

Gratitude in Action

January, 2013

Welcome to the latest edition of Gratitude in Action

What is Gratitude in Action?

Gratitude in Action is a newsletter published by the WSI 12th Step Committee of Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA) to inspire you to get involved and do service so that you and others can be helped. We will bring you the latest FA worldwide information, remind you of tools and resources available within FA, and highlight upcoming FA worldwide events. Remember – **“Service keeps us abstinent!”**

FA Information Sessions

In FA, we are fortunate to have many resources at our disposal to help spread the message of recovery to the still-suffering food addict. Some of these resources include:

- *The Letter to the Health Care Professional*
- *The Letter to the Clergy*
- *Calendar Item documents*

Another way we can spread the word about FA is to share our message through having Information Sessions. *In this newsletter, we will provide a basic overview of what an Information Session is and how to organize one in your area.* We hope you will be inspired to get started.

“Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery.” (AA Big Book, page 97.)

In his personal story, *“Dr. Bob’s Nightmare,”* Dr. Bob, a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous writes, “I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. *Sense of duty*
2. *It is a pleasure*
3. *Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me*
4. *Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip.”* (AA Big Book, pages 180-181.)

FA Information Sessions - FAQ's

What are FA Information Sessions?

Information Sessions are meetings that have a special format designed to introduce FA to the general public, regardless of whether they are food addicts or not.

What is the purpose of an FA Information Session?

Information Sessions are a great way to do service, to reach food addicts who are still suffering, to inform the public about the disease of food addiction, and to share the recovery that is possible through FA. They are an opportunity to offer information about the program and to provide the newcomer with the tools he or she will need to get started.

When is a good time to hold an FA Information Session?

Discussion about organizing an Information Session should begin once your meeting has several members with one year or more of abstinence and several members available to sponsor. You can then make a decision with your local Chapter or Intergroup Public Information or Twelfth Step committee chair. It is suggested that you hold an Information Session at least once a year and recommend that you allow several months to adequately prepare for the meeting.

What resources are available to help?

The Public Information Kit - an extensive (and extremely useful) tool that has *everything* you will need to plan and implement an Information Session. Information Kits are available for \$3.00 each by sending a Literature Order Form to the FA World Service Office. They are also free to download at www.foodaddicts.org under the Members tab in the Public Information section. (An updated Public Information Kit will be available soon. In the meantime, we encourage you to use the one currently available.)

Is there a format to follow for an FA Information Session? - Yes, there is a document that provides a standard format for your Information Session found on the FA website (www.foodaddicts.org).

What additional help is there for finding speakers and covering additional costs? You can contact your local Intergroup or Chapter to help you identify speakers with long-term abstinence and possibly provide funding to cover some of the costs of bringing speakers to your session. If you don't know which intergroup or chapter you belong to or who to call you may contact the World Service Office at (781) 321-9118 and ask for contact information.

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## **FA Information Session Best Practices**

### **Preparing for an Information Session**

1. Please refer to the Twelve Traditions of FA to guide all of your FA Public Information activities.  
*If you need help applying the Traditions to your activities, support is available from the **WSI Traditions Review Committee** via [traditions@foodaddicts.org](mailto:traditions@foodaddicts.org) for assistance.*
2. Four weeks prior to the event, announce the Information Session in publications and broadcast media such as TV, cable, and radio in the meeting's area and surrounding communities.
3. Recruit speakers at least four weeks prior to the Information Session.
  - a) Identify two to four members with 90 days or more of continuous FA abstinence from your local meeting or the broader FA community. They should demonstrate physical, mental and spiritual recovery and have sufficient knowledge of the FA program and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. It is helpful if the speaker panel represents a wide range of demographics in addictive behaviors, age, gender, socio-economic background, race, etc.
  - b) Invite these members to serve as a panel of speakers at the Information Session and give each of these individuals the *FA Information Session Meeting Format* and the *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about FA* to review. These documents are located at [www.foodaddicts.org](http://www.foodaddicts.org) under the Members tab in the Public Information section.

### **Sending the Right Message**

1. When speaking to groups or individuals, remember that no one person represents FA as a whole. We only share our personal stories and experiences. Be sure the reporter/producer/audience understands this as well.
2. Remember that Public Information work is a form of service. Conduct the Information Session duties with the humility, sense of usefulness, and gratitude that guide all FA service work.

3. Dress nicely. Remember that when representing FA, we are not professionals, but we do need to present a polished appearance.
4. Use a professional demeanor on the phone and in person.
5. Ensure that the FA literature you use is current and appropriate. Do not photocopy literature (except the Meeting Lists and tri-fold brochures), but rather use the Literature Order Form at [www.foodaddicts.org](http://www.foodaddicts.org) to order what you need (i.e. pamphlets).
6. Do not use self-designed flyers to publicize FA meetings. Use the approved flyers and Meeting Announcement Brochures developed by the Public Information Committee found on [www.foodaddicts.org](http://www.foodaddicts.org) in the Public Information section under the Members tab.

### ***During the FA Information Session***

*Critical to the success of the Information Session is the welcoming of newcomers to the meeting. The first impression a newcomer has of FA is influenced by the interactions that occur with FA members. For this reason, it is vital that FA newcomers be greeted with warmth and humility. In addition, we recommend the following best practices:*

1. Literature should be setup and displayed in an organized way.
2. Nametags and pens should be available to FA members, so that they can be identified as FA members as opposed to newcomers.
3. Someone should be assigned to estimate the number of newcomers in attendance and, if possible, find out during conversation how they heard about the Information Session. Remember, however, that the newcomers' comfort and sense of anonymity should take priority over collecting this data.
4. The Information Session should be led by a moderator who will introduce each panelist using the *FA Information Session Meeting Format* as a guide.
5. Each panelist should share his or her own experience, strength and hope using his or her own personal history. Depending on the number of panelists, each should share for 10-20 minutes. The focus should be on food addiction in each panelist's own life without a lot of time spent explaining the details of the program (i.e. daily use of tools, etc). Panelists should stay within the allotted amount of time.
6. Moderator or panelists should answer questions during the Q&A period. Remember that we are not authorities on the subject of food addiction. Don't be afraid to say that you don't know the answer to a question asked of you.
7. Refer to the fact that FA is a *Twelve Step* Program, patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous. This will answer many questions.
8. If you state an opinion of your own, explain that it is your experience and not necessarily representative of FA as a whole.
9. Remember that FA is not in competition with anyone and that we are not a professional organization.
10. Remember the importance of your non-FA listener. They may know food addicts who are friends, acquaintances, relatives, neighbors or colleagues. They may pass on information that can help someone else.
11. Ensure that the *Information Session Evaluation Form* is completed and returned to the FA World Service Public Information Committee.
12. Members who spend their own money on items for the Information Session should be reimbursed from the monies collected during the regular meeting's passing of the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition basket. Information Sessions are funded either by a specific meeting, groups of meetings, or a chapter or Intergroup.

## Important Announcements:

### ***The 2013 Business Convention:***

The convention will take place from June 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Boston North Shore in Danvers, Massachusetts. (Please note: this is the same location as previous years. The hotel has had a name change since last year.) Please check the FA website at [www.foodaddicts.org](http://www.foodaddicts.org) to get more details and to register.

### ***The new FA Website:***

The updated website is being launched this month. It will have a new look and a new logo! *If you used your FA website account in the last year, then you will receive a reminder email to go to 'Login' and verify your account to make it active. Please do this within a month.*

### ***To activate an account, please follow these instructions:***

- Request a temporary password via email, then login with your email address and that temporary password.
- Check that your profile information is correct and change your password to one that you will remember, and save it.
- Be sure to use the same email address that you used previously in your FA website account.
- If you need to change your email address for FA information, then log in to your account with the old email address and update your profile to your new email address and save it. Future logins would use the updated email address in your Profile. *Please do not create an extra account.*

If you have any questions regarding the new website and/or your account, please send them to [web@foodaddicts.org](mailto:web@foodaddicts.org).

Activating your account on the new FA website and keeping your Profile information up to date will ensure that you receive the latest FA announcements and the Gratitude in Action Newsletter.

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Please email your comments to GIA@foodaddicts.org.