

DOCUMENT 4: SAMPLE FA MEETING FORMAT

Before printing this format for use at your meeting, you will need to make a few edits. Using the guidelines below, please adjust accordingly.

1. The format is a read-only file (pdf). To receive a version where adjustments may be made, please email docrequest@foodaddicts.org. In the subject line of the email, type "Request Document 4: Sample FA Meeting Format." Refer to **Meeting Guidelines Document 1** for the portions of the format that registered FA meetings must include.
2. Delete the footer that says "Document 4: Sample FA Meeting Format" by double-clicking the footer and choosing "delete."
3. Insert the meeting day, time, and location in the "Introduction" section.
4. At your monthly business meeting, review the five types of meetings listed in the "Meeting Format Options" section. Use group conscience to decide the preferred meeting format option(s). Some groups will choose to use the same type (e.g. Sharing) each week, while other groups will choose to vary the type of meeting week to week. Please refer to **Meeting Guidelines Document 3** for further clarification.
5. If the meeting chooses to use more than one format option, be sure to mark the WEEK in your format (e.g. **WEEK ONE**: Sharing, **WEEK TWO**: Qualification/FA Speaker Recording, **WEEK THREE**: Tools, **WEEK FOUR**: FA Book, **WEEK FIVE**: *connection*).
6. Once your meeting has selected its meeting format option(s), insert a time 50 minutes after the start of the meeting to indicate to the leader when to stop for the break in each of the selected format options.
7. At meetings where literature is read, the group decides whether to read one paragraph, several paragraphs, or one page at a time. Please edit your format accordingly. Meetings can choose to add the wording, "Members with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA, currently working with an FA sponsor, may raise their hand to share during any part of the reading. We ask that you please refrain from clapping."
8. If your meeting decides not to read the Meeting Health Question during the meeting, delete that section.
9. Decide whether to keep the optional language in { } on page 17 and under Qualification/FA Speaker Recording. *For suggestions about other changes you might want to make to your format, please see **Meeting Guidelines Document 2: Meeting Essentials and Document 3: Format Options for FA Meetings**.*
10. Print using a 14-point font to make the format easier to read.



FOOD ADDICTS

in recovery anonymous

FA MEETING FORMAT

❖ INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the [day of the week, time a.m./p.m., city] group of Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous -- FA. Before we continue, please silence your cell phone. [*Pause.*] Thank you.

My name is _____; I am a food addict and the leader for this meeting. [*Pause.*] After a moment of silence, will you please join me in the **SERENITY PRAYER?** [*Pause.*]

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

❖ PREAMBLE

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous is 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. FA is 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 continuous abstinence in FA to come to the front of the room to read. Would someone please read the **DEFINITION OF FOOD ADDICTION?** [*Call on a volunteer to come to the front, then give them the following page to read.*]

❖ **DEFINITION OF FOOD ADDICTION**

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 the Twelve-Step program of FA. 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.

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

- ❖ How many food addicts are here besides me? [*Pause.*] Welcome to you all. FA is based on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- ❖ At AA's request, we read their literature as originally written, so the words "alcohol" and "alcoholic" remain. Would someone please read "**HOW IT WORKS**" from page 58 of AA's Big Book? [*Call on a volunteer to come to the front, then give them the following page to read.*]

❖ 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.

- ❖ Would someone please read the **TWELVE STEPS** as adapted by FA?
[Call on a volunteer to come to the front, then give them the following page to read.]

❖ THE 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.**

- ❖ The following passage is also from the Big Book, page 60: [*Leader reads.*]

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.
- ❖ Would someone please read the **TWELVE TRADITIONS** as adapted by FA? [*Call on a volunteer to come to the front, then give them the following page to read.*]

❖ THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. **Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on FA 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 FA membership is a desire to stop eating addictively.**
4. **Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or FA as a whole.**
5. **Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the food addict who still suffers.**
6. **An FA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the FA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**
7. **Every FA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**
8. **Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.**
9. **FA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.**
10. **Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, hence the FA 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. No smoking, food, drinks, or gum, please.
 2. We encourage people to arrive early to help set up the room and greet newcomers.
 3. Please refrain from texting, doing handicrafts, or engaging in any activity that might distract others.
 4. We ask that you not bring infants and children to the meeting. However, anyone who identifies as having a problem with food is welcome.
 5. Please remember that naming specific foods, or even describing them without a name, may trigger cravings for some members.
 6. Business meetings are held after the first meeting of every month. All members are welcome to attend. Members with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA, who regularly attend this meeting, will have a voice and a vote and service positions open to them.

- ❖ **LITERATURE:** Free newcomer packets, phone lists, and a variety of FA Conference-approved materials are available at the literature table, and MP3 qualifications may be downloaded from the FA website. Someone will be at the table to assist you during the break and after the meeting. Literature person, would you please stand and identify yourself?

- ❖ **connection:** *connection* is a magazine of experience, strength, and hope created by food addicts for food addicts. You may subscribe at foodaddicts.org or purchase an individual copy at this meeting. You may also submit art and articles. *connection* representative, would you please stand and identify yourself?

- ❖ We would like to encourage those who do not yet have 90 days of continuous abstinence in FA to come to the front of the room to read one of the **TOOLS OF RECOVERY**. Would someone please read the tool of **ABSTINENCE**? [*Call on one volunteer for each tool and give them the following page.*]

❖ THE TOOLS OF RECOVERY

ABSTINENCE: In the past, addictive eating was our most common reaction to life. We obtain abstinence from addictive eating by weighing, measuring, and committing our food to an FA sponsor. We have found that we must abstain completely from all flour and sugar.

SPONSOR: We ask an FA sponsor to guide us through the recovery program on every level: physical, mental, and spiritual. Ours is a program of attraction. Find a sponsor who has what you want and ask how it was achieved.

MEETINGS: We attend meetings in person, sharing 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.

TELEPHONE: Food addiction is a disease of self-centeredness and isolation, so we use the telephone daily to connect with FA members. We begin with a committed call to our sponsor. Phoning others throughout the day, we share our hope, and when we need help, we ask for it. Above all, we call if we are tempted to take the first addictive bite.

ANONYMITY: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our program. We are not afraid to admit our own addiction, but at the public level, we protect the program by concealing our full names and faces. Humility is essential for our recovery. No individual member should ever be seen as representing FA as a whole. Within the program, we reach out to help, but we do not gossip or reveal anyone's membership in FA except our own. Each person's story is theirs to reveal.

LITERATURE: We study FA Conference-approved literature to strengthen and reinforce our program. When we read it daily, the literature impresses on us basic truths we have found vital to our recovery. Literature is an ever-available tool that gives us insight into our problem, strength to deal with it, and the hope that there is a solution for us.

WRITING: Writing is an indispensable tool for sustaining abstinence and working the Twelve Steps. We write down our food plan each day before committing it to our sponsor. When we are troubled, writing also helps us see situations more clearly and better discern any necessary action.

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.

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 FA, we practice it as an action.

SERVICE: We do service by staying abstinent. Abstinence gives us freedom from compulsion and obsession with food so that we can be available to others. Any service that reaches a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. We are promised a life of sane and happy usefulness as a result of working the Twelve Steps. Service fulfills that promise.

MEETING FORMAT OPTIONS

1. QUALIFICATION/FA SPEAKER RECORDING

Speaker shares experience, strength, and hope regarding recovery in FA. *{Most meetings consider clapping after a qualification a sign of gratitude. However, your meeting may choose to include this optional wording: "We ask that you please refrain from clapping."}*

*[At approximately _____ a.m./p.m., proceed to the **SEVENTH TRADITION.**]*

2. SHARING MEETING

The meeting is now open for sharing from all those with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA who are working with an FA sponsor. We ask that you please refrain from clapping.

*[At approximately _____ a.m./p.m., proceed to the **SEVENTH TRADITION.**]*

3. LITERATURE MEETING

[Choose a reading from one or more of the following books or pamphlets.]

3.1. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (BIG BOOK) MEETING

[When choosing a selection from the Big Book, please avoid pages 64-103, which cover Steps Four through Twelve. Focusing on those steps may not be appropriate for newcomers.]

Today we will read from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, also known as the Big Book. Please take turns reading *[length of reading]* at a time. Those who do not wish to read, say "Pass." Please start reading from page _____.

[If there is time before the break:] The meeting is now open for sharing from all those with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA who are working with an FA sponsor. We ask that you please refrain from clapping.

*[At approximately _____ a.m./p.m., proceed to the **SEVENTH TRADITION.**]*

3.2. **FOOD ADDICTS IN RECOVERY ANONYMOUS [GRAY BOOK] MEETING**

[When choosing a selection from the Gray Book, please avoid pages 386-416, which cover Steps Four through Twelve. Focusing on those steps may not be appropriate for newcomers. Read and share on one chapter at a time. Bookmark the following chapter for the next leader so the book can be read consecutively.]

Today we will read from *Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous*. Typically, we refrain from mentioning food by name, but we will read these stories as they are written. Please take turns reading [*length of reading*] at a time. Those who do not wish to read, say "Pass." Please start reading from page ____.

[If there is time before the break:] The meeting is now open for sharing from all those with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA who are working with an FA sponsor. We ask that you please refrain from clapping.

*[At approximately ____ a.m./p.m., proceed to the **SEVENTH TRADITION.**]*

3.3. **connection MEETING**

[Choose a connection magazine story.]

Today we will read from *connection* magazine. Please take turns reading [*length of reading*] at a time. Those who do not wish to read, say "Pass."

[After the reading:] The meeting is now open for sharing from all those with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA who are working with an FA sponsor. We ask that you please refrain from clapping.

*[At approximately ____ a.m./p.m., proceed to the **SEVENTH TRADITION.**]*

3.4. TOOLS MEETING

[Read and share on one tool at a time. Bookmark the pamphlet for the next leader so it can be read consecutively.]

During this meeting we will read from the booklet *Living Abstinently*. Please take turns reading. Those who do not wish to read, say “Pass.” We will now read the tool of _____.

[After the reading:] The meeting is now open for sharing from all those with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA who are working with an FA sponsor. We ask that you please refrain from clapping.

*[At approximately _____ a.m./p.m., proceed to the **SEVENTH TRADITION.**]*

3.5. PAMPHLET MEETING

Today we will read from [*name of selected pamphlet-see Meeting Guidelines Document 3 for suggested pamphlets*]. Please take turns reading [*length of reading*] at a time. Those who do not wish to read, say “Pass.”

[After the reading:] The meeting is now open for sharing from all those with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA who are working with an FA sponsor. We ask that you please refrain from clapping.

*[At approximately _____ a.m./p.m., proceed to the **SEVENTH TRADITION.**]*

- ❖ **SEVENTH TRADITION:** We will now collect the Seventh Tradition donation. The Seventh Tradition advises us to support ourselves through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. Our expenses include rent, literature, support of our intergroup or chapter, and support of the FA World Service Office. Please contribute generously to the Seventh Tradition.
- ❖ **MEETING HEALTH QUESTION:** Would the meeting health person please read the meeting health question?
- ❖ Are there any FA or AWOL announcements?
- ❖ **WELCOME:** We would like to welcome any newcomers or visitors. If you are at this meeting for the first time, would you stand, if you are able, and give us your first name only, so that we may welcome you? [*Pause.*] Is there anyone here for the second or third time or anyone who has not been to this meeting recently? [*Pause.*] Welcome to you all.
- ❖ **GREETERS:** If you are new or have any questions, greeters will be available during the break and after the meeting. Would the greeters for this meeting please stand and introduce themselves? [*Pause.*] The Fifth Tradition reminds us that we are all responsible for carrying the message of recovery to newcomers. If you are new or uncertain about FA, we encourage you to attend several meetings to gain an understanding of what the program offers.
- ❖ **SPONSORS:** Sponsors are FA members currently being sponsored and living the Twelve Steps. FA recommends that a sponsor be six or more months abstinent. Sponsors help us begin the FA program and guide us in our recovery. We recommend that newcomers and anyone without a sponsor speak with one of these people. Would all sponsors with time available please stand and identify themselves?
- ❖ We will now take a 10-minute **BREAK.**

[After the break, resume here.]

- ❖ **SHARING:** {OPTIONAL: Is there anyone who is visiting or who has recently reached 90 days and is working with an FA sponsor, who would like to share first? *[Pause.]*} The meeting is now open for sharing from all those with 90 days or more of continuous abstinence in FA who are working with an FA sponsor. We ask that you please refrain from clapping. *[Sharing should conclude three or four minutes before the end of the meeting.]*

- ❖ Would someone please read the **PROMISES** from the Big Book, page 83? *[Call on a volunteer to come to the front, then give them the following page to read.]*

❖ THE PROMISES

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 you please remain in your seats, and, after a moment of silence, join me in the **SERENITY PRAYER**? [*Pause.*]

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.