



W O R L D S E R V I C E O F F I C E

April 22, 2020

RE: Guidance for Transitioning to Online Meetings

Dear OA Fellows,

Our OA Promise says, “I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness . . .” Thanks to our Higher Power, we are witnessing that even these hectic, unprecedented times can be navigated through the experience, strength, and hope of our Fellowship! We are thankful for members who are jumping in with both feet to create telephone, online, and non-real-time meetings. This will help us to overcome today’s public health challenges and continue our communities of support so that we do not succumb to our cunning disease.

With the majority of the Fellowship transitioning to virtual meetings, including many who have limited experience with virtual meetings, we would like to offer suggestions and resources for groups to manage these transitions.

First, we suggest you let the Twelve Traditions and the group conscience guide you. [Guidelines for a Group Conscience Meeting](#) (found under “Guidelines” in the oa.org Document Library) can help you address a few key concerns: what time to meet, on what platform, and how to publicize the meeting so that others may join. For ideas on how to structure your virtual meeting, see the [Suggested Telephone Meeting Format](#), which can be found in the Document Library under the “Meeting Formats” category. Submit your updates to [Edit a Meeting](#) at oa.org **and** communicate any changes to your intergroup and the contact person for the meeting, since updates to Find a Meeting may be delayed while the World Service Office is closed.

When moving a meeting to a virtual platform and publicizing that meeting, be mindful of the Tool of anonymity and the Eleventh Tradition. Most online meeting platforms are public means of communication by default, so it is important to ensure that any meeting communication is protected by the platform’s privacy safeguards. See [Guidelines for Anonymity in the Digital World](#) (found under “Guidelines” in the oa.org Document Library) for general information or visit [oavirtualregion.org](#) for information about specific online platforms.

Similar to face-to-face meetings, the group will need to appoint a moderator for a virtual meeting. Moderating a virtual meeting often comes with its own set of challenges, such as “directing traffic” so that members can be recognized and share in turn. It is suggested that the group determine who the moderator will be, as well as their technical and facilitating responsibilities. Disruptive behavior is sometimes amplified in virtual meetings. For suggestions on how to deal with disruptive members or guests, please refer to our [Guidelines for Addressing Disruptive Behavior](#) (found under “Guidelines” in the oa.org Document Library).

Many have asked about how to include literature in virtual meetings. Our February 2019 [Trademark Letter](#), posted in the Document Library at oa.org under the “Copyright” category, states that “Members and groups may not reprint or post OA literature (in any digital medium) without written permission from OA, Inc.” The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees further asks that members not share images or screen live video of OA literature but instead ask a member who owns the literature to read it aloud. For more information and a list of exceptions to this rule, see the [Copy Requests page](#) by clicking the “Copy Requests” link at [oa.org/sitemap](#). Literature is an important source of income for OA, so thank you for honoring this request, which supports our Tradition of being self-supporting.

With respect to monetary contributions, the Seventh Tradition is vital for us to uphold right now. Though we may not be able to “pass the basket” in person, our commitment to being self-supporting has not disappeared. The WSO is dependent on monthly contributions, without which we could not survive. We encourage you to put money aside in a separate envelope for each meeting you attend. Envelopes can be given to the group once the quarantine is over, or write a check to

give to your treasurer or even become one of our Automatic Recurring Contribution supporters by visiting oa.org/contribute and checking the box “Make this a recurring gift.” Of course, if the current economic situation makes this impossible for you, wait until things improve.

Our Fellowship has proved—as our virtual groups have long experienced—that we can support each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope, even if we cannot do so face-to-face. As always, we are guided by the Steps, Concepts, and Traditions in managing any transition, however sweeping yet temporary this situation may be. We will be posting world service updates on the oa.org home page, so please keep up to date with any changes. Thank you for your service and for continuing to carry the message during this time.

Sincerely,

Executive Committee
OA Board of Trustees