

The meeting begins at 5:30

“Welcome to **The Heart & Hand Group** of Overeaters Anonymous.

My name is _____. I am a compulsive eater and your leader for this meeting. Please mute your microphone at this time.”

“Will those who wish, please join me in the Serenity Prayer:

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

“As we extend the heart and hand of the OA Fellowship to those who still suffer, let us be mindful of

OA’s Unity with Diversity Policy, which respects our differences, yet unites us in the solution to our common problem. Whatever problem you may have with food, you are welcome at this meeting, regardless of race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other trait.

“Are there any compulsive eaters here besides myself?

“Is there anyone here for the first, second, or third time? Would you please tell us your first name so we can welcome you? If you are returning to OA or are visiting from another area, please tell us your first name so we can also welcome you.” [Welcome each person by name.]

“We encourage you to:

- get a sponsor to help guide your recovery;
- develop a plan of eating and, if you wish, write it down and report daily to your sponsor; and

- read OA-approved literature to develop a working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.”

“The following is the OA 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 compulsive food behaviors and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.”

Ask someone to read “Our Invitation to You,” which includes the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous.

Then ask someone to read The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.

TOOLS: “The OA Tools of Recovery help us work the Steps and refrain from compulsive overeating. The nine Tools are: a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity, and service.

SPONSORS: “Sponsorship is one of our keys to success. Sponsors are OA members committed to abstinence and to living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their experience, and they strengthen their

recovery through this service to others. To find a sponsor, look for someone who has what you want and ask how he or she is achieving it.

Will all abstinent sponsors please identify themselves?”

LITERATURE: “Only OA-approved literature is used at this meeting. Many OA members find that reading our literature on a daily basis further reinforces how to live the Twelve Steps.

REPORTS: [Secretary makes announcements; presents coins and medallions, if customary. Intergroup representative’s report and Treasurer’s report are to be given once a month.]

SEVENTH TRADITION: “According to our Seventh Tradition, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. Expenses are _____, _____, and _____. We send regular contributions to our intergroup or service board, our region, and the World Service Office to help carry the message to other compulsive overeaters. Give as if your life depends on it! We encourage OA members to give as much as they are able, to help our group be self-supporting. The suggested contribution is \$3.00 or more.” Merri will put the donation information on the screen.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR SHARING: [We suggest you read the following before members begin sharing:] “As you share your experience and strength in OA, please also share your hope. Please confine your sharing to your experience with the disease of compulsive eating, the solution offered by OA, and your own recovery from the disease, rather than just the events of the day or week. If you are having difficulties, share how you use the program to deal with them. If you need to talk more about your difficulties and seek solutions, we

suggest you speak to your sponsor and other members after the meeting.”

STATE THIS MEETING’S CHOICE: [Some meetings vary or combine options, as decided by group

conscience. Sample options are listed below.]

Step and Tradition Meetings: “This is a Step meeting. We are reading Step _____ and/or

Tradition _____.” [Leader begins reading from The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of

Overeaters Anonymous. Members share about the Step or Tradition.]

Topic Meetings: “This is a topic meeting. Today’s OA program topic is _____.” [Members

are invited to share for three to five minutes on the topic.]

Speaker Meetings: “This is a speaker meeting.” [Leader describes his or her story for

about twenty minutes and shares experience, strength, and hope.

Members are invited to share

for three to five minutes.]

Literature Meetings: “This is a literature meeting. Today we are reading _____.” [Choose from any OA-approved literature. Members may read and share, or read and then share at the end.]

“Feedback, cross talk, and advice-giving are discouraged here. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the

group, and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time.

“We ask everyone to respect our group conscience. This meeting has decided that the chair for each meeting has the discretion to suggest to anyone sharing that he or she is off topic or is speaking too long. This meeting asks you to accept this suggestion in order to keep the meeting on track.” [We suggest you add here any other guidelines your group conscience has decided to follow.]

CLOSING: “By following the Twelve Steps, attending meetings regularly, and using the OA Tools, we are changing our lives. You will find hope and encouragement in Overeaters Anonymous. To the newcomer, we suggest attending at least six different meetings to learn the many ways OA can help you.

“There are many different types of meetings, all of which are available to support your recovery from

compulsive eating. We welcome you to this meeting whenever you would care to attend. There are other face-to-face meetings and virtual (phone and technology-based) meetings that you may find helpful. Information about these meetings can be found on oa.org.

“The opinions expressed here today are those of individual OA members and do not represent OA as a whole. Please remember our commitment to honor each other’s anonymity. Whom you see here, What you hear here, When you leave here, Let it stay here. Let us all reach out by phone or email to newcomers, returning members, and each other. Together we get better.

“Thank you for asking me to be your leader. After a moment of silence, will those of you who wish

please join us in 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.

Our Invitation to You

We of Overeaters Anonymous have made a discovery. At the very first meeting we attended, we

learned that we were in the clutches of a dangerous illness, and that willpower, emotional health, and

self-confidence, which some of us had once possessed, were no defense against it.

We have learned that the reasons for the illness are unimportant. What deserves the attention of the

still-suffering compulsive overeater is this: There is a proven, workable method by which we can arrest

our illness.

The OA recovery program is patterned after that of Alcoholics Anonymous. As our personal stories

attest, the Twelve Step program of recovery works as well for compulsive overeaters as it does for

alcoholics.

Can we guarantee you this recovery? The answer is up to you. If you will honestly face the truth about

yourself and the illness; if you will keep coming back to meetings to talk and listen to other recovering

compulsive overeaters; if you will read our literature and that of Alcoholics Anonymous with an open

mind; and, most important, if you are willing to rely on a power greater than yourself for direction in

your life and to take the Twelve Steps to the best of your ability, we believe you can indeed join the

ranks of those who recover.

To remedy the emotional, physical, and spiritual illness of compulsive eating, we offer several

suggestions, but keep in mind that the basis of the program is spiritual, as evidenced by the Twelve

Steps.

We are not a “diet club.” We do not endorse any particular plan of eating. In OA, abstinence is the

act of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards

or maintaining a healthy body weight. Once we become abstinent, the preoccupation with food

diminishes and in many cases leaves us entirely. We then find that, to deal with our inner turmoil, we

have to have a new way of thinking, of acting on life rather than reacting to it—in essence, a new way

of living.

From this vantage point, we begin the Twelve Step program of recovery, moving beyond the food and the emotional havoc to a fuller living experience. As a result of practicing the Steps, the symptoms of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors are removed on a daily basis, achieved through the process of surrendering to something greater than ourselves; the more total our surrender, the more fully realized our freedom from food obsession.

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Here are the Steps as adapted for 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.

“But I’m too weak. I’ll never make it!” Don’t worry; we have all thought and said the same thing. The amazing secret to the success of this program is just that: weakness. It is weakness, not strength, that binds us to each other and to a higher power and somehow gives us an ability to do what we cannot do alone.

If you decide you are one of us, we welcome you with open arms. Whatever your circumstances, we offer you the gift of acceptance. You are not alone anymore. Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous.

Welcome home!

Permission to use the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for adaptation granted by AA World Services, Inc.

Overeaters Anonymous®, Inc.

World Service Office

6075 Zenith Ct. NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87144-6424 USA

Mail Address: P.O. Box 44727, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727 USA

Tel: 1-505-891-2664 • Fax: 1-505-891-4320

info@oa.org • www.oa.org

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The Tools of Recovery (abridged)

We use Tools—a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, the telephone, writing, literature, action plan,

anonymity and service—to help us achieve and maintain abstinence and recover from our disease. 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.

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. Find a sponsor who has what you want and ask that person how he or she is achieving it.

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. 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.

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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 reach a 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."

See the full Tools of Recovery pamphlet for more information.

OA Board-approved.

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Welcome Home (abridged)

Have you ever wished you could lose ten pounds (5 kg)? Twenty (9 kg)? Forty (18kg)? A hundred (45kg)

or more? Have you ever wished that once you got it off you could keep it off? Welcome to OA; welcome

home!

Have you sometimes felt out of step with the world, like a homeless orphan without a place where you

really belonged? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wished your family would get to work or school so you could get busy eating? Welcome to

OA; welcome home!

Have you ever awakened first thing in the morning and felt happy because you remembered that your

favorite goodie was waiting for you in the fridge or in the cupboard? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever looked up at the stars and wondered what an insignificant person like you is doing in the

world anyway? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever cooked, bought, or baked for your family and then eaten everything yourself so you

wouldn't have to share? We know you in OA because we are you. Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever wanted to hide in the house, without going to work, without getting cleaned up or even

getting dressed, without seeing anyone or letting anyone see you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever hidden food under the bed, under the pillow, in the drawer, in the bathroom, in the

wastebasket, the cupboard, the clothes hamper, the closet, or the car so that you could eat without anyone

seeing you? Welcome to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever been angry, resentful, defiant—toward God, your mate, your doctor, your mother, your

father, your friends, your children, the salespeople in stores whose looks spoke a thousand words as you

tried on clothes—because they were thin, because they wanted you to be thin, and because you were

forced to diet to please them or shut them up or make them eat their words and their looks? We welcome

you to OA; welcome home!

Have you ever sobbed out your misery in the dark night because no one loved or understood you?

Welcome to OA; welcome home!

—A Taste of Lifeline, pp. xiii–xvi

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The Twelve Traditions

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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