



# Temporary Secular Step Sponsoring | For the Sponsor

Secular Overeaters (SO) has developed a temporary sponsor path for members who would like practice in sponsoring before making a long-term commitment. Temporary Secular Step Sponsoring takes 10 weeks and follows a specific plan that introduces secular OA and the Steps.

Not only will you be doing a crucial service for a newcomer, you will also learn new skills to prepare you to become a full-time sponsor when you're ready. It may be that after the 10 weeks is finished, you'll want to continue working with your sponsee on more Steps, or you may want to become a temporary sponsor again for someone else.

## OA and "Outside" Resources

OA does not allow "outside" resources to be used at their meetings, but non-OA secular 12-Step literature is essential for many seculars' recovery. In fact some secular OA meetings have chosen to be "unregistered" in order to use outside literature and alternative Steps during meetings. While OA can mandate rules for registered meetings, they cannot control what happens between a sponsor and sponsee.

## Recommended Experience for Temporary OA Secular Sponsors

- Worked Steps 1-3
- Abstinence
- Having a sponsor

## What's Involved?

- Follow the prescribed 10-week plan and syllabus and keep your sponsee on track

to: complete Steps 1-3, find an accountability buddy, and begin looking for a new sponsor

- Purchase and become familiar with all the items on the required materials list (chances are, you already own many of these items!)
- Meet with your sponsee weekly for an hour and do the reading assignments

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## How to Sponsor

- Order and read the [Secular Sponsor Kit](#) (mailing includes OA's "A Guide for Sponsors" and a print copy of Secular Sponsoring Resources) for lots of tips
- Be a compassionate listener
- Be a good role model by having a healthy program (for instance, attending several meetings a week, being abstinent and following a food plan, having a sponsor, working the Steps, doing service, etc.,)
- Set boundaries and think about how to handle issues before they come up (e.g., what to do if a sponsee is chronically late, misses meetings, or doesn't do the homework)
- Use your own sponsor as a mentor

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## How to Find a Sponsee

You can make announcements at secular meetings and post an ad in the Zoom Chat or in the [Secular Overeaters Facebook](#) group.

Be sure to include your: Name, contact info (phone and/or email), time zone, and that you can be a temporary sponsor.

*(Continues on next page)*

## Example of Sponsor Ad

I'm Maria (USA, East Coast), and I'm available to be a temporary Step sponsor for a newcomer. Contact me by email (maria@gmail.com) or by text (123-456-7890).

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## Things to Cover with a Sponsee Before You Start Week 1

- Before your first conversation, send them a link to the [Temporary Secular Step Sponsoring | For the Sponsee](#), pdf (4 pages)
- During your first conversation, introduce yourself and share a little of your story (what it was like, what happened, how you got to OA, and what it's like now)
- Go over expectations (e.g., be on time, do the homework, follow the syllabus)
- Talk about anonymity—Make them know that what is shared stays between the two of you and that your relationship is private
- Find an hour a week for a regular meeting by phone, WhatsApp, Facetime, Zoom or maybe even in person
- Make sure you both have all the required materials before you start (see next column)
- Decide which secular 12-Step book you'll be using (Cleveland, Munn, Prengel, or your personal favorite)
- Read the [Where Do I Start](#) brochure for the first meeting (the next time you meet will be Week 1 on the syllabus)

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## For Each Meeting

- Read the assignments to prepare for a discussion with your sponsee
- Consider starting each meeting with a quick sponsee check-in on how the week has been going. This should be short (5-10 minutes or less). You are not their friend or therapist; you are meeting to work on the Steps and that should be the focus.
- Consider using a timer

- Consider asking them how they've used the OA 9 Tools this week (pages 5-7 in OA's [Where Do I Start?](#))
- Consider leaving 5-10 minutes at the end to wrap up and to review the homework for the next week and to confirm that the next meeting time still works

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## Required Materials

**TIP:** It's a good idea to create a folder on your desktop to hold all the digital files so you can find them easily.

### Free: Download or Print These Out

- OA's [Where Do I Start](#) brochure (free, pdf)
- SO's [Welcome Secular OA Newcomers!](#) (free, pdf)

**Note:** You can get hard copies of both of the above at: <https://bit.ly/SOnewcomer>

- [Secular Translations of the "God" Questions in The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#) (free pdf, print this out and keep it in your OA workbook)
- [Freethinker Alternative 12 Steps for Overeaters](#) (free pdf, print this out and keep it in your OA workbook)

### Purchase (If You Don't Own Already)

- OA's [The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous](#), Second Edition (\$16.50, available in print, digital or audio versions)
- OA's [The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#), Second Edition (\$15 print, \$9 digital)
- Secular 12-Step guide (choose one): [The Alternative 12 Steps: A Secular Guide to Recovery](#) (Martha Cleveland, 2014, \$12.95 print or \$5.99 Kindle) **or** [Staying Sober Without God](#) (Jeffrey Munn, 2019, \$12.79 print or \$5.99 Kindle) **or** [The Proactive Twelve Steps](#) (Serge Prengel, 2021, \$9.99 print or \$5.99 Kindle) **or** your favorite secular 12-Step book



# Temporary Secular Step Sponsoring | For the Sponsee

Some people are lucky and find a long-term sponsor right away, but it's also very common to have a short-term sponsor. And, most people in OA go through several sponsors. Having a temporary secular sponsor provides a solid introduction to secular resources in case your next sponsor is more traditional.

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## Goals and Expectations

During this 10-week Temporary Secular Step Sponsoring program you will:

- Read and review the OA brochure [Where Do I Start](#)
- Read Steps 1-3 using traditional OA literature as well as a secular 12-Step book
- Work Steps 1-3 in the OA 12&12 Workbook
- Find an Accountability Buddy
- Start looking for a more permanent sponsor to start Step 4 with

Sponsees can expect 1-3 hours of homework a week, in addition to attending OA/SO meetings and communicating with their temporary sponsor weekly for an hour.

Even though this is a temporary arrangement, you should take the relationship seriously by committing to arriving on time and doing your homework. You are “working” the Steps, which means you need to work!

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## Required Materials

Your initial financial outlay may be around \$50-60. Think of how much you've spent on binges or at a “pay and weigh,” and you'll find this a good deal! Be sure to have all eight pieces purchased/printed out before meeting with your sponsor.

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## Required Materials

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- SO's [Welcome Secular OA Newcomers!](#) (free, pdf)

**Note:** You can get hard copies of both of the above at: <https://bit.ly/SOnewcomer>

- [Secular Translations of the “God” Questions in The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#) (free pdf, print this out and keep it in your OA workbook)
- [Freethinker Alternative 12 Steps for Overeaters](#) (free pdf, print this out and keep it in your OA workbook)

### Purchase (If You Don't Own Already)

- A Journal
- OA's [The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous](#), Second Edition (\$16.50, available in print, digital or audio versions)
- OA's [The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#), Second Edition (\$15 print, \$9 digital)
- Secular 12-Step guide (choose one): [The Alternative 12 Steps: A Secular Guide to Recovery](#) (Martha Cleveland, 2014, \$12.95 print or \$5.99 Kindle) **or** [Staying Sober Without God](#) (Jeffrey Munn, 2019, \$12.79 print or \$5.99 Kindle) **or** [The Proactive Twelve Steps](#) (Serge Prengel, 2021, \$9.99 print or \$5.99 Kindle) **or** your favorite secular 12-Step book



# Temporary Secular Step Sponsoring | Syllabus

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## Before Week 1

- Introductions/expectations
- Figure out meeting time/day/venue
- Decide on the secular 12-Step book
- Read [Where Do I Start](#) OA brochure

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## Week 1 Meeting

### Date:

- Confirm all required materials are in hand
- Review any questions from the [Where Do I Start](#) OA brochure
- Discuss Food Plans
- Discuss Abstinence
- Look at OA's 9 Tools (pages 5-7 in [Where Do I Start](#): Plan of Eating, Sponsorship, Meetings, Telephone, Writing, Literature, Action Plan, Anonymity). Plan on using these tools every week!
- Identify at least three different meetings to attend (check [here](#) for secular meetings)

### Homework for Week 2 Meeting

- Create a Food Plan
- Make a list of your Red/Yellow/Green (RYG) Light foods  
Red = I no longer eat these foods because they cause me to binge, and I may decide to remove them from my home.  
Yellow = I eat these foods with caution because they may sometimes trigger cravings. To be on the safe side, I may measure my Yellow Light food portions.  
Green = I can eat all of these foods in moderation, and they do not trigger cravings.
- What is your abstinence?
- Go to at least three meetings in the next week ([secular meeting list](#))
- Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 2 Meeting

### Date:

- Review Food Plan
- Review RYG Food list
- Review Abstinence
- Review Meetings (Did you like any?)
- If time, how did you use the 9 Tools this week?

### Homework for Week 3 Meeting

- Read Introductions and Step 1s in the OA 12 & 12 and the alternative Step book, highlight passages of interest
- Listen to [Alternative Versions of Step 1](#) recording and follow along in the [Discussion Guide](#), pages 4-5.
- Answer the 6 questions on pages 3-4 in the OA 12 & 12 Workbook
- Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 3 Meeting

### Date:

- Discuss Step 1 and any passages of interest in the OA 12 & 12 and the alternative Step book
- Review OA 12 & 12 Workbook answers on pages 3-4
- If time, how did you use the 9 Tools this week?

### Homework for Week 4 Meeting

- Answer the 6 questions on pages 5-6 in the OA 12 & 12 Workbook
- Think about action plans you may need (e.g., "I made this treat just for you," traveling, holidays, restaurants, potlucks, free food at work, etc.,)
- Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 4 Meeting

### Date:

- Review OA 12 & 12 Workbook answers on pages 5-6
- Discuss getting an Accountability Buddy to build support network
- If time, how did you use the 9 Tools this week?

### Homework for Week 5 Meeting

- Answer the 5 questions on pages 7-8 in the OA 12 & 12 Workbook
- Listen to [Accountability Buddy](#) Podcast
- Read [Accountability Buddies in Secular Overeaters](#) handout (pdf, 1 page)
- Create an Accountability Buddy ad to post in the Zoom Chat or Secular Overeaters Facebook group
- Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 5 Meeting

### Date:

- Review OA 12 & 12 Workbook answers on pages 7-8
- Do you feel like you have a compulsive eating issue? If yes, yay—you're done with Step 1!
- Review Accountability Buddy ad
- If time, how did you use the 9 Tools this week?

### Homework for Week 6 Meeting

- Read Step 2 in the OA 12 & 12 and the alternative Step book, highlight passages of interest
- Listen to [Alternative Versions of Step 2 recording](#) and follow along in the [Discussion Guide](#), pages 6-7
- Answer the 6 questions on pages 9-10 in the OA 12 & 12 Workbook
- Post Accountability Buddy ads at meetings and/or SO Facebook group
- Follow up with interested people
- Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 6 Meeting

### Date:

- Discuss Step 2 and any passages of interest in the OA 12 & 12 and the alternative Step book
- Review OA 12 & 12 Workbook answers on pages 9-10
- Be sure to keep a copy of this handout with the workbook: [Secular Translations of the "God" Questions in The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#)
- Check in about finding an Accountability Buddy
- If time, how did you use the 9 Tools this week?

### Homework for Week 7 Meeting

- Answer the 6 questions on pages 11-12 in the OA 12 & 12 Workbook—Higher Power questions are going to start cropping up, so refer to the [Secular Translations of the "God" Questions in The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#) to reframe questions
- If an Accountability Buddy is still needed:
- Post Accountability Buddy ads at meetings
  - Follow up with interested people
  - Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 7 Meeting

### Date:

- Review OA 12 & 12 Workbook answers on pages 11-12
- If time, how did you use the 9 Tools this week?

### Homework for Week 8 Meeting

- Answer the 7 questions on pages 13-15 in the OA 12 & 12 Workbook
- Use the [Secular Translations of the “God” Questions in The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#)
- Think about what kind of sponsor you want and how you will find them
- Read the information on this SO webpage: <https://secularovereaters.org/so-sponsors/>
- Write an ad for a sponsor
- If an Accountability Buddy is still needed:
  - Post Accountability Buddy ads at meetings
  - Follow up with interested people
  - Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 8 Meeting

### Date:

- Review OA 12 & 12 Workbook answers on pages 13-15
- Do you feel like you need help with compulsive food behaviors? If so, yay—you’re done with Step 2!
- Review sponsor ad (include start date!)
- If time, how did you use the 9 Tools this week?

### Homework for Week 9 Meeting

- Read Step 3 in the OA 12 & 12 and the alternative Step book, highlight passages of interest
- Listen to [Alternative Versions of Step 3](#) recording and follow along in the [Discussion Guide](#), pages 8-9

*Week 8 continues next column*

- Answer the 6 questions on pages 16-17 in the OA 12 & 12 Workbook
- Use the [Secular Translations of the “God” Questions in The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#)
- Post sponsor ad at meetings
- Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 9 Meeting

### Date:

- Discuss Step 3 and any passages of interest in the OA 12 & 12 and the alternative Step book
- Review OA 12 & 12 Workbook answers on pages 16-17
- Discuss progress on finding a new sponsor
- If time, how did you use the 9 Tools this week?

### Homework for Week 10 Meeting

- Answer the 6 questions on pages 18-19 in the OA 12 & 12 Workbook
- Use the [Secular Translations of the “God” Questions in The Twelve Step Workbook of Overeaters Anonymous](#)
- If a new sponsor is still needed:
  - Post sponsor ad at meetings
  - Use all nine tools sometime this week

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## Week 10 Meeting

### Date:

- Review OA 12 & 12 Workbook answers on pages 18-19
- Do you believe that OA/SO can help you with your compulsive food behaviors? If yes, yay—you’re done with Step 3!
- Action plan: what are next steps now that the temporary sponsorship has ended?
- Any feedback about the past 10 weeks—the process or the relationship? (What went well, could be tweaked, too fast/slow, etc.,)