
OA is not a diet club

“Food and weight are only symptoms of our problem.

We use food as the alcoholic uses alcohol and the drug addict uses drugs.”

Many people come to OA expecting diets, weigh-ins, and lectures on food and weight. To their surprise (and often relief), they find that OA offers none of these things.

Why?

Because food and weight are only symptoms of our problem. We use food as the alcoholic uses alcohol and the drug addict uses drugs. While a diet can help us lose weight, it often intensifies the compulsion to overeat.

The solution offered by Overeaters Anonymous does not include diet tips. Instead, because of our long experience of compulsive eating and recovery from compulsive eating, we are able to offer understanding and support for the compulsive eater and offer general guidance in developing a personal plan of eating (for more infor-

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mation see the pamphlets *A Plan of Eating* and *Dignity of Choice*). OA does not furnish counseling services, hospitalization or treatment; nor does OA participate in or conduct re-search and training in the field of eating disorders.

OA members who are interested in learning about nutrition or who seek professional advice are encouraged to consult qualified professionals. We may freely make use of such help, with the assurance that OA supports each of us in our efforts to recover.

OA gives the compulsive overeater an opportunity to identify with others who have the same problem. In OA, we share our experience of both the suffering of compulsive overeating and the joy of recovery.

What does OA offer?

We offer unconditional acceptance and support to one another through OA meetings which are readily

available and self-supporting through our voluntary contributions. The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

We in OA believe we have a threefold illness—physical, emotional, and spiritual. Tens of thousands of us have found that the twelve-step program offered by Overeaters Anonymous effects recovery on all three levels.

The Twelve Steps embody a set of principles which, when followed, promote inner change. Sponsors help us understand and apply these principles. As old attitudes are discarded, we often find there is no longer a need for excess food.

Recovery for each OA member is highly personal. There are no rules, just suggestions. Those of us who choose to recover one day at a time practice the Twelve Steps. In so doing, we achieve lasting freedom from our food obsession and a new way of life.

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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.

After reading this pamphlet, you may have questions which have not been fully answered. If there is an OA group near you, its members will be happy to welcome you and give you further information and help, along with additional OA literature. If there is no OA group in your community, please contact the World Service Office at the address below.



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