

Hello Everyone!

Happy Holidays!

We held a General Service Board of EDA meeting on Wednesday, December 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:

- Annette H – Phoenix, AZ
- Mandy F – Montana
- Corrine W – Wichita, KS
- Liza – Silver Spring, MD
- LeAnn – Mississippi
- Julie M – Lancaster, PA
- Amelia – Bethesda, MD
- Jill R – Chicago, IL
- Nuria S – Florence, SC
- Sam – Utah
- Sue A – Massachusetts
- Seren B – Online meeting

Notes from our December 6th meeting:

- **We adopted the 12 Concepts of Service in EDA**
 - We adopted the 12 Concepts of Service in EDA (attached) with an affirmative vote by 10 of 12 representatives, with 2 abstentions from new GSRs who not discussed the document with their groups yet.
 - The 12 Concepts of Service will be posted on the Literature and GSB tabs on the EDA website before January 1st, 2018.
- **It's the holidays! Many struggle, but it doesn't have to be that way.**
- In recovery, we can celebrate the warmth of our relationships with family and friends without engaging in any negative body image or food-related obsessive thinking or acting out.
- **We discussed some ideas that can help:**
 - *We are all just human beings trying to live life on life's terms. Our families and family members might not be all that healthy, but they, like us, are doing the best they can. They might be quite ill, but we don't have to be—we can get and stay well regardless of anyone, because in EDA (and in other Twelve Step programs) we learn to **Lean on God (Higher Power/higher purpose) and Walk with People.***

- *We can **love people for who and what they are** (and are trying to be), rather than being disappointed because we have unrealistic expectations of our family members or of ourselves.*
- **Bookend potentially difficult events:** *call someone in recovery before and after big family gatherings or events that are stressful – this works for non-holiday events, too!*
- **Use the phone list:** *sometimes just being accountable to someone can help.*
- **Reach out to someone who may be struggling, and consider sponsoring others.** *Sometimes the best way to strengthen our own recovery is to share our gratitude for what we have and support others in their recovery.*
- **Read EDA's [Help for the Holidays](#) brochure.**
- **We discussed challenges faced by EDA groups and EDA members**
 - **How do groups handle distinction between types of eating disorders?**
 - **Be explicit about welcoming everyone**, looking for similarities rather than distinctions, taking what you can use and leaving the rest.
 - **Don't sidestep the issue with newcomers.** It can be really tough for people coming in who don't "look" like "the norm" in any particular group. Explain that most people have seen different forms of eating disorders over the course of their lives, and that the solution to all eating disorders has to do with emotional recovery, and building a new foundation in our relationship to life. (Might not serve the best interests of the newcomer to mention the spiritual angle right at first, when the newcomer might already be better versed in religious matters than we are, or when they might be agnostic or atheist.)
 - **Encourage milestones that tie back to the EDA motto, H.E.A.L.T.H** (Honesty, Equality, Accountability, Love, Trust and Humility), rather than on recovery from symptoms.
 - **Set an example by using the term "eating disordered"** rather than "anorexic", "bulimic", "binge eater", or "compulsive overeater"
 - **Set an example by generalizing your shares: refer to "acting out"** rather than "throwing up," "restricting," or "bingeing."
 - **Focus on emotional recovery**, not physical manifestations of the eating disorder: acting out (whatever the form) is but a symptom of our issues.
 - **Sponsoring people when they are not abstinent**—*some sponsors (especially people from other Twelve Step groups) have trouble with this!*
 - Strong recovery depends on being less afraid of ourselves and "triggers". We cannot develop confidence if we do not take small, careful risks. When we take larger risks than we ought, we pick ourselves up and learn from the experience. Developing resilience-

full recovery—seems to require falling down and picking ourselves back up quite a lot: sponsors need to maintain a positive attitude.

- Focus on the milestones to keep the atmosphere recovery based.
- Some groups end with each participant selecting an area in which they commit to be brave.
- An initial description of the recovery process is covered on pages xvi-xvii in the EDA Big Book. Abstinence from behaviors is not required to start working the Steps, but full recovery comes from full reliance on them. Bottom of page xvi through end of first full paragraph on page xvii clarifies that we gain peace and freedom from our eating disorders by gaining perspective *through working the Steps*. We have a spiritual transformation (or transcendent experience) as a *result* of working the Steps: they restore us to sanity as we come to rely upon them, and upon our own concept of God, Higher Power, or higher purpose.
- Yes, early recovery is often messy, but as we work though issues, full recovery is resilient – not rigid. We need never be afraid of ourselves. “As we resolve our underlying thinking problems and become more positive and proactive, our recovery grows stronger and more flexible. By practicing the habits of thought and behavior we learn through working the Twelve Steps, we find we can rely on them to bring us durable peace and freedom: we need never return to our old patterns.”
- Bottom of page 79 through bottom of page 80 describes the process in greater detail, and page 97 through page 98 outlines the change in perspective and orientation to self that characterizes full recovery.
- Pages 110-112, introduces the Twelve Steps and explains what is required to make a full recovery. Specifically, in the middle of page 111: “We would like to assure all readers that it is completely normal for someone with an eating disorder to continue to engage in old patterns of thought and behavior until they have – through repeated and determined practice—learned to rely more heavily on a new foundation created through working the Twelve Steps.”
- At the bottom of page 111-112, “We are not able to change by focusing on ourselves directly. It is too much for us! (footnoted AA text here). Instead, we have to allow change to happen within and through us by doing two things:
 - 1. Removing ourselves from the center of our own attention by placing our focus on something greater than ourselves that we commit to serve without reservation. All people in

Twelve Step recovery find their new freedom, peace, power, and happiness comes directly through steady reliance on God, manifested as a Higher Power of their own understanding, or on the idea of serving a higher purpose. To provide perspective and meaning to our lives, we replace self-centeredness with God-centeredness or service to the greater good. It is that simple.

- 2. Recognizing that serving God and/or the greater good requires us to first take care of our own basic needs for air, water, food, sleep, clothing, shelter, and physical safety. We remember the old adage, “God helps those who help themselves.” We found we could not reliably turn our attention to a higher plane until our basic needs—not wants—were met. We must first take care of these basics, and it is our job to do so.
 - Page 189: When we take good care of ourselves, the “tiger within” settles down, and we can then utilize its strength and power to serve others (and a Power or purpose greater than ourselves) more reliably.
 - Page 257: “EDA’s endorsement of balance (not abstinence) proved confusing to both newcomers and Twelve-Step old-timers. We had to remind ourselves—and each other—that recovery is a process, not an event. Some EDA members are granted an immediate reprieve from their eating-disordered behaviors, but far more find their recovery is gradual. As we practice new ways of being in the world that permit us to let go of old behaviors, they begin to lose their power, and we are gradually restored to sanity.
 - EDA’s position is that living in recovery is so much better than living with an active eating disorder that no one who has experienced both will want to go back to old patterns for long.

- **EDA Step Workshops 2018: *Please pass the word to your groups!***
 - **Southern CA EDA Step Study: January 21st 2018 – Carlsbad, CA. [Click here](#) to get details and/or register (Flyer attached)**
 - **Lancaster PA EDA Step Workshop: March 16-18, 2018: [Click here](#) to get details and/or register (Flyer attached)**
 - **Southeast Regional EDA Step Workshop: Moving to May 2018! (Lakeview Church, Delray Beach, FL).**

- **Northeast Regional EDA Step Workshop:** June 15-17, 2018 at Pendle Hill (close to Philadelphia)!

- **EDA Daily Meditation book (365 days of the year)!**
 - **To submit a meditation for consideration:**
 - Please include a quotation from the EDA Big Book or other EDA literature at the top of your meditation.
 - Following each quote, include your personal reflection on the quotation.
 - Please remember to be concise – the quote plus reflection should fit onto one small page (think of *Daily Reflections* or *Inner Harvest*).
 - Send your submission via email to meditations@eatingdisordersanonymous.org **or** click on [EDA Meditations](#) and add your meditation to the bottom of the existing Google Doc.
Please do not edit or delete anyone else’s submissions. All entries will be reviewed and edited before being submitted for consideration by the literature team.
 - We would love everyone to submit one or more meditations for consideration.

- **EDA Sponsorship: we are in urgent need of EDA sponsors.** What can we do to foster and support sponsors? Answers:
 - Conduct an EDA Step Workshop in your area and
 - Encourage sponsees to start sponsoring

- **Great news:** if your group is willing to **order 24 or more books through the GSB: you can get a 50% discount.** Shipping on a box of 24 runs around \$22-25, depending on destination. This means each book will cost about \$8. Contact treasurer@eatingdisordersanonymous.org if you’d like to place an order.

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!

Our next full GSB meeting will be on January 3rd, 2018, at 7PM Central Time.

Agenda items for our January 3rd meeting:

- **Revised EDA Bylaws** – we’ll send out the new version for a vote in February
- **Fully Recovered** brochure – EDA has embraced the idea of full recovery since its inception, yet those of us coming from other Twelve Step groups sometimes struggle with this concept because most Twelve Step programs have a “once an addict, always an addict” approach. We addressed this in the EDA Big Book, but it is obvious that we need to do a better job clarifying exactly what it means to be

fully recovered – without “mental blank spots,” vulnerability to triggers, or re-engaging with eating disordered thoughts and behavior—and how we support one another in the process of becoming fully recovered. Abstinence from behaviors obviously *isn't* full recovery, and a focus on abstinence can lead to rigidity of thought and habit. That's why EDA doesn't set “abstinence” aside as something unto itself... even though abstinence from behaviors is **definitely** part of full recovery. Join us in January for more discussion on this!

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

We will use Zoom for this meeting, 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.