

CoDAteen Meeting Handbook

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# Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this document is to provide CoDA and CoDAteen members with all the basic documents and information needed to start and conduct CoDAteen meetings. This document provides information and guidelines for CoDA sponsoring groups and the adult sponsors/hosts who work with teens. CoDA recommends that every meeting have a copy of this handbook. It has the basic documents that support CoDA unity and safety for CoDAteen members.

# Carrying the CoDAteen Message

How do we “carry the message” of recovery to teens? Many CoDA members share the wish of knowing about CoDA when we were younger. We are powerless over the past. Today, we can choose to support young people in recovery from codependency.

# SECTION ONE: Introduction and Getting Started

## What is a CoDAteen Meeting?

A CoDAteen meeting is a group of two or more young people who come together around their shared desire for healthy and loving relationships. These meetings are guided by a CoDA adult member (sponsor/host) who has the desire to work with young people/teens. 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.

CoDAteen groups are sponsored or hosted by an adult CoDA group, Intergroup, Region or Voting Entity and are required to register with Co-Dependents Anonymous for the safety of the group and to have support from CoDA as a whole. CoDAteen meetings have specific behavioral and safety requirements for working with minors but on the whole, they should function as close as they can to an adult CoDA meeting. CoDAteen meetings are required to read the four following Foundational Documents as written at every meeting.

• CoDAteen Preamble

• CoDAteen Welcome

• CoDA Twelve Steps

• CoDA Twelve Traditions

With respect to other questions about group organization (date, time, type of meeting), each group is autonomous. As Tradition Four states, “*Each group should remain autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole*,” it is important that a CoDAteen meeting clearly communicates the message, “This is CoDAteen.” While it is rare, some meetings have chosen to adopt a format that varies significantly from CoDAteen guidelines, this presents confusion, particularly to the newcomer, about the nature of our program.

## Purpose of a CoDAteen Meeting

The basic purpose of a CoDAteen meeting is to allow young people to discover a healthy and loving relationship with their Higher Power, themselves, and others. This happens according to their experience with step work, sponsorship, and, most importantly, identification with others in the group. Seeing others with similar feelings and problems find a common solution is the key to trusting in a "*Higher Power of our own understanding".*

Dysfunctional families, caregivers or other adults involved in a teen’s life present poor role models who offer mixed and negative messages fostering self-destructive beliefs. These beliefs are formed by daily repetitious examples and messages that lower self-esteem. It is this daily experience which instills these ideas as belief, and it will take a daily healing process of positive affirmations to reverse the impact.

The meetings are designed to offer the necessary tools of recovery from codependency and unhealthy relationships. They also offer the example of other members sharing their experience, strength and hope which can bring about healthy change. These examples are far more powerful than words.

A CoDAteen meeting is the focus for developing a new way of life. As adult CoDA sponsors/hosts review their ninth step, they may find CoDAteen sponsorship a healthy way of amending past wrongs. Even when their kids are grown and gone, the opportunity to practice and model recovery for our youth can be a powerful healing experience.

## Differences Between CoDAteen Meetings and “Adult” CoDA Meetings

There are many more similarities than differences. CoDAteen is based on the CoDA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of CoDA. The CoDAteen meeting format is like CoDA’s suggested meeting format. CoDAteens have similar service positions and make meeting decisions based on the group conscience process just as adult meetings.

CoDAteen members, through their group conscience process, can decide if they want to allow attendance by an adult member other than the regular sponsors/hosts, for special purposes. For example, a CoDA member may be available to share experience, strength, and hope relating to teen issues. An adult CoDA member may be available to hold a CoDA-related workshop for CoDAteens. These decisions are made by the teens, not the adult meeting sponsors/hosts. Aside from these exceptional circumstances, CoDAteen meetings are not open to adults, except for the certified adult sponsors/hosts.

## Structure of CoDAteen

Each CoDAteen meeting must have a sponsoring CoDA group which holds business meetings with adult sponsors/hosts included to help oversee the CoDAteen group. Likewise, the group may help with transportation, finances, sponsor/host recruitment, alternate sponsors/hosts, and or special events.

The sponsoring group would also be responsible for assuring that sponsors/hosts and any other adult CoDA member involved with CoDAteen comply with *“CoDA’s Minimum Behavioral and Safety Requirements for CoDAteen”* as well as any local area requirements to work with minors.

There may also be a liaison with other teen organizations in the area. An important liaison would be to hospitals and institutions. Sometimes, the neediest youth are overlooked in residential schools, foster home programs, juvenile hall, and other institutional settings. Codependent teens are frequently misunderstood in these situations. The group may also maintain a list of community resources to share how CoDAteen members may contact those who may be able to help.

The sponsoring CoDA group for CoDAteen is key to tradition four; "*Each group should remain autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole".* Local groups, regional groups, Intergroups and Voting Entities maintain adult responsibility for the youth. Without the adult sponsoring group, "autonomy" would be impossible to establish.

This sponsoring group is permitted by tradition nine; “*CoDA as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve*".

Though autonomous, CoDAteen adult sponsoring groups are responsible to CoDA as well as the individual CoDAteen meetings.

## Steps for an adult CoDA meeting to sponsor a CoDAteen meeting

* Call one or more group conscience business meeting(s) to determine if there is sufficient support within your group to host a CoDAteen meeting.
* Read and Review “*CoDA’s* *Minimum Behavioral and Safety Requirements for CoDAteen*” during the group conscience business meeting.
* Determine if there are two people in your group who fit the minimum requirements for hosting a CoDAteen meeting. Please note that for safety’s sake, the “*CoDA’s* *Minimum Behavioral and Safety Requirements for CoDAteen*” are mandatory.
* When possible, it is preferred for safety’s sake to have one member of each sex to host at a co-ed CoDAteen meeting. If this is not possible, two people of the same sex may serve as sponsors/hosts. However, it is necessary that the two sponsors/hosts do not have a marital/romantic/sexual relationship with one another. The adult CoDA meeting should be able to provide a qualified substitute sponsor/host when the regular sponsor/ host is unavailable.
* Contact your local police department or authorities for the most up to date requirements and any necessary procedures to allow adults to work with teens/minors. They may require fingerprints and/or background checks.
* Determine if there are funds available to pay for rent and some CoDA and/or CoDAteen literature to start the CoDAteen meeting. The adult CoDA group may financially support the CoDAteen group, if necessary, within the scope of Tradition Seven.
* We suggest stocking welcome chips and literature such as: *Establishing Boundaries in Recovery, Communication and Recovery, Am I Codependent, Your First Meeting, Info for the Professionals, Newcomer Handbook~~,~~ Tools for Recovery etc*. and other materials as chosen by the group. *(Note: Many of these items are available to download for free under Member Resources at* [*www.coda.org*](http://www.coda.org)*,* or you may purchase literature online at [www.corepublications.org](http://www.corepublications.org). (A literature form is included in *Section 5- Service Forms* of this handbook)
* It is suggested for face-to-face meetings to take place in the same building and at the same time as an adult meeting or set up a time after school that is convenient for the teen to attend.
* You may also choose to hold a virtual meeting. The most convenient time and day would be set by the CoDAteens in attendance through a group conscience.
* Set a start date.
* Register the CoDAteen meeting with CoDA Inc. Fill out and mail in the group registration form or email to meetings@coda.org specifying that this is a CoDAteen meeting. (See *Section 5- Service Forms* of this handbook)
* Decide what ages the group is willing to accept and include that in your registration.
* Announce the CoDAteen meeting to attract CoDAteen members through posters or handouts. Suggested places to announce meetings are:
	+ Local schools and teen/youth centers
	+ Guidance counselors’ offices and/or treatment centers
	+ Doctors/Nurse’s offices and/or hospitals
	+ Detention Centers or Shelters
	+ Local newspapers
	+ CoDA or other twelve step meetings *i.e., Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-anon, Alateen, Adult Children of Alcoholics, etc.*
	+ On the CoDA website (coda.org)
	+ Libraries or other municipal centers
	+ Supermarkets or grocery stores
	+ Video or music stores, movies, bowling alleys, etc.

## Steps for a CoDA Intergroup, Region, or Voting Entity to sponsor a CoDAteen meeting.

* If your CoDA Group wants to host a meeting for CoDAteens, follow the process above, which pertains to a regular CoDA Meeting hosting a CoDAteen Meeting.
* The group needs to decide where the best location would be for CoDAteens.
* Among the considerations are:
	+ Is the location accessible? How might teens get there?
	+ Will it be adjacent to — or near -- a regular CoDA meeting within your Intergroup, Region or Voting Entity?
	+ What is the best time for teens? When are the sponsors/hosts available?

## Can two Adult CoDA members host a CoDAteen meeting without the support of a local or regional group?

It is not recommended for the safety of all involved. It is imperative to have the support of an adult CoDA group.

## The Role of Adult sponsors/hosts inside CoDAteen meetings

CoDAteen sponsors/hosts model appropriate adult behavior for the CoDAteen members by arriving earlier so the meeting begins on time, communicating directly with each other and the group, being good listeners, using "I" statements, encouraging CoDAteens to take on service roles, and supporting them in their recovery process.

Sponsors/hosts are role models for the CoDAteen members through their interactions with each other and with the teens themselves. They show recovery through their actions (i.e., letting go of control, using the CoDA Steps and Traditions in their lives, turning to their Higher Power for guidance, and trusting the process as the CoDAteens make decisions using the group conscience process.)

It is important to remember that the role of the CoDAteen sponsor/host is to provide a safe place for teens to share with each other, and to support and encourage the group as a whole. All teens should be treated equally, without any indication of favoritism.

## The Role of Adult sponsors/hosts outside of CoDAteen meetings

In between meetings, the adult sponsor/host can encourage the teens to reach out, if needed, to the adult sponsor/host or other CoDAteen members using the voluntary phone list. Adult sponsors/hosts do not serve as personal sponsors to individual CoDAteens. CoDAteens serve as personal sponsors to each other.

Adults in CoDAteen service need always use caution in any one-on-one interactions with minors, including in person, via phone, or other electronic means. Remember that communications such as text messages and e-mails can be saved, forwarded, and manipulated. Be sure you know the teens and that everything you say or write is appropriate for the adult sponsor/host and CoDAteen relationship. Also avoid giving opinions about or otherwise intervene in a way that puts the adult sponsor/host in an adversarial role with the parent/guardian.

### CoDA’s Minimum Behavioral and Safety Requirements for CoDAteen*(Board motion #11 will replace this after 2022 conference approval)*

To ensure the safety of CoDAteen members, at the recommendation of the CoDA Board of Trustees and the CoDAteen Task Force, all CoDA members who work with CoDAteens are required to be sponsored and certified by an adult CoDA group, Intergroup, Region or Voting Entity. Through group conscience, a sponsoring group is required to adapt a process to certify adult sponsors/hosts who work with CoDAteen members and register with CoDA World. The certification process must meet the minimum requirements listed below along with other considerations.

1. Every adult CoDA member or sponsor/host involved with CoDAteen service **must**:
	* Be a CoDA member regularly attending CoDA meetings who has a sponsor and is working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions according to the CoDA program of recovery.
	* Be at least 25 years old with a minimum of 3 years of recovery in CoDA and has participated in CoDA service work.
	* Not have been convicted of a felony.
	* Not have been charged with any form of child abuse.
	* Not have been charged or demonstrated any inappropriate sexual behavior or be named on any sex offender’s list.
	* Demonstrate emotional stability and sobriety.
	* Remain free from mind altering substances during meetings and service work*.*
	* Not have demonstrated violent tendencies or coercive abuse that could harm a CoDAteen member.
2. There must be two CoDA sponsors/hosts at every CoDAteen meeting, but if this is not possible, one adult sponsor/host who is certified and sponsored by a CoDA group and meets all other requirements may be acceptable.
3. The group requirements must prohibit overt or covert sexual interaction between any adult and CoDAteen member.
4. The group requirements must prohibit conduct contrary to applicable laws.
5. Research your local area for requirements according to the law.
6. The group requirements must contain procedures which include parental permission and medical care for the teen to participate when necessary. In some circumstances, it might be possible to accept a referral from a counselor, teacher, or doctor. *(See sample Parental Permission Letter in Section 5- Service Forms in the CoDAteen Handbook)*
7. Adapt a process for training adult sponsors/hosts using recommendations and resources from CoDAteen at CoDA World.
8. Adapt a process for addressing problem behaviors within the group, using recommendations and resources from CoDAteen at CoDA World.

Other points for groups to think about or consider:

1. Requiring two CoDA sponsors/hosts at every CoDAteen meeting.
2. Having background checks, many areas require this by law to work with minors.
3. Deciding on age ranges for your group. In general, CoDAteen is for “teens” ages 13 to 18 however there may be younger children who are ready for CoDAteen who can participate safely in a sharing and learning experience. Each group may decide through group conscience on an acceptable age range, or they may decide to divide their meetings based on the age range. It is encouraged that older teens begin attending CoDA adult meetings while attending CoDAteen to have a smooth transition or they may form a “young adult” CoDA group.
4. Connecting CoDAteen conferences or conventions with CoDA Intergroups, Regions or Voting Entities.
5. Hosting a CoDAteen meeting that meets at the same time and place as the sponsoring CoDA meeting or group.
6. Being conscious about gender diversity.
7. Avoiding one-on-one interactions.
8. Always having an appropriate ratio of adults to CoDAteen members.
9. Ways CoDAteen members can be transported to and from events.
10. Organizing informational and awareness activities i.e., inviting CoDA speakers, setting up workshops, and/or information booths etc. about codependency for teens, adult sponsors/hosts and/or the community.
11. Having local legal counsel review the group requirements for working with minors

CoDA World has many resources and free downloads to help, including CoDAteen Meeting Handbook found on the CoDAteen webpage at www.coda.org.

## Useful tips for CoDA meeting sponsors/hosts:

* Have a willingness to share the experience, strength, and hope of CoDA recovery.
* Be a healthy role model for teens to support teens in their recovery.
* Practice patience.
* Be good listeners
* Allow Higher Power to work within the CoDAteen meeting.
* Be aware that CoDAteen is not equipped to deal with crisis situations i.e., potential injuries to self or others, fighting, etc. In an emergency, the sponsor/host can call 911, the national emergency numbers or national suicide prevention hotline of the respective country or local police if needed. Also remember to notify the parents/guardians through their emergency contact information provided to the group, as soon as possible.
* Continue to work the CoDA Steps and following the Traditions in their own CoDA recovery.
* Be in contact with the sponsoring CoDA group, Region or Voting Entity for support and guidance.
* Be able to commit to CoDAteen service for one year, two years preferably.
* Each sponsor/host must keep the focus on their own recovery, first. The CoDAteen meeting exists for teen’s benefit and should be oriented to their needs. A sponsor feeling particularly troubled should arrange for a substitute and deal with their own serious issues outside of the teen meeting.
* Sponsoring CoDAteens is not a substitute for adult meeting participation. We need to remember to work on our recovery within our own CoDA adult meetings. It is a service commitment. Our primary responsibility is to model our own recovery behavior as adults.
* All these cautions should not detract from the fact that working with teens is one of the most rewarding experiences we will ever have.

## Some suggestions to help engage the teens:

* Have a guest CoDA speaker.
* Use the *Establishing Boundaries in Recovery, Communication and Recovery,* and *Am I Codependent*? pamphlets. (Free downloads from coda.org)
* Read and discuss excerpts from the *Codependents Anonymous Book (Blue Book)*. The Pocketbook edition could be another useful resource for CoDAteens. (You can purchase online at www.corepublications.org)
* Use the *CoDA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Workbook* (adapted appropriately for teens) and/or the *CoDAteen Step Study Guide. (See member resources at* [*www.coda.org*](http://www.coda.org) *or purchase from www.corepublications.org)*
* Use the self-evaluation tools (*Patterns and Characteristics of Codependency and Recovery Patterns and Characteristics*) to open the sharing. *(See section 4 of this Handbook.)*
* Other sources for sharing are *In This Moment Affirmations for CoDAteen*, *CoDAteen Do’s and Don’ts*, or *The Slogans. (See section 4 of this Handbook.)*
* Not all CoDAteen meetings can be financially self-supporting, but the members should be given the opportunity to donate as they can.
* Meetings may start off small. Some of the teens are not sure what to share or how to say it. Safety, trust, and confidentiality are issues that need to be addressed.
* It is a good idea to remember what it was like to be a teenager!
* To give your meeting the best chance for success, work the Steps for your own recovery, follow the Traditions to help resolve group and personal issues, and reach out to your CoDA community for help.

# SECTION TWO: Public and Community Outreach

## Informing the Public about CoDAteen

* CoDA members/groups can participate in community events by providing CoDA and CoDAteen literature and may refer to the CoDAteen webpage on www.coda.org.
* Community events may take place at community centers, hospital health fairs, youth centers, schools, etc. It is a great way to get the word out about CoDAteen and Co-Dependents Anonymous.
* You can check with your local youth centers, social service agencies, hospitals, healthcare centers, local school’s nurse, or counselor to find out if they are holding appropriate events or if they wish to receive information about CoDAteen and Co-Dependents Anonymous.
* You can obtain free downloads of “*Information for Professionals*” and “*Your First Meeting*” or other related pamphlets to distribute. *(See Member Resources at www.coda.org)*

## Host a CoDAteen event at your convention or conference

* If your community is holding a CoDA convention or conference, consider hosting a CoDAteen meeting during the event.
* Make announcements at adult meetings that there will be activities and meetings for teenagers at your event. This way, adult CoDA members know they can invite their teen to the conference providing an opportunity for family interaction and recovery. It is a great way for families to grow together in recovery.

## Online and alternative format meetings

* Teens are not always able to get out to a meeting when they need to share. All alternative format meetings can be made available for teens like adult meetings.
* There are many options i.e., chat room, email, WhatsApp, Virtual online, and/or phone. Social media is a great way to connect i.e., Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat. (*See [Anonymity and Social Media Guidelines)](https://coda.org/outreach/service-guidelines/coda-communications-guidelines/anonymity-and-social-media/)*
* For updated information about online meetings, check the website: [www.coda.org](http://www.coda.org)

## Suggestions for meetings at local schools and other public areas

* Some schools allow groups to meet inside the school. Any CoDA member can petition the school although it helps if there is a CoDA member who has a connection, like a parent/guardian who can speak with the school or district.
* The success of the meeting depends on the support of the counselors, teachers, staff, and teen or community centers in the area.
* Teen centers, religious buildings, libraries, shelters, and hospitals are other good places for a CoDAteen meeting. However, transportation may be difficult if there is no public or school transportation.
* Having the meeting immediately after school may ensure higher participation.
* Meeting announcements can be posted in classrooms, auditorium, school bulletins, or other viable resources approved by CoDAteen and the school.

## Suggestions for meetings on a university or college campus

* Colleges and universities sometimes provide rooms for Twelve Step programs. Speak to the Community Service Division at the college. The college or university may have regulations that need to be followed to hold a meeting on campus. For instance, they may require that meetings be posted, including the meeting time and place.
* If the university or college says you must become a “club” to meet there, look for another place. Being a club, with a membership list, violates *Tradition Twelve: “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions…”*
* Sometimes a faculty member needs to be responsible for the space. The faculty member does not need to oversee the meeting but needs to sign for liability purposes. It may help to involve a faculty member from either the Psychology or Sociology department.
* A university or college may require that on-campus meetings be open to all members of the school community, including staff and faculty. If that is the case, the CoDAteen meeting sponsors/hosts and/or sponsoring CoDA community need to make a group conscience decision about allowing staff and faculty to attend, keeping in mind the requirements for adults to be involved with minors in their local area.

# SECTION THREE: Training Resources for Adult Sponsors/Hosts

It is important for groups to adapt a training process and resource guide to assist adult sponsors/hosts. Groups can accomplish this by offering workshops, retreats, materials for reading, etc. This section provides resources recommended and conference approved by Co-Dependents Anonymous members.

## How to Help Teens Participate in a Meeting

Finding a power greater than ourselves begins with self-evaluation and self-discovery through identifying with others in the group.

It is important to go over [*Am I Codependent?*](Am-I-Co-Dependent-Bro-4002.pdf%20%28coda.org%29)and[*Your First Meeting*](https://coda.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Your-First-Meeting-master-1.pdf) pamphlets with the newcomer as soon as possible. *(See* [*Meeting Materials - CoDA.org*](https://coda.org/meeting-materials/)*)* Depending on the age and other factors, it may be necessary to go over this material several times, since some of the "jargon" may be unfamiliar to younger teens.

However, once they understand their relationship to codependency, they have some basis to relate to others in the meetings. Each person can be encouraged to identify with their own stories in others' sharing. As some teens become more experienced, caution them to be careful to avoid therapy “rap” as means to sounding better than counterparts. Each teen should share their own experience, strength and hope and avoid lecturing. For example, “*When I did this or that"* is far more powerful than "*You ought to do this*". Sometimes helping with cleanup or putting up chairs is the best way to say, "I care".

Help newcomers with appropriate sharing style. Remember in a shame-based home, a teen may be at a loss in how to speak up for themselves. *"Hi, I'm Bill, I am a codependent"*, is something worth rehearsing with a new CoDAteen. Encourage the teen to share what they are feeling, i.e*., “I feel sad, lonely, happy, tired, overwhelmed…*” or maybe that they are not sure how they are feeling.

Review cross talk and how to avoid it. Even unintentionally, it is possible to upset someone with an inappropriate comment. Emphasize talking about personal feelings about situations and concerns. For example, "I feel terrible about this meeting's topic". Occasionally, some CoDAteens may need closure about how some sharing was not directed at them or necessarily critical about their comments. It could have been incidental to someone else's experience. You may use the “*Thirty Second Rule*” and/or repeat the “*CoDA’s Guidelines for Safety’s Sake*” crosstalk statement during the meeting as needed.

As much as possible, at the end of each meeting, you may close with a “feelings check in” sharing a few words on how they are feeling in this moment. Adult sponsor/hosts can offer their experience, strength and hope if given permission by the teen in response to difficult situations revealed by the teen after the meeting.  Living in the solution is the key to happiness.

Sponsors/hosts and other CoDAteens should become acquainted with suggested meeting courtesies or distractions. For example, avoid whispering or laughing while someone else is sharing. Some of these things may seem trivial, but small matters could make a large difference to some teen's tender feelings.

Older teens and sponsors/hosts should be aware of their facial messages and body language. For example, avoid seductive behavior toward teens. A seeming "jest" could have painful implications for an abused teen. Empathy and getting down to their level, does not relieve sponsors/hosts from their responsibility as adult role models.

Refer to *Experiences in Crosstalk* and *Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter* booklets. *(See* [*Meeting Materials - CoDA.org*](https://coda.org/meeting-materials/)*)*

Meetings could be ended with reading positive affirmations, the CoDA Promises in addition to the standard or the long version of the "Serenity Prayer" and/or with a guided meditation written by teen group members. Eventually they could take turns leading this meditation. (See Section 4- Sample Meeting Format)

## Boundaries

In each family system, boundaries, limiting each family member to specific roles and behaviors are either clear and healthy or fuzzy to nonexistent and unhealthy.

It is not necessary for adult CoDA sponsors/hosts to be a counselor or therapist to sponsor teens. It can be useful to review [*Establishing Boundaries in Recovery*](https://coda.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Boundaries-Bro-4104.pdf) *(booklet) and Co-Dependents Anonymous book Chapter 5 on boundaries, Chapter 2 “Our Spiritual Dilemma”.* It is important to continue our own course of personal growth and spiritual focus, remembering our own “inner child” or codependent issues may be triggered.

In our case, spirituality begins with trusting the CoDA process and reminding ourselves to continue working a daily step 10 and 11 and stay in close contact with the adult CoDA sponsoring group and our own sponsor or co-sponsor.~~, Taking the CoDA steps of recovery means action precedes understanding. Leading off with action is an act of faith, which, hopefully, will resolve in a capacity for healthy intimacy respecting another's differences.~~ Having faith in our Higher Power and seeking a spiritual answer with the Twelve Steps, sponsorship, and attending meetings leads to freedom from shame-based feelings and allows us to create and support healthy boundaries.

In the dysfunctional family, children develop survival tools, which come to be viewed in recovery as shame-based codependent patterns and characteristics. (See *Co-Dependents Anonymous Book Chapter 5 on boundaries, Chapter 2 “Our Spiritual Dilemma.* The patterns of how these survival tools are used define the shame-based family roles. Such roles provide the illusion of control, which continues until an effective spiritual answer is realized. Effectiveness means touching the heart as well as the deep recesses of the mind.

These shame-based roles may present as follows:

Rescuer, enabler, and helper

Antagonist, persecutor, and provoker

Sufferer, martyr, and victim

Codependents have played all these roles at various times. Sometimes they are used within a few minutes to maintain a false sense of control. Usually, one role may dominate and become the shame-based personality of the actor and play out codependent characteristics and patterns. (See *Patterns and Characteristics of Codependents and Recovery Patterns and Characteristics”)*

Hopefully, in our own step work and the teen’s step work, the primary role becomes identified, and recovery detaches us to a spiritual condition enabling us to address our own codependent patterns and characteristics. The Recovery Patterns and Characteristics are good examples to give us direction. We remember to encourage balance within our lives as well as the teen’s. The "Serenity Prayer" offers the best boundary affirmation written.

God grant me the serenity

to accept the things I cannot change,

the courage to change the things I can,

and wisdom to know the difference.

Add Long Serenity Prayer

## Further safety considerations and appropriate boundaries

Minors are vulnerable to grooming and coercive authority figures such as adults with inappropriate sexual boundaries, including sexual predators. Many regions/states/provinces and countries require that adults who participate in activities with minors undergo a background check and be fingerprinted. CoDAteen suggests this as a requirement for all CoDAteen sponsors/hosts in your area.

Appropriate boundaries require to not engage in any of these behaviors with teens:

* Sexual contact of any kind. This includes verbal, emotional, or physical seduction, implied contact, flirting or any other behavior that could be construed as sexual in nature.
* Manipulation, exploitation or threatening any teen.
* Showing anger inappropriately by yelling, raging, swearing.
* Controlling the CoDAteen meeting or CoDAteen members by engaging in “caretaking,” “fixing” or “rescuing” behaviors.
* Providing therapy, counseling, or professional services of any kind.
* Business relationships of any kind.

## Transference

Transference specifically relates to how teens may redirect their feelings from home life to their adult sponsors/hosts. Similarly, adult sponsors/hosts can allow their childhood feelings to influence the way they relate to CoDAteens.

Like codependence, transference is not good or bad, it is just there and needs to be addressed appropriately. Hopefully each CoDAteen sponsoring group will have a diverse group of people who can assist sponsor and teen objectivity.

 As sponsors/hosts, we should not be reluctant to refer teens to outside assistance when a situation becomes complicated or unmanageable. We are not therapists. Adult sponsors/hosts exemplifying healthy boundaries is key to CoDAteen recovery.

A teen with an abusive parent/caregiver, could have tremendous anger and projection of mixed emotions towards the same sex sponsor. If this anger can come out non-violently, it can be useful to encourage such a teen to express their feelings. Repressed anger is the most damaging commodity we may have to deal with in teens. *Refer to chapter five of the CoDA book (3rd edition) for more information in dealing with these types of behaviors that may come out in meetings.*

If we, adult sponsors/hosts, model a spiritual answer, most of the time the basic approaches are going to work. Our primary spiritual approach frequently works without our complete understanding of it.

Be aware that this may be the first time a teen is sharing about difficult feelings or past traumas. We are offering a new direction which is based on spiritual courage. Some teens may not be ready for group work, and we may suggest that a CoDAteen seek outside counseling alongside attending CoDAteen meetings. In accordance with Traditions 6 and 10, we can encourage teens to appeal to the group for help, talk to their parents/caregivers (if it is safe) or suggest outside public agencies and community resources to direct the teen to a place they may obtain additional help, but we cannot give advice or make specific referrals ourselves.

Adult sponsors/hosts experiencing anger toward a teen, or some other inappropriate feelings, need to talk to their sponsor and others in their own CoDA group and seek guidance from their Higher Power.

## Inappropriate/Disruptive Behavior

At times, new and inexperienced teens may have problems dealing with issues and "act out” in meetings. Teens often mirror the exaggerated feelings in the home. When acting out happens and is not remedied by using the “*Thirty Second Rule*,” if possible, you can choose to repeat “*CoDA’s Guidelines for Safety’s Sake*” or call an immediate group conscience to discuss the feelings within the group.

If the behavior continues to be inappropriate for the group, the adult sponsors/hosts may ask the teen to briefly step outside of the meeting. A quick review of the teen's feelings and what "came up" for them may be helpful. At the same time, this does not mean forcing the issue. It is simply a loving way to say, "we must have a certain space to all feel safe in sharing". They may need to "boil out" feelings and welcome privacy. It can be a good time to bond with the seriously affected teen.It is usually best to leave the teen to their own process. It is not necessary to precisely define the feeling or problem and fix it. It simply means a feeling came up for them they needed to deal with in their own way, which may not have been appropriate for the rest of the group.

Ideally, it is better to not be one on one when working with a teen’s problematic behavior. You may include a second adult sponsor/host or an older teen who is strong in their recovery. If you must be one on one, it is important to take into consideration the teen’s sex or sexual orientation. Do not allow yourself to be alone in a potentially compromising situation.

Attacking and bullying should be addressed directly in group if it occurs during sharing. It could also be a meeting topic to have a time when teens can share their experiences with being bullied or abused or they have been the bully themselves. (*See- Co-Dependents Anonymous Book Chapter 5, section on physical and non-physical forms of abuse and control)*

When a CoDAteen member shares of experiences related to the difficult topics of abuse, violence, or suicide, the adult sponsor/host can encourage the teen to seek help from parents/caregivers (if it is safe), school counselors, social service agencies, police, and the courts. As mentioned previously, some teens may not beready for group and/or may be helped by additional counseling outside of the CoDAteen meetings. In these situations, it may be useful to gently suggest to the teen the following example: *“When I have seen someone else hurt the way you have described and/or from my own experience, I found it might be helpful to speak with someone on an individual basis such as a counselor or a therapist to explore deeper issues, along with attending CoDA meetings.”*

Adult sponsors/hosts are careful to limit their part in the discussion to their own experience, and do not give specific advice. It is useful to maintain a list of public agencies, community resources, emergency hotlines etc. to be able to share with the teen where to get help. Be cautious and get other opinions from the adult CoDA sponsoring group before trying to rescue or fix a situation.

### Helpful tips to address inappropriate or disruptive behavior:

* For safety of the teen and the adult, avoid one on one interactions when possible
* Use [*CoDA Guidelines to Sharing for Safety Sake*](CoDAteen%E2%80%99s%20Guidelines%20to%20Sharing%20for%20Safety%20Sake) and the “*Thirty Second Rule”*
* **Use a** “Feelings Check.” *(Each person may raise their hand in turn and state very briefly in a few words how they are feeling in this moment.)*
* If the teen’s behavior is disruptive to the group, a member may call 30 seconds and recite the Serenity Prayer or the Long Serenity Prayer and may re-read the [*CoDA Guidelines to Sharing for Safety Sake*](CoDAteen%E2%80%99s%20Guidelines%20to%20Sharing%20for%20Safety%20Sake).
* A group conscience can be called immediately within the meeting to resolve the issue if needed.
* Encourage use of the tools of the program. (See [*Tools of Recovery*](https://www.corepublications.org/product/tools-for-recovery)*, or* [*30 Questions-Steps 1,2,3*](https://coda.org/wp-content/uploads/ThirtyQuestions_final.pdf))

# SECTION FOUR: Meeting Structure and Meeting Documents

## CoDAteen Service Positions

The sponsoring CoDA group may help the teens in developing their service positions. For example, the adult treasurer would work with the teen treasurer in opening bank accounts, maintaining financial records, and expense forecasting. Such activity is a vital part of recovery. Some teens may need assistance with how to handle money.

Any member can call for a group conscience business meeting to address special concerns. The adults are not there to rescue or fix. They are there to keep the tasks appropriate to the development of the group.

These are suggestions of positions that have worked with meetings in the past. Each meeting may decide how to distribute responsibilities among the trusted servants of the meeting, combining, or expanding positions as needed. A meeting does not need to have all these positions.

Meeting leader/coordinator/facilitator: (it is suggested that this position rotates with each meeting or at time intervals, i.e., monthly, or biannually)

• Takes a leadership role for the duration of the meeting.

• Assumes overall responsibility for meeting format.

• Invites speakers or finds a volunteer to handle speaker invitations.

• Guides the meeting according to CoDAteen-endorsed guidelines.

Secretary: (Suggested term of office - 6 months or 1 year)

• Is the business representative for the meeting and acts as liaison to the meeting facility.

• Obtains and maintains a meeting room or online/phone/virtual account.

• Plans and conducts "group conscience or business meetings" regularly (agenda items may include elections, meeting format, procedures, etc.) and keeps records of meeting group conscience decisions.

• Ensures that information about the meeting is kept up to date in the Intergroup, Voting Entity and CoDA World meeting lists.

Group Service Representative (GSR): (Usual term 1 to 2 years rotation)

• The link between the CoDAteen meeting and the next level. Ideally, a GSR is an established member of the group, with experience, knowledge, and understanding of CoDAteen’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

• Attends the local CoDAteen Intergroup, Region or Voting Entity service meetings.

• Carries the group conscience to the next local service level and then reports to the meeting on the outcomes.

• Notifies the meeting of any local or CoDA World updates, announcements, and flyers.

Treasurer:

• Keeps accurate financial records of the group, and regularly reports to the group about income, expenses, and prudent reserve. (Note: A prudent reserve is determined by the group conscience of the meeting, usually two- or three-months’ worth of group expenses).

• Pays rent to the meeting facility or alternative format account for use of the meeting room.

• Disburses Seventh Tradition funds following the meeting group conscience. **A suggested guideline is offered earlier in this document.**

• Turns over records and funds to a new treasurer.

Literature Person:

• Makes CoDA or CoDAteen Conference Endorsed Literature available at the meeting.

• Keeps track of group literature supplies and re-orders as needed.

• Obtains funds from the group treasurer to restock literature.

• Refers newcomers and other CoDAteen members to available CoDA and CoDAteen Conference Endorsed Literature.

Phone Contact Person(s):

• Makes first name and contact info available on local and CoDAteen World meeting lists.

• Is available to respond to inquiries about the meeting and CoDAteen.

## Suggested CoDAteen Meeting Format

This sample meeting format is included as a guideline. The style of program your meeting wishes to use (whether Speaker, Sharing, Topic or Step) can be a group conscience decision made by the members of your group. You may also copy and display our “*For Safety Sake*” tent card during meetings.

**Opening Section**

1. **“Good evening (morning, afternoon) and welcome to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** (insertmeeting name) **meeting of CoDAteen, part of Co-Dependents Anonymous. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am a codependent. I am your meeting host tonight (today). CoDAteen asks those with cell phones and pagers to please turn them off or silence them for the duration of the meeting, so we can keep our focus on the meeting without interruptions. Please help me open this meeting with a moment of silence followed by the**

**(***This is the meeting leader or group's prayer of choice: the Serenity Prayer or the CoDA Opening Prayer***)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The CoDA Opening Prayer ©** | **The Serenity Prayer** |
|  |  |
| In the spirit of love and truth, | God, grant me the Serenity |
| we ask our Higher Power | to accept the things, I cannot change; |
| to guide us as we share our experience, | Courage to change the things I can; |
| strength, and hope. | and Wisdom to know the difference |
| We open our hearts to the light of wisdom, |  |
| the warmth of love, and the joy of acceptance. |  |
|  | The Long Serenity Prayer |
|  | God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.Grant me patience with the changes that take time, appreciation of all that I have, tolerance of those with different struggles, and the strength to get up and try again. |
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1. **The group meeting leader reads the CoDAteen “*Preamble*” as written.**
2. **"We welcome any newcomers who are attending their first, second or third meeting of CoDAteen and ask that you raise your hand and introduce yourself by your first name only... *(call on raised hands and wait for introductions)* Welcome to CoDAteen. We** suggest that you listen for similarities rather than differences in our shares. We suggest that you attend at least six meetings before deciding whether CoDAteen is for you.”

***Optional - Newcomers*** *can be welcomed by clapping after each or all have introduced*

*themselves. If your meeting gives out welcome chips and/or newcomer packets, you may distribute those.*

1. **"We will now introduce ourselves and** do a “Feelings Check.”  Let us raise our hand in turn and introduce ourselves by our first name only, stating very briefly in a few words how we are feeling at this moment. There will be an opportunity to share more fully later in the meeting. *(Meeting leader introduces self and then introductions continue**around the room.)*
2. **The group meeting leader reads the CoDAteen “*Welcome*” as written** (long or short version)**.**

6**. "*CoDA's Twelve Steps*** **are the spiritual guidelines for our individual recovery. Will the** **person with the *Twelve Steps* please read them?" *Optional-*** *some groups prefer to pass the**Twelve Steps around and share the reading of them.*

1. **"*CoDA's Twelve Traditions* are the guiding spiritual principles of our meetings. Will the person with the *Twelve Traditions* please read them?" *Optional-*** *some groups prefer to pass**the Twelve Traditions around and share the reading of them.*

**Announcements Section** (some groups do this after the Program Section)

1. **"There are meeting schedules and phone lists on the literature table. Our phone list is just for private CoDAteen use in case we need to reach out and talk with someone, have a problem, or need a ride to a meeting. Newcomers are welcome to it."**
2. **a) "Our literature person is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Do you have any announcements?"**
	1. **"Our treasurer is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Do you have any announcements?"**
	2. **"Our Group Representative is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Do you have any announcements?"**
	3. **“Our Phone list contact person is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”**

*Note: If you do not have trusted servants for the above positions or choose as a group not to speak items 10, then continue from 11.*

11. **"Restrooms are located……."** Announce any meeting facility issues (smoking policy, etc.)

12. **"Are there any CoDAteen announcements?" *(****The GSR or secretary shares community, Voting Entity, or CoDA World announcements, unless already shared above. Any member may also share CoDAteen or CoDA related announcements.*)

1. ***Optional-* "We give chips at this meeting. Are there any CoDA birthdays today-30 days, 60days, 90 days, 6 months, 9 months, 1 year, 2 years, etc.?"**

***Note****: Some meetings ask the person celebrating if they**would like to share a few words of recovery. In some meetings the group claps after each birthday is recognized; for birthdays of 30 days to 9 months; for 1 year or more the group sings “Happy Birthday”, ending with “keep coming back”.*

1. ***Optional***- **Announce:** "If you would like to celebrate your birthday, please let the secretary know at least one week ahead of time.

Program Section

Begin your meeting program here. If your meeting has a speaker or reads from CoDA or CoDAteen literature, this usually lasts 10 to 20 minutes. Introduce the speaker, after the speaker shares, he picks a topic for discussion. (If there is no speaker you may ask someone to talk about a problem, read from CoDA literature or pick topics from the *"In This Moment Affirmations for CoDAteen” “CoDAteen Do's and Don'ts” or the Slogans.)*

To enhance the power of our recovery program, CoDAteen suggests considering having at least one meeting per month be devoted to studying one of the Twelve Steps. (You can use the *CoDAteen Step Study Guide* or the *CoDA Workbook for Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.)

1. Read: “CoDAteen and Co-Dependents Anonymous does not accept harassment, bullying, or expressed intolerance of any kind. No person should be subject to unwanted verbal or physical conduct which intimidates or shows hostility towards that person because of their gender, class, age, appearance, national origin, skin color, disability, language, sexual orientation, or for any other reason. If you feel you are being treated disrespectfully in this meeting, please notify the person leading the meeting.”
2. Read [*CoDA Guidelines for Sharing - For Safety’s Sake*](CoDAteen%E2%80%99s%20Guidelines%20to%20Sharing%20for%20Safety%20Sake) -

“As we pursue our recovery, it is important for each of us to speak as we are able. Many of us find speaking among others, especially strangers, a difficult task. We encourage people to begin slowly and carefully. It is the intention of every CoDAteen member and group not to ridicule or embarrass anyone. Nothing that is shared is unimportant or stupid. The sharing of our experiences is best done with “I” statements. “Crosstalk” and “feedback” are discouraged.

**While many of us were growing up, no-one listened to us. We were told our feelings were wrong or that they did not matter. We were often interrupted and criticized. We need to know in our meetings we can share without fear of interruption, criticism, or contradiction.**

*FOR SAFETY’S SAKE*

We use “I” statements when sharing. (I feel; I believe.)

We share our own experience, strength, and hope—no one else’s.

We do not comment on what others share.

*We are aware of the time available for shares*. OR

*We share three to five minutes, keeping the focus on ourselves*.

We help ourselves and others by being emotionally present and honest.

We let others experience their own feelings.

We keep advice to ourselves.

**As codependents we are learning to set boundaries and recognize that they are vital to recovery. This is why we discourage feedback, crosstalk and advice giving. We need to learn to keep the focus on our own recovery rather than rescuing or controlling others.**

**If you think that these guidelines have been violated, please ask the meeting host to read them again at the end of a particular share.**

1. **“**I would like to again thank\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for sharing. We will now take turns and share on today’s topic or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

***Optional-*** "Would each of you please limit your sharing to 3-5 (or less if meeting has a lot of attendees) minutes to allow for everyone toshare?” Group conscience can decide how to indicate when time is up, i.e., a timer, tapping on something, or a gentle reminder by chairperson.

**Closing Section**

1. **Read: “Our Seventh Tradition reminds us that while we do not have dues or fees, we are self-supporting through our own contributions. We ask that you donate only as you can.** The money you offer to the group buys literature and pays meeting expenses.” *(Pass the basket or* *communicate specifics of how to contribute for an online meeting)*

**(*Optional-*** *some meetings choose to ask for Seventh Tradition donations at the**beginning of the meeting, during the announcements section.)*

1. **Read: "As we bring this meeting to a close, I would like to remind you that CoDA is an anonymous program. Everything shared here is confidential.** Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in CoDAteen.

**“Who you see here, what is said here, when you leave here, let it stay here."**

What each person says is their own opinion. Take what you want and leave the rest. A special note for newcomers, whatever is bothering you has also worried others. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened. We are not perfect. The welcome we give you may not show how much we care **or how much we already love and accept you for just who you are. Keep** coming back and keep an open mind and you will find a new love and acceptance of yourself and others, one day at a time.

***Optional-*** "Will the person with the ***Twelve Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous*** pleaseread them?" *(You may pass around to read individually)*

**19. "Thanks to our speaker."** *(If this is a speaker meeting)*

**20. "Thanks to those who read and who do service at this meeting."**

***Optional-***Affirmations: Starting with the leader or a volunteer each person in turn gives apositive affirmation such as: “I know a new freedom for me” or they may pass. *(You may also use readings from the “In this Moment Affirmations for CoDAteen” or “Making Choices in Recovery Handbook”)* or have teens make up their own.

The group leader **requests everyone to join in a circle for the closing prayer of choice**. The following are the CoDA endorsed prayers.

**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

The Long Serenity Prayer (insert here)

**The CoDA Closing Prayer ©**

We thank our Higher Power

 For all that we have received

 from the meeting.

 As we close, may we take with us

the wisdom, love, acceptance,

and hope of recovery.

# CoDAteen Preamble

# CoDAteen Welcome (long version)

# CoDAteen Welcome (short version)

# CoDA Twelve Steps

# CoDA Twelve Traditions

# CoDAteen’s Guidelines to Sharing for Safety Sake

**While many of us were growing up, no-one listened to us. We were told our feelings were wrong or that they did not matter. We were often interrupted and criticized. We need to know in our meetings we can share without fear of interruption, criticism, or contradiction.**

*FOR SAFETY’S SAKE*

We use “I” statements when sharing. (I feel; I believe.)

We share our own experience, strength, and hope—no one else’s.

We do not comment on what others share.

We are aware of the time available for shares.

We help ourselves and others by being emotionally present and honest.

We let others experience their own feelings.

We keep advice to ourselves.

**As codependents we are learning to set boundaries and recognize that they are vital to recovery. This is why we discourage feedback, crosstalk and advice giving. We need to learn to keep the focus on ourselves and our own recovery rather than rescuing or controlling others.**

**If you think that these guidelines have been violated, please ask the meeting host to read them again at the end of a particular share.**

# Thirty Second Rule

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 say the Serenity Prayer before resuming the meeting.

# Suggested CoDAteen Meeting Closing

**As we bring this meeting to a close, I would like to remind you that CoDAteen is an anonymous program. Everything shared here is confidential.** Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in CoDAteen.

**“Who you see here, what is said here, when you leave here, let it stay here."**

What each person says is their own opinion. Take what you want and leave the rest. A special note for newcomers, whatever is bothering you has also worried others. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened. We are not perfect. The welcome we give you may not show how much we care **or how much we already love and accept you for just who you are. Keep** coming back and keep an open mind and you will find a new love and acceptance of yourself and others, one day at a time.

# For Safety Sake’s Tent Card (insert here)

# IN THIS MOMENT AFFIRMATIONS

IN THIS MOMENT, I will live through this day only and not tackle my whole life problem at once.

IN THIS MOMENT, I will be happy. I will be my own best friend. I will love myself just the way I am. I will do something I enjoy and plan something special to look forward to. I will not be affected by your emotions, opinions, or approval of me.

IN THIS MOMENT, I take responsibility for myself, and I let you do the same.

IN THIS MOMENT, I can say “no” without feeling selfish. I will have the courage to ask for help. (I may be turned down but at least I am taking care of my needs by asking.)

IN THIS MOMENT, I will ask for the willingness to talk about what is bothering me and turn it over to a Higher Power of my own understanding. (Even when I think it is the last thing in the world I could possibly do.) I will enjoy the new sense of freedom I feel by "letting go."

IN THIS MOMENT, I will strengthen my mind. I will study and learn something useful. I will read something that requires effort, thought, and concentration.

IN THIS MOMENT, I will respect my boundaries and yours.

Physically, I will be aware of keeping a safe, comfortable distance between you and I and not get any closer until we both agree.

Emotionally, I will keep an imaginary bubble around me and courageously trust my own feelings. This bubble will act like a guard and help keep out the things that are not true about me. (When you strike out at me verbally or physically, I know it is more about the pain that you are feeling.)

Intellectually, I will not do your thinking or your talking for you. I will listen, not interrupt, and allow you to have your own feelings.

(You are the only one who knows what they are.)

IN THIS MOMENT, I will be patient and agreeable. I will be thankful for all that I have. I will look as well as I can. I will talk calmly and respectfully. I will act courteously and be tolerant of other’s struggles. I will save myself from worry and indecision.

IN THIS MOMENT, I will feel my feelings, be it pain, anger, despair, hopelessness, or their opposites. They help me to discover who I am.

I will not deny, repress, or react to any of these feelings by using people, places, things, or substances. Feelings are neither good nor bad. “This too shall pass.”

IN THIS MOMENT, I will have courage and not be afraid. I will enjoy what is beautiful and believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.

# CoDAteen Suggested DO'S and DON'TS

DO'S

1. Do remember you are not the only one who is having problems with relationships.
2. Do look for help in CoDAteen, Co-Dependents Anonymous, and other related Twelve Step programs.
3. Do learn all you can about codependency, a family disease.
4. Do be honest with yourself and others.
5. Do use your talents in ways that interest you.
6. Do develop a sensible attitude about others.
7. Do remember that not only you, but all the members of your family are emotionally involved with codependency.
8. Do learn to forgive yourself and others - you only hurt yourself by holding grudges.
9. Do find an additional safe person outside the family system or a CoDAteen member to confide in.
10. Do take a daily inventory and admit your faults to one person. (Step 10)
11. Do keep your trust in your Higher Power and spend time in prayer and meditation. (Step 11)
12. Do pass on your knowledge of CoDAteen to others. (Step 12)

DONT’S

1. Don't make it easy for anyone abusing themselves or others by covering up for them and taking on their responsibility. (Don’t enable others.)
2. Don't try and change anyone's inconsistent behavior. You can't. Only they can.
3. Don't argue with anyone who is angry when your safety is in question.
4. Don't try and get revenge with anyone who has treated you unfairly. The situation will only get worse.
5. Don't take it personally when anyone blames you for their bad moods. They'll use any excuse.
6. Don't use drugs or alcohol as a means of escaping the family situation or to not feel your feelings.
7. Don't condemn, judge, or criticize yourself or others; remember that codependency is a disease of silence, self-neglect, and abandonment.
8. Don't make your parents or other peoples' problems the number one thing in your life.
9. Don't expect things to get better overnight.
10. Don't expect to change anyone other than yourself.
11. Don't give room for self-pity to grow inside of you otherwise it will destroy you.
12. Don't overreact or react to other peoples' problems (or your own). When it feels overwhelming use the tools of the program, “The Serenity Prayer” and turn it over to your Higher Power.

# THE SLOGANS

LIVE AND LET LIVE. To get the most out of your life, don't judge or criticize others or concern yourself about what they do.

FIRST THINGS FIRST. Do first what's most important - you'll get more done. It's a great way to organize your time and energy.

THINK. Hold back that rash word or thoughtless action. THINK about ways to improve yourself. THINK before you make decisions.

EASY DOES IT. Haste makes waste - of time and effort. Relax - get rid of tension and rushing.

LET GO AND LET GOD. You can't fix everything that's wrong with the world, and with your family and friends. Let it go! God can't do His work if we're standing in the way.

ONE DAY AT A TIME. Today is the most important day of your life. Use it. Forget yesterday - and don't worry about what might happen tomorrow.

LISTEN AND LEARN. There's something of value to be learned from everyone you meet. Look for it and use it.

# CoDAteen Tools for Recovery

What are recovery tools?

The map for our recovery from codependency includes the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, attending meetings, working the program with a sponsor, trusting in a Higher Power, and using other recovery tools. If we are willing to use these tools daily, we can succeed at living happier and more fulfilling lives.

These tools may include:

* Asking for Help - Reaching out to others may be difficult. Some of us fear rejection making it hard to open up to other people. However, in recovery we learn to ask for help when needed, from our Higher Power, sponsor, CoDAteen members or trusted friends.
* Telephone, Texting, Instant Messaging, What’s App - Those of us who have the convenience of cell phones allow us to connect to others in real time, so we are never too far away from support.
* Telephone List- Most meetings keep a phone list of CoDAteen members and/or adult sponsors/hosts who are available to those who wish to reach out.
* Social Media- For members around the world, there is a need for connection with one another and social media is a way where members wish to connect. This is especially true in areas with few face to face meetings and for CoDAteen members.
* Sponsorship- Sponsors guide sponsees in working the CoDA Steps. They listen carefully and share their experience, strength, and hope. As sponsees, we may share parts of our journal, our Fourth Step inventory, or letters to a family member with our sponsor. (For more information, see the CoDA handbook on sponsorship: Sponsorship: What’s in It for Me?)
* Literature- Reading about codependency as seen through the eyes of others who have gone through what we have experienced can provide new perspectives and support. (Free downloadable items, CoRE website)
* Slowing down and Living in the Present - In stressful moments, deep breathing my help us to collect our thoughts and can reflect on what is happening in the moment. We acknowledge that we cannot change past events. The future does not yet exist. When we concentrate on today, most of us find that we have whatever it is we need for the moment. (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, a job, friends, health, a Higher Power in our lives.) Taking life “one day at a time,” it becomes manageable.
* Slogans- Slogans are used by members during sharing and in times of stress. They are also called “thought stoppers” to be used over and over when obsessive, “stinking thinking” threatens. See “Slogans

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