



# A GUIDE FOR SPONSORS

## Why, when and how to be an OA sponsor

**\*All information gleaned from the OA pamphlet of the same title.**

\*Copies of this pamphlet available at:

**<https://bookstore.oa.org/pamphlets/a-guide-for-sponsors-why-when-and-how-to-be-an-oa-sponsor-200.asp>**

# What is a sponsor?

Remember: To keep our program, we need to give it away.

1. A sponsor is an OA member who shares the message of Tradition 5 and their program of recovery on an ongoing and individual basis with another member, **sponsee/sponsee.**
2. Sponsors work and live the 12 steps and 12 traditions to the best of their ability.
3. Sponsors guide sponsees through the Steps based on their experience, strength, and hope. They listen and support with understanding.

**\*They are not therapists or doctors,  
Etc.**

# Why should I sponsor?

1. Being a sponsor is mutually beneficial to sponsor/sponsee
2. It reinforces our recovery: works on the 3 parts of our disease, relationship skills (HP and others), anti-isolation, reminds us of our beginnings (humility).
3. The program is not meant to be worked alone and we need others to help us. We get to witness transformations in others (beautiful!)

# When and how do I become a sponsor?

1. You can begin at any time (it's up to your level of experience.). You don't need to have finished the steps either, there's no perfect sponsor.
2. Discuss sponsoring with your sponsor first then begin when you both feel it's right.
3. Ask your group to or you can introduce yourself as a sponsor. Later, you will encourage your sponsees to do the same. Woo-hoo!
4. We should make contact with potential sponsors first; we are a program of action.
5. When someone seeks your sponsorship be understanding. Discuss expectations on both ends including how to part; lay down groundwork.
6. You could be a temporary sponsor or suggest someone else if you're too busy to sponsor regularly.

**Should I be abstinent before I sponsor?**

Sponsors are most effective  
when refraining from  
compulsive overeating.  
Clarity of mind comes with  
abstinence.



# How do I learn to sponsor?

1. Have a sponsor yourself, learn by example and by doing.
2. Be a good listener
3. Read literature (You can read and/or discuss this with your sponsees) and go to meetings (We share and listen here about sponsoring)
4. Sponsorship focused meetings and workshops (like this one!) to support, revitalize sponsorships, and encourage potential sponsors.

# What are the different styles of sponsorship?

1. Styles vary from person to person-we can approach it in our own way.Explain your style up front to sponsees and agree.It common for our styles to evolve as we do.
2. Support, honesty, and positivity enrich sponsorship.
3. The best solutions to problems are to encourage application of Steps and Traditions; not simply giving advice.
4. Two-way mutual communication and feedback are important (H.O.W.)
5. Structured (daily reading/writing/phone calls/food commitments/meetings quotas VS. Easy-going/flexible sponsorships (make a few suggestions)
6. Encourage and stress a sponsees commitment to service; it's vital to recovery.



# What are the different styles of sponsorship (continued)?

1. Sponsor Types: All three levels of recovery (spiritual, physical, emotional), Particular aspect of the program (ex:physical recovery), Food sponsor, step sponsor, etc.
2. "Our experience has shown us that effective sponsoring encompasses the interrelated nature of physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery.", pg. 7.
3. GOAL: Help sponsees discover a new way of living one day at a time and with God's (HP) help.
4. Sponsors don't have all the answers and are not therapists.
5. Feel free to refer sponsees to other OA members with similar experiences with permission.



## **What about two people sponsoring each other?**

1. Working with each other is preferable to doing it alone if no sponsors are available. (ex: isolated areas/few meetings/small meetings)
2. Use OA approved literature for guidance.

# How much contact should I have with my sponsee?

## The sponsor and sponsee decide this.

-The more contact you have, you'll be able to help the sponsee identify specific problems better. (It also helps us grow in recovery, see God's (HP's) will for us, and learn more about ourselves.

-Face-to-face contact is best when possible and consistent phone calls (you decide frequency) The sponsee should make the call.

-Don't let others impose, it can hinder recovery (yours and theirs). Encourage sponsees to call other members and use other tools and prayer. Use mail if distance is a challenge.

# How do I take a sponsee through the Steps?

1. There's no perfect answer. Here's what is encouraged: move from one step to another based on individual needs/willingness/ability to integrate each step into their life-Sponsees set the pace and focus is RECOVERY.
2. The Steps are the heart of the program and working them keeps us abstinent and in recovery one day at a time.
3. How to start...You can: step by step building on insight from previous steps, Inventory of eating history and unmanageability, or 30 questions of 1st 3 steps.
4. STEP 5: we are ears and sounding board, use prayer and meditation beforehand, pick a time and place for an unhurried and private discussion, be mindful or very short or very long inventories.
5. The steps work if they are thoroughly followed, sponsors aren't Magical.

## How many people should I sponsor?

1. Don't say "yes" unless you mean it because your sponsee relies on you.
2. Your involvement will change depending on needs.
3. Be realistic about how many people you can help.
3. Do not neglect your personal, family time, job demands, etc.

# When and how should I decline sponsorship?

Be honest with yourself and the person asking to be sponsored. You can't give away what you don't have.

- If you've reached your "limit" suggest a different sponsor, often one of your sponsees.

- If you're in relapse or shaky you can focus on your own recovery; discuss with HP and sponsor first.

- We do not recommend sponsoring someone you may be sexually attracted to or is a personal friend (sponsor may later become good friends.)

## **What if my sponsee wants to have more than one sponsor or change sponsors?**

- Don't take it personally; good sponsors encourage other relationships in the Fellowship.
- It is a positive sign that a sponsee wants a new sponsor as they progress
- Some people need sponsoring on various areas and may need an additional sponsor if their sponsor's time is limited.



# What should I do if my sponsee has a slip or a relapse?

- Slips and relapses are learning and growth experiences.
- Be supportive
- Don't judge, be encouraging
- Explore what led to the slip/relapse.
- Revisit Step One :-)

## **What should I do if I slip or relapse?**

Discuss it with your sponsor and be honest with your sponsee(s). You can allow the sponsee to find a new sponsor if they'd like (offer to help find one.)

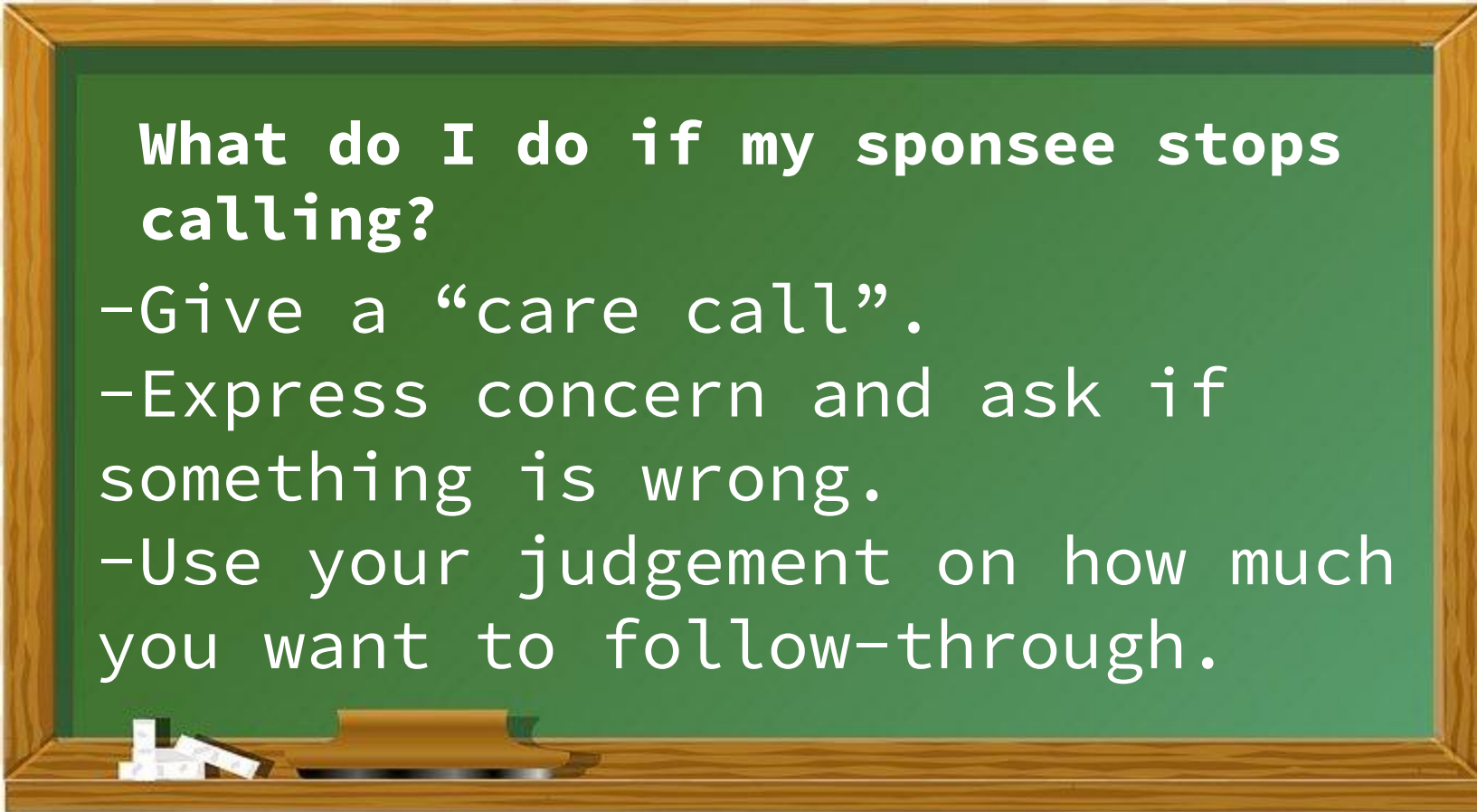
- You could stop sponsoring and focus on your own program if you need to.

- Do not simply “drop” sponsees; it can be devastating.

- Encourage your sponsee to have strong support system.

# What do I do if I feel that my sponsee is not making progress?

- Check your expectations. Everyone progresses at their own pace and sponsors are not responsible for a sponsee's recovery.
- Sponsor=an example and encouragement  
God/HP=gives strength to follow the path
- Suggest relapse and recovery groups/meetings
- See what has changed in their program
- Suggest a different sponsor or additional sponsors
- Discuss concerns with your sponsee, sponsor, and HP if they are dependent on you and don't still want to work the steps.
- \*You may have to let this sponsee go.



**What do I do if my sponsee stops calling?**

- Give a “care call”.
- Express concern and ask if something is wrong.
- Use your judgement on how much you want to follow-through.

## What if my sponsee wants to leave OA?

- It is not a reflection on us.
- People leave OA for various reasons (12 step approach, not ready, non-identity with compulsive eating, mismatched sponsor/sponsee)
- Do not be judgemental, let go with love and acceptance
- The doors of OA are always open.

## When and how should I end a relationship with a sponsee?

- If it interferes with your program/abstinence/recovery; discuss this with your sponsor first.
- Do it by phone or in person and with love, compassion, and honesty.
- Clearly give your reasons, ex: "Maybe I'm not the person who can help you."-but don't criticize anyone including yourself
- Encourage the sponsee to find a new sponsor as soon as possible if you decide to end the relationship.
- This will be easier if you establish that either of you can end the relationship at any time at the beginning.



# Characteristics of a good sponsor

1. He/She works the 12 steps to the best of their ability.
2. He/She shares the message of Tradition 5 with their sponsees and others.
3. He/She listens and supports with understanding and is willing, honest, and open.
4. Establishes expectations at the beginning of the relationship; later, they follow-through on these.
5. He/She uses OA literature and tools to help guide.
6. He/She balances their time to commitments and responsibilities.
7. He/She understands that their sponsees have to work their own program and the sponsee is not responsible for that.
8. He/She uses the interrelated nature of physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery to help sponsor.



**KAHOOT! Let's Play!!!**

- Go to the web address  
**Kahoot.it**
- Put in the game PIN
- Let's go! :-)

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