Meeting Guidelines

1. We come to OA seeking a solution to our compulsive overeating and food behaviors. If you can’t stop eating when you’re full, when you’ve had enough, when you really want to stop, if you can’t stop restricting, over-exercising or purging, then you are in the right place. This is a solution-based meeting. Please raise your hand virtually to share on how each particular topic has improved your life. To raise your hand on the phone press *9. To unmute on the phone press *6. Please relate your share directly to the topic being discussed.

2. Questions about OA are welcome at any time. Questions do not have to be related to the topic being discussed and may be asked about any part of the OA program. The leader will then select two volunteers who wish to share their personal experience in response to the question. Questions on outside issues can be discussed after the meeting or over the phone. An outside issue is anything not directly related to the OA program of recovery. (Leader will determine outside issues.) We ask you to frame any questions you have in a way which seeks a solution.

   After two members share their experience in response to a question, we will go back to the topic we were discussing previously. Others may share their experience with the questioner after the meeting or on the phone.

3. When sharing please be kind and keep others in mind. We are suggesting three-minute shares as this allows time for everyone to participate. When you hear the timer go off please complete your sentence and pass.

4. The meeting will end promptly at 8:15 p.m.

5. Specific foods CAN be mentioned in this meeting.

6. If you are joining us virtually on Zoom, please silent your cell phones so that you will not disrupt the meeting. Please keep yourself muted unless you are sharing.
HOW IT WORKS
Page 58, Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way; what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with food cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now! Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon. Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

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The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over food – 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 God as we understood Him.

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him 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 God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His 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 compulsive overeaters, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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Many of us exclaimed, “What an order! I can’t go through with it.” Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

(a) That we were powerless over food and could not manage our own lives.  
(b) That probably no human power could have relieved our compulsion.  
(c) That God could and would if He were sought.
The Twelve Traditions

(Read corresponding month)

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

3. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.

5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers.

6. An OA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the OA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

7. Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. OA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Overeaters Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the OA name ought never 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, films, television, and other public media of communication.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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Plan of Eating

A plan of eating helps us abstain from compulsive eating and food behaviors, guides us in our dietary decisions, and defines what, when, how, where and why to eat. OA does not require a specific plan of eating and does not endorse or recommend any plan. Many of us find it essential to take guidance from our sponsors in developing a plan of eating that requires an honest desire to achieve and maintain abstinence.
Sponsorship

As stated in Tradition 5, carrying the message of recovery is OA’s primary purpose. A sponsor is an OA member who shares this message - and her or his own program of recovery - on an ongoing, individual basis with another member often called a sponsee.

Sponsors are OA members who are living the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions to the best of their ability. They are willing to share their recovery with other members of the Fellowship and are committed to abstinence.

We ask a sponsor to help us through our program of recovery. By working with other members of OA and sharing their experience, strength and hope, sponsors continually renew and reaffirm their own recovery. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their own experience.

Styles of sponsorship vary from person to person. We are each free to approach it in our own way.

Ours is a program of attraction; find a sponsor who has what you want and ask that person how he or she is achieving it. A member may work with more than one sponsor and may change sponsors at will.
Meetings

Meetings give us an opportunity to identify our common problem, confirm our common solution through the Twelve Steps, and share the gifts we receive through this program. There are many different face-to-face meeting formats, as well as telephone and online meetings. For the newcomer, it is suggested to give OA a chance by attending at least six meetings so we may hear the message we need.

Remember, we are all in this together.
Telephone Calls

Many members call, text, or email their sponsors and other OA members daily. Telephone or electronic contact provides an immediate outlet for those hard-to-handle highs and lows we may experience.

At this time if you are joining us virtually through Zoom, please leave your number in the chat section if you are willing to receive outreach calls.
Writings

Putting our thoughts down on paper helps us to better understand our actions and reactions in a way that is often not revealed to us by simply thinking or talking about them. Many of us begin using this tool by writing our food plan, writing our action plan or writing what we think after reading approved literature. Later on, writing becomes the irreplaceable method by which we work the 12 Steps.
Literature

We read OA approved books, pamphlets, and Lifeline Magazine. Because our program is based on Alcoholics Anonymous, we include AA literature, as well. Reading and implementing program-approved literature strengthens our understanding of the program of recovery.
Plan of Action

An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions that are necessary to support our individual abstinence. Just like our plan of eating, it may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted to bring structure, balance, and manageability into our lives.
Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our program. If we are to recover, we must feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts; therefore, we must protect members’ identities. To this end, remember that we can carry the message, not the messenger. Remember, who you see here, what they say here, when you leave here, let it stay here.
Service

Any form of service, no matter how small, that helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Members who are new to OA can give service by getting to meetings, putting away chairs or literature, talking to newcomers, and doing whatever needs to be done for the group.

Members who meet the abstinent requirements can give service beyond the group level in such activities as intergroup rep, region rep or conference delegate. Sponsoring is a service. There are many ways to give back what we have generously been given.
Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven’t got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you until then.
(OA Pledge)

Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.

(Rozanne’s Prayer)

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, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower.

We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

Keep coming back it works if you work it.