

OSPA – Special Focus: Body Dysmorphic Obsession

Notes before beginning:

- Ensure the lead share has access to screen share for sharing literature.

Thursday 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm UK Time (GMT); 7:00pm – 8:00pm CET; 12:00 to 1:00pm EST;

Welcome to the Body Dysmorphia focussed meeting of Obsessive Skin Pickers Anonymous (OSPA). My name is ____, I am a_(skin picking addict, obsessive skin picker, body dysmorphic etc.) and your trusted servant for this meeting.

Please help me open the meeting with a moment of silence followed by a the serentiy prayer (I version).

Higher Power,

grant me the serenity, to accept the things I cannot change,

the courage to change the things I can

and the wisdom to know the difference.

Introductions

We will begin with introductions:

Newcomers: Is there anyone here for their first time at this meeting? If so, please say your first name so that we may welcome you.

Greet the newcomers with, “Welcome_____” (naming the newcomers) “We are glad you are here. We encourage you to stay on for fellowship after the meeting to take down phone numbers and ask questions”]

It is the custom of this group for members to share their first name, and how you are feeling in one or two words. I will start.

(Hi my name is _____ I’m a (obsessive skin picker; picking addict; body dysmorphic) from _____ I feel _____.

Would someone start us off by reading the OSPA preamble?

The OSPA Preamble

Obsessive Skin Pickers Anonymous (OSPA) Worldwide Fellowship is a community of people who have found their way out of Excoriation Disorder’s grip by working the OSPA program and engaging with the community support of the worldwide group. The primary premise and foundation of OSPA is the concept of one skin picker reaching out to another with an attitude of love and support. Through giving back to others what we are freely given we are finally able to recover from this devastating illness.

Obsessive Skin Pickers Anonymous is a fellowship of people who seek to recover from Excoriation Disorder (Skin Picking) by working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as adapted from AA. We seek abstinence from obsessive or compulsive skin picking, and physical, emotional and spiritual

recovery. The only requirement for OSPA membership is the desire to stop picking. OSPA is entirely self-supporting relying only on contributions from individual members, and is free to all who need it.

Many of us who have now found OSPA truly thought we were the only ones in the world who engaged in this form of self-destructive behavior.

We seek to eliminate the shame we have felt due to this disorder by lifting each other up with love and understanding.

Welcome to OSPA - You are no longer alone!

Body Dysmorphia and Skin Picking

This is an OSPA meeting with a special focus on body dysmorphia.

Skin picking, like all addictions, includes mental obsession. This meeting has been set up to share experience strength and hope around a particular kind of obsession – body dysmorphia.

For some of us, body dysmorphic obsession can be a particularly stubborn part of this disorder. We may have found it persisting even when we are abstinent from picking. Yet, if we remain unrecovered in our dysmorphic obsession, we leave the door open for a skin picking relapse.

Body dysmorphics are like 'jekyll and hyde'. We are often people with core values and spiritual lives that do not relate to how we look. We are not 'vain'. Yet this illness propels us to become consumed by obsession with our skin or other aspects of our physical appearance.

You do not have to have any kind of formal diagnosis to attend this meeting or identify as a body dysmorphic or obsessive. We are simply a group of people who wish to stop obsessing about how our body looks and start living our lives in line with our Higher Powers will.

Our experiences are many. Some common features of body dysmorphia in skin pickers include:

- Engaging in obsessive checking or scanning behaviours centred on how we look.
- Convincing ourselves that that our picking would stop, if only our skin would be perfect.
- Finding ourselves in constant debates about whether we do or do not look ok; sometimes drawing others into these debates through reassurance seeking. Yet the answers do not satisfy us, we never feel reassured.
- Some of us find that we have dysmorphia that is broader than, or perhaps not even focussed on our skin – we can still recognise this perfectionism and self-criticism as part of the disease of skin picking.

The Big book of Alcoholics' anonymous states that we '*cease fighting anything and everyone, even alcohol*'; Step one of Overeaters Anonymous tells us to '*resign from the debating society*'. To recover from dysmorphic obsession with our skin, we stop trying to settle the debate about our self worth through focussing on how we look. Instead, the solution is spiritual – through the steps, traditions and the fellowship we learn that we are ok, regardless of how our skin or other body parts look. With gentleness, we can abstain from behaviours that encourage the obsession one day at a time.

While this is a special interest meeting, all OSPA members are welcome.

Would someone like to read the 12 steps?

The Twelve Steps of OSPA

1. We admitted we were powerless over skin picking - 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 our Higher Power and we understood that Power.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves
5. Admitted to our Higher Power, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked our Higher Power 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 our Higher Power as we understood that Power, praying only for knowledge of our Higher Power's 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 other skin pickers, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

On the *First week of the month* we read the traditions – Would someone like to read the 12 traditions?

The Twelve Traditions of OSPA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on OSPA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving Higher Power as may be expressed through our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for OSPA membership is a desire to stop skin picking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OSPA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the skin picker who still suffers.

6. An OSPA group or OSPA as a whole ought never to endorse, finance, or lend the OSPA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every OSPA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Obsessive Skin Pickers Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. OSPA as such ought never to be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Obsessive Skin Pickers Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OSPA name ought never to 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.

Thank you _____

Timekeeper

We will need a timekeeper for our reading and sharing. Who would be willing to do that service?

Thank you _____.

Reading

This is a 'read and share' meeting of OSPA. Each week someone reads a short conference approved reading from OSPA or another 12 step fellowship, and shares on this reading for 5 minutes with a focus on body dysmorphic obsession and skin picking. The total share should be no longer than 7 minutes.

Today _____ will be reading and sharing.

Sharing

Thank you _____.

It is now time for sharing. Everyone is invited to share but no one is obligated to do so. Please avoid "Cross-Talk" and interruptions during the meeting. "Cross-Talk" is defined as commenting on a person's share, offering feedback, or interrupting them during their share. Please refrain from the use of graphic descriptions of picking episodes or acting-out behaviors so that others aren't triggered during the meeting.

Please do not mention by name any outside media, programs, therapies, or resources in your share as this could be viewed as promotion and mixes the message of OSPA.

Remember to mute yourself if you are not talking. The time limit for each share in this meeting is 3 minutes. Please acknowledge you have heard the timekeeper and promptly wrap up your share.

[If it is the 1st, 2nd, 4th or 5th Thursday of the month] “We will share until 55 minutes after the hour”

[If it is the 3rd Thursday of the month] “Sharing ends at 40 minutes after the hour for the business meeting, which will last for up to 15 minutes.”

Who would like to begin sharing?

[After sharing] That is all the time we have for sharing.

[If it is the 3rd Thursday of the month] “I will now turn the meeting over to our Business meeting Chair for our business meeting.” Otherwise continue with the format.]

Milestones

Marking milestones shows the OSPA program works as we carry the message of hope that anyone with a desire to stop skin picking can recover. Is there anyone here who would like to celebrate any abstinence time or other recovery milestones?

Congratulations to everyone celebrating tonight! Keep coming back!

Our time in the OSPA program does not make us better than, nor less than other members. We learn from each other, as our lives depend on this, knowing that we are all in recovery one day at a time.

The Seventh Tradition and Announcements

Our Seventh Tradition states, “Every OSPA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” This means OSPA depends only on the contributions of its members for support. OSPA has no dues or fees, but our Fellowship does have expenses. As this is an online meeting, we do not pass a physical basket, but instead we ask you to donate to our meeting directly. Details will be shared in the chat box after the meeting.

Our business meeting is held every third Thursday of the month, 40 minutes after the hour, for 15 minutes.

Are there any OSPA announcements?

Who would like to read the Acceptances?

The acceptances

“Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God’s world by mistake. Until I could

accept [my alcoholism](#), I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and my attitudes."

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, Page 417

[The brief excerpt from Alcoholics Anonymous is reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint the excerpt does not imply an affiliation with or an endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous.]

Thank you_____.

Closing

Thank you for allowing me to be of service during this meeting, thank you all for your participation, and thank you to those who were of service.

Everyone is welcome to stay on afterwards for conversation, support, and to exchange phone numbers in the chat box for outreach and sponsorship. Who would like to volunteer to host fellowship?

Thank you_____. Just as a reminder, fellowship begins with newcomer questions and I will copy and paste that part of the format into the chat box for you.

Please remember this is an Anonymous program: Who you see here – What you hear here – When you leave here - Let it stay here. This is to remind us all not to share members' names or discuss the details of this meeting outside of the meeting.

After a moment of silence for the skin picker who still suffers both in and out of these rooms, please join me in a special version of the Set Aside Prayer.

God, please help me to set aside

everything I think I know about how I look and am perceived,

and about my recovery from obsession,

For an open mind and a more loving experience of myself and the world around me.

[End of Meeting. Continue with Phone Number exchange before turning the meeting over to the fellowship host.]

Business Meeting – last week of the month,

OSPA Business Meeting Format

1. Open with the “We” version of the Serenity Prayer

1. Announce the duration of the meeting and ask the timekeeper to give a 5 minute warning, a 1 minute warning, and then to announce “time” when the duration has ended.

1. Confirm the Business Meeting Secretary is present to take minutes of the meeting. If not available, ask for a volunteer to step in to take meeting minutes.

1. Ask for reports:
 - Secretary’s Report: Read minutes from the last meeting. After the minutes are read Chair asks if there are any amendments to the minutes or for a motion to accept the business meeting minutes as read.
 - Other Report: (if applicable)

1. Conduct Elections of the meeting’s service positions: (30 days of abstinence is suggested)
Elected Monthly:
 - Trusted Servant for next month
 - Zoom Host for next month
 - Screen-sharer for next monthElected Quarterly (March, June, September, December):
 - Intergroup Representative for the next 3 months
 - Business Meeting Chair for the next 3 months
 - Business Meeting Secretary for the next 3 monthsElected Biannually (June, December):
 - Google Drive Keeper for the next 6 months

1. Ask if there is any Unfinished Business to discuss – (items carried over from the previous meeting’s minutes)

1. Ask if there is any New Business to discuss – (items suggested by members in the meeting)

***** **1 minute warning** *****

1. Motion to close or extend the Business Meeting – (unfinished business will carry over as old business to the next meeting, if tabled or not addressed.)

1. Close with the “We” version of the Serenity prayer

[End of Business Meeting. Turn meeting back over to the trusted servant to continue with the regular format.]

