

# The Fellowship Service Manual of Co-Dependents Anonymous

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## Part 1 Structure and General Information Summary

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## Link to Other Parts of the FSM

Below are links to the other 4 parts of the Fellowship Services Manual (FSM). Suggested uses are as follows:

- Part 2 is the Meeting Handbook and is intended for those wanting to start or help run a meeting. It is recommended that all meetings have a copy of this part.
- Part 3 is intended for use by those currently or considering doing service at the levels between meetings and CoDA, Inc. It is intended to be particularly helpful in establishing these service levels.
- Part 4 is intended for use by those currently or considering doing service at the CoDA, Inc. level. It is strongly recommended for all those who will be attending a CoDA Service Conference (CSC).
- Part 5 contains more detailed information related to the various service entities that exist at the CoDA Inc. service level, including the CoDA Board of Trustees, the various committees and other working groups and individual positions.

Links:

[FSM Part 2 - Meeting Handbook](#)

[FSM Part 3 - Guidelines for Intermediate Service Levels](#)

[FSM Part 4 - Service Conference \(CSC\) Procedures](#)

[FSM Part 5 – World Level Service Details](#)

[FSM Combined File](#)

## Section 01 Introduction

### Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive description of our service structure and to furnish spiritual guidelines for applying the *Twelve Traditions* to our service work. It also provides an overview and examples of the group conscience process.

### Vision of the Fellowship

Tradition Five: *"Each group has but one primary purpose: to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer."*

CoDA is a Twelve Step program. The basis of our program is the *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous, Inc.* What all CoDA members share in common are these *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions*. As a whole, CoDA has no opinion on outside books, treatment programs, or therapies related to codependency. Some individuals have found other things that assist in recovery, and each person is free to explore as they choose. However, as a Fellowship, working the *Twelve Steps* has worked for us, and this is what we do in CoDA. Our common experience is that the Steps and Traditions have restored us to sanity and healthy relationships. The vision of our Fellowship is to develop and make available the recovery resources known as Co-Dependents Anonymous. Through this effort, we provide support to the individual seeking help, and continue to improve the quality of the recovery resources we offer.

CoDA's Twelfth Step reads: *"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other codependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

As we begin to see the positive results of our participation in CoDA, we feel a sense of serenity and gratitude for the gifts we have received through our program. Our own recovery and growth become examples of what our program has to offer. Through our outreach to the codependent who still suffers, we give back to our program. CoDA was there when we needed it, and, through our service, it will continue. Our willingness to "carry the message" of experience, strength, and hope helps the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous to continue on and to grow in its ability to improve our lives and the lives of those around us. Let us gratefully demonstrate what CoDA has to offer...through our service.

Service work is not a replacement for working a good CoDA recovery program. It is, instead, only a part of working that program.



## The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous®\*

1. We admitted we were powerless over others, 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 wherever 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 God, *as we understood* God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other codependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*"The Twelve Steps are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt this material does not mean that AA has reviewed or approved the content of this publication, nor that AA agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only - use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise."*

### The 12 Steps of AA:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - 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 Him.
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 Him 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 wherever 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 God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



## The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous®\*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority: a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.
4. Each group should remain autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose: to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer.
6. A CoDA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the CoDA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim.
7. Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. CoDA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. CoDA has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the CoDA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

*\*The Twelve Traditions are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt this material does not mean that AA has reviewed or approved the content of this publication, nor that AA agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only - use of the Twelve Traditions in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise.*

### The 12 Traditions of AA

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups of A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## The Twelve Service Concepts of Co-Dependents Anonymous®

1. The members of the Fellowship of Co-Dependents Anonymous, in carrying out the will of a loving Higher Power, advance their individual recoveries, work to insure the continuance of their groups and their program, and carry the message to codependents who still suffer. They may also collectively authorize and establish service boards or committees and empower trusted servants to perform service work.
2. The Fellowship of CoDA has the responsibility of determining, through its group conscience, the service work to be performed, and the best manner to perform such work. This authority is expressed through our group conscience. Authority carries responsibility; thus, CoDA groups conscientiously provide adequate funding and support for the service work they authorize.
3. Decisions about service work in the Fellowship and all CoDA affairs are made through the group conscience decision making process. For this spiritual democratic process to work, every member of the group is encouraged to participate, consider all the facts and options concerning the issue, listen respectfully to all opinions expressed, then reflect and meditate to find a loving Higher Power's will. Finally, we deliberate honestly and respectfully to determine the proper course of action. Unanimity in the group is the desired outcome; a majority vote is a group conscience.
4. All those who volunteer to do service work for CoDA by serving on committees, boards, or corporations are trusted servants, not authority figures. Ideally, trusted servants volunteer out of a desire to follow their Higher Power's will, out of gratitude for the gifts they have received from CoDA, out of a desire to grow in their ability to create and keep healthy relationships, and to contribute what they can of themselves to CoDA. The Fellowship recognizes the need to select the most qualified people willing to serve as trusted servants. At times, trusted servants may hire individuals outside of the Fellowship for commercial services.
5. Trusted servants are directly responsible to those they serve and are bound to honor the group conscience decision making process and uphold those decisions concerning their service work. The Fellowship also recognizes the need and right for members to honor their own experience, strength, and hope and their Higher Power's will as expressed to them. When the group conscience violates an individual's own truth and makes participation impossible, the individual may relinquish the service position.
6. The Fellowship guarantees trusted servants the right and authority to freely make decisions commensurate with their responsibilities and the right to participate in group conscience decisions affecting their responsibilities. Each CoDA member is also guaranteed the right to respectfully dissent during the group conscience decision making process. A member may freely and safely express any personal grievances as long as no particular person or group is unexpectedly singled out as the subject of the grievance. Members are encouraged to honor their own integrity as well as the integrity of others.
7. Trusted servants do practice the *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions* in their service work and in all of their affairs. Trusted servants do not seek power, prestige, wealth, status, or acclaim; do not govern, coerce, or attempt to control others; and do not push a personal agenda, promote controversy, or advance outside issues at CoDA's expense. Since issues over authority, will, money, property, and prestige can and do arise in service work, trusted servants need to practice emotional sobriety, including anonymity, humility, tolerance, gratitude, making amends, and forgiveness.
8. The CoDA Service Conference (Conference), through its group conscience decision making process, guides the Fellowship in making policy decisions and in following the *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions*. The Conference, though providing guidelines, holds no authority over the decision making process of individual groups. The group conscience process is our decision making process. Failure to honor this process may violate Traditions One and Four and a sanction may be imposed. The harshest sanction Conference can impose on an individual or group is to no longer recognize it as belonging to CoDA; this sanction may only be imposed on those who consistently violate the *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions*, as determined by guidelines accepted by Conference.



9. By tradition, the CoDA Service Conference gives responsibilities to working committees composed of Conference Delegates and other CoDA volunteers or to separate service boards or corporations. All are directly responsible to the Conference. The scope of the work a committee does is determined by the Conference group conscience. The chairperson of each committee assumes the responsibility to ensure the work assigned to the committee is completed in a timely manner.
10. When the CoDA Service Conference is in session, the CoDA Board of Trustees is directly responsible to the Conference. When not in session, the Conference assigns its decision-making authority on material matters to the Trustees. The Board of Trustees is authorized to monitor the work of Conference-appointed service committees and may provide assistance or guidelines when necessary. The Trustees serve as the boards of directors of CoDA, the non-profit corporation, are assigned custodial control of all money and property held in trust for the Fellowship, and are responsible for prudent management of its finances.
11. The powers of the CoDA Service Conference derive from the pre-eminent authority of the group conscience decision-making process. Arizona State law gives the Board of Trustees legal rights and responsibilities to act for the Fellowship in certain situations. CoDA's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws are legal documents enumerating these Board rights and responsibilities.
12. The Fellowship strives to practice and encourage spiritual principles in all its material, financial, and business affairs, including fairness, equality, and respect for individual rights. Every member within CoDA has a voice and is encouraged to use it. Every member has the right to know what is happening within our organization. To honor this right, and in the spirit of CoDA unity, our CoDA organization publishes and distributes group conscience decisions, such as minutes of our service boards and motions from our CoDA Service Conferences, in the most inclusive and timely manner possible.

## Section 02 The CoDA Service Structure and Organization

The CoDA service structure is comprised of members from the Fellowship who have stepped forth from their local organizations to serve and participate in the process of translating the will of the greater CoDA Fellowship into action at the CoDA Fellowship level.

The spiritual structure of CoDA is based on Tradition Two: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority: a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." By polling our group conscience (see Group Conscience Process in Section 05, Communication within CoDA), we seek guidance from our Higher Power and make decisions affecting our groups, our service boards, and our committees.

We call this "group conscience decision making." This is sometimes new to people entering the program, and some have difficulty understanding and adapting to this process because of its "non-governing" style. It can be a lengthy process requiring patience.

Many of us are more familiar with "hierarchies." Imagine a hierarchy as a pyramid. The people at the top of the pyramid have power, and it flows down from them through various levels. By the time power reaches those at the bottom of the pyramid, it is so diluted that the people at the bottom have little power at all. CoDA is about self-empowerment, so a hierarchical system cannot adhere to our Steps, Traditions, and spiritual principles.

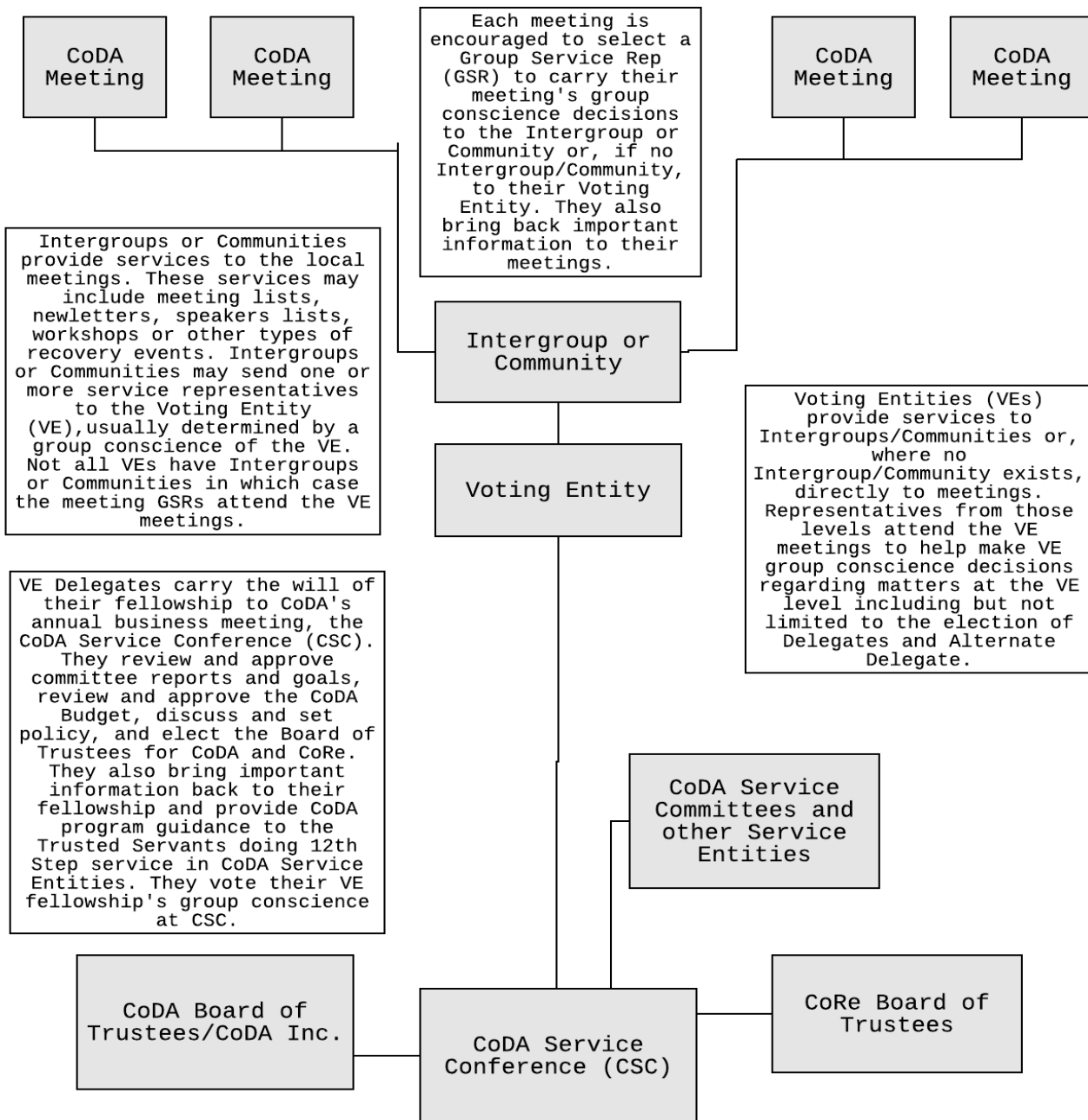
CoDA structure is an inverted pyramid. The broad pyramid top represents the members of CoDA, and authority, power, and direction resides with them. Members of groups may exercise power through the group conscience. Authority and power flow down to and through a group's trusted servants and area Intergroup (or community service groups), then on to the Voting Entity's (VE) Intergroup and the VE's delegates and eventually to the bottom of the pyramid. At the bottom, we find our CoDA boards, committees and service corporations.

### Service Responsibility:

- Each member honors each entity, individual, and group in the process of service work. To insure effective implementation, we entrust each servant with the right of decision.
- Service responsibilities are guided by the Steps and Traditions and determined by CoDA bylaws and CoDA Service Conference decisions.
- Each committee decides by its own Group Conscience how to best complete its service work, based on its goals presented to and approved by CSC.
- Our trusted servants use the group conscience process to implement their duties.
- Because the CSC entrusts our servants with responsibilities, they are supported financially and morally...this is the essence of right of decision.
- Committees may spend their allocated budget on goals that were approved as part of that committee's budget at CSC.
- Ideally, CoDA recovery is built on the principle of mutual trust. We trust Higher Power, we trust CoDA, we trust ourselves, and we trust one another.

## Co-Dependents Anonymous Structure Chart

Group conscience decision making provides a foundation for the entire service structure of Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA). It is an inverted pyramid and begins in our meetings, moving down to our Inter groups or Communities, continuing through our Voting Entities (VEs) and finally reaching the CoDA Inc. organization. Not every VE has both Inter groups or Communities



## CoDA Meetings

A CoDA meeting is a group of people who come together around their shared desire for healthy and loving relationships. The meeting uses the *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous* as the basis for working toward recovery. It is a place to find sponsorship and fellowship as well as the sharing of experience, strength, and hope. A strong sense of acceptance and community makes a meeting attractive both to the newcomer and old-timer. The sense of community and belonging, which are the gifts of our program, begin at the meeting level.

CoDA meetings remain strong and have the ongoing participation of long-term members when they demonstrate the qualities of acceptance and community. Members are encouraged to carry on fellowship outside of the meeting. **To find out more on Starting or Running a Meeting, please go to Part 2 of the FSM, Meeting Handbook.**

## Intergroup/Community Service Group (CSG)

The Intergroup/CSG is made up of Group Service Representatives (GSRs) from area meetings and CoDA members from the local Fellowship. A strong CoDA Intergroup/Community Service Group contributes to the success of CoDA in general. A sense of community at the local level leads to success in attracting and sustaining the involvement of members of the fellowship in service work and in community building activities. The Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Service Concepts of CoDA offer guidance in establishing service boards. Intergroups/CSGs typically elect officers and committee chairs. This is an optional level and typically exists where sufficient meetings or distance require an interim level between meetings and the Voting Entity.

For more information on Intergroups/CSGs please see Part 3 of the FSM, CoDA Guidelines for Intermediate Service Levels.

## Voting Entity (VE)

A Voting Entity (VE) is a level of Fellowship within CoDA that handles the business aspects for a group typically made up of two or more Intergroups/CSGs and/or Meetings. An Intergroup/CSG may serve as a Voting Entity if decided by group conscience when it is the only Intergroup/CSG within a VE. The Voting Entity organization provides a bridge between Intergroups/CSGs, and CoDA, Inc.

Each State and Territory of the United States of America and each Country is automatically defined as a VE and entitled to send two (2) Delegates to the CoDA Service Conference (CSC). Sometimes two or more Voting Entities may choose to join together in order to combine resources and better serve the needs of their meetings and Intergroups. No state, country or Voting Entity shall be considered to have surrendered their rights to representation and voting at the CoDA Service Conference in spite of any affiliation without having surrendered those rights in writing to CoDA, Inc. Voting Entity may also choose to divide into two or more Voting entities according to CoDA's [Bylaws](#) for more information.

For more information on Voting Entities please see Part 3 of the FSM, CoDA Guidelines for Intermediate Service Levels.

## CoDA Service Conference (CSC)

A CoDA Service Conference (CSC) is held each year in order to transact the business of CoDA by group conscience. This is CoDA's annual business meeting. The location varies from year to year. Delegates to CSC elect trusted servants, review budgets and expenditures, authorize literature, and develop goals for our organization and plan to reach those goals. While voting privileges are restricted, all CoDA members are welcome to attend the Conference and work on a CoDA committee. For more information about the CSC please see Part 4 of the FSM, [CoDA Service Conference Procedures](#).

## CoDA Service Boards and Trustees

To provide continuity of CoDA's work between Conferences, Delegates at the CoDA Service Conference (CSC) elect members to serve on two service boards -Co-Dependents Anonymous, Inc. (CoDA), and CoDA Resource Publishing, Inc. (CoRe). Within each board, members elect their own officers.

Participation on either board excludes participation on the other. Trustees serve as volunteers and are not paid. The term of office is three years. Trustees are responsible for the legal and business needs of CoDA or CoRe. Each board has but one purpose: to serve the Fellowship. Trustees are elected by the will and through the consent of the Fellowship as expressed through the group conscience of the conference.

NOTE: Each CoDA trustee has a vote at the CSC; the CoRe Board has two voting members at CSC.

## Incorporated CoDA Service Entities

**Co-Dependents Anonymous, Inc. (CoDA®)** is a non-profit corporation created by the Fellowship of CoDA to serve its business and legal needs. As such, CoDA, provides a center of on-going support, outreach, and information for the spiritual program of Co-Dependents Anonymous.

### Contact Information:

Written correspondence to CoDA may be directed to:

Co-Dependents Anonymous - Fellowship Services Office

PO Box 33577, Phoenix, AZ 85067-3577

Telephone numbers: [\(888\) 444-2359](tel:(888)444-2359) {Toll free}

[\(888\) 444-2379](tel:(888)444-2379) {Spanish toll free}

Our web site is: [www.coda.org](http://www.coda.org)

Email meeting updates to: [meeting@coda.org](mailto:meeting@coda.org)

Email other things to: [info@coda.org](mailto:info@coda.org)

**CoDA Resources Publishing, Inc. (CoRe)** is a non-profit corporation, established by the CoDA Service Conference, to perform specific duties related to the publication and distribution of literature for our program. This avoids problems of money, property, and prestige, allowing the CoDA membership to avoid disruptions to our program's primary spiritual purpose. The voting members at the CoDA Service Conference elect CoRe's Board of Directors. CoRe is a completely separate corporation from CoDA, but the CoDA trustees and the CoRe Board of directors are elected by the same voting members at Conference and are responsible to the same people, the

Fellowship of CoDA.

CoRe's primary mission is to ensure that CoDA literature be produced in a timely and cost efficient manner.

Reprinting of Spanish translated items of CoDA literature shall not be limited by portions 3(iii) and 3(iv) of CoRe's contract with CoDA, Inc., in order to allow CoRe to revise Spanish translations in accordance with edits made by Spanish Outreach.

**Contact Information:**

Written correspondence to CoRe may be directed to:

**CoRe Publications**, PO Box 1004 Denver, NC 28037. Voice Mail: 704-483-3038

Fax number: (704) 483-3088. The email address for CoRe is: [coreorders@codaa.org](mailto:coreorders@codaa.org)

## Board Overseen Services

### Fellowship Services Workers (FSW) and Independent Contractors

Fellowship Services workers provide baseline support services. This includes a mail and telephone point of contact for the members, maintenance of the organization's meeting and contact lists, and the delivery of other services required by the organization. The CoDA Board of Trustees is responsible for the execution and oversight of these services.

The following FSWs and Independent Contractors currently exist. More detailed information about each can be found the Part 5 of the FSM, Structure and General Information Details.

- Admin FSW handles various administrative tasks including retrieving postal mail from the PO box, maintains the meeting database and handles 7<sup>th</sup> tradition contributions.
- Webmaster is responsible for maintaining the content of the CoDA.org website.
- Email List Coordinator is responsible for handling the various announcement lists and the emailing of content to the addresses on those lists.

### CoDA Website

### Legal Group

## CoDA Standing Committees

Delegates, alternates, and members at large who wish to participate in CoDA service have the opportunity to volunteer for committee work, which focuses on specific areas of concern to the Fellowship. The focus and priority of these efforts is determined by group conscience at the CoDA Service Conference. These standing committees, at and between CoDA Conferences, plan and implement specific efforts. Any CoDA member may join and serve on a Conference committee. For more information on any of these please go to Part 5 of the FSM, Structure and General Information Details.

A committee requires a minimum of two (2) members in order to be a functioning committee of CoDA, Inc. A committee that does not have at least two members for 6 months or more will be presented to the next CoDA Service Conference

(CSC) and CSC will determine how to proceed.

- CoDA Events Committee (CEC)

CoDA Events Committee has a variety of duties revolving around the organization and management of the annual CoDA Service Conference (business meeting) and International CoDA Convention (workshops and speaker meetings), also known as the CSC and ICC. These duties include recommending and securing the date, location and hotel in conjunction with the CoDA Board. The CoDA Service Conference (CSC) and International CoDA Convention (ICC) will be announced two years in advance. More information in Part 5.

- CoDA Literature Committee (CLC)

The CLC's function is to encourage and facilitate the creation of new literature written by and for the Fellowship of Co-Dependents Anonymous. More information in Part 5.

- Communications Committee (Comm)

Comm's functions are to improve communications up and down the inverted pyramid within the World CoDA Fellowship and to work towards ensuring that every codependent throughout the world has access to all the CoDA information that is important to them. The Communications Committee provides administrative support for both the CoDA Email Team (CET) who answer and/or redirect email sent to [info@codaa.org](mailto:info@codaa.org) and to CoDA Phone team (Cphone) that responds when people call the CoDA phone number and choose to speak to a CoDA volunteer. More information in Part 5.

- Co-NNections<sup>®</sup> Committee (Online CoDA Newsletter)

The Co-NNections Committee publishes Fellowship recovery stories. The committee's belief is that publishing the submissions shared by CoDA members will enhance the recovery of contributors and viewers alike. The Co-NNections Committee's goal is to provide a weekly Reading and an on-line Meeting in Print for CoDA members to share their thoughts about their recovery journey. Committee members do this by publishing Co-NNections<sup>®</sup>, collection of original writing, graphic art, audio and video based submissions sent in by members of the CoDA Fellowship.

- Finance Committee

The CoDA Finance Committee works with the CoDA Treasurer and Board to provide financial oversight, analysis, and advice to the Fellowship of CoDA with respect to prudent budgeting and investing, financial stability and monetary resources of the CoDA Fellowship. More information in Part 5.

- Hospitals and Institutions (H and I)

The purpose of the Hospital and Institutions Committee (H&I) is to carry the message of CoDA to codependents through medical, penal, educational and social services institutions. This includes hospitals, prisons, jails, rehabilitation centers, schools and the libraries that serve these institutions. It is this committee's goal to act as a resource and support to the local H&I trusted servants. More information in Part 5.

- Issues Mediation Committee (IMC) Elected by the CoDA Service Conference

Primary function: The Issues Mediation Committee facilitates dispute mediation for Voting Entities, Intergroups, and other CoDA entities as needed. For further information and functions see FSM Part 5.

- Outreach Committee

The CoDA Outreach Committee (Outreach) is a group of actively recovering codependents whose focus is on carrying the message to codependents who still suffer. We provide information to members and groups who seek to reach out to codependents outside of CoDA, focusing on attraction, not promotion. More information in Part 5.

- Service Structure Committee (SSC)

The Service Structure Committee function is to serve the will of the fellowship and to serve in an advisory capacity to the CoDA Service Conference, Board of Trustees, and other service entities regarding service structure and the foundational documents. This includes maintaining CoDA fundamental structural documents, including Fellowship

Service Manual, Twelve Concepts, and other documents, as directed by the CoDA Service Conference. More information in Part 5.

- Spanish Outreach Committee (SPO)

Spanish Outreach receives emails from many parts of the World. We provide assistance to start, and register new meetings, answer questions regarding availability of Spanish literature, and how it can be obtained, translate for other CoDA Committees, the Webmaster, and the Fellowship Service Worker (FSW). Some of the Spanish Outreach members are volunteers to answer the Spanish phone line, and others are in charge of moderating the Spanish announcement list. (espcoda@codependents.org). More information in Part 5.

- Translation Management Committee (TMC)

The Translation Management Committee, working with the CoDA Board of Trustees, maintains, coordinates and assists in the process whereby individuals, groups and Voting Entities around the world find, translate (if necessary), create, publish and/or distribute CoDA literature and materials in their own language. More information in Part 5.

- World Connections Committee (WCC)

The World Connections Committee (WCC) focus is to connect with worldwide groups and members to collaborate by broadening the “experience, strength and hope” between worldwide voting entities, Co-Dependents Anonymous Inc. (CoDA) and the rest of the Fellowship. More information in Part 5.

## Other CoDA Service Entities:

### Task Forces and Ad Hoc committees:

#### Definition of a Task Force:

Temporary group of people formed to carry out a specific mission or project, or to solve a problem that requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

#### Definition of an Ad Hoc committee:

Committee formed for a specific task or objective, and dissolved after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective.

When a new Task Force or Ad Hoc committee is established by the CoDA Board between CSC meetings the following steps must be followed:

- A clear mission must be developed
- A clear set of criteria for membership must be developed
- The mission and criteria must be made available to the CoDA Fellowship via posting on the website and sending out via the Email List to solicit volunteers
- Any suggestions made by the Task Force or Ad Hoc committee must be presented at and approved by the next CSC prior to any actions being taken.
- Any current Task Force or Ad Hoc committee not using guidelines will be disbanded and recreated following the above procedures.

### Chairs Forum

The CoDA Chairs Forum was created to give current CoDA Chairs the opportunity to strategically work on topics and common goals and to share our CoDA experience. The Chairs Forum works in a collaborative, productive and respectful



manner. Topics can include educational and informational issues, and those identified problems that can be better solved collectively. By working on these goals, we strive to become better chairs.

## **Board Liaisons**

### **Description:**

The Board assigns a member to serve as liaison to each standing committee as well as other CoDA service entities such as FSWs, Ad Hoc committees, Task Forces and Voting Entities. The liaison provides a communication link between the Board and the committee or service entity.

For more information, please go to Part 5 of the FSM, Structure and General Information Details.

## Section 03 Communications within CoDA

### Healthy Communication Guidelines

Informative and timely communications are necessary for the growth and maintenance of any service organization. Lack of communication among our members can cause unnecessary conflict. CoDA members have requested guidance in applying our Steps and Traditions to new forms of communication, specifically electronic mail (email). The principles of effective communication may be applied to all forms of communication among members, committees, and service boards of CoDA.

All e-mail/Internet and postal addresses are confidential and are for CoDA business use only.

Because email is less expensive and more efficient than Postal Service deliveries, its use is encouraged, provided boundaries are maintained. These boundaries include maintaining appropriate anonymity. Appropriate anonymity requires that we keep our CoDA business within CoDA and that our emails do not go to people outside the Fellowship. It also means that we do not forward any email to a wider audience than the original thread without the author's express permission.

Note: The one exception to the above policy is when an email is pertinent in a dispute. In that case the email may be sent to IMC without the author's permission.

Our 11<sup>th</sup> tradition states: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. This does not say that we cannot share our last names with members of the fellowship. Whether or not to do so is a personal choice,

Email providers may include your full name even if it isn't part of your email address if you have provided it when signing up. If this level of anonymity is important to you, use the tools provided by your email provider to hide your last name. If necessary, create a new email account and only use your last initial in the last name field.

Anyone in the CoDA Fellowship can request his/her email address be placed on the CoDA Announcements email list. Because email copies involve no additional cost, broad distribution of general information is enhanced. Communication is enhanced when at least two members in each Voting Entity have email addresses and are willing to disseminate information received via email.

Any communication may be sent via e-mail. However, care must be taken when sending copyrighted information via email in order to protect our copyrights. Under the "fair use" rule of copyright law, an author may make limited use of another author's work without asking permission. This means that only a small portion (never more than 1 or 2 paragraphs) may be used and no permission is required to do so. Service items that are available on the website may be sent in full.

Proper email etiquette should be used at all times while conducting CoDA business. The following items are suggested:

- Avoid offensive language, name calling and taking others' inventories
- When using reply all that includes aliases remove individual addresses that are part of an alias to prevent people from getting multiple copies
- Do not use all capitals as that is considered yelling

## Group Conscience Process

The group conscience process is used to make decisions at all levels of CoDA. The home group typically has a monthly business meeting to discuss issues affecting the group such as how to address crosstalk, what literature to buy, how to welcome newcomers, etc. A group conscience may also be asked for during a regular meeting, if a decision is needed right away and can't wait for the regular business meeting. Anyone may ask for a group conscience at any time during a CoDA meeting, if and when immediate attention is needed to ensure the safety of an individual or the group, or to uphold the CoDA Traditions.

The group conscience process is also used to make decisions that affect CoDA as a whole and to elect trusted servants to carry out those decisions. The process of electing trusted servants begins with the group meeting. Each home group meeting may select a group service representative (GSR) to represent that group at Intergroup. The Intergroup (community, area, country, state, regional) elects delegates to represent them at CoDA meetings. The GSR carries the group conscience of the home group meeting to Intergroup. Intergroup holds a group conscience and decides whether the item will proceed to CoDA, or the next level.

At the Country, State and Regional or other Voting Entity levels, group and community representatives select trusted servants to serve the members of that Voting Entity. Group representatives also select Delegates to represent them and carry their group conscience to the CoDA Service Conference, which is held annually. Each Voting Entity may send two Delegates to this Conference, which is the annual business meeting of CoDA. At the CoDA Service Conference, Delegates carry the group conscience of those they represent. Delegates also work together to make decisions dealing with CoDA, and select trusted servants who will serve our Fellowship.

### Process of Determining a Group Conscience

Decisions at all levels of CoDA are made with the guidance of our Higher Power as expressed through the *Twelve Traditions*. Particularly useful are Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends upon CoDA Unity." and Tradition Two: "For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." Thus as with all our recovery, group conscience is about putting aside the "self" and looking to Higher Power for guidance

To begin the group conscience process, members present raise issues or items of business. Our goal is to reach agreement on the items presented. The meeting is opened to discussion by the chair/facilitator. When discussion ends, we determine the group conscience by taking a vote. A majority determines the group conscience.

Using a group conscience process is similar to "consensus-based decision making." The primary difference is

that in CoDA, people who participate share their strength, hope, and experience with one another in an effort to determine what is best for everyone in the Fellowship as a whole. We consciously invite our Higher Power to guide and direct us, individually and collectively. We grow in our recovery by putting aside the need to be right while making a decision for the good of CoDA in a spiritual process.

We seek to avoid campaigning in order to gain a win for "our" solution. A group conscience decision grows out of the combined wisdom invested in the whole group. With the help of our Higher Power, we open our minds to all viewpoints presented and then vote for the one we see as best for CoDA. We work to keep "personalities and prestige" from becoming involved. For instance, the voice and wisdom of someone with six months of experience is of as much weight and value as that of someone with ten years of recovery. Finally, be warned that an individual's need for acceptance and approval may circumvent the spiritual process. It isn't Higher Power's will that we go along to get along.

In CoDA, everyone is encouraged to share experience, strength, and hope with each other. We may engage in assertive presentation of our point of view, but we draw a boundary against aggressive persuasion, name-calling, or arm-twisting of people to vote a certain way. If a position is that of our Higher Power, it will naturally attract others.

Sometimes a person may invoke the "Right of Dissenting Opinion." This means that even a minority of one, favoring or opposing an issue, has a right to be heard. Only individual(s) who actively participated in the decision making without circumventing the process can offer a dissenting opinion. At a meeting, it means a person has the right to express a dissenting opinion before the members vote. In the CoDA Fellowship, it means that a member, group of members, or a committee may request the distribution of a dissenting opinion in writing in order to be "heard" by the Fellowship.

In conclusion, while every person has the right to express opinions, the group conscience determines a particular course of action. We demonstrate our openness to the will of Higher Power by accepting that decision even when we may disagree with it.

## **Safety, Boundaries, and Respect in the Group Conscience Process**

During the group conscience process, it is important that we all practice our program by balancing patience with assertion. We respect the boundaries of others and expect the same consideration. We assume responsibility for our behavior and accept accountability for our actions.

A time limit on speaking is an example of an appropriate boundary when made by group decision. The group may place a time limit on how long a person may speak to an issue, limit the number of times a one may speak on the issue, and determine how to seek clarification from members. If a member would like additional speaking time, that member may request it, and all members take a group conscience poll for resolution.

Before a group conscience is started in a home group meeting or service committee, it may be helpful to allow each member time to speak. Each member shares his or her name, an explanation of what the member hopes the group will accomplish, and the member's willingness to accept group conscience decision. Members may also choose to tell of a personal experience that pertains to the subject under discussion. This builds safety and trust within the group and reinforces CoDA's spiritual principles.

Sometimes there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest regarding a member's participation on a

particular subject. To be respectful of a member's integrity and boundaries, the member should have an opportunity to abstain from voting.

We are all at different places in our program, and many in CoDA service work are still working the CoDA Steps and Traditions to understand themselves. Some members may unconsciously act out, responding with anger and hostility. By practicing loving tolerance of each other's opinions, we may receive the ultimate reward of our program: spiritual growth.

### **Disagreement, Mediation, and Resolution in Our Group Conscience Process**

When we disagree, we express ourselves in non-personal, non-shaming ways. We do not attack an individual's point of view. Instead, we accept what the person says as true for them. In turn, we respectfully express our differing point of view. In this manner, we can share our experiences in a constructive way.

During the group conscience process, we reveal our commitment to CoDA by assuming responsibility for our behavior and accepting accountability for our actions. If we slip back into codependent attitudes and behaviors during this process, we admit it and make amends to those we have harmed. Thus, we gain a greater understanding of our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and CoDA's spiritual principles.

Occasionally, a member(s) may engage in unsafe behavior by not respecting the boundaries of others, or someone may perceive that to happen. In such a situation, any member may call for a "time out" or "thirty seconds." During a time out or thirty seconds, everyone ceases talking and spends time seeking guidance from Higher Power. At the end of the thirty seconds, someone calls "time," and members may choose to say the Serenity Prayer before resuming the meeting.

If a "time out" or "thirty seconds" does not eliminate the contentious behavior, it may be appropriate to ask for a group conscience decision on whether a person's behavior is threatening and/or offensive. If the group decides that the person is engaging in detrimental or disruptive behavior, the group can hold that person accountable by requesting that such behavior stop. Persons so cited are encouraged to work Steps Four and Ten, and act according to personal truth. Then, another group conscience may be requested to re-establish safety and CoDA unity.

If the contentious behavior continues, then mediation may be in order. Two or more people (to avoid allegations of impropriety, one person should be mutually agreed upon between the dissenting members) may meet privately with the offending member. It is recommended that the parties directly involved in the dispute recuse themselves from the group that is attempting to offer options to resolve the dispute. These parties should also recuse themselves from the final resolution decision making process if their unhealthy behavior is excessive; and/or they exhibit bias, and/or they prove to be uncooperative. The mediators will explain why their attitude and/or behavior are unacceptable in CoDA.

If mediation fails to resolve the problem, and an individual continues to behave in an offensive manner, the group can decide (through a group conscience decision), to suspend that individual's speaking privileges or even voting privileges. In extreme cases, the group may ask the individual to leave the meeting. Each person's right to attend meetings is guaranteed by Traditions Three, Five, and Twelve. Violations of the rights and boundaries of a meeting dishonors Tradition One that says, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery

depends upon CoDA unity.” An individual may lose the rights and privileges accorded to them by that group for committing such violations.

A situation may arise where a trusted servant in a position of responsibility acts irresponsibly in performance of their duties or acts in a manner contrary to our program's principles. If so, that group (e.g. meeting, committee, board, Intergroup, or Voting Entity etc.) may call for a group conscience decision to remove that individual from that position of responsibility for that group, meeting or CoDA entity (however, not from any other entity). In such cases, the individual(s) affected should be notified of a group conscience meeting and allowed to participate in the process. A temporary time period should be discussed with the trusted servant to allow for self development and a return to service. Depending on the nature of the act of irresponsibility and/or the level of responsibility of the position, there may be a need for a permanent disqualification. A record of all actions should be maintained by the group and be made available to any CoDA member upon written request, or to the Fellowship if deemed necessary by the IMC.

If the dispute case is at the IMC level, any trusted servant(s) (including Board Trustees) and/or any CoDA entity(s) (including a CoDA Board), directly or indirectly involved with a dispute/complaint, are expected to follow CoDA FSM guidelines/Bylaws, and fully cooperate and participate with IMC’s gathering of facts, mediation and resolution process. Some examples of cooperation are: providing truthful information relating to the dispute; negotiating and communicating earnestly and in good faith; and cooperating with IMC recommended resolution actions. All should be done in a timely manner.

If a dispute is irresolvable at the IMC level, the dispute may be brought to the Board of Trustees or to CSC (if a Board member or the Board is involved with the dispute). Personal names and titles will be removed for confidentiality purposes if brought to the CSC. Bringing a dispute to the CSC is a natural progression given CoDA’s inverted triangle. It also avoids a conflict of interest in the event the Board is directly involved in a dispute.

The Board of Trustees or CSC, while working together with the IMC, may apply consequences to relevant trusted servant(s) who excessively violate(s) FSM policies and/or Bylaws and who may choose not to participate with the conflict resolution process. Consequences may include requesting that the trusted servant volunteer to take a 45-day ‘cooling off’ period; a simple warning; temporary removal from CoDA service; and/or removal from leadership positions, etc. This time period would allow for self-development, personal growth and recovery before trusted servant(s) returns to service.

The IMC will present the relevant information to either the CoDA’s Board of Trustees (unless a Board member or the Board is directly involved with the dispute) or at the next CSC to allow for accuracy, objectivity, and fairness.

It is essential that all disputing parties use CoDA’s approved FSM mediation process, and not an external mediation/arbitration process. CoDA follows the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions and has its own policies and procedures. The IMC will work with CoDA members and not attorneys hired or on a pro bono basis by any party involved in the dispute. The IMC will base their recommendations on information provided by CoDA members, FSM policies and IMC procedures.

Groups, Intergroups or Voting Entities do not establish CoDA policy. CoDA policy is the responsibility of the

CoDA Service Conference. When a conflict is referred to the group, Intergroups or Voting Entity, they may help the conflicting members to explore the guidance offered by our *Twelve Traditions*.

In summary, the first step in resolving a conflict is for the individuals involved to attempt resolution between themselves. If this is not possible, the next step is for them to ask their home group for guidance or mediation. If this proves unsuccessful, the next step is to seek guidance from the Intergroup. Beyond this, the Voting Entity may be contacted for assistance. As a final step, and only when necessary, members may seek guidance from our CoDA service structure by requesting assistance from the Issues Mediation Committee (see Section 07 of the Fellowship Service Manual or IMC Main Page of the CoDA Website ([www.coda.org/service/IMC.htm](http://www.coda.org/service/IMC.htm))). It is recommended that individuals contact their Voting Entity Delegates for assistance in forwarding the request to the CoDA Issues Mediation Committee.

By seeking resolution in this sequence, we encourage individual growth, support group autonomy, respect our Traditions and allow our program to work.

## **The Limits of Autonomy: When a Group Conscience Decision Affects Other Groups or CoDA as a Whole**

Our Fourth Tradition reminds us that “Each group should remain autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole.” The decision making process of each group, including meeting groups and service groups, is independent and self-directed. However, if their group conscience decision affects other groups or CoDA as a whole, then that effect needs to be considered. The Steps, Traditions or will of the Fellowship as expressed by decisions made at CoDA Service Conference cannot simply be suspended by group conscience decision in the meeting or service group.

If a group does not agree with the interpretation of a Step or Tradition or the application of a CSC decision, they may want to present their concerns to their Intergroup assembly in order to formulate an Intergroup’s issue, or they may want to discuss their concerns with the Board of Trustees. In some cases, if direct resolution proves difficult, it may be useful to consult the Issues Mediation Committee.

Sometimes a CoDA member or group may perceive that their group or CoDA as a whole is being adversely affected by the group conscience decision of another group (meeting or service). The methods described in the section “Disagreement, Mediation, and Resolution in Our Group Conscience Process” (see above) can be applied to groups as well as individuals. First talk to the group and try to resolve the problem directly. If unsuccessful, seek guidance as described above.

## **Empowerment to Serve**

Trusted servants at any level of service are empowered to serve their group or committee through the process of group conscience. Those who volunteer to serve are invested with the responsibility to act for the group or committee through this process, remembering that the ultimate authority is “a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience.”

## **Resolving Communication Issues**

When we disagree, we express ourselves in non-personal, non-shaming ways. We do not attack an individual's

point of view. Instead, we accept what the person says as true for them. In turn, we respectfully express our differing point of view. In this manner, we can share our experiences in a constructive way.

During the group conscience process, we reveal our commitment to CoDA by assuming responsibility for our behavior and accepting accountability for our actions. If we slip back into codependent attitudes and behaviors during this process, we admit it and make amends to those we have harmed. Thus, we gain a greater understanding of our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and CoDA's spiritual principles.

Occasionally, a member(s) may engage in unsafe behavior by not respecting the boundaries of others, or someone may perceive that to happen. In such a situation, any member may call for a "time out" or "thirty seconds." During a time out or thirty seconds, everyone ceases talking and spends time seeking guidance from Higher Power. At the end of the thirty seconds, someone calls "time," and members may choose to say the Serenity Prayer before resuming the meeting.

If a "time out" or "thirty seconds" does not eliminate the contentious behavior, it may be appropriate to ask for a group conscience decision on whether a person's behavior is threatening and/or offensive. If the group decides that the person is engaging in detrimental or disruptive behavior, the group can hold that person accountable by requesting that such behavior stop. Persons so cited are encouraged to work Steps Four and Ten, and act according to personal truth. Then, another group conscience may be requested to re-establish safety and CoDA unity.

If the contentious behavior continues, then mediation may be in order. Two or more people (to avoid allegations of impropriety, one person should be mutually agreed upon between the dissenting members) may meet privately with the offending member. It is recommended that the parties directly involved in the dispute recuse themselves from the group that is attempting to offer options to resolve the dispute. These parties should also recuse themselves from the final resolution decision making process if their unhealthy behavior is excessive; and/or they exhibit bias, and/or they prove to be uncooperative. The mediators will explain why their attitude and/or behavior are unacceptable in CoDA.

If mediation fails to resolve the problem, and an individual continues to behave in an offensive manner, the group can decide (through a group conscience decision), to suspend that individual's speaking privileges or even voting privileges. In extreme cases, the group may ask the individual to leave the meeting. Each person's right to attend meetings is guaranteed by Traditions Three, Five, and Twelve. Violations of the rights and boundaries of a meeting dishonors Tradition One that says, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity." An individual may lose the rights and privileges accorded to them by that group for committing such violations.

A situation may arise where a trusted servant in a position of responsibility acts irresponsibly in performance of their duties or acts in a manner contrary to our program's principles. If so, that group (e.g. meeting, committee, board, Intergroup, or Voting Entity etc.) may call for a group conscience decision to remove that individual from that position of responsibility for that group, meeting or CoDA entity (however, not from any other entity). In such cases, the individual(s) affected should be notified of a group conscience meeting and allowed to participate in the process. A temporary time period should be discussed with the trusted servant to allow for



self-development and a return to service. Depending on the nature of the act of irresponsibility and/or the level of responsibility of the position, there may be a need for a permanent disqualification. A record of all actions should be maintained by the group and be made available to any CoDA member upon written request, or to the Fellowship if deemed necessary by the IMC.

If the dispute case is at the IMC level, any trusted servant(s) (including Board Trustees) and/or any CoDA entity(s) (including a CoDA Board), directly or indirectly involved with a dispute/complaint, are expected to follow CoDA FSM guidelines/Bylaws, and fully cooperate and participate with IMC's gathering of facts, mediation and resolution process. Some examples of cooperation are: providing truthful information relating to the dispute; negotiating and communicating earnestly and in good faith; and cooperating with IMC recommended resolution actions. All should be done in a timely manner.

If a dispute is irresolvable at the IMC level, the dispute may be brought to the Board of Trustees or to CSC (if a Board member or the Board is involved with the dispute). Personal names and titles will be removed for confidentiality purposes if brought to the CSC. Bringing a dispute to the CSC is a natural progression given CoDA's inverted triangle. It also avoids a conflict of interest in the event the Board is directly involved in a dispute.

The Board of Trustees or CSC, while working together with the IMC, may apply consequences to relevant trusted servant(s) who excessively violate(s) FSM policies and/or Bylaws and who may choose not to participate with the conflict resolution process. Consequences may include requesting that the trusted servant volunteer to take a 45-day 'cooling off' period; a simple warning; temporary removal from CoDA service; and/or removal from leadership positions, etc. This time period would allow for self-development, personal growth and recovery before trusted servant(s) returns to service.

The IMC will present the relevant information to either the CoDA's Board of Trustees (unless a Board member or the Board is directly involved with the dispute) or at the next CSC to allow for accuracy, objectivity, and fairness.

It is essential that all disputing parties use CoDA's approved FSM mediation process, and not an external mediation/arbitration process. CoDA follows the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions and has its own policies and procedures. The IMC will work with CoDA members and not attorneys hired or on a pro bono basis by any party involved in the dispute. The IMC will base their recommendations on information provided by CoDA members, FSM policies and IMC procedures.

Groups, Intergroups or Voting Entities do not establish CoDA policy. CoDA policy is the responsibility of the CoDA Service Conference. When a conflict is referred to the group, Intergroups or Voting Entity, they may help the conflicting members to explore the guidance offered by our Twelve Traditions.

In summary, the first step in resolving a conflict is for the individuals involved to attempt resolution between themselves. If this is not possible, the next step is for them to ask their home group for guidance or mediation. If this proves unsuccessful, the next step is to seek guidance from the Intergroup. Beyond this, the Voting Entity may be contacted for assistance. As a final step, and only when necessary, members may seek guidance from our CoDA service structure by requesting assistance from the Issues Mediation Committee (IMC Main Page of the CoDA Website). It is recommended that individuals contact their Voting Entity Delegates for assistance in

forwarding the request to the CoDA Issues Mediation Committee.

By seeking resolution in this sequence, we encourage individual growth, support group autonomy, respect our Traditions and allow our program to work.

## **Social Networking Sites**

Because there are concerns about anonymity and privacy on social networking sites no CoDA literature or CoDA business should be posted or discussed on any site that is open to everyone. If anyone chooses to discuss CoDA literature or CoDA business on a private recovery site one should limit literature posting to very small excerpts to protect copyrights and use discretion when discussing CoDA business.

These guidelines were developed with insight gained from the following Steps and Traditions:

Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

If we fail to follow our guidelines, we admit our shortcomings and make amends wherever and as soon as possible. If we wronged a person in private, we make amends in private; if we wronged a person in front of others, we make amends in front of others.

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity.

We ask, "Does this message promote CoDA unity, foster fellowship or promote recovery? Could it be interpreted as disruptive or divisive?" If we receive a message that we consider disruptive or divisive, we share that feeling with the author before seeking other remedies. We ask permission before copying an email message or other communication to others. We review our responses for adherence to our Steps, Traditions, and principles.

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority: a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

CoDA has procedures in place to determine the group conscience of a meeting, Intergroup, Voting Entity and even our CoDA structure. We determine our collective group conscience by selecting/electing representatives to serve the Fellowship. Our Higher Power gives us guidance in this way. Sometimes people may circumvent our process by claiming to be interpreters of our group conscience. To avoid future confusion, when we participate in a group conscience decision, we make written notes of the people who were notified and/or participated, identify the subject we discussed, and include the results of the decision.

Tradition Three: The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships. We need to be aware that not everyone in CoDA has access to telephones, computers, email, or the Internet. CoDA is based on inclusion, not exclusion. Access to technology of any kind is not a requirement for participation in our program, so we look for ways to distribute information, when requested, to those who do not have this access. We make a sincere attempt to include all interested members in our discussions, whether by telephone, fax, email, the Internet, Postal Service, or other means.

Tradition Nine: CoDA, as such, ought never to be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

As members of CoDA, and when working as trusted servants in any way, we are respectful to the members we serve and the members we associate with during our service. We communicate with others on matters that affect other groups or CoDA as a whole. We communicate with our Voting Entity Delegates when seeking information.

Tradition Ten: CoDA has no opinion on outside issues; hence, the CoDA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

As members of CoDA, and when working as trusted servants, we respect the careful use of Postal Service, telephone, fax, email and the internet. We do not use personal correspondence of any kind to draw Co-Dependents Anonymous, any of its service boards, or any CoDA member into public controversy on any matter.

Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

The Internet is not a private form of communication. It is a public medium. Publishing items to web sites is comparable to publishing in a newspaper. For this reason, we encourage members to seek anonymity in screen names, email addresses, and postal mail addresses.

Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

We respect the anonymity of others and ourselves. We consider the point of view of any writer or speaker. Is anyone cloaking personal opinions or concerns in our Steps and Traditions? Are we all respecting group conscience procedures? Is there a possibility of miscommunication? Could we be making erroneous assumptions? Does it feel right? If not, it probably isn't. When in doubt, check it out.

## **List of Affirmative Communication Actions**

- I respect the anonymity of others by not using a member's last name in the text of a message.
- I obtain permission before faxing or emailing CoDA identified materials to a member.
- I respect the personal integrity, anonymity, and privacy of each member, and I expect and deserve the same.
- I maintain civility and decorum in my communications to members of CoDA, as I practice developing and maintaining healthy relationships. I continue to practice healthy interpersonal behavior in communications via telephone, fax, email, and the Internet.
- When in doubt about the content or intent of a letter, telephone call, email, or other communication, I first request clarification from the author before discussing its content.
- When I participate in a group discussion (in person or by Postal Service, telephone, fax, email or on the internet), I maintain focus on the subject at hand. My attention and focus is a gift I offer other members.

- Recovery is a process; I respect each member for where that member is in recovery. I practice my program by sharing my experience, strength, and hope with others, not by pointing out faults and flaws in others.
- The text of any forwarded message is transmitted verbatim. I do not edit it. (For the purposes of committee work where editing work is in process, I clearly mark a previous, unedited version and include it with my suggested revisions.) Generally, emails are not forwarded to people not addressed by the original sender.
- I encourage others in their recovery, and do not "flame" them. Flaming is a written attack on a person, a person's opinions, or a person's point of view, distributed to multiple addresses, usually via email. When my opinions differ from another, I share my experiences with that person, explaining how they are different or similar.
- When sending email to a list of addresses, I send the message to myself and use BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) for the list of intended recipients in order to protect the anonymity of the members.

## CoDA Quarterly Service Report (QSR)

Each committee and service entity provides a quarterly summary of what they have accomplished. The Board combines these summaries into a report that is distributed by the Email List Coordinator. For more information on the QSR process please see Part 5 of the FSM, Structure and General Information Details.

## Guidelines for Developing a CoDA Meeting, Intergroup or Voting Entity (VE) Website

CoDA service committees, Meetings, Intergroups, or Voting Entities may establish a web presence with a web site to carry the message of Co-Dependents Anonymous. Each entity may decide what information they want to provide and the level of complexity they wish to maintain on a web site.

For more information of how to create a CoDA website please see Part 3 of the FSM, Guidelines for Intermediate Service Levels.

### CoDA Service Items/Literature:

CoDA's service items include the Meeting Starter Packet, the Fellowship Service Manual, the Steps, Promises, Traditions, & meeting format. All service items appear on the [www.coda.org](http://www.coda.org) website. They may be photocopied for use in CoDA meetings or posted on CoDA community websites.

CoDA does not allow quotations from our literature on any website, nor does CoDA allow photocopying of literature. Literature includes but is not limited to: *The CoDA Book*, *the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions Workbook*, *Newcomer's Handbook* and other items that we sell through CoRe. Although text of CoDA's literature is not

posted on the CoDA.org website, short descriptions of literature (blurbs) and ordering information are available online.

We, as a Fellowship, own the literature, develop it, approve it and maintain it. We have entrusted the Board of Trustees of Co-Dependents Anonymous, Inc. the legal responsibility to protect our property. That includes rigorous protection of our copyrights from use without permission. If copyright infringement is found to exist, the following steps should be taken:

- Bring it to the attention of the Board of Trustees
- The Board of Trustees will take appropriate action to preserve CoDA rights and resolve the violation, up to and including notification of the Internet Service Provider, and legal action.

### **An Extension of Press, Radio and Films:**

Tradition Eleven, which calls for maintaining “*personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, film,*” also applies to the Internet.

### **Technical Issues:**

Technical issues may arise during the development of web sites. Detailed questions about coding, page structure, and other issues cannot be covered in this general overview. Your Internet Service Provider may be able to provide you with technical assistance. Trustees or committee chairs may be contacted via email, the CoDA web site, [www.coda.org](http://www.coda.org), or by postal mail.

Write to: Co-Dependents Anonymous

PO Box 33577

Phoenix, AZ 85067

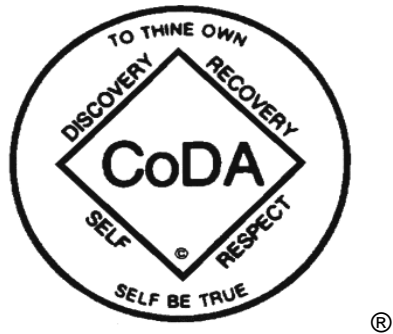
### **Summary:**

The general things you need to remember are:

- Design the site with newcomers in mind.
- Do not use CoDA copyrighted material.
- Take a careful look at any site that you consider linking to for Traditions related problems. It is strongly suggested that you only link to sites sponsored by other Co-Dependents Anonymous service bodies, including the CoDA web site, [www.coda.org](http://www.coda.org).
- Create a Web Site Maintenance Committee within the service body or community to make ongoing revisions to your web site.
- Sponsoring service bodies must be advised of and approve all revisions to their sponsored web site.
- Have fun considering the possibilities of the information that you can disseminate and the creative ways there are to do that.

- A web site is an incredible tool to help spread information to people who suffer from codependency. It just takes a little thought and effort to maintain our adherence to the principles that we have learned to incorporate into our everyday lives.
- Remember, the internet is a way to facilitate bringing more hands and hearts into our Fellowship.

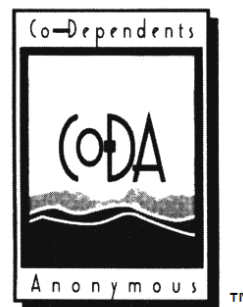
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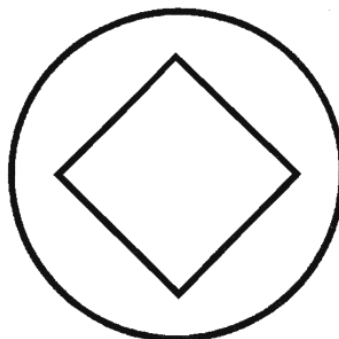


This symbol was chosen at the 1989 Service Conference as the newsletter symbol. The name *Co-NNECTIONS* was also chosen at the 1989 Conference.



This symbol was also used by *Co-NNECTIONS*.

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