

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABA AND THE GENERAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF ABA

We, the elected Board of Directors know legally as the *General Service Association of Anorexics and Bulimics Anonymous* and hereafter referred to as “GSA-ABA,” wish to clarify herein our understanding of the relationship that exists between us and the *Fellowship of Anorexics and Bulimics Anonymous*, hereafter referred to as “ABA.”

1. ORIGIN OF ABA: ABA is a grass-roots organization that originated in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in February 1993. It gradually evolved into a full-fledged 12-step Fellowship whose primary purpose is to support its members to recover from anorexia, bulimia, and associated eating disorders, and to carry its message of recovery to others who suffer from eating disorders. ABA uses the 12-Step Program adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous and abides by the 12 Traditions, also adapted from those of Alcoholics Anonymous. It has been successful in facilitating scores of individuals to find and maintain sobriety in their eating practices and through the 12 Steps, to deeply heal the insane manner in which they think about food and about their bodies.

2. EVOLUTION OF ABA: Over the past eleven years ABA has expanded and continued to evolve. New ABA groups are now springing up internationally, a process that has been catalyzed by the Dec 2002 publication of ABA's textbook of recovery, *Anorexics and Bulimics Anonymous: The Fellowship Details Its Program of Recovery for Anorexia and Bulimia*.

3. CURRENT NATURE OF ABA: To this day, ABA remains what it has always been: a loosely organized, spiritually-based community of individuals who come and go from our meetings, who remain anonymous at a public level, who have no leader and are all equals, who have no membership rules to abide by, who pay no dues or fees for membership in ABA, who receive no monetary return for their participation in the group, and whose sole responsibility remains to share their experience strength and hope with one another that, together, all will find the power to recover from their eating disorder.

4. NON-LEGAL STATUS OF ABA: ABA, as such, can never become a legal entity because it can never be organized in the manner that corporations or businesses organize themselves. No member is required to provide their surname or any personal information about themselves, no member can set themselves up as a ruler or authority, and no one can ever own the Fellowship except our Higher Power.

5. NEED FOR A LEGALLY RECOGNIZED SERVICE ARM OF ABA: That being so, when the time came in 2000 to begin writing a book that would carry the ABA message beyond the confines of Edmonton, ABA soon realized that it would need to create a service board that would acquire some kind of legal status designed to allow it to function in the public domain, carrying on such activities as distributing ABA's literature nationally and internationally, receiving and disbursing funds surrounding the publication and sale of such literature, tracking ensuring the unity required for ABA's continued survival. Thus, in Sept. 2002 ABA began holding a series of business meetings to discuss the issues involved. The final outcome of ABA's deliberations was the formation of the GSA-ABA, incorporated as a non-profit society under the Societies Act of the Province of Alberta on March 2003.

6. COMPOSITION OF GSA-ABA: In designing its General Service Association, ABA took its lessons from Alcoholics Anonymous and decided to include both ABA members and people outside the Fellowship who do not have eating disorders. ABA recognized that sometimes hard business decisions would need to be made by the GSA-ABA, and people with a variety of business and organizational skills would be strong assets. The GSA-ABA therefore includes a wide range of people, all of whom are dedicated to the purpose of organizing and overseeing ABA's service activities at the provincial, national, and international levels.

7. RESPONSIBILITY OF GSA-ABA TO ABA: All GSA-ABA members are elected by the Fellowship of ABA at an Annual General Meeting held each year in March. They serve finite terms of office as laid out in the Society's bylaws, and are governed by these bylaws. Ultimately, the GSA-ABA operates as a service board in the spirit of the Ninth Tradition of ABA: "ABA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." In other words, the GSA-ABA is *responsible* to the grass-roots Fellowship of ABA for all its decision and actions. If any ABA member or members are displeased with any of those decisions or actions, they have the right and the responsibility to make their views known to the GSA-ABA through their Group Representative, and the GSA-ABA have the moral responsibility to listen. Should they fail to do so, individually or collectively, they will undoubtedly be voted out of office at the next possible AGM. Of course, *before* making any decision or taking any action that directly affects ABA, the General Service Association seeks the input of ABA through these same Group Representatives.

8. ABA LITERATURES AND GSA-ABA: Furthermore, the GSA-ABA *does not own the copyright to any ABA literature*, even though its job includes overseeing the preparation and publication of ABA's literature, including future editions of the ABA text book and future brochures and pamphlets.

9. SUMMARY: In summary, the General Service Association is not synonymous with Anorexics and Bulimics Anonymous. Rather, it is a legally incorporated Board of Directors that together are the *servants of ABA*, and its decisions and actions are governed by the collective ABA group conscience, which in turn represents the authority of a Higher Power speaking through it.

On 22 Sept 2004, the nine articles of this Memorandum of Understanding received the unanimous approval of the GSA-ABA and, through their Group Representatives, the approval of all existing ABA groups in Edmonton, Alberta at that time.

We, the executive Committee of the general Service Association of ABA, hereby affix our signatures to indicate formal adoption of these nine articles in their entirety.

Signed in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada this 24th day of November, 2004

Joan M. Johnston, President

Jacquelyn Nagy, Vice-President

Kim E. O'Leary, Secretary

Patricia Mackay, Treasurer