

**DOCUMENT 9:
BEST PRACTICES FOR HEALTHY FA MEETINGS**

Document 9 is a repository of various “best practices” documents published by FA World Service, the intergroups, and intergroup committees. The original source of the information is provided in italics beneath each heading. The content does not reflect the views of “FA experts.” Rather, it comes from the collective experience of various committees of FA members with many years of experience at all levels of service. These offerings are reflective of the types of questions and issues that commonly arise at meetings and business meetings.

Document 9 is intended to be a “living” document that is updated regularly. The items that are highlighted with an asterisk (*) are particularly helpful to newcomers and are appropriate to be shared by the Meeting Health Person during the weekly FA meeting announcements (suggested wording for the announcement is noted in Document 5).

Meetings may choose to create a “best practices” portion of their business meetings using Document 9 as a resource. The Meeting Health Person may read and facilitate discussion around the “best practice” statement relevant to the stage of growth of the meeting. The use of the non-asterisked items is appropriate in this forum, and all “best practices” statements can help initiate discussions when a business meeting is completing the meeting’s regular 4th Step inventory.

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MAINTAINING MEETING HEALTH

Fall 2007, FA Best Practices Newsflash, FA Chapter, Intergroup, and Meeting Tips

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- Treat a meeting as a formal occasion, not as a club or support group. *
 - Look to the Meeting Guidelines on www.foodaddicts.org for help with meetings. *
 - Arrive early and stay late. As a rule, we say, "Arriving at my meeting 10 minutes early is arriving 'on time.'" *
 - This sets an example for the newcomer.
 - Keep chairs theater style to maintain a formal tone. If there are easy chairs in the room, move them out of the seating area or turn them towards the wall. Using one type of chair is preferable to maintain consistency in the room and avoid the impression of preferential seating. *
 - Stand up to read, to make announcements, or to talk. *
 - Consider adding "No Gum Chewing" as a discipline in your meeting format if it occurs routinely. It can be distracting. *
 - Always start and end the meeting on time. *
 - When leading meetings sit when reading the format, reading it exactly as written, without any improvising. *
 - Welcome newcomers (and announce greeters) even if you think there are none in the room. *
 - Try to call on people without 90 days to read before you call on old-timers. (During your business meetings, remind people with 90 days not to read unless there are no more newcomers.) *
 - Even in smaller meetings, read tools one at a time, not two, and don't rush through the format. *
 - Remind members (at business meetings) that announcements should relate only to FA meetings and AWOLs. It is not the time to announce fellowship meals, clothing swaps, etc. *
 - Try not to chat with friends before the meeting or at the breaks. Use the time to talk with newcomers. *
 - Talk with and sit next to newcomers. Don't save seats. Let your higher power decide who will sit next to you. *
 - Be active and excited as you welcome newcomers. Take them to the literature table. Point out your name on the phone list. Have newcomer packets prepared. *
 - Remember that the 5th Tradition reminds us that our primary purpose is to carry our message to the food addict who still suffers (that is, the newcomer). *
 - Don't go to the meeting fearing what you will have to say or judging others. Pass on the caring and hope that you have found in FA. *
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SHARING

Winter 2007, FA Best Practices Newsflash - FA Chapter, Intergroup, and Meeting Tips

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- When the leader asks for people with fewer than 90 days to read in front of the room, it is good to be patient through the silence until newcomers raise their hands. *
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- If you have 90 days and nobody has raised his or her hand after a few moments, then raise your hand to share. *
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- Remember to speak to the newcomer, share hope, and express excitement about your recovery. *
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- When sharing, it is helpful to ask yourself, "What can I share that will benefit the newcomer and that won't hurt or insult anyone?"
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- It helps the newcomer if you do not mention food by name or describe food or food fantasies; doing so may start another member on a mental binge that could lead to a food binge. If you must mention a specific food, use "flour product" or "sugar product," rather than naming or describing it. *
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- In your sharing, it helps the newcomer if you focus on abstinence and recovery through FA, and if you describe the tools you use to keep your program strong. It is not helpful to focus on what you did yesterday, or share the details of your family and work relationships. *
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- To get an idea of what to share, think about what you wanted to hear when you were a newcomer. Listening to FA audio recordings of qualifications in CD or MP3 format is also helpful. *
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- If you run out of people to share at a meeting, have people share again or read from conference-approved literature instead of ending the meeting early. *
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- If you hear "loose" or inappropriate sharing that is "off the beam," be an example. Get up and share about food addiction and the FA solution for recovery. *
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BUSINESS MEETINGS

Winter 2008, FA Best Practices Newsflash - FA Chapter, Intergroup, and Meeting Tips

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- A healthy meeting needs a healthy business meeting. *

 - Encourage sponsees and others in your meetings to attend business meetings. *

 - When at business meetings, be grateful to be there and share things that are going on in other forums.

 - Keep business meetings formal, with a chair for the secretary in front of the room, facing business meeting participants.

 - Be sure all reports are read and people stand when giving reports.

 - Have the courage of your convictions. Be willing to bring up issues gently and respectfully at a business meeting.

 - Conduct a 4th step inventory of your business meeting, asking “Are we really serving the newcomer?”

 - Speak about the type of sharing and other actions that are helpful to newcomers.

 - Remember the primary purpose is to carry the message to the newcomer. A meeting is not a weekly gathering of friends or a support group.

 - Always make chapter, intergroup and World Service announcements at business meetings to be sure members stay connected to the worldwide fellowship.

 - Old-timers reassure us — no matter what decision we make in the business meeting, remember that God is in charge and everything is going to be okay.

 - Focus on grateful service and not reluctant service. Do it gratefully. Talk about it gratefully. Talk to your sponsees about doing service.
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MEETING HEALTH QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Western Area Intergroup - Monthly Intergroup Summary

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| September | 2011 | Are you waiting to get to the front of the room before beginning to speak? | * |
| October | 2011 | Are you remembering to reach out to newcomers at the break as well as before and after the meeting? | * |
| November | 2011 | Does your meeting hold business meetings monthly? Are the WAI Summary Highlights and the WSI Quarterly Report read during your business meeting? | |
| December | 2011 | Are you reading your "smartphone" or texting during meetings? Is your cell phone completely turned off? Vibrating phones disturb others in the meeting. Listening requires sitting still; otherwise, we are distracted from getting our medicine. | * |
| January | 2012 | If you hold a service position and you miss your committed meeting and/or business meeting, do you arrange to have someone replace you? | * |
| February | 2012 | Are your members arriving at the meeting at least 10 minutes early to set up and to greet newcomers? | * |
| March | 2012 | Do you return FA outreach calls in a timely manner? | |
| April | 2012 | Is there cross talk at your meeting, or are members keeping the focus on their own experience, strength, and hope in their sharing? | * |
| May | 2012 | Are members of your meeting standing up to sponsor? | * |
| June | 2012 | Whether or not you have 90 days of abstinence, attending your business meeting is essential. It supports meeting health and your own personal recovery. Are you talking to your sponsor about attending your business meetings? | * |
| July | 2012 | Attending business meetings is essential. It supports general meeting health and individual recovery, which, in turn, supports FA as a whole. Sponsors: Are you suggesting that your sponsees attend the business meetings at their committed meetings, regardless of their time in abstinence? | * |
| August | 2012 | Are you making sure that you are connecting with those new to the meeting before talking with your peers at the break and before and after the meeting? | * |
| September | 2012 | Service is essential to our recovery. No amount of service is too small – and it is never too early to begin. If you do not yet have your 90 days, are you consistently raising your hand to read at your meetings? | * |
| October | 2012 | Is your meeting taking advantage of the Public Information tool kit located on the FA website to carry the message of recovery to your area? | |

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| November | 2012 | At your meetings, are you refraining from engaging in activities that might distract others? Such activities may include texting, talking or whispering, leaving your phone on (even on vibrate), chewing gum, drinking water, talking back to the speaker or putting on hand lotion. | * |
| December | 2012 | If you have time in abstinence beyond 90 days, are you waiting for members who do not yet have 90 days to raise their hands to read so that they, too, can reap the benefits of service? | * |
| January | 2013 | Is your meeting's literature table easy for the new member to find? Is it well stocked, neatly and attractively arranged, and does it contain only appropriate FA-approved literature? Is the Literature Person present at the table before the meeting, at the break, and after the meeting? | |
| February | 2013 | When called on to speak at a meeting, are you remembering to share hope with the newcomer? Are you expressing the joys and relief that FA recovery has brought you? | * |
| March | 2013 | Do you have a personal profile on the FA website? Having a personal profile helps facilitate the service and the business of FA. Having members who are well informed and committed to the fellowship helps strengthen individuals, meetings, and FA as a whole. | |
| April | 2013 | When you share at meetings, are you refraining from mentioning food by name as well as avoiding detailed descriptions? Painting an elaborate picture can trigger fantasies that may lead to the bite – for the speaker and for others. Please be considerate. | * |
| May | 2013 | Are you reading your "smartphone" or texting during meetings? Is your cell phone completely turned off? Vibrating phones disturb others in the meeting. Using them during the breaks takes away from being available for new members and fellows at the meeting. Let us not be distracted from getting our medicine. | * |
| June | 2013 | When sharing at your meetings, do you ever find yourself veering away from your personal story to give advice, air a grievance or entertain the group? Are you staying humble in your own experience and speaking from your heart to reach the newcomer? What you were like, what happened, and what you are like now is what has been proven over time to help your fellows. | * |
| July | 2013 | Meeting health is strengthened by meetings made up of individuals who are committed to their recovery. To deepen your commitment to your own recovery, are you engaged in service outside your committed meetings, such as participating in 12th Step outreach, attending health fairs or serving on an intergroup committee? | |
| August | 2013 | Are you remembering to reach out to newcomers and to anyone who looks like they might need a friendly welcome before and after your meeting and at the break? | * |

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| September | 2013 | Do you find yourself dozing at your meetings? If so, are you reaching out to your sponsor and fellows to talk about how to best manage your time and energy? For your own recovery, it is important to be awake and alert to get the message. It's also respectful to the speakers and sets a good example for newcomers | * |
| October | 2013 | FA is a program of honesty. How do you "do what you can when you can" at your committed meetings? Ask yourself honestly: how am I contributing to the strength of my meetings? Then talk to your sponsor about how to stretch yourself in a weighed and measured way to "give back what you have so generously been given." | * |
| November | 2013 | Repeat of December 2012 | |
| December | 2013 | Does your FA group consistently attract newcomers? Are they the primary focus before the meeting, during the break, and after the meeting? How is your meeting spreading the hope of FA recovery to the local suffering food addict? | |
| January | 2014 | Repeat of February 2013 | * |
| February | 2014 | In FA, the telephone is a tool. It is one of the main ways we stay connected and supported in between meetings. When leaving a voicemail for your fellows, are you speaking slowly and clearly, and repeating your callback number? Are you doing everything you can to assist fellows in returning your calls? | * |
| March | 2014 | Repeat of September 2012 | * |
| April | 2014 | Are you introducing newcomers to the literature table and offering them FA pamphlets? Are you encouraging them to buy the <i>Big Book</i> , <i>Twenty-Four Hours a Day</i> , and <i>connection</i> ? FA members often say that it has been reading the literature in times of stress that has kept them from taking that first bite. | * |
| May | 2014 | The World Service Inc. (WSI) Contact is a key person for keeping FA members at their meeting apprised of important news and opportunities for service. Is your WSI Contact's personal profile up to date on the FA website so that they are receiving correspondence from the WSI Board and the FA office? Are they making copies of the Frontier Sponsor List, Frontier Phone List, Universal Language List, and the newsletter <i>Gratitude in Action</i> available on the literature table at your meeting? Are they reading WSI announcements they receive via email at your business meeting, and are they announcing the annual business convention and this year's fellowship convention? | |

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| June | 2014 | If you are an Intergroup Contact, your role is to serve as a liaison between your meeting and the intergroup. Responsibilities include ensuring your contact information is accurate on the FA website, receiving and reading all correspondence from intergroup at your monthly business meeting, announcing the date of the upcoming intergroup meeting, submitting meeting information changes in the absence of a Web & Directory Contact, and attending intergroup if you live within 100 miles of the meeting location. If you are the Intergroup Contact for your meeting, are you performing the responsibilities required of the position? |
| July | 2014 | As the Web & Directory Contact, it is important to remember that you are the main resource for keeping meeting information up to date on the FA website. One of the primary responsibilities is making changes to contact information on the "Manage Meetings" section of the website. Without current information on contacts, your meeting will not get emails sent by Western Area Intergroup and World Service; therefore, meetings will be in the dark about what is going on in FA. And, if changes to a meeting day, time, or location do not get posted, newcomers and current members will not get accurate information regarding a meeting they want to attend. We want to do everything we can to make it possible for the food addict who is still suffering to find us. As the Web & Directory Contact, are you keeping your meeting information on the FA website current? |
| August | 2014 | As treasurer of a meeting, it is your job to collect the 7th Tradition each week, pay rent, and to serve as a liaison to the meeting location. The treasurer also records all expenses and income, gives a financial report at the monthly business meeting, and donates 75% of leftover funds to World Service Inc. and 25% to Western Area Intergroup. Other than keeping a prudent reserve for the meeting, WSI does NOT recommend that meetings set aside money for other purposes, such as purchases of PI materials, funding a member to attend the annual business convention or a fellowship convention, or for babysitting at meetings. As treasurer, are you fulfilling your required duties? |
| September | 2014 | The main purpose of the secretary position is to ensure your meeting is adhering to FA WSI Meeting Guidelines and that service positions are being covered. You can find the description of responsibilities in Meeting Guidelines Document 7 on the FA website. If you are the secretary for your meeting, are you aware of your responsibilities? |
| October | 2014 | The Speaker Seeker is a critical position because the speakers chosen for your meetings provide the first impression of FA to newcomers. If you are the Speaker Seeker for your meeting, are you finding strong, committed FA members to lead each week? |
| November | 2014 | The tool of the telephone is a lifeline for us as food addicts in recovery, and it is critical that the newcomer has access to current phone lists. Is |

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| | | there a current phone list available on the literature table at each of your meetings? | |
| December | 2014 | When you get called on to share at a meeting, are you keeping your focus on what it was like when you were active in your food addiction and how you're using your tools to live in abstinence and recovery today? | |
| January | 2015 | None – intergroup was cancelled. | |
| February | 2015 | Repeat of June 2013 | |
| March | 2015 | When you qualify at a meeting, are you calling on a diversity of fellows to speak after the break? Calling on a variety of people expands the messages heard by the fellowship and provides the opportunities to be of service – service that strengthens the individual, the meeting, and FA as a whole. | |
| April | 2015 | Do you consistently arrive ten minutes early to your meetings to help greet newcomers and set up the room? | * |
| May | 2015 | Are you keeping your cell phone turned off and tucked away during the entire length of your meetings so that you and the others around you are not distracted? | * |
| June | 2015 | If you are a WAI, WSI, or Web & Directory Contact, are you preparing for your monthly business meetings by printing out and reviewing the necessary documents in advance? For those taking on new service positions next month, please refer to Document 7, “Service Positions—Description of Responsibilities,” on the FA website. | |
| July | 2015 | If you are going to be out of town during one of your meetings, have you asked someone to cover your service position while you are gone? | * |

MEETING HEALTH QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Eastern Area Intergroup Monthly Intergroup Summary

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|-----------|------|---|---|
| July | 2007 | Does your meeting hold monthly business meetings and does the NEI (EAI) Contact read the NEI (EAI) Report? | |
| August | 2007 | Are members standing up to sponsor? | |
| September | 2007 | Does your meeting last for 90 minutes? | |
| October | 2007 | Are your members arriving at the meeting 10 minutes early to set up the room and greet newcomers? | * |
| December | 2007 | Is there cross talk at your meeting, or are members keeping the focus on their own experience, strength, and hope in their sharing? | * |
| January | 2008 | Are all members of your meeting with 90 days of abstinence staying for the monthly business meetings? Are sponsors reminding sponsees with 90 days of abstinence to attend business meetings? | * |
| February | 2008 | Are the members of your meeting remembering to reach out to newcomers during the break? | * |
| March | 2008 | Are newcomers at your meeting given priority for reading tools and Big Book passages from the format? | * |
| April | 2008 | Does your meeting start and end on time? | * |
| May | 2008 | Are enough people standing up to sponsor? (10%-20% of the meeting) | |
| June | 2008 | Does your meeting and your business meeting begin and end with the Serenity Prayer? | |
| July | 2008 | Are your members sharing for the newcomer? | * |
| August | 2008 | Do members of your meeting attend intergroup? | |
| September | 2008 | Repeat from February 2008 | |
| October | 2008 | Repeat from April 2008 | |
| November | 2008 | Are members rushing through when they read the format? Are they reading one tool at a time? | * |
| December | 2008 | Do meeting members rotate their service positions? | |
| January | 2009 | Repeat from July 2007 | |
| February | 2009 | Do you sit in the same seat and talk with the same people every week? Or to combat the addict's tendency to isolate do you make an effort to switch it up a bit and get to know everyone at your meeting? | * |
| March | 2009 | Are you on time for your meetings? Do you show up early enough to help set up the room and greet any newcomers? | * |
| April | 2009 | Are you reading your "smartphone" (Blackberry, iPhone etc.) or texting during meetings? Listening requires sitting still; otherwise we are distracted from getting our medicine. | * |
| May | 2009 | When travelling do you plan ahead and schedule yourself to attend local FA meetings? Calling ahead to Meeting Contacts (Web & Directory | * |

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| | | Contacts) to see how you can be of service, i.e., qualifying, leading a meeting and/or participating in a fellowship meal, are wonderful and rewarding ways to strengthen your program while “carrying the message.” | |
| June | 2009 | Do you return outreach calls in a timely manner? | * |
| July | 2009 | If you hold a service position and you miss your committed meeting and/or business meeting, do you arrange to have someone replace you? | * |
| August | 2009 | Is your Intergroup Rep (Intergroup Contact) providing copies of the various 12 th Step lists including the Frontier Phone List and the Frontier Sponsor List to your meeting? Are you placing and accepting calls from the Frontier Phone List? | |
| September | 2009 | Repeat from Feb 2008 | |
| October | 2012 | Repeat from March 2008 | |
| November | 2012 | Repeat from Jan 2008 | |
| December | 2012 | Repeat from July 2008 | |
| January | 2013 | Repeat from Feb 2009 | |
| February | 2013 | Repeat from June 2009 | |
| March | 2013 | Is everyone with 90 days of abstinence raising hands to share at meetings or does the meeting rely on the same people to share? | * |
| April | 2013 | Are members raising their hands to help newcomers find a sponsor even if they do not have time to take an additional sponsee? | |
| May | 2013 | Repeat from April 2009 | |
| June | 2013 | Are FA Information Sessions being planned in a way to encourage all members to participate in the process? | |
| July | 2013 | Repeat from Dec 2008 | |
| August | 2013 | Are members reading the format slowly and clearly? | * |
| September | 2013 | Repeat from July 2009 | |
| October | 2013 | Are members with 90 days sharing their experience, strength, and hope in order to carry the message of recovery to the food addict who still suffers? | * |
| November | 2013 | At each business meeting do you review any meeting changes (i.e. names and contact information for EAI and WSI Contacts, meeting locations, etc.) and make the appropriate updates with the EAI office? | |
| December | 2013 | Repeat from Jan 2008 | |
| January | 2014 | Repeat from Feb 2009 | |
| February | 2014 | Repeat from May 2009 | |
| March | 2014 | Repeat from Feb 2013 | |
| April | 2014 | Repeat from March 2009 | |

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|-----------|------|---|---|
| May | 2014 | Are updated phone lists and newcomer packets available at your literature table? | |
| June | 2014 | Repeat from May 2014 | |
| July | 2014 | Do you know who the PI Representative is for all your FA meetings? | |
| August | 2014 | Does your meeting hold business meetings monthly? Are “highlights” from EAI (and chapter, where applicable) read during the business meetings? | |
| September | 2014 | Service is essential to our recovery. No amount of service is too small - and it is never too early to begin. If you do not yet have your 90 days, are you consistently raising your hand to read at your meetings? If you do have your 90 days, are you raising your hand to share and allowing those without 90 days to read? | * |
| October | 2014 | Are you remembering to reach out to newcomers and to anyone who might need a friendly welcome before and after your meeting and at the break? | * |
| November | 2014 | The telephone is one of the main ways we stay connected and supported in between meetings. When leaving a voice mail for your fellows are you speaking slowly and clearly when leaving your call back number? Are you picking up your phone when you don't recognize the number? Making an attempt to return FA calls in a timely manner? | * |
| December | 2014 | Do you find yourself dozing at your meetings? If so, are you reaching out to your sponsor and fellows to talk about how to best manage your time and energy? | * |
| January | 2015 | Are you running out the door as soon as the meeting has ended? Or are you relaxed and unhurried, talking to that person God has put in your path, helping to put the room back in order, and attending your meeting's business meeting? | * |
| February | 2015 | When sharing at meetings, do you find yourself referring to other members by name, commenting directly on their share, or giving advice from the front of the room? Or do you stay focused on telling your own story, sticking with "me" and "I" pronouns? | * |
| March | 2015 | When sharing or reading tools at meetings, do you find yourself stating your name and that you are a food addict on your way to the front of the room, rather than waiting until you are facing the group and can be heard clearly? | * |
| April | 2015 | Repeat from December 2012 | |
| May | 2015 | Are you attending business meetings for your committed meetings? Are you talking to your sponsor about your decision? | * |
| June | 2015 | Does your meeting have an EAI contact? Is he/she registered with the EAI office? | |
| July | 2015 | Your FA meeting's Web & Directory Contact is the main resource for keeping your meeting information updated on the FA website using the | |

“Manage Meetings” section of the website. This ensures that your meeting will receive communications from Eastern Area Intergroup and World Service, Inc., with information to help your meeting thrive and grow. If your Web & Directory Contact has any questions about updating meeting information, he or she is encouraged to contact the Office Committee at eaioffice@foodaddicts.org.

MEETING HEALTH QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Southern Area Intergroup - Monthly Intergroup Summary

| | | | |
|-----------|------|--|---|
| September | 2011 | When reading or sharing, do you speak in a loud, clear voice so that everyone can hear you? | * |
| October | 2011 | When sharing at a meeting, do you avoid using elaborate details to describe certain foods and instead just refer to it as a flour or sugar product? | * |
| November | 2011 | Do you stay for the monthly business meetings for your committed meetings and take on service positions as able? | * |
| December | 2011 | When giving newcomers an FA phone list, do you ask for their number as well so that you can make follow-up calls to them? | * |
| January | 2012 | If you get drowsy during a meeting, do you discreetly stand up in the back of the room to revive yourself? | * |
| February | 2012 | Do you have a current Frontier Phone List, and do you challenge yourself to use it on a regular basis? | * |
| March | 2012 | Do you attend intergroup meetings on a regular basis as well as participate on a local FA committee to offer greater service to our area? | * |
| April | 2012 | Have you read the <i>Gratitude in Action</i> newsletter lately? | * |
| May | 2012 | What can I share that will benefit the newcomer that won't hurt or insult anyone? | * |
| June | 2012 | How do you do what you can when you can in your committed meetings? | * |
| July | 2012 | Do you use writing as a tool for your recovery and if you have 90 days or more of continuous abstinence have you submitted an article for <i>connection</i> magazine lately? | * |
| August | 2012 | Do you consistently arrive early to your meetings to help greet newcomers and set up the room? | * |
| September | 2012 | If eligible, when was the last time you served as your meeting's leader? | * |
| October | 2012 | Do you frequently do the service of answering or returning phone calls from FA members? | * |

In 2012, the Southern Area Intergroup ceased publication of Meeting Health Questions of the Month.