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Learn more about OA.
Visit the OA Web site.
www.oa.org



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Why Should You Refer a Patient to OA?

— Jill Gernert, MSW, Community Mental Health

As a social worker and counselor, one of my goals for patient care is to promote change. Change is difficult, and educating clients to change is just the tip of the iceberg. I have found that patients also need a support system. Many support systems are within the health-care system and the community.

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) is a community-based program that has changed the lives of its members, one person at a time. The support system found in OA includes group support with face-to-face, phone and online meetings. Another



strength of the program is the one-on-one support provided by a sponsor, an OA member who has benefited from the program and is willing to share his or her experience. Many sponsors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a

week. These group meetings and one-on-one support transform lives.

I have participated in OA with many members, witnessed weight losses of over 100 pounds and seen the support system change lives and carry members to a safe place and a life beyond the trauma and obesity of compulsive eating. Peace, harmony and freedom are rewards of the program.

I encourage professionals to refer to OA those patients who suffer from obesity, anorexia or bulimia. Information about OA and for professionals is available at www.oa.org.

If Only We Were a Rational Species

— Pat O'C, MPH

I am a scientist by nature. I have my bachelor's degree in biology and my master's degree in public health. I spent over 20 years providing health-promotion services at a county public-health department and in an HMO. I knew all the right answers when it came to a healthy diet and lifestyle. I designed and directed smoking-cessation programs, weight-loss pro-

grams, diabetes-education programs and cardiovascular-disease programs.

Yet I was helpless to cure myself. I was on an endless roller coaster of weight gain and loss. I knew it wasn't right to eat an entire half-gallon of ice cream, but I did it. I also suspected it wasn't "normal." As a health educator, I was aware of the Twelve-Step program as it applied to alcoholics, and



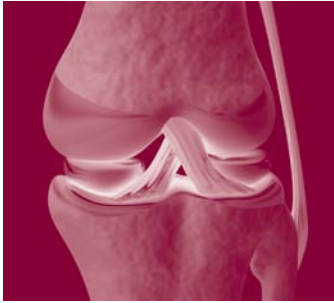
I also knew that Overeaters Anonymous (OA) existed. Yet I resisted this option because I wanted to view myself as a rational person in control of my eating and life.

My last round of binges and weight gain with

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Better Knees and Hips

— Roy Tzemah, PT, MPHA



As a practicing physiotherapist, I have met many patients who are obese and who suffer from joint disorders. The pain and discomfort they have are often disabling, making their ability to walk, climb stairs or maintain an active life almost impossible. Most of these patients tend to suffer many years before their doctors offer them a solution of total arthroplasty (joint-replacement) surgery.

Disorders related to leg and lower-back joints are usually a result of too much weight carried by patients' bodies over a long period of time; the cartilage of the joints gradually wastes away.

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) offers a way of dealing with eating disorders and promotes maintaining healthy body weight. The program encourages its members to pursue better and healthier lives. As a result of working the program, members might alleviate their health-related problems, making surgery unnecessary.

Even though surgery seems like an easy way out, it is not. Surgery exposes the patient to many risks and a necessary long rehabilitation. In some cases, the patient might require a revision of the surgery after a few years, making the initial solution only temporary at best.

From a professional point of view, I suggest giving OA and the Twelve-Step program a chance. If your patients already suffer from knee and/or hip problems and are considering surgery, OA might give them an opportunity to recover without the touch of a surgical blade.

Complementing the Professional Community With Overeaters Anonymous

Many professional organizations and institutions work with OA members to inform other professionals and the public about compulsive eating and the resources available in OA to address this problem.

OA is not in competition with the professional community. On the contrary, many members consider OA to be a complement to the professional services they receive.

In part, OA works because it offers an ongoing support system for members and encourages them to help one another, thereby weaken-

ing their isolation and loneliness. OA members provide this support through sharing their experience, strength and hope with one another. OA claims no medical, nutritional or psychological expertise. It suggests that interested members contact qualified professionals for help in these areas.

Enhance the Waiting-Room Experience!

Overeaters Anonymous publishes *Lifeline*, a full-color magazine produced monthly (except April and October).

In *Lifeline*, OA members share their experience, strength and hope found in OA. Subscribers consider *Lifeline* "a meeting on the go." Your patients or clients may benefit from reading *Lifeline* while in your waiting room. To subscribe for \$23, go to www.oa.org/lifeline-magazine/subscribe-to-print-lifeline/



Modern-Day Miracle

— C. Fitzsimmons, Physical Therapist (retired)

As a physical therapist, I have watched in amazement and admiration as one of my patients, a compulsive overeater whom I shall call Patty, lost 132 pounds with the help of Overeaters Anonymous (OA). She used the Twelve Steps of this program to confront the serious problem of using food to cope with life.

Penny used to ambulate with a four-wheeled walker because of her knee pain. She later transferred to two canes and now has weaned herself to one. She exercises daily to strengthen her lower extremities.

Her physical transformation is only part of her story. She is much more positive and hopeful, and she has said "yes" to life again after years of hiding in pain and despair.



One of the secrets to stopping compulsive eating and staying stopped is working with others. Patty takes this seriously by reaching out to newcomers and sponsoring other compulsive overeaters, whom she guides in working this effective program that has no dues or fees.

I feel I have witnessed a modern-day miracle in Patty's story. She has maintained her weight loss for four years and says she lives life one day at a time. I would highly recommend this OA program of recovery to any patients struggling with food issues.



To hear a recap of an Overeaters Anonymous meeting, members describe remarkable recoveries in OA, and readings from OA pamphlets, listen to podcasts in English, Spanish or French at www.oa.org/oapodcasts/. Also, tune in to hour-long Internet radio programs on Voice America at www.voiceamerica.com/show/2139/sound-bites-from-overeaters-anonymous to hear members describe OA and explain how they work the OA program.

If Only We Were a Rational Species

Continued from page 1

accompanying shame and guilt finally drove me in desperation to OA. There I was ready to admit I was powerless over my compulsive overeating.

I discovered a simple way existed to obtain physical, spiritual and emotional recovery through OA's Twelve Steps. A power greater than I could remove my compulsion. I will spend the rest of my life defining this Higher Power because I am a scientific skeptic, but a 30-pound weight loss and a world of peace and joy have convinced me of its existence.

Compulsive overeaters may have arrived at your offices looking for an escape from their lonely, sad and terrible paths. They may be experiencing serious health consequences because of their weight or their eating and purging. They are hoping you have a magic pill to take away the consequences of their overeating. But until they

Pamphlets for Professionals

The World Service Office (WSO) of Overeaters Anonymous has pamphlets for health-care professionals. To order, call the WSO (505-891-2664) or order online and find other pamphlets at bookstore.oa.org.

Introducing OA to Health-Care Professionals— Explains how OA complements professional care. Includes a questionnaire for clients and patients about eating behaviors. (#753/\$.15 each)

Is Food a Problem for You?—Includes 15 questions to determine if someone is a compulsive eater, a description of the OA program, member testimonials and the Twelve Steps. (#750/\$.20 each)

Fifteen Questions—Helps your client decide if he or she is a compulsive eater. (#755/\$.10 each)

US Shipping: \$5 for orders up to \$24.99; 20% for orders \$25 to \$59.99; 17% for orders \$60 to \$99.99; 12% for orders above \$100. Call the WSO at 505-891-2664 for expedited orders and shipping outside the US.

deal with the reasons that drive them to compulsive overeating, they will not heed your good advice and suggestions.

Compulsive overeaters are different. Early in my program, I took the OA self-assessment, a 15-question quiz, and had my husband take it as a way of showing him what I was confronting. As I suspected, he answered yes to one question. I

answered yes to 14 questions. My husband doesn't "use" food. He is about the same weight now as when I married him 30 years ago. Not me. I have gained and lost over 150 pounds in our marriage. All my scientific knowledge was no help to me.

Overeaters Anonymous is not for everyone. It is only for people who compulsively overeat and whose nutritional choices

interfere with their lives and health. Compulsive overeaters are unable to change their behavior even when they want to change. If you have patients who persist in a way of life that is harming them, please consider a referral to OA. These patients may hear your good counsel about OA even if they have ignored your other advice. Your suggestion could save their lives.

Transformation

— Eric S. Gernert, RN, MSN

Miracles can happen. I have met many people who suffer from obesity, anorexia and bulimia, and they all need support to help with the disease from which they suffer. Modification of behavior is necessary. Overeaters Anonymous (OA) is a recovery program that has helped many. The miracle is that a simple Twelve-Step program can help

these suffering people find a new way of life.

One experience I would like to share is about a member of this simple program. She has had many stressful situations, but with the support of OA members, the Twelve Steps and OA meetings, she has faced life's challenges one day at a time. Her loss of over 80 pounds and her

transformed life have affected her and many others. She now lives a full life, whereas at one time her obesity was a prison, confining her to her home.

OA's support has transformed her life in more ways than just her weight. She is a happy and beneficial member of her community. She shares her experience,

strength and hope with others who suffer from the disease of obesity, helping them to transform their lives.

Overeaters Anonymous helps people on three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. I encourage you to encourage your clients to take the next step: to join this excellent Twelve-Step recovery program.

Overeaters Anonymous
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12 STEPS

Twelve Steps

- to freedom from yo-yo dieting
- to peer understanding
- to renewed self-esteem
- to freedom from compulsion
- to a healthier body
- to a new attitude toward life



www.oa.org



Together We Can