

Phone List:

Newcomer Booklet



Balance
- not abstinence -
is our goal.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF EDA¹

In EDA, recovery means living without obsessing on food, weight and body image. In our eating disorders, we sometimes feel like helpless victims. To recover, we have to gain or regain the power to see our options and to make careful choices in our lives. Recovery means rebuilding trust with ourselves, a gradual process that requires much motivation and support. As we learn and practice careful self-honesty, self-care and self-expression, we gain authenticity, perspective, peace and empowerment.

How to Find EDA:

**Look for meetings, publications, and more at:
www.4EDA.org or www.eatingdisordersanonymous.org
Email: info@eatingdisordersanonymous.org**

Or write to:

**Eating Disorders Anonymous
PO Box 55876
Phoenix, AZ 85078-5876**

1. We admitted we were powerless over our eating disorders – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood God*.²
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with eating disorders, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

1. EDA's 12 Steps and 12 Traditions are reprinted and adapted from the first 164 pages of the "Big Book", Alcoholics Anonymous, with permission from Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt this material does not mean that AA has reviewed or approved this or any other EDA material. AA is a program for recovery from alcoholism only. Use of AA material in the program of EDA, which is patterned after that of AA but which addresses other issues, does not constitute endorsement by or affiliation with AA.

2. "God" in EDA literature can mean the Deity, a deity, a spiritual entity of one's own understanding (a Higher Power), or a non-spiritual conception (a higher purpose). Reliance on any one of these conceptions confers a perspective that transcends our immediate physical, social and emotional circumstances and allows us to "keep calm and carry on" with what really matters.

WHAT IS A SPONSOR?

A sponsor is someone who has completed all 12 steps and takes others through the process of working the Twelve Steps. They listen, provide honest and positive feedback, and share their personal experience, strength and hope. Their insight and inspiration can help others learn how to successfully work a Twelve-Step program of recovery.

How do I find a sponsor?

Attend EDA meetings in your area and speak to other members. If meetings are not available in your area, find a phone or online meeting and reach out to attendees who have a recovery program that attracts you. We encourage you to leverage EDA Step Workshop materials on the EDA website: <http://4EDA.org/audios/>.

It is important to find someone who has worked all 12 steps and has experience in recovery from their eating disorder. Please remember that a sponsor-sponsee relationship is not a substitute for professional therapy. We encourage everyone to work with qualified, trained counselors and other experienced and credentialed medical professionals as needed.

I have a sponsor, what do I do now?

Once you have gotten a sponsor you are now a sponsee! Sponsees are responsible for working the program of EDA: maintaining regular, frequent contact with a sponsor; completing the Twelve Steps of EDA; regularly attending EDA meetings; being open to honest, positive feedback; asking for guidance when needed; taking responsibility for their own decisions and actions. Once you have completed the Steps of EDA, you will be able to sponsor and carry the message of your own experience, strength, and hope – helping others find traction in the recovery process from an eating disorder while strengthening your own recovery.

Sponsorship is a fundamental and vital component of recovery and Step 12: it is carrying the message of recovery in the most direct and meaningful way possible.

Can You Relate?

- Are you, at times, unable to stop (or start) eating even when you really want to?
- Do you obsess about food, weight, or body image?
- Are you ritualistic about eating or exercise to an extent that others are impacted?
- Do you spend a great deal of time thinking about what, when, and where you will eat or exercise next?
- Do you sneak or hoard food?
- Do you feel guilty about eating (or not eating)?
- Are you, at times, afraid to eat?
- Does your self esteem depend to a large extent on your body weight?
- Do you often feel anxious or panicked about your eating, weight, and/or body image?
- Do you eat so much or little that it affects your plans for the day?
- Do you use thinking about food, weight, or exercise to help you manage your emotional states so your life feels more manageable?
- Do you feel concerned that you might not be able to do all that is required of you each day without depending on food, weight, or exercise-related thinking or behavior that causes mental distress or physical harm?

If your honest answer is “yes” to any of these questions, you may have a serious problem—an eating disorder.

EDA is a program of recovery for people with eating disorders.

What is EDA?

Eating Disorders Anonymous (EDA) is a fellowship of individuals who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover from their eating disorders. People can and do fully recover from having an eating disorder. In EDA, we help one another identify and claim milestones of recovery.

Now what do I do?

If you think you may have an eating disorder or have been diagnosed with one, you may think recovery is not possible. Many of us felt the same way, yet our experience is that recovery is not only possible but probable for all of us. Recovery does not depend on anything other than our willingness to be uncomfortable as we gradually adopt new ways of thinking and acting in response to life's challenges. If you have an eating disorder, the good news is that you are already very adept at being uncomfortable! The bad news is that recovery takes time. We found that we continued in our eating disordered behaviors until we no longer needed them. We did not develop eating disordered patterns overnight, and they did not go away overnight, either. Eating disorders are ineffective and damaging solutions to difficulties in the ways we think about ourselves in relation to everything else: they are only a symptom of underlying issues. There are many sources of support that can help establish new foundational ideas and practices that foster recovery. We encourage everyone to utilize whatever trusted and reliable resources are available to build a strong network of support. Groups like Eating Disorders Anonymous (EDA) can provide insight and inspiration: hope and sustainable patterns of thought and action that create perspective and balance.

Is there a food plan?

There are no food plans in EDA. EDA endorses sound nutrition and discourages any form of rigidity around food. Food is nourishment for mind, soul, and body. Balance—not abstinence—is our goal. We encourage anyone looking specifically for a food plan to work with experienced and credentialed professionals, such as registered dietitians trained to work with the special concerns of individuals with eating disorders, as needed.

HOW DO PEOPLE RECOVER?

We believe an eating disorder is a mechanism for coping with stress. We binge, purge, and/or starve to feel better about our shame, anger, fear, loneliness, exhaustion, and ordinary human needs. As we learn to address stress through other mechanisms, the symptoms of the eating disorder tend to fade away. It is a process, not an event. In EDA, we share our experience, strength and hope with each other to help one another come to terms with and change how we deal with life. Some of the tools we use to build and sustain recovery include:

- **Steps** - The Twelve Steps of the EDA program of recovery is the “main tool” we use to establish a foundation for recovery from our eating disorders.
- **Sponsorship** - Sponsors can provide the insight and inspiration needed to successfully work the Twelve Steps of the EDA program of recovery.
- **Meetings** - Go to them! It helps to be in fellowship.
- **Service** - As we recover, and work to maintain recovery, we continue to build and develop more perspective, peace, and power to address our own life challenges. We grow stronger and more resilient in our own recovery through our efforts to help others gain traction in recovery.
- **Reading Literature** - Read the EDA Big Book, including the stories, www.4EDA.org/EDABigBook.
- **Writing/Journaling** - Writing out emotions helps us get some distance, perspective, and clarity.
- **Telephone** - Calling people helps us build relationships and stay accountable to our recovery!