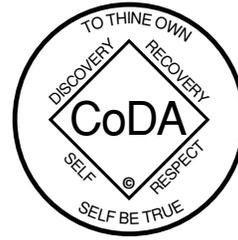


CoDA Service Structure

CoDA meetings are connected to the wider Fellowship through our service structure. In many geographic areas, meetings band together to create an Intergroup for mutual support. Voting Entity, or VE, is the next level of service. A VE can be a country, or a division within a country such as a state, where meetings send their GSR. The VE elects Delegates to represent the VE at the annual CoDA Service Conference, CSC.

The following pieces of CoDA literature will expand our understanding:

- *Attending Meetings*
- *Newcomer Handbook*
- *Co-Dependents Anonymous*
- *Experiences With Crosstalk*
- *The CoDA Twelve Step Handbook*
- *The Twelve Step and Twelve Tradition Workbook*
- *Sponsorship, What's in It For Me?*
- *CoDA Prayers*
- *Building CoDA Community, Healthy Meetings Matter*



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MEETINGS:

Welcome to Co-Dependents Anonymous
Co-Dependents Anonymous

WELCOME TO CODA

Welcome to Co-Dependents Anonymous, CoDA, a Twelve Step fellowship for people who desire healthy and loving relationships.

Four major building blocks of recovery in the CoDA program are attending meetings, sponsorship, working The Twelve Steps, and following The Twelve Traditions in service.

Attending Meetings

Because many of us come to CoDA in great pain, impatience, and confusion, it may take time to hear the CoDA message. Newcomers often struggle with believing they are in the right place.

A CoDA meeting may feel strange to a newcomer, even if they feel drawn to the hopeful message about healthy and loving relationships. CoDA's introductory readings may not make sense or may appear to be overly long. Sharing may stir up strong, unwelcome, or uncomfortable emotions.

Attending regularly, at least twice per week, for a minimum of six weeks, gives newcomers a clearer understanding of the CoDA message. We begin to calm down and become able to absorb the message of hope and healing. Time and repetition help. Our experience has shown us that the program works if we work it.

Listening

Listening to others share in a CoDA meeting is how we begin to get the program. Learning to listen deeply is a skill that takes practice. Many find learning to listen to be one of the best gifts of recovery.

Sharing

Newcomers are encouraged to share as they feel able. It is recommended to begin slowly. Passing is fine.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is the heart of the CoDA program, offering members a unique opportunity to develop and maintain a healthy one-to-one relationship.

A sponsor is:

- a CoDA member who has experience working the Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions of CoDA with a sponsor.
- willing to share their experience, strength, and hope.
- a guide through the Twelve Steps.
- a mentor for service work, who applies the principles of The Twelve Traditions.
- a source of healthy, loving support and accountability.
- respectful their sponsee's autonomy.
- a person with whom issues of romance or sexual attraction will not arise.

Working the Steps

Working The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous means to study and use the Steps in a personal program of recovery. Reading CoDA Conference endorsed literature, writing, and sharing are the tools needed to begin to work the Steps. Members typically use *Co-Dependents Anonymous* (the "blue book") and *The CoDA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Workbook* (the "green book").

One approach is to work individually with a sponsor. Another approach is to meet with a group of two or more CoDA members in a step study group. The group will decide on the pace of study.

Newcomers often wonder if it is necessary to "believe in God" in order to work the steps. The short answer is no. In CoDA, we learn to rely on a power of our own understanding that is greater than ourselves. This power can be anything we define it to be for our recovery.

Service, Following the Twelve Traditions

The Twelve Traditions are the guiding spiritual principles of our meetings and all service within the CoDA service structure. Some of the principles found in the Traditions are: unity of purpose, self-support, and anonymity.

CoDA meetings rely on members to keep the meeting viable. Support can be as simple as regular attendance, setting up chairs, putting out literature, contributing to the Seventh Tradition basket, or reading during a meeting. Examples of taking on increased service are: opening up the room, chairing a meeting, becoming the meeting secretary or treasurer, or acting as a Group Service Representative (GSR) to represent the meeting at intergroup or Voting Entity meetings.

Healthy meetings rotate service positions and hold regular business meetings where all members are welcome to participate in the decision-making process, called a group conscience. They maintain current information about the location, time, and contact person for the meeting at coda.org and local intergroup meeting lists.