WELCOME NEWCOMERS
WELCOME TO OA FOOTSTEPS 🎉

Here are some important links:

- Footsteps Website: [http://www.oafootsteps.com](http://www.oafootsteps.com)
- Zoom Meetings Schedule: [www.oafootsteps.com/meetings](http://www.oafootsteps.com/meetings)
- New WhatsApp Chat Group: [https://zoom.us/j/293355222](https://zoom.us/j/293355222)
- Facebook Group: [https://bit.ly/2Li5cA3](https://bit.ly/2Li5cA3)
- OA Worldwide Fellowship: [https://paypal.me/pools/c/8oo2Ud4WK5](https://paypal.me/pools/c/8oo2Ud4WK5)

*Please note that we have a special Newcomer’s Meeting on the 1st Sunday of the month at 3:00pm EST – The same zoom link as above to attend.

** Please Note that all pamphlets and literature quoted in this Newcomer Packet is available for purchase or for free, on the [OA Worldwide Fellowship](https://oa.org) website.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Is food a problem for you?
• Have you been worried about the way you eat?
• Do you resolve to go on a diet tomorrow, only to fail again and again?
• Is your weight affecting the way you live your life?

You are not alone. Overeaters Anonymous can help. No dues, no fees, no weigh-ins

What is OA?
Overeaters Anonymous (OA) is a Twelve-Step Fellowship of people recovering from
compulsive eating. OA is not a diet club. We are dedicated to helping individuals recover from
compulsive eating, anorexia, bulimia, food addiction and obesity. If you are struggling, you are
not alone anymore.

Overeaters Anonymous Preamble

Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength and hope, are
recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There
are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor
accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement,
ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from
compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still
suffer.
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**Who joins OA?**
OA members are men and women from around the world. Some have been obese, while others have been anorexic, bulimic or a normal weight. We have been unable to freely live our lives because we have been so obsessed with food or weight.

**Does the program really work?**
Typically, OA members have tried numerous solutions to their problems with food, including (for many of us) years of diets or exercise. In OA, we have finally found a long-term answer. Many OA members have maintained a normal weight and found freedom from compulsive eating for many years. Overeaters Anonymous is patterned after the Alcoholics Anonymous program. Physical, emotional and spiritual recovery are offered through attending meetings, practicing the Twelve-Step program and helping others.

**Many symptoms, one solution**
The membership of OA is varied, both in its makeup and in the eating behaviors and experiences that brought each individual to OA.
In OA you’ll find members who are or were:
• extremely overweight, even morbidly obese;
• only moderately overweight;
• average weight;
• underweight;
• still maintaining periodic control of their eating behavior;
• totally unable to control their compulsive eating.

OA members have experienced many different patterns of eating. These symptoms are as varied as our membership.
They include:
• obsession with body weight, size and shape;
• eating binges;
• grazing;
• preoccupation with weight-reduction diets;
• starving;
• inducing vomiting after eating;
• Laxative or diuretic abuse
• constant preoccupation with food;
• inability to stop eating after taking the first bite;
• excessive-exercising.
• Chewing and spitting out food
• Use of diet pills, shots and other medical interventions to control weight
• Fantasies about food
• Vulnerability to quick-weight-loss schemes
• Using food as a reward or comfort
Our symptoms may vary, but we share a common bond: we are Powerless over food and our lives are Unmanageable. If you feel you are one of us, WE WELCOME YOU WITH OPEN ARMS.

**Fifteen questions:** This series of questions may help you determine if you are a compulsive eater. Many OA members have found that they answered yes to many of these questions.

1. Do you eat when you’re not hungry?
2. Do you go on eating binges for no apparent reason?
3. Do you have feelings of guilt and remorse after overeating?
4. Do you give too much time and thought to food?
5. Do you look forward with pleasure and anticipation to the time when you can eat alone?
6. Do you plan these secret binges ahead of time?
7. Do you eat sensibly before others and make up for it alone?
8. Is your weight affecting the way you live your life?
9. Have you tried to diet for a week (or longer), only to fall short of your goal?
10. Do you resent others telling you to “use a little willpower” to stop overeating?
11. Despite evidence to the contrary, have you continued to assert that you can diet “on your own” whenever you wish?
12. Do you crave to eat at a definite time, day or night, other than mealtime?
13. Do you eat to escape from worries or trouble?
14. Have you ever been treated for obesity or a food-related condition?
15. Does your eating behavior make others unhappy?

Excerpts from—“Is Food a problem for you” pamphlet. **Overeaters Anonymous ® World Service Office 6075 Zenith Court NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87144-6424 USA. Mail Address: PO Box 44020, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020 USA. Tel: 1-505-891-2664 • Fax: 1-505-891-4320; Email: info@oa.org • www.oa.org; OA Board-approved. ©2008 Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. All rights reserved. 750

**The Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous**

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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The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous

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 non-professional, 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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LET’S GET MORE SPECIFIC

1. **The disease of Compulsive Eating (Physical, Emotional, Spiritual)**

Please Read “**Our Invitation to you**”, to come and join us at Overeaters Anonymous which is often read as part of an Overeaters Anonymous meeting.

- We suffer from the disease of compulsive overeating. We are not immoral, weak-willed, bad, or disgusting—and we are not alone.
- We have a progressive disease characterized by an obsession of the mind and compulsive behavior.
- Our common problem is threefold: Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual.
- The book *Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition* (and is also available for purchase), on which our program is based, gives many parallel insights into addiction as a disease.
- We have found that the disease of compulsive eating can be arrested, one day at a time, but cannot be cured. Once the “diagnosis” is accepted we can follow the OA “prescription” for recovery: abstinence one day at a time and the Twelve Steps.
- We are powerless over controlling compulsive eating with misdirected willpower.
- The miracle of recovery happens through working the Twelve Steps: the freedom from the food obsession, and the freedom to not want to eat foods that used to beckon to us.
- It is important to just being willing to follow the OA program rather than insisting on prior intellectual understanding of the problem.
- OA does not pretend to be a medical program or a storehouse of nutritional knowledge. Members who want information of this nature must seek it from other sources. OA does not endorse any particular food plan. The pamphlets *Dignity of Choice* and *A Plan of Eating: A Tool for Living—One Day at a Time* provide guidance (available for purchase).
- Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery. We need to support every OA member, instilling hope, trust, freedom, and joy, rather than feelings of guilt, fear, and hardship. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively, which is Tradition Three (*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition* - available for purchase).
- OA does not weigh members, sign them up, monitor their eating habits, or keep tabs on them in any way. The important thing is to keep coming back and work the program with others.

2. **How to abstain from compulsive eating one day at a time**

**ABSTINENCE** is the act of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.
**RECOVERY**: Recovery is the removal of the need to engage in compulsive eating behaviors. Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is achieved through working and living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program.

- OA members have different plans of eating. Many follow a specific food plan; others are comfortable with eating moderate meals or simply not bingeing or purging. Some OA members weigh and measure their food. Our plans vary in the number of meals and foods to include or exclude. The OA pamphlets *Dignity of Choice* and *A Plan of Eating* (available for purchase) provide suggestions on how to meet individual needs.
- Focus on “just for today”: abstain for just this 24 hours, this hour, or this minute, if necessary.
- Get a sponsor and stay in touch on a daily basis—even several times a day if necessary. Talking about food specifics can be helpful, and sharing feelings and personal problems is also important.
- Some members find that postponing compulsive eating—until this afternoon, tonight, or tomorrow—and continuing to postpone it helps them get and maintain abstinence.
- Attend as many meetings as possible.
- Call other OA members, newcomers, or people with more experience. You help the person you call as much as you help yourself.
- Look for someone else to help. Sharing how OA has been a benefit to us is how members “keep” their recovery.
- Read OA and AA literature, keeping it around the house and carrying some in your purse or pocket.
- Pray—in whatever way is meaningful for you, even if you’re “acting as if.”
- Change routines, especially at times most conducive to compulsive eating. This helps to change old patterns.
- Make a list of things to do instead when you have thoughts about food or the urge to eat compulsively, and then do one of them.
- Get together with other OA members for non-eating activities or to enjoy an abstinent meal.
- Begin working the Twelve Steps.

3. **How It Works: The Twelve Steps as a suggested program of recovery**

Please read “How It Works” from *Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition* (the Big Book), Chapter 5. Many of us find that we can identify more easily by substituting words such as ‘compulsive eating’ for ‘alcoholism,’ and ‘food’ or ‘binge food’ for ‘alcohol.’

- OA is a spiritual program and does not follow any religious doctrine. Members practice the spiritual principles of the program with a personal Higher Power of their own understanding.
- The Twelve Steps are the basis of our program of recovery. We try to work on them—and let them work on us—for the rest of our lives, one day at a time. There are no “musts” in OA; these Steps are simply suggested, based on the experience of recovering OA members. They evolved in AA as a result of experience in recovery.
• Newcomers are encouraged to study the Steps with their sponsor and OA friends and to apply them in their daily lives. We do not expect to be perfect at doing this, just to make progress.

• The pamphlets (available for purchase) *To the Newcomer* and *Questions and Answers* provide an introduction to our Twelve Step program of recovery. Since the source of the Twelve Steps is Alcoholics Anonymous, we encourage newcomers to read the Big Book for themselves in addition to OA literature.

4. **The Twelve Traditions**

• While OA functions with very little obvious organization, adherence to the Traditions assures the survival of the Fellowship. Applying the Traditions to our relationships in and out of OA strengthens our spirituality and helps maintain abstinence. *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition* along with *AA’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (also available for purchase) and *AA Comes of Age* (available for purchase) are excellent sources of information on the origin and importance of the Traditions. OA’s pamphlet *The Twelve Traditions* provides a good introduction for the newcomer.

• We use the Traditions to understand key concepts within the fellowship such as anonymity; principles before personalities; group conscience; self-support; OA’s non-affiliation with other organizations; and our sole membership requirement, a desire to stop eating compulsively.

• It is equally important to point out what OA does not do. For example, OA does not solicit members or attempt to convince anyone to join the Fellowship. Nor does it keep membership lists, participate in research, follow up on its members, give medical or psychological advice, offer any kind of social services or counseling, accept reimbursement for its services, or accept contributions from non-OA sources.

5. **The Tools of Recovery**

The nine Tools of Recovery—a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity, service—are described in our pamphlet, *The Tools of Recovery*. (available for purchase)

“In working Overeaters Anonymous’ Twelve-Step program of recovery from compulsive overeating, we have found that a number of tools are available to assist us. We use these tools on a regular basis, to help us achieve and maintain abstinence and recover from our disease.” – The Tools of Recovery p.1

○ **A Plan of Eating**

A plan of eating helps us abstain from compulsive eating. (See the pamphlet *Dignity of Choice.*) This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease and achieve physical recovery.
○ **Sponsorship**
  We ask a sponsor to help us through our program of recovery on all three levels, physical, emotional, and spiritual.

○ **Meetings**
  Meetings give us an opportunity to identify our common problems, confirm our common solution through the Twelve Steps, and share the gifts we receive through this program. In addition to face-to-face meetings, OA offers telephone and online meetings.

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

○ **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.

○ **Literature**
  We read OA approved books, pamphlets, and Lifeline Magazine. Reading literature daily reinforces how to live the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

○ **Action Plan**
  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**
  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. Anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication means that we never allow our faces or last names to be used once we identify ourselves as OA members. Within the Fellowship, 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.

○ **Service**
  Any form of service that helps a reach fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Members can give service by getting to meetings, putting away chairs, putting out literature, and talking to newcomers. Beyond the group level, a member can serve as intergroup representative, committee chair, region representative, or Conference delegate. As OA’s responsibility pledge states, “Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this, I am responsible. Service is the basis of our program of recovery and the essence of spiritual growth.
6. **Pithy wisdom**

**The Serenity Prayer**

"God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference."

**OA slogans, which include:**

- Abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception.
- Easy does it.
- Let go and let God.
- Live and let live.
- Keep it simple.
- One day at a time.
- Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels.

**And 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."

We hope this gives you a good overview of the Program and please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us on the [Whatsapp Chat](#) group and **Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous….**

**Welcome HOME !!!!**