

Suggested Meeting Format

We have found that consistent use of this format keeps meetings focused on OA recovery, reinforces our program, and encourages unity. It also provides a reassuring feeling of continuity—an important factor in member retention. Each group may modify this format to better suit its needs.

The meeting to begin at _____.

1. “Welcome to the *[day and time]* _____ meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. My name is _____. I am a compulsive eater and your leader for this meeting. Please silence your phones at this time.”

2. “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.”

3. “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 attribute.

“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.”

4. “**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.”

5. *[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. Some meetings may also decide to read The Twelve Concepts of OA Service or to read the Concept corresponding to the month of the year.]*

[Optional: “We will now read an abridged version of ‘Welcome Home’ from the book A Taste of Life-line.”]

6. **“THE DEFINITIONS OF ‘ABSTINENCE’ AND ‘RECOVERY’ IN OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS:**
Abstinence is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight.
Spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery is the result of living and working the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program on a daily basis.”
(Business Conference Policy Manual, 1988b [amended 2019, 2021])

7. **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, an action plan, anonymity, and service. For more information, read *The Tools of Recovery* pamphlet.”
[Or read The Tools of Recovery (abridged) included with this meeting format.]

8. **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?”

9. *[Pass the meeting record book around and ask members to sign their names with contact information, if they would like. Pass the record book around a second time so members may write down contact information to call or write later.]*

10. **LITERATURE:** “Only OA-approved literature is displayed at this meeting. Many OA members find that reading our literature on a daily basis further reinforces how to live the Twelve Steps.”
[Ask someone to serve at the literature table during the break and after the meeting.]

11. **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.]*

12. **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 US\$5.00 or more.”

13. **OPTIONAL FIVE- OR TEN-MINUTE BREAK:**

- Welcome newcomers and visitors.
- Offer newcomer pamphlets.
- Draw attention to OA literature.
- Take time for fellowship.

14.

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.”

15.

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.]*

16.

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 _____.” [*Select one of the following suggested closings: Serenity Prayer, Seventh Step Prayer, Third Step Prayer, or the OA Promise ‘I put my hand in yours....’*]

OA Responsibility Pledge

Always to extend the hand and heart of OA
to all who share my compulsion;
for this I am responsible.

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