

How **YWM2020-VIRTUAL** Helped OAC Redefine Education, Advocacy and Support

by Mckinzie Burrows, OAC Engagement Specialist

Without a doubt, this year has dealt an interesting hand and has urged each one of us to navigate a challenging “new normal.” Our efforts at OAC also took a new spin this year, and this prompted us to do something we have never done before: host our Annual *Your Weight Matters* Convention on a virtual platform in 2020!

GROWING OUR REACH AND FILLING THE GAPS

The OAC's Annual Convention is highly-anticipated each year, and it is widely celebrated as the nation's leading event for individuals seeking real answers about weight and health. Despite the uncharted waters of hosting our first virtual event of this magnitude, **YWM2020-VIRTUAL** was a groundbreaking success!

When OAC started planning **YWM2020-VIRTUAL**, we immediately recognized its promise. We knew that this year was different with the challenges our community has faced due to COVID-19. This prompted us to want a novel way to offer genuine support to our community and others who may be stumbling across OAC for the first time.

With this, we designed **YWM2020-VIRTUAL** to reach anyone around the world without barriers and deliver an immersive, energetic and supportive experience for people in their health journeys. It was also important to us that **YWM2020-VIRTUAL** held true to our values and reflected what our Convention has always provided: quality education.



By bringing in the country's leading experts, **YWM2020-VIRTUAL** cut through the noise of the diet industry by:

- Breaking down the science behind weight
- Exploring weight management options and resources
- Offering strategies in nutrition, exercise, behavior health, mental health and more
- Encouraging and empowering attendees

REDEFINING EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT

While this was the first time we've ever hosted an OAC Convention virtually, **YWM2020-VIRTUAL** checked all the boxes. It was educational and informative, but it was also intimate and supportive.

With a live chat feed and weekly virtual support groups, **YWM2020-VIRTUAL** made it possible for attendees to connect one-on-one and talk about their experiences with weight and health. Our Q&A feature allowed viewers to directly ask questions for experts and get quality answers. The event series also helped OAC spread the word about our offerings, resources and advocacy opportunities to get involved and make a difference.



"You are in charge of food. Food is not in charge of you. Make a decision. Own it. Enjoy it. Move on."

— Dawn Jackson Blatner, RDN, CSSD, LDN

Most importantly, the ease of using a virtual platform helped make OAC's education, advocacy and support available to thousands. The unique opportunity to do this ended up making OAC's mission and momentum even stronger:



We **REDEFINED EDUCATION** by showing what quality, science-based information about weight and obesity should look like.



We **REDEFINED ADVOCACY** by showing how easy it is to be an advocate and make the world a better place for people struggling.



We **REDEFINED SUPPORT** by showing what a support system looks like — a space without judgement where you can be yourself, share openly, and lean on others.



"Break down goals into small, manageable steps. Steady change is the key to success."

— Paul B. Davidson, PhD



"Take care of you. Show yourself some grace and kindness."

— Patty Nece, JD, OAC Vice-Chair

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The success of YWM2020-VIRTUAL taught us a lot about the virtual space and the needs of our community. With this, we encourage you to stay tuned for what's to come, because this was just the start of what is on the horizon! In the meantime, we hope you will continue walking with OAC so we can support you in the ways you need — and we also need you on the frontlines with us as we continue to navigate this new normal together and be each other's advocates.

YWM2020-VIRTUAL TAKEAWAYS:

If you are struggling with obesity or facing challenges with weight, we encourage you to add these resources to your toolbox:

- Genuine help from people who understand and are qualified to help you
- An encouraging support system
- A healthy inner monologue
- What works best for YOU in this "new normal"
- The answers to your weight and help that YOU need



"Life events impact weight. A better understanding of your past can give you a pathway to self-compassion and targeted treatment."

— Robert Kushner, MD



"We need to fight back against a society telling us we're a failure because we can't keep the weight off."

— Scott Kahan, MD, MPH



YWM2020 - VIRTUAL Highlights

More than
2,000
Virtual
Registrants!



Individuals from
**59 countries &
47 States**
participated!



11 National Sponsors



18 Exhibitors



5.8 Million



Social Media
Impressions

1,100+



Mentions &
Social Media
Posts

5,000+



Social Media
Interactions

#YWM2020VIRTUAL TRENDING WORDS



#YWM2020 #Education #EventSeries #VirtualEducation #Health #Weight
#TopnotchExperts #Great #Free #OAC #Obesity #ChangingObesity #Weightloss
#MentalHealth #Selfcare #Nutrition #Exercise #EmotionalHealth #Best #Inspiring
#Support#Fitness #Experts #Food #Kind #Acceptance #Stress #Positive
#Answers #WorldClass



Mary Rismeyer: "Very interesting and informative. Love the suggestions on getting the "exercise" off the to do list on on the want to do list and then done. Great ideas. Really felt like the speakers talk to us directly. They listen to us and responded to all of the questions. Very professional."



Paul Davidson, PhD: "What a fantastic event #YWM2020Virtual turned out to be. Thanks to #OAC, presenters, sponsors and especially the attendees. Hoping to be together in person next year!"



Maura Murphy: "I really enjoyed it, connecting with others on this journey is empowering. Listening to experts with facts and figures on obesity and learning the difficulties in losing weight and maintaining the loss reminds me of the saying 'knowledge is power.' Thank you"

THANK YOU TO OUR CONVENTION SPONSORS

FOR MAKING YWM2020-VIRTUAL POSSIBLE!

Without support from our sponsors, OAC wouldn't have been able to provide this incredible educational experience, and we want to thank them for their contributions.

PLATINUM



SILVER



BRONZE



Boehringer
Ingelheim



Save
the Date
YWM2021

July 8-10, 2021
Westin Lake
Las Vegas
Resort & Spa



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



PUBLIC
EDUCATION



ADVOCACY



ANNUAL
CONVENTION



NATIONAL
AWARENESS
CAMPAIGNS



VIBRANT
COMMUNITY

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

**Through the OAC Community,
you can get access to:**

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO [OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN](https://obesityaction.org/join)

info@obesityaction.org

(800) 717-3117 | (813) 872-7835 | Fax: (813) 873-7838



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