

Minutes from the March 28, 2020 Communications Committee Meeting

Present - Steve K., Jamie D., Scott J., and William. Absent - Colleen C.

We began with the Serenity prayer.

We each shared our experience, strength, and hope as to how our program is going for us these days.

We also did a brief introduction of ourselves to get familiar with each other - as Steve K. is new to our group.

By consensus, we agreed with the summary of our February 29th meeting based on the notes that were supplied. These will be posted on the website to keep people up to date with the work of this committee.

William brought up a topic that we decided to suggest moves forward in the fellowship of EA as a specific point of action. As a committee, by consensus, we're interested in having the Trustees and/or the Ex. Dir. make an Official Statement (3 to 5 sentences) to be posted on the Loop, on the EA Website, on the EA Facebook page, and in an email and snail mail communication to those in the fellowship. We'd ask for words of this nature or similar. "We have found that EA face to face interactive meetings are very helpful to our program. However we realize that such meetings are neither an imperative nor required in order for our recovery to continue - both during this time of social distancing and even when we are not in a pandemic. We have observed that growth happens in our program in all sorts of ways."

In a second, but related topic, we want the Trustees/the ISC to put out a statement encourage people to try these types of venues - i.e. telephone meetings, skype meetings, chat meetings, and encouraging people to be sure to submit things in writing that can be shared as experience, strength, and hope on the Loop and on the EA Facebook page.

In a related task area, we're interested in having testimonials shared about how these types of venues that are not face to face are helping people in their recovery. Jamie and Steve are both willing to ask some people to share some comments on this and/or to submit their own testimonials.

We reviewed our understanding of how the communications committee will work, being clear that our goal is to create a communications plan for the fellowship to be used by EAI to support the fellowship members.

We agreed to these committee guidelines (borrowed from the Bylaws Review Committee) by way of clarifying how we'll work.

1. Our committee & its work are guided by EA principles and the EA Administrative Concepts.
2. Our meetings will open & close with the Serenity Prayer
3. A majority of committee members must be present in order to make decisions
4. Come to each meeting on time and with a positive attitude
5. Treat all meeting participants with the same respect you would want from them
6. Talk one at a time; this is especially important on conference calls

7. Be patient when listening to others & try not to interrupt
8. Listen with an open mind; seek first to understand, then to be understood
9. Stay on the topic or agenda item being discussed
10. After a topic or agenda item has been fully discussed, do not return to the same subject
11. Respect each other's thinking and value everyone's contributions
12. Disagree without being disagreeable; respectfully challenge the idea, not the person
13. If you raise a problem or disagree with a proposal, try to offer a solution
14. Our committee's goal is consensus, however disputes will be resolved by a simple majority vote of those present
15. One committee member will keep meeting notes which will be sent to committee members for review, comment, and approval as soon as practicable after each meeting
16. Once meeting notes have been approved by a majority of those who attended the meeting, they will be published to the entire EA fellowship
17. Except in unusual circumstances where confidentiality is at issue, emails between committee members should be addressed to all committee members and responses should be reply all to keep everyone up to date
18. Except where unusual circumstances make it impracticable, all documents produced and edited by committee members should be shared in Microsoft Word format (i.e., .docx extension; Word 2007 & later [Windows] or Word 2008 & later [macOS]).
19. No member of this committee shall speak for the committee as a whole. After approval of minutes, the committee's minutes will be available to the fellowship on the EA website and by email blasts as appropriate.

We reviewed an audit of current communication outlets for EA which had been done and was provided as following

* Connection Newsletter * Literature Committee * Web posts on the EA website * Mailings * Emails * Skype Meetings * Loop Meetings * Ad-hoc, topic-specific workshops done in teleconference or Skype format * Flyers included with literature orders * Facebook * You Tube * Face to Face Group meetings * Notifications on Apple/Android app * Surveys

We reviewed some basic Information about the mission and goals of both the worldwide fellowship of Emotions Anonymous and EA International. This is coming from the Bylaws Review Committee's recommendation - In brief, EA is a worldwide fellowship of people who share their experiences, strength and hope with each other so they may seek emotional health and help others recover from their emotional problems. EA International is a not-for-profit corporation which serves Emotions Anonymous by handling the financial, legal and administrative needs of the fellowship and includes a director and a board of trustees directly responsible to EA members. The EA International Service Center is based in St. Paul. The board may create short-term committees directly responsible to EA members.

Finally, we each agreed to submit in 50-75 words or less per question our responses to these 8 questions. (These can be submitted to Scott, for now.) We gave ourselves a week to start the work of answering these questions and then checking in our progress at that time. 1) Objectives: what do we want to accomplish with our communications? 2) Key Messages: what are the 3 or 4 most critical messages to accomplish objectives? 3) Audiences: who are we primarily speaking to? 4) Action Steps: How will we reach these audiences? 5) Current Attitudes: what do our audiences think now? 6) Desired perceptions: what would we like our audiences to think? 7) Measuring Success: how will we know if we achieve our objectives? What metrics will be used? 8) Tools: what means do we have to best

communicate with our audiences?

One item we failed to look at - which was on our agenda - was to review the survey results.

We closed with a brief self-evaluation of our meeting, asking for feedback. We felt that our check-in time was a key - having the serenity prayer at the beginning and the end was good, too - we felt good about productivity, some specific actions steps - we like the gentle ways of listening to each other and the ways we did course correction with ease/flow - felt it was a good meeting.

We closed at 11:52 CDT with the Serenity Prayer. These notes you're reading were taken by Scott J. Additional notes were taken by William (thanks Will!!) and may be added to this accounting of our time together if we find that to be helpful.

Meeting Notes, as consented to for accuracy, from our Feb. 29th meeting: We spent a good amount of time getting to know each other and what the program means to us. Future meetings will always include 7 or 8 minutes of "check-in time." Colleen summarized some of the opportunities and challenges facing the program. Challenges include: being a diffuse fellowship (more than 300 groups including thousands of members in more than 30 countries - some members want to focus entirely on emotional wellness, others want to be more involved in the day-to-day work of EA International; challenge raising revenue; very limited staff; and an incomplete understanding of how best to reach our members and attract others to our program. Opportunities include: a strong board with a commitment to effective decision-making, outreach, transparency and member involvement; many new communication outlets to explore; and energy and optimism generated by committee process. Team expressed interest in helping to improve communications and outreach to sustain EA for future generations and to grow the program by actively reaching out to those seeking emotional health, particularly youth. "No one should fall through the cracks." Next meeting is set for Saturday, March 28, from 10:30-11:50 a.m. CST. For now, we'll be meeting monthly but this will be open for discussion. Will offered to help with notes at future meetings. Next meeting agenda will focus on these documents: How the Communications Committee Will Work; and Winter 2019 Communications Survey Results.