

**Sponsorship Q&A Suggestions Gathered
Region 4 Fall 2013 Assembly and St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup Super Saturday**

1. What are the attributes of a good sponsor?

- Good listener
- 12 Step experience (ongoing)
- Patience/Kindness (first)
- Directness/Intuition
- Nonjudgmental
- Challenges me
- Availability
- Abstinence
- Have a sponsor
- Trustworthy
- Agreement on joint expectations
- Flexibility
- Honesty

2. Why do you sponsor? What do you get out of it?

- Reminder of what I need to do
- Continue to evaluate your program
- Because I was told to
- Giving away what I have learned
- Keeps me honest
- Build a relationship
- Get you out of isolation
- Sincere desire to help others

3. Helpful tips to the new sponsor.

- Be familiar with literature and continue to use over time
- You only have to stay one step ahead – share by sponsor
- Be a good listener
- Suggestions rather than directions
- Each person could use different tools/help etc.
- We are all responsible for our own recovery
- Be honest

4. When should someone start sponsoring?

- After Step 5 possibly
- When Higher Power lets you know you're ready
- Talk to your sponsor about it
- Talk to newcomers to "practice"
- Experiment with co/sponsoring

5. What guidelines do you set up at the beginning for your new sponsee?

- Use Dignity of Choice pamphlet (put in link)
- Call every weekday for 15 minutes
- Honesty

- Tools include going to meetings
- Nutritionist within 30 days
- ABC List
 - A – Foods you can eat
 - B – Foods I have to measure
 - C – Binge foods
 - D – Unknown as of yet
- Co-sponsor – you can expect
 - I won't give advice
 - I may just sponsor on food
 - I may just sponsor on steps
 - I may just sponsor on spirituality
 - I won't nag, just encourage
- Style
 - Rigid
 - Gentle
- Talk up front about expectations of sponsee
 - Communication
 - Step work
 - Abstinence/Good plan
 - Spiritual
 - Willingness to seek additional support if requested

6. What suggestions do you have for a sponsee who argues or complains with no change to their actions?

- Stay on Step 1
- Listen
- Active Listening
- Try another sponsor – maybe not a good match
- Lifeboat – lifesaver – this is the one I have
- Start reading step 3 in the first person
- “Do you want to be right or do you want serenity?”
- Can you get them to tears – “It sounds like you are really angry” – go or feelings underneath – identification
- Ask “How can I help you? What do you need right now?”
- Guiding sponsee to self-awareness and accepting
- Listening well – try to find out what the problem really is
- Sharing own experience
- Taking self-inventory (sponsor)
- What are you (sponsee) willing to do?

7. Are there certain ways to sponsor:

- a. Newcomer
- b. Chronic Relapse
- c. Bulimic
- d. Restrictor
- e. Anorexic
- f. Compulsive Overeater

- g. Gastric Bypass
- h. Your former Sponsor
- i. Longtimer

Are there certain ways to sponsor certain members?

- Tell your story
- Read the doctor's opinion and discuss step one.
- Discuss
 - a food plan (get professional input, present Dignity of Choice pamphlet)
 - trigger foods (try to identify them to start, 30 questions/30 days)
 - food history
 - expectations regarding sponsor/sponsee relationship
- Face-to-face meeting early on
- Sponsee's failure/success abstinence is not the responsibility of the sponsor
- Regular/frequent contact

Newcomer?

- Be available, even proactive in creating contact
- Help them to feel at ease

Chronic relapser?

- Set expectations about sponsors "letting go" of sponsees (sponsor preference)
- It helps to have sponsor who has relapsed and recovered from it
- Make clear...
 - relapse is an act of self-will
 - the necessity of 100% powerlessness
 - that that first compulsive bite was the last thing to go

Bulimic/Anorexic?

- Each may have to be considered separately
- Plan of Action
 - Work with professional (depending on the extremity of the case)
 - Abstinence is more than the food (behaviors such as purging, exercise, restricting)
- Need a food plan (worked out with a professional)
- Preferably a sponsor's food addiction/behavior should be identifiable to the sponsee

Compulsive Overeater?

- Nothing separately

Gastric Bypass?

- No judgment about how they did it; bypass is just another diet

Long-timers?

- Be humble (elder statesmen vs. bleeding deacons)
- Forget everything you think you already know
- Continue to be teachable
- Tell your story

How do you have your sponsees work the steps?

- Big Book and AA 12x12
- OA 12x12
- Must accept powerlessness completely (100%), or nothing else will work

8. How do you ask your sponsee to create/work an action plan?

- Step study – using OA Literature
 - 30 questions in 30 days
 - Slipping and Sliding questions (relapse questions)
- OA Workbook
- Growing through the twelve steps
- Ask about daily activities
- Goal for this week (10 minutes)
 - Exercise
 - Buying groceries
 - Paying bills
 - Personal relationships
 - 4th step
 - Spirituality – making amends
- Spirituality
- Humility vs. being humble (low self-esteem)
- Commitment and Discipline
- If you can't follow through be honest
- If not willing to do so as sponsor suggests discontinue discussion on that issue
- Ask sponsee for food history and expectations

9. Tips for when you are “let go” /fired by your sponsee

- Don't take it personally – take it to your sponsor if that happens
- Find someone else
- Be gracious about the offer
- Leave relationship open
- Thank them for their friendship
- At first
 - Suggest – let's try it out
 - I'm not your HP
 - Your program is not my responsibility it is yours and HPs. I'm here to assist

10. Does your area have enough sponsors? What is done to find new ones?

- List of sponsors on OA website
- No – check with other groups in the area
- Have an Abstinence workshop
- Encourage people to ask fellow group members
- When you're ready, a sponsor will show up

11. Things you've learned from your sponsors

- Have a 'Spiritual snack' by reading program literature throughout your day
- You are not responsible for another's life/abstinence
- Important not to 'control' others
- Open to on-going relationship – who's doing the work
- Know when to set limits
- Eat properly
- Lean about other compulsions you have (worry, fear, etc.)

- Take responsibility for yourself, your actions and your reactions
- How to work the steps
- Honesty
- Being yourself.
- Knowing your faults, don't assign blame
- You get out of it as much as you give

12. How do you sponsor?

- With great care and kindness
- Work steps
 - OA 12 x 12
 - AA 12 x 12
 - Read, write and share
- Learn from own sponsor what to do
- Require rigorous honesty
- Minimum number of check in calls a week
- Get a plan of eating
- Use the tools
- Give assignments
- Ask questions
- Listen
- Go to meetings (with sponsee)
- Read the literature

13. What tools should a sponsor have to work with?

- Phone and time commitment
- Writing – assigned questions
- Literature – Start with the 30 questions in the sponsorship pamphlet
 - Sponsoring through the 12 steps
 - 12 steps for you and your Sponsor
- Pre-commitment questions (H.O.W. format)
- Big Book – Steps!!
- OA 12 x 12
- Plan of eating Food plan
- Written action plan if needed, specific circumstances
- Start small
- Meetings
 - Face-to-face
 - Phone
 - Online
- Service – encourage sponsees to do service – this helps them feel a part of the group
- Having a sponsor of your own to confer with

14. What do you look for in your own personal sponsor?

- Someone who is spiritual, has a good relationship with own HP
- Someone who is recovered

15. As a sponsor, when is it okay to discuss a complicated/concerning issue in regards to a sponsee? And who should that someone else be?

- My sponsor. I don't tell her the name of the sponsee, but I explain the situation
- If my sponsor is stumped, we both call 3 people about the issue
- My favorite sponsor prayer is, "God, I got nothing here. This one's yours." My sponsees need to know I don't know everything and I do go to my HP to get help to know what to say.

16. How has having a sponsor advanced your recovery?

- If I wait long enough, every voice in my head is a "Higher Power". So I need a sponsor to be a sounding board, a voice of reason, keep me focused in the solution
- I just don't know how to do it without one
- Daily reprieve to keep me out of insanity
- Accountability: my sponsor knows when I am full of malarkey. She hears the dis-ease in my words and directs me back to sanity
- She can do what a counselor can't do because she has lived the dis-ease herself
- The blind leading the blind means we both end up in the ditch. So I need someone in recovery
- I respect and trust my sponsor and need to bounce thongs off of her
- A unique relationship, not my friend, not responsible for my recovery