

# Assisting Staff Responsible for Student Well-Being at Higher Education Institutions

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Overeaters Anonymous has a powerful message: Those who suffer from compulsive eating find recovery through abstinence and the practice of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.

One effective way to share this message is to make college staff responsible for student well-being aware of the existence of OA.

Here is a sample of text that OA service bodies around the world can send to college staff. We recommend email as the most effective means of distribution. Feel free to add links to approved [Public Information and Professional Outreach PSAs](#), such as videos. We envision this as an initial contact (a “cold call”) with a higher education institution.

Before you send this text (as an email or hard copy), it is advisable to have a plan for what comes next. The *Public Information and Professional Outreach Service Manual* (found at [bookstore.oa.org](http://bookstore.oa.org)) and the [Guidelines for Professional Outreach Committees](#) (found in the oa.org Document Library) are excellent resources. We encourage you to direct young members to the resources on the [Young People page](#) at oa.org, including our free downloadable [To the Young Person](#) pamphlet and [young people's podcasts](#).

## Privacy Disclaimer

As stated in the *Public Information and Professional Outreach Service Manual*, this content is not a guide for how to enact data privacy or implement data protection. When using these resources, OA members and groups should comply with applicable data privacy regulations and laws.

As communication and outreach has moved more and more to digital formats, the need to protect data and privacy has increased. States, countries, and economic and political partnerships have enacted laws to protect the public. For example, in May 2018, the European Union put into effect one of the toughest privacy and security laws in the world, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The term “data privacy” concerns who has access to data, such as how data is shared and stored. The term “data protection” concerns the tools and policies that restrict access to the data, such as how data is safeguarded.

## Sample higher education staff letter

[*World Service office address*]

Dear [*amend as applicable*]:

“I don’t know what to do with my eating disorder—I’ve tried everything.”

You may have struggled with how to respond when a student comes to you with this problem. We are reaching out to you because we know that many young people are experiencing difficulties with overeating, under-eating, and body image. In our personal experience, Overeaters Anonymous (OA) is a lifesaving, free, and confidential source of help.

You may have heard of other Twelve Step fellowships. Twelve Step recovery is also available for anyone who has issues with food or body image in the form of Overeaters Anonymous.

Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive eating. This may manifest as overeating, under-eating, overexercising, body obsession, bulimia, and/or anorexia. We welcome everyone who wants recovery.

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 Overeaters Anonymous to those who still suffer.

We offer in-person meetings, virtual meetings, and phone meetings. Members typically share contact details with each other to provide support outside of meetings.

More information about OA, including personal stories and meeting lists, can be found at [oa.org](http://oa.org). Meetings that specifically focus on young people can be found under Find a Meeting ([oa.org/find-a-meeting](http://oa.org/find-a-meeting)) by selecting “Young People” from the specific focus filter. We humbly recommend that you share the Overeaters Anonymous name and website with students who are suffering so that they can find a meeting and connect with others who are recovering. We offer experience, strength, and hope.

Many of our meetings are open to visitors. If you would like to attend one of these meetings, you are more than welcome.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [*phone number/email address*].\*

*\*For service body or individual to add details. If sent by World Service Office staff, this sentence will not be included.*

OA Board-approved

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