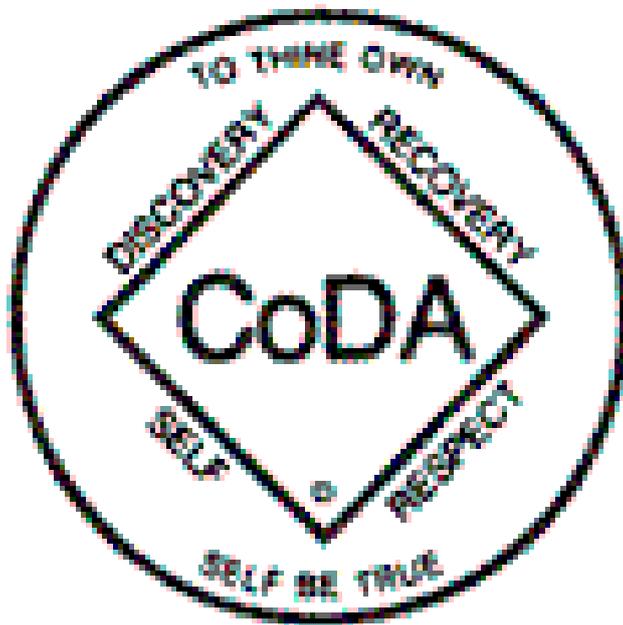


CoDA MEETING STARTER KIT

(For Australian Groups)



Starter Kit of CoDependents Anonymous - Australia
Revised during 2007 & 2008 for Australian Meetings based on the US CoDA Starter Kit Conference Approved September 2002
2015 October – updated with new contact details
2018 October – typos and contact details fixed. “Inserts here” replaced with reference to website recourses.

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SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

SECTION SUMMARY

- **Starting A New Meeting**

The CoDA pamphlet “Starting a New Meeting” is reprinted here (with revisions & additions for Australian groups). It provides an overview of what is involved: *Where, When, Rent, Help, Announce, Registration, Meeting Format, Service Tasks, Growth, Support*

- **Types of Meetings**

Here you will find information about the different options for meeting structure.

- **Commonly Asked Questions on Starting New Meetings**

Look here for answers about such things as what constitutes a CoDA group, how to inform the public of your meeting, group funds and what to do **if a meeting closes**.

- **Commonly Asked Questions on CoDA Literature**

Includes Policy on Outside Literature at Meetings

Note: SERVICE POSITIONS at MEETINGS

Every group needs members to do the work that allows the meeting to continue. That work is known as *service*. See **SECTION FOUR** of this kit for “**Guidelines for Group Service Positions**”. This explains the principles of service work in CoDA and describes what typically needs to be done to keep a meeting running

STARTING A NEW MEETING

Based on the CoDA Pamphlet of the same name – with additions specific to Australian groups.

HOW?– Keep It Simple

All it takes to start a meeting is a venue, a time, and a few people willing to commit to supporting the meeting for the first six months. Having more than one founding member ensures the service work is shared from the start. The support you give each other in this way creates a healthy, committed group where recovery can grow.

WHAT TO CONSIDER When Starting a New CoDA Meeting

WHERE

Start your search with places where other Twelve Step Fellowship groups hold meetings. Try local community centres, library meeting rooms, church halls, synagogues, hospitals, schools and any other facility with space and willingness. Note: A member's home is not ideal for reasons of anonymity and avoiding reliance on one member.

WHEN

Based on a time that's best for you to serve, choose the day and time of the week you want to hold the new meeting. Consider the timing of other CoDA groups in the same area – if there is just one other meeting try and hold your meeting a few days apart from the existing group to encourage members to attend both groups.

RENT

It is important that rent, no matter how small, be paid for the meeting place. In 2008 between \$5 and \$15 per meeting is a good guide. In this way, we honor our Seventh Tradition: *Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.* As you won't know how large a meeting will be at the start, try to keep rent to a minimum. Rent may be a percentage of the meeting's collection, a monthly or quarterly fee, or anything to which you and your landlord agree. Some places let you use the space more as a courtesy than as a revenue source, so don't be afraid to negotiate while avoiding abusing their generosity.

HELP

Ask for help, especially in the beginning:

- Invite people from other CoDA meetings to help get the new meeting going. It helps to have several people present when newcomers show up.
- **Put up a sign** at the new meeting location each week so that people can find your room easily.
- Try and find a couple of other people interested in helping to get the meeting going.
- Contact the CoDA National Service office to see if they have had enquiries from other people in your area.
- Put notices with a contact phone number in venues where other Twelve Step Fellowships hold meetings. It can be useful to have founding members who are already familiar with the 12 Steps.

ANNOUNCE

Let people know about the new meeting.

- Visit other CoDA meetings with flyers giving meeting details – date, time, directions/map.
- Put up notices – see Section Three of this kit.
- Some local newspapers publish meeting notices at no charge.

In all efforts to attract new members, remember the Eleventh Tradition: *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.*

As people see the announcements and hear about the meeting, **they will come!**

REGISTRATION – Connecting to the Fellowship

By registering your meeting you ensure you are connected with CoDA as a whole. That way you become aware of other CoDA groups, workshops, retreats, conferences and conventions. This Starter Kit contains all the forms you will need to register with the Australian National Service Office who will add your meeting details to the national meetings list (sent to all groups) and to the Australian website. You will also receive bi-monthly reports from the Intergroup Committee, literature news & updated order forms.

Worldwide Fellowship – To receive the Quarterly Service Reports(QSR) by email from the CoDA Board of Trustees (USA) – contact board@codas.org

FORMAT & STRUCTURE

After a few initial meetings, hold a group conscience* of all current members to choose a meeting format that you are all comfortable with. Several different types of meeting formats exist: Step, topic, speaker etc or a combination. *See “Types of Meetings” in Section One of the Starter Kit.*

A simple format that will appeal to newcomers may be best for an area with no other CoDA groups.

* *Guidelines on Group Conscience Meetings can be found in Section Four of this kit.*

CoDA TWELVE STEPS & TWELVE TRADITIONS

Just as the Twelve Steps offer guidance for maintaining healthy relationships, our Twelve Traditions offer guidance for maintaining healthy meetings. The CoDA pamphlet on the 12 Traditions is reproduced in this Starters Kit. The CoDA Book, CoDA Workbook and *CoDA Fellowship Service Manual* also contain valuable commentary on the Steps, Traditions and on service.

For a group to thrive it is important that group members:

- rely on the wisdom embodied in the Steps and Traditions.
- keep in mind that a group's trusted servants take direction from the whole group.
- remember – a group conscience can be a powerful tool.

SERVICE TASKS

Define what tasks must be done and agree who will be initially responsible for each task.

See Section Four for suggestions of how to divide responsibilities.

GROWTH

Out of necessity, in the beginning members may be called on to do service in more than one job. This needs to be temporary. Encourage all members to participate. Avoid controlling, “burn out” from doing too much and becoming resentful all of which could harm the growth and recovery of the group. Service positions in CoDA groups are **rotated regularly**. (*See Section Four for suggested service term lengths.*)

SUPPORT is available

- **We remember – our Higher Power is present at all Fellowship Meetings.**
- Contact your Intergroup Committee at the National Service Office on 0417 995 111
- Email the National Office: codaooffice.oz@gmail.com
- Contact **CoDA Outreach in the USA** by email: outreach@codas.org

- **Keep in regular contact** with the CoDA National Service Office. Send in short group reports to the bi-monthly intergroup meetings including things like: numbers of regular members, changes in format, ideas you would like to share with the rest of the Fellowship, questions you have about growing your meeting. Even better – send someone in person as your **Group Representative**. We all care about how new groups are doing and want to help.
- Use the “**Support Group for New meetings**” – *see Appendix for current phone list*. Consider asking one of these members to be available to support the founding members of your group during the first 6 to 12 months by being available to take phone calls and listen and share their experience, strength and hope.

SOME DIFFERENT TYPES OF CODA MEETINGS

The TWELVE STEPS ARE THE BASIS OF OUR RECOVERY. It is strongly suggested that each group set aside at least one meeting per month for Step Study.

Open Share Meetings. This type of meeting often has no topic or opening speaker, giving members an opportunity to share their experience, strength, and hope of recovery as they wish.

Newcomers meetings. These meetings have a special format to allow newcomers to have their questions answered by Old Timers. (*See page 14 of the Newcomers Handbook for suggested format*)

Special efforts are made at all regular meetings to provide for the needs of newcomers – providing approved literature (Newcomers Handbooks etc) meetings lists, people to call, and people willing to be sponsors.

Step, Tradition, or Book Study Meetings: In this style of meeting, the group uses CoDA literature (*The CoDA Book, Steps Pamphlets and/or Steps & Traditions Workbooks*) and/or CoDA Tapes as a foundation for study, discussion, or sharing related to CoDA's Steps and Traditions. The group may elect to read a portion of this material out loud and then have an open sharing session.

Topic Share Meetings: The meeting opens with a group member suggesting a specific topic (*eg. Setting Boundaries, Sponsorship, Healthy Communicating etc*) followed by sharing based around the topic. The meeting may include reading from CoDA literature on the suggested topic. Topics & readings can also be chosen in advance by group conscience

ID Meetings: To help us identify our own codependent behaviours, members share their histories: how their codependency developed, the results of this disease and their recovery experience. ID type sharing can also be invited in a general open meeting, especially if there are newcomers present.

Speaker Meetings. A speaker shares his/her personal recovery story for 15-30 minutes or shares on a designated topic. Speakers are invited from other CoDA groups. The meeting may then be opened up for general sharing after the speaker has shared.

Step Study Groups. Members may agree to meet regularly to work the Steps together using CoDA literature. Meetings may include a writing session and a buddie/cosponsor system for discussion between group sessions.

Step Four Writing Meetings. These are designed to allow time for individual reflection and writing, followed by an opportunity for each person to share some of what they have written during the session. There may be a specific topic eg. a specific codependent characteristic.

A note on “Open” and “Closed” Meetings:

A CoDA meeting may be "open." This means that anyone can attend. "Anyone" means codependents, non-codependents, therapists, students, or representatives of other organisations (including the media), etc. All such visitors are asked to agree to respect our need for anonymity and confidentiality.

A “closed” group, however, is a group attended **only** by people who are codependent or think they may be codependent. Newcomers who think they may be codependent can attend a closed meeting.

A closed group may be “restricted”. For example, a meeting may be listed as “closed - women.” In this example, only women who are codependent (or believe they may be codependent) may attend this meeting. However, in respecting the spirit of Traditions One, Three, and Five, we honor one exception*.

No member of our Fellowship shall be turned away from even a closed or restricted meeting, if there is no other meeting available to this person.*

** This exception does not apply to CoDA-Teen groups for teenage members and CoDA groups for gay men and lesbians which may choose to purposefully exclude others in order to create safety for its members.*

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS on Starting New Meetings

What Constitutes a CoDA Group?

- A CoDA group is composed of two or more individuals whose purpose in meeting is a desire for healthy relationships (Tradition 3).
- A group applies the principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as adapted for our purpose from Alcoholics Anonymous.
- **At each meeting** a CoDA group reads out loud CoDA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and the copyrighted “Welcome” and “Preamble” as they are written – without additions or alterations. *These readings, together with the availability of CoDA Literature for sale at the group, help to support a sense of CoDA Unity as called for in CoDA's First Tradition.*
- A CoDA group registers with CoDA National, in order to stay in contact with CoDA as a whole.

Tradition Four states, “each group should remain autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole.” With respect to other questions about group organisation (date, time, type of meeting), each group is autonomous except in matters affecting CoDA as a whole.

It is important that a CoDA meeting present familiar aspects that communicate – “**This is CoDA.**”

While it is rare, some meetings have adopted a format that varies significantly from CoDA guidelines. This presents confusion, particularly to the newcomer. If a community service group (*in Australia, this is the CoDA National Intergroup Committee, comprising representatives from all CoDA groups*) feels it necessary, a group may be reminded of the CoDA Traditions and specifically how it does not appear to be following their unifying principles. If the group conscience of that group decides not to change, they may no longer be recognised as, nor call themselves, a CoDA meeting and will be removed from local, state, regional, and national CoDA listings.

How can we let people know about our meeting?

Tradition Eleven *“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion”*.

Location & time of CoDA meetings can be announced in local papers on community notice boards etc.

Avoid making promotional statements such as *“we can fix your problems – come to our group”*.

Make sure your meeting is correctly listed in national meetings lists and websites and provide good directions to the venue with an explanation of how to get to the meeting room.

Don't use the venue name as the name of your group.

See Section Three of this kit - Attracting Members for more information.

Where do we get funds?

Attendance at meetings is by voluntary donation. CoDA groups usually "pass a basket" at the end of each meeting, reminding those attending about our Seventh Tradition: *“Each group is fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions”*. Contributions are only accepted from individual members and not from outside organisations. Clearly state during the Seventh Tradition collection what the approximate total weekly expenses of the group are. Occasionally, a group may need to pass the basket a second time if contributions are insufficient to meet the group's expenses.

What is a “prudent reserve,” and what do we do with excess moneys collected?

A “prudent reserve” consists of about two months' worth of group expenses. Group expenses include items such as rent, supplies, refreshments and CoDA literature. The prudent reserve is to cover expenses in the event that the group has unusually low attendance or donations. The excess funds left after the reserve amount is satisfied are normally used to make a Seventh Tradition donation to the National Service Office. (*See Section Five for Donation Form or include with literature order*)

Is There A Limit to The Amount an Individual May Donate to CoDA?

Seventh Tradition cash donations are anonymous, and are not monitored or regulated in any way.

Gifts of cash, goods (such as computers or books), or **donations of services of value** (such as auditing financial records or website maintenance) are subject to limitations on an annual basis. For optimal spiritual health, CoDA groups and service bodies adhere to our Seventh Tradition, which states that we remain self-supporting. Even though people donate with the best intentions, we are warned that *“problems of money, property, and prestige may divert us from our primary, spiritual aim.”* If the group relies too heavily on one individual or a small group of donors, autonomy is compromised, and group unity may suffer. Therefore, limits are placed on individual contributions, and these limits vary according to the size of the body receiving the gift.

For individual groups, state or regional organizations, or intergroup service bodies, the value for donated cash, goods, or professional services rendered is limited to \$1000 per year.

Note – a group may also become reliant on a venue that provides meeting space for no or very little rent. The group needs to find some other way of making a regular contribution to the venue owners – either a donation or some service work eg. cleaning or providing something for the venue in return for use of the space.

What should we do if the group decides to close?

In the unfortunate case of a group disbanding, inform all contactable members, the meeting venue owners and the CoDA National office. Pay any rent owing from group funds so that future CoDA groups are still welcome to use that venue. If necessary, negotiate a reduction or forgiveness of rent due.

Remaining funds and literature can be passed on to other groups or returned to the National Office.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS on CODA LITERATURE

What is and where do I get CoDA approved literature?

CoDA approved literature is that which has been created by CoDA members and approved at a CoDA Service Conference. CoDA literature should be available for purchase at your local CoDA group. Groups order literature directly from the CoDA National Service Office: Ph: 0417 995 111

Can my group use non-conference approved literature?

The CoDA pamphlet, *"Why is CoDA Conference Endorsed Literature Vital?"* (1998) states:

"Conference Endorsed literature benefits the Fellowship by making our collective experience, strength and hope available to our members. By using endorsed literature, our recovery is not diverted by any particular perspective, personality or plan. We can rely on the fact that what we are reading is the experience, strength and hope of recovering members like ourselves. Even when we attend meetings distant from our home, we can feel at home, because the literature and message are the same at CoDA meetings all over. Hence, we have CoDA unity."

There are many of us who have found a variety of non-CoDA literature out there that has touched our lives and enhanced our recovery, and each of us is free to choose and read as much of it as we want to on our own. If there is something that really touches us that we would like to share at the meeting, we can share our experience of what we read as it has become part of our own recovery. Each of us finds our own personal path to recovery, but what we share in common at CoDA meetings is the CoDA program. We have time and freedom to explore and share many different facets of our recovery before and after meetings, **but our time in a CoDA meeting is our time to focus on the principles of CoDA.**

From "FAQs" on www.coda.org

Regarding outside literature, the **CoDA Book** (pages 92-93) states:

"Newcomers may believe that CoDA approves this literature. Outsiders may see CoDA as promoters of professional authors. Issues of money, property and prestige may arise. The ripple affect can hurt other CoDA groups in the area, state, nationally and worldwide."

POLICY REGARDING OUTSIDE LITERATURE AT CoDA MEETINGS

The following policy was approved by the 1990 Fourth International Service Conference of Co-Dependents Anonymous. It has been superseded by the previous text taken from www.coda.org and is included here for group conscience discussion purposes.

It is strongly suggested that CoDA groups use CoDA Conference approved and Board approved literature. However, if a group, by informed group conscience chooses to use outside literature in order to be an informed group conscience that group must weigh their decision against the Twelve Traditions to ascertain if a responsible decision has been made.

Some points to consider are:

- **Tradition One:** Using CoDA literature supports the growth of CoDA and offers unity and continuity of message.
- **Tradition Four:** will the decision reached by the group affect neighbouring groups or CoDA as a whole? What might be a newcomer's first impression of CoDA based on the literature chosen? What is a group's responsibility to the newcomer?
- **Tradition Five:** Are all decisions made by the group in line with CoDA's primary purpose?
- **Tradition Six:** Is the use of outside literature an endorsement of a particular author? By making the work of a particular author the focus of a meeting is that a CoDA meeting or a general study session on codependency?
- **Tradition Eight:** Use of outside literature may border on therapy. CoDA is a self-help group and uses the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as a basis for recovery.
- **Tradition Ten:** Use of copyrighted materials not owned by CoDA may lead to problems in the future and ought to be considered in the decision making process. CoDA will not define codependency but will describe it. Does the use of outside literature support a particular definition?

If after considering the above points, a group chooses to use some outside literature, an **announcement** ought to be made at the beginning and end of each meeting stating that the materials used are not approved or endorsed by CoDA as a whole.

DON'T DILUTE THE MESSAGE OF CODA

Please do not call yourself a **CoDA** group if you are actually a general self help meeting, a therapist led group or a study group for codependents
- **there IS a difference.**

SECTION TWO: FOUNDATIONAL & MEETING DOCUMENTS

SECTION SUMMARY

- **The Basic Meeting Format** offers guidelines for conducting any CoDA meeting. The minimum requirements are highlighted. The format can be adapted (within the guidelines of the Twelve Traditions) by a group conscience decision made by the members of your group to suit your specific type and style of meeting.
- **Example of a full Meeting Format** A detailed example to give you ideas.
- **The Preamble** introduces us to CoDA and reminds us of who we are as recovering codependents and why we are in Co-Dependents Anonymous.
- **The Welcome** addresses us all in the CoDA meeting, acknowledging the pain of our codependence and confirming the joy of our recovery.
- **The Twelve Steps** of Co-Dependents Anonymous are the spiritual guidelines for our individual recovery
- **The Twelve Traditions** of Co-Dependents Anonymous are the guiding spiritual principles of our meetings. They are also useful guidelines for functioning in any group or relationship.
- **The Twelve Promises** let us know that there is hope for a new way of life in the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous.
- **Patterns of Codependence** help us to see more clearly what codependence is and how it manifests in our lives. (Also see the Appendix for the "Characteristics of Codependence")
- **Prayers** help us open and close CoDA meetings, reminding us of our connection with a power greater than ourselves.

The documents enclosed in this section are the **foundation**
upon which all CoDA meetings are built.

Basic CoDA Meeting Format - SUMMARY

Items with *R* are minimum requirements to be a CoDA group

1. **OPENING SECTION** - intro & prayer

R 2. Read “Preamble” as written.

3. Welcome any newcomers.

4. Members Introductions & **Feelings check**

R 5. Read the CoDA “Welcome” as written.

R 6. Read CoDA's Twelve Steps

R 7. Read CoDA's Twelve Traditions

8. *[Optional - Read Patterns of Codependence]*

9. *[Optional- Acknowledgement of CoDA birthdays]*

PROGRAM SECTION

10. Read the **CoDA Guide to Sharing and Crosstalk Guideline**

11. Open the meeting for individual sharing

CLOSING SECTION

12. Seventh Tradition Donations

13. **Announcements Section**

- Meetings Lists & literature
- Service reports - Literature, Treasurer, Group Rep
- CoDA announcements

14. Anonymity Statement

15. *[Optional- Read The Twelve Promises]*

16. Closing Prayer

CODA MEETING FORMAT (Example)

Note to meeting leader: - *Italics* are not read out loud.

- Meeting formats are agreed by our Group Conscience - please stick to the format as written.

OPENING SECTION

OPEN the Meeting on time

Good evening/morning/afternoon and welcome to this meeting of Co-Dependents Anonymous. My name is and I am a recovering co-dependent. I am your meeting leader tonight (today). Would you please help me open this meeting with a moment of silence followed by the CoDA Opening Prayer / 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, the Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference



"At this point I would like to remind all those with mobile phones to please switch them off."

CoDA PREAMBLE : Meeting leader reads.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS

"Is anyone attending their first, second or third CoDA meeting?"

[IF there are newcomers -READ the following paragraph]

* "We welcome you to CoDA and to this meeting. We recommend attending at least six CoDA meetings in rapid succession before deciding if CoDA is right for you. There are free meetings lists and other CoDA literature available for sale after the meeting. During others' sharing we suggest that you listen for the similarities to your own experience rather than the differences. CoDA is a spiritual not a religious program. The God mentioned in the Steps is the Higher Power of your own understanding."

[Optional "Are there any out of town visitors?" If so welcome them.]

Announce any meeting facility requirements Eg. "Toilets are located ..., smoking policy.."

FEELINGS CHECK & Optional ID

"Each of us is now invited to state our first name, identify as a codependent or newcomer and

then to share briefly in one or two words how we are now feeling.”

Select someone to start and continue around the room. As this is being done the meeting leader makes a note of everyone’s names in the meeting notebook.

- Note to Chairperson for **LATE ARRIVALS**

- *Wait for the in-progress share to finish.*

- *IF the person is known as a CoDA member say:*

“Would the **recent arrival** like to identify and do a feelings check.”

IF the person might be a CoDA newcomer say:

- *And then **READ** the Newcomer’s welcome paragraph* at the start of this meeting format.*

“Is this your first meeting? ...Please can you introduce yourself by your first name so we can welcome you”

(Meeting format continued.. page 2)

READ: CoDA WELCOME: Meeting leader reads as written. (*OR invites another member to*)

READ: THE 12 STEPS & 12 TRADITIONS (*OR read half way through the meeting*)

"**CoDA's Twelve Steps** are the spiritual guidelines for our individual recovery. Will someone please read the Twelve Steps."

"**CoDA's Twelve Traditions** are the guiding spiritual principles of our meetings. Will someone please read the Twelve Traditions".

[Some groups prefer to pass the Steps & Traditions around and read one or two each.]

*[Optional- "Will someone please read the **Patterns of Codependence**"]*

[Optional- Are there any CoDA birthdays this week?"]

If newcomers present explain: "Your CoDA Birthday is the date of your first CoDA meeting."

Birthdays can be acknowledged by clapping and / or with a small celebration and cake after the meeting. At some groups 15 minutes is allocated for the birthday member to share a fuller version of their recovery story i.e. "what they were like, what happened to change them and what they are like now".

PROGRAM & SHARING SECTION

If your meeting has a speaker or reads from CoDA literature, this usually lasts 5 to 15 minutes. It is recommended that at least one meeting per month be devoted to Step study.

READ: CoDA Guide to Sharing

"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 very difficult task. We encourage people to begin slowly and carefully. Everything that is shared is of value. The sharing of our experiences is best done with "I" statements. We tell only of our own experience, avoiding the words "you" and "we" and do not refer to another person by name during our shares. In keeping with Traditions 6 and 10 we avoid naming specific self-help books, programmes or religions."

READ: CoDA Crosstalk Guideline

The sharing session must be a time when each of us is allowed to express our feelings openly and honestly, free from fear of judgment by others. In our meetings we speak about our own experience, and we listen without comment to what others share. We give the person sharing our full, uncritical attention. We work towards taking responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others. This also applies after the meeting. Crosstalk guidelines help keep our meeting a safe place.

Note to Meeting leader: If further explanation of crosstalk is requested – read the following:

Crosstalk can be: giving unsolicited feedback, advice-giving, answering, making 'you' and 'we' statements, interrogating, debating, criticising, controlling or dominating. It may also include: minimising another person's feeling or experiences, physical contact or touch, body movements, such as nodding one's head, calling another person present by name, or verbal sounds and noises."

For more information the group can read the CoDA booklet "Experiences With Crosstalk"

- **LENGTH OF SHARES**

"Please limit your sharing to approximately..... minutes"

"The last person is asked to finish their sharing by" (5 to 10 minutes before end of meeting)

Group conscience to decide if and how to indicate when time is up, e.g. a timer, tapping a cup or a gentle reminder by chairperson. Time limit may depend on numbers present.

e.g. Under 5 members - 10 mins; 5 to 10 members – 7 mins; Over 10 members – 5 mins each.

- **SHARING SESSION**

"The sharing session at this meeting is open to anyone who wishes to speak. Our message is one of identification and hope. We identify our codependent patterns by sharing with others how our codependency developed in our childhood, how we carried it into our adult lives and how we came to Co-Dependents Anonymous. The message of hope is given by sharing what we were like, what happened to change us and what we are like now. "

"The meeting is now open for sharing."

CLOSING SECTION

"We close the meeting with the **Twelve Promises** of Co-Dependents Anonymous"

(Select someone to start and pass the sheet round and read 1 or 2 each.)

[Alternatives: The Stages of Recovery or the Patterns of Recovery – See Starters Kit Appendix]

For those of you who did not have a chance to share tonight we suggest that you talk with another member after the meeting. There are free national meeting lists and welcome packs available.

LITERATURE "CoDA literature is available for sale after the meeting"

"Our current literature person is....."

Our SEVENTH TRADITION reminds us that we are self-supporting through our own contributions. Donations are used for meeting expenses and literature, and to support the work of the CoDA National Service Office and of the CoDA World Fellowship.

The **weekly expenses** of this group are approximately \$.....

"Our current treasurer is....."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Are there any service reports?" *(Literature, Treasurer etc)*

- Give notice of next group conscience meeting / announce decisions of last group conscience..

"The current service positions available at this meeting are....."

(Have copies of service position descriptions from Section 4 of the Starters Kit available for members)

"Are there any CoDA related announcements?"

- Ask Group Rep for any Intergroup or Service Office News * **Eg IG service opportunities.**
- Announce date of next intergroup meeting (Meeting is via teleconference with dates and details information on the website)
- Other Group announcements (from any member) – social outings, public info work...

*News Source – Australian Intergroup meeting reports and US Quarterly Service Reports (QSRs)
 [QSR's are available by email: board@coda.org (Board of Trustees)]

SPONSORSHIP

Members are encouraged to seek sponsorship

"If we attempt to complete the Steps alone, we may perpetuate isolation, a common codependent behaviour. In time many of us seek the loving help of those who have travelled this path before us – sponsors in CoDA can offer us insight, encouragement and support. They help us to see that these Steps cannot be completed quickly or absolutely; they are not quick fixes."

CoDA Book pages 23-24

[Optional] It is recommended that we work through readings and questions on the Steps and the Traditions with another CoDA member to assist and guide us either in a Sponsorship or Co-Sponsorship relationship or as part of a small group of CoDA members who agree to work as a "Step Study Group." Before approaching someone to be your sponsor read the CoDA Sponsorship Handbook and Pamphlet.

ANONYMITY

Tradition 12 states "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions; ever reminding us to place principles before personalities". We ask that you respect the anonymity and confidentiality of each person in this meeting.

We all say: *(Display on card in the centre of the circle)*

<p>"What you see here, What is said here, When you leave here, Let it stay here."</p>

"The opinions expressed here today are of those who shared and are not necessarily those of CoDA as a whole. **Thank you for allowing me to chair this meeting.**"

- **THE “MEETING AFTER THE MEETING”**

“Everyone is invited to stay after the meeting to make contact and exchange phone numbers if they wish. “

“There are copies of the group phone list on the table – please add your name and number to the master copy if you wish.”

“Those who wish to are invited to join hands and close the meetings with theprayer”

Closing prayer of choice - the following are the CoDA endorsed prayers.

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.

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the Serenity

to accept the things I cannot change,

the Courage to change the things I

*can, and the Wisdom to know the
difference*

The following slogan is often recited by groups after the closing prayer:

**Thanks for sharing, keep coming back,
it works if you work it and we're all worth it!**

Preamble

of Co-Dependents Anonymous

Co-Dependents Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships. The only requirement for membership is a desire for healthy and fulfilling relationships. We gather together to support and share with each other in a journey of self-discovery - learning to love the self. Living the program allows each of us to become increasingly honest with ourselves about our personal histories and our own codependent behaviors.

We rely upon the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (as adopted from Alcoholics Anonymous) for knowledge and wisdom. These are the principles of our program and guides to developing honest and fulfilling relationships with ourselves and others. In CoDA, we each learn to build a bridge to a Higher Power of our own understanding, and we allow others the same privilege.

This renewal process is a gift of healing for us. By actively working the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous, we can each realise a new joy, acceptance and serenity in our lives.

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Welcome

of Co-Dependents Anonymous

We welcome you to Co-Dependents Anonymous, a program of recovery from codependence, where each of us may share our experience, strength and hope in our efforts to find freedom where there has been bondage and peace where there has been turmoil in our relationships with others and ourselves.

Most of us have been searching for ways to overcome the dilemmas of the conflicts in our relationships and our childhoods. Many of us were raised in families where addictions existed - some of us were not. In either case, we have found in each of our lives that codependence is a most deeply rooted, compulsive behavior and that it is born out of our sometimes moderately, sometimes extremely dysfunctional family systems.

We have each experienced in our own ways the painful trauma of the emptiness of our childhood and relationships throughout our lives. We attempted to use others - our mates, friends, and even our children, as our sole source of identity, value and well being, and as a way of trying to restore within us the emotional losses from our childhoods. Our histories may include other powerful addictions which at times we have used to cope with our codependence.

We have all learned to survive life, but in CoDA we are learning to live life. Through applying the Twelve Steps and principles found in CoDA to our daily life and relationships - both present and past - we can experience a new freedom from our self defeating lifestyles. It is an individual growth process. Each of us is growing at our own pace and will continue to do so as we remain open to God's will for us on a daily basis. Our sharing is our way of identification and helps us to free the emotional bonds of our past and the compulsive control of our present.

No matter how traumatic your past or despairing your present may seem, there is hope for a new day in the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous. No longer do you need to rely on others as a power greater than yourself. May you instead find here a new strength within to be that which God intended - Precious and Free.



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 co-dependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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* The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted for adaptation with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

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 out 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 other 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 co-dependents 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 non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
9. CoDA, as such, ought never be organised; 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.

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* The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted for adaptation with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. *The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous* 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity. 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority: a loving God as he may express Himself to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. 3. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole. 5. Each group has but one primary purpose: to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. 7. Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres 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. AA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA 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 PROMISES

Of Co-Dependents Anonymous

I can expect a miraculous change in my life by working the program of CoDependents Anonymous. As I make an honest effort to work the Twelve Steps and follow the Twelve Traditions...

1. I know a new sense of belonging. The feelings of emptiness and loneliness will disappear.
2. I am no longer controlled by my fears. I overcome my fears and act with courage integrity and dignity.
3. I know a new freedom.
4. I release myself from worry, guilt and regret about my past and present. I am aware enough not to repeat it.
5. I know a new love and acceptance of myself and others. I feel genuinely lovable, loving and loved.
6. I learn to see myself as equal to others. My new and renewed relationships are all with equal partners.
7. I am capable of developing and maintaining healthy and loving relationships. The need to control and manipulate others will disappear as I learn to trust those who are trustworthy.
8. I learn that it is possible for me to mend to become more loving, intimate and supportive. I have the choice of communicating with my family in a way which is safe for me and respectful of them.
9. I acknowledge that I am a unique and precious creation.
10. I no longer need to rely solely on others to provide my sense of worth.
11. I trust the guidance I receive from my Higher Power and come to believe in my own capabilities.
12. I gradually experience serenity, strength and spiritual growth in my daily life.



* PATTERNS OF CODEPENDENCE

Included in the CoDA pamphlets - "Am I Codependent?" & "What is CoDA?"

The following examples of these patterns and characteristics are offered as a tool to aid in self-evaluation. It is not an exhaustive list.

Denial Patterns

- I have difficulty identifying what I am feeling
- I minimise, alter or deny how I truly feel
- I perceive myself as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.

Low Self-Esteem Patterns

- I have difficulty making decisions
- I judge everything I think, say or do harshly as never good enough
- I am embarrassed to receive recognition, praise or gifts
- I do not ask others to meet my needs and desires
- I value others approval of my thinking, feelings and behaviour over my own
- I do not perceive myself as a loveable or worthwhile human being

Compliance Patterns

- I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or others' anger
- I am very sensitive to how others are feeling and feel the *same*
- I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long
- I value others' opinions and feelings more than my own.
- I am often afraid to express differing opinions and feelings of my own
- I put aside my own interests in order to do what others want
- I accept sex when I want love

Control Patterns

- I believe most other people are incapable of caring for themselves
- I attempt to convince others of what they *should* think and how they *should truly* feel
- I become resentful when others will not let me help them
- I freely offer others advice and directions without being asked
- I lavish gifts and favours on those I care about
- I use sex to gain approval and acceptance
- I have to be "needed" in order to have a relationship with others

Also see Characteristics of Codependence – Newcomers Handbook & Starters Kit Appendix

To the Higher Power of your own understanding

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 CoDA Closing Prayer ©

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

SERENITY PRAYER

*God Grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the Courage to change the things I can
and the Wisdom to know the difference.*

SECTION THREE: ATTRACTING MEMBERS

SECTION SUMMARY

- **Community Outreach – Providing Public Information**

Provides an overview of the principles of “Attraction rather than promotion” and the essential process of how to let the community know about your CoDA meeting.

- **Flyer for Notice Boards**

This is the example based on the one from the US Starter Kit – more examples, that have been successfully used in Australia, are included in the appendix.

Flyers can be individualised with your meeting and contact person information and put up to announce your meeting.

- **Welcoming Newcomers**

Attending one’s first meeting can be scary. Welcoming newcomers offers ways to address those fears and encourage the newcomer to keep coming back,

- **Group Members Phone List – Template**

- **Current National Meeting List**

Updated meeting lists are sent to all groups with the Intergroup reports every two months. Please make sure your group has several copies of the current meeting list available for members.

**TRADITION FIVE: Each group has but one primary purpose:
to carry its message to other co-dependents who still suffer.**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH – Public Information

INTRODUCTION

Community outreach is a way to implement our Twelfth Step and Fifth Tradition, that a CoDA group "has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to other Co-Dependents who still suffer." The suggestions included here are within the guidelines of Tradition Eleven:

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.*

Our Eleventh Tradition reminds us that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.

We do not advertise in the traditional sense in that we do not push for everyone to join CoDA. We do not pay celebrity sponsors to speak on our behalf. We do not tell people why they should join up.

Instead, **we let the program speak for itself.** We let people know we are here and then we let them decide for themselves if they want to participate.

STEP TWELVE: *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other co-dependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

The goal is to "carry the message". This Twelfth Step work means, in part, to get information about CoDA and CoDA meetings out into your community, so the information is available to other codependents who still suffer. When your meeting is listed in your local newspaper, and area mental health professionals know about CoDA, more people have a chance of learning about CoDA and finding recovery.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

1) Newspaper Announcements: Phone local papers with free "Community Announcements" sections" . *See Example announcements on next page.*

2) Mail the following information to local therapists, GPs, hospitals, rehab centres, help-lines, libraries, community centres, and colleges etc. Start with those within a 15 minute radius of your meeting. Check your phone book for possible nearby locations.

- Brief covering letter with details of your meeting.
- "What is CoDA?" pamphlet.
- CoDA National Meetings List
- Your CoDA group's flyer for notice boards
- Information Pamphlet for professionals. *(Coming soon)*

3) Put up your **CoDA group's flyer** in the local area. Some suggestions for locations are churches, supermarkets, community notice boards, libraries, doctor's offices, locations of other Twelve Step meetings. You may need to ask permission first.

4) Pamphlets: Leave copies of *What is CoDA?* & *Am I Codependent?* with meeting details at information points in Libraries, Health Centres etc. You may need to ask permission first.

ANY QUESTIONS? Contact:

- Intergroup Public Info person at the National CoDA Service Office in Sydney:
Ph: 0417 995 111 email: *codaoffice.oz@gmail.com*
- CoDA Board of Trustees (USA) or the Outreach Committee.
Phone: USA (602) 277-7991, or email: *board@coda.org* or *outreach@coda.org*

NEWSPAPER ANNOUNCEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Include: the **day, time and location** and/or a contact **phone number** if possible for directions.

Including the national CoDA **website** is a useful way to give people easy access to information about codependency and

CoDA: www.codependentsanonymous.org.au (*A shorter website address may be set up in the future!*)

From USA CoDA Starter Kit: (CoDA endorsed announcement)

Note, this may be too long for most newspapers' free sections.

Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a Twelve Step Fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is recovery from codependence and the development and maintenance of healthy relationships. The CoDA meeting in the area meets:

On _____ at _____ am/pm (Day) (Time)

At _____ (Place) (Address)

For further information contact: _____ at () _____

Or see the website www.coda.org (www.codependentsanonymous.org.au)

CoDA is a non-profit organisation supported by the voluntary contributions of attending members.

Other suggestions used in Australia:

CoDependents Anon (CoDA): 12 Step Program for those wanting healthy relationships with self & others. Meetings held in many suburbs incl..... www.coda.org

Co-Dependents Anonymous for relationship problems meets Wed 6.30pm, Church Hall, Back room.. Ph: <contact num> www.coda.org

CoDA: 12 Step program for those having difficulty with all types of relationships:
7–8.30pm Community Centre, 12 Smith St, Freetown Ph: <contact num>
www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

More than one group can be advertised in the same notice:

CoDA: Weekly 12 Step self-help meetings for people with codependent behaviour in relationships meets Sundays at...(location), and Thursdays at.....(location) 6pm both nights. Ph: <contact num> www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

CoDA – Relationships

Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a worldwide network of groups made up of men and women with a common interest in working through the problems that co-dependent behaviours & beliefs have caused in their lives. **The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy & fulfilling relationships.** CoDA is a Twelve Step Fellowship and uses an adapted version of the Twelve Steps and Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous as a central part of the suggested program of recovery and as such it is a spiritual **not** a religious program. There are no fees for membership of CoDA – each group is fully self supporting by donations from its members.

Some Characteristics of Codependence

Co-Dependents typically:

- Assume responsibility for other people's feelings
- Are not aware of how they feel and cannot identify their feelings
- Tend to minimize, alter, or even deny the truth about how they feel
- Tend to fear or worry about how others may respond to their feelings
- Bolster their self-esteem by trying to solve other people's problems
- Look to other people to determine what to do, say or feel
- Focus their attention on pleasing another person
- Have difficulty acknowledging good things about themselves
- Tend to judge everything they say or do harshly, by someone else's standards
- Have difficulty in forming and/or maintaining close relationships with others
- Have to feel needed in order to have a relationship with others
- Do not know or believe that asking for help is both OK and normal

If you identify with any of these patterns and/or would like to find out more about the CoDA program of recovery you are welcome to attend the CoDA meeting detailed below.

LOCAL MEETING DETAILS:

For a National meeting list Ph: 0417 995 111

CoDA Service Office, 41 / 1 Regent Place, Redfern NSW 2016

Or email: codaoffice.oz@gmail.com

Or search for meetings online at www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

Or www.coda.org for international meetings.

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

in CODA MEETINGS

Attending one's first meeting can be scary. Welcoming newcomers offers ways to address those fears and encourage the newcomer to **KEEP COMING BACK**

We communicate to the newcomer that they are welcome and included by:

- Making it easy to find the meeting – put signs up at the door and inside.
- Formally acknowledging and welcoming newcomers during the meeting. This can include a statement in the format about when they can ask questions (after the meeting? during a break?)
- Providing some literature free of charge or making up a “welcome pack” (see welcome letter in appendix of starters kit). The pamphlets: “Am I Codependent?” or “Welcome to CoDA” and “Attending Meetings” are appropriate.
- Encouraging people at their first few meetings to buy the **CoDA Newcomers Handbook** as an ideal starting point.
- Suggesting that newcomers try several meetings before deciding if CoDA is right for them. (and if possible to attend different CoDA groups)
- Making an effort to speak to a newcomer after the meeting.
- If your group's members go out after the meeting for coffee or a meal, announce at the end of the meeting that everyone is welcome.
- Have current national meeting lists available – it is important they know that each group is part of a wider Fellowship.
- Have a current group phone list available. Offer to chat with them between meetings about the literature they have read. (Act as a temporary sponsor.)
- By supporting and encouraging sponsorship in your group so that there are sponsors available to guide newcomers.
- If you are the phone contact for the meeting, return calls promptly.

CURRENT NATIONAL CoDA MEETING LIST

Meeting Details are updated regularly on:

www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

Questions are welcome:

Email: codaoffice.oz@gmail.com

Phone CoDA Office : 0417 995 111

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR MEETING IS LISTED CORRECTLY
- WITH GOOD DIRECTIONS

SECTION FOUR: SERVICE

SECTION SUMMARY

- **Service in CoDA**

Introduction – Why do we need to do service?

General Responsibilities, Rotation of Positions, Service & The Traditions

- **Guidelines for GROUP Service Positions**

Includes suggested maximum times in each position

- **What is a Group Conscience Meeting**

Guidelines for Group Conscience Meetings

- **Format for Group Conscience Meetings**

A formal structure provides safety for all to speak and be heard and for connection with a Higher Power.

- **(National Service Office and Intergroup) –**

Still being revised. To be included at a later date. Will be posted on website.

SERVICE IN CODA

A CoDA group functions only if there are members willing to do service. Similarly the CoDA Fellowship cannot grow to meet the needs of an increasing number of people seeking recovery from codependency unless the service structure of CoDA can respond to these needs. A steady flow of members doing service is vital for the introduction of fresh ideas and energy. **CoDA needs new members to be brought into service in a steady and regular manner so that we remain stable and progressive.**

START AT GROUP LEVEL: Service positions can be as simple as a 1 to 6 month commitment to set up the refreshment table or literature table before each meeting, to a one to two year commitment to represent the group at national level (*or at a local intergroup committee if one is formed*)

NEW GROUPS: Out of necessity, in the beginning members may be called on to do service in more than one job. This needs to be temporary. Encourage all members to participate. Avoid controlling, "burn out" from doing too much and becoming resentful – all of which harm the growth and recovery of the group.

"ROTATION OF SERVICE POSITIONS SHOWS RECOVERY"

Service by just a few, no matter how keen, can create problems. Over-commitment can be harmful to the individual and the group. An appearance of martyrdom or over-achievement can also discourage others who may be considering service.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES of CoDA's TRUSTED SERVANTS

Preserving continuity: Outgoing officers, particularly in the administrative functions of secretary, treasurer, and Group Representative, are expected to work with the next person holding the position to ensure that procedures, knowledge, and records are passed along.

Responsibility of office: When officers cannot attend a meeting or other service commitment, they find a substitute to handle the job. In the event a commitment is not fulfilled, the officer is given a chance to explain to the group. If desired, a group conscience may then be taken to determine if the group wishes the meeting officer to continue or wishes to seek another volunteer to take over the position.

Desirable qualities of Group Service Officers:

- Welcomes and acknowledges newcomers.
- Encourages Twelve Step attitudes and healthy boundaries.
- Has knowledge of and supports adherence to **CoDA's Twelve Traditions** and principles (*Read the Traditions section of The Steps & Traditions Workbook*).
- Calls group conscience meetings to discuss new matters or to resolve disputes.
- Supports CoDA's program of spirituality in the tone and style of the meeting.
- Promotes "principles before personalities" (*Tradition 12*).

SERVICE AND THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

Our 12 Traditions help CoDA to remain spiritually centred and to operate from a state of integrity. Applying the Traditions in service work means learning to speak for ourselves, practicing equality with others and maintaining boundaries.

We risk hurting CoDA if we do service work without knowledge of the guidance of the spiritual principles found in our Traditions.

*Understanding and implementing the Traditions is the responsibility of **every CoDA member**. Each of us is hurt every time a member or group breaks or modifies any of our Traditions; and each time we ignore, disregard or overlook Traditions violations we perpetuate that hurt.*

Extract from The CoDA Book pages 91 – 93

GUIDELINES FOR GROUP SERVICE POSITIONS

This section contains some detailed descriptions of the tasks and responsibilities involved with service positions for your group. These are guidelines for group use, and each group may decide to add, delete, or combine responsibilities as necessary.

TYPICAL GROUP SERVICE POSITIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairperson• Secretary• Treasurer• Literature person• Group Representative	<p><u>Other Optional Positions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refreshment person(s)• Photocopying (<i>Meetings Lists, Welcome packs etc</i>)• Outreach Phone list person• Phone Contact person
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Chairperson / Meeting Leader *Suggested maximum service term: 2 MONTHS*

This position can rotate with each meeting or at time intervals, eg. every 4 weeks or every 2 months.

- Takes a leadership role for the duration of the meeting itself. Notes first names of those attending and what reading was used (if any) in the *meeting record notebook*.
- Runs the meeting according to CoDA-endorsed guidelines and the format agreed by the group.
- Follows the group conscience decisions on matters such as length of shares and crosstalk.
- Where flexibility has been agreed, assumes overall responsibility for meeting format eg which prayer to use or whether to read from CoDA literature or not.
- Offers a special welcome to newcomers and refers them to available CoDA literature.

Secretary *Suggested maximum service term: 6 MONTHS*

This position may be shared between 2 or more *co-secretaries*.

- Arrives sufficiently early to **open and set up the meeting room** so the meeting can start on time. Chairs the meeting if no one volunteers to do so.
 - After the meeting, ensures the group's possessions are safely packed up and stored and venue is locked and secured as required by venue owner. (*All members help with packing up*)
 - Chairs regular group conscience meetings eg. monthly. Asks members for agenda items at 1 or 2 meetings prior. (Agenda items to include: elections, meeting format, procedures, etc.)
- Ensures there are brief written records of all group conscience decisions. (*These can be in the meeting record book or in a separate group conscience book which is available to all members.*)
- Ensures the CoDA National Service Office is informed of any changes in meeting details or Group Rep/contact person.
 - Acts as the group's liaison person with the venue owner. (*Or the treasurer can do this*).
 - Passes on information to the new secretary at the end of the term

Treasurer

*Suggested maximum service term: **6 MONTHS***

- Is responsible for the safe keeping of group funds. (*A Group Bank account is not usually required*)
- Keeps accurate financial records for the group, and regularly reports to the group regarding income, expenses, and prudent reserve. Note: *A prudent reserve is determined by the group conscience of the meeting, usually about two month's worth of group expenses.*
- Keeps a record of weekly donations and total funds (Usually in the *meeting record book*.)
- Pays rent to the meeting facility for use of the meeting room. (*Keep rent receipts*)
- Ensures funds do not build up to excessive levels by disbursing group funds in accordance with group conscience meeting decisions. Eg. Literature orders and donations to National Service Office.

Note: *National Service Office sends donations to CoDA Inc. World Fellowship in the U.S.*)

- Passes on information to the new treasurer at the end of the term.

Refreshment Person

*Suggested maximum service term: **3 to 6 MONTHS***

(Note: This is an optional but highly recommended group social function.)

- Sets out refreshments, biscuits, coffee, etc. before start of meeting (*only use your group's supplies.*)
- Checks supplies weekly and obtains restocking funds as needed from the Treasurer.
- Cleans up the refreshment area and takes care of the rubbish.

Group Literature Person

*Suggested maximum service term: **6 MONTHS***

- Sets out CoDA Endorsed literature before start of meeting.
- Keeps track of group literature stocks and re-orders as needed (with group conscience approval) obtaining reimbursement from the group treasurer.
- Familiarises themselves with CoDA literature so they can guide newcomers and CoDA members in finding relevant literature.
- Announces to group about new CoDA literature, price changes etc (From Intergroup Reports)
- Passes on information to the new literature person at the end of term.

Current Literature order forms are available from the Sydney CoDA Office - phone 0417 995 111 or download from website:
www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

Photocopying Person

*Suggested maximum service term: **3 to 6 MONTHS***

Note: The literature person could cover this if necessary.

- Photocopies CoDA meetings lists, Newcomer welcome packs, CoDA newsletters etc
- Obtains funds as needed from the Treasurer
- Passes on information to the new photocopying person at the end of the term.

Phone List Person

*Suggested maximum service term: **12 MONTHS***

- Updates & makes copies of the group's outreach phone list (See Group Phone List Template in Section Three of Starter Kit)

Phone Contact Person (Optional)

*Suggested **Minimum** service term: **12 MONTHS** Makes first name and phone*

number available on local, state, and national meeting lists.

- Receives & returns phone calls in order to give directions to the meeting.

Group Representative (GR) *Suggested Maximum service term: 2 YEARS (Minimum 6 months)*

• **Your GR is the VITAL LINK** between your CoDA group and the CoDA Fellowship. Ideally, a GR is an established member of the group, with solid experience, knowledge, and understanding of CoDA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The GR has a special responsibility to deepen their understanding of the Traditions and to encourage their observance and practical application within the group.

- Carries the **group** conscience (not just their own opinion) to Intergroup meetings and reports to the group on the outcomes.
- If possible attends in person the Intergroup service meetings. (Currently there is only a National Intergroup in Australia- there are no local or state intergroup committees. National Intergroup meets in Sydney every other month - call 0417 995 111 for details.)
- If unable to attend Intergroup meetings in person sends a report (written, emailed or phoned) of:
 - Group news (number of regular members, general news, celebrations, plans for workshops etc)
 - any issues or concerns affecting CoDA as a whole that the group conscience wishes to have discussed by Intergroup
 - any group conscience decisions on matters affecting CoDA as a whole.

• **Reads the Intergroup reports and notifies the group of any local or national CoDA news, announcements, and flyers.**

- Makes the group aware of the activities of the National Service Office and its need for financial support from CoDA groups to operate. Works with their group to develop practical plans for supporting this CoDA service structure.
- Acts as **Group Mail Contact (VERY IMPORTANT)**- provides a contact address for receiving information from the CoDA National Service Office and the Intergroup Committee reports. (Updated National Meetings lists are also sent to this address - to be passed on to the photocopying person)
- Passes on information to the new Group Representative at the end of the term.

• To **ELECT A NEW GROUP REP** a group conscience is held which has been well advertised to the group in advance. It is suggested that the election be preceded by an explanation to members of the role of a GR and their work in the CoDA community.

• Please notify the Intergroup Secretary at the National Service Office in Sydney by phone, 0417 995 111, or in writing of changes to GR. [CoDA Group, Old GRs Name, New GRs Name, new postal address, new phone number] to:

Email: codaoffice.oz@gmail.com

What is a Group Conscience Meeting?

These are business/service meetings to collect the “group conscience” about any issue that is of concern to the group or to CoDA as a whole such as:

- Election of Group Rep, Secretary or Treasurer
- Changes in format, start time etc of the meeting
- Public Information – attracting and welcoming newcomers
- Financial matters
- the group's position on matters brought up at CoDA Intergroup or national level.

They are best held regularly (e.g.monthly) after the main meeting and may also be called by any member as needed to address issues as they arise.

All group members should be invited and encouraged to attend these meetings.

We remember **TRADITION FOUR:** *Each group should remain autonomous except in matters affecting other Groups or CoDA as a whole.*

Having a group reading from the following CoDA Literature and Service Manual is helpful.

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.*

- The group conscience process offers us safety. Without crosstalking, arguing or shaming we become willing to speak our truth, remain open to other's opinions and let go of results.
- We are afforded the opportunity to say we have changed our mind.
- We believe in **progress not perfection; we honour the outcome of the group conscience.**
- In old thinking, we had to have the answers right away, sometimes even before the questions were asked. Today, as we work our program, we learn to choose our response instead of reacting immediately.
- As trusted servants, we find it helpful to wait for a period of time (*sometimes minutes, sometimes weeks*) after a motion is presented. This allows members time for meditation and conscious contact with Higher Power before reaching a group conscience decision. **There are very few issues that require immediate decisions.**

(CoDA Steps and Traditions Workbook)

Extracts from -

The CoDA Fellowship Service Manual: Section 2 The Group Conscience Process

To begin the group conscience process, members raise issues or items of business. Our goal is to reach agreement on the items presented. The meeting is opened to discussion by the chairperson. 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. Anyone may ask for a group conscience at anytime 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.

If a position is that of our Higher Power, it will naturally attract others.

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.**

CoDA Group Conscience Meetings

Suggested Format

Note to Chairperson - if there are differing opinions on an issue, allow all members in turn to speak and be heard without interruption or response. Then have a few moments silence for contact with Higher Power. Then allow each member to speak again with the aim of arriving at a consensus ie. *a solution that all members are comfortable with.* If there are major disagreements that have not been resolved by the end of the meeting it is useful to postpone a decision to the next group conscience meeting. To avoid obstructing the group conscience procedure, it is usual to only postpone once and then go with a majority decision at next GC.

Appoint someone to **chair the meeting** (usually the Group Secretary or Group Rep)

Appoint another person to **take minutes**.

Minute taker records only the main points discussed, the decisions made and who is responsible for any action required. Exact details of who said what are not recorded.

OPEN the Meeting - All say the Serenity Prayer (*using "we/us" instead of "me/I"*)

& Tradition Two (*or go round the group and read all 12 Traditions*)

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.

Attendance: Minute taker to note names of those attending and their positions.

If there are new members present - ask each service person to introduce them selves and say what their role is.

Closing Time: Agree an approximate finish time. (e.g.30 to 45 mins depending on agenda)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Welcome new members at their first group conscience meeting.

2. Treasurers Report: Date rent currently paid up to. Balance of funds. etc

3. Literature Report: Stock levels, Literature order for approval etc

4. Disbursement of remainder of Group Funds

Eg. Donation to CoDA National Service office / copying flyers for local area

5. Service positions: positions coming up for rotation: election of Secretary, Group Rep or Treasurer, requests for volunteers.

6. Public Information What is the group doing to carry the message to the local community?

7. Other business:

- EG:**
- Matters arising from Intergroup meetings (see bimonthly reports sent to all groups),
 - Selecting Topic readings,
 - Group Social events. ...etc

8. Business for next meeting. Note items to be discussed at next meeting.

Set date for next group conscience.

CLOSE the meeting with the Serenity Prayer (*using “we/us” instead of “me/I”*)

SECTION FIVE: FORMS

SECTION SUMMARY

- **Group Registration & Change of Details Form**

Register or update your Meeting details here:

<https://form.jotform.com/210040759664051>

- **Seventh Tradition Contribution Forms**

For donations to your National Service Office

<https://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au/7th-tradition>

- **Literature Order Form**

Literature can be ordered directly from our website.

<https://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au/coda-webstore>

If you wish to post in your order details are here: <https://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au/literature>

The following Certificates are sometimes required by meeting venues:

- **Public Liability Insurance : Tax Invoice & Certificate of Currency**

<https://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au/s/Certificate-of-Currency-2021-03.pdf>

- **CoDA Australasia Inc Certificate**

Certifies that of Australasia CoDA Inc is a registered body can be obtained by emailing codaoffice.oz@gmail.com



CoDA *Australia* SEVENTH TRADITION DONATIONS

CoDA National Service Office
41/1 Regent St Redfern NSW 2016
Phone: 0417 995 111
Email: codaoffice.oz@gmail.com
www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

The CoDA National Service Office serves the Australian CoDA Fellowship by providing literature, countrywide public liability insurance for meeting venues, a public information service, updates the Australian website and supports new and existing meetings.

We can only do this if all CoDA groups continue to support the office expenses with donations.

✂

SEVENTH TRADITION DONATION – from: **CODA GROUP:** _____

Address for receipt: _____

- Direct Bank Deposit # (Enclose deposit slip/transaction receipt)
- TICK ONE Cheque / Aus Post Money Order. - payable to CoDA Sydney Intergroup
- Internet Deposit # (Send copy of receipt if possible) **REF:** "T 7 DON –...." + *group name*

Commonwealth Bank, **BSB:** 062-223 **Acc:** 2803 2042 **Account Name:** CoDA Sydney Intergroup

✂

SEVENTH TRADITION DONATION – from: **CODA GROUP:** _____

Address for receipt: _____

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✂

SEVENTH TRADITION DONATION – from: **CODA GROUP:** _____

Address for receipt: _____

- Direct Bank Deposit # (Enclose deposit slip/transaction receipt)
- TICK ONE DONATE option via PayPal at www.codependentsanonymous.org.au
- Internet Deposit # (Send copy of receipt if possible) **REF:** "T 7 DON –...." + *group name*

Commonwealth Bank, **BSB:** 062-223 **Acc:** 2803 2042 **Account Name:** CoDA Sydney Intergroup

CURRENT CoDA LITERATURE ORDER FORM & CURRENT CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

Order literature online from

<https://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au/coda-webstore>

Order via post using the literature order form, download here:

<https://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au/literature>

Access the latest Certificate of Public Liability here:

<https://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au/for-coda-groups>

Need Help?

Contact The National Service Office:

0417 995 111

codaoffice.o@gmail.com

41/1 Regent Place, Redfern, NSW 2016

CoDA STARTER KIT APPENDICES

SECTION SUMMARY

- **Support Group for New Meetings** : Phonedlist

Additional Meeting Literature

- **Characteristics of Codependence**
From the CoDA Newcomers Handbook - Pages 25 to 28 (2007 Edition)
- **Stages of Recovery** - Adapted from "Peeling The Onion"
- **Patterns of Recovery** - Adapted from "Peeling The Onion"
- **Authentic Relationships**- Adapted from "Peeling The Onion"
- **Serenity Prayer** - alternative longer version

Service

- **Using The Twelve Traditions** - CoDA Pamphlet
- **Twelve Traditions - Long Form**
Original "long form" - was replaced by the above pamphlet
- **World Fellowship Structure** - *not included, to follow*
See Fellowship Service Manual on www.coda.org

Attracting New Members

- **Welcome letter for newcomers**
- Example that can be used in a Newcomer welcome pack. Folds into 3.
- **Letter to health professionals** - used by CoDA National Service Office

- **Attraction Flyers** - more examples.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR GROUP'S FLYER WITH THE REST OF THE FELLOWSHIP - email to codaoffice.oz@gmail.com and ask for it to be put on the coda website. Thankyou

Typical Characteristics of Co-Dependence

Taken from the CoDA Newcomers Handbook Pages 25-28 Edition 2007
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The following list is collected from individual experiences. It is offered as a way of identification. These are behaviour patterns which some individuals claim as their codependent traits. Few of us have all these traits, but most of us identify with some of them.

Codependents typically:

- Are not aware of how they feel
- Have difficulty identifying their feelings.
- Have difficulty in expressing their feelings.
- Tend to minimise, alter or even deny the truth about how they feel.
- Give power over their own feelings to others.

Also, codependents generally:

- Are not aware of what they want.
- Have difficulty in asking for what they want.
- Are more concerned with what others want.
- Find it easier to ask what others want.
- Tend to put other people's wants and needs before their own.
- Look to other people's wants or desires in determining what to do or say.

As such, codependents tend to:

- Focus their attention on pleasing the other person.
- Focus their attention on protecting the other person.
- Focus their attention on solving the other person's problems.
- Focus their attention on relieving the other person's pain.
- Focus their attention on manipulating the other person (to do things their way).

Also, in general, codependents

- Have difficulty acknowledging good things about themselves.
- Are perfectionistic, and tend to place too many expectations on themselves and others.
- Tend to judge everything they say or do, harshly, by someone else's standards.
- Tend to feel that nothing they think, say or do is "good enough"

In relationships, codependents typically:

- Have difficulty forming and/or maintaining close relations with others.
- Have to feel "needed" in order to have a relationship with another.
- Do not know or believe that being vulnerable is a means to greater intimacy.
- Do not know or believe that asking for help is both okay and normal.
- Do not know that it is okay to talk about problems outside the family.
- Do not know or believe that it is good to share feelings, rather than to deny, minimise or try to justify them.

Often codependents:

- Are more aware of what others feel.
- Assume responsibility for other people's feelings.
- Allow their serenity to be affected by outside influences.
- Allow their serenity to be affected by the other person's struggles.
- Allow their serenity to be affected by how others feel.
- Allow their serenity to be affected by how others behave.
- Condition feeling good about themselves on being liked by others.
- Condition feeling good about themselves on receiving approval from others.
- Bolster their self-esteem by trying to solve other people's problems.
- Bolster their self-esteem by trying to relieve other people's pain.
- Look to other people's feelings in determining what to do or say.

Accordingly, in relationships, codependents may tend to:

- Diminish their social circle as they become involved with another person.
- Link their dreams for the future to the other person.
- Link their quality of life to that of the other person.
- Value the other person's ideas and ways of doing things more than their own.
- Try to control the other person's, dress and behaviour feeling that these things are a reflection on them.
- Feel overly responsible for the other person's behaviour.
- Fear the other person's anger; fear being hurt and/or rejected by the other person.
- Let these fears dictate what they should say or how they should behave.
- Use giving as a way of feeling safe in a relationship.
- Put aside their own hobbies and interests and spend time sharing the interests and hobbies of the other.
- Question or ignore their own values in order to connect with the other person.
- Let the other person's actions and attitudes determine how they should respond or react.
- Remain steadfastly loyal, even when such loyalty is unjustified and personally harmful.
- Controlling others by not listening to them or by discounting their opinions and values.

Stages of Recovery

Adapted from the "Peeling The Onion" Pages 20 to 23 Copyright © 2007 Co-Dependents Anonymous

With recovery experience, we discover deeper layers than we first imagined. We proceed with courage because we realise we are no longer alone. We have developed a consistent relationship with a Higher Power, a recovery program, a home group, a sponsor and the support of recovery friends.

We have tools, including the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, which guide us to new ways of thinking and behaving. We are no longer overwhelmed by life.

Recovery from codependence, love, sex and relationship addiction and avoidance may include the following stages

- We reach out for help when we need it
- We speak up for ourselves
- We see others and ourselves realistically
- We stop using others or expecting them to meet all of our needs
- We set boundaries that ensure our well-being
- We use the tools of recovery
- We work the Steps and Traditions
- We rely on a Higher Power
- We give back to the Fellowship by participating in service work.

PATTERNS OF RECOVERY

Adapted from "Peeling The Onion" Pages 12 -19 Copyright © 2007 Co-Dependents Anonymous

Recovery from Denial Patterns

- We pay attention to what is going on inside us and are better able to recognise and accept our feelings for what they are.
- We learn to be truthful with ourselves and to see others and ourselves realistically.

Recovery from Low Self-Esteem Patterns

- We make decisions with confidence after considering our options. We learn to trust ourselves.
- We accept ourselves as good enough. We admit our mistakes and then let them go - learning to love ourselves.
- As adults, we are capable of and responsible for meeting our own needs. We ask others for what we want, realising we may not get it and that no one person can meet all our needs. We learn self-care and nurturing
- We know it is healthy and self-loving to receive. We know we are worthy.

Recovery from Compliance Patterns

- We maintain our values and integrity knowing we deserve respect. We do not tolerate abuse. We learn to set limits using our boundaries to safeguard ourselves.
- We learn to allow others to be responsible for their own feelings. Our boundaries empower us to know the difference between our own and other's feelings.
- In recovery, our opinions and feelings matter to us. We learn to express them to others.
- We respect ourselves and others. We set boundaries in our sexual relations. We do not use sex as a way to please or manipulate others or as a substitute for love.

Recovery from Control Patterns

- We take care of ourselves in relationships and allow other adults to do the same. We respect other's boundaries and stop doing for others what they can do for themselves learning to be considerate without becoming enmeshed.
- We learn that relationships are based on mutual respect for each other and that everyone has a right to their own thoughts and feelings.
- We ask if someone wants help and accept their response. We learn that we were never meant to be someone else's Higher Power.

- We learn we can't buy love or make someone like and approve of us. Being our authentic selves becomes more important than seeking approval from others.
- We surrender our need to control and pray for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Codependent Relationships vs Authentic Relationship

As we continue on our paths of recovery from codependence, we learn to differentiate between unhealthy dysfunctional relationships and authentic relationships. We look at past behaviours and patterns and compare them with how we engage in present relationships. The following chart shows aspects of codependent relationships and authentic relationships. Our goal to ultimately sustain a healthy relationship includes building a friendship first, keeping a promising relationship moving forward, retaining our identity, boundaries and values and learning to share with another person.

☹️ Codependent / Addicted Relationships	😊 Authentic Relationships
Due to my dysfunctional upbringing I gravitate towards emotionally unavailable, needy partners who will likely be addicted to drugs, alcohol, gambling, sex etc	I am attracted to your thoughts, ideas, personality, sense of humour, the way you present yourself and our common interests.
I accept sex when I really want affection. I'm afraid you won't stay around if I don't give you what you want.	Because I am in recovery, I no longer rush in to relationships. I want to develop a friendship first before taking the relationship to the next level.
I talk with you for hours about our traumatic pasts. We both come from dysfunctional families. I feel as if I have known you all my life. You are my soul mate.	I take my time getting to know you. I want to make sure you're emotionally available, capable of loving and respecting me, not just during the "honeymoon" phase, but consistently, over a period of time.
I want to spend all my free time with you. I blow off friends and family obligations. I feel incomplete without you.	I value my time with friends and family and continue to pursue my interests. In addition, I look forward to the time we spend together.
I put on a façade in order to gain your approval. I believe if you knew the real me, you would reject me.	I'm not afraid to be emotionally intimate with you. I'm willing to show you the real me.
I quickly become enmeshed in your life. The more indispensable I am to you, the more secure I feel. I believe you won't leave me.	I remain my own person. By practicing healthy boundaries and expressing my needs directly, I avoid being engulfed by you.
Together, you and I make a whole. When you're not around, I feel as if something is missing.	We come together as two separate people who encourage each other's personal growth and process.
I take my identity from you. I am preoccupied with all the details of your life: your friends, your work, how you spend your time away from me.	I remain self-assured with my own identity. I value my accomplishments, make my own decisions, and approve of my behaviours.
You become my primary focus. My happiness depends on you. You are my "higher power".	My happiness and joy are the result of the relationships I have with my Higher Power. I am able to share my happiness with you.
I fear being abandoned by you because, as a child, someone I loved abandoned me. I'm afraid of being alone.	I realise I am an adult, capable of taking care of my needs. Therefore I can never really be abandoned. My Higher Power is always present to love and guide me.
I am jealous, possessive and controlling. I listen to your phone conversations, read your email, and go through your pockets. I don't trust you.	I turn my will and my life over to my Higher Power. I no longer have to be in charge. I accept that whatever happens in my life is for my ultimate good. I trust my Higher Power.
I use whatever means necessary including lying, manipulating and evading to get what I want from you..	I am realistic about our relationship. I realise that a healthy relationship involves give and take, negotiation and compromise.
I am addicted to the chaos and drama in our relationship. It reminds me of growing up in my family of origin. When things are going well, I am waiting for the other shoe to drop.	We share love and happiness. We value and appreciate the peaceful times in our lives.
I am uncomfortable if you don't approve of what I'm doing, wearing or saying.	I am okay with myself, character defects and all. I love and accept myself as I am.
I focus on your negative traits and tell you how you should change.	I focus on your positive qualities and accept your character defects. I remember why I fell in love with you.
If our relationship ended, I would feel depressed, angry, hopeless and scared. In order to avoid these feelings, I would desperately seek a replacement as soon as possible. I would blame you for the breakup.	If our relationship ended, I would feel sad. Before getting into another relationship, I would take time to grieve the loss. To avoid making the same mistake again, I would try to figure out what went wrong. My self-worth would remain intact and I would still care about you.

To the Higher Power of our own understanding...

The Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change
the 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
- One day at a time.*

Extended version of the Serenity Prayer heard in June 2007 at the Freedom Women's CoDA Group that meets every Monday 7.30pm at St Columba's Church, Knightsbridge, London - with thanks.

USING THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

of Co-Dependents Anonymous

Text reproduced from the CoDA Pamphlet of the same name.

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

Our first tradition reminds us that without the strength of our CoDA Fellowship, we do not recover on our own; CoDA's existence depends on CoDA unity. We need the continuity of our common bonds, such as literature, meeting format, the Steps, the Traditions and recovery tools and concepts. We come together, in unity, to help each other recognise that we are not alone in our recovery. Each member is a unique part of a greater whole. We value every individual's experience, strength and hope.

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.*

In CoDA, our ultimate authority comes from a power greater than ourselves. We call this power our "group conscience." A group conscience is the collective expression of every member's loving Higher Power. The group conscience provides guidance for all CoDA groups in an atmosphere of safety, respect and acceptance. No individual is an authority in a CoDA group. At all levels of service, members are responsible to carry out the decisions made through the group conscience process.

Tradition Three *The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.*

This Tradition gives hope to all who suffer from codependency. We are members of this organisation when we say we are. Membership in CoDA is self-determined by a personal desire to experience loving and healthy relationships.

Tradition Four *Each group should remain autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole.*

As long as a group follows the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and reads the CoDA preamble and welcome as written, it may be recognised as a part of Co-Dependents Anonymous. After meeting these requirements, each group is responsible to its membership through the group conscience process. Each group has the obligation to make responsible decisions regarding its own affairs. In the spirit of unity, each CoDA group needs to be accountable for its decisions and actions which affect CoDA as a whole.

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

We carry the message of recovery from codependence to those of us who still suffer, sharing our experience, strength and hope. We are diligent in keeping this as our primary spiritual aim.

Tradition Six *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.*

CoDA groups do not use the CoDA name to promote or support any outside author or written material, organisation, therapy, religion, political group, charity, business or financial enterprise. When we use any facility for meetings or

events, we pay for its use, implying no affiliation. We actively protect ourselves from matters that might otherwise divert us from our main spiritual goal: recovery from codependency.

Tradition Seven *Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*

CoDA groups encourage responsibility in financial matters, such as paying for meeting room space, literature and refreshments. We maintain treasuries through voluntary contributions from members only. After the group meets its own needs and obligations it is suggested that excess funds, over and above a prudent reserve, be distributed to the larger communities of CoDA: local, state, regional, provincial, national or international. Co-Dependents Anonymous does not accept large contributions from any individual, nor do we accept money, space or services from non-CoDA sources. Thus we maintain accountability and independence.

Tradition Eight *Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.*

In CoDA, no one is paid to share experience, strength and hope, whether in meetings, as sponsors, or in any other Twelve Step related activity. Professionals attending CoDA meetings do so as members only and do not use the Fellowship to further their business interests. Our service centres may hire member or non-member employees for business needs. We may reimburse service related expenses, when financially possible, to those who serve the Fellowship.

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

CoDA groups need the least possible organisation that can accomplish our service responsibilities. We are organised through our service structures. We rely upon the spiritual leadership of a loving Higher Power as expressed through the group conscience at all service levels, as opposed to rigid organisation. Positions of leadership need to be regularly rotated. By doing so, we welcome the active flow of new ideas and energy to service. Our service structure consists of volunteers from the Fellowship who act in CoDA's best interests by reflecting the group conscience of CoDA as a whole. All CoDA members have an opportunity to offer service as a vital part of their recovery.

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

Our sole purpose is recovery from codependency through working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. CoDA groups and members refrain from linking the CoDA name to our personal opinions on any outside issue or organisation, including politics, religion, other self-help groups, therapeutic concepts, recovery centres, businesses, literature or causes. If we identify ourselves as members of the Fellowship, then we remain neutral on all public matters. We have no authority to speak for CoDA as a whole and we disengage from controversial issues.

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.*

CoDA groups and members do not advertise and promote the Fellowship; the experience, strength and hope of members speaks for itself. Our announcements to the public supply necessary meeting information, such as time, day and location. Relations with the media are handled through appropriate service entities, such as public information committees or Fellowship Services. In meetings, we identify ourselves by first names only. However

members may choose to shed their anonymity at a personal level. We make our meeting information and literature available to the community.

Tradition Twelve *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions; ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

Anonymity has profound spiritual value. Since we focus on building self-worth, we cannot afford personal quests for power or prestige. We are constantly reminded to look beyond our egos and personalities toward the higher issues of recovery. Anonymity challenges us to practice true humility and reminds us that the principles of the CoDA program transcend any individual.

* The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted for adaptation 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 here-in. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only – use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise.

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The CoDA adapted Long Form of the AA Traditions is no longer used. Work continues on documents that reflect the evolving experience, strength and hope of our own Fellowship (as it is different from other Twelve Step groups), as another level of our Higher Power's plan is revealed. (CoDA Book p84 - 5th Printing 1999)

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS of Codependents Anonymous

(LONG FORM - * Reprinted for adaptation with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.)

1. Each member of Co-Dependents Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. CoDA must continue to live but individual welfare follows close afterward.
2. For our Group Purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience.
3. Our membership ought to include all who suffer from codependency. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought CoDA membership ever depend on money or conformity. Any two or three codependents gathered together for recovery may call themselves a CoDA group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.
4. With respect to its own affairs, each CoDA group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plan concerns the welfare of neighbouring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, committee or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect CoDA as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the National Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.
5. Each Co-Dependents Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose - that of carrying its message to the Codependent who still suffers.
6. Problems of money, property and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think therefore that any considerable property of genuine use to CoDA should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the Spiritual. A CoDA group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to CoDA, such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the CoDA name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, CoDA managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside CoDA and medically supervised. While a CoDA group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never go as far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. A CoDA group can bind itself to no one.
7. The CoDA groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that public solicitation of funds using the name of Co-Dependents Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those CoDA Treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated CoDA purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money and authority.
8. Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counselling codependency for fees or hire. But we may employ codependents where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage non-codependents. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for.
9. Each CoDA group needs the least possible organisation. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area form their central committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The Trustees of the International Service Board are, in effect, our CoDA International Service Committee. They are custodians of our CoDA Traditions and the receivers of voluntary CoDA contributions by which we maintain our International Service Office at Phoenix, Arizona. They are authorised by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principle newsletter, Co-NNECTIONS. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in CoDA are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.
10. No CoDA group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate CoDA, express any opinion on outside controversial issues - particularly those of politics, reform or sectarian religion. The Co-Dependents Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatsoever.
11. Our relation with the general public should be characterised by personal anonymity. We think CoDA ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as CoDA members ought not to be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

12. And finally, we of Co-Dependents Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessing may never spoil us; that we shall ever live in thankful contemplation of God who presides over us all.

WELCOME PACK Information for Newcomers

March 2008

You have just attended, or are considering attending, one of your first meetings of Co-Dependents Anonymous - a Fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships, firstly with ourselves and then with others, by ceasing to use others codependently to ease our own pain.

TAKE HEART – you are not alone. This renewal process is a gift of healing for us. By actively working the CoDA program we can each realise a new joy, acceptance and serenity in our lives.

There are FOUR PARTS to the CoDA program of recovery:

Attending meetings

Sharing & Fellowship

Working the Steps

Sponsorship

A major part of recovery in any 12 step program is to attend meetings. At meetings members are able to share their experiences, thoughts, feelings and recovery with the group. There is never any obligation to share if you do not wish to. Being able to speak and be heard without interruption or feedback is a powerful healing experience for many people as is listening to others in the same way. **Recovery is something we cannot do alone.**

It is recommended that you attend **at least six CoDA meetings** in relatively quick succession before deciding if CoDA is right for you. If you are able to it is recommended that you attend more than one CoDA Group as part of your six meetings. The “God” as mentioned in the Steps is the Higher Power entirely of your own understanding; CoDA is a spiritual not a religious program and has no denominational, religious or other affiliations.

WHAT NOW? Honesty – Openness – Willingness

ATTEND WEEKLY MEETINGS – 2 to 3 a week if possible.

LISTEN without judgment to others’ sharing.

be **WILLING** to see the similarities to your own story - *“Take what you need and leave the rest”*.

TALK to other members after and between meetings about what brought you to CoDA (ask other members for their phone numbers).

ASK members to share their experience of codependency and recovery with you.

READ some CoDA literature and write about your feelings and thoughts. The CoDA Book is a good place to start. Begin to identify your codependent patterns and TALK to other members about them.

SHARE in MEETINGS - Speak as honestly as you are able about your feelings, your story and what you are discovering about your self.

Read the CoDA literature on sponsorship and then look for a **SPONSOR** or **Co-SPONSOR** to share your Step work with.

CoDA RESOURCES

Co-Dependents Anonymous Australian National Service Office:

41/1 Regent Place, Redfern, NSW 2016

email: codaoffice.oz@gmail.com

Phone: 0417 995 111

CoDA Literature & CDs are available for purchase through your local meeting.

For those without a local meeting, CoDA literature & CDs can be ordered from the CoDA website:

www.codependentsanonymous.org.au.

Literature can also be ordered via post using the literature order form available from the website or by request to codaoffice.oz@gmail.com.

Suggested Literature for Newcomers: "Common Threads of Codependency" Booklet; CoDA Newcomers Handbook, Set of 12 Step Pamphlets, the CoDA Book, Sponsorship Pamphlet & Handbook

CoDA WEBSITES

www.codependentsanonymous.org.au Provides information for members in Australia and New Zealand such as meetings details & a Starters Kit for those wishing to start new CoDA groups.

www.coda.org is the International website of CoDA. It contains many useful resources and links to other CoDA groups' websites and the International "Connections On Line" Newsletter.

CoDA Email group:

"All Over Oz-NZ" Join up at: <http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/alloveroz-nzcodea>

NEWSLETTER: CoDA Connections (Australia & New Zealand) - our "Meeting in Print"

Sets of back issues available from office – also on the Australian CoDA website - above.

NO MEETING IN YOUR AREA? If you can not get to a regular CoDA meeting it is suggested that you attend open meetings of another Twelve Step Fellowship to gain an understanding of the Steps and of how recovery works, while using CoDA literature to work your own program of recovery from codependency. You may have to try several meetings before you find those that feel right to you. It is worth making the effort to travel to somewhere that has CoDA meetings to make contact with others in recovery and to receive the benefits of face to face meetings.

Consider starting a new CoDA meeting: a starter pack is available for this purpose from the CoDA office or from the Australian CoDA Website..

OTHER 12 STEP FELLOWSHIPS

The Twelve Step Program was originally developed by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. (CoDA was founded in 1986). The Steps provide tools and spiritual approaches to help us in our search for meaning in life, and with overcoming depression, addictions, low self-esteem and other personal life crises. The basic premise of anonymity allows people to attend meetings without fear of legal or social repercussions. **Anonymity also supports an atmosphere of equality in meetings. It helps ensure that no individual's personality or circumstance will be considered more important than the message of recovery.**

- **Al-Anon & Alateen:** For families and friends of alcoholics. (Codependency issues discussed)
National Office: (03) 9620 2199, Sydney: (02) 9279 3600 www.al-anon.org/australia
- **Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACoA):** www.adultchildren.org [Al-Anon lists some ACoA meetings.](#)
- **NAR-Anon Family Groups:** For those affected by drug addiction in another.
NSW:02 9418 8728, QLD: (07) 3030 8403, SA: (08) 8272 8228 www.naranon.com.au
- **Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA):** (02) 9358 6605 www.slaa.org.au
- **Overeaters Anonymous (OA):** www.oa.org, www.oasydney.org
Sydney: (02) 9518 3004, Melbourne: (03) 9521 3696, Brisbane: (07) 3229 6977
- **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)** National Office: (02) 9599 8866 www.aa.org.au
- **Narcotics Anonymous (NA)** Ph: (02) 9565 1453 www.na.org.au
- **Workaholics Anonymous** www.workaholics-anonymous.org (International website)
Sydney meeting : Tues 6.30pm Surry Hills See www.rainbowrecovery.com.au for venue info.

NB: CoDA is an entirely separate entity from all other twelve-step recovery programs.



Co-Dependents Anonymous National Service Office

41/1 Regent Place, Redfern, NSW 2016

Phone: 0417 995 111

www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

Email: codaoffice.oz@gmail.com

Date:

Dear

Thank you for your interest in CoDA.

Co-Dependents Anonymous is a Twelve Step Fellowship of self help groups of men and women with a common interest in working through the problems that codependency has caused in their lives. **The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy & fulfilling relationships with ourselves and others.** CoDA uses an adapted version of the Twelve Steps and Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous as a central part of the suggested program of recovery.

CoDA is a non-professional organisation, is not affiliated with any religious denomination, politics, other organisation or institution and is fully self-supporting by the voluntary contributions of its members.

There is no requirement for members to work the 12 Steps however experience has shown that healing and recovery does follow when we apply these Steps in our lives. Many members also seek the help of the professional community at some point in their journey.

CoDA's meeting guidelines are specifically designed to ensure that people are able to feel safe and accepted just as they are. For many of us it is the first time we have been simply listened to without judgment or advice, which in itself can be a powerful healing experience. In CoDA we find others whose experiences we can identify with. We learn that we are not the only person struggling with life and relationships.

The following is an extract from a standard CoDA meeting format that is read out at the start of each meeting:

“As we pursue our recovery it is important for each of us to speak – as we are able. We encourage people to begin slowly and carefully. Everything that is shared is of value. The sharing of our experiences is best done with ‘I statements’ – this means we tell only of our own experience. CoDA has only one paramount rule during sharing – “no cross talk or feedback”. This means no verbal or physical response to what someone else has said. The sharing session must be a time when each of us is allowed to express our feelings openly and honestly, free from fear of judgment by others. In our meetings we speak about our own experience, and we listen without comment to what others share. We give the person sharing our full, uncritical attention. We work towards taking responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others. Crosstalk guidelines help keep our meeting a safe place.”

The Twelve Step Program was originally developed by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. (CoDA was founded in 1986). The Steps provide tools and spiritual approaches that have helped many people in their search for meaning in life and with overcoming addictions, low self-esteem and other personal life crises. The basic premise of anonymity allows people to attend meetings without fear of legal or social repercussions. **Anonymity also supports an atmosphere of equality in meetings.** It helps ensure that no individual's personality or circumstance will be considered more important than the message of recovery.

To learn more about Twelve Step Programs we suggest that you attend some open Twelve Step meetings in your area. In accordance with the Tradition of anonymity it is suggested that you do not state your occupation and, if asked to, you can identify yourself at meetings in the following way: “My name is.... (first name only) and I am interested in learning more about the 12 Steps.”

Enclosed is a CoDA Information Pack including a list of common codependent patterns, a CoDA meetings list and contact details for other 12 Step programs. *Please do photocopy this pack for your clients if you wish or contact the CoDA office for more copies.*

Kind regards

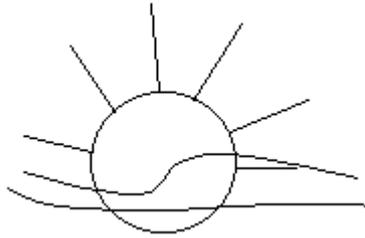
Public Information Officer - CoDA National Service Office

Email: codaoffice.oz@gmail.com

CoDA

Self- help groups offering a 12 Step Recovery Program

“To Thine Own Self Be True”



Relationship Difficulties?

self – partners – family – friends - work

Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a worldwide network of groups made up of men and women with a common interest in working through the problems that co-dependent behaviours & beliefs have caused in their lives. **The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy & fulfilling relationships.**

CoDA is a Twelve Step Fellowship and uses an adapted version of the Twelve Steps and Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous as a central part of the suggested program of recovery and as such it is a spiritual **not** a religious program. There are no fees for membership of CoDA – each group is fully self supporting by donations from its members.

Local Weekly Meetings *Newcomers welcome*

For more information on CoDA meetings in Australia & NZ contact: **CoDA Service Office** Phone: 0417 995 111 www.coda.org
www.codependentsanonymous.org.au