

HOW/OA TOOLS OF RECOVERY

A Plan of Eating

As a tool, a plan of eating helps us to abstain from eating compulsively. The HOW food plan consists of three weighed and measured meals daily, with nothing in between. Food is written down, called in, and committed on a daily basis to our sponsor. This tool helps us deal with the physical aspects of our disease and helps us achieve physical recovery and move beyond the food to a happier, healthier and more spiritual living experience.

Sponsorship

HOW Sponsors are OA members who have 30 days of back to back HOW abstinence, have completed thirty days of questions and have taken the first three steps. We ask a sponsor to help us through our program of recovery on all three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. By working with other members of OA and sharing their experience, strength and hope, sponsors continually renew and reaffirm their own recovery. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their own experience.

Meetings

Meetings are gatherings of two or more compulsive overeaters who come together to share their personal experience, strength and hope OA has given them. Though there are many types of meetings, fellowship with other compulsive overeaters is the basis of them all. Meetings give us an opportunity to identify and confirm our common problem and to share the gifts we receive through this program. Attendance at a minimum of three meetings per week is necessary.

Telephone

The telephone helps us share one-to-one and avoid the isolation, which is so common among us. As part of the surrender process, it is a tool with which we learn to reach out, ask for help and extend help to others. The telephone also provides an immediate outlet for those hard to handle highs and lows we may experience. We make three outreach calls per day to other members of the program.

Writing

Most of us have found that writing has been an indispensable tool for working the Steps. Further, putting our thoughts and feelings down on paper, or describing a troubling incident, helps us to better understand our actions and reactions in a way that is often not revealed to us by simply thinking or talking about them. In the past, compulsive eating was our most common reaction to life. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action.

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Literature

We study and read OA-approved pamphlets; OA-approved books, such as Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition, The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous and For Today; and we read Lifeline, our monthly magazine on recovery. We also study the book Alcoholics Anonymous, referred to as the "Big Book," to understand and reinforce our program. Many OA members find that when read daily, the literature further reinforces how to live the Twelve Steps. Our OA literature and the AA "Big Book" are ever-available tools, which provide insight into our problem of eating compulsively, strength to deal with it, and the very real hope that there is a solution for us.

Action Plan

An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual and physical recovery. This tool, like our plan of eating, may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted as we progress in our recovery. An action plan might focus on planning, shopping for, and preparing food. Some members may need a regular fitness routine to assist in working towards the goal of achieving physical recovery and abstinence. Along with working the Steps on a daily basis, an action plan may incorporate use of the other tools to bring structure, balance and manageability into our lives.

Anonymity

Anonymity is placing principles before personalities. Our sharing with other members is confidential. Anonymity offers us freedom to express ourselves, and protection from gossip. Each member agrees not to reveal another's participation in the HOW program. Remember: "What you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here."

Service

Carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers is the basic purpose of our Fellowship; therefore, it is the most fundamental form of service. Any form of service—no matter how small—which helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Getting to meetings, putting away chairs, putting out literature, talking to newcomers, doing whatever needs to be done in a group or for OA as a whole are ways in which we give back what we have so generously been given. We are encouraged to do what we can when we can. "A life of sane and happy usefulness" is what we are promised as the result of working the Twelve Steps. Service helps to fulfill that promise.