Ponca City "Welcome Home" Meeting Format

The meeting to begin at *6:36 pm*.

1. Welcome to the ***Thursday night 6:36pm*** meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. My name is _____. I am a compulsive eater and your leader for this meeting. Please silence your phones at this time.
2. Will those who wish, please join me in the Serenity Prayer. As we move from shame to grace we say

   ……God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.
3. Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous a growing, evolving Fellowship with in-person and virtual meetings around the world. In OA, there are opportunities for recovery and to give service at local and virtual group, intergroup/service board, region, and world service levels. We strive to provide literature and support in every language, worldwide, to meet still-suffering compulsive eaters wherever they are. If you have attended at least 3- 12 step meetings, we encourage you to chair our meeting! Simply add your name to the meeting schedule calendar. **Can I please have a volunteer to do service and chair our next meeting?**

   As we extend the heart and hand of the OA Fellowship to those who still suffer, let us be mindful of OA's Unity with Diversity Policy, which respects our differences, yet unites us in the solution to our common problem. Whatever problem you may have with food, you are welcome at this meeting, regardless of race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other attribute.
4. Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology, or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors and to carry the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps of OA to those who still suffer.

   We are passing the meeting record book around. If you so choose, please add your name and contact information. If you are joining us online, please put your information in the chat and we will add it to the book. Once this has gone around once, we will pass it around a second time so that members may write down contact information for outreach.

5. Who will to do service by reading **Our Invitation to You**, which includes the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous?

- Who is willing to do service by reading the **Tradition of Overeaters Anonymous** that correlates to the number of this month? (Thank you)
- Who is willing to do service by reading the **Concept of OA Service** that correlates to this month? (Thank you)
- Who is willing to do service by reading today's passage in **Voices of Recovery**? Would you like to share? (Thank you)
- Who is willing to do service by reading the writing prompt? Would you like to share?

We encourage you to ponder this question throughout the week and write about it. If you'd like, share your response with a fellow OA member.

THANK YOU to our readers for being willing to do service!

6. The OA Tools of Recovery help us work the Steps and refrain from compulsive overeating. The nine Tools are: a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, an action plan, anonymity, and service. For more information, read *The Tools of Recovery* pamphlet. Or Join us the 4th meeting of the month for our tools meeting. Would **ONE** person like to **briefly share** on how they used **one** of the tools this week?

7. Only OA-approved literature is displayed at this meeting. Many OA members find that reading our literature on a daily basis further reinforces how to live the Twelve Steps. If you are interested in purchasing literature, please ask after the closing of the meeting.

8. Does anyone have any announcements, coins or celebrations?

a Reminder: **Green Country Intergroup meeting is the second Saturday at 9:45**. All are welcome to attend. You can find this meeting link at TulsaOA.org

b (*LOOK IN THE CALENDAR! ANY UPCOMING RETREATS SHOULD BE LISTED*) Are there any upcoming events?

9. According to our Seventh Tradition, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. Expenses are donations to the church and contributions to our intergroup. The intergroup makes donations to Region 3 and the World Service Office to help carry the message to other compulsive overeaters. Make donations through TULSAOA.org- click on the 7th tradition button on the left. Please make sure to note that it is for the 6:30 Ponca City, Welcome Home meeting. The suggested contribution is $5.00 or more. We encourage OA members to give as much as they are able, to help our group be self-supporting. Give as if your life depends on it!

10. Sponsorship is one of our keys to success. Sponsors are OA members committed to abstinence and to living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their experience, and they strengthen their recovery through this service to others. To find a sponsor, look for someone who has what you want and ask how they are achieving it.

Will all abstinent sponsors please identify themselves by raising their hand?

11. If you are a compulsive eater, like myself, please raise your hand!

12. As you share your experience and strength in OA, please also share your hope. Please confine your sharing to your experience with the disease of compulsive eating, the solution offered by OA, and your own recovery from the disease, rather than just the events of the day or week. If you are having difficulties, share how you use the program to deal with them. If you need to talk more about your difficulties and seek solutions, we suggest you speak to your sponsor and other members after the meeting.

13. Feedback, cross talk, and advice-giving are discouraged here. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group, and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time. If you have any questions, please let the CHAIR know you have a question for "Ask it Basket" at the end of the meeting or ask a fellow after the meeting.

14. We ask everyone to respect our group conscience. At this meeting we take turns reading a paragraph or two. During your turn, you may choose to "pass", or read and then pass, or read and then share on what has been read. Saying "pass" signals the next person to begin. This meeting has decided that the chair for each meeting has the discretion to suggest to anyone sharing that they are off-topic or speaking too long. This meeting asks you to accept this suggestion in order to keep the meeting on track.

15. Newcomers

"We would love to welcome anyone here for the second, or third time, if you are returning to OA or are visiting from another area, if you would like, please tell us your first name so we can also welcome you." *[Welcome each person by name.]*

We encourage you to:

- get a sponsor to help guide your recovery;
- develop a plan of eating and, if you wish, write it down and report daily to your sponsor; and
- read OA-approved literature to develop a working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions."

*****Is there anyone here for their first OA meeting?**

IF "no", go to # 16

IF "YES", READ THIS>>>>

- **OA does not pretend to be a medical program or a storehouse of nutritional knowledge. Members who want information of this nature must seek it from other sources. OA does not endorse any particular food plan. The pamphlets**

Dignity of Choice and A Plan of Eating: A Tool for Living—One Day at a Time provide guidance.

- **Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and to carry the message of recovery. We need to support every OA member, instilling hope, trust, freedom and joy, rather than feelings of guilt, fear and hardship. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively, which is Tradition Three. OA does not weigh members, sign them up, monitor their eating habits or keep tabs on them in any way. The important thing is to keep coming back and work the program with others. (See "How Does an Individual Join OA?" on page 7 of Questions and Answers and "How Do You Become a Group Member?" on page 6 of the OA Handbook for Members, Groups and Service Bodies.)**

*(****PROCEDE to the NEWCOMER MEETING format found at the end of this document.)*

16. This meeting is

a **1st week-** This is a STEP meeting. We are reading the step that corresponds to the month from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition.

b **2nd week-** This is a TRADITION meeting. We are reading the tradition that corresponds to the month. From the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition

c **3rd week-** This is a NEWCOMER meeting: We will take turns briefly sharing our experience, strength and hope in OA. IF THERE ARE NO NEWCOMERS this will be a BIG BOOK meeting.

d **4th week-** This is a TOOL meeting. We are reading out of the pamphlet Tools of Recovery, or a daily reader. Take turns reading and sharing.

e **5th week-** This is a CHAIR CHOICE The chair will decide what the topic will be. (There are some options at the end of this document)

17. CLOSING: "Thank you for asking me to be your leader. By following the Twelve Steps, attending meetings regularly, and using the OA Tools, we are changing our lives. You **will** find hope and encouragement in Overeaters Anonymous. To the newcomer, we suggest attending at least six different meetings to learn the many ways OA can help you.

"There are many different types of meetings, all of which are available to support your recovery from compulsive eating. We welcome you to this meeting whenever you would care to attend. There are other face-to-face meetings, virtual and phone meetings that you may find helpful. Information about these meetings can be found on oa.org.

“The opinions expressed here today are those of individual OA members and do not represent OA as a whole. Please remember our commitment to honor each other’s anonymity. **Whom you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.** Let us all reach out by phone or email to newcomers, returning members, and each other. Together we get better.

We need someone to the be the leader for the next meeting. Who would like to provide service?

“Wonderful! After a moment of silence, will those of you who wish please join us in _____.” *[Select one of the following suggested closings listed on oa.org: Serenity Prayer, Seventh Step Prayer, Third Step Prayer, or the OA Promise (‘I put my hand in yours...’).]*

OA Responsibility Pledge
Always to extend the hand and heart of OA
to all who share my compulsion; for this I
am responsible.

OA Board-approved. Overeaters Anonymous®, Inc.
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NEWCOMER MEETING

The purpose of newcomer's meetings is to welcome newcomers and give them the opportunity to listen to the experience, strength and hope of recovering members. Newcomers are also encouraged to participate in discussions and to ask questions.

We will begin by having the members sharing about the disease of compulsive eating and our program of recovery.
This will be followed by discussion and a time for questions and answers. While OA members are invited to share their recovery with newcomers, the meeting is for newcomers and should not be dominated by the leader or by other OA members. The leader is responsible for seeing that it does not turn into a discussion between experienced OA members. Newcomer participation is encouraged.

FORMAT #1

What is OA?

We have found we have the disease of compulsive eating (physical, emotional, spiritual) We will be passing around this information. Please read the next bullet point, you may choose to pass or share. Please remember feedback, cross talk, and advice-giving are discouraged here. cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group, and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time.

a. We suffer from the disease of compulsive overeating. We are not immoral, weak-willed, bad or disgusting—and we are not alone.
b. We have a progressive disease characterized by an obsession of the mind and compulsive behavior. Our common problem is threefold: physical, emotional and spiritual.
c. The concept of compulsive eating as a disease is spelled out in all our literature. Especially pertinent are the OA book Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition (particularly "Our Invitation To You," pages 1-6, and the Appendixes, pages 229-251) and the pamphlets 2 Questions and Answers and A Program of Recovery. The book Alcoholics Anonymous, on which our program is based, gives many parallel insights into addiction as a disease. Let newcomers know that "Our Invitation to You" is often read as part of the meeting format.

d. We have found that the disease of compulsive eating can be arrested, one day at a time, but cannot be cured. Point out that once the "diagnosis" is accepted we can follow the OA "prescription" for recovery: abstinence and the Twelve Steps

e. The symptoms of the disease of compulsive eating.

f. The differences between normal eaters and compulsive eaters. The discussion on pages 2-3 of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous can be very useful and powerful in this connection.

g. Our powerlessness over controlling compulsive eating with misdirected willpower.

h. The miracle of recovery through the Twelve Steps: the freedom from the food obsession, and the freedom to not want to eat foods that used to beckon to us.

i. The importance of being willing to follow the OA program rather than insisting on prior intellectual understanding of the problem.

(When all the traditions have been read, everyone has shared, or time runs out, RETURN TO #17 "CLOSING".)

FORMAT #2

How to abstain from compulsive eating one day at a time

Abstinence is refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. OA members have different plans of eating. Many follow a specific food plan; others are comfortable with eating moderate meals or simply not bingeing or purging. Some OA members weigh and measure their food. Our plans vary in the number of meals and foods to include or exclude. The OA pamphlets *Dignity of Choice* and *A Plan of Eating* provide suggestions on how to meet individual needs.

(The CHAIR is encouraged to share his or her own story of becoming abstinent.)

The process of abstaining from compulsive eating is a one day at a time, one hour at a time, even one minute at a time process. The pamphlets *A Commitment to Abstinence* and *Before You Take that First Compulsive Bite*, and the pocket card *Think First* contain suggestions on how to avoid compulsive eating.

We will be passing around this information. Please remember feedback, cross talk, and advice-giving are discouraged here. cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group, and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time. Please read the next bullet point when you may choose to pass or share adding your suggestions to the following methods of

abstaining from compulsive eating one day at a time:

- Focus on “just for today”: abstain for just this 24 hours, this hour or this minute, if necessary.
- Get a sponsor and stay in touch on a daily basis—even several times a day if necessary. Talking about food specifics can be helpful, and sharing feelings and personal problems is important.
- Some members find that postponing compulsive eating—until this afternoon, tonight or tomorrow—and continuing to postpone it helps them get and maintain abstinence.
- Attend as many meetings as possible.
- Call other OA members, newcomers or people with more experience. You help the person you call as much as you help yourself.
- Look for someone else to help. Sharing how OA has been a benefit to us is how members “keep” their recovery.
- Read OA and AA literature, keeping it around the house and carrying some in your purse or pocket.
- Pray—in whatever way is meaningful for you, even if you’re “acting as if.”
- Change routines, especially at times most conducive to compulsive eating. This helps to change old patterns.
- Make a list of things to do instead when you have thoughts about food or the urge to eat compulsively, and then do one of them.
- Get together with other OA members for non-eating activities or to enjoy an abstinent meal.
- Begin working the Twelve Steps.

(When all the traditions have been read, everyone has shared, or time runs out, RETURN TO #17 “CLOSING”.)

FORMAT #3

How It Works: The Twelve Steps program of recovery

The purpose of this meeting format is to introduce newcomers to the 12 steps. We will read a little from the Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book) then the chair will read one bullet then members will take turns sharing. Please remember feedback, cross talk, and advice-giving are discouraged here. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group, and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time.

Would someone be willing to read or paraphrase "How It Works" from *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the Big Book), Chapter 5.

- OA is a spiritual program and does not follow any religious doctrine. Members practice the spiritual principles of the program with a personal Higher Power of their own understanding. How has this affected your program?
    - The Twelve Steps are the basis of our program of recovery. We try to work on them—and let them work on us—for the rest of our lives, one day at a time. There are no "musts" in OA; these Steps are simply suggested, based on the experience of recovering OA members. They evolved in AA as a result of experience in recovery. Share how you have worked the Steps and how they have helped your recovery.
    - We encourage newcomers to study the Steps with their sponsor and OA friends and to apply them in their daily lives. We do not expect to be perfect at doing this, just to make progress. What does this mean to your program?
- The pamphlets *To the Newcomer and Questions and Answers* provide an introduction to our Twelve-Step program of recovery. Since the source of the Twelve Steps is Alcoholics Anonymous, we encourage newcomers to read the Big Book for themselves in addition to OA literature. What other OA approved literature would you recommend and why?

(When all the traditions have been read, everyone has shared, or time runs out, RETURN TO #17 "CLOSING".)

FORMAT #4

The Twelve Traditions

While OA functions with very little obvious organization, adherence to the Traditions assures the survival of the Fellowship. Applying the Traditions to our relationships in and out of OA strengthens our spirituality and helps maintain abstinence. *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*, along with *AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and *AA Comes of Age* are excellent sources of information on the origin and importance of the Traditions. OA's pamphlet *The Twelve Traditions* provides a good introduction for the newcomer.

We will take turns reading one tradition at a time. The reader may choose to share or pass. Please remember feedback, cross talk, and advice-giving are discouraged here. Cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who

have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group, and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time.

Please share your own experience in using the Traditions to help newcomers understand the importance of anonymity; principles before personalities; group conscience; self-support; OA's non-affiliation with other organizations; and our sole membership requirement, a desire to stop eating compulsively.

You might share how living the Traditions helps you stay abstinent.

It is equally important to point out what OA does not do. For example, OA does not solicit members or attempt to convince anyone to join the Fellowship. Nor does it keep membership files, participate in research, follow up on its members, give medical or psychological advice, offer any kind of social services or counseling, accept reimbursement for its services or accept contributions from non-OA sources.

The Traditions are significant for our personal recovery and the Fellowship's survival and growth, this topic is of great importance. Would anyone be willing to do service and read Tradition #1

(**When all the traditions have been read, everyone has shared, or time runs out, RETURN TO #17 "CLOSING".)**

FORMAT #5

The Tools of Recovery

The nine tools of recovery—a plan of eating, sponsorship, meetings, telephone, writing, literature, action plan, anonymity, service—are described in our pamphlet, *The Tools of Recovery*. This is to be used as a basis for the explanation of each tool and how the tools have contributed to working the Steps and maintaining abstinence. Please remember feedback, cross talk, and advice-giving are discouraged here. cross talk during an OA meeting is giving advice to others who have already shared, speaking directly to another person rather than to the group, and questioning or interrupting the person speaking or sharing at the time. When sharing your experience, strength and hope, include how the tools have supported your recovery.

Today we are paying special attention to sponsorship: what it is, how to get a sponsor, when and how to change sponsors. In addition to the tools pamphlet, newcomers and sponsors can find helpful information in the pamphlets *A Guide for Sponsors* and *Sponsoring Through the Twelve Steps*.

Would someone be willing to read the first tool?

(When all the traditions have been read, everyone has shared, or time runs out, RETURN TO #17 "CLOSING".)

More OA meeting format ideas

A complete session may be devoted to each of the topics below, or they may be incorporated into other sessions.

- **Literature**

  Newcomers are interested in knowing about every possible source of help available in OA. One of the most important things we can do for newcomers may be to introduce them to the publications available from the World Service Office. Note that *Alcoholics Anonymous* is often referred to as the Big Book and *Overeaters Anonymous* is called the Purple Book. Alcoholics Anonymous and publications about our illness and the OA program are available from the World Service Office. Recovery CDs are also available from WSO, and information and inspiration are posted on the OA Web site. We suggest that you have a good supply of approved literature available. Include *Lifeline*, our monthly magazine of recovery, often considered a "meeting on the go." Describe these publications and how you have used these sources to support your recovery. Encourage newcomers to read them.

- **Spiritual awakening**

  Discuss what this experience has meant for others, beginning with Bill W., cofounder of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. See Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed., pages 8-14, 569-570 and the chapters "We Agnostics," "Working with Others" and "A Vision for You." Also pertinent is "Step Twelve" in *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*. Encourage newcomers to discover what "spiritual experience" means for them, and emphasize that this is a deeply personal matter. Suggest that they read *Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition* and *Lifeline* to learn about the experiences of other OA members. The experiences of AA members are recorded in AA's book Came to Believe.

- **Service**

  Service is the basis of our program of recovery and the essence of spiritual growth. Explain briefly the service structure (intergroup, region,

WSO), particularly explaining the local intergroup and what it does. Newcomers may find useful information in the pamphlet *OA Handbook for Members, Groups and Service Bodies*. Leaders and speakers may find the *Service, Traditions and Concepts Workshop Manua*l a supplemental resource. Share how service has contributed to your recovery.

- **History**
  - The original AA experience as described in *Alcoholics Anonymous and AA Comes of Age*.
  - How OA evolved from AA. Leaders may familiarize themselves with OA history by reading the book Beyond Our Wildest Dreams and "Rozanne's Story" in *Overeaters Anonymous, Second Edition*.

- **The family and significant others**

The leader and other OA members share on how they needed to help their non-OA relatives understand compulsive eating and the recovery process and how they overcame difficulties. The pamphlet *To the Family of the Compulsive Eater* was written to assist 6 newcomers in explaining the disease, the process of recovery and how the family can help.

• **Slogan**s

- Abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception
- Easy does it
- Let go and let God
- Live and let live
- Keep it simple
- One day at a time
- Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels