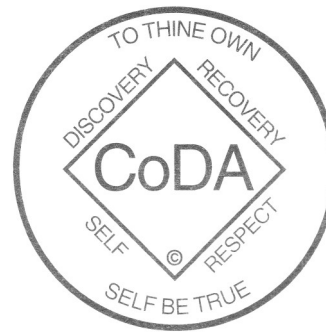


# Co-Dependents Anonymous

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a worldwide network of groups of men and women who share the common purpose of learning how to develop and maintain healthy and fulfilling relationships.

As CoDA is an anonymous Twelve Step group, each person's privacy is protected. Its' program is based on an adapted version of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. As such it is a spiritual not a religious program. It is a non-profit organisation, there are no fees for membership, each group is fully self supporting by voluntary donations from its members.



## Co-Dependents Anonymous National Service Office

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*Co-Dependents Anonymous*  
*An Introduction for Newcomers*

# Co-Dependents Anonymous

## **We welcome you to CoDA.**

Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a fellowship of support groups for men and women who share an interest in recovering from co-dependency and the problems that it has caused in our lives.

**The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and fulfilling relationships with ourselves and others.**

Like other groups based on adapted versions of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, Co-Dependents Anonymous offers an entirely voluntary program, operating on the principle that it is up to each person to decide if they are co-dependent and if CoDA is right for them.

## **CO-DEPENDENCE**

Co-Dependence could be described as a condition born of losing a strong connection with our authentic self, thereby losing the ability to share our true self with others and be in healthy intimate relationships. Somewhere along the line we may have learned to doubt our perceptions, discount our feelings, and overlook our needs. Subsequently, we may have learned to look to others to tell us what to think, what to feel and how to behave, thus becoming overly dependent on others.

We may also have rebelled, trapping ourselves in our reactions to others. Or childhood experience of abuse may have left us with habits of being overly independent, unable to trust anyone or allow anyone close. We may also alternate between these patterns. In any case, hiding our true selves, our real thoughts, feelings and needs, is painful and exhausting.

We may have used alcohol, drugs, food, nicotine, activities, sex, or preoccupation with others, to try to escape this underlying condition.

## **RECOVERY**

**CoDA's suggested program for recovery is based on attending meetings, working through the Twelve Steps, sponsorship and service.**

### **Attending Meetings**

A safe environment without crosstalk or feedback is created by meeting guidelines. Each person speaking is listened to without interruption or comment, and is not given advice.

When we are ready we can begin sharing our authentic feelings and experiences in the safe environment of meetings. For some of us this can be the first time in our lives that we are listened to without being interrupted, misinterpreted, or criticized. There is never any requirement to speak if we do not wish to.

It is suggested that a person attend six meetings, in fairly rapid succession, before deciding if CoDA is right for them. Meetings are not all the same. A person may not feel they fit in at their first meeting, but they may find that the next week, if they return, there are different people there, and they may feel more comfortable. There are also different types of meetings to try; steps meetings, focus topic meetings,

women's and men's meetings, for example.

### **The Twelve Steps**

By working through the process of the Twelve Steps, we can recover a capacity for being more genuinely ourselves. We can come to know a new love and acceptance of ourselves and others. We can learn to maintain healthy boundaries, good communication skills and become more capable of sustaining intimate and loving relationships.

### **Sponsorship**

A sponsor is an experienced member of CoDA, someone who's consistent sharing of recovery inspires us. Each member of CoDA may ask a person to sponsor them — to gently guide them as they work their way through the twelve steps.

### **Service**

As with all other aspects of the program, service is entirely voluntary. Perhaps after attending a few months of regular meetings, we may feel ready to begin doing service, with something as simple as helping pack up the chairs after a meeting. Service offers us the opportunity to learn healthy ways of doing things as part of a group and sharing responsibility. We can grow a new confidence in ourselves and deepen our sense of belonging by taking up a manageable and equal share of responsibility for our meetings, at our own pace, in a safe and supportive environment.

You are welcome to phone our National Service Office on **0417 995 111** or visit our website at: **[www.codependentsanonymous.org.au](http://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au)** for more information about CoDA.

Kind regards,

CoDA National Service Office