

EDA SUNDAY 6PM GMT MEETING FORMAT

Welcome to the Sunday 6PM GMT Skype meeting of Eating Disorders Anonymous. My name is _____ and I'm fully recovered from _____. Will everyone please join me in a moment of silence to reflect on why we are here, followed by the Serenity Prayer?

{Silence}

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can & the wisdom to know the difference.

This is an open meeting of Eating Disorders Anonymous. We welcome all of you, particularly any newcomers. In keeping with our primary purpose and our Third Tradition, which states "the only requirement for EDA membership is a desire to recover from an eating disorder", we request all who participate to limit their sharing to problems and solutions related to their eating disorders.

Preamble: EDA is a fellowship of individuals who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that we may solve our common problems and help others to recover from their eating disorders.

The **only** requirement for membership is a desire to recover from an eating disorder. There are no dues or fees for EDA membership. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. EDA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our **Primary Purpose** is to recover from our eating disorders and to carry this message of recovery to others with eating disorders. Please contact info@eatingdisordersanonymous.org if you are able to volunteer some of your time outside of this meeting.

If there are newcomers...

[May I have a volunteer to read "More on Eating Disorders" for the newcomers? You can find it on the EDA website under "EDA Meeting Readings" on the Literature tab.]

[More on Eating Disorders:]

In our individual pursuit of happiness and success, even pursuit of usefulness and selfless service, we who have an eating disorder have struggled with the business of living.

Our problems, though many and varied, have elements in common. We have mismanaged anger, avoided growing pains that might have set us free, indulged in unhealthy forms of

dependence on those around us, and engaged in futile, damaging attempts to control our bodies and other people.

We suffered many forms of illness – physical, emotional, and spiritual – as a consequence of our attempts to control our problems and ourselves through ever-greater exertion of self-will. Most of us lost our self-respect, our hopes and dreams, and anything like meaningful purpose for our lives. Many have lost or compromised their health. Many have died.

We tried in vain to control our emotional natures with some or all of the following behaviors: bingeing; purging; laxative abuse; over-exercising; self-denial; restricting; self-mutilation; misuse of insulin; rigidity of thought and habit; obsession with weight, food, and body image.

We sought escape through many other forms of obsession. We often blamed those who love us most for our agony. We were depressed, anxious, chronically irritable and unhappy. We experienced complete defeat only to emerge – just hours or days later – with renewed resolve to cling to the same attitudes and actions that made us miserable in the first place. No matter what we tried, we somehow couldn't face reality, deal with it effectively, and walk free.

There is no magic about recovery. It is hard work. We were powerless to change until we came to believe we could recover. We then surrendered – usually in fits and starts – to the uncomfortable process of making deliberate changes in our response to life. This process of giving up our old reactive coping mechanisms and adopting new, deliberate, active skills and attitudes gradually restores our integrity, self-esteem and authority. This is not an overnight matter. There are sure to be setbacks, moments of deep unhappiness and fear, yet we found that when we work diligently and patiently, we are amazed by a quality of peace, happiness and usefulness never before imagined.

We wish this for you, whether you find recovery in or out of these rooms. We hope you will find something here that you can use and that you may find opportunity to share your experience with still others, for such work brings calm and freedom from despair when all other measures fail.

We wholeheartedly welcome you to join us as we trudge the Road of Happy Destiny together.

In our healing process, we use the Twelve Steps, adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous, as the foundation of our journey. May I have a volunteer to read “The Twelve Steps of EDA” and the two paragraphs after them found in EDA’s Big Book starting at top of page 113? The EDA Big Book is available on our website, www.4EDA.org, under the EDA Big Book tab, www.4EDA.org/EDAbigbook.html

The Twelve Steps of EDA¹ : Here are the steps we took, suggested as a program of recovery, through which we allow the needed changes in ourselves to occur:

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 awakening³ 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.

Many of us first reacted to this list like those who first encounter AA’s Twelve Steps: “What an order! I can’t go through with it!” And, in the same way that AA members comfort newcomers, we in EDA are happy to reassure, “Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles.” The point is that we are willing to grow along the lines we have set down. We aim for balance, understanding that “our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” We claim progress, never perfection.

Our description of the eating-disordered mind in Chapters 3 and 4, coupled with our personal adventures before and after finding recovery, make clear three pertinent ideas:

- a) That we had serious problems—eating disorders—that we could not solve despite our best efforts.
- b) That no accessible human power had relieved our eating disorders.
- c) That reliance on God, a Higher Power, or a higher purpose could—and would—restore us to sanity and set us free.

¹ EDA’s Twelve Steps and Twelve 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.

³The term “spiritual awakening” can refer to an event – a “vital spiritual experience” – or to a gradual change. Those of us who are atheists also experience a transformation, enabling us to place service before selfishness.

We also adhere to the Twelve Traditions developed by Alcoholics Anonymous. (Read the Tradition that corresponds to the current calendar month, i.e. February = Tradition 2, March=Tradition 3, etc.)

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon EDA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God⁴ as God may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for EDA membership is a desire to recover from an eating disorder.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or EDA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message of recovery to others with eating disorders.
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.
7. Every EDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. EDA should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. EDA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. EDA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the EDA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, film, and web.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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In EDA, we try to focus on the solution, not the problem. Solutions have to do with recognizing life choices & making them responsibly. **Diets and weight management techniques do not solve our thinking problems.** EDA endorses sound nutrition and discourages any form of rigidity around food. Balance – not abstinence – is our goal.

In EDA, recovery means living life without obsessing on food, weight, body image, or exercise. Suggestions that help us build recovery include:

- Eat when hungry, stop when moderately full. Consistent nutrition is essential for recovery. Recovery is about feelings, not food, but we can't reason or build trust when bingeing, purging, or starving.
- Get basic needs met first. If hungry, eat. If angry, find a safe outlet. If lonely, reach out. If tired, sleep. If ashamed, talk about it.
- Ask others for input but make your own decisions.
- When anxious or troubled, do something that focuses attention on your physical senses, get outside, pray, or meditate. Then deal with the problem head-on.
- Get open with others. Honesty restores integrity.
- Develop willingness to look at things differently. Recovery is not rigid. 😊
- Go to 12-Step meetings, read the literature and work The Steps with a sponsor.
- Be proactive and plan your recovery

We build trust with ourselves by being authentic with others. We encourage you to connect with other people in recovery outside this meeting.

We would now like to welcome any newcomers. Is anyone here for a first, second or third time? If so, would you please tell us your first name and where you are from so we can welcome you?

Now, let's go around the virtual room and the rest of us will introduce ourselves. I will start. My name is _____, I am fully recovered from _____ and I am from _____.

REPORTS:

Are there any EDA announcements?

In EDA we recognize what we call "milestones of recovery". A "milestone of recovery" is a self-defined marker on our journey in recovery. It is essential to recognize that even on our worst days we do things that are right and good, and supportive of our recovery.

Milestones – which take myriad and often surprising forms – are bright spots in our meetings that inspire us with their honesty and reality. We find, often in retrospect, that our milestones express how we are working the principles of the program in our lives. The principles – embodied in the Twelve Steps of EDA – include Honesty, Equality, Accountability, Love, Trust and Humility (HEALTH: the EDA motto). We claim as many milestones as we can!

Examples:

- “I ate a food last night for the first time in three years and it was great!”
- “I took responsibility and let go of one of my boyfriends.”
- “I refused to let my wife tell me what to think about our daughter coming out.”
- “I’m looking at how miserable I am and I am looking at what it is I’ve been getting from staying stuck. Maybe if I know what works about it, I can make a different plan to get those needs met.”
- “I thought about what might make me happy and decided to take dance lessons.”
- “I forgave my friend for disappointing me. I felt very mature about that.”
- “Ugh! I’m obsessing again, but at least I know it and I’m being open about it.”
- “I finally weaned myself off laxatives. It’s been many years since I’ve gone without them for this long.”
- “I was feeling very hurt and rejected, and I said so calmly without expecting any particular response.”
- “My need for security always seems to conflict with my need for self-expression. It makes me mad and I want to escape! But I realized I’ll never be safe until I allow myself to have and express ugly thoughts.”
- “I screamed what I was thinking on paper and then I found I could talk about it calmly without blaming.”
- “I wanted to run and hide by being really busy, but I sat down and asked myself what I was afraid of. I made a new plan. My fears evaporated and I felt terrific!”
- I was sad yesterday and I just let myself be sad.”
- I almost ate something I hate because I didn’t want to look eating disordered, but then I decided I care more about what I think than about what they think of me.”

Does anyone have a milestone of recovery they care to recognize?

FORMAT:

This is an EDA Step Study meeting. Each week, we read from the EDA Big Book, going through the Steps as if a Sponsor was taking us through them. If you don't have an EDA Big Book, you can find a .pdf copy on the EDA website, www.4EDA.org/EDAbigbook.html. Once we are done reading, we'll go around the virtual room and discuss the Step, the readings or the homework assignments. Yes, there *is* homework for those who are working the Steps with us or with a Sponsor, but don't be frightened: the assignments are completely voluntary, and they are easy to understand. You may be thinking, "But I haven't worked the earlier Steps. This meeting isn't for me." Please know the insights you get as we discuss the Step will be valuable to you later, and you are always welcome to ask questions about anything that seems confusing. Step work isn't like math where one concept must be fully mastered before one can move on. Having a good working understanding of all the Steps will help you as you forge ahead with the recovery process. It might be helpful to know that we encourage people to start working Steps Ten and Eleven as soon as they possibly can.

Please limit your comments so everyone gets a chance to share.

Please do not provide unsolicited advice. If you *want* feedback, please ask for it after the meeting.

Last week, we discussed _____. Starting now on page ____, paragraph ____, may I have a volunteer to start reading? Please read a few paragraphs, then say "pass" when done.

[No matter how far the reading gets, stop no later than 35 or 40 minutes into the meeting (depending on group size) so everyone gets an opportunity to share.]

Wrap up the sharing five minutes before the hour to close

[Discuss the homework for the next week.]

7th TRADITION:

According to our 7th Tradition, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. If you would like to help EDA carry the message and you consider yourself an EDA member, you may send a voluntary contribution on the website through PayPal under the "support EDA" tab. Please contribute as you can.

CLOSING:

It is now time to close. Can I have a volunteer to read "EDA's 9th Step Promises" from page 185 in the EDA Big Book?

EDA's 9th Step Promises

“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down we have fallen, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will see that our service to God, our Higher Power, or the greater good has done for us what seemed humanly impossible. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.”

Thank you for being here. Please make time to greet newcomers after the meeting and **get involved.**

Please preserve our anonymity; do not discuss personalities and problems (other than your own) with others once you leave this meeting.

Take what you can use and leave the rest, and keep coming back. It works when you work it – it really does!

Will those of you who wish please join me in saying the closing prayer? [“We” version of the Serenity Prayer or other prayer adopted by the group conscience.]

God, grant us the Serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the Courage to change the things we can, and the Wisdom to know the difference.

Keep coming back – it works when we work it!