

Hello Everyone!

We held a General Service Board of EDA meeting on Wednesday, July 19th. The General Service Board of Eating Disorders Anonymous is an organization set up to help EDA groups carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer. We meet every month, and (per GSB vote this evening) we now meet on 1st Wednesdays.

Attendees:

- Allyson T – Delray Beach, FL
- Amy – Lubbock, TX
- Annette H – Phoenix, AZ
- Gisele B – Phoenix, AZ
- Jamie K – San Diego, CA
- Jenni S – Austin, TX
- Jill R – Chicago, IL
- Liz F – California
- Liza M – Silver Spring, MD
- Lynn L – Minnesota
- Margo H – Knoxville, TN
- Nuria S – Florence, SC
- Seren – Maine
- Stacey Lee F – Pensacola, FL

Notes:

- **Step Workshop Recap:**
 - **Congratulations** to everyone who attended the 1st ever EDA Big Book Step Study Workshop, and **thank you to all the organizers and panelists!**
 - We've heard an overwhelming number of positive comments from workshop participants.
 - A post-workshop survey was sent out to elicit more specific feedback on what went well and what could be improved. Results will be sent out before our next GSB meeting.
 - EDA Step Study Workshop Worksheets are now available on the Literature tab of the EDA website, www.4EDA.org/publications.html.
- **Additional Step Workshops:**
 - We know of a few groups who are interested in starting EDA Step Workshops in their area.
 - Del Ray Beach, FL has started discussing the idea of a workshop in January 2018
 - Lancaster, PA is also thinking of holding a workshop in the next six months

- Resources in the San Diego area may also be interested
- **Help for groups wanting to hold an EDA Step Workshop in their area:**
 - Annette agreed to post a copy of the EDA Step Workshop schedule and .pdf version of the PowerPoint slides (minus names of the presenters) online for reference by groups who want to use these materials.
 - Anyone interested in leveraging these materials can write to StepWorkshop@eatingdisordersanonymous.org to get the source PowerPoint decks, and can ask for advice on how to get started if this is desired.
 - Nuria agreed to update the slide decks to remove the names of the presenters, and will make an effort to identify specific page and paragraph numbers, as the current version of both the worksheets and the slide decks list ranges of pages rather than specific references in many cases. (Annette just sent the slide decks to Nuria).
- **Cooperation vs affiliation with treatment centers**
 - A question was raised about holding EDA Step Workshops at eating disorders treatment facilities.
 - The long form of EDA's 6th Tradition states:

An EDA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the EDA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose. To involve our fellowship in issues outside the direct scope of our primary purpose is to distract us from carrying the EDA message to those who still suffer. To best serve our primary purpose, we hold no affiliation to external organizations or activities.
 - Just like other Twelve-Step groups, many EDA groups meet at treatment facilities. Part of carrying the message of recovery is taking it to those who need to hear it. Bill W and Dr. Bob met with new AA prospects in hospital settings. AA members and EDA members do the same.
 - We think it is well understood that Twelve-Step groups are **not** affiliated with treatment facilities, schools, libraries, halls, and churches where Twelve-Step meetings are held.
 - A Twelve-Step Workshop is analogous to (but not exactly like) a Twelve Step meeting. **Special precautions should be taken to address the presumption of affiliation that could arise.**
 - We considered the implications of having an EDA Step Workshop at a treatment facility. There were several concerns expressed, including:
 - **Anonymity:** The anonymity of attendees could be compromised by having treatment center staff know who is in their facility.
 - The point was made that there will always be a need to share information about people attending the workshop with

any facility where a workshop is held. Techny, for instance, had a list of our contact information—they require this as part of their health and safety policy. When an event was over, Techny shredded the records.

- When EDA members visit prospects in treatment centers, they also must sign in and out, and often also have to sign non-disclosure agreements to protect the confidentiality of patients.
- We reflected on the 12th Tradition, “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.” The tradition is not meant to bar us from being of service to those who need to hear the message of recovery. Instead, except for resources who are already professional (such as professionals in the field of eating disorders treatment and prevention who serve on our General Service Board), we are to be *anonymous at the level of press, radio, film, and web*. We should note that the initial composition of AA’s General Service Office included roughly half AA members and half professionals.
- Early AA members knew each other’s full names, and the members of the medical professional communities in which they worked also knew them. We ought to remember that the idea is to provide humble and anonymous **service**, remembering we are serving *principles, not personalities*.
- Per the AA Big Book, page 102: “Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others, so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful. You should not hesitate to visit the most sordid spot on earth on such an errand.”
- **Lending the EDA name:** by holding a Step Workshop or meeting at an eating disorders treatment center, there is an implied association. When flyers go out declaring that a Step Workshop is being held at such-and-such facility, people may misconstrue collaboration as endorsement. We agreed that any printed material would need to include verbiage that clarifies that EDA is not allied with any related facility or outside enterprise, **and** that we would need to get the treatment facility to agree via a legal document not to use the EDA name in any of its promotional material. It would not, for instance, be acceptable for a treatment center to donate space on condition that the workshop literature or flyers state that the event is sponsored by the treatment center.
- A motion was made and seconded to adopt the following statement: “The General Service Board of EDA accepts that an EDA Step Workshop may be conducted at an eating disorders treatment facility under the following conditions: 1) All workshop signage clarifies that EDA is not affiliated with the treatment center, and 2) The treatment center signs an Agreement of

Non-Affiliation, in which it affirms it will not use the EDA name in any promotional material.” The vote passed with twelve in favor, one opposed, and one abstention.

- **Connecting with others:**
 - o As agreed at the Step Workshop, Jill sent emails to everyone asking about inclusion on a contact list. She will send out an updated contact list to those who agreed to share their information with other workshop attendees.
 - o Jill created a secret/private Facebook page for Step Workshop attendees. People were added to this Facebook page because apparently there is no other way to invite people to a FaceBook page; the invitation is through addition. If you were added without your consent and do not wish to be included, please remove yourself from the group.
 - o **Please note:** The Board recognizes and appreciates enthusiasm for recovery, and recognizes how vital it is for EDA members to stay connected. The GSB, however, had not taken a Group Conscience vote about the creation of a FaceBook page. We agreed that no similar action should be taken before a Group Conscience vote in the future.

- **GSB housekeeping:**
 - o **Zoom, not Skype:** After a relatively brief discussion of pros and cons, we voted unanimously to switch to Zoom for future GSB meetings.
 - The (Zoom) phone number for **US (west): 1-408-638-0968**. The phone number for **US (east): 1-646-558-8656**.
 - The Meeting ID is 7971017971 #.
 - When asked for Participant Number, enter 7971017971 # again.
 - If calling from Canada or another country, your dial in number will be different, but the Meeting ID and Participant Number will be the same. Please see the Zoom site for the dial in number for your country at <https://zoom.us/zoomconference>.
 - Alternatively, you can join a Zoom meeting join via the Zoom application. Connect to <https://zoom.us>, then download and run the Meeting Client installer (Zoom_Launcher.exe.) This adds a blue-and-white Zoom icon to your taskbar. To join a Zoom meeting, click the Zoom icon, enter the Meeting ID and Participant Number, and click “Join.”
 - o **Switching to 1st Wednesdays:**
 - After a brief discussion, we considered a motion to move the GSB meeting to 1st Wednesdays, and voted unanimously in favor of the proposal. Our next meeting will be August 2nd.

- **Videos discussing how to work the Steps:**
 - o One of our Board members has started voice recordings (with a sponsee) about working the first few Steps, using Chapter 7 as a guide (see links below).

- Those who have listened to the recordings have liked them. **We will take a vote at the next GSB on August 2nd about whether to post GSB-approved recordings on the EDA website.**

Agenda for our August 2nd meeting:

- **Shall we list recordings discussing how to work the Steps on the EDA website?**
 - One of our Board members has started voice recordings (with a sponsee) about working the Steps, using Chapter 7 as a guide.
 - Several months ago, we agreed it would be helpful to have something like this accessible to people looking for help with working the Steps: we are short of sponsors.
 - The GSB will first consider whether to list recordings approved by the GSB on the EDA website. If the proposal is accepted, we will vote on each of the below videos independently, unless too few people have heard them. Homework: please listen to the below recordings.
 - Intro: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugvX8agsloY&t=34s>
 - Step 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amJAFLSw6dk&t=210s>
 - Step 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m540vbyKedk>
 - Step 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0-uQcikYF0>
 - Step 4 (part 1): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3Jc4zl1RwQ>
 - Step 4 (part 2): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjx6qxcO8YE>
 - Step 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMKRYwZMBNU>

- **Shall we consider AA literature “GSB approved?”**
 - Some discussion points to consider:
 - Many EDA groups have long used AA literature, and many sponsors continue to use AA literature when taking EDA members through the Steps. AA literature need not be “GSB approved” for these practices to continue. EDA sponsors have always been encouraged to use whatever material they deem in the best interest of carrying the message of recovery to their sponsees.
 - While there is much that is wonderful and inspiring in all Twelve Step literature—and EDA’s Big Book draws very heavily and explicitly on AA literature—there are good reasons why we have been focused on developing our own EDA literature. Among these:
 - AA (and other Twelve-Step groups’) literature is abstinence-based, containing many statements that are black-and-white, all-or-nothing, overly dramatic, and hyperbolic. Though sometimes funny and poignant, such statements foster all-or-nothing thinking and are not conducive to recovery from an eating disorder.
 - The earliest founding members of EDA did not recover from their eating disorders by using the *AA Big Book* or the *AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. We used AA’s Steps and Traditions as the

foundation for EDA, but stopped using the AA Big Book because it conflicted with ideas we knew were at the core of eating disorders recovery: balance not abstinence, and the idea that full recovery is possible.

- Thus, to admit all AA literature, or even just the AA Big Book and AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as “GSB approved” is counter to EDA’s foundational ideas:
 - Recovery from an eating disorder is about **balance, not abstinence**
 - **Full recovery.** We recover by building relationships of trust—with ourselves, with others, and with a God, Higher Power, or higher purpose of our own understanding—through taking small, careful risks. However, we cannot build relationships of trust without perspective, and we cannot get perspective without first taking care of basics: when hungry, eat; when angry, find a safe outlet; when lonely, reach out; when tired, sleep; when ashamed, talk about it. These ideas are not in opposition to AA literature at all, however, *AA does not provide support for the idea that we gain full recovery by developing resilience and flexibility through this (usually quite slow) process of taking small, careful risks to build trust.* The AA literature describes what full recovery looks like—see page 102 in the AA text—but this support is insufficient to constitute a definition of “full recovery” in light of other passages that suggest quite the opposite.
- There is no sincere accommodation in AA’s foundational texts for atheists and agnostics. Although the early members of AA included an atheist who stayed sober, and Bill W himself allowed that “greater good” could be used in place of God in the Twelve Steps, the chapter in the AA text entitled “*We Agnostics*” attempts to convince readers that the way of spiritual faith is the only viable solution to the alcoholic malady. The AA Big Book and AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions express throughout how spiritual faith is essential to recovery, yet the lived experience of many in Twelve Step fellowships worldwide shows that **reliance on ideas and principles greater than ourselves**—whether the reliance is on God, Higher Power, or higher purpose—enables us to walk free. The many statements in the AA texts that deny the fullness of this truth are offensive and injurious to those who cannot reconcile themselves with the idea of God or Higher Power. EDA’s literature explicitly, and we hope respectfully, bridges the gap. It is the obligation of every EDA member to reach out a hand to those who still suffer, regardless of what they currently believe, or think they can believe. To embrace an entire body of literature that denies access to those who do not see life as we see it runs counter to the purpose of EDA.

- AA's World Services office issued a statement requesting that other Twelve-Step groups, including ours, read AA literature as written, without substituting words.
- EDA literature will continue to grow, and *will quote additional AA literature where appropriate*. There are many excellent passages in AA literature that we have not yet referenced in EDA texts, and there will be opportunity to do so. There is no need to incorporate all of AA literature as "GSB approved" at this time. To do so would be confusing to the EDA newcomer, and counterproductive to EDA as a whole.
- EDA groups have always been allowed to incorporate outside literature, provided the inclusion is by Group Conscience vote. The GSB recommends that groups using outside literature identify it at the start of each meeting where it is referenced.
- If a vote is taken, we ask that only one representative from each EDA group participate to prevent unfair weighting of the outcome in favor of groups where multiple people join the call. (Everyone is welcome to join GSB meetings.)
- By convention, the Chair abstains unless participation is impactful (vote affects the outcome) and material (Chair represents a group).
- **EDA Step Workbook:**
 - Many people have expressed a desire to retain the best of our existing Step Workbook. We will be updating the workbook to reflect the content of the Step Workshop, aligning material with the EDA Big Book and including specific guidance from sponsors in EDA.
 - It is very important that all opinions and ideas are heard and addressed. If you have concerns or ideas, please raise them: write to literature@eatingdisordersanonymous.org.

Thank you to all who attended and to all who serve EDA! Please pass these minutes on to members of your groups.

Our next meeting will be on August 2nd, 2017, at 7PM Central Time.

We will use Zoom for the August 2nd and future GSB meetings.

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Wishing you peace and joy in recovery,
Annette H
Chair, General Service Board of EDA

Note: This email address is checked only monthly. Please send comments and inquiries to info@eatingdisordersanonymous.org.