



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

July 11, 2023

### **What Is an Outside Issue: Are We Being Open-Minded in Our Meetings?**

Beloved Members, Groups, and Service Bodies of Overeaters Anonymous,

We all come from different backgrounds and experiences. The OA program is for everyone with a desire to stop eating compulsively. We are meant to be inclusive and welcoming to all.

A subcommittee of the Unity with Diversity Conference Committee has been in contact with some members of specific-focus groups, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and Health Issues, and has found that, despite all previous statements on inclusivity, there are still members who don't feel safe or included. The subcommittee was distressed to hear that some OA members, when sharing their life realities, were told that their life experiences were considered outside issues and were shut down.

How will we ensure that everyone is included?

The Unity with Diversity Committee's primary concern is that *all* OA members, in *all* meetings, feel safe while sharing their experience, strength, and hope and are not told that their share is an outside issue. Everyone needs to be able to share at meetings about factors in their lives that could cause them to act out with food.

The Unity with Diversity Committee is discouraged that efforts to date have not brought about sufficient change.

It is an urgent matter that people are not silenced at OA meetings. Action is required from the Board of Trustees and the whole Fellowship to create a safe space for all to share.

Respectfully,

OA Board of Trustees and Unity with Diversity Conference Committee

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