Dear Fellows in Recovery,

The Tidewater Intergroup Twelfth-Step-Within Committee has created this special focus meeting format for use by its local meetings during the week of 12/12. Participation is voluntary, but encouraged! To participate, we suggest that your meeting call a group conscience to consider the use of this format for your regular meeting day/time during the week of 12/12.

All needed materials are provided with this packet and include the Region 7 Trifold, an Invitation to You, The Twelve Traditions, the OA Preamble, prompt sheet 1, prompt sheet two, and the OA Promise.

We hope that this format will encourage and strengthen recovery for all members! By observing Twelfth-Step-Within Day we are uniting with our World Wide Fellowship and recovering together!

Sincerely,

Your Trusted Servants from the

Twelfth-Step-Within Committee

**Special Topic Meeting for week of 12/12**

**Overeaters Anonymous Twelfth-Step-Within Day**

1. Welcome to this special focus meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I am your leader for this meeting.
2. Will those who wish to, join me in the serenity prayer.
3. This meeting format has been specifically designed by the Twelfth-Step-Within committee to provide a way for groups to observe Twelfth-Step-Within day, held annually by the OA fellowship on December 12. It is a day to focus on carrying the message of recovery to OA members who are in relapse or still suffering from compulsive eating.
4. The Twelfth Step Within committee statement of purpose, as stated in the *Twelfth-Step-Within Handbook* is as follows:

* To carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer within the fellowship
* To deal with relapse and issues of membership retention, offering a message of hope
* To encourage OA members to maintain recovery and prevent relapse

1. Let’s go around the room and introduce ourselves by first names only.
2. To share the hope that recovery is possible after relapse, if you have survived a relapse and come out on the other side, please identify yourself and state the length of your current back to back abstinence since your release from relapse.
3. Would someone please read the OA preamble:
4. Would someone please read Our Invitation to you, which includes the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous?
5. Would someone please read the Tradition of the month?
6. The following reading is from our OA pamphlet *Members in Relapse:*

“Many of us found that our fears unconsciously led us to use food for comfort or escape, but the food eventually overwhelmed and imprisoned us. When we came back to OA, we feared judgement because we considered relapse a failure. It is not. Relapse is proof that we are human and our disease is serious. When treated as a learning experience, relapse does not mean failure. Relapse is not inevitable, but for some of us, it has played a significant part in our long term recovery. We fell, got up, learned from the experience, and recommitted ourselves at a deeper level to the program. We were always warmly welcomed. The only time we fail in OA is when we stop trying.”

1. Our goal for this meeting is to encourage members to create and maintain an environment of love and support through a daily commitment to actions that support strong and lasting recovery within our fellowship. Actions may include all or some of the following:

* Personally committing to abstinence and daily step work
* Sponsorship
* Attending meetings/special events and intentionally listening to those who share
* Outreach calls, especially to newcomers, returners and those in relapse or having a hard time
* Setting aside step 11 time to pray for others in program and how you might help support the still suffering compulsive eater
* Being honest about your own challenges and allowing others in program to offer support to you

1. Please read the Region 7 trifold, *Ways to Keep and Ways to lose New Comers and Returning Members.* (Leader can choose one reader or simply pass around the pamphlet and take turns until it is finished)
2. I will now read two passages from our OA approved literature. Our first passage comes from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Please remember that when we read AA literature aloud in a group, we read it exactly as written from the original text. When reading it silently, many of us find that when we substitute words such as ‘alcohol’ and ‘alcoholic’ with ‘food’; and ‘compulsive eater’, we can identify more easily.

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“…I know I must get along without liquor, but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute? Yes, there is a substitute vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous…Among them you will make lifelong friends. You will be bound to them with new and wonderful ties, for you will escape disaster together and you will commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey. Then you will know what it means to give of yourself that others may survive and rediscover life. You will learn the full meaning of “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Fourth Addition* pp. 152-153

Our second passage is from *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, 2nd Edition:*

“Here were people who understood us and cared about us. We could be totally honest about ourselves and they still accepted us unconditionally. This acceptance grew to love, carrying with it a power that seemed to stay with us as we left our OA meetings.” *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition*, pp.12-13)

1. Before we begin sharing on these readings and prompts, I will read the suggested guidelines for sharing:

As you share your experience and strength in OA, please also share your hope. Please confine your sharing to your experience with compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors, the solution found in OA, and your own recovery from the disease, rather than just the events of the day or week. 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 other members after the meeting.

Feedback, cross talk and advice giving are discouraged here. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group, and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time.

1. We will have 10 minutes to share on this first set of prompts. Do I have a volunteer timer?: (Please read the following prompts aloud and place prompt sheet 1 on the table so members can see the questions. Set time for 10 minutes)

* How were you received as a newcomer or returner to OA? Did it impact your willingness to keep coming back?
* How have you greeted newcomers/returners in the past?
* Do you believe you can stop eating compulsively or remain abstinent without the support of your OA fellows and a personal commitment to love and support them back?

(Please continue after 10 minute timer sounds)

1. Relapse is a common experience in OA and we are all only one bite away. Thankfully, the use of the OA Tools and steps of the program provide constructive actions we can take with the support of our fellows to put ourselves in a position to receive the gift of abstinence, or if abstinent, maintain our fit spiritual condition and remain abstinent and free. Please use the rest of the sharing time to share your experience, strength and hope on the following prompts. You may focus your share on one prompt or address any and all that you feel you have something to contribute. (Leader should slowly read the prompts out loud and place prompt sheet two somewhere all members can see it in order to participate in the sharing)

* If you are a relapse survivor, please share the role that the love and support of other OA fellows played in your release from relapse.
* What does the slogan, “Don’t leave until the miracle happens” mean to you?
* What actions on behalf of your recovery have you taken after a slip or relapse to get you back on track?

1. (8 minutes before end time) Our sharing portion of the meeting is now over. Thank you for participating. We cannot work this program by ourselves. We have found it indispensable to call on the support of a sponsor for guidance in working our threefold program of recovery. Sponsorship is one of our keys to success. Sponsors are OA members committed to abstinence and living the Steps and Traditions to the best of their ability. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their experience, and they strengthen their recovery through this service to others. To find a sponsor, look for someone who has what you want, and ask that member how he or she is achieving it. Would all abstinent sponsors identify themselves?
2. Seventh Tradition

According to our seventh tradition, we are fully self-supporting though our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. We encourage you to give as generously as you can to support our group, Intergroup, Region and World Service Organization.

1. Are there any OA related announcements?

Region 7 invites you to participate in the Call 5 campaign. (Leader, please read and pass around flyer)

1. Closing

By following the Twelve Steps, attending meetings regularly, and using the OA Tools, the miracle of recovery has been realized by thousands! We carry this message of hope to all who share our compulsion!

Please remember that the opinions expressed here are those of individual members and do not represent OA as a whole. Please remember to honor each other’s anonymity:

**Whom you see here, What you hear here, When you leave here, Let it stay here**.

Let us remember that every time we pick up the phone, we strengthen the fellowship! Please remember to reach out to newcomers, returners and each other! Together we get better!

Thank you for allowing me to be your leader. After a moment of silence, please join me in the OA Promise.

**Prompt Sheet One**

* How were you received as a newcomer or returner to OA? Did it impact your willingness to keep coming back?
* How have you greeted newcomers/returners in the past?
* Do you believe you can stop eating compulsively or remain abstinent without the support of your OA fellows and a personal commitment to love and support them back?

**Prompt Sheet Two**

* If you are a relapse survivor, please share the role that the love and support of other OA fellows played in your release from relapse.
* What does the slogan, “Don’t leave until the miracle happens” mean to you?
* What actions on behalf of your recovery have you taken after a slip or relapse to get you back on track?