

The Only Requirement

Overeaters Anonymous respects the autonomy of each OA group. We do suggest, however, that any group that has requirements in addition to the suggested 12 Steps and 12 Traditions inform its members that these requirements are what that particular group has found effective in working the program and do not represent OA as a whole.

The members of this group have found the HOW concept to be effective in working the OA program. The opinions expressed here this evening by those who share are their own and not necessarily those of OA as a whole. The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop eating compulsively. Anyone who says he/she is a member is a member. We of Overeaters Anonymous welcome all members with open arms.

A Plan of Eating

A plan of eating helps us abstain from compulsive eating, it guides us in our dietary decisions, and defines what, when, where and why we eat. OA does not endorse or recommend any specific plan of eating, but many of us find it essential to take guidance from our sponsors to develop a plan of eating that reflects an honest desire to achieve and maintain abstinence. HOW sponsors weigh and measure their meals. The amount of meals varies with each sponsor. HOW sponsors avoid, sugar, flour and wheat as trigger foods. They drink 8 glasses of water a day, with nothing in between except sugar free soda, beverages and sugar free gum, some HOW sponsors avoid all these as well.



Action Plan

An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual and physical recovery. While the plan is ours, tailored to our own recovery process, most of us find it important to work with a sponsor, fellow OA member and/or appropriate professional to help us create it. This tool, like our plan of eating, may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted as we progress in our recovery.

For example, a newcomer's action plan might focus on planning, shopping for and preparing food. Some members may need a regular fitness routine to improve strength and health, while others may need to set exercise limits in order to attain more balance. Some of us may need an action plan that includes time for meditation and relaxation or provides strategies for balancing work, personal interactions with family and friends, and our program. Others may need help to organize their homes; deal with their finances; and address medical, dental or mental health issues.

Along with working the Steps on a daily basis, an action plan may incorporate use of the other OA tools to bring structure, balance and manageability into our lives. As we use this tool, we find that we develop a feeling of serenity and continue to grow emotionally and spiritually while we make measurable progress one day at a time.

Sponsorship

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. A HOW sponsor is a sponsor who has 90 days of back to back abstinence and has completed the 90 writing assignments given to them by their HOW sponsor. A sponsor will help you work through the 12 steps. Everyone in HOW is sponsored under similar guidelines, and have taken the first three steps as outlined in the Big Book. All sponsors are welcome in HOW, but only a HOW sponsor can sponsor another HOW person.



Anonymity

Anonymity guarantees we will place principles before personalities and assures us that only we have the right to make our membership known within our community. Within the Fellowship, anonymity means that whatever we share with another OA member will be held in respect and confidence. We also keep anonymity when we leave phone messages by stating our first name only, the town we are from, and a phone number where we may be called back. What we hear at meetings should remain there.



Service

Any form of service that helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Service is abstinence, the greatest gift we give ourselves. Service is coming to a meeting on time, being a leader/speaker, taking a service position. HOW meetings were and are formed in the belief that Service and Abstinence is the key to lifelong sobriety from compulsive overeating. Service is being quiet when another member shares, picking up after ourselves and others after a meeting and service is needed on every level of the fellowship. Service is freedom from bondage of self.



Telephone

The telephone helps us share on a one-to-one basis and avoid the isolation that is so common among us. Many members call, text or email their sponsors and other OA members daily. As part of the surrender process, this tool helps us learn to reach out, ask for help and extend help to others. Telephone or electronic contact also provides an immediate outlet for those hard-to-handle highs and lows we may experience. HOW members are encouraged to make 3 outreach calls daily, plus one to their sponsor.



Meetings

Meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive overeaters who come together to share their personal experience, strength and hope. Meetings give us an opportunity to identify our common problems, confirm our common solution through the 12 Steps, and share the gifts we receive through this program. In addition to face-to-face meetings, OA offers telephone and online meetings. HOW members are encouraged to attend three meetings a week, and one of them should be a HOW meeting.



Meetings

Meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive overeaters who come together to share their personal experience, strength and hope. Meetings give us an opportunity to identify our common problems, confirm our common solution through the 12 Steps, and share the gifts we receive through this program. In addition to face-to-face meetings, OA offers telephone and online meetings. HOW members are encouraged to attend three meetings a week, and one of them should be a HOW meeting.



Readings and Writings

Reading literature daily reinforces how to live the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. We read OA-approved books, pamphlets and Lifeline magazine. All our literature provides insight into our problem of eating compulsively, strength to deal with it, and the very real hope that there is a solution for us.

Writing allows us to put our thoughts and feelings down on paper, or describe a troubling incident, which 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. In the past, compulsive eating was our most common reaction to life. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action.

