

Using OA's Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Using Public Service Announcements can be a great way to carry the OA message, raise public awareness, and attract new members.

A PSA is usually a 15-, 30-, or 60-second radio or television spot with a short message about OA and the phone number and website of the World Service Office and/or the local service body. Although broadcast stations are no longer required to air PSAs, many stations do so as a community service and to fill space between programs.

Using live copy: Some stations prefer live copy that they record or announce on the air. (See sample live copy PSA scripts in the *Public Information and Professional Outreach Service Manual*, available at bookstore.oa.org.)

Using the prerecorded radio PSA “Start Living the Life You Deserve”: Downloadable audio files in 15-, 30-, and 60-second spots are available from the Podcasts page at oa.org in the “PSA” section. When contacting radio stations, include an emailed cover letter with a link to these resources. Once broadcast or internet radio stations are interested, they may request digital files via email or cloud.

Using the video PSA “Many Symptoms, the OA Solution”: Provide a link to the Podcasts page on oa.org to share on social media.

Make sure your group is ready for an influx of newcomers before using the PSAs. Ask this question: Are the members abstaining and experienced enough in the program to handle an influx? Experience has shown that groups with little abstinence or a lack of sponsors risk turning off newcomers who may never return.

When establishing and growing OA groups in the committee's area, be patient. At first, use low-key publicity techniques, such as a couple of lines in the classified ads, to obtain a nucleus of abstaining members who can be examples to those whom the PSA may attract. Once the committee has that, then begin using the PSAs.

Make sure there's a way for inquirers to learn of local meetings via a website or a 24-hour phone line. If using an answering service, make sure the operators are fully informed about meeting information and clearly instructed in how to refer people. Give the service a few names and numbers of abstaining members who are willing to take calls. If your group or service body has no website or answering service, direct PSA responders to Find a Meeting at oa.org.

Twelve Steps to Getting OA's Public Service Announcements (PSAs) Aired on Radio and Television Stations

1. Call local television and radio stations and ask to speak with the public service or public affairs director at each station. Don't forget about cable television stations; many small communities have cable systems that run PSAs. Large metropolitan areas often have a local broadcasters' association. Nonprofit groups may have to go through this association to get a clearance—a special number assigned to each organization—which can be used at all area stations. In areas with few stations, it is important that local meetings coordinate their approaches to avoid confusion.
2. Tell the public affairs director that the group is submitting a PSA on behalf of the nonprofit organization Overeaters Anonymous.

3. If the station requires further proof of OA's nonprofit status, contact the WSO for a copy of OA's tax-exemption letter. (*Note: Groups and service bodies **cannot** use this letter to establish their own tax-exempt status.*)
4. Ask which format the station uses; many will request digital files. An online cloud storage service can be used for a large file transfer to upload the files. Provide a link to our PSAs, send the station links to the PSAs at oa.org, or attach PSA files in an email. If broadcast-quality video files are needed, contact the WSO.
5. Ask the public affairs director if the station will accept a professionally produced PSA as-is, or if they plan to dub over the provided video. (Some stations insist on using the voices of their own anchorpeople.) If this is the case, the committee can send the station the PSA script found in the *Public Information and Professional Outreach Service Manual* along with the file. If any changes will be made to the PSA, request to listen to or see it before it is aired.
6. Ask if the station is equipped to add the local service body's phone number instead of or in addition to the WSO phone number provided. If the station is unable to do so, the PSA will direct interested people to call the World Service Office or visit oa.org.
7. For audio PSAs, visit the Podcasts page on oa.org and find the "PSA" section to hear, link to, and download 15-, 30-, and 60-second spots. The committee may convert the spots to whatever audio file format each station requires.
8. Send the PSA file(s) to the public affairs director the committee contacted. Include a script with the PSA, as well as an explanation of why the station should air the PSA. (See the *Public Information and Professional Outreach Service Manual* for a sample letter that can be adapted.) Provide a link to oa.org or send an informative pamphlet, such as *About OA*.
9. Ask the public affairs director to let you know when the PSA will air. (PSAs are often aired at night.)
10. When the PSA has aired, send a thank-you note to the public affairs director you worked with.
11. Prepare for newcomers to come to meetings by stocking up on OA literature. If a service body phone number is included in the PSA, prepare for calls by compiling a list of abstaining members who can help callers with questions about OA.
12. Share the committee's success stories about using video and audio PSAs to carry the message. Report at meetings and post on social media and online PIPO groups.

OA Board-approved.

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