

Hello Everyone!

We held a General Service Board of EDA meeting on Wednesday, June 6th. 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 on the first Wednesday of every month. **However, because the first Wednesday in July is the 4th – a federal holiday – we will hold the next GSB meeting on Wednesday, July 11, 2018.** We strongly encourage every EDA group to elect a General Service Representative (GSR) to represent and vote at GSB meetings.

Attendees:

- Allison – Delray Beach, FL
- Annette H – Phoenix, AZ
- Beth – Georgia
- Cale O – Phoenix, AZ
- Cat – New York, NY
- Christine – Reno, NV
- Gisele B. – Phoenix, AZ
- Jamie K – San Diego, CA
- Julie M – Lancaster, PA
- Laura – Mexico
- Leah – Oklahoma
- Mandy – Monday Night Zoom Meeting
- Seren B – Maine
- Tee – Naperville, IL
- Therese – Phoenix, AZ

New and Noteworthy:

Philadelphia 12-Step Workshop

- Please let others in your area know about this opportunity to work the 12 Steps of EDA with one of EDA's founding members and others in full recovery
- Register here [Philadelphia PA: EDA Step Workshop \(Steps 1-12\) - June 15-17, 2018](#) or register from the EDA home page at www.4EDA.org.

June 6 Meeting Minutes:

Item 1. Discussion on Traditions 6 and 8: EDA is non-professional

- Recently, someone on the EDA General Service Board sent an email to the list of people waiting for an EDA sponsor that offered professional services: a clear transgression of Traditions 6 and 8.

- Tradition 6: 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.
- Tradition 8: EDA should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers. The long form includes: We do not give or receive payment for Twelve-Step work.
- This is not the first time the General Service Board has had to address this situation--in fact, it was a similar situation that gave rise to our new bylaws. We discussed:
 - Precedent: General Service Board historical actions
 - Bylaws: The GSB Bylaws (section 2.C.ii.2) specifically addresses this. When a Board member violates EDA Traditions, they are to receive no more than two warnings prior to a move to suspend.
 - Specifics: What led to the error, and what we are going to do about it now. Contributing to the error:
 - The person who sent the email has been trying to connect people seeking sponsors up with sponsors for over year. The list of sponsees has grown to over 150 people. The person has come up with many creative solutions, including creating Step audios (which were reviewed and positively received by this Board), and is working on Step Workshop-style audios.
 - The person who sent the email has been personally sponsoring people through the Steps and recently had a sponsee who wanted to continue the sponsor-sponsee calls after completing the Steps with her. Person on the board consulted the Chair, saying she wanted to move on, but wasn't sure what to do about the sponsee who wanted to continue. Chair said "in EDA, sponsorship is about helping people through the Steps. It is important that we move on to help still others once we've gone through the Steps with someone." Person asked about coaching. Chair clarified that sponsorship is never for sale, but noted that some services, like yoga instruction, outside of sponsorship, aren't forbidden. Chair was thinking that this might provide the sponsee a chance to continue contact with the sponsor who wanted to move on. Chair also wanted to clarify that the person was not expressly forbidden from having *any* future professional relationship with the sponsee;
 - Chair took responsibility for providing murky and confusing advice; the situation was tantamount to providing counseling services though Chair did not recognize this. Chair immediately discouraged a professional relationship of a particular type, but then indicated that there could be exceptions for relationships of a different type, which was confusing.

- A draft of the email was sent to the Chair about a month after the initial conversation. Chair was travelling and dealing with a family member in ICU, neither reading nor responding to email. When the email under discussion received no response, the email was sent to the distribution list. Someone contacted the Chair, who then read the email and contacted the sender immediately. The author of the offending letter immediately sent an apology to the distribution list.
- There is precedent for taking no response as affirmation, though not without sufficient advance notice (2 days for a communication that is expected, and 1 to 2 weeks for a communication that is not expected). In each case where a response is expected, the protocol is to provide a due date in the subject line and a statement in the body of the email clarifying what “no response” means.
- Root cause analysis:
 - There is a lack of understanding of Traditions – what they mean in practical terms – among people who lack experience with the Traditions in other Twelve Step Fellowships
 - Extenuating circumstances, noted above.
- Prevention: what we will do to prevent this from re-occurring
 - Short term: we need to ensure everyone on the General Service Board not only has a passing understanding of the Traditions, but that all EDA members have the opportunity to become familiar with them.
 - We should encourage all groups to at minimum read at least one tradition at every meeting.
 - Long term: Write the EDA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

The floor became open for GSB members to share what they think should happen. Each member was given a maximum of three minutes to share his or her thoughts. We received the following feedback:

- Jamie K. from San Diego said: Even though this was a situation of duress – which may explain why the situation occurred, it does not excuse the situation at hand. I do think it’s important to have a procedure in place to ensure the people who are on the Board are really aware of what is implied by the Traditions.
- Beth from Georgia said: This is a big problem. Because a friend I have in EDA was offered more sponsorship time if the services were bought, it becomes very confusing. I want to highlight the importance of the positions on the GSB, and the importance to protect newcomers. I believe strong education is needed on the Traditions. (Clarification: Sponsorship was not for sale, though coaching sounds very much like sponsorship.)
- Seren from Maine said: In my mind, this is also a Tradition Twelve violation because the email list is by nature confidential. I have a lot of decades of experience with the Traditions, and this just seems to be fairly common sense to

me. For myself, I wouldn't send an email without checking with somebody first. I would ask for the removal of this person from the Board.

- Mandy said: I would like to add that, because eating disorders can be deadly, a lot of times people are very desperate. Because there is a lack of sponsors, and because of that feeling of desperateness, I think people would potentially pay for services to get the support they need. I would also call for this person's resignation because the Traditions are very clearly written in the book.
- Gisele B from Phoenix said: I do not feel this is a reason to ask this person to resign. I do not want to see this person resign. I also look at everything else this person has done for the program, for the people in it, and for herself. There absolutely needs to be some accountability; there needs to be some going over some practical applications of what the Traditions mean in these instances. This was definitely a different kind of situation, but I don't think it warrants for her to be removed. Something we might want to have looked at is a group that is responsible for the Traditions – people who have been in recovery for, say, five to ten years – who can oversee whether the Traditions are being followed by the Board. Reading the Traditions at meetings is not enough. We haven't had the studies (of the Traditions); we've had step-workshops and things like that – but we haven't done the Traditions. This person doesn't have the background of Traditions like I do, and I just think there needs to be more accountability – but not removal.
- Julie from Pennsylvania said: This was my mistake. I completely acknowledge it and I am 100 percent accountable for the error that I made.
- Annette from Phoenix said: In the past, EDA has given no more than three warnings before asking for resignations from Board members. When we updated the bylaws last fall, we changed that to no more than two warnings because of a particular situation that involved repeated behavior. One warning has already been issued, with expected behavior, actual behavior, and the gap identified. We have followed the protocol outlined in the bylaws. I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this conversation. (Annette then called for MOTIONS on this issue.)
- Cat from New York said: I know that in some other programs there are ways for groups to take inventory at the meeting level. I've never had a service board position in other fellowships, but I'm curious if there's any way we could take an inventory as a Board on the Traditions.
- Cale from Phoenix: I want to get clarification on what it means to take a group inventory. I'd like to have a better idea of what that would look like; it would help me vote.

- Seren from Maine said: I have taken part in a group inventory. There are typically set guidelines established, related to group inventory questions to ask, to make sure the group itself is abiding by the Traditions. There's a lot of preexisting literature about group inventories.

Jamie K. from San Diego brought the **MOTION** to follow the precedent previously set by EDA, and the bylaws, in which no more than two warnings are given to Board members before his or her resignation is requested. Her motion was to issue the first of these warnings.

- Gisele **SECONDED** the **MOTION**
- **VOTE: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Cat from New York brought a **MOTION** to implement a Group Inventory, based on the Traditions, to be taken annually.

- Gisele brought a MOTION to table this issue until we have a better understanding of what a Group Inventory would look like.
- The **MOTION** was **SUSPENDED**

Gisele B. brought a MOTION to form a Traditions Committee

- Seren **SECONDED** this **MOTION**
- **VOTE: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Seren brought a **MOTION** to seek the resignation of Julie from Pennsylvania

- Gisele said we have already established we need more familiarity with the Traditions, and she **OPPOSED** the idea of getting rid of any Board members at this time.
- Three other board members voiced opposition to the motion.
- This **MOTION** was **SUSPENDED**

Item 2. Discussion on Traditions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5: EDA unity, Group Conscience, membership requirement, group autonomy, and primary purpose

- Recently, an EDA group of long standing has been struggling. Those who started the group and kept it running have been challenged by newcomers who are troubled by the group's format, which requests meeting attendees identify as addicts. The "old-timers" of the group know that without a lot of support, including support that can be found in other Twelve Step fellowships, newcomers may flounder. They want newcomers to feel comfortable attending other Twelve Step fellowships. If newcomers declare they are addicted to their eating disordered behaviors, it is easier to fit in. Newcomers, armed with the EDA Big Book, Fully Recovered brochure, and to EDA's earliest literature ("Identifying Ourselves", circa 2001), are not at all comfortable with this idea: they want the meeting

format to change. Obviously, a Group Conscience is needed! But what happens? The old-timers are annoyed at the constant pushback from people who aren't in full recovery. They've freely given of their experience, strength, and hope--and are met with stiff resistance. They are sure they are right to keep things as they are because this is how they recovered. Newcomers are sure the old-timers are wrong--EDA literature says they do not have to identify as anything at all if they don't want to.

- Five Traditions apply:
 - Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon EDA Unity. Eating Disorders Anonymous is a "we" program. United we stand; divided we fall.
 - Tradition 2: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as God may be expressed in our Group Conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants. They do not govern.
 - Tradition 3: The only requirement for EDA membership is a desire to recover from an eating disorder.
 - Tradition 4: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups, or EDA as a whole.
 - Tradition 5: Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message of recovery to others with eating disorders.

- A flyer called "Identifying Ourselves" was developed in 2001 by the original EDA group in Phoenix precisely because of situations like this. Parts of the original flyer have been folded into EDA's current FAQ brochure. The brochure clarifies that EDA members at open meetings do not have to identify as having an eating disorder; at closed meetings EDA members are expected to affirm (at minimum) that they have a desire to recover from an eating disorder, however, there is no specific format this needs to take.

- But what if an EDA group's Group Conscience sets different expectations based on the group members' sincere desire to carry the message of recovery to the newcomer? Is the expectation to identify as an addict something that affects other EDA groups or EDA as a whole, or is this a matter where group autonomy should be respected?

QUESTION PROPOSED: Does the General Service Board have guidance to groups struggling with this issue?

The floor became open for GSB members to share their thoughts and feedback on this matter. Each member was given a maximum of three minutes to share his or her thoughts. We received the following feedback:

- Beth from Georgia said: As much as I hate to say it, I think the group autonomy might have precedence in this case. This sounds like the perfect opportunity where we splinter; we pick up our purse and we leave. I would pick up my purse and leave, and start another meeting. I would not sit in this meeting, if they said I have to identify as an addict, but I do think they have a right. My reading of the EDA book is that we're not an addiction model, but I could be wrong on that.
- Therese from Phoenix said: Nowhere in the EDA book does it tell me that I need to identify myself as an addict. I believe that is a personal choice, but it's not one that should be dictated by the Board or anyone else. I do not believe that identifying yourself in EDA as an addict has any benefit. We are here for a primary purpose – and that purpose is to recover from an eating disorder. I believe this is a personal choice, and not one that should be dictated by the Board.
- Jamie K from San Diego said: It seems like a logical error to say that just because we don't ask people to identify themselves in a particular way, that we approve and/or endorse every way that people choose to identify themselves. I do think we have to maintain some boundaries around how we conceptualize a person who qualifies for these meetings, without being too exclusive, but also having some definition of ourselves that keeps us meaningful.
- Cale O from Phoenix said: I truly do not have any issue with identifying ourselves as addicts. When I first started in this program, I was asked to identify myself as an addict – and I do on Monday night meetings. At first it was really odd for me, but we say that we identify ourselves as addicts to relieve ourselves from the pain of isolation. I know it's helpful for some, but not helpful for others. For me, I didn't make it a big deal in my head. I said, "I smoke cigarettes, so I guess I'm an addict anyway." So I had no problem with identifying myself in this way. But what I think is more important is the focus on abstinence; I think this is a very important distinction between EDA and other 12-Step fellowships. It's not about whether we're addicts or not; it's about whether we focus on abstinence. You had made it clear in the agenda, Annette, and I really like how it's worded: "Abstinence is not our goal, but it's a byproduct." I believe that by staying focused on what our goal is – and that is to find recovery from our eating disorders, through balance – then abstinence from our Behaviors will come as a byproduct. I attend this meeting in Phoenix, and I believe the true issue at the heart of this is counting days of abstinence. It was proposed to make it a requirement to those who speak – as the main speaker, not just those who share afterward – have at least 90 days abstinence from their eating disorders. That was something I personally took issue with, because one of the things I loved most about EDA when I first joined was that we don't count things. We don't count days of abstinence, we don't count calories, etc. Counting for me was really the issue. Even so, I think we took care of this issue at the group-level. They made a decision to implement that requirement at one meeting, and so at the next meeting I brought the motion and was successfully able to have that requirement

struck down when finding speakers to speak at our meeting. In my opinion, I think the heart of the issue is drawing a distinction between us and other fellowships, and what the importance of abstinence is.

- Annette from Phoenix said: Groups can be various. I would like to make the suggestion to this group based on what we've said in the past. For example, if you say you want your group to be a "Christian group," – that's great, just put it in your meeting format. Be sure to point out it's distinct to the group. The GSB supports any group of people who are bonded together by their desire to recover from eating disorders. We do take issue if there is anything that conflicts with EDA as a whole, or if it affects other groups. If you're making it clear at the top of every meeting that this is a group that has elected by group conscience to do something different – and you're making it clear what that is – then there shouldn't be anything that the General Service Board has to say about it. I do agree with Cale that the focus on abstinence is something that is really critical to avoid with newcomers. That's often one of the biggest distractions we can have when developing a perspective that is calm, with respect to our behaviors. That's critical for recovery from anything.

Further discussion on this topic was **TABLED** for the next meeting.

Additionally, the following items were also **TABLED** for next month's meeting:

Tradition 1: EDA distinction from other Twelve Step Fellowships

- An EDA member recently raised a concern about EDA's statement that "balance--not abstinence--is our goal." Her comment was, "To declare 'not abstinence' creates distance between EDA and other Twelve Step fellowships that use abstinence as a measure of recovery. Full recovery is abstinent from behaviors. I would like the General Service Board to consider eliminating 'not abstinence' because it creates friction. I offer this suggestion in the spirit of loving kindness and hope the General Service Board will consider this request with love."
- In EDA, we recognize that focusing on abstinence can be a distraction from doing the work needed for full recovery. If we are distracted by being "clean" with food, we may miss the main point--recovery is not fundamentally about food, and that even after the behaviors become a distant memory, balance--in all areas of our lives--remains a challenge. Yes, full recovery *is* abstinent from behaviors, but full recovery is a by-product of doing the hard work of taking care of basics, learning to build trust with self, God/Higher Power/higher purpose, using the Steps to create a new foundation for how we relate to life and our place in it, and then using our new foundation and reliance on something greater than ourselves to be of cheerful and reliable service.

- EDA's founders wanted to make it clear that EDA is not a place where abstinence is the goal; abstinence is a by-product. There is great danger to the newcomer in focusing on abstinence, and the word doesn't work well for some forms of eating disorder such as anorexia and orthorexia. We agreed in the beginning that "not abstinence--**as a goal**" *does* create a distinction from other groups: it is purposeful and foundational to EDA. However, we should make it clear that we are not in competition with, or opposed to, or in judgement of anything or anyone. We are glad for everyone who has found recovery, however they may come to it. Is there something the General Service Board can do to make it clear that we take no issue with any other fellowship?

Request for new Literature:

- A concerned family member requested we add a brochure (at minimum) to EDA literature, titled: "When your loved one has an eating disorder."
- Do we have volunteers ready and willing to work on this?

Reports from EDA Subcommittees:

- **Body/Size Acceptance Subcommittee**, empowered to:
 - Create a new brochure on body and size acceptance
 - Recommend changes to existing brochures to ensure consistency of message
- **Escalations Subcommittee**, empowered to:
 - Add to or revise the EDA Meeting Guide with more explicit references to the Twelve Traditions Group Conscience process and
 - Create a new Escalations brochure or revise the existing [Guide to Difficult Situations with Meetings and Sponsorship](#) to address escalations
- **Literature Subcommittee** (Jamie)
 - Work on additional flyers/info for Professionals, more specific to clinician's and researchers concerns, to supplement our [Information for Professionals](#) brochure.

Additional Reports:

- Meeting and Membership Coordination update (Cat)
- Options for online meetings that don't have inappropriate ads (Cat)
- Professional Contact Coordination (Jenni/Julie/Sarah)
- Sponsorship Coordination (Julie)
- Spiritual Toolkit App developer contact update (Allyson)

G-Suite: Should we switch from GoDaddy to G-Suite – at no cost?

Reminders and Continuing Items:

1. EDA Daily Meditation Book

- 365 meditations for every day 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
 - Write to sponsors@eatingdisordersanonymous.org if you are able to sponsor someone online or by phone.
- **Great news:** if your group is willing to **order 24 or more books through the GSB, you can get a 50% discount.** If you use the PayPal link on the [GSB website EDA Big Book tab](#) (this only applies to EDA groups!), the cost is \$210 *including shipping*. **This means each book costs \$8.75, delivered.**

On Deck for July 11th Meeting:

- EDA’s founder, Gisele B, has a statement about “Balance—not abstinence—is our Goal”. This will be sent out with our July 11th agenda.

“Address about Abstinence from Gisele B, EDA’s founder:

Hello, I wanted to address this separately because this is such an important issue.

An EDA member recently raised a concern about EDA's statement that "balance--not abstinence--is our goal." Her comment was, "To declare 'not abstinence' creates distance between EDA and other Twelve Step fellowships that use abstinence as a measure of recovery. Full recovery is abstinent from behaviors. I would like the General Service Board to consider eliminating 'not abstinence' because it creates friction. I offer this

suggestion in the spirit of loving kindness and hope the General Service Board will consider this request with love."

EDA is different because it does not measure recovery by any form of abstinence. I have never "measured" my recovery by how long I have been without my eating disorder behaviors. Let me explain why. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) uses time of abstinence from alcohol to measure recovery time. This means a person in AA can have 40 years of sobriety yet change nothing except *not drink*. They call this a "dry drunk" in AA, but there are plenty of people who are "dry drunks" and don't realize it. I can't do this in EDA. Why, do you ask? Because I don't measure recovery by abstinence. I HAVE TO work on me, or stay stuck—out of balance, and without much perspective. I say this from experience. Working on myself, being open to new perspectives—constantly seeking balance—and seeing the real me is not easy, it's frickin hard and painful! But it's the only way to get recovery and freedom.

My recovery is inside, not based on abstinence. The work of recovery is work we do on ourselves. Letting go of eating disordered behaviors is a byproduct of that work. I really don't see any possible way of getting full recovery in EDA without working on my REAL issues.

Ask people who have full recovery, "When did you get full recovery?" and the answer is almost always "I'm not exactly sure." My answer to this is, "I do not have a date. Recovery is a process and I am never done growing and changing. I realized I was just living my life. I was able to just "be" okay in my own skin. I realized getting balance in *every* area of my life was what worked." I still have a long way to go—lots of room for growth—but I know I am in full recovery because of where my focus is: on what is really important.

The reason I identify in meetings as fully recovered is to give the newcomer hope, and for my own accountability. This can be a hard gig, just living life, but anyone can gain their life back, and it is worth it.

Because EDA does not focus on numbers and length of time, my focus goes to dealing with my issues so I can live at peace with myself. There are people with 40 years of sobriety who sponsor and attend lots of meetings, yet have nothing I want. This was never the model for EDA and I want to make that clear: **EDA is not an abstinence-based program; it is a full recovery program.** The process of recovery is messy. It's never just about stopping a behavior. It's about fundamental transformation. Please don't take my comments to mean I put AA down. I will forever be grateful for AA and I know the program has saved millions of lives and families. For many, putting down the drink or drug is really the best they can do and I applaud them.

I love the Ninth Step promises, because they really do come true! The more work on me and my issues the more the promises come true. This is true in AA *and* EDA. The promises are a *byproduct* of doing that work. I started in AA and I tried to make AA work with my eating disorder, but I could not. I was dying and desperate to change. EDA is different than other Twelve Step programs and I pray the foundation and principles do not ever get compromised or watered down, so we can "fit in" or feel more comfortable.

I am passionate about this because I have watched groups in AA water down the message and they lose people. The foundation of a program is very important to keep intact.

"Balance—not abstinence—is our goal" has such a deep meaning. I don't think Annette or I knew how important this was going to be, or how well it would work—but *it is important because it does work*.

Thank you.
Gisele B.

- We will continue discussions about that topic, and about Group autonomy and what does and does not affect EDA as whole.
- Switch to free G-Suite: Implementation process, timeline, and communication

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

All best,
—Cale O.
Secretary, General Service Board of EDA