



## **CoDependents Anonymous Meeting Facilitator Manual**

### Welcome to Co-Dependents Anonymous

Welcome to Co-Dependents Anonymous, 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 loving relationships.

This Facilitator's guide is based on CoDA.org guidance including wording and organization. The Script should be followed in regards to content and order to present a consistent group experience.

# Table of Contents

## Opening Section

1. Welcome
2. Preamble
3. CoDA Welcome
4. CoDA's Twelve Steps
5. CoDA's Twelve Traditions

## Announcements and Introductions

6. Facilities and contact list
7. CoDA announcements
8. Birthday & Chip Presentation
9. Introductions
10. Hand out welcome chips with newcomer packets

## Reading Recovery Patterns

11. The recovery patterns of Co-Dependence

## Suggested Reading or Volunteer Reading

12. Topic for sharing or readings

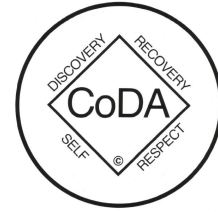
## CoDA Guide to Sharing

13. Importance of sharing
14. What is Crosstalk?
15. What is 13th Stepping?
16. For Safety Sake
17. Open for Individual Sharing

## Closing Section

18. Seventh Tradition
19. Anonymous program
20. What is a Sponsor?
21. The twelve promises
22. Thank you for Service
23. Affirmations
24. Fellowship after meeting
25. Recovery Prayer & CoDA Closing Prayer
26. Serenity Prayer & CoDA Motto

# CoDependents Anonymous Meeting Facilitator Manual



- **Highlighted** sections are for the meeting facilitator to read aloud;
- Plain text sections are facilitator *guidelines*.
- You may also copy and display the “For Safety Sake” tent card during meetings, which is available on the [coda.org](http://coda.org) website.

## Meeting Facilitator Expectations:

- The meeting should start promptly at scheduled time.
- Arrive early to setup facility and on-line meeting (Hybrid meeting if applicable). Unlock doors and exterior signage setup as appropriate.
- Create a safe place
- Depending on number of attendees, potentially divide the attendees into multiple groups during sharing to manage overall length of meeting and to be respectful of participant’s time.
- Manage crosstalk violations
- Manage sharing by splitting groups when friends, partners, spouses etc. follow someone to the meeting to “observe”.
- Follow group conscience guideline regarding allowing/disallowing “observers” such as students, counselors, etc. to participate both in person and online.

## Opening Section

1. **Good evening and welcome to the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of Co-Dependents Anonymous.**

**My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a codependent. I am your meeting facilitator tonight. CoDA asks those with phones to silence them for the duration of the meeting, so we can keep our focus on the meeting without interruptions.**

**For online participants, go to [northtexascoda.org](http://northtexascoda.org)>meetings>meeting resources> Participant Booklets to follow along in this meeting.**

**Please help me open this meeting with a moment of silence followed by the CoDA Opening Prayer in unison.**

(moment of silence)

**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.**

**2. “Required” May we get a volunteer to read the CoDA ‘Preamble’ as written in our books?**

**The 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 loving 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 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 realize a new joy, acceptance and serenity in our lives.

**3. “Required” May we get a volunteer to read the CoDA ‘Welcome’ as written in our books?**

**Welcome to 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.

Codependence is a deeply-rooted, compulsive behavior. It is born out of our sometimes moderately, sometimes extremely dysfunctional families and other systems. We attempted to use others as our sole source of identity, value, well-being, and as a way of trying to restore our emotional losses. Our histories may include other powerful addictions which we have used to cope with our codependency.

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 lives and relationships, both present and past, we can experience a new freedom from our self-defeating lifestyles. Our sharing 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. May you find a new strength within to be that which God intended - Precious and Free.

**4. “Required” CoDA’s Twelve Steps are the spiritual guidelines for our individual recovery. We will go around the room to read the Twelve Steps."**

**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 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. We're 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 codependents, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**5. “Required” CoDA's Twelve Traditions are the guiding spiritual principles of our meetings. We will continue with the Twelve Traditions.**

**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 codependents 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. A CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. CoDA, as such, ought never be organized; 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.

## **Announcements and Introductions**

**6. The restrooms are located \_\_\_\_\_.**

**CoDA literature is available at [northtexascoda.org](http://northtexascoda.org) and [coda.org](http://coda.org). Ask your Group Service Representative (GSR) about the meeting phone list. The list includes the names of those who consider this their home group and reflects their CoDA Birthdays (the length of time in recovery).**

**(Meeting specific option) After your fourth meeting, if you elect to do so; you may be added to the phone list.**

**(Optional meeting specific) The WhatsApp chat and phone list are resources to stay connected to others with experience, strength and hope between meetings or if a sponsor is not available.**

**(Optional, meeting Specific) Newcomers, please scan QR Code on the table to be directed to resources.**

**7. Are there any CoDA announcements from our GSR or treasurer?"**

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

*Note: Celebrate CoDA birthdays and we ask the person celebrating if they would like to share a few words of recovery.*

**So that we can get to know each other better, let's take this time to introduce ourselves by first name only, going clockwise around the room.**

**We welcome any newcomers. Please indicate if this is your 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th meeting of CoDependents Anonymous, and how you heard about us.**

*The Meeting Facilitator introduces themselves and then introductions continue.*

**9. Hand out welcome chips with newcomer packets.**

## Reading Recovery Patterns (optional)

10. **The recovery patterns of Co-Dependence: The following checklist is offered as a tool to aid in self-evaluation. It may be particularly helpful to newcomers as they begin to understand codependency. It may aid those have been in recovery a while to determine the traits that still need attention and transformation. Tonight, we will read from \_\_\_\_\_ (pick color or number) patterns around the room.**

Denial Patterns		
	Codependents often...	In Recovery...
1	Have difficulty identifying what they are feeling	I am aware of my feelings and identify them, often in the moment. I know the difference between my thoughts and feelings.
2	Minimize, alter, or deny how they truly feel.	I embrace my feelings; they are valid and important.
3	Perceive themselves as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others	I know the difference between caring and caretaking. I recognize that caretaking others is often motivated by a need to benefit myself.
4	Lack empathy for the feelings and needs of others.	I am able to feel compassion for another's feelings and needs.
5	Label others with their negative traits.	I acknowledge that I may own the negative traits I often perceive in others.
6	Think they can take care of themselves without any help from others.	I acknowledge that I sometimes need the help of others.
7	Mask pain in various ways such as anger, humor, or isolation.	I am aware of my painful feelings and express them appropriately.
8	Express negativity or aggression in indirect and passive ways.	I am able to express my feelings openly, directly, and calmly.
9	Do not recognize the unavailability of those people to whom they are attracted.	I pursue intimate relationships only with others who want, and are able to engage in, healthy and loving relationships.
Low Self-Esteem Patterns		
	Codependents often...	In Recovery...
1	Have difficulty making decisions.	I trust my ability to make effective decisions.
2	Judge what they think, say, or do harshly, as never good enough.	I accept myself as I am. I emphasize progress over perfection.
3	Are embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts.	I feel appropriately worthy of the recognition, praise, or gifts I receive.
4	Value others' approval of their thinking, feelings, and behavior over their own.	I value the opinions of those I trust, without needing to gain their approval. I have confidence in myself.
5	Do not perceive themselves as lovable or worthwhile persons.	I recognize myself as being a lovable and valuable person.
6	Seek recognition and praise to overcome feeling less than.	I seek my own approval first and examine my motivations carefully when I seek approval from others.
7	Have difficulty admitting a mistake.	I continue to take my personal inventory, and when I am wrong, promptly admit it.
8	Need to appear to be right in the eyes of others and may even lie to look good.	I am honest with myself about my behaviors and motivations. I feel secure enough to admit mistakes to myself and others, and to hear their opinions without feeling threatened.
9	Are unable to identify or ask for what they need and want.	I meet my own needs and wants when possible. I reach out for help when it's necessary and appropriate.
10	Perceive themselves as superior to others.	I perceive myself as equal to others.
11	Look to others to provide their sense of safety.	With the help of my Higher Power, I create safety in my life.
12	Have difficulty getting started, meeting deadlines, and completing projects.	I avoid procrastination by meeting my responsibilities in a timely manner.
13	Have trouble setting healthy priorities and boundaries.	I am able to establish and uphold healthy priorities and boundaries in my life.

## Compliance Patterns

	Codependents often...	In Recovery...
1	Are extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.	I am committed to my safety and leave situations that feel unsafe or are inconsistent with my goals.
2	Compromise their own values and integrity to avoid rejection or anger.	I am rooted in my own values, even if others don't agree or become angry.
3	Put aside their own interests in order to do what others want.	I consider my interests and feelings when asked to participate in another's plans.
4	Are hypervigilant regarding the feelings of others and take on those feelings.	I can separate my feelings from the feelings of others. I allow myself to experience my feelings and others to be responsible for their feelings.
5	Are afraid to express their beliefs, opinions, and feelings when they differ from those of others.	I respect my own opinions and feelings and express them appropriately.
6	Accept sexual attention when they want love.	My sexuality is grounded in genuine intimacy and connection. When I need to feel loved, I express my heart's desires. I do not settle for sex without love.
7	Make decisions without regard to the consequences.	I ask my Higher Power for guidance and consider possible consequences before I make decisions.
8	Give up their truth to gain the approval of others or to avoid change.	I stand in my truth and maintain my integrity, whether others approve or not, even if it means making difficult changes in my life.

## Control Patterns

	Codependents often...	In Recovery...
1	Believe people are incapable of taking care of themselves.	I realize that, with rare exceptions, other adults are capable of managing their own lives.
2	Attempt to convince others what to think, do, or feel.	I accept the thoughts, choices, and feelings of others, even though I may not be comfortable with them.
3	Freely offer advice and direction without being asked.	I give advice only when asked.
4	Become resentful when others decline their help or reject their advice.	I am content to see others take care of themselves.
5	Lavish gifts and favors on those they want to influence.	I carefully and honestly contemplate my motivations when preparing to give a gift.
6	Use sexual attention to gain approval and acceptance.	I embrace and celebrate my sexuality as evidence of my health and wholeness. I do not use it to gain the approval of others.
7	Have to feel needed in order to have a relationship with others.	I develop relationships with others based on equality, intimacy, and balance.
8	Demand that their needs be met by others.	I find and use resources that meet my needs without making demands on others. I ask for help when I need it, without expectation.
9	Use charm and charisma to convince others of their capacity to be caring and compassionate.	I behave authentically with others, allowing my caring and compassionate qualities to emerge.
10	Use blame and shame to exploit others emotionally.	I ask directly for what I want and need and trust the outcome to my Higher Power. I do not try to manipulate outcomes with blame or shame.
11	Refuse to cooperate, compromise, or negotiate.	I cooperate, compromise, and negotiate with others in a way that honors my integrity.
12	Adopt an attitude of indifference, helplessness, authority, or rage to manipulate outcomes.	I treat others with respect and consideration and trust my Higher Power to meet my needs and desires.
13	Use recovery jargon in an attempt to control the behavior of others.	I use my recovery for my own growth and not to manipulate or control others.
14	Pretend to agree with others to get what they want.	My communication with others is authentic and truthful.

## Avoidance Patterns

	<b>Codependents often...</b>	<b>In Recovery...</b>
<b>1</b>	Act in ways that invite others to reject, shame, or express anger toward them.	I act in ways that encourage loving and healthy responses from others.
<b>2</b>	Judge harshly what others think, say, or do.	I keep an open mind and accept others as they are.
<b>3</b>	Avoid emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy as a way to maintain distance.	I engage in emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy when it is healthy and appropriate for me.
<b>4</b>	Allow addictions to people, places, and things to distract them from achieving intimacy in relationships.	I practice my recovery to develop healthy and fulfilling relationships.
<b>5</b>	Use indirect or evasive communication to avoid conflict or confrontation.	I use direct and straightforward communication to resolve conflicts and deal appropriately with confrontations.
<b>6</b>	Diminish their capacity to have healthy relationships by declining to use the tools of recovery.	When I use the tools of recovery, I am able to develop and maintain healthy relationships of my choosing.
<b>7</b>	Suppress their feelings or needs to avoid feeling vulnerable.	I embrace my own vulnerability by trusting and honoring my feelings and needs.
<b>8</b>	Pull people toward them, but when others get close, push them away.	I welcome close relationships while maintaining healthy boundaries.
<b>9</b>	Refuse to give up their self-will to avoid surrendering to a power greater than themselves.	I believe in and trust a power greater than myself. I willingly surrender my self-will to my Higher Power.
<b>10</b>	Believe displays of emotion are a sign of weakness.	I honor my authentic emotions and share them when appropriate.
<b>11</b>	Withhold expressions of appreciation.	I freely engage in expressions of appreciation toward others.



## Suggested Reading or Volunteer Reading

11. Does anyone have a suggested topic for sharing or a reading for the group?

## CoDA Guide to Sharing

12. 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. It is the intention of every CoDA member and group not to ridicule or embarrass anyone. Nothing that is shared is unimportant or stupid. The sharing of our experiences is best done with 'I' statements. 'Crosstalk' and 'feedback' are discouraged.

13. What is Crosstalk?

The facilitator should *emphasize* the importance of crosstalk. Avoiding crosstalk is a key guiding element for this meeting and in our recovery.

**Crosstalk can be: giving unsolicited feedback, advice-giving, answering, making you and we statements, interrogating, debating, criticizing, controlling or dominating. It may also include: minimizing 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.**

**In our meetings we speak about our own experience, and we listen without comment to what others share. We work toward taking responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others. Crosstalk guidelines help keep our meeting a safe place.**

14. Would someone like to volunteer to read "What is 13<sup>th</sup> Stepping?"

### 13th Stepping

In recovery, manipulating another into a relationship, be it emotional, financial, or sexual, violates the core values and Twelve Traditions of our program. "Thirteenth stepping" is a term used to describe this kind of unhealthy relationship. Thirteenth stepping is harmful to both people involved and to the overall health of a meeting. Newcomers may be especially vulnerable.

15. Would someone like to volunteer to read "For Safety Sake?"

### For Safety Sake

I use "I" statements when sharing. (Such as, "I" feel; "I" believe.)  
I share my own experience, strength, and hope—no one else's.  
I refrain from commenting on what others share.  
I share for three to five minutes, keeping the focus on myself.  
I help myself and others by being emotionally present and honest.  
I let others experience their own feelings; I keep my advice to myself.

16. The meeting is now open for individual sharing... Please limit your sharing to 3-5 minutes to allow time for everyone to share.

The facilitator should use their own judgment to determine how to indicate when time is up, For example:

- use a timer
- decide to split into groups
- go clockwise with option to "pass"

## Closing Section

17. **Our Seventh Tradition reminds us that we are self-supporting through our own contributions. We ask that you donate as you can. A suggested donation of \$5 to \$10 will help to meet our obligations for rent and other meeting expenses, as well as supporting CoDA at all levels. *Optional Meeting Specific:* Online payments are also available. Provide specific details of where and how to make an online payment.**

18. **As we bring this meeting to a close, I would like to remind you that CoDA is an anonymous program.**

**We ask that you respect the anonymity and confidentiality of each person in this meeting.**

**We ask that what you see here, what is said here, when you leave here, let it stay here.**

19. **What is a Sponsor?**

**A sponsor is someone who will guide you through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and is a role model for recovery. A source of loving support who will respect your anonymity.**

**How do I get a CoDA sponsor?**

**For Sponsorship support, go to [northtexascoda.org](http://northtexascoda.org), sponsorship section.**

20. **The Twelve Promises are the primary spiritual aim of recovery. We will go around the room and read the Twelve Promises.**

The Twelve Promises of CoDA©

I can expect a miraculous change in my life by working on the program of Co-Dependents 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 feeling 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 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.

21. **Thank You to those who read and who did service at this meeting.**
22. **We share affirmations at the end of the meeting – there are booklets and handouts on the table, or you can affirm one of the recovery patterns to help you in your recovery. Let's go around the room clockwise as we share our recovery affirmations.**

*Starting with the leader or a volunteer each person in turn gives a positive affirmation such as: "I know a new freedom" or they may pass.*

23. **We would like to remind you that our CoDA meetings are a fellowship. Consider spending time after the meeting talking with at least one other person and welcoming our newcomers.**

**As a reminder, the first meeting of the month we go out to eat after the meeting, which is an excellent way to get to know one another.**

24. **The *facilitator* will read** both the "Recovery Prayer" and "Closing Prayer" *combined*.  
(Optionally, choose one prayer or the other.)

**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.**

**Recovery Prayer:**

**God help me to:  
Accept other people as they are,  
Recognize my own feelings,  
Meet my own needs,  
and Love myself just as I am.**

25. **Please stand and join hands as we recite the Serenity Prayer.**

**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.**

**Keep Coming Back!**

**It works when you work it,  
and YOU'RE WORTH IT!!**