

Ideas for Newcomer Retention

- Communicate to newcomers that they are vital to our recovery in OA/our life-lines.
- **For members:** Be mindful of the presence of newcomers in meetings. It is very important that we acknowledge and notice them, helping them to feel that they are welcome. Avoid temptation after the meeting to only stay within our own group of friends. Reach out, talk to the new person(s), share your experience in OA, keeping your sharing positive, give them a meeting list, and/or a phone list. This is particularly helpful with those who may be shy, and may be feeling isolated or overwhelmed. (This is Key)

(It often happens, that a newcomer will remember you for a long time as someone who reached out to them and was kind. This is a very rewarding experience and it helps both people.)

- Encourage newcomers (in the meeting format) to try 5 or 6 meetings to see if this is a program for them
- **Smile**, be friendly and non-judgmental and, of course, be positive in your approach to a newcomer
- Ask a newcomer if he/she would like to receive a phone call during the week, when a good time would be, and then follow up.
- When calling a newcomer, **do NOT say on voice mail** that you are from OA
- Respect the anonymity of newcomers and other members at all times.
- When approaching a newcomer and talking with them, use your good listening skills, make eye contact (not staring), and focusing on what they are saying, without thinking about what you are going to say next.
- During a meeting, if we notice a newcomer, and make eye contact, smile at that person. This sends a powerful and positive message, that someone cares they are in the group.
- As a newcomer and other members speak in a meeting, give them your undivided attention.
- Provide an opportunity during the meeting for sponsors to identify themselves, and ask which sponsors may be willing to sponsor a newcomer for 21-30 days until that person can find a more permanent sponsor.
- Encourage the newcomer to try other meetings

- Make a plan among the OA group to have members call newcomers once/week. As a service position, this could be held by one member for one week or a month at a time. This can also include calling members who may be struggling or in relapse or those who have been missing from meetings, also known in the southern NH region as, “**We Care Calls.**”
- Include a clause in the OA meeting format which welcomes newcomers or is specific for them.
- Have a sign-up sheet asking if a person is a newcomer, sponsor, etc.
- The Tuesday meeting in Lebanon (5:30 – 6:30pm) has a “protected time” at 6:15pm for newcomers to share or ask questions of our program and they are encouraged to do so after the meeting as well.
- If you as a member & have a chance within your community to do 12th step work with another individual, offer to go to a meeting with that person (or drive them) if they express interest in trying a meeting.
- Offer to take a newcomer to the next meeting or form a carpool so that the new person can go to an upcoming share-a-thon. Attending share-a-thon s in other areas/states allows members/new persons a chance to see large numbers of OA members in recovery, sharing experience, strength and hope.
- Praise the person for coming to the meeting, with a short cordial sentence such as; I’m glad you came to the meeting, or hope to see you soon-or there is a great meeting next _____ and hope to see you – something along those lines.
- Our Thursday, New London meeting uses the “For Today” and “Voices of Recovery” meditation books in 2 of its weekly meetings. We encourage the newcomer to purchase one of these books so they can read a meditation each day.
- This Thursday meeting (above) also offers rides and uses car pools to get to other meetings.
- When explaining the telephone tool- to newcomers, tell them if they call someone and it is not a good time for that person to talk, to **NOT** take it personally. Encourage them to call another member.

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