

Compulsive Eaters Anonymous - HOW (CEA-HOW) Public Information Guidelines

Produced by the CEA-HOW World Service Business Conference Public Information Committee

Introduction

These Public Information Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of CEA-HOW members. It is a document that attempts to communicate how we, from a practical standpoint, try to make the public aware of how it is possible to recover from compulsive eating through working the CEA-HOW Concept.

Our goal is twofold:

1. To define what it means to provide the public with information about CEA-HOW.
2. To give our fellowship a vision of the practical ways in which we can bring that message of recovery to the public.

Tradition Five states that, “*Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the compulsive eater who still suffers.*” And Tradition Four says that, “*Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CEA-HOW as a whole.*” Therefore, we recognize that ultimately, any work to carry the message of recovery must be done by individual members and/or the local groups (i.e., service bodies). Any decisions made about *how* to carry that message will be done by the group conscience of the members involved. So, these guidelines are provided to help CEA-HOW members and service bodies reach an *informed* decision and group conscience regarding how to reach out to the public about our program of Recovery.

In addition to drawing upon our own experiences in following the CEA-HOW Concept, this document also reflects guidance from Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), which already has a well-established Public Information policy.

What about “Attraction vs. Promotion?”

In dealing with how we should make the public aware of CEA-HOW, this is the most-often cited objection that some of our members have raised: What about attraction vs. promotion? Some members have thought that Tradition Eleven suggests that we should *not* seek to publicize CEA-HOW; that we should rely only on personal word of mouth and social networking to get our message out to the public.

In response to that concern, we’d encourage all members to re-read Tradition Eleven in the *Twelve and Twelve*. Tradition Eleven states, “Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films and other public media of communication.”

The long form of Tradition Eleven, appearing on Page 192 of the *Twelve and Twelve* says: “Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or

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publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.”

This implies that we do need to promote the program publically, but that when we do so, we maintain *personal* anonymity. In other words, *it is our duty to carry the message of the program to the public, not our personalities.*

In the reference section at the end of this document, we provide several quotes from conference-approved literature that support the position that we *do* need to promote the program publically. But just to provide some examples here¹...

- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions,*
 - o Tradition Eleven: “Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.”
 - Page 181
 - Obviously, A.A. had to be publicized somehow...
 - o Tradition Twelve: “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”
 - Page 186
 - But it became apparent that the word-of-mouth method was too limited. Our work, as such, needed to be publicized. The A.A. groups would have to reach quickly as many despairing alcoholics as they could.
- *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*
 - o Page 144
 - We could therefore no longer be a seldom heard of secret society. Word-of-mouth communication with the few alcoholics we could contact by our then-current methods would be not only slow but dangerous; dangerous because the recovery message in which we now had such high confidence might soon be garbled and twisted beyond recognition. Clearly our budding society and its message would have to be publicized.
- *As Bill Sees It*
 - o Page 255
 - Nothing matters more to A.A.’s future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination.

Should we handle this great instrument badly, we shall be shattered by the ego manifestations of our own people. Against this peril, A.A. members’ anonymity before the general public is our shield and our buckler.

Taken from the Grapevine, November 1960

¹ We encourage all readers to look up these references yourselves, and read what’s quoted in context.

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Who are we trying to carry the message to?

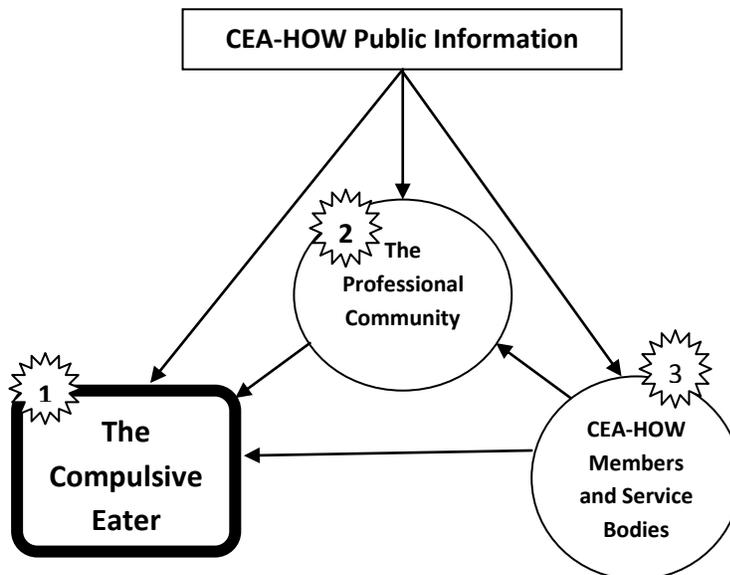
CEA-HOW has one ultimate goal: To carry the message to the compulsive eater who still suffers.

We realize that our competence to speak about compulsive eating is limited in subject matter to CEA-HOW and its recovery program. We also know that we are not the only solution being offered to the compulsive eater. But we have found our program to be effective, and so we need to make the public aware of it.

What are the main ways we reach the Compulsive Eater?

Any public information we produce about CEA-HOW is intended to reach the compulsive eater in one of three ways:

1. By providing information to the compulsive eater directly.
2. By informing the “professional community” whose work is or may be involved with the active compulsive eater.
3. By giving the CEA-HOW fellowship tools and information so that Members and Service Bodies are better equipped to reach out to the compulsive eater *and* the professional community.



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What is each of these groups likely to be looking for?

	 The Compulsive Eater	 The Professional Community	 CEA-HOW Members and Service Bodies
Definition of the group	Men, women and young people from all walks of life, ages, nationalities and religions	Doctors, therapists, clergymen, counselors, Student Health Departments, etc.	Members of the CEA-HOW fellowship who have found Recovery through working the CEA-HOW Concept
What is their need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To know that there is recovery from compulsive eating (“Does it work?”) Information about CEA-HOW in general: who we are, our history, how our program works (7 Tools. 12 Steps. 12 Traditions. “No fees. No dues. Just results,” etc.) What we offer (acceptance, understanding, communication, relief and power) Where and when the meetings are. Info on how to acquire program literature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of the CEA-HOW Concept (our history, how the program works, what is required of Members, etc.) Information on our success rate (“Does it work?”) Where and when our meetings are Possibly a recording of a sample meeting or workshop to give them a feel for what happens in meetings Info on any upcoming events Contact names and numbers in case they have questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Note: This group already knows the program works 😊</i> Information and documents they can use to reach out to the Compulsive Eater (handouts, brochures, flyers, etc.) Information they can give to the Professional Community to help <i>them</i> reach the Compulsive Eater. Any tools that will help educate them on <u>how</u> to reach out to the compulsive eater (e.g., workshops that explain how to conduct public outreach, etc.)
What are they ultimately looking for?	Relief from the obsession of compulsive eating.	A viable, successful solution that can help the people they seek to help: the Compulsive Eater.	Training and tools to help them carry the message of Recovery to both the Compulsive Eater, and the Professional Community who is trying to help the Compulsive Eater.
How can we help?	Provide information for when the compulsive eater reaches out on their own (i.e., through the website, or by calling our WSO or local office)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a place where the Professional Community can go to find out more about CEA-HOW (i.e., our CEA-HOW website). Have Members and Service Bodies proactively reach out to this Professional Community, to make them aware of our program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give the Members and Service Bodies a vision of how they can carry the message Give them tools to carry the message

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What about the media?

CEA-HOW has enjoyed excellent relations with print, radio and television journalists. But when we interact with the media, there are certain guidelines we follow.

The principle of anonymity is a basic tenet of our fellowship. Those who are reluctant to seek our help may overcome their fear if they are confident that their anonymity will be respected. In addition, and perhaps less understood, our tradition of anonymity acts as a restraint on CEA-HOW members, reminding us that we are a program of principles, not personalities, and that no individual CEA-HOW member may presume to act as a spokesman or leader of our fellowship.

Therefore, if any CEA-HOW member is identified in the media, we ask that you please use first names only (e.g., Judy L. or Tom S.) and that you not use photographs or electronic images in which members' faces may be recognized.

Please note that 'public media of communication' does include personal means of internet social networking, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc. We ask that if you do reference your recovery and/or weight loss on your personal social networking site, please do not mention CEA-HOW.

And lastly, we also remind the media to respect our tradition of anonymity at the public level. Attached in the Reference section of this document is a letter that can be sent to the media, asking them to cooperate with our tradition of anonymity.

What are the ways in which we can communicate our message of Recovery to the Public?

There are many, many ways to communicate the principles of our CEA-HOW program to the public. Here are a few examples of things we *have* done (or *could* do):

Perspective:	The intended audience:	The Means of Communication:	The goal:
Reactive	Everyone: the compulsive Eater, the professional community, CEA-HOW members and service bodies, and the general public	The CEA-HOW Website www.ceahow.org	A central source of information for anyone who's looking to find out information about CEA-HOW.
Proactive	The compulsive eater	Personal Relationships	Word of mouth is obviously one way to share the message of Recovery with another Compulsive Eater. Some Members have made business cards with the CEA-HOW website and local office phone number on it, to give to anyone who is interested.
Proactive	The compulsive eater	General Public Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find any public location that has a bulletin board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Public library o Grocery store o Local hospital/health clinic o Laundromat o Community Center o School student union building, etc. - Post info about CEA-HOW on that bulletin board, such as:

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A “13 Questions” flyer (see the Reference Section at the end of this document for a sample) o A 3x5 card with 5 questions (see the Reference section for an example) o A “Dear Neighbor” letter (see the Reference section for an example) o A CEA-HOW pamphlets such as: “Am I a Food Addict?”, or “The CEA-HOW Concept” o A one page document that provides a brief overview of CEA-HOW, and a listing of local CEA-HOW meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don’t forget to provide a local CEA-HOW office phone number in case anyone has questions
Proactive	The compulsive eater	Phonebooks	Be sure that CEA-HOW is listed in your local yellow pages under appropriate headings (e.g., “Eating Disorders Information and Treatment”, or “Recovery Center”, etc.)
Proactive	The compulsive eater	YouTube	Create a video that communicates the message of Recovery through working the CEA-HOW concept, also providing our website and local CEA-HOW office number. <i>NOTE: In accordance with our Tradition of Anonymity, please do not use photographs or images in which any members’ faces may be recognized, and use first names only (e.g., Judy L., or Tom S.).</i>
Proactive	The compulsive eater	Internet Search Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure that internet search engines are finding CEA-HOW when someone enters likely keywords (e.g., “Compulsive Eater”, “Eating Disorder”, etc.) - Make sure that any info sites (e.g., Wikipedia, etc.) reference CEA-HOW as a link for topics like “Compulsive Eating”, “Eating Disorder”, etc.
Proactive	The compulsive eater	Public Service Announcements (PSAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio and TV Stations usually have a quota of PSA’s they must provide, so there is always an option to approach a local station and ask if they will run a CEA-HOW PSA for free. CEA-HOW WSO has already produced a professional PSA for the radio; both the recording and the script are available for download from our website. You just need to provide your local CEA-HOW office number. - You can also approach your local newspaper, and see if they will run a PSA for free.
Proactive	The compulsive eater	Buy Advertising	You or your Intergroup could decide to buy advertising from any number of public media of communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newspapers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Info for inserts into the mainline local newspapers o Info for local neighborhood o Listing CEA-HOW in the non-profit section (e.g., meeting locations and times) - Magazines - Radio commercial - TV Commercial - Billboards² - Bus stop Advertising Spaces - Car Wash Advertising Spaces - Gas Station Advertising Spaces - Etc.

² One member let us know that she came into 12 Step recovery as a result of a billboard that provided a message of hope of recovery from compulsive eating. A simple billboard, with a local phone number, and that was enough to bring her into the rooms.

Another member shared how (in a different instance), their Intergroup bought billboard space with a message similar to the one at right. They ran the billboard in November and December (around the holidays), and their “meeting rooms were full through the following March.”



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Proactive	The compulsive eater	Using modern media capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a podcast that explains what CEA-HOW is all about, and make it available online - Create handouts that contain a barcode which people could then scan and listen to that Podcast - Etc.
Proactive	The compulsive eater, and the professional community	Public Information Meeting	<p>Conduct a special Public Information meeting about CEA-HOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite lots of people who might want to learn more about what CEA-HOW is all about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Announce it well in advance at the community center, library, grocery store, local church/synagogue, etc. - Have it in a nice location - Arrange to have 1 or 2 speakers with long term abstinence - Serve coffee and tea, have everyone dress nicely - Have lots of support people there to answer questions - Have lots of brochures handy that explain our program, provide info on our meeting schedules, etc.
Proactive	The compulsive eater, and the professional community	A Local Health Fair	<p>CEA-HOW has had a lot of success with this approach; there is a lot of information on our website about how to put on a health fair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health Fairs are put on by a number of organizations: it could be a local hospital or medical group, a local employer, universities, etc. - You need to approach the Health Fair organizer and ask permission to have a CEA-HOW booth at their event. - There's information available on our website regarding how to set all this up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A recorded workshop from the 2011 CEA-HOW convention is available to listen to, where the Speaker provides a step by step overview of everything you need to know; you can download this for free from the www.ceahow.org website. o There is also a one page flyer available on the website, which is also available to help you set this up.
Proactive	The compulsive eater, and the professional community	A Booth at the County/State Fair	This is similar to the CEA-HOW booth set up for a Health Fair (mentioned above) ³
Proactive	The compulsive eater	Outreach to large Corporations who do Health Fairs for their Employees	<p>Many large corporations put on annual Health Fairs for their employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You could approach one of these corporations and offer to participate by manning a table with CEA-HOW brochures for the 1 or 2 days these events typically last - They may also have a lunch time health panel where you could offer to be one of the Speakers about your own Recovery through CEA-HOW
Proactive	The professional community	Outreach to the Health Care Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You can approach your own medical doctor and/or health care professional, and ask if they would allow you to provide CEA-HOW pamphlets in their waiting room⁴ - You could also send a letter to various local health care providers, telling them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Who we are o Here's our meeting list o Feel free to come to our meetings to check us out o Here's our local # and website for more info

³ One member shared how they had 20,000 visitors a day at their state fair. The cost to set up a booth was \$150, plus they had to man it. It was a wonderful way to "rev up the old timers" in program. They set up shifts with a senior person, and a new person, passing out CEA-HOW pamphlets and answering questions.

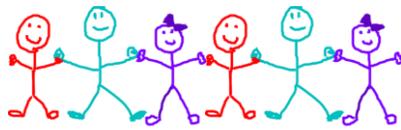
⁴ One member mentioned how her doctor had been very impressed with how she was managing her weight. When the doctor asked how she did it, the member told her about CEA-HOW, and asked if she could provide some CEA-HOW brochures in the waiting room. The member ultimately approached her dentist and her endocrinologist to do the same thing. As a result, their local meeting had 6-10 newcomers a week.

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What's the best way to coordinate and accomplish all of this?

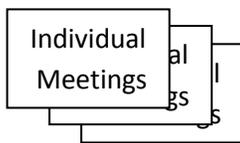
The good news is, there's no one "best" way. Any and all efforts to carry the message of recovery to the Compulsive Eater are good!

But from an organizational standpoint, we've found the following approach to work well...

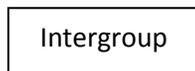


Individual CEA-HOW Members

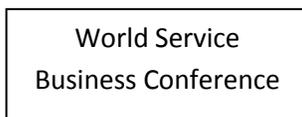
There are individual CEA-HOW Members who may, on their own, decide to try to carry the message of recovery to the public.



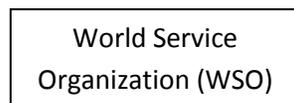
Individual CEA-HOW meetings may also have one or several people responsible for Public Information.



More commonly, there is a committee of 5-6 people responsible for Public Information at the Intergroup or Area level.



At the annual CEA-HOW World Service Business Conference, there are 5-13 Delegates assigned to the Public Information Committee that work throughout the year on developing coordinated public



WSO maintains the CEA-HOW Website, a central source of information for the compulsive eater looking for a solution, for the professional community, and for our own fellowship.

Here's how all these groups can work together:

- Local Public Information committees can build an understanding within the fellowship of the Twelve Traditions and the part that public information plays.
- Special meetings can be held to explain the difference between spreading the message through attraction and "promotion."
- Tradition Eleven workshops can be held to help the fellowship gain interest and insight.

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- An individual meeting, or Intergroup or Area could create a Public Information newsletter that includes a list of upcoming health fairs, projects, or other information on how the word is being spread. For example, if members have been asked to share their experience, strength and hope on the radio or other media, this information could be included in the newsletter.
- Individual members can visit local groups to give brief talks about Public Information service.
- Public Information workshops can be conducted at Area Assemblies, Conventions, Conferences and other CEA-HOW get-togethers.

Again, there are many ways we can carry the message.

Our CEA-HOW By-laws state that the purpose of the World Service Business Conference Public Information Committee is to:

Develop a coordinated Public Information effort that includes, but is not limited to:

1. Research the activities of other CEA-HOW groups' PI efforts;
2. Gather the information into a central source;
3. Make this information available to the general fellowship via the CEA-HOW website (ceahow.org) and any other communication methods;
4. Maintain contact with the various CEA-HOW groups in order to keep the information current and updated;
5. Research and develop other PI opportunities including, but not limited to radio, TV, hospitals, and Internet;
6. Develop additional material to be used in outreach to the community such as, but not limited to: sample letters to the clergy, hospitals, treatment centers, physicians, therapists, other health care professionals, flyers for public display, public service announcements, community calendar announcements and articles for media publication;
7. Provide guidance to CEA-HOW groups as to how they can use the available material and information to inform the public about CEA-HOW;
8. Suggest ways to involve the membership in public outreach.

Ideally, there will be coordinated public information efforts between the World Service Business Conference Public Information Committee, and the Area/Intergroup PI committees, and the local meetings/individual members.

In closing...

We hope these Public Information guidelines will help you better understand what it means to provide the public with information about CEA-HOW. We encourage all members of the fellowship to look for ways to make the public aware that CEA-HOW does offer a message of hope and recovery for the compulsive eater who still suffers.

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If you have any questions, or want help to develop your own local Public Information outreach, please contact CEA-HOW at gso@ceahow.org, and asked to be put in touch with this year's World Service Business Conference Public Information Committee. Thank you for your service!

Reference Section

HISTORY

H.O.W. started in 1979 in Phoenix, Arizona by Fred S. and Helaine who decided that there was a need for structure and discipline in recovery from food addiction. In the mid-1990's the H.O.W. groups reformed and chose the name Compulsive Eaters Anonymous – HOW, and incorporated as a world-wide association in 1998.

PROOF TEXTS

Here are several “proof texts” from conference-approved literature supporting the position to promote the program (not the personalities) in the public space. And, as we mentioned above, we encourage you to look up all these references yourself, to read what’s quoted in context.

- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
 - o Tradition Five: “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”
 - Page 150
 - Alcoholics Anonymous can be likened to a group of physicians who might find a cure for cancer, and upon whose concerted work would depend the answers for sufferers of the disease...once these men had hit upon a cure, once it became apparent that only by their united effort could this be accomplished, then all of them would feel bound to devote themselves solely to the relief of cancer. In the radiance of such a miraculous discovery, any doctor would set his other ambitions aside, at whatever personal cost. Just as firmly bound by obligation are the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, who have demonstrated that they can help problem drinkers as others seldom can.
 - Page 151
 - There is another reason for this singleness of purpose. It is the great paradox of A.A. that we know we can seldom keep the precious gift of sobriety unless we give it away.
 - o Tradition Eleven: “Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.”
 - Page 180
 - Without its legions of well-wishers, A.A. could never have grown as it has. Throughout the world, immense and favorable publicity of every description has been the principal means of bringing alcoholics into our Fellowship
 - In A.A. offices, clubs and homes, telephones ring constantly. One voice says, “I read a piece in the newspapers...”; another, “We heard a radio program...”; and still another “We saw a moving picture...” or “We saw something about A.A. on television...” It is no exaggeration to say that half of A.A.’s membership has been led to us through channels like these.
 - Page 181
 - Obviously, A.A. had to be publicized somehow...
 - Page 182
 - The Foundation wrote letters to practically every news outlet in North America, setting forth our public relations policy of attraction rather than promotion, and emphasizing personal anonymity as A.A.’s greatest protection. Since that time, editors and rewrite men have repeatedly deleted names and picture of members from A.A. copy...
 - o Tradition Twelve: “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”
 - Page 186

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- But it became apparent that the word-of-mouth method was too limited. Our work, as such, needed to be publicized. The A.A. groups would have to reach quickly as many despairing alcoholics as they could.
- Page 187
 - As this tide of public approval swept in, we realized that it could do us incalculable good or great harm. Everything would depend upon how it was channeled. We simply couldn't afford to take the chance of letting self-appointed members present themselves as messiahs representing A.A. before the whole public. The promoter instinct in us might be our undoing. If even one publicly got drunk, or was lured into using A.A.'s name for his own purposes, the damage might be irreparable. At this altitude (press, radio, films and television), anonymity—100 percent anonymity—was the only possible answer. Here, principles would have to come before personalities.
- Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age
 - Page 34
 - When they first saw the Convention's pressroom, many visitors realized for the first time that good communications, within and without, were the actual arteries in which A.A.'s life-giving blood circulates among us and thence out to brother and sister sufferers everywhere. Something more than slow word-of-mouth message-carrying obviously has been required. Certainly not much Twelfth Step work ever could have been done until the sick ones and their families had been reached and persuaded that A.A. might offer hope for them.
 - Page 35
 - Years ago we found that accurate and effective publicity about A.A. simply does not manufacture itself. Our over-all public relations couldn't be left entirely to chance encounters between reporters and A.A. members, who might or might not be well informed about our fellowship as a whole. This kind of unorganized "simplicity" often garbled the true story of A.A. and kept people away from us.
 - Page 143
 - Another great service has been performed by A.A.'s friends of press, radio, and all kinds of communications. These agencies have given A.A. millions of dollars of free publicity. They have brought alcoholics to us by the tens of thousands. And they never have required anything of us except our co-operation in getting the story of A.A. before the world. We know that without the help of these friends our growth would have been slow indeed.
 - Page 144
 - When Dr. Bob and I realized on that fall day in 1937 that some two-score of us had recovered from alcoholism, we at once asked ourselves, "How can this experience be shared? How can the word be spread?" Dr. Bob had recovered two and a half years before, and I had been sober three years.

It had taken all this time to perfect the recovery program and to bring sobriety to a handful of sufferers. The number of alcoholics in the world who wanted to get well was reckoned in millions. How could the great chance we had be brought to them? At the snail's pace we had been going, it was clear that most of them could never be reached.

We could therefore no longer be a seldom heard of secret society. Word-of-mouth communication with the few alcoholics we could contact by our then-current methods would be not only slow but dangerous; dangerous because the recovery message in which we now had such high confidence might soon be garbled and twisted beyond recognition. Clearly our budding society and its message would have to be publicized.

Reference Section

- Page 206
 - Meanwhile a great tide of public approval, stimulated by A.A.'s friends of press, radio and in recent times television, began to sweep in upon us and it has never ceased. Each month a clipping service feeds our Headquarter scrapbooks with a very large amount of material. Writers constantly ask Headquarters to check their manuscripts. A.A. members are helped to appear anonymously on radio and TV programs. The making of arrangements or publicity has become a constantly increasing activity of our A.A. office. How many lives have been saved, how many years of misery have thus been averted for thousands of alcoholics and their families, only God knows.
- As Bill Sees It
 - Page 255
 - Nothing matters more to A.A.'s future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination.

Should we handle this great instrument badly, we shall be shattered by the ego manifestations of our own people. Against this peril, A.A. members' anonymity before the general public is our shield and our buckler.

Taken from the Grapevine, November 1960

Sample Anonymity Letter for the Media



World Service Office
CEA-HOW Inc.
3371 Glendale Blvd, Suite 104
Los Angeles, CA 90039
Phone: 323 660 4333, Fax: 323 660 4334
E-mail: gso@ceahow.org

Compulsive Eaters Anonymous-HOW

MEDIA LETTER

A NOTE OF THANKS – AND A REQUEST FOR CONTINUED COOPERATION

If any CEA-HOW member is identified in the media, we ask that you please use first names only (e.g., Judy L. or Tom S.) and that you not use photographs or electronic images in which members' faces may be recognized.

From time to time we write our public media friends to thank them for helping us observe our long-standing tradition of anonymity for members of Compulsive Eaters Anonymous – HOW (CEA-HOW).

First, let us express our deep gratitude to you. From the beginning, our members have recognized that word-of-mouth is not sufficient by itself to carry the program's message of hope and recovery to the many people still suffering from compulsive eating. The public media has been a vital part of this effort, and today we estimate that there are thousands of compulsive eaters around the world successfully recovering as a result of finding CEA-HOW.

Second, we respectfully request that you continue to cooperate with us in maintaining the anonymity of CEA-HOW members. The principle of anonymity is a basic tenet of our fellowship. Those who are reluctant to seek our help may overcome their fear if they are confident that their anonymity will be respected. In addition, and perhaps less understood, our tradition of anonymity acts as a restraint on CEA-HOW members, reminding us that we are a program of principles, not personalities, and that no individual CEA-HOW member may presume to act as a spokesman or leader of our fellowship.

Again, we thank you for your continued cooperation. Those who wish to know more about our fellowship are welcome to visit our website, www.ceahow.org. Our fellowship does not comment on matters of public controversy, but we are happy to provide information about CEA-HOW to anyone who seeks it.

Sincerely,

Public Information Committee
of Compulsive Eaters Anonymous

Sample “Dear Neighbor” Letter

Your Name
Your Intergroup Public Information Committee
Mailing Address
Phone number - Email address

Date:

Dear Neighbor: (Dear Friend is another option)

There’s a lot of talk about obesity these days. It’s in the news, on the talk shows, and advertisements for lap band are everywhere we look. Diet plans have new programs and there are new low fat products on the market every time we go to the grocery store. There are suggestions about getting more exercise, eating moderately, and ideas about to eat in a healthier way. There’s a lot of good information out there.

But if you are like many of us in Compulsive Eaters Anonymous – HOW (CEA-HOW), you’ve heard it all before. You’ve tried many diets, weight loss programs, pills, and even surgery. You know what you should do but can’t seem to do it for more than a short period of time (a month, a week, a day, 10 minutes...) It’s a constant battle that you just can’t win. We may be able to help.

CEA-HOW is a fellowship of individuals who have been where you are. We understand your struggle with food and weight. We are not affiliated with any other weight loss program; there are no dues or fees for members. Our program is patterned after the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and we apply those principles to our addiction to food.

We welcome the opportunity to provide you with information about our program of recovery. We have included the following in the enclosed packet:

Am I A Food Addict
Overview of the 12 Step Program
The CEA-HOW Concept and What It Means

You can find more information about our fellowship, phone bridge meetings and how to obtain a local meeting schedule on our website at www.ceahow.org. If you would like to speak to somebody, please feel free to contact us at the phone number listed above.

We look forward to hearing from you and joining you on your path to recovery.

Sincerely,

John Doe
Your Intergroup Public Information Committee
COMPULSIVE EATERS ANONYMOUS - HOW

Sample 3x5 Card

ARE YOU A COMPULSIVE EATER?

- Do you eat when you're not hungry?
- Do you hide your eating from others?
- Do you overeat and then starve yourself, purge, take laxatives or exercise for hours?
- Do you promise yourself you won't overeat and then do it anyway?
- Is your weight affecting the way you live your life?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may have a problem with compulsive eating. You are not alone. There is recovery. We welcome you to attend a meeting of Compulsive Eaters Anonymous - HOW (CEA-HOW). For more information: **(XXX) XXX-XXXX** or visit **www.ceahow.org**

Sample 13 Questions Handout

Are you a Compulsive Eater?

1. Do you get hungry when things don't go your way?
2. Do you get hungry when there doesn't seem to be anything to do?
3. After you have been frightened or scared about something that has happened, do you find yourself hungry?
4. When you feel "all alone" do you sometimes use food to get over the feeling?
5. After an argument with someone, do you find yourself wanting to eat?
6. Have you ever found yourself eating two breakfasts, lunches, or dinners because you felt the first one was inadequate?
7. Do you find yourself planning the next meal before you have finished eating?
8. When you sit down to a meal, do you find you eat more than you want to?
9. Do you ever have a sense of being out of control during a meal?
10. Have you ever sought outside help to deal with your eating?
11. Do you ever attempt to hide your binges by eating in secret or alone or in your car?
12. Have you ever turned to diet pills, alcohol or other drugs in an effort to control your eating or relieve depression or guilt?
13. Are you obsessed with body image, weight or exercise?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may have a problem with compulsive eating. You are not alone. There is recovery. We welcome you to attend a meeting of CEA-HOW.

For more information call **(xxx) xxx-xxxx** or visit our website at **www.ceahow.org**