

OA's 9 Tools of Recovery

[Pandemic Version]

Many of us have found we cannot abstain from compulsive eating unless we use some or all of OA's nine tools of recovery to help us practice the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Food Plan: Abstinence is not the same thing as a food plan. A food plan is a tool that helps us achieve daily abstinence from compulsive eating, guides us in our food decisions, and defines what, when, how, where, and why we eat. Although individual plans of eating are as varied as our members, most OA members agree that some plan--no matter how flexible or structured--is necessary. Each of us develops a personal plan of eating based on an honest appraisal of their past experience. See the pamphlet "Dignity of Choice" for more information.

Sponsors are OA members who are living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. They are willing to share their recovery with other members and are committed to abstinence. Find a sponsor who has what you want and ask that person how they are achieving it. The sign-in sheet has a list of available sponsors. Finding a sponsor in this program can take time and effort, but it's worth it. You do not have to be abstinent or ready to "give up" certain foods to get a sponsor. Go to a variety of meetings, including those outside your neighborhood to find someone to begin the journey with.

Meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive overeaters who come together to share their personal experience, and the strength and hope OA has given them.

Telephone, email or texting also provide an immediate outlet for those hard-to-handle highs and lows we may experience. Member-to-member contact helps us share on a one-to-one basis and avoid the isolation that is so common among us.

Writing: Putting our thoughts and feelings 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. 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.

Literature: Literature provides insight into our problem of eating compulsively, strength to deal with it, and the very real hope that there is a solution.

Action Plan: Many of us find it important to work with a sponsor, fellow OA member and/or appropriate professional to help us create action plans.

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.

Anonymity: Anonymity means that whatever we share with another OA member will be held in respect and confidence. What we hear at meetings should remain there. Another aspect of anonymity is that we are all equal in the Fellowship, whether we are newcomers or seasoned longtimers. And our outside status makes no difference in OA; we have no stars or VIPs. We come together simply as compulsive overeaters.

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, putting out literature, talking to newcomers, and doing whatever needs to be done for the group.

The OA Promise

**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.