

What is CoDA?

“Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships.”

“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.”

From Preamble and Welcome

What is Codependency?

These patterns and characteristics are offered as a tool to aid in self evaluation. They may be particularly helpful to newcomers. There are 5 main patterns: denial, low self esteem, compliance, control, and avoidance.

These are some characteristics:

- Have trouble setting healthy priorities and boundaries
- Freely offer advice and direction without being asked
- Attempt to convince others what to think, do or feel
- Compromise their own values and integrity to avoid rejection or anger
- Put aside their own interests in order to do what others want
- Do not recognize the unavailability of those people to whom they are attracted
- Have difficulty identifying what they are feeling
- Express negativity or aggression in indirect and passive ways

From Am I Codependent

Who can attend a meeting?

Tradition Three states “the only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.”

Do I need to sign up?

There is no need to register. You can just drop in. Meeting information can be found on the coda.org site. A group contact can provide you with additional information.

How much does it cost to attend?

There is no charge for attendance. CoDA meetings are self supporting. Contribute as you are able. CoDA accepts no advertising and no sponsorship by any outside entity.

Can I bring a friend?

If a meeting is an “open” meeting, and most are, you are welcome to bring a friend or family member.

Can I get advice?

CoDA is a 12 step fellowship. We do not give advice and we do not take the place of counselors. Members share their own experiences and recovery.

Is CoDA a Religious Group?

Like other Twelve Step fellowships, CoDA is considered “spiritual” in the broadest sense, since it deals with inner change. Members may belong to various religious faiths or consider themselves agnostics or atheists. Everyone is welcome in CoDA.

What Happens at a Meeting?

Welcome

You will be welcomed at the meeting. Some meetings even have “Greeters” that meet you at the door. Some meetings give hand-outs or Welcome Chips to newcomers.

The Meeting Format

The Format will vary depending on Meeting emphasis—sharing, topics, CoDA book, the Steps and Traditions, are examples.

A Typical Meeting:

- The Serenity Prayer or CoDA Opening Prayer starts the meeting.
- We use first names only.
- In some meetings, people may sign in with first names.
- Readings help us focus on why we are here—The four “Foundation Documents”—Preamble, Welcome, Twelve Steps, and Twelve Traditions—must be read, but most meetings read more.
- Members introduce themselves by their first name. You will say that it is your first meeting.
- A “Seventh Tradition” donation is taken to pay for literature, rent, etc.

Sharing

You will have an opportunity to share, or not. It is not required. Newcomers usually share about why they have come. Some meetings have special newcomers groups. Most sharing is 2 to 3 minutes. We do not comment or give advice.

At the end

We end with “the Serenity Prayer” or “The CoDA Closing Prayer”. Some read “the Promises”.

Afterwards

Many meetings go out for coffee and fellowship. This is a good opportunity to meet people and practice your recovery.

Safety is Important!

Anonymity

Our identity and sharing stays within the room. Tradition Twelve reminds us that by not focusing on who we are, we are free to focus on our recovery. At the end of the meeting, we are reminded: “Let what is said here, who you see here, when you leave here, let it stay here.”

The No Crosstalk Rule

“Basically, any sharing which is not simply one’s sharing honestly about themselves.”
“Crosstalk happens when you interrupt, or turn into a therapist/mother/advisor by telling the person what they should do, or get into a conversation about what the other person is talking about.”

From Experiences with Crosstalk

The Serenity Prayer

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