

## If you decide that...

If you decide that you are one of us,  
we welcome you with open arms.

Whatever your circumstances, we  
offer you the gift of acceptance.

You are not alone anymore.

Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous.

Welcome home!



Call 1-800-589-6262 Monday through Friday, from 9 am until noon, to speak to someone about meetings in your area. Or, visit [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) or [www.region5oa.org](http://www.region5oa.org) for more information.

## REGION 5 OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

## What to Expect at an OA Meeting

*Always to extend the hand and heart of  
OA to all who share my compulsion; for  
that I am responsible*



**REGION 5  
OVEREATERS  
ANONYMOUS IS  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS,  
INDIANA, KENTUCKY,  
MICHIGAN, OHIO,  
SOUTHERN ONTARIO  
AND WISCONSIN**

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**800-589-6262**

## What to Expect at an OA Meeting

After years of struggling with your weight and obsessing about food, you have decided to give Overeaters Anonymous a try. You find an OA meeting in your area by checking OA's online meeting locator or by calling or emailing the World Service Office (WSO). You've called the contact person to confirm the day, time and location of the meeting to make sure the information hasn't changed.

When you arrive at the meeting, you will find men and women who share a common malady – compulsive overeating – and have found a common solution: the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous. You will see anywhere from three to 30 people at the meeting. An average meeting has about 10. You will be warmly welcomed.

The meeting usually opens with the Serenity Prayer, and you may hear a reading called "Our Invitation to You," which describes the disease of compulsive overeating and the Twelve Step solution. Meeting formats may vary, but all OA groups are the same in that they seek recovery on three levels – physical, emotional and spiritual – through the Twelve Steps, and the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

You may hear a speaker open the meeting and speak for 10 to 15 minutes about what life was like before OA, what happened, and what he or she is like now; or someone might read from OA or AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) literature. Other members will share their experience, strength and hope. You will have an opportunity to introduce yourself as a newcomer if you like. You will find that you are not alone, that there is a way out of your desperation. Because anonymity is a critical principle of

the OA program, you are assured that what you share will be held in confidence. This provides the safety you need to share your experiences honestly.

You may recognize your own story when you listen to others share. Listening will help you find others who have what you want, whether it be weight loss, clarity, joy or recovery from the obsession. You may want to ask someone to be your sponsor. A sponsor will help you work the Steps of the program to achieve the recovery you seek.

When members share, you may hear them refer to a Higher Power or to God. OA is not a religious program and does not subscribe to any specific religious ideology. It is a program that practices spiritual principles, and members individually approach these principles with a Higher Power of their understanding.

A list may be passed around for all to sign their names and phone numbers, so people can offer each other support between meetings. Someone from the meeting you attend may call you to answer any questions you may have about the program, and you will also have an opportunity to get phone numbers yourself to reach out for help. The telephone is an important tool in OA for getting and giving support and reminding you that you are not alone.

Meetings usually last between one and two hours, and they often include a break. During the break, feel free to ask questions and pick up some OA literature to help you learn about the program. By asking for help, you are taking an important step toward recovery.

Because OA is self-supporting through member contributions, a basket will be passed.

You will notice that some members volunteer to help keep the meeting going, such as the group sec-

retary, the treasurer and greeters. Members find that doing service in OA helps keep them from eating compulsively. Service is important to their recovery and allows them to give back to the Fellowship that has saved their lives. Service opportunities exist in all levels of the Fellowship, from making coffee and setting up chairs at a meeting to being on the Board of Trustees.

The meeting usually closes with a reading like the OA Promise, "I Put My Hand in Yours". If you find that the meeting you attended does not feel right, try a different group at another time and location. **It is a good idea to attend at least six meetings before deciding on a meeting that is right for you.**

What you won't find at OA meetings are weigh-ins, packaged meals, dues, fees, "should," "musts," or judgment.

What you will find at meetings is:

- Acceptance of you - as you are now, as you were and as you will be.
- Understanding of the problems you now face – problems almost certainly shared by others in the group.
- Communication that comes as the natural result of our mutual understanding and acceptance.
- Recovery from your illness
- Power to enter a new way of life through the acceptance and understanding of yourself, the practice of the Twelve-Step recovery program, the belief in a power greater than yourself, and the support and companionship of the group.