

To my family, relatives and-Friends ...

Why do I need Emotions Anonymous?

The pressures of daily living and the resulting emotions have affected my ability to cope with life. I have problems that have emotional symptoms such as anxiety, depression, abnormal fear, self-pity, guilt, low self-esteem, negative thinking, compulsive behavior (eating, drinking, working, spending), psychosomatic or physical illnesses. It's difficult to deal with these feelings alone. The EA program is a proven way for me to learn about myself and to see that it is possible for me to change. I no longer feel different or alone because I have found a group of people to whom I can relate. I can live a new way of life and find peace of mind.

Why can't I just talk to you about my problems?

No matter how much you care, it is important for me to share what I am feeling with people who have experienced the same emotional symptoms. Because you care about me, you may feel sorry for me and accept my excuses. You may tell me to just snap out of it because you may not have experienced the same symptoms. I need to listen to others who have been where I am and have changed. They give me hope.

What do I do at an EA meeting?

At meetings we read about and discuss the EA program. We share what is helpful to us, what we are dealing with now, and what we are learning about ourselves. We do not spend the time complaining or indulging in self-pity. We avoid being judgmental or critical of others. If we do not want to talk, we may choose to just listen.

What kind of people attend the meetings?

People from every walk of life, men and women, young and old, come to the meetings. The emotional symptoms or situations people are dealing with may be similar or quite different, but our thinking is similar. Many newcomers are surprised at first to find so many happy people at the meetings.

What does anonymity mean?

Anonymity means that members only use their first names and that it is up to each person to decide what he or she wants others to know about membership in Emotions Anonymous. It doesn't matter to whom we are related or what we are doing for a living. What does matter is learning who we are and sharing our experiences as related to the EA program. We must feel free to talk about feelings in order to make progress. Therefore, whatever we say at a meeting, on the telephone or to another member must be kept confidential.

Do I talk about you?

Members may discuss particular situations by saying, "my husband [wife, father, daughter, boss, etc.]...", but we do not use specific names. Our purpose is not to give advice concerning personal or family affairs. Our time is spent talking honestly about ourselves and our feelings instead of finding fault with others.

Is EA some sort of religious sect?

No, the EA program is spiritual, not religious. People of any religious faith or of no religious faith are members. The program involves a belief in a Power greater than ourselves. This can be human love, a force for good, the group, nature, the universe, God, or any entity a member chooses as a personal Higher Power. It is up to each person to choose for himself what to believe and how to best practice that belief. Because religion is not part of the EA program it is never discussed at meetings.

What does it cost?

There are no dues or fees for EA. At meetings we have a freewill contribution. This money is used for the expenses of the group which include literature, meeting place rent, and donations to EA International (our parent organization). At meetings we sell EA literature, but only at its cost to us.

Why am I getting phone calls from people in EA?

Members can exchange phone numbers if they wish and use the phone as a means of support between meetings. However, these conversations are confidential.

May you attend an EA meeting?

Yes, the support of family and friends is important to our recovery. Some married couples are members of EA. Parents and children, neighbors or friends may attend meetings together. However, some members are uncomfortable if a friend or loved one is at the same meeting. In that case they may attend different meetings. This is an individual choice.

Why doesn't EA have a family support group similar to Al-Anon?

Experience has shown that a separate program like Al-Anon is not necessary for the family of an EA member, since it would only duplicate the EA program. Emotional symptoms can affect the entire family. Families who have observed the sufferings of their emotionally ill loved one may experience repeated disappointments, frustrations, loneliness, daily uncertainty and continuous emotional stress. Both the person and the family who are experiencing emotional discomfort or "dis-ease" to whatever degree will find acceptance, understanding, support and the tools for their recovery in the EA program.

The love, acceptance and patience of my family, relatives and friends are important elements of support to me and are very beneficial to my recovery.

It takes time, one day at a time, to change a lifetime of negative behavior. However, with the help of the Emotions anonymous program, my Higher Power and your understanding and encouragement, I know that my emotional well-being can improve. I can feel better about myself and others.