

## **Addressing Behavior Issues at FA Meetings**

FA meetings are usually calm and orderly. Under Tradition Three, they are open to any person who wants to stop eating addictively. However, there have been occasions when individuals who attend FA meetings engage in actions that offend or alarm other members. Such behavior can have a disruptive effect on the meeting and its members.

Disruptive behavior can take many forms; the types will vary in degree from minor to serious. Some issues may simply be one-time occurrences. Others may require patience, and faith that the problem will resolve itself. In these circumstances, it is helpful to remember the slogan that suggests we “keep our eyes on our own plate.”

Though rare, disruptive behavior may be so problematic that it needs to be addressed for the good of the members, and the effectiveness of the meeting. MESA (the Meeting Effectiveness, Support, and Assistance subcommittee of the World Service Twelfth Step Committee) offers the following suggestions.

1. Discuss the issue with your sponsor. Do some writing and ask your Higher Power for help. Sponsors can provide guidance and assist in discerning when action must be taken as well as what should be done and how. Asking for help from long-term members can also lead to a resolution.
2. Bring the issue to the group at your business meeting. Because meetings are autonomous, problems are frequently solved by discussion at a business meeting and seeking a consensus or group conscience. The unity of the group will be protected if members refrain from gossiping about the issue.
3. Direct communication is usually the best policy; a clear, kind, and calm approach often works.
4. Call the MESA Helpline Team at [mesa@foodaddicts.org](mailto:mesa@foodaddicts.org). A member will provide confidential consultation by telephone and/or email, while remaining true to the principles of meeting autonomy and group conscience.
5. Occasionally, outside assistance may be called for.