

These are guidelines and suggestions to aid in sponsorship.

OA/HOW SPONSORING

Before you take on this commitment, honestly evaluate your own program.

- A. Have you had seventy (70) days of back to back abstinence?
- B. Have you admitted your powerlessness? (taken Step 1)
- C. Have you become willing to believe in a power greater than yourself who can restore you to sanity? (taken Step 2)
- D. Have you become willing to give your will up to the care of this Higher Power? (taken Step 3) (as you understand)
- E. Have you been making use of all the eight tools of this program?
 - Abstinence
 - Sponsorship
 - Anonymity
 - Phone calls
 - Meetings
 - Service
 - Literature
 - Writing and Burning
- F. Have you completed the seventy (70) pre-commitment questions?

If you have, you are ready to sponsor. Sponsoring means you are passing on the high standards and the knowledge that was given to you. Sponsoring is a way to give away your program and thereby, keep it.

SPONSORING GUIDELINES

1. Sponsoring should be a positive experience. If you find yourself rushed or taking on more than you can realistically handle, you may help find a new sponsor for your newcomer (N.C.) Your program comes first. Therefore, limit the number of N.C. to what you can handle.
2. It is suggested that you choose a time that is good for both of you.
3. Explain to the N.C. that this time slot is reserved for her/him. She/he should call promptly at that time. This is the beginning of a disciplined program. On the other hand, you as the sponsor should also be there for them. If there is a problem one day, call your N.C. The time should be prearranged between you and the N.C.
4. Discuss the food plan the N.C. has chosen. Listen carefully to the reasons she/he is selecting this food plan. If you hear any manipulations, be open about it to her/him. For example, if she/he selects a food plan with bread, ask if bread is a binge food for her/him. If she/he says she/he will only use it when she/he goes out to eat, a red light should go on for you. Listen carefully to what the N.C. is not saying as well as what she/he is saying. Ask what her/him binge foods are. If you are uncomfortable sponsoring someone on a certain food plan give

up that N.C.

5. Once a food plan is chosen, there are no deviations from that plan. A chosen food plan stands on its own. On the other hand, if her/his food plan allows certain foods that are not allowed on your food plan, that is okay. (As long as those foods do not set you up. You may ask for a written copy of her/his food plan. Read over the Guidelines for Abstinence.)
6. When a N.C. is in a situation that she/he honestly does not know what is going to be served in a certain situation, she/he may commit generically to the proper ounces of each food group. For example, she/he may tell you:
 - 4 oz. protein
 - 2 c. salad
 - 2 T. dressing
 - 1 c. vegetableor whatever is proper for her/his food plan. If possible, make prior arrangements with sponsor if you will be having a deviation.
7. Remember HOW is a structured and disciplined program. We should all do our part to keep it that way. You do not have the right to change anything on the program. The way it was passed on to you is the way you should pass it on to them.
8. When questions arise, be clear with your answers. If you are not sure how to answer anything, call another HOW sponsor. Don't answer unless you are sure. You might also find the answer in the literature.
9. Be sure the N.C. is writing down her/his food plan and committing it to you daily. Make certain she/he is reporting portion sizes. If she/he eats the exact same food day in and day out, discuss it with her/him. This can present a potential problem.
10. Optional questions to determine status of N.C.'s program:
 - A. Did you follow your food plan today?
 - B. Did you weigh and measure?
 - C. Did you drink your water?
 - D. Did you make your phone calls?
 - E. Did you go to at least one meeting this week?
 - F. If you have to be away, remind the N.C. to make arrangements to call another HOW sponsor.
 - G. **Listen to the N.C.s writings. Don't make judgments.**

11. If the N.C. has to be away, work out a mutually satisfactory arrangement. Possible options include:
 - A. If she/he can continue to call you -- GREAT! Remind them how difficult vacations can be and how important it is to continue the contact.
 - B. If she/he can't call -- have her/him write down her/his food and assignments daily.
 - C. If she/he cannot honestly speak to any OA person, write down food anyway.
 - D. Procedures for eating out should be decided between sponsor and sponsoree.

12. If the N.C. slips:
 - A. They do not have to begin the questions again, unless you feel they should. In the first ten days, start over with the questions.
 - B. Listen for an HONEST commitment.
 - C. Do not be judgmental. Remember we are all one bite away.
 - D. Suggest they write or talk about what happened. Emphasize the solution. Remember we each have the gift of the next day or the next moment to be abstinent. First write the slip as it happened. Then write the slip as she/he wished they had acted.
 - E. When circumstances warrant, you may continue to sponsor a N.C. after the second slip, but, warn them that this may be their last chance with you as her/his sponsor. If she/he continues to manipulate and be sloppy, explain what is expected in the HOW program. If you do not hear this commitment, you can drop them. It is up to you. But remember, sponsors are scarce. We need you for a more committed N.C. Also, remember, you cannot force a commitment. They may not be ready at this time.

13. If you slip:
 - A. Tell your sponsor.
 - B. Tell your N.C.
 - C. If it is your first slip, let the N.C. decide if they want to continue to work with you -- if you want to.
 - D. If this is the second or more slip -- you may want to drop all N.C.s. You cannot give what you do not have. Plus you need to concentrate on your own recovery.
 - E. Be sure you are fully recommitted to abstinence before you resume sponsoring (a sufficient number of days, weeks, months of abstinence -- whatever is decided between you and your sponsor).
 - F. This is an individual matter between you and your sponsor whether or not you get up during sponsors' "chorus line" at meetings.

14. When the N.C. begins questions, emphasize that they do their best. Some

questions do not exactly follow every edition of every book. Each individual's writings are her/his own.

15. N.C.s need time to develop their own form of spirituality. We do not have the right to force our own belief on any other person. But it is fine to share spiritual aspects you have derived from this program.
16. Sponsoring should be a positive experience. If, for any reason, you find yourself uncomfortable, either because of someone's life style or personality, choice of Higher Power or any type of situation, do not judge N.C., but, in a positive manner, suggest they find a new sponsor.
17. When a N.C. appears overwhelmed, active listening is encouraged. If the sponsor feels the N.C. needs additional support systems, the sponsor should suggest professional help. We are not therapists. We do not take the place of professional help.

For example, if a N.C. states that she/he is very upset because she/he has learned that her/his child was using drugs, tell her/him she/he does not have to eat over it and/or that eating won't help. Then suggest that she/he contact a therapist or an organization to seek the required help.

18. Anonymity is one of the tools of this program. It is a SACRED TRUST. You are serving the group by not breaking a trust.
 - A. If you are given permission by the N.C. to give out her/his name and address (for example, if she/he will be in the hospital), that is okay.
 - B. Lives can be devastated, programs can be lost, if even a small insignificant or even humorous item is passed around.
 - C. Each sponsor/sponsee relationship is unique and cannot be compared to the program or relationship of others.

DEFINITIONS FOR THE SUNDAY NIGHT OA/HOW GROUP

Sobriety
Lost
Its
Priority

SLIP = One of any type of food beyond food plan or measured portion.

BINGE = More than one of any type of food beyond food plan or measured portion.

RELAPSE = Three days or more of uncontrolled eating.

These definitions apply to the food part of the program. But this is a multifaceted program and the sponsor should be attuned to all areas. For example, readings, writings, meetings, phone calls, weighing and measuring. If a person is not demonstrating a full commitment, you can choose to ask the N.C. to find a new sponsor.

Remember that SERVICE is the backbone of this program. Help the group and the group will help you.

H.O.W. Guidelines for Abstinence

1. Choose your food plan carefully. It should be a sensible one given to you by some knowledgeable authority -- a doctor, nutritionist or dietician. (We CANNOT write our own food plans!!) Discuss it with your sponsor. Be sure you are being HONEST and not picking one that allows any of your binge foods. Most importantly of all, do not deviate. Do not manipulate your food plan in any way.
2. Be sure to weigh and measure all your portions so that there is no guesswork. Do not measure by eye. Use a measuring cup, spoons and a scale.
3. If some food on your plan becomes a problem, avoid it.
4. When in doubt, leave it out.
5. While you're losing weight, weigh yourself only once a month, unless your doctor suggests otherwise. People maintaining their weight will follow the suggestions of the "source" of their food plan.
6. Discuss with your doctor our recommendations to take a multi-vitamin and 64 ounces of water per day.
7. We do not use alcohol or foods containing sugar except that if your salad dressing has sugar, be sure it is listed 5th or beyond.

According to the O. A. pamphlet, *A Commitment to Abstinence*, "An eating plan is a guide to the food we eat each day. For some O. A.s an effective plan includes specific foods and food portions ... Rigorous honesty makes it clear that we don't eat foods or amounts that are not included in our plan."