

OA GUIDELINES



Guidelines for Professional Outreach Committees

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Purpose

The purpose of the Professional Outreach Committee is to coordinate the efforts of OA groups interested in carrying the message of recovery to hospitals, treatment centers, correctional facilities, religious organizations, schools, libraries, corporations, and civilian and military professional communities.

Remember to adhere to the principles in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions:

- Be mindful of the difference between attraction and promotion.
- OA has no opinion on the methodologies or policies of the institutions—these are outside issues.
- Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of the Fellowship. Emphasize the importance of respecting it both within your committee and in dealing with staff and OA members at hospitals and institutions.

Preparing and developing a Professional Outreach Committee

1. Create Professional Outreach Committees at the service body and region levels. In smaller service bodies, it may be necessary to combine with an existing Public Information or Twelfth-Step-Within Committee. Establish liaisons between your service body and region to build effective communication.
2. Enlist committed volunteers to serve on the committee.
3. Hold meetings to determine goals and develop strategies specifically for your community. Periodically reexamine the committee goals and prioritize them.
4. Have available a copy of the *Professional Outreach Manual*, which may be purchased from the World Service Office.
5. Compile a list of professional resources including individual physicians, treatment centers, local professional conferences, community health fairs, hospitals, schools, libraries, correctional facilities, religious organizations, corporations and military bases. Libraries, telephone directories, professional associations and convention bureaus can provide information to assist you in compiling this list.
6. Compile a list of volunteers who would be available for one or more of the following: (a) panel presentations; (b) health fairs; (c) professional trade shows; and (d) temporary sponsors or mail sponsors. OA is best represented by members who are in recovery and have a working knowledge of the Steps, Traditions, OA service structure and OA literature.

Making contact with professionals

1. When possible, make initial contact by phone, or write a letter and make a follow-up phone call. Always inquire whether the professional is familiar with OA.
2. Ask for an appointment to explain OA's program of recovery to the interested professional; share only from your personal experience, and remember that OA is nonprofessional.
3. Encourage the professional to attend an OA meeting, or offer to take him or her to an open OA meeting.
4. Provide OA literature. Usually a service body

purchases professional presentation folders from the WSO (available at bookstore.oa.org) and provides them for individual members to take to their appointments with their family doctor or other professionals. These folders include a cover letter to the professional, the *Courier* newsletter, and the pamphlets *Introducing OA to Health Care Professionals*, *Membership Survey Report* and *Compulsive Overeating: An Inside View*. Additional pamphlets can be added to customize the folder for specific audiences, and it's advisable to include a current meeting list.

Below is some literature, available through the World Service Office, that you can use to customize professional folders:

- *About OA*
- *Questions and Answers*
- *To the Teen*
- *To the Family of the Compulsive Eater*
- *Many Symptoms, One Solution*
- *Treatment and Beyond*
- *Introducing OA to the Clergy*
- OA literature catalog

Or you may want to donate an OA book:

- *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*
- *Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition*
- *Abstinence*

Or give a free subscription to or back issues of *Lifeline*, OA's international magazine of recovery.

Follow-through

1. Always follow any visit or lengthy phone

conversation with a letter of appreciation for the professional's time and attention.

2. Maintain current address records of all professionals, and note when they were last contacted.
3. Make as many of your resources as possible available to hospitals and institutions (e.g. audio recordings, DVDs, literature).
4. Continue to invite professionals to attend open OA meetings and/or special events sponsored by the Professional Outreach or Public Information Committees.
5. Stress OA's willingness to serve as a community resource to help the still-suffering compulsive eater.
6. If appropriate, offer to put up a display about OA.
7. Use intergroup or region display booths for professional conference trade shows, if available.
8. Keep going back!

Why OA attends professional conferences

A professional conference brings together professionals who are either employed in the same field or who have common interests. Most conferences have an exhibition area which consists of booths occupied by companies, treatment centers and Twelve-Step programs. By exhibiting at professional conferences, Overeaters Anonymous has the opportunity to educate a large number of professionals at one time and to speak to them directly when they visit the OA booth. Remember, we do not present ourselves as professionals, nor do we affiliate ourselves with the sponsors of the conference or other exhibits.

OA Board-approved

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