

Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter

Co-Dependents Anonymous

CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS

**Building CoDA Community:
Healthy Meetings Matter**

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Introduction

Healthy meetings are an integral part of the CoDA Fellowship, providing us with a safe space to learn about recovery. Recovery does not happen in isolation. CoDA's Tradition One states, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity."

A CoDA meeting is comprised of a group of people who come together around their shared desire for healthy and loving relationships. The group uses the *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions* of Co-Dependents Anonymous as the basis for working toward recovery. It is a place to find sponsorship and fellowship as well as the sharing of experience, strength, and hope. A strong sense of acceptance and community makes a meeting attractive to both the newcomer and old-timer.

The sense of community and belonging, a gift of our program, begins at the group meeting level. A CoDA meeting is more than a place to tell our troubles. It is a place to identify with people like ourselves and to interact with people focused on similar goals—to develop and maintain healthy and loving relationships. Meetings also provide an opportunity to learn about ourselves by interacting with those who are different from us.

A CoDA meeting depends on all who attend. It does not belong to any one person or small group. Because working the CoDA program is a spiritual practice, we learn to rely on a loving Higher Power to guide our group. We come to this understanding by attending meetings regularly, asking our Higher Power for guidance, and engaging with our CoDA peers as equals. Attending meetings, listening to others, and speaking our truth are important aspects of our spiritual journey. When members truly share this journey, it creates healthy CoDA meetings.

CoDA meetings remain strong when they have the ongoing participation of long-term members who demonstrate the qualities of acceptance and community. Members are encouraged to create fellowship outside of the meeting by going for coffee or attending CoDA events such as picnics, potlucks, or camp outs.

In *Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter*, we discuss the characteristics of healthy CoDA meetings, the obstacles meetings may face, ways to address them, and the vital need for a service structure.

Healthy Meetings

There are many components that contribute to safe, strong, and healthy meetings. The following recommendations are based on the experience of long-standing meetings. Each is simple by itself. Together, they help create a space where codependents practice spiritual recovery.

Recommendations:

- Register the meeting with CoDA, Inc. at www.coda.org.^{*} The CoDA meeting will then be listed on the worldwide meeting list at coda.org. So that meeting information remains current, update yearly.
- Use a consistent meeting format. A suggested CoDA format is available online and in the Meeting Starter Packet.
- At every meeting, read, as written, CoDA's four foundational documents: the *Twelve Steps*, *Twelve Traditions*, *Welcome*, and *Preamble*.^{*}
- Read the “CoDA Guide to Sharing” and “What is Crosstalk?”
- Recognize and welcome newcomers and invite them to return.
- Announce that newcomers can ask questions after the meeting.
- Ask members who are willing to be temporary sponsors to raise their hands.
- Announce upcoming CoDA events.
- Use CoDA Conference endorsed literature during meetings.
- Have sample CoDA literature and CoRe^{**} literature order forms available.
- Have CoDA literature available for sale.
- Respect CoDA; refrain from photocopying copyrighted material.
- Maintain copies of current meeting lists.
- Display “For Safety Sake” tent sign during meetings. The sign is included in the middle of this booklet and on coda.org. It may be copied for use during CoDA meetings.
- Keep meeting location and times consistent. Start and end on time.