhile.

Microaggressions vrs Unconscious Biases

The Unity with Diversity committee acknowledges microaggressions as being conscious action against another person. We realize many members may not be aware their actions are perceived as aggressive. Therefore we considered changing the word microaggression to unconscious bias. It is suggested the incoming Unity with Diversity edit the second paragraph on the introductory slide.

What follows are screenshots of the Welcoming Inventory. An editable version can be found here.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1irtykV1a5JRZj8IsROIfhaDNy5TRELAOiZOFJYbR33g/edit>

Overeaters Anonymous: Welcoming Inventory

Welcome to the Overeaters Anonymous: Welcoming Inventory. Your local Intergroup or meeting has shared this tool with you in the interest of developing awareness and acceptance of all individuals in our meeting rooms. This anonymous interactive inventory is designed to help OA members check the extent of their own awareness of diversity. This inventory is meant to be a direct reflection of diverse experiences in the OA rooms, and is intended to help us think critically about our responses.

Many individuals experience microaggressions within OA meetings. Microaggressions are statements, actions, or incidents regarded as instances of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discriminations against members of marginalized groups. These may refer to racial or ethnic identities or physical abilities. Members are often unaware that their words and actions are received as microaggressions.


All questions are optional. After you submit the inventory a response sheet will be generated with feedback. The feedback is design to educate us all to the perceptions of others around us.

Question: 1
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

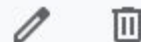
 Choose correct answers:

During fellowship of an online meeting with a bunch of members I know on video, one member is new and happens to be a person of color. What do I do?

 0 points

- I talk to my friends about their week and if the newcomer is still there, I introduce myself and give them my number.
- I talk to the newcomer before I chat with my friends and ask them if they have any questions about the program. 
- I wait to see if the newcomer talks and when they don't I assume they're shy and respect their space.

Feedback for incorrect answers



There might be a more inclusive alternative. In OA, the newcomer is the most important person in the room.

Done

Question: 2
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

Choose correct answers: ...

I notice that every week on the meeting the only woman of color is not being called on. What are the most welcoming actions for me to take?

0 points

Call on her when I have the opportunity and after the meeting, let her know I noticed she was being ignored. ✓

Assume it's not my business and say nothing.

Make a motion during the business meeting for the group to make a concerted effort to call on people they don't know.

Feedback for correct answers



Is that the best action to take for the consideration of OA as a whole? (Sometimes we need to allow ourselves to be uncomfortable to grow.)

Done

Question: 3
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

☑ Choose correct answers: ...

I walk into a meeting where 12 people are white presenting and one person is a person of color. What are the most welcoming actions for me to take? 0 points

- A. I assume the room is diverse in all ways and continue with the meeting as usual, paying no attention to differences in race.
- B. I sit next to that person of color before the meeting starts and introduce myself if I don't know them. ✓
- C. When that person of color raises their hand to share, I call on them. ✓
- All of the above
- B and C ✓

Feedback for incorrect answers



Is there anything more you can do to be welcoming to the member who might feel like an outsider?

Done

Question: 4
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

 Choose correct answers:

A member shares in a meeting that her recovery is in jeopardy because of her feelings about racism in the United States and that she feels triggered by reports of police brutality. What do I do? 0 points

- I ask the chair to read Tradition 10 to remind the group that OA has no opinion about outside issues.
- I tense up and sit in awkward silence during and after the share.
- I listen and honor the member's experience and after the meeting. I thank her for her share. ✓
- I talk to the fellow after the meeting to let them know that if they don't take racism so seriously they might not feel so triggered around the food.

Feedback for incorrect answers



Feelings are not outside issues, even if they are about racism. Minimizing someone's experience about racism is a microaggression.


Done

Question: 5
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

 Choose correct answers:

I have the service position of setting up the chairs before the meeting. Most of the chairs are armed chairs. What do I do?

 0  points

- I pay little attention to the kinds of furniture in the room, but make sure the circle is perfect.
- I make sure there are some chairs without arms in the back of the room in case someone needs another option.
- I incorporate chairs without arms into the circle for all members attending the meeting as some people have a hard time sitting in chairs with arms 

Feedback for incorrect answers



Is there something more inclusive you can do for the fellow who still suffers?


Done

Question: 6
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

 Choose correct answers:

I'm in an OA meeting and a newcomer at a healthy body weight walks into the room. What do I do?

0 points

- I let them know that AA is meeting down the hall because I assume they are lost.
- I welcome them to the meeting and offer them a newcomers pamphlet. 
- I assume we have nothing in common and I let the other fellows talk to them.

Feedback for incorrect answers



OA members come in all shapes and sizes. It's our common solution that binds us.

Done

Question: 7
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

 Choose correct answers:

A member brings a wireless microphone and a speaker to a meeting because they are hard of hearing. The members present at the start of the meeting take a group conscious to pass the microphone for shares. The microphone is uncomfortable to use. What do I do? 0 points

- When it's my turn to share, I let the room know I have a loud voice and speak up so I don't need to use the microphone.
- I speak directly into the microphone to respect the needs of all fellows in the room. ✓
- I use half of my share to complain about needing to use the microphone and how it feels like a performance to share into a mic.

Feedback for incorrect answers



How am I being of service if I'm not accommodating to the members in the program who ask for help?

Done

Question: 8
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

☑ Choose correct answers:

A young person shares in a meeting. After the meeting, a longtimer approaches the young person and immediately asks their age. They then follow it up with a light-hearted anecdote about being that young. The young person appears uncomfortable. What do I do?

0 points

- A. I join the conversation and mention that the wisdom of the rooms is available to all who share my compulsion, no matter one's age. ✓
- B. I joke with the longtimer about being older and wiser, remembering how naive I was when I was young.
- C. I talk with the young member separately and let them know there is also a Young Person's meeting on Thursdays. ✓
- Both A and C ✓

Feedback for correct answers




Ageism is a prejudice and making a joke of someone's age can be harmful.

Done

Question: 9
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

 Choose correct answers:

In an OA meeting, one member is on camera wearing a hat endorsing a political candidate and mentions in his share that he is looking forward to voting. I start to feel angry. What do I do? 0 points

- After the meeting ends, I tell that man that I don't appreciate his hat or his politics and talk about his share at fellowship.
- I practice feeling my feelings in the room, repeating the slogan "Bless them, Change me" and call my sponsor after the meeting.
- I make an announcement during the break reminding the group that no political endorsements be allowed in the meeting room as it violates Tradition 10. 

Feedback for incorrect answers



Other people's political ideas are outside issues and should not be debated in an OA meeting room.

Done

Question:
10
Question,
Possible
best
answer, and
Feedback

Choose correct answers:

At fellowship lunch, a straight female OA member asks a gay male OA member if he has tried dating women to see if he likes it. I notice he has stopped eating.

0 points

What do I do?

I wait to see what he says because I'm also interested in his answer.

I let the female OA member know the question is inappropriate and that fellowship is an extension of the meeting. ✓

I deflect the conversation for the gay male OA member by saying "I had a bi-sexual phase in college, but it wasn't for me."

Feedback for incorrect answers



Homophobia is a prejudice and can show up in many ways, including microaggressions causing harm to the queer individual.


Done

Question: 11
Question,
Possible best
answer, and
Feedback

Choose correct answers:

During an OA business meeting with female, male, and non-binary* members, a member makes a motion to suggest that everyone share their pronouns after their name. During the discussion of the motion, a member shares that it's ridiculous and unnecessary information. What do I do? *Non-binary refers to a person that does not identify as male or female.

points

- I let the discussion carry out and say nothing since I'm a cis-gendered person* and it doesn't affect me. *Cis-gender refers to a person who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.
- I offer another 'con' to the motion explaining that gender is an outside issue and talking about it violates the Traditions.
- I offer a 'pro' to the motion to suggest that transgender and non-binary members might feel more welcome in the meeting if they were able to be correctly identified. 

Feedback for incorrect answers



Gender is not an outside issue in OA and opportunities that help members feel safe and welcome is what betters OA as a whole.


Done

Question: 12
Question,
Possible best
answer, and
Feedback

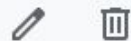
 Choose correct answers:

I attend a meeting that just happens to have a majority of members that are gay and lesbian. A member that attends occasionally brings a newcomer to the meeting. Before the meeting starts I hear the member tell the newcomer this is a "gay and lesbian meeting". What do I do?

 points

- I speak up and introduce myself as lesbian and then point out all the other lesbians in the room.
- I tell the newcomer this is a meeting for all that share our compulsion and occasionally we will talk about our relationships and how they effect our eating. 
- I keep my judgements about others' sexuality to myself and say nothing.

Feedback for incorrect answers



We respect each others' anonymity. Each member has their own story to tell. Talking about someone else in a meeting is a microaggression.

Done

Thank you statement at the end of the Inventory.

Thank you for actively welcoming OA member and being an ally of members who are different from you. We hope you have found the experience enlightening and suggest talking with your sponsor and other fellows about how to be a more welcoming member of OA. And above all, remember "Love and Tolerance is our Code". Although the choices that are offered on this inventory may not fit the answer to what you would honestly do in these situations, this inventory exists to give us all pause to reflect on the situations that we have experienced and be more aware in order to respond more purposefully in the future.