

## Welcome and Thank You!

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We are glad you are thinking about starting an EDA meeting. It is not an easy task, often requiring much patience and persistence; yet effort put into sharing our honest experience, strength and hope helps us recognize, celebrate and deepen our recovery. We sincerely hope your recovery will be strengthened through your efforts to carry the message of recovery.

First things first: Per our Traditions, EDA meetings can only be run by EDA members. Once a group is formed it must follow our primary purpose, which states "Our primary purpose is to recover from our eating disorders and to carry this message of recovery to others with eating disorders." There are no dues or fees for EDA membership: anyone with a desire to recover from an eating disorder can be an EDA member.

If you have no experience in other 12-Step programs you may find it very helpful to attend EDA on-line or phone meetings prior to and while starting a new group. EDA is guided by its 12 Traditions. Please read the Traditions prior to starting your group.

Have questions about starting a meeting? Email [info@eatingdisordersanonymous.org](mailto:info@eatingdisordersanonymous.org).

One of EDA's volunteer support staff will respond as soon as possible.

## Steps to Getting a Meeting Started

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- Review suggestions for starting a new meeting in the *EDA Meeting Guide* (in the EDA Meeting Starter Kit).
  - Locate a facility to hold the meeting. Public libraries are often available for meetings. Try to find a central location to increase likelihood of attendance.
  - Pick a time and day of week for the meeting that you can reliably make. Try to select a time that should be convenient for others.
  - Let EDA's support staff know about your meeting. Please contact [wm@eatingdisordersanonymous.org](mailto:wm@eatingdisordersanonymous.org) with the information so we can put it in our "EDA Meetings" web page.
  - **Remember to keep your anonymity at the level of press, radio, film and web.** Contact info should be something like [YourCityEDA@gmail.com](mailto:YourCityEDA@gmail.com) instead of a personal address (you can forward the email to whomever will be answering email in the future). Avoid giving out personal phone numbers to the general public.
  - Make up flyers. Flyers should include, "For more information, see [www.4EDA.org](http://www.4EDA.org)." **Please be careful to share information without "promoting EDA"**. It is easy to get overzealous. Our program is based on attraction, not promotion, but it is essential to "carry the message." Half of EDA's primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to others with eating disorders. When we share information about meetings and about our own experience, strength, and hope we are doing just that.
  - Post flyers in health centers of local universities.
- Provide flyers/information to local therapists/psychologists/psychiatrists who treat eating disorders (find these on [www.EDArefferal.com](http://www.EDArefferal.com)).
    - Ask such resources if they know anyone in recovery who could help run meetings.
    - Ask them to pass on your contact information (if you feel safe doing so).
  - Provide information to halfway houses/treatment centers.
  - Contact newspapers about your meeting. Community pages often list 12-Step meeting information free of charge.
  - Call your friends and let them know about the meeting.
  - Be prepared to serve as the meeting chairperson for the first six months.
  - Attend online and phone EDA meetings (and/or attend other 12-Step meetings if applicable to you) while your fellowship is growing. You need to be healthy too.
  - Be prepared for little attendance during the first six months.
  - Keep to the 12-Steps and 12-Traditions!
  - Be patient! It sometimes takes great perseverance to get a new meeting up and running.
  - BE PUNCTUAL – people tend not to return if no one greets them and makes them feel welcome. Make sure someone can be at the meeting at least 5 minutes early to open the doors.

**Once your group gets going, EDA suggests you hold a business meeting to elect:**

- Chairperson responsible for facilitating meetings, greeting newcomers and making sure the other positions are filled.
- General Service Representative (GSR) to carry information to and from EDA's General Service Board (GSB). For more information, see [www.4EDA.org/generalserviceboard](http://www.4EDA.org/generalserviceboard).
- Treasurer to collect 7th Tradition funds and pay the rent.
- Literature Representative to make copies of EDA literature (from [www.4EDA.org/publications](http://www.4EDA.org/publications)) available at meetings. 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.

Service positions, such as chairperson and treasurer, generally rotate every 3 to 6 months. The group conscience (group vote) can determine how long service terms should last. It is vital to emphasize the importance of sharing service commitments. It is good for our recovery to accept and carry out service commitments to ourselves and others. It is amazing how many people involved in EDA service say service (chairing meetings, answering email, writing literature) has been very helpful in building their recovery and helping them develop good coping skills.

According to our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, each EDA group ought to be fully self-supporting through its own contributions. Each meeting should take a collection at its conclusion. Once your group has established a prudent reserve of 2-3 months rent, it should decide (by group conscience vote) what to

do with the surplus, bearing in mind that each group's purpose is to carry the message of recovery. We suggest a percentage of the surplus be sent to EDA's GSB to help fund public information dissemination and the website.

A **7<sup>th</sup> Tradition Contribution Form** is included in the Meeting Starter Kit: please send in a copy with each contribution or use **PayPal** (see [www.4EDA.org/support](http://www.4EDA.org/support)) to send in your meeting's contribution. We suggest the balance be used to carry the message of recovery to others with eating disorders in your local community, setting up a local EDA service office and hotline, or whatever group conscience dictates.

Sometimes meetings just can't seem to get off the ground. If you have been trying hard for six months and no one is showing up regularly at your meeting or if no one else is willing to accept responsibility for the meeting, it is all right to call it quits. Contact [wm@eatingdisordersanonymous.org](mailto:wm@eatingdisordersanonymous.org) with the location, day of week and time of any meeting you know of that is closing. When a meeting does not succeed it is sometimes indicative that other things in life need attention. Failure of a meeting should not be taken as a personal failure. Remember, EDA's stance is "Effort, not results." We are responsible for our efforts. The results of our efforts are not our responsibility; we try to accept them with as much grace and dignity as possible.

**Whatever happens, don't lose heart: You are not alone!**

**Thank you and best wishes for the success of your meeting!**

Sincerely,

**The General Service Board of Eating Disorders Anonymous**

[www.4EDA.org/generalserviceboard](http://www.4EDA.org/generalserviceboard)

## *Starting an EDA Meeting*



For more information please visit our website at:

[www.4EDA.org](http://www.4EDA.org)

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