

THE TOOLS OF RECOVERY

There are eight essential tools of recovery. The tools must be used if they are to work. They are a way of working and living the Twelve Steps.

ABSTINENCE - is following the food plan prescribed by your physician, or abstinence is following the Basic Food Plan refraining from sugar, flour, starches and compulsive overeating, eating three weighed and measured meals, no between meal snacks, one day at a time. It's working the Twelve Steps as a program of recovery and refraining from "stinking thinking". Physical abstinence is a daily reprieve from the disease of compulsive overeating. It enables emotional abstinence which is a positive change in attitude due directly to the program.

SPONSORSHIP – A sponsor is a person committed to abstinence and has taken the first three steps of the program. A sponsor is a newcomer's guide during their first thirty days and a continuing helping hand in their recovery program.

TELEPHONE – The telephone is a daily link to our sponsors; a way to reach out for help and to extend that same help to others. We make four telephone calls each day: the first to our sponsor, and using the OUTREACH DIRECTORY, three calls to other members of the program.

LITERATURE/WRITING/BURNING - Reading and writing is how we learn about the program and ourselves. Because we identify so closely with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), we've adopted and study their "Big Book" and "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions". Writing about our frustrations and mixed emotions, then burning or destroying the writing acts as a safety valve, releasing us from negative thoughts "stinking thinking".

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".

MEETINGS - are where we learn we are not alone. We encourage every member and especially newcomers, to attend three meetings each week. The strength, hope and encouragement we derive from our meetings is invaluable. A list of HOW-OA meetings are available on the literature table. "Keep coming back! It works when you work it!"

SERVICE - is another opportunity to share with others what we receive in program. We know that as we give, so shall we receive. Service is abstinence; working the Tools of Recovery; helping at meetings; setting up chairs; bringing the soda; greeting the newcomers; it's anything and everything that makes the program work.

ACTION PLAN – This is a program of action. Along with activities that support abstinence (food planning, shopping and preparation) an action plan can also be used to establish balance and manageability into our lives by attending to other areas such as fitness and exercise; family and social obligations; time management, health; home maintenance; and rest and relaxation.

HOW-OA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA INTERGROUP, INC.

HOW-OA Newcomer And Returning Member Information Brochure

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(this document is downloadable from HOW-OA.ORG, RESOURCES)

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

What is Overeaters Anonymous?

OA is a fellowship of men and women who meet to share their *experience, strength and hope*. OA offers a 12-step program of recovery from all types of under and overeating, anorexia and bulimia.

Is HOW-OA part of Overeaters Anonymous? Yes. HOW-OA is a subgroup of OA. It is considered a special focus group that offers a structured approach to working the 12 steps of OA.

What is the difference between OA and HOW-OA? HOW-OA is for people seeking a structured program. HOW-OA has a basic weighed and measured food plan with abstinence from sugars and refined white flour. A sponsor is required prior to receiving the HOW-OA food plan.

What does HOW stand for? Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness.

What is HOW-OA's purpose? The purpose of HOW-OA is to help ourselves and others who suffer from the self-destruction of compulsive eating.

Is there a cost for membership? There are no dues or fees for membership. We are a non-profit organization, self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. Contributions are optional

The 12 Step Program

How do I begin? We encourage newcomers and returning members to go to a meeting and get a sponsor. A sponsor is the newcomer's and returning member's guide during their first thirty days and continuing helping hand in their recovery program. There will be many people able and willing to answer your questions. Don't forget, we all started exactly the same way.

How do I change myself? Your recovery is targeted at three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual.



Is HOW-OA a religious group? No. It aims at spiritual growth, but is not limited to any sect or denomination. It is open to all who want recovery.

What happens at meetings? You will hear positive shares from recovering compulsive eaters. They will talk about how they used the Twelve Steps and the tools of recovery of the HOW-OA program and became able to cope with life without eating compulsively. (Please see the meeting page at HOW-OA.ORG, Resources).

Weight Control

What is compulsive eating?

A Compulsion is an irresistible urge to do an irrational act. This series of questions may help you decide if you are a compulsive eater.

Do you eat when you're not hungry?

Do you go on eating binges for no apparent reason?

Do you have feelings of guilt and remorse after overeating or undereating?

Do you give too much time and thought to food?

Do you look forward with pleasure and anticipation to the time when you can eat alone?

Do you plan these secret binges ahead of time?

Do you eat sensibly with others and make up for alone?

Is your weight affecting the way you live your life?

Have you tried to diet for a week (or longer) only to fall short of your goal?

Do you resent others telling you to "use a little willpower" to stop overeating?

Despite evidence to the contrary, have you continued to assert that you can diet "on your own" when you wish?

Do you crave to eat at times other than mealtime?

Do you eat to escape from worries or trouble?

Have you ever been treated for obesity or a food-related condition?

Does your eating behavior make you or others unhappy?

Have you answered yes to three or more of these questions? If so, it is probable that you have, or are on the way to having a compulsive eating problem. We have found that the way to arrest this progressive disease is to practice the Twelve-Step recovery program of Overeaters Anonymous.

Do we have a diet? No, HOW-OA is not a diet club. However, HOW-OA does have a food plan.

Do you have to be overweight to be a member of HOW-OA? No. Obesity is just one of many symptoms of the deadly disease of compulsive eating. It is not how much we weigh or even how much we eat or don't eat that brings us to HOW-OA; it is the ways we have desperately tried to control our food, eating and weight.

What if I have only a little weight to lose? The amount does not matter; if you need help with compulsive food thoughts and behaviors you are in the right place.

What if I have a medical issue? We urge all newcomers and returning member to consult their physician. You may not modify the Basic Food Plan to suite yourself. Your physician, of course, may prescribe modifications to the Basic Food Plan.

The 12 Steps of Recovery

1. We admitted we were powerless over food- and 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 whenever 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.