

How to Live in Recovery Program Sponsor Information Packet

Welcome to the How to Live in Recovery Program

Thank you for your service to food addicts. Being a sponsor is wonderful but when a sponsee struggles with abstinence and recovery, the job sometimes becomes daunting. We have been working exclusively with relapsers since 2013 and have found methods that work to keep them focused on their recovery journey. We would like to share those ideas with you.

Please understand that we are NOT a 12-step Program, nor are we a substitute for any Food Program. We are simply rehab for those who deal with our disease and who need more specialized support.

If you ever have questions or concerns or if you have a sponsee who is struggling and you would like for them to have information on our programs, please contact us via our website: www.howtogetabstinent.org

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**** More information on these topics and others are available. See page 9 for details.**

How to Live in Recovery Program

Our Groups

(#1) How to Live in Recovery Group

1. This is the initial 10-week group for struggling food addicts to learn new ways to better utilize the recovery tools in an effort to find a path to abstinence.
2. The addition of our specially designed support materials, documents, and checklists helps them remember to do their tools and to remember why we do this every day.
3. There is the option of taking this group a second time if a participant is still struggling after the first 10-week group.
4. If a participant is still struggling after the 2nd group, we offer the Individual Program for one-on-one mentoring
5. All graduates of the Individual Program are abstinent.

(#2) Ongoing Relapse Prevention Group

1. This group is an ongoing weekly conference call for the How To Live in Recovery graduates.
2. They will receive continued support on their abstinence and recovery journey.
3. They will learn about relapse prevention and why we ate addictively.
4. They will learn how to practice exquisite self-care, especially during their first 90 days,
5. And they will continue working on new, positive attitudes and behaviors to grow in recovery.
6. Please consider having your sponsee make this group one of their committed meetings.

(#3) Buddy Program

1. After your sponsee graduates from the How To Live in Recovery and if they are having success doing all their tools and support materials, they are offered an opportunity to do service for others who are still struggling.
2. The Buddy Program pairs up graduates with new participants to help them set up their binder, get organized, and be prepared for each 10-week call.
3. Being a Buddy will also help your sponsee by allowing them to revisit the materials as they take a new participant through the homework.

Why Are We Doing These Groups for Relapsing Food Addicts?

Our primary purpose is to help the food addict who still suffers. (Tradition 5)

- ✓ To practice love and compassion for food addicts struggling with abstinence.
- ✓ To help food addicts who are struggling to take the necessary actions to find recovery and abstinence.
- ✓ To guide struggling food addicts to focus on the solution rather than the problem.

What You Can Do to Help

Seeking Sponsors

1. We are looking for sponsors who have time available to sponsor struggling food addicts who want to join the How to Live In Recovery Group.
2. Email us via the Contact Us on the website: www.howtogetabstinent.org.

How To Live In Recovery Program

How to Support Your Sponsee Weeks 1-4

First, understand that you are not required to do anything. We appreciate you giving your sponsee permission to take this group. If you want to though, here is what they are going to be learning and how you can help.

Getting Started

- Because we are teaching them what has worked for our past participants, we recommend they do it as we suggest for these 10 weeks.
- Living in recovery is our goal and doing that will lead to contented abstinence.

Week 1 Homework:

- The first thing they will do is to get a Homework Buddy from our Buddy List. Their Buddy will help them for all 10 weeks.
- Your sponsee will then print the materials and, with the help of an instructional video and their buddy, they will put their binder together.
- One of the documents they printed was a group of inspirational sheets called the Recovery Support Sheets. They will read parts of these with their morning tools and their evening tools.

Week 2 Homework:

- They will create a daily reader called the Warrior Reading Sheet.
- It helps them remember why they are working toward recovery.
- They will read this sheet with their morning and evening tools.
- Our documents were designed to be used **ONLY** with our groups and not for public or sponsor use.
- To that end we ask our participants not to share them with you or anyone else.
- They can, though, read you what they have written, and then you can share your own ideas and encourage them to discover theirs.

Week 3 Homework:

- They will create a 911 Emergency Choices Sheet and start using it to prevent breaks.
- The 911 Emergency Choices Sheet is a document with a section for phone numbers to call and a section with a list of self-soothing things they can do instead of eating.
- Consider having them read you this list and you can discuss them and share your ideas.

Week 4 Homework: Quiet Time and the Weekly Tools Checklist

- The discussions will be around ways to do effective quiet time.
- We suggest the quiet time not include reading or journalling. We advise them to use a timer and just surrender to the quietness. If your quiet time looks different, please consider giving them the grace to do it our way for the remainder of the group and then re-evaluate.
- Weekly Tools Checklist (this is a spreadsheet of all the tools- they should only be checking off the tools they are doing. We add tools each week and they can then check off those new tools).
- Participants will begin charting their tools as they complete them on the Weekly Tools Checklist

How To Live In Recovery Program
How to Support Your Sponsee Weeks 5-7

Week 5 Homework: Meal Planning and Abstinence

- Meal Planning: They are given suggestions including shopping, planning ahead, and cooking in bulk.
- Abstinence: Our suggestions are general in nature and do not include food plans. Here are a few samples.

✓ Eat fresh, organic, and natural food.	✓ Eat weighed and measured meals every day and never skip a meal.
✓ Read labels on everything.	✓ Beware of sugar substitutes and ‘sugar-free’ products. The sugar is just replaced with corn syrup, honey, or a chemical that mimics the taste of sugar.
✓ Do not drink alcohol.	
✓ Stay active and stay hydrated.	

Week 6 Homework: Three Outreach Calls and Journaling

- The discussions will center on doing effective outreach calls and journaling.
- Outreach calls are sometimes difficult for relapsers, so read the Food For Thought (pg 9 of this document). They have the same sheet in their Week 6 homework. It would be a great discussion. Lastly, they will start making a Phone List of people to contact. It takes a village. They need to cultivate theirs.
- We encourage the evening tool of journaling to last only 10 minutes and to be done just before or after dinner as most of us are exhausted by bedtime.
- They are given over 120+ possible journaling topics. Have them read you some of them and maybe you can both journal on the same topic.

Week 7 Homework: Common Break Locations and Relapse Foods

- **Common Break Locations**: This week we discuss locations (grocery store, kitchen, their car, etc) where they tend to eat off-plan.
- They will make a list of these locations and problem-solve solutions.
- **Relapse foods** (caffeine, artificial sweeteners, and salt) can directly impact abstinence and recovery. (pg 6-7)
- They are instructed to have a talk with you about these and to plan, if needed, a reduction plan with you. (they have the same sheet in week 7). Continue to encourage your sponsee to remain free of these substances.

How to Live In Recovery Program
How to Support Your Sponsee Weeks 8-10 + Week 11

Week 8 Homework: Break-Through Sheet and Putting My Program First.

- We suggest that you start having your sponsee use our **Break-Through Sheet** for any and every break. This is an in depth look at their breaks to find the patterns, the reasons, and then the solutions. This is a key for them to be able to move through a food thought to the other side and to abstinence.
- The Break-Through Sheet is on page 8 of this packet
- When your sponsee has completed this sheet, we suggest that you go over questions 5 & 6 with them to help look for patterns in their breaks:
 1. # 5: What did you learn?
 2. # 6: What will you do differently next time?
- After that, consider asking them to follow our break procedure.
 1. When a sponsee has a new break, to avoid feeling guilt, shame and judgment as they have in the past, have them immediately fill out a new Break-Through Sheet.
 2. Then they should contact you to go over questions 5 & 6.
- They are also to read “**What Does Putting My Program First Mean?**” Having them read part of this to you might be meaningful.

Week 9 Homework: 14 Summary Topics and What Group Will They Do Next.

- This week has your sponsee journaling on 14 topics that have been covered during these 10 weeks.
- Encourage them to write on 2 topics per day so that they can reflect on all that they have learned.
- We highly recommend that your sponsee not stop after the 10-week class. Even if they have obtained abstinence, it is still fragile and will need more support.
- Some participants need to repeat the group. All are encouraged to go on to the Ongoing Relapse Prevention Group. This group adds to their foundation of living in recovery with knowledge of what causes relapse, how to recognize the signs of relapse and how to prevent going back into the food.

Week 10 Homework: Video/ What did They Learn About Themselves and Recovery

- The video: [The Faces of Food Addiction](#) (also available for you on our website under For Sponsors)
- Consider having your sponsee talk to you about what they have learned, which of our suggestions have worked the best. and how they can continue toward contented abstinence.

Week 11: Buddy Training

- This extra week was added to teach graduates how to be a Buddy.
- A Buddy’s focus is strictly on helping with the homework and being prepared for each call.
- Perfection is not required. A willingness to help another person in recovery is.
- Your sponsee can take the Buddy Training now but choose to be a buddy in the future.

How To Live In Recovery Program

Introduction to the Science of Relapse Foods

By Christina R.N., C.N.H.P

Coffee: It produces a rush by releasing sugar, and the cycle begins a rush of blood sugar, over-abundance of insulin then a “crash” 2 hours later about 10am. The 10am low wants to be fed more sugar because the physical “crash” is real. Has anyone ever been tempted to reach for a second cup of coffee or a sugar product at this time? The solution is to eliminate the coffee and the accompanying sugar high. Sugar is 8 times more addicting than cocaine. No wonder we are called addicts. Higher intakes of coffee, regardless of its caffeine content, were associated with lower levels of liver enzymes. The common solvents used to make coffee beans decaffeinated include methylene chloride (causes cancer), ethyl acetate (nail polish), and highly pressurized carbon dioxide. Early decaffeination efforts were abruptly terminated because of the toxic solvents that were used in the process (benzene, chloroform, and trichloroethylene). Of course, the F.D.A. is okay with benzene being inside your soft drinks (Coke, Pepsi, etc.), where it can be found in remarkably high amounts, and inside all of your microwaved foods. Remove **all** caffeine from your diet.

Artificial Sweeteners: Taking in all artificial sweeteners can actually cause weight gain for the following reasons: The taste of artificial sweeteners signals the pancreas to produce insulin. Insulin without food causes the body to stimulate the appetite for food. Blood sugar drops without food/sugar to buffer the insulin, and the hunger levels rises. You are setting yourself up to physically be hungry! Artificial sweeteners like Sweet N Low contain aspartame which is a toxic substance that the body is not designed to use. The body will often retain water and fat to attempt to dilute toxins, resulting in weight gain. Sweet N Low and other artificial aspartame-based sweeteners might cause Multiple Sclerosis and other permanent neurological damage. Natural sweeteners: stevia, etc., provide the same effect of stimulating appetite. Remove **all** sweeteners from your diet.

Diet sodas: Too much phosphorus can deplete calcium. If the phosphorus is too high relative to calcium, as with phosphoric acid containing soft drinks like colas are consumed, the body senses a deficiency of calcium, and may pull it out of the bones, which can lead to osteoporosis. A significant association was found between the weekly consumption of at least 1.5 Liters (about four 12-ounce cans) of phosphoric acid containing soft drinks (primarily colas) and calcium deficiency. Low serum calcium in children, who commonly drink sodas, can lead to subnormal intelligence, muscle seizures, intestinal malabsorption, and cardiovascular problems. In adults, phosphoric acid can promote kidney stones and osteoporosis. Many young people might have succumbed to Multiple Sclerosis because of a diet soda addiction. Diet sodas stimulate appetite, dehydrate, cause neurological damage and fluid and fat retention. Remove **all** sweeteners from your diet.

Gum Chewing: Chewing releases digestive enzymes in the mouth along with insulin signaling food is on its way. Sugarless gum contains artificial sweeteners and toxins and that go directly into blood. The ‘sweet’ taste of chewing gum stimulates appetite by the body producing insulin in response to sugar but without food the body sends a signal to the brain to eat. Gum stimulates appetite. Remove **all** sweeteners from your diet.

Salt: Salt has all of its minerals removed, which would otherwise help to balance the blood pressure. Contrary to popular belief, salt is not just sodium chloride commonly included are Ferrocyanide, talc, and silica aluminate. Remove **all** added salt and soy sauce from your diet. **Follow your doctor’s advice.**

For the expanded version of the Science of Program Food Guideline go to the website & find the For Sponsors tab.

How To Live In Recovery Program
**How to Create a Relapse Foods Elimination Plan
From Week 7**

Discussion About Relapse Foods

1. Read the Introduction to the Science of Relapse Foods (page 6)
2. Some people who have had relapses suggest that relapse may be caused by:
 - **Caffeine:** gradually eliminate all caffeine, including decaf which has some caffeine.
 - **Sugar substitutes** (natural and artificial): gradually eliminate all, diet soda, gum, sweetener packets etc.
 - **Salt:** American Heart Association suggests salt usage of 1/4 to 1 teaspoon daily. We already get the needed amount of salt in our healthy food. Therefore, gradually eliminate all salt added to cooking or to food. Consider using a salt substitute like Mrs. Dashes or the Costco salt substitute of herbs and spices. Get your iodine by taking a multi vitamin. See www.fsc.tam.edu/food_and_nutrition/pdf for the sodium content of our foods.
3. As always, follow your doctor's advice.

How to Create a Relapse Foods Elimination Plan

- Identify what foods need to be eliminated.
- Determine the quantities you are currently using each day.
- If you have 2 or more of these relapse foods to reduce, start with the easiest one first.
- Set up a separate plan for each one.
- Use a calendar to schedule dates for each step of the reduction plan.

Eliminate all Caffeinated and Decaffeinated Coffee or Tea Example:

A person drinks 4 cups of coffee a day and wants to eliminate caffeine

1. Starting today reduce to 3 cups of coffee daily
2. In four more days reduce to 2 cups of coffee daily
3. In four more days reduce to 1 cup of coffee daily
4. In four more days, you will be caffeine free

Eliminate all Sugar Substitute Example:

A person adds 4 packets of sugar substitutes each day and wants to eliminate them

1. Starting today reduce to using 3 packets daily
2. In four more days reduce to using 2 packets daily
3. In four more days reduce to using 1 packet daily
4. In four more days, you will be sugar substitute free

Eliminate all Added Salt Example:

A person adds salt to 3 foods at breakfast, 3-4 foods at lunch and 3-4 foods at dinner and wants to eliminate all added salt

1. Starting today reduce salting to 3 foods at each meal
2. In four more days reduce salting to 2 foods at each meal
3. In four more days reduce salting to 1 food at each meal
4. In four more days, you will be salt free

Week 9 Homework
My Break-Through Sheet

Questions

1. What did you eat:
 - a) What food(s) and quantities did you eat? _____

 - b) Is this a common break food for you? (Yes or No?) _____
 - c) Did this food lead to a binge? (Yes or No?) _____
2. Where did it happen:
 - a) Where did you get this food and where did you eat it? (i.e., home, work, car, restaurant, social event, etc.) _____
 - b) Is this a common break location for you? (Yes or No)? _____
3. When did it happen:
 - a) What time of day did the break start and end? _____
 - b) Is this a common break time for you? (Yes or No?) _____
4. How did you feel before the break:
 - a) What were your feelings before the break? (i.e., anger, sadness, grief, tired, loneliness, happiness, celebration, etc.) _____

 - b) Did you sense ahead of time that the break was going to happen? (Yes or No?) _____
 - c) When did you become aware that you had made the decision to eat? _____
 - d) Do you know why this break happened? _____

First, Fill Out Numbers 5 and 6 Below. Then, Go Over Numbers 5 and 6 Below With Your Sponsor.

5. What did you learn:
 - a) Where did you get the food from? (refrigerator, cooking, counter, freezer, pantry/cabinet, fast food, on way home from work, to food store from home, while buying food, movies, eating at a restaurant, social/family event, work, travel, etc.) _____
 - b) What did you learn from answering questions 1-4 above? (I.E. I eat over my feelings, it doesn't work, and I feel worse.) _____
 - c) Did you think about doing something to stop this break before it started? (Yes or No) _____
 - d) Which of your daily tools did you miss doing? (Note: Your 911 Emergency Choices Sheets are a tool) _____

 - e) Do you see any break patterns? What? (i.e. Not doing all my tools leads to a break and then I feel worse.) _____
6. What will you do differently next time:
 - a) What solutions or new behaviors will you use to prevent this type of break from happening again?
 1. **CHOOSE** to effectively do all my tools and support materials every day, no matter what, for myself. *I'm worth it.*
 2. **CHOOSE** to use my 911 Emergency Choices Sheet until the feeling of "wanting to eat" pass, for myself. *I'm worth it.*
 3. **CHOOSE** to follow the Break-Through Procedure **IMMEDIATELY** after having a break to end the break and avoid more breaks, for myself. *I'm worth it.*
 - b) Do you need additional visual 911 Emergency Choices Sheets? (Yes or No) Where should they go? _____
 - c) Look at each answer to questions 1-4 above and then create more solutions. (i.e., bring weighed foods, leave before dessert, close the kitchen after dinner, not driving near fast-food restaurants, not leaving food on the counter, etc.)
 - d) Next time I will:
 1. _____ 5. _____
 2. _____ 6. _____
 3. _____ 7. _____
 4. _____ 8. _____

Suggestions For Sponsors

Suggestions for Daily Discussion Topics

1. Discuss how their tools are going and problem-solve any challenges.
2. Discuss any breaks, including what they wrote in the Break-Through Sheet.
3. Discuss, pre-plan and problem solve solutions for:
 - ✓ Today's food challenges (work party, baking for school or family, etc.)
 - ✓ Upcoming food challenges (social functions, holidays, travel, etc.)
 - ✓ Unexpected food challenges (food spoilage, forgetting your food, illness, etc.)

Food For Thought

Suggestions for Making Outreach Calls

Why should we consider counting every three calls where we leave a message as one outreach call?

One day, I made 10 outreach calls to fellows. I left messages with my name and number, but felt frustrated because I had not completed my needed 3 outreach calls. We need to know how many calls and messages to leave, to feel we have completed our daily outreach calls. We suggest that 3 calls where we leave a message be counted as one outreach call.

Why should we consider counting one half hour in-depth call as 3 outreach calls?

I have had a weekly scheduled call with a fellow for over 11 years. This has developed into a friendship where we have gone through a lot of recovery together. As a previous isolator, I feel that developing close personal relationships, where honesty is the basis of the connection, is advisable for food addicts. Half hour in-depth calls, where both people share about half the time should be encouraged and counted as 3 outreach calls.

Why should we consider counting each incoming call as well as each outgoing calls as one of our 3 daily calls?

The purpose of outreach calls is to make daily connections with food addicts, to benefit from talking with fellows, and to combat our food addiction behavior of isolation. Those connections are all beneficial whether we initiate a call or answer a call. I am a manipulative food addict. If I am required to initiate a call for it to be counted as an outreach call, here is where my addict thinking goes. If someone called me, I would not answer the call because it would not count. I would call them back so my call would count. By playing this insane, addict game of not answering outreach calls because they do not count, none of us would achieve the purpose of outreach calls which is connecting with fellow food addicts.

Request More Information and Additional Materials

If you would more information about the HLR, please go to our website: www.howtogetabstinent.org. Click on the **For Sponsors tab**. The link to the Sponsor Additional Information is on the bottom and includes:

1. Introduction to Our Program
2. Program History
3. 70 Journaling Topics
4. 12 Step Recovery Slogan Journal Topics
5. My Addict Brain Is a Liar Topics
6. 100 Affirmation Journal Topics to Use for Positive Recovery Thinking
7. Food Information for Maximum Weight Loss
8. Should my Sponsee Join an AWOL?
9. What I Have learned from the 10 Week Group
10. What Is Food Addiction
11. How Our Participants Feel When They Come to Our Program
12. Suggested Readings