

Suggested Young People's Meeting Format

The meeting to begin at _____.

1. **LEADER:** “Welcome to the Young People’s Meeting [*title of your choice*] of Overeaters Anonymous. My name is _____. I’m a compulsive eater and your leader for this meeting. Please silence your phones 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.”

“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.”

“The focus of this meeting is on the experience, strength, and hope young people find in Overeaters Anonymous. While anyone is welcome, the emphasis is for those under thirty, or those who were under thirty when they came to program.”

2. **READINGS:** “Who would like to read ‘What brought us here’ and ‘Why we stay’?” [*Pause for readings.*] Who would like to read the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous?” [*Pause for reading.*] “Who would like to read the Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous?” [*Pause for reading.*]

“Are there any compulsive eaters here besides myself? We will now go around and introduce ourselves. Please introduce yourself by first name only.”

3. **NEWCOMERS:** “If you are new, please introduce yourself by your first name only—not to embarrass you, but so that we may welcome you.” [*Newcomers introduce themselves.*]

“We encourage you to keep an open mind, attend several meetings, ask lots of questions, and read our literature to learn the many ways OA can help you.”

4. **WELCOME BOOK:** “We are circulating the Welcome Book. Please feel free to write down your contact information and take the names and contact information of anyone you may want to reach

out to.”

ABSTINENCE: “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.”

5. TOOLS: “The OA Tools of Recovery help us work the Steps and refrain from compulsive eating. The nine Tools are a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity, and service. For more information, read *The Tools of Recovery* pamphlet.”

6. SPONSORSHIP: “Sponsorship is an important part of our program of recovery. Sponsors are OA members committed to abstinence, and they guide us by sharing their own experience, strength, and hope. Would all abstinent sponsors please identify themselves, starting on my right?”

7. FORMATS:

- **SPEAKER:** “It is now time for me to share my experience, strength, and hope for approximately _____ minutes.”
- **LITERATURE:** *[To be determined by the meeting. While each meeting is autonomous, Overeaters Anonymous endorses only OA-approved literature, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition (the Big Book) and the AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. For a list of all OA-approved literature, see the OA-Approved Literature List at oa.org or your local intergroup or service board for assistance.]*

8. SEVENTH TRADITION: “Although there are no dues or fees for membership, according to our Seventh Tradition, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. Our group 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.”

9. REPORTS: “Now it is time for announcements. I’ll turn the meeting over to our secretary.”

10. SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR SHARING: “The meeting is now open for three-minute shares.” *[At group’s discretion, depending on number in attendance.]* “Please respect the timer so that as many people as possible have a chance to share. There is no cross talk at this meeting. Cross talk is defined as commenting on another person’s share with anything other than ‘Thank you for your share.’ Sharing ends at _____. Who would like to begin sharing?”

11. CONCLUSION: “That is all the time we have for sharing. If you didn’t get a chance to share but need to talk, please find one of us to talk to after the meeting. Remember that the opinions expressed here are those of individuals and not of OA as a whole. Please remember our commitment to honor each other’s anonymity. **What you hear here, whom you see here, when you leave here, let it stay here.**

“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.”

12.

CLOSING READING: “Would someone please read _____ [*select the Promises from Alcoholics Anonymous, pp. 83-84, or the last two paragraphs of Step Twelve from The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, pp. 86-87*]?”

13.

CLOSING: “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...’ listed below.*]

OA Responsibility Pledge

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

Prayers to End Meetings

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.

SEVENTH STEP PRAYER: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 76

THIRD STEP PRAYER: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 63

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.

What brought us here?

OA is a worldwide Fellowship, open to all who have the desire to stop eating compulsively. Compulsive eating behaviors may include overeating, under-eating, anorexia, bulimia, laxative or drug abuse, overexercising, or any combination of these actions. Some of these behaviors may have begun in early childhood, but we believe that compulsive eating is progressive and may become even more of a problem for us later on. It can have a dramatic effect on the daily lives, relationships, physical health, and aspirations of young people in their teens, twenties, and thirties.

Why we stay

You may feel that you are alone, struggling with feelings of powerlessness and shame over your compulsive eating, body image, and weight. You may wonder if anyone else your age feels the way you do. We can tell you that many young people in OA have found recovery and freedom from the crippling effects of compulsive eating. Members of all ages have discovered that the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous offer a common solution for all who wish to recover. You are not alone.

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The Twelve Steps

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.

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

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 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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