

Hello Everyone!

We held a General Service Board of EDA meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 1. 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.

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
- Cait O. – New York
- Cale O. – Phoenix, AZ
- Christine – Reno, NV
- Jamie K – San Diego, CA
- Jennifer B. – Oakland, CA
- Leah – Oklahoma (Zoom Meeting)
- Mandy – Montana
- Sam B. – Boston
- Shelly – Guadalajara, Mexico
- Tee K – Naperville, IL

Exciting News!

- An EDA Step Workshop, sixteen weeks (1 hour per week) will start September 6th, 2018 at 6:30 MST (9:30 EDT, 8:30 CDT, 7:30 MDT, 6:30 PDT)
- EDA's founders and panels of EDA sponsors will explain how they work EDA's Twelve Steps and we'll work through the Steps together
- Location: 8585 East Hartford Dr. #114, Scottsdale, 85255 and on Zoom:
- The (Zoom) phone number for **US (west): 1-408-638-0968**. The phone number for **US (east): 1-646-558-8656**.
 - The Meeting ID is **570242738 #**.
 - When asked for Participant Number, enter **570242738 #** again.
- If calling from Canada or another country, your dial-in number will be different, but the Meeting ID and Participant Number will be the same. Please see the Zoom site for the dial in number for your country at <https://zoom.us/zoomconference>.
- Alternatively, you can join a Zoom meeting join via the Zoom application. Connect to <https://zoom.us>, then download and run the installer (Zoom_Launcher.exe.) This adds a blue-and-white Zoom icon to your taskbar. To join a Zoom meeting, click the Zoom icon, enter the Meeting ID and Participant Number, and click "Join."

Item I. Traditions: Update from the GSB's EDA Traditions Subcommittee

As requested at the last GSB meeting, the EDA Traditions Subcommittee met and has provided the following recommendations:

- EDA's GSB Traditions Committee advises the GSB to keep "not abstinence" in EDA's foundational statement "Balance—not abstinence—is our goal."
- Just as happiness is a by-product of right thinking and right action, full recovery from eating disordered thinking and behavior is a by-product of the effort to gain perspective and balance in our lives.
- In EDA, the fundamental transformation required to sustain full recovery is brought about by consistently applying the principles and tools outlined in the Twelve Steps of EDA to bring perspective and balance.
- Focus on abstinence from eating disordered thinking and behaviors is a distraction from the hard work of recovery.
- We want to make it clear to newcomers that EDA is not an abstinence-focused recovery group.

--In the interests of EDA unity, EDA's GSB Traditions Committee advises the GSB to counsel groups against promoting the idea that EDA members call themselves addicts.

- Having an eating disorder is a recoverable condition. People can and do recover fully from having an eating disorder. This reality is in conflict with the "once an addict, always an addict" thinking that is prevalent in many though not all Twelve Step fellowships.
- Many people who have an eating disorder *do not* have any other form of addiction, and medical teams typically do not embrace the idea of an eating disorder as an addiction.
- Focusing on the mental disorder as a disease (which it is not per the medical definition of the term) or as an addiction can *and does* create friction and disunity within EDA groups (Tradition 1).
- The practice of thinking of a mental illness as an addiction can foster mistrust in the medical professionals upon whom our youngest and most vulnerable members must often rely in order to recover, with potentially fatal outcomes. We wish to stress that hopelessness can lead to suicide. The following National Institutes of Health article helps clarify that while less than a third of people with

eating disorders have substance abuse issues, the risk of suicide is significantly elevated. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3155572/>

- We in EDA have always encouraged people to make use of whatever resources are available to them, and many people do find sustenance and support in open meetings of other Twelve Step fellowships. Recovery means relying on something greater than ourselves to find enough positivity, peace, and perspective to live meaningful and satisfying lives, free of dependence on old coping mechanisms. In Twelve Step fellowships everywhere, we find people doing exactly that. The honesty and humility typically found in Twelve Step meetings everywhere generates hope in those who most desperately need it. Yet, despite the tremendous positives, we should consider carefully the implications of too close an association with other programs. Most Twelve Step fellowships embrace some form of abstinence. Focusing on abstinence (lengths of time, chips, years) is a distraction from doing the work that leads to full recovery and freedom, and generates fear of failure. Loss of abstinence in other Twelve Step fellowships is typically associated with shame, fear of self or “the addiction”, and self-loathing: the very opposite of what people looking to recover from an eating disorder need in order to build a foundation that is flexible, resilient, and strong. People in EDA need to be free to fail *without fear* so they can get to the heart of the issues that cause them to rely on an eating disorder in the first place: the abstinence model is the antithesis of what makes EDA effective.
- Although EDA has explicitly avoided becoming embroiled in any debate on this topic, most evidence-based medical literature in the field of eating disorders prevention and treatment does not embrace the addiction model. Members of the GSB and its Advisory Board have spoken to the founding editor (now retired) of *Eating Disorders: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention* (Leigh Cohn, editor-in-chief from 1993-2017), a respected journal with a highly 3redentialed editorial board <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=editorialBoard&journalCode=uedi20>, at length about this topic specifically. EDA has always embraced a recovery model that is distinct from the addiction model.
- We do not think it helpful to align with other Twelve Step groups at the expense of EDA unity. Tradition One affirms that personal recovery depends upon EDA unity. EDA must be united in carrying a message of hope to all who desire freedom from eating disordered thinking and behavior.

--The Traditions Committee agreed to to have a representative reach out to the EDA group that had been advising its members to define themselves as addicts.

- We have great respect and appreciation for the dedication and service of key members of this group and would like to request their participation in the writing of EDA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

- Although the Traditions Committee will advise the GSB to recommend that EDA groups avoid suggesting members call themselves addicts, any two people who desire freedom from an eating disordered thinking and behavior may call themselves an EDA group.
- The GSB does not govern. If an EDA group is not taking a regular Group Conscience that includes all members of the group, the GSB will have a representative contact the group to review the suggestion to do so. The GSB representative will offer coaching, and will follow up. An EDA group will only be de-listed from the EDA website if it requests delisting, or if the group declines to take a regular Group Conscience that is focused on how to best carry the message of recovery to the newcomer. If an EDA group has adopted patterns or practices that affect other EDA groups or EDA as a whole, the group will be advised of this observation and will be asked to consider the matter at its next Group Conscience.

--The Traditions Committee will also have a representative reach out to the EDA member who suggested that we strike “—not abstinence—” from EDA’s foundational statement, “Balance—not abstinence—is our goal.”

- We understand that the purpose of the suggestion was to break down distinctions between EDA and other Twelve Step fellowships that are focused on recovery from disordered eating, and respect that the suggestion was made to try and foster greater cohesion and reduce tension between EDA and other fellowships.
- EDA’s distinctions, however, are purposeful, foundational, and (we think) essential to support the newcomer in their quest for recovery.

--The floor was opened for comment from other GSB members

Jamie K. from San Diego brought a **MOTION** to accept the recommendations from the Traditions Committee outlined above without amendments

- Cale O. from Phoenix **SECONDED** the motion
- The **MOTION PASSED WITH 9 VOTES** and with Jennifer B. abstaining

Item II: Reports from Other 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

There was no update from this subcommittee. This report was **TABLED** for next meeting.

Additional Reports:

- Meeting and Membership Coordination update
 - If you have started a new meeting, please let the GSB know. We'd like to send each new group one free EDA Big Book.
 - There were no further updates on this call.
- Options for online meetings that don't have inappropriate ads
 - There was no update available on this call
- Professional Contact Coordination (Jenni/Julie/Sarah)
 - There was no update available on this call

Item III: Question proposed: Meet and Greet Events

We have had meet-and-greet events with area-specific professionals, where we've discussed EDA and provided literature and copies of the EDA Big Book. We are planning to have one within the couple months in Phoenix. The Chair would like to know whether the GSB is willing fund some of the costs of these meet-and-greet events.

The floor was opened for comment. No comment was provided.

Shelly from Guadalajara, Mexico requested a Big Book for her new meeting.

Item IV: Literature Committee Update on the Family Brochure

Jamie K. from San Diego, Chair of the Literature Committee, said she has not received any drafts to review up to this point. Laura in Mexico, as well as Mae from New York had previously volunteered to work on a draft of this brochure.

We believe this is a significant need that we have not yet addressed.

Jamie K. from San Diego suggested we create a sub-committee to draft a brochure for professionals. She volunteered to be a part of that committee. Sam B. from Boston also volunteered to be a part of this effort.

ProfessionalPamphlet@eatingdisordersanonymous.org will be created.

Item V: Traditions Committee – Drafting Twelve & Twelve

This would be an extended brochure of the Twelve Traditions that provides more context, and examples of how to best adhere to the traditions.

The Chair requested something along the lines of drafting one page per tradition. This could be used to begin the Twelve & Twelve book in the future.

- Jennifer B. in Oakland is interested in helping with this effort.
- Cale O. from Phoenix is also interested in helping.
- Tee K. also volunteered to help with this.
- Cait O. is also interested.

Item VI: Escalations Subcommittee Update

This subcommittee is 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

Tee K. from Naperville, Illinois provided the following update:

“I have my own personal work, but I’ve yet to be able to get in touch with other people in this group. For me, I am also a member of N.A., so I’ve used a lot from what I’ve learned from that fellowship. It’s basically just taking the traditions and putting them into a survey for the group. ... For example, is this a “we group,” we’re putting together here, or Traditional Twelve: are we Placing Principles Before Personalities? Our goal is making sure we’re carrying that message to all newcomers to our groups.”

Tee K. said she would send her work to the Escalations Subcommittee for review.

Item VII: EDA Sponsorship – We have a shortage of Sponsors!!

One solution to the shortage of sponsors is a 12-Step Workshop Series that will be recorded on Zoom.

- EDA will begin recording a 16-week, 12-Step Workshop beginning Sept. 6 in Scottsdale, AZ. Details are at the top of these minutes – and all are welcome. A Zoom Conference line will be used, as well.
- The format will include a few of EDA's founding members working with others in EDA to introduce EDA history, discuss the concept of balance, and describe how to work each of the Twelve Steps of EDA
- Each workshop session will include panelists addressing live questions
- We will use the same [workshop worksheets](#) used at the EDA Big Book Step Study Workshops in Chicago, Lancaster, Delray Beach, and Philadelphia (there will be homework)
- Each session will be recorded with the intention that an edited version will be made available online after review and approval by the Literature Committee and approval by the General Service Board
- The workshop will be free of charge and open to all

What Else Can We do?

- 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.

The floor was opened for additional comments and ideas:

Jamie K. from San Diego suggested we do an online survey of everyone who is currently on the waiting list to be sponsored to better understand what their individual needs are. For example, we could ask: Are you looking for someone to guide you through your Step Work? Another question is: Are you looking for someone who is “on-call” in your life, someone you can reach out to when you’re in need?

Jamie K. also suggested we look into an “EDA Sponsorship Hotline,” that people could call whenever they are struggling. We could put together a rotation of people who are in recovery from an eating disorder, and could provide others who are struggling with some experience, strength and hope. This would be in addition to these 12-Step Workshop sessions.

Tee K. from Naperville said she agreed completely with Jamie K.’s comments. She also said that, as a veteran of other fellowships, she was a bit confused by what it means to be a sponsor in EDA. She said she, “came with the notion that you get a sponsor and you keep them forever, and they stay your support system.” She wondered if a document contrasting the difference between EDA sponsorship and other fellowships, such as AA, would be possible to produce.

Chair commented: “I like the suggestion of providing more details on what’s different. But I think we already do clarify in our existing literature that sponsorship is intended to help those who are working the steps. In EDA, we don’t typically have ‘Sponsors for Life,’ or sponsors who are just there to take calls. However, some sponsors do that – but that isn’t really our model. We believe it’s most helpful for people to work through the challenges of life, and that is best done by working the Steps or with the support from professionals. We’re not a substitute for counseling.”

Cait O. from New York suggested we use the existing literature – focused on questions about what each sponsee needs – when putting together the survey for those who are still seeking sponsors. She said she uses the existing literature as a sort of “intake form” before working with others.

Chair said: Having a Hotline is a great idea, but we have difficulty getting people to respond to emails. The chair asked if we might be able to find enough people to man a hotline.

Jennifer B. asked how many people it would take to man a hotline.

Chair responded: 12 people per day, for two hour shifts, and then 7 days a week. If we wanted to have that many, we'd need 84 people for one two-hour shift a week.

Leah suggested we have a hotline for only a certain number of hours a day – or a limited number of days per week.

Cait O. said she has a friend who works for a substance abuse hotline, and she will ask him for additional information on how he makes that work. That hotline, she said, only has three people on staff. She will get more information and report back to the GSB at the September meeting. Her report will include cost and what it takes to staff.

Chair asked the GSB who is supportive of the hotline

IN SUPPORT: Majority.

Leah suggested GSB representatives get additional feedback from their groups, and report back in September.

Mandy said she would be willing to serve as the Hotline Coordinator.

Further discussion on this topic will resume in September.

Reminders and Continuing Items:

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.

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.**