

IS EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS FOR YOU?

Perhaps these questions will help you to decide if Emotions Anonymous would be helpful to you:

1. Do you often feel nervous, tense, or bored?
2. Do ordinary situations often frighten you?
3. Do you often suffer from indigestion or frequent headaches?
4. Do you have trouble sleeping or sleep too much?
5. Do you experience mood swings?
6. Do you often eat when not hungry or have little interest in food?
7. Do you often feel sad or cry for no apparent reason?
8. Do your feelings get hurt easily?
9. Do you often have difficulty making decisions?
10. Do you feel indifferent about most things?
11. Do you often feel guilty, even when you have no good reason for it?
12. Are you often preoccupied with yourself and your problems and find it hard to concentrate?
13. Have you lost interest in things you once enjoyed?
14. Is there no humor in your life, is nothing funny?
15. Do you feel you are a useless person?
16. Have you ever considered suicide?
17. Do you feel tired much of the time?
18. Do you often feel everyone is out to get you?
19. Do you often feel different and alone?
20. Do you often feel like a failure?
21. Do you often find that nothing anyone else does or says is acceptable to you?
22. Are you often irritable and perhaps abusive to those you love?
23. Do you often use alcohol, food, pills, work, or television as a way of escape?
24. Have you lost hope that your life can ever be different?

These feelings can be symptoms of emotional problems. Emotions Anonymous (EA) may be helpful at this point in your life. You will find that members have experienced the same feelings and that you are not alone. The twelve-step program of Emotions Anonymous works. We believe it can work for anyone who wants a change.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM AN EA MEETING?

Who comes to EA meetings? Meetings are attended by men and women who are unhappy with their lives, are experiencing emotional problems, and are seeking relief.

Will I fit in? Everyone is welcome at EA meetings. We do not differentiate between types of emotional problems, nor do we judge or state that some problems are more serious than others. No matter what you are feeling, you will probably find someone else who has had these same feelings.

All these years I have been trying hard to get control of myself. If I come to EA, does that mean I am emotionally ill? The first step in recovery is to admit we are powerless over our emotions. That is not the same as claiming we are mentally ill. The very fact that we have felt we are powerless over our emotions holds out the hope that we can learn to break their hold on us and begin recovery.

If EA members do not give each other advice or counseling, how can I expect to get help from a group with members who may be just as emotionally dysfunctional as I am? We do not come to EA to have someone solve our problems. Instead, we come to share our experiences with the group, and as we share our feelings and see the non-judgmental understanding of other members, we find our problems appear less enormous. As we hear others share, we come to find what we are feeling is not unique or irrational, and that others have had those same feelings. This helps take away our fear that we are disturbed beyond help.

If my emotional problems make it difficult/or me to speak in front of others, how can I benefit from a meeting? Although sharing our feelings is a vital part of our recovery, we can also gain help from listening. We benefit from hearing what others have to share because we learn we are not unique. This sharing by others creates a bond between us. In time, those who are too shy or upset to speak find they will open up and reveal the feelings which are troubling them.

Will any one try to force me to speak? No one should. All members at all meetings are free to share or not to share, based on their feelings at the time. All of us have felt the need to keep silent at one time or another, and we respect that in others. To make sure you have an opportunity to share, the group leader may invite you to do so. A simple, "I pass," is understood to mean you prefer to participate in the meeting silently. That's fine.

Who is the group leader? Will the leader give me advice? No one should give advice at our meetings. The leader is a member of the group whose only responsibility is that of leading the meeting. This person is not a counselor or mentor and doesn't have any more authority than any other member. Anyone in the group may volunteer to be the leader if they wish. It is best if the group leader changes week to week.

Sometimes my out-of-control emotions frighten me. At times, they seem totally irrational. Will anyone criticize this? Our EA concepts suggest that members never judge or criticize others. Everything you have felt has probably been felt by someone in the group, regardless of how irrational you think it is. In fact, many of us have come to treasure our EA meetings as a safe harbor in which to reveal anything and find understanding. Another of our concepts suggests that anything talked about in a meeting is to stay there and not to be repeated to others who are not at the meeting.

Sharing one's thoughts is fine, but what if I feel I need one-on-one contact? Although the meetings follow a pattern of sharing without response or cross talk, members can feel free to have conversations outside the meetings with other members. Very often within the group you will find one or more members who seem in harmony with you. Close and

helpful friendships may develop. Many members have sponsors who can point out EA principles in a one-on-one situation.

Must I formally join one group? Not at all. If there are other meetings throughout your area, you may attend as many as you choose. Most people seem to find a group in which they feel the most comfortable and attend it. However, you are free to change groups or attend as many groups as you wish.

How long do I need to come to meetings? As long as you want to come. Most people attend regularly because meetings serve to promote continuous emotional stability. Many members plan to continue the rest of their lives because EA becomes a way of life and they wish to be helpful to newcomers by sharing their program. However, you must answer this question for yourself.

Many EA meetings seem to be held in church or hospital facilities. Does that mean the meetings are sponsored by these institutions? No. Most churches are empathetic to twelve-step groups and provide meeting space at reasonable rents. Some hospitals consider twelve-step groups a valuable follow-up to their own care, and for that reason make meetings rooms available.

Is EA certain to make me well? There are no guarantees that any twelve-step program can bring permanent recovery. We can say only that many people have found relief and recovery from working the EA program. Your best guide is to talk with EA members and get personal testimonies as to what EA has done for them.

Is EA an ongoing financial commitment? No. All contributions at meetings are voluntary and are used to cover the groups expenses. There are never any ongoing fees or charges and no membership fee. You may buy EA books or literature, if you wish.

These are the questions most commonly asked by people new to Emotions Anonymous. You may have more. We suggest you attend an EA meeting and feel, for yourself, the atmosphere of warmth and fellowship. And by all means, ask the other members any other questions you may have. We look forward to sharing our program with you!