

Suggestions to Service Bodies and Individuals for Attracting and Retaining Men in OA

THE PROBLEM: How can Service Boards, Regions, IGs, and meetings increase the number of men in OA and support men in OA with their recovery? Helping men connect with other men recovering from compulsive eating is *one* key to fostering a sense of belonging. The lack of current representation of men in OA may result in a struggle for some new men coming into OA to feel like they belong.

While men make up roughly half of the human population, their numbers in Overeaters Anonymous are much below fifty percent.

Let's remember Overeaters' Anonymous (OA)'s *Unity with Diversity Policy*, which values and respects our differences while uniting us in solving our common problem. OA is a welcoming space for everyone, regardless of race, creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other attribute.

Our goal with this document is to provide suggestions that can help groups attract and retain men in OA. These suggestions are particularly useful for service bodies with few male members.

Ways to Attract Male Compulsive Eaters to the Rooms of Overeaters Anonymous

1. OA members who attend multiple twelve-step fellowships and other groups may carry the message by sharing about their recovery from compulsive eating.

2. Outreach to compulsive eaters of any kind will also help reach men. A full Public Information / Professional Outreach Resource is available at

this webpage <https://oa.org/service-bodies/public-information-and-professional-outreach/>

Ideas for Service Bodies to Create Resources for Male Members of Overeaters Anonymous

1. Meetings specifically focused on men can be found at OA.org. Please check all meeting options: face-to-face, online, telephone, and non-realtime. Refer newcomers and male members to male-focused OA meetings. See a shortcut to OA's Special Focus for Men meetings at this webpage: <https://www.oamen.org/meetings/>
2. Start a new in-person or virtual OA male-focused meeting.
3. Consider printing business card handouts to give to new and existing male members. An example is shown to the right.
4. Develop a list of men in your local area who are available to sponsor other men.
5. At the meeting level, create a "Male to Male Outreach Committee." Designate a male OA member to contact any male newcomers or men who are noticed to be missing from meetings they attend.



Resources and Support to Service Bodies to Assist in Connecting Male Compulsive Eaters with Others Worldwide

1. There is a Men's Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous (MIGOA) <https://oamen.org> which is part of the Virtual Region. The website provides links to a sponsorship workshop and over 125 podcasts of male speakers at OA men's focus meetings.

2. The OA Men's Helpline, 1 + (347) 201-0914, is available 24/7. If a call comes in during the night, any messages left will be responded to the next morning.

Suggestions for Individual Members of OA to Welcome Men

1. Greet him warmly: treat him just like any other newcomer and tell him that other men are in the program. Don't overdo it by greeting him with excessive enthusiasm.
2. Give him a copy of the OA pamphlet "To the Man Who Wants to Stop Compulsive Overeating. Welcome," available at:
<https://bookstore.oa.org/pamphlets.asp>
3. Refer men to the website <https://www.oamen.org/>, where they can connect with other men. You may also refer them to the Facebook page of the Men's Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous
<https://www.facebook.com/p/Mens-Intergroup-of-OvereatersAnonymous-61550337494282/>
4. Encourage members to establish appropriate boundaries between men and women in our fellowship so they can share their experience, strength, and hope with each other.
5. Try a temporary sponsoring commitment with a male newcomer.
6. Consider starting a men's focus meeting within your OA local service structure.
7. Volunteer to support your local OA service body to inform men in your area about OA.

OA is a fellowship of men and women who share a spiritual solution through the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions to arrest the disease of compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. Our goal is to reach as many compulsive eaters as possible, regardless of race,

creed, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other trait.

You will find hope and encouragement in Overeaters Anonymous.

Adopted by MIGOA on August 1, 2024