

# What to Remember When You See Your Doctor or Other Health Care Professional Workshop

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## Background

This workshop is a product of the World Service Business Conference Professional Outreach committee. The committee's aim was to educate Overeaters Anonymous members on how to carry the message to health care providers and provide a wallet card for members.

## Why Is It Important?

OA members who attend professional exhibits and conferences on topics such as obesity, addiction, cardiology, diabetes, and family medicine frequently report back that attendees say they have never heard of OA.

Anytime we see our doctor or other health care provider, we ARE the message. They can tell from our charts, and if they know us personally, they can see how well we are doing. This creates a unique opportunity to introduce Overeaters Anonymous to them.

As OA members share about our recovery in OA, these professionals have a chance to ask questions and to witness the improvement in our lives. They are then more likely to mention OA to other people they care for.

## Workshop

**Ask members to share their experience of talking with a health professional.**

**Present the tip sheet *What to Remember When You See Your Doctor or Other Health Care Professional*.**

**Ask those present at the workshop to break into small groups, appoint a leader/notetaker, and complete the following information:**

- Write a list of all the types of health care professionals you see regarding your health.
- Do we mention OA to health care providers we encounter?
- What keeps us from sharing?
- Why is it important to share?
- What experiences have we had when sharing?
- What suggestions does the group have for making it easier to talk with health professionals?

**After a period of time, call the groups back together and have a member report back from each small group.**

**Hand out two little wallet cards to every participant: one for themselves and one to hand to another OA member.**

*This workshop can be used for an in-person meeting or adapted for a podcast.*

# What to Remember When You See Your Doctor or Other Health Care Professional Tip Sheet

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## Tips

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Here are some quick and easy ways to open that valuable discussion:

- Mention OA at our health care appointments. We carry the message whenever we share our recovery.
- Keep it short and simple. We might ask if they have patients who don't seem able to follow medical instructions on diet and weight loss.
- Invite our interested health care professional to a meeting. Both health care students and practicing professionals who want to learn more about OA are welcome to come to an open meeting or visit [OA.org/ally](http://OA.org/ally).
- If we're willing to take calls, let health care professionals know they can give our phone number to patients interested in knowing more about OA.
- Start by talking to our primary care provider; then tell other health professionals we see for our care, such as a cardiologist, gastroenterologist, dentist, diabetes specialist, nutritionist, and psychotherapist. They often have compulsive eaters among their patients.

## Resources

For more ideas about how to carry the message of the OA recovery program, see these pieces of OA literature:

- *When Should I Refer Someone to Overeaters Anonymous?* is an easy way to introduce the program.
- The *Courier*, OA's newsletter for health professionals, is another piece of literature we can offer.
- Get both items plus more by ordering the *Professional Presentation Folder*.
- Take a pack of *OA Bulletin Board Attraction Sticky Notes* to leave with the office. Write in the nearest meeting or local contact information so people can find out more about the program. Be sure to ask permission before putting OA materials in an office or a health care facility.

OA Board-approved

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