

DEPRESSION ANONYMOUS

****The secretaries lines have been highlighted in blue****

Welcome to the Wednesday night Candlelight meeting of Depression Anonymous. My name is _____ and I am your leader tonight.

It is group conscious that we have no cell phone distractions. Please make sure your cell phones are turned off. It is also group conscious that no children are present at this meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to aid each of us in our recovery from depression. We share information and personal experiences in a supportive environment to promote awareness and to develop strategies for coping. We are here to say how we feel and be supportive of each other. The more support we receive, the better we are able to manage and lead a more satisfying life.

Would the person asked please read GUIDELINES FOR THIS MEETING.

GUIDELINES FOR THIS MEETING

For the support of all our members, we ask you to abide by the following guidelines:

1. We speak only of our own feelings and experiences. We do not tell others what they should or should not do, but we may share our own feelings and perceptions.

2. Try and keep your sharing in the personal “I”. Examples: I feel strong when I speak about my feelings; I know that I get frustrated easily.
3. When someone else is sharing we silently sit and listen. We do not interrupt for questions or comments while someone is sharing. We exercise consideration of others.
4. As you share and listen, please give others the courtesy of understanding and accepting them.
5. We respect the privacy of everyone here. The things you hear here are spoken in confidence and are not to be repeated elsewhere.
6. Referring to somebody else’s share is permitted in this meeting, but only after a person has finished sharing.
7. No aggressive or disruptive behavior is permitted.
8. The opinions expressed are strictly those of the person who gives them. Take what you want and leave the rest.

Would the person asked please read [WHAT IS A DEPRESSIVE DISORDER](#).

WHAT IS A DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

A depressive disorder is a “Whole-Body” illness, involving your body, mood and thoughts. It affects the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things. A depressive disorder is not the same as a passing blue mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be wished or willed away. People with a depressive illness cannot merely “Pull Themselves Together” and get better! Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months or years. Appropriate treatment however, can help

most people who suffer from depression. Some symptoms of depression are:

1. Sadness
2. Loneliness
3. Irritability
4. Anger
5. Fear
6. Feeling overwhelmed
withdrawal
7. Low self esteem
things
8. Feelings of guilt
normally
9. Feelings of worthlessness
10. Lethargy and lack of
energy
11. Feelings of hopelessness
12. Feelings of despair
13. Inability to concentrate
14. Inability to make decisions
15. Isolation and
16. Lack of interest in most
17. Inability to function
18. Suicidal thoughts

A certain amount of sadness is natural but when that sadness doesn't go away, that is depression. The good news is that you can do something about it. First, you've got to recognize that it's an illness not a character weakness. Once you take steps to do something about it, the odds of getting over it are heavily in your favor. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, symptoms can be

relieved in 80 percent of people with serious depression. So you can climb out of depression!

Depression Anonymous is a Twelve-Step, Twelve-Tradition oriented fellowship. Would the person asked please read HOW IT WORKS.

HOW IT WORKS

If you are hurting and would like to change, you are probably willing to try anything that will help. Our stories tell how we once were, how we used the Twelve Step Program, and what we are like now. These steps are:

1. We admitted we were powerless over depression – 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.
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 whenever 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 a power greater than ourselves, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to other depressed people, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.

Some of these steps seemed difficult. We thought there must be an easier way but there was not. From the very beginning we urge you to be fearless and thorough in following these steps. Some of us tried to hold on to our old ways but found we could not grow in the program until we let go entirely.

We discovered through the program that God, as we understood God, helped us to comprehend and begin working these steps as completely as we could, to the best of our ability. Through daily practice of these steps we discovered ourselves. We grew emotionally and spiritually.

We will now go around the room and introduce yourself by your first name.

We have now come to the sharing portion of the meeting. It is group conscious that we do not interrupt a person while they are sharing. Nor do we give advice.

This is a participation meeting. It has been designed to allow each person to speak from her or his “gut level.” AT this meeting you may say whatever is on your mind without worrying how well you are communicating or getting your point across to the rest of us. In fact it is not important whether you communicate with others present at all. However, it is very important that you communicate honestly with yourself.

Many of us have posed questions and answered them for ourselves through just this “thinking out loud” process. This is especially beneficial for people facing stressful circumstances, because we deal with day to day reality without any pretenses.

As you speak, tell us what you are doing right or wrong, that accounts for how things are going for you, or generally how you are “making it” right now.

Would someone read The Promises?

THE PROMISES

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to 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 the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience will 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 economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

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.

The leader will share for 5 to 10 minutes. Then we go around the room. Leader shares:

The leader picks on people to share.

Thank you all for sharing. After a moment of silence, would _____ lead us in the prayer of his choice?