
What is EDA?

Eating Disorders Anonymous (EDA) is a fellowship of individuals (founded in February 2000 by members of Alcoholics Anonymous in Phoenix) who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problems and help others 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.

Are there sponsors in EDA like in other 12-Step groups?

Yes. In EDA, a sponsor helps sponsees work the Twelve Steps, and is one part of their support network. A sponsor's experience, strength and hope can provide the insight and inspiration needed to successfully work a Twelve Step program of recovery. For more information about sponsorship, please see "New to 12-Step Programs and Sponsorship in EDA" under the Literature tab at www.4EDA.org.

Are there dues or fees for EDA membership?

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, political organization or institution. EDA does not wish to engage in any controversy. We neither endorse nor oppose any cause.

Is there a food plan?

There are no food plans in EDA. EDA endorses sound nutrition and discourages any form of rigidity around food. Balance – not abstinence – is our goal. We encourage our members to work with qualified professionals, such as registered dietitians and therapists trained in treating eating disorders.

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.

Recovery means living life on life's terms, facing pains and fears without obsessing on food, weight, and body image. In our eating disorders, we sometimes felt like helpless victims. Recovery means gaining or regaining the power to see our options, to make careful choices in our lives. Recovery means rebuilding trust with ourselves, a gradual process that requires much motivation and support. There are bound to be setbacks and moments of fear and frustration. Support – professional, group, and family – helps us get through such trials safely, when we are honest about them. Support groups such as EDA provide inspiration and opportunity for turning the most deeply painful and humbling experiences to useful purpose. As we learn and practice careful self-honesty, self-care, and self-expression, we gain authenticity, perspective, peace and empowerment.

What are EDA meetings like?

Please see "Suggested Meeting Format" under the Literature tab and the Online Meetings tab found at www.4EDA.org.

To find a meeting or publications, or get information on how to start a meeting, please visit our website or email us at:

info@eatingdisordersanonymous.org

Identifying Ourselves in EDA Meetings

An open EDA meeting is not limited to EDA members. People attending an open EDA meeting are not required to identify themselves as members. Participants at a closed meeting, limited to EDA members only, are expected to state (at minimum), "I have a desire to recover from an eating disorder."

In EDA meetings, identifying as "anorexic", "bulimic," etc., is optional. Some of us say, "Hi, I'm Jane. I'm in recovery from anorexia." Others say, "Hi. I'm Jane. I have a desire to recover from an eating disorder." There are good arguments for and against "identifying." We want to encourage everyone to follow their conscience in deciding what is right for them.

Reasons Why Some of Us Identify

- Doing so reminds us of who we are and where we came from. There is no shame (and much peace and power) in accepting ourselves and our past. It is honest, and honesty is the foundation of recovery.
- Identifying reminds us of our continuing commitment to recovery. When we say, "I'm in recovery from anorexia" it means we are committed to embracing the attitudes and behaviors of recovery.
- When we "identify" we help the newcomer relate to and find hope among our fellowship.
- Identifying reduces the shame and stigma of having an eating disorder.

Reasons Why Some of Us Do Not Identify

- Some people do not like “labeling themselves” as anorexic, bulimic, BED, OSFED, or anything else, as this can be self-limiting. We are what we think we are.
- Identifying can counter group cohesion. It can be all too easy for someone struggling with anorexia to discount what a person in recovery from bulimia says.
- Labels can promote black and white thinking. It is easy to dismiss eating disordered thoughts as “diseased” when it is critically important to embrace our thinking; to work with it rather than reject it. Accepting and countering negative thoughts with careful inquiry, deliberation, and self-care is what recovery is all about, and it is what normal people do.
- Labels can promote self-judgment. If we identify as a “binge eater” or “in recovery from binge eating” and we binge, we may feel we have abandoned recovery. When we fall back on old coping skills, we are in desperate need of self-acceptance, not self-judgment.
- Labels focus on the problem, not the solution.

In EDA, we are committed to support one another in our personal search for truth and meaning.

May you find peace with your choices.

What’s the Difference Between EDA and other 12-Step Programs

Unlike AA, OA, and ABA, EDA does not endorse abstaining from anything. Our organization is devoted to helping our members develop more resilient relationships with ourselves, with others and with food.

Rather than recognizing periods of continuous abstinence, we in EDA celebrate self-defined milestones of recovery. These milestones, which take myriad – and often surprising – forms, are bright spots in our meetings that inspire us with their honesty and reality.

Many EDA members also attend other 12-Step groups. In EDA meetings, we discuss our disordered thinking that we might also discuss how to work a solution, which has to do with our recognizing life choices and making them responsibly. Diets and weight management techniques do not solve our thinking problem. EDA endorses sound nutrition and discourages any form of rigidity around food. Balance – not abstinence – is our goal. Having issues with food, weight, body image and/or exercise is a sign that we need to develop better (and more effective) coping mechanisms. As we come to rely on a perspective that confers peace and power, our new methods of dealing with life issues gradually replace the self-limiting rigidity and self-destructive behavior that are hallmarks of an eating disorder.

We encourage our members to seek counsel with qualified therapists and dietitians who work with the eating disordered if needed.

Frequently Asked Questions



For more information please visit our website at:

www.4EDA.org

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