About ANAD

ANAD is a non-profit, 501 (c)(3) organization providing free, peer support services to anyone struggling with an eating disorder. Our peer-led programs are available to anyone struggling with disordered eating and body image, regardless of eating disorder type or diagnosis. Through support and education, we strive to relieve suffering and provide hope.

Our work is made possible by the compassionate and dedicated volunteers who are the heart and soul of ANAD. They answer helpline calls, facilitate support groups, mentor those in recovery, and share their own stories to support others on their healing journeys.

46 Years of Peer Support

ANAD was founded in 1976 by Vivian Meehan, a nurse whose daughter had been diagnosed with anorexia and was unable to find support for eating disorders. Vivian started her own support group in her basement in Highland Park, Illinois.

The way we communicate and gather has changed over the years but the need for human-to-human peer support has not. With 17 weekly virtual support groups, an expanding peer mentorship program, and a strong network of helpline volunteers we are rising to meet the need for peer support.

We are committed to building a diverse, inclusive community of support because we believe in the importance of healing through connection.
Thank You!

Dear ANAD Community,

With 2023 coming to an end, ANAD board and staff are reflecting on what we’re thankful for. At the top of the list is you: the team of unstoppable people who create community with us by sharing your time, your talent, your passion, and your voices. Having a group of dedicated and caring people makes working with ANAD a true privilege. Getting to speak to and meet you is a huge perk of the job.

Thank you for guiding and inspiring us, and offering support when we need it. The need for ANAD’s services has grown dramatically ever since COVID and again in the last year.

And when we call out for help, ideas, feedback, and support, you have stepped up and delivered, been there for us, and for the people that we serve, even as some of you are on your own journeys.

The ANAD community is truly the heart of the support services. ANAD can only do as much as our community makes possible, and we do SO MUCH together.

As we reflect on gratitude, please know you are top on our list. Together, we make the world a little bit better, and we could not be more proud to work side by side with you.

Thank you for staying connected with us as we continue to grow and serve even more people who need community. Because of you, there is a space for everyone.

Dr. Maria Rago
ANAD Board President
Programs: A Year of Unprecedented Growth

- 2.1k Helpline Calls Answered
- >20k Support Group Registrants
- 100 Peer Mentor Matches
- 320 Referrals

*Data as of September 30th, 2023*
A 2nd Line of Support

This year, we added a second line and onboarded the largest cohort of helpline volunteers in ANAD’s history. These measures help expand ANAD’s ability to accept calls. In fact, our helpline volunteers answered more than double the number of calls in 2023 than the previous year.

We’re proud to be able to provide the much-needed hope, comfort, and support to individuals calling the helpline. However, we realize there is still work to be done as our helpline call volumes continue to grow at an unprecedented rate.

I am grateful to serve as a Helpline Volunteer and shine light into the darkness for those struggling and their loved ones on their recovery journey.

Johanna, Helpline Volunteer

206% Increase in Helpline Calls Received


ANAD added 5 new support group offerings in 2023 to meet the rising attendance rates of existing groups while expanding our offerings for specific audiences:

- Caregiver and Sibling Support Groups (in partnership with F.E.A.S.T)
- Men’s Eating Disorder Support Group
- Binge Eating Disorder Group

"Joining the ANAD Support Group was the cornerstone of my recovery. I felt support, guidance, and unity during each meeting. ANAD changed my life."

Cayden, Support Group Attendee
Bridging Connection

Our new website went live this spring! Along with a refreshed look and more resources, we were excited to unveil a revamped treatment directory!

We never want finding eating disorder treatment to be a barrier to healing. That’s why we were thrilled to welcome more than 350 mental health professionals to the directory who may be able to provide local services. These professionals include therapists, dietitians, physicians, psychiatrists, treatment centers, coaches, and others.

Thank you to all of the providers who have joined the directory! We value the incredible work you do in providing relief to those suffering with an eating disorder.

353 Directory Listings

Weekly referrals issued more than doubled in 2023!
Volunteer Spotlight

It is organizations like ANAD that provide essential services that truly supported my recovery from day one. They provide a community to connect through mentorship, referrals, and support groups. These resources made a massive difference in my journey. It is an understatement to say that I am proud to be a part of ANAD now. For those who have found their strength in recovery, I encourage you to find a way to pour back into the community. There are many people with a variety of experiences that show up to provide support in the ways only they can. Even people who were in my life for a finite amount of time inspire me to be my favorite version of myself today. Please know that you make all the difference in someone’s life. To those of you who held my hand in moments of need, provided a sense of safety when I could not find my own, and continue to drive me forward on days I feel weak—thank you. I continue to aim to be grounded in my self-worth, unapologetically me, and available to those who need my support. I pay it forward every day.

Excerpt from *Pay It Forward* by ANAD Support Group Leader Abbi

Volunteers trained through Q3

213


"Each of my mentees over the years has been completely different, and yet we always reach a point where we recognize astounding parallels in our stories! Then a beautiful thing happens... connection and trust begin to grow. I love empowering others to believe they can find freedom and the full life they were meant to have!"

Tracey, Peer Mentor
Outreach: Building a Community of Support

>21k ANAD 90 Education Series Views

23 New Stories & Blog Posts

33 Helpline Heroes

2.2k New social connections

*Data as of September 30th, 2023*
Welcome to New Faces!

ANAD was thrilled to welcome several new faces to the team in 2023. In January, we welcomed author and speaker Jason Wood to lead marketing and communications efforts for the organization.

With an increased demand for ANAD peer support, we welcomed Liron Cohen, Leela Hauze, and Athena McDowall to our Programs Team to better support our volunteers and coordinate our peer-led services.

In the spring, Dr. Tiffany Rush-Wilson joined the ANAD Board of Directors, bringing more than 20 years of clinical and academic experience to the organization.
New Ways to Connect!

Fresh look. Proven support. Just in time for Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2023, we launched the all-new anad.org. We hope the new website has made it easier for folks to connect with the information and help they need and deserve.

With a new video shared every Tuesday on our social platforms, the ANAD 90 education series is an opportunity to start a conversation about an important topic related to support, education, or awareness in 90 seconds or less.

ANAD is rooted in the peer experience and supporting the human behind the eating disorder. Our JourneyED series is intended to create a space for these experiences and journeys to be shared.

Reading connects and that’s what we hope to achieve with the brand-new ANAD Book Corner. We feature a new title every month while sharing unique opportunities to connect with the authors behind the books!
Events & Partnerships: Together, we can

19 Events & Collaborations

1.3k Event Registrants

3.5k Event Recording Views

11 Treatment Center Partners

*Data as of September 30th, 2023
Support Through Education

Peer support services are only part of our mission to provide suffering to those struggling with an eating disorder. Throughout the year, we are proud to team with our treatment center partners and other organizations for collaborative, multi-disciplinary events aimed at education and awareness.

2023 saw a record-number of these events! From an Instagram Live on Autism & Eating Disorders to a panel discussion on Eating Disorders in Men, our event line-up was dedicated to promoting awareness of eating disorders in all communities and backgrounds.

We’d like to take a moment to thank all of our partners for their contributions and expertise during these webinars, panels, and conversations. We look forward to hosting many more events in 2024!

“I can’t thank the panel enough, it was really heartening to hear from others who have been through this darkness and know the contours of its specific challenges.”

Anonymous, 2023 Event Attendee
Answering the Call

This year in particular has brought so many folks to the ANAD community looking for support. We’ve grown in response; added a second line so that we can answer more calls, added five new support groups, and increased the training available for mentors so they feel able to make strong connections and hold space for their mentees.

But we haven’t yet made space for everyone. Our helpline can’t answer every call. We are not able to say yes to everyone who needs a mentor. When our groups fill up, we have to turn people away. And that’s awful. In a world where getting mental health care, and eating disorder care specifically, is so difficult, we don’t want to put up more obstacles. We intentionally keep ANAD’s services free, easy to access, and open to anyone. Now, we need to continue to grow so anyone who wants that connection can get it.

I’m asking you to join me in supporting ANAD. Help us bring more people into our incredible community of volunteers so we can say yes to every mentee, make space in a group for anyone who needs it, and answer every call. We are thankful to our donors, but our current donations have not yet kept pace with our increased needs and expanding community.

ANAD’s services help people. We’ve known it for years and see it happen every day. I want them available to anyone who could use the support.

Will you help us change that by giving a gift to ANAD today?

Kristen Portland
Executive Director

Support.
Connection.
Community.