

## CoDA Is .....

Codependents 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 won codependent behaviours.

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 to us. By actively working the program of Codependents Anonymous, we can each realize a new joy, acceptance, and serenity in our lives.

## What is Codependence?

Many of us struggle with the questions: What is codependence? Am I codependent? We want precise definitions and diagnostic criteria before we will decide. As stated in our Eight Tradition, Codependents Anonymous is a non-professional Fellowship. We offer no definition or diagnostic criteria for codependence. What we do offer from our experience are characteristic attitudes and behaviours that describe what our codependent histories have been like. We believe that recovery begins with self-diagnosis. We come to accept our inability to maintain healthy and nurturing relationships with others and ourselves. We begin to recognise that the cause lay in long-standing destructive patterns of living.

## Patterns and Characteristics

These patterns and characteristics are offered as a tool to aid in self-evaluation. They may be particularly helpful to newcomers...

### Recognizing Codependent Patterns

#### *Denial Patterns:*

Codependents ...

- Have difficulty identifying their feelings.
- Minimise, alter, or deny their feelings.
- Perceive themselves as being completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.

#### *Low Self-Esteem Patterns:*

Codependents ...

- Have difficulty making decisions.
- Judge their thoughts, words and actions harshly, as never being good enough.
- Are embarrassed to receive recognition, praise or gifts.
- Are unable to ask others to meet their needs or wants.

#### *Compliance Patterns:*

Codependents...

- Compromise their values and integrity to avoid rejection and other people's anger.
- Are very sensitive to others' feelings and assume the same feelings.
- Are extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.
- Place a higher value on others' opinions and feelings and are afraid to express differing view-points or feelings.
- Put aside personal interests and hobbies to do what others want.
- Accept sex as a substitute for love.

#### *Control Patterns:*

Codependents...

- Believe most others are incapable of caring for themselves.
- Attempt to convince others what they should think or feel.
- Become resentful when others refuse their offers of help.
- Freely offer advice and guidance without being asked.
- Lavish gifts and favours on those they care about.
- Use sex to gain approval and acceptance.
- Have to be needed in order to have a relationship with others.

## The Twelve Steps of Codependents 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 short comings.
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.

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[www.coda.org](http://www.coda.org)



Co-Dependents Anonymous Inc  
PO Box 33577  
Phoenix, AZ 85067-3577 USA

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