

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 behaviour.

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!

Thursday Meeting: Special Focus Introduction

This OSPA 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.

You do not have to have any kind of formal diagnosis to attend this meeting. 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 may 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 were 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 tells us to '*cease fighting everyone and everything, even alcohol*'. 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. Rather, 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.

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.

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 centres 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.

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

Set Aside Prayer

(meeting version)

*God, please help me to set aside
everything I think I know
about how I look and am perceived,
and about my recovery from this obsession,
for an open mind and a new experience.*