

Preparing for a Group Inventory

What is a group inventory?

Twelve Step groups take an inventory of themselves from time-to-time. This tool can give the group perspective on how the meeting is doing. It helps to show both strengths and weaknesses. This process can keep us on the road toward being an ever-safer group. It helps us to carry the CoDA message of recovery.

Why have a Group Inventory?

Maybe only a few members are doing service in our group. Maybe newcomers attend one meeting, but never return. Possibly there are members who do not respect the meeting's boundaries, making the meeting feel unsafe. These problems may be easy to spot, but may be difficult to solve during the meeting or in a regular business meeting. Just as a Fourth Step inventory enhances recovery in our personal lives, a group inventory can enhance the health of our group.

Introduce the Inventory Idea to the Group

Bring copies of this document to your business meeting and suggest the group consider doing an inventory. If your group does not have regular business meetings, suggest scheduling one to discuss doing an inventory.

Like business meetings, inventory meetings are made safer by having a trusted servant facilitate in a fair and inclusive manner. Announce the inventory in advance—so that all interested members can make plans to participate.

It is important that all members feel welcome and respected. In accordance with our Second and Third Traditions, all members should have an equal opportunity to speak.

Set Boundaries for the Process

It is important to set boundaries; healthy boundaries create safety.

Here is a list of boundaries to consider:

When will we meet? Will we meet before or after the meeting or at a separate time?

What will the length of each session be? How long will we meet? How many questions will we cover each time we meet?

Will there be a time limit on individual sharing? What will that time limit be?

How will we determine the speaking order? Will it be round-robin style, will the facilitator call on those with raised hands, or some other method?

Will we rotate the responsibility of facilitating?

Discuss crosstalk guidelines? Read CoDA Guide to Sharing/ Crosstalk Guidelines.

How often will we revisit this process of setting boundaries?

CoDA has created many resources which are helpful to meetings:

Printed literature:

- *Building CoDA Community, Healthy Meetings Matter*
- *Experiences With Crosstalk*
- *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Workbook*
(in particular, the Preface and the Traditions Checklist)

On the Website, www.coda.org:

- The Twelve Traditions
- The Twelve Service Concepts
- Fellowship Service Manual
- Meeting Handbook

Meeting Inventory Format

Please Note: This suggested format was created by CoDA members for CoDA members. Each meeting is autonomous and may adapt the format to meet its own needs.

Welcome everyone! My name is _____ and I will be leading our meeting inventory. Please take a copy of the questions. Please help me open this meeting with the CoDA Opening Prayer or The Serenity Prayer:

The CoDA Opening Prayer

*In the spirit of love and truth,
we ask our Higher Power to guide us
as we share our experience, strength, and hope.
We open our hearts to the light of wisdom,
the warmth of love, and the joy of acceptance.*

The Serenity Prayer:

*God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.*

This group inventory is like a Fourth Step for our meeting. The intention is to gather information about how well we are fulfilling our primary purpose as stated in our Fifth Tradition: *Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer.*

We will use the list of questions to guide the discussion as we evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our meeting. The secretary will take notes during the inventory for review.

If disturbances arise, anyone may call for 30 Seconds of Silence by saying "30 seconds." The discussion will be immediately put on hold, and 30 seconds of silence will be observed. We will say the Serenity Prayer before resuming discussion.

In the interest of safety, please use "I" statements.

Facilitator will restate boundaries the group has decided to use relative to share times, etc.

Facilitator will now read the first question and open the discussion.

Suggested Inventory Questions

1. How do we treat newcomers?
 - a) Are we welcoming?
 - b) Do we talk with newcomers before and after the meeting?
 - c) Are newcomers acknowledged during the meeting?
 - d) Do we give newcomers an overview of CoDA? How?
 - e) Are phone/email lists available?

* For more information, see “Welcoming Newcomers” in the *Meeting Handbook* at coda.org

2. Are CoDA’s four foundational documents read, as written, at each meeting? The Preamble, The Welcome, The Twelve Steps, and The Twelve Traditions.
3. Does the meeting start and end on time?
4. If the meeting goes for fellowship (coffee, food) do we announce that everyone is welcome to attend?
5. Is sponsorship encouraged and modeled among our membership?
6. Are service positions such as meeting facilitator, secretary, treasurer filled and regularly rotated?
7. Do we give chips/medallions?
8. Do we use, stock and sell CoDA conference endorsed literature in our meetings? Do we respect CoDA copyrights by refraining from photocopying literature? Some information from the coda.org website may be downloaded and copied, for use by meetings.
9. Do we elect a Group Service Rep (GSR) to represent our meeting in the wider CoDA world, such as intergroup, State or Voting Entity(VE) organizations?
10. Does the privilege of leading the meeting rotate among all regular attendees?
11. Seventh Tradition
 - a) Are donations sufficient to cover the needs of our group?
 - Rent, or donation for use of meeting space

- Purchase of CoDA literature
 - Other expenses
- b) Do we send a portion of our Seventh Tradition donations to help support our regional intergroup, VE, and CoDA World Service? Note: the amount of the donation does not matter. Supporting the fellowship regularly, no matter the amount, is a spiritual practice that benefits our group. If every group sent even \$5 each year to CoDA, it would help immensely!
- c) Do we announce service and support opportunities in committees, etc., throughout CoDA's service structure?
12. Is crosstalk, giving advice, interrupting one another avoided? How do we deal with crosstalk if it happens?
13. Are group conscience meetings (business meetings) held monthly to make decisions about treasury, rotation of service, literature inventory, meeting issues, etc?
14. Is the group registered with CoDA on the fellowship website, www.coda.org? Is the listing updated yearly, or each time there is a change throughout a year's time?
15. What is the group doing to carry the message of CoDA recovery?
16. Does the group practice anonymity by reminding members not to repeat who is seen or what personal sharing is heard at a meeting, and by omitting last names and professional titles?

Concluding the Meeting

That is all the time we have for this inventory today. Thank you for your participation in this process. Is there a volunteer to lead the inventory meeting next time?

Announce next inventory meeting time here.

Please help me close this meeting with the CoDA Closing Prayer or Serenity Prayer.

The CoDA Closing Prayer:

*We thank our Higher Power,
for all that we have received from this meeting.
As we close, may we take with us
the wisdom, love, acceptance, and hope of recovery.*

The Serenity Prayer:

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.*
