

Hello Everyone!

We held a General Service Board of EDA meeting on Wednesday, September 6th, 2017. 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 on 1st Wednesdays. We strongly encourage every EDA group to elect a General Service Representative (GSR) to represent and vote at GSB meetings.

Attendees:

- Allyson T – Delray Beach, FL
- Annette H – Phoenix, AZ
- Cathy – Wisconsin
- Connie – Fort Bragg, CA
- Debbie F – Christchurch, New Zealand
- Elizabeth – Palo Alto, CA
- Jill R – Chicago, IL
- Jamie K – San Diego
- Julie M – Lancaster, PA
- Linnae – North Carolina
- Liz F – Oakland, CA
- Liz (2) – Oakland, CA
- Liza M – Silver Spring, MD
- Margo H – Knoxville, TN
- Michelle D – Myrtle Beach
- Nuria S – Florence, SC
- Seren B – Maine
- Veronica N – Delray Beach

Notes:

- **We unanimously agreed to form a Bylaws subcommittee with the following mandate:**
 - Review and discuss Service Organization structures in other Twelve Step groups.
 - Identify pros and cons of adding a Board of Trustees
 - If the subcommittee agrees to a revision to the bylaws by December 2017, present a recommendation to the GSB for the restructuring the General Service Board for an up or down vote (2/3rds majority is required to pass per our existing bylaws).
 - If recommending the addition of a Board of Trustees (and/or other changes), specify roles and responsibilities (and limitations thereto) for each organizational unit
 - Establish guidelines for handling General Service Board member actions that transgress the GSB Charter, Bylaws, or EDA Traditions, taking into account the need to address both major (i.e. theft and other

criminal behavior; intentional personal injury, such as intentionally or repeatedly violating someone else's personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, film, or web; threats, name-calling, and other unprofessional or unethical behavior; publicly promoting ideas and practices that directly conflict with EDAs foundational principles) and minor concerns (i.e. forgetting to attend GSB meetings without sending a proxy, using personal email blocks that include promotional material for outside organizations when communicating on behalf of the GSB, and using EDA's contact lists to promote outside organizations)

- **Members of the Bylaws Subcommittee:**

- Annette H
- Gisele B
- Julie M
- Nuria S
- Michelle P
- Paige S

Several others, including the Literature Subcommittee Co-chair Jamie K and Events Coordinator Jill R, offered to provide preliminary review of materials prior to the proposal going to the General Service Board for a vote.

- **Expectations:**

- Bylaws subcommittee members will decide among themselves when and how to meet.
- We will adhere to the admonition to "Keep It Simple" and will be as clear and concise as possible.
- Bylaws subcommittee members should plan to make time available each week to review materials, and respond within a day or two, so that we can arrive at recommendations, decide upon them, and propose them to the General Service Board by the December meeting of the GSB. It is important, however, that we respect both the volunteer aspect and the gravity of the

- **Action Items:**

- Annette to create a new distribution list, bylaws@eatingdisordersanonymous.org for the above-listed bylaws subcommittee volunteers. If you are interested in joining, please write info@eatingdisordersanonymous.org and one of our email correspondents will respond. We are capping participation at 10 people, understanding that the whatever the bylaws subcommittee proposes will be reviewed and voted on by the General Service Board as a whole.

- **We discussed recordings made by the Lancaster, PA group:**

- Intro to working the Steps: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugvX8aqsloY&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>
- Step 6: <https://youtu.be/58jELVC7o3g>

Kudos to the Lancaster, PA group of EDA for doing such a stellar job with these recordings!

We considered whether to add these recordings to the EDA website. Many expressed how much they appreciate these recordings. Several expressed concern that such recordings may be seen as a possible substitute for EDA community or sponsorship—something that could be injurious to the newcomer. Others agreed, but countered that such recordings are a help for those who are truly isolated. Some suggested that the recordings could be made available on request. Others suggested the recording would be a way to scaffold people so they are able to engage with the EDA Big Book.

It *is possible* to append something to the beginning of each recording, providing clarification around the “no substitute for community and sponsorship” points specifically, however, the process of adding a preface to an audio recording is not necessarily easy and the Lancaster, PA group did not sign up to re-record.

Decided:

- We agreed unanimously that the General Service Board should create an “audio recordings” page on the EDA website, www.4EDA.org.
- We agreed that the literature team should review, and provide recommendations for adoption or rejection to the GSB, on each individual recording based on the same criteria that are used for other literature.
- We agreed that the General Service Board, after obtaining a recommendation from the literature team, would vote on each recording individually.
- We agreed to send the feedback received about the recordings so far to the literature committee.
- **Action Item:** Julie and/or Annette to send the feedback on the above-listed recordings to literature@eatingdisordersanonymous.org for review.

- **The General Service Board of EDA voted on whether or not EDA shall consider AA literature “GSB approved.” The proposal to approve AA literature was unanimously rejected, with no abstentions other than the Chair.**

Decided:

- Motioned by Nuria S, and seconded by Jamie K, the General Service Board of EDA unanimously rejected the proposal to accept AA literature as “General Service Board approved.”
- The General Service Board of EDA **reaffirms** that:
 - **As always, EDA sponsors are welcome to use whatever literature they have found helpful in their own recovery when working with sponsees.**
 - **As always, EDA groups may, by Group Conscience vote, decide to use outside literature if so doing is deemed to be in the best interests of carrying the message of recovery to the newcomer.** The General Service Board recommends that groups using outside literature identify it as such by reading a statement at the opening of each meeting where such literature is used, as this will prevent affecting other groups or EDA as a whole.
 - **As noted on the EDA website:**
 - In keeping with EDA's 4th Tradition, use of outside literature (including literature from other Twelve Step groups) in EDA meetings is contingent on Group Conscience vote.
 - To prevent impact to other groups and EDA as whole, please state, "This group has voted to include outside literature, [name of specific text]" at the start of each meeting where outside literature is used.

Discussion:

- 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.

On deck for our October meeting:

- **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.
- **EDA Daily Meditation book (365 days of the year)**
 - This idea has come up before. EDA does not currently have a 365-day book of meditations. This seems to be a literature committee topic. Anyone interested?
- **EDA Step Workshops: several groups are starting to get these going!** Find out when and where, and what you can do to get involved.
- **EDA Sponsorship: we are in urgent need of EDA sponsors.** What can we do to foster and support sponsors?

Have you worked the Steps? Help solidify your own recovery by sharing your experience, strength, and hope with others: write to sponsors@eatingdisordersanonymous.org and volunteer to be a sponsor today, or just ask about what the process entails. People out there need you!

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

Our next full GSB meeting will be on October 4th, 2017, at 7PM Central Time.

We will use Zoom for this meeting, and to prevent confusion, frustration, and despair(!) we will have someone open the room ten minutes early. The (Zoom) phone number for US is 1-408-638-0968.

- The Zoom Meeting ID is 570242738 #.
- When asked for Participant Number, enter 570242738 #

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.