

CoDA NEW MEETING MINI STARTER KIT

This minikit is provided free of charge. If after reading this you decide you would like to start a new CoDA group in your area we suggest that you order the full starters kit from National Service Office using the enclosed literature order form – this comes in a folder and includes a selection of CoDA pamphlets. The cost is \$10 – postage is free.

Both this kit and the full kit are available for download from:

www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

The full kit is over 50 pages long.

CONTENTS

- Welcome Letter
- Starting A New Meeting
- Preamble & Welcome – read at the start of every meeting.
- 12 Steps & 12 Traditions – read at every meeting.
- Basic Meeting format
- Crosstalk Paragraph – read at most meetings
- Guidelines for sharing – read at most meetings
- The 12 Promises
- Contents page of FULL STARTER KIT
- Group Registration Form

- Literature order form - order the Full Starter Kit using this.
- CoDA Pamphlets: "Am I Codependent"
 - "What Is CoDA?"
 - "Attending Meetings"
- National Meeting List
- Literature Order Form

CoDA National Service Office Phone: 0417 995 111

Email: ozcoda@yahoo.com.au

Meeting Updates: codameetings@yahoo.com.au



Dear Friend, Welcome!

We welcome you to the Fellowship of Co-Dependents Anonymous. New groups are essential to keep CoDA a healthy, growing and recovering community.

We are glad to receive your enquiry about starting a CoDA group. This Meeting Starter Kit is intended to support you to do this even if you have no experience of 12 Step groups. The CoDA National Service Office and Intergroup committee also exist to serve the needs of CoDA groups in Australia although neither is a governing body. The national office is staffed by volunteer CoDA members for a few hours one day a week.

CoDA Foundation Day

Codependents Anonymous was founded on **22nd October 1986** in Phoenix, Arizona (USA) and the National Service Board was incorporated in the USA in 1987. Since the founding meeting approximately 3,500 groups have been established in over 23 countries. In Australia the first meeting was held in Sydney in Neutral Bay in June 1989.

Group Registration

To inform potential members of your group's existence don't forget to complete the enclosed registration form and return it to the national service office – address above. Your new meeting will then be added to the national meetings list and website.

CoDA Literature

Included in the Starter Kit is a literature order form. When placing an order, please ensure that you have the current version as they are updated regularly. The latest order form can be printed from the Australian website: www.codependentsanonymous.org.au and is sent out to all groups with the bi-monthly intergroup committee reports.

Please make sure you read the “**Policy on Outside Literature**” in Section 1. In keeping with CoDA's Twelve Traditions, it is strongly recommended that CoDA groups use only CoDA literature in meetings, as this promotes CoDA unity. Experience has shown that meetings which focus on the CoDA 12 Step program using only CoDA literature are more likely to flourish.

Funding

CoDA's Seventh Tradition states “*Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions*”. CoDA service bodies can only function when they have adequate financial resources. After setting aside a prudent reserve each group is asked to donate surplus funds to the National Service office. One of the major costs is **public liability insurance**, which many meeting venues require. A copy of the current policy schedule is enclosed.

Keep in Touch

Please keep in regular contact with the Fellowship by phone, mail or email. It is suggested that you find a member with several years experience in CoDA who is willing to provide support as you go through the process of forming a new group. There are members in Australia willing to do this. See “*Starting A New Meeting*”.

We wish you the serenity and hope that many before you have found through working the program of CoDependents Anonymous.

In service and fellowship,

The trusted servants of Co-Dependents Anonymous

STARTING A NEW MEETING

Based on the CoDA Pamphlet of the same name – with additions specific to Australian groups.

HOW?– Keep It Simple

All it takes to start a meeting is a venue, a time, and a few people willing to commit to supporting the meeting for the first six months. Having more than one founding member ensures the service work is shared from the start. The support you give each other in this way creates a healthy, committed group where recovery can grow.

WHAT TO CONSIDER When Starting a New CoDA Meeting

WHERE

Start your search with places where other Twelve Step Fellowship groups hold meetings. Try local community centres, library meeting rooms, church halls, synagogues, hospitals, schools and any other facility with space and willingness. Note: A member's home is not ideal for reasons of anonymity and avoiding reliance on one member.

WHEN

Based on a time that's best for you to serve, choose the day and time of the week you want to hold the new meeting. Consider the timing of other CoDA groups in the same area – if there is just one other meeting try and hold your meeting a few days apart from the existing group to encourage members to attend both groups.

RENT

It is important that rent, no matter how small, be paid for the meeting place. In 2008 between \$5 and \$15 per meeting is a good guide. In this way, we honor our Seventh Tradition: *Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.* As you won't know how large a meeting will be at the start, try to keep rent to a minimum. Rent may be a percentage of the meeting's collection, a monthly or quarterly fee, or anything to which you and your landlord agree. Some places let you use the space more as a courtesy than as a revenue source, so don't be afraid to negotiate while avoiding abusing their generosity.

HELP

Ask for help, especially in the beginning:

- Invite people from other CoDA meetings to help get the new meeting going. It helps to have several people present when newcomers show up.
- **Put up a sign** at the new meeting location each week so that people can find your room easily.
- Try and find a couple of other people interested in helping to get the meeting going.
- Contact the CoDA National Service office to see if they have had enquiries from other people in your area.
- Put notices with a contact phone number in venues where other Twelve Step Fellowships hold meetings. It can be useful to have founding members who are already familiar with the 12 Steps.

ANNOUNCE

Let people know about the new meeting.

- Visit other CoDA meetings with flyers giving meeting details – date, time, directions/map.
- Put up notices – see Section Three of this kit.
- Some local newspapers publish meeting notices at no charge.

In all efforts to attract new members, remember the Eleventh Tradition: *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.*

As people see the announcements and hear about the meeting, **they will come!**

REGISTRATION – Connecting to the Fellowship

By registering your meeting you ensure you are connected with CoDA as a whole. That way you become aware of other CoDA groups, workshops, retreats, conferences and conventions. This Starter Kit contains all the forms you will need to register with the Australian National Service Office who will add your meeting details to the national meetings list (sent to all groups) and to the Australian website. You will also receive bi-monthly reports from the Intergroup Committee, literature news & updated order forms.

Worldwide Fellowship – To receive the Quarterly Service Reports (QSR) by email from the CoDA Board of Trustees (USA) – contact *board@coda.org*

FORMAT & STRUCTURE

After a few initial meetings, hold a group conscience* of all current members to choose a meeting format that you are all comfortable with. Several different types of meeting formats exist: Step, topic, speaker etc or a combination. *See “Types of Meetings” in Section One of the Starter Kit.*

A simple format that will appeal to newcomers may be best for an area with no other CoDA groups.

* *Guidelines on Group Conscience Meetings can be found in Section Four of Full StarterKit.*

CoDA TWELVE STEPS & TWELVE TRADITIONS

Just as the Twelve Steps offer guidance for maintaining healthy relationships, our Twelve Traditions offer guidance for maintaining healthy meetings. The CoDA pamphlet on the 12 Traditions is reproduced in this Starters Kit. The CoDA Book, CoDA Workbook and *CoDA Fellowship Service Manual* also contain valuable commentary on the Steps, Traditions and on service.

For a group to thrive it is important that group members:

- rely on the wisdom embodied in the Steps and Traditions.
- keep in mind that a group’s trusted servants take direction from the whole group.
- remember – a group conscience can be a powerful tool.

SERVICE TASKS

Define what tasks must be done and agree who will be initially responsible for each task.

See Section Four for suggestions of how to divide responsibilities.

GROWTH

Out of necessity, in the beginning members may be called on to do service in more than one job. This needs to be temporary. Encourage all members to participate. Avoid controlling, “burn out” from doing too much and becoming resentful all of which could harm the growth and recovery of the group. Service positions in CoDA groups are **rotated regularly**.

See Section Four (of FULL KIT) for suggested service term lengths.

SUPPORT is available

- **We remember – our Higher Power is present at all Fellowship Meetings.**

- Contact your Intergroup Committee at the National Service Office in **Sydney (02) 8230 3959**
- Email the National Office: *ozcoda@yahoo.com.au*
- Contact **CoDA Outreach in the USA** by email: *outreach@coda.org*
- **Keep in regular contact** with the CoDA National Service Office. Send in short group reports to the bi-monthly intergroup meetings including things like: numbers of regular members, changes in format, ideas you would like to share with the rest of the Fellowship, questions you have about growing your meeting. Even better – send someone in person as your **Group Representative**. We all care about how new groups are doing and want to help.
- Use the “**Support Group for New meetings**” – *see Appendix (of FULL KIT) for current phone list.*
Consider asking one of these members to be available to support the founding members of your group during the first 6 to 12 months by being available to take phone calls and listen and share their experience, strength and hope.

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 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 own codependent behaviors.

We rely upon the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (as adopted from Alcoholics Anonymous) 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.

WELCOME of 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.

Most of us have been searching for ways to overcome the dilemmas of the conflicts in our relationships and our childhoods. Many of us were raised in families where addictions existed - some of us were not. In either case, we have found in each of our lives that codependence is a most deeply rooted compulsive behavior and that it is born out of our sometimes moderately, sometimes extremely dysfunctional family systems.

We have each experienced in our own ways the painful trauma of the emptiness of our childhood and relationships throughout our lives. We attempted to use others - our mates, friends, and even our children, as our sole source of identity, value and well being, and as a way of trying to restore within us the emotional losses from our childhoods. Our histories may include other powerful addictions which at times we have used to cope with our codependence.

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. It is an individual growth process. Each of us is growing at our own pace and will continue to do so as we remain open to God's will for us on a daily basis. Our sharing is our way of identification and 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. No longer do you need to rely on others as a power greater than yourself. May you instead find here a new strength within to be that which God intended - Precious and Free.

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 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 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 co-dependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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 co-dependents 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. Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres 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.

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- The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted for adaptation with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Basic CoDA Meeting Format - SUMMARY

Items with  are minimum requirements to be a CoDA group

1. **OPENING SECTION** - intro & prayer

 2. Read “Preamble” as written.

3. Welcome any newcomers.

4. Members Introductions & **Feelings check**

 5. Read the CoDA “Welcome” as written.

 6. Read CoDA's Twelve Steps

 7. Read CoDA's Twelve Traditions

8. *[Optional - Read Patterns of Codependence]*

9. *[Optional- Acknowledgement of CoDA birthdays]*

PROGRAM SECTION

10. Read the **CoDA Guide to Sharing and Crosstalk Guideline**

11. Open the meeting for individual sharing

CLOSING SECTION

12. Seventh Tradition Donations

13. **Announcements Section**

- Meetings Lists & literature
- Service reports - Literature, Treasurer, Group Rep
- CoDA announcements

14. Anonymity Statement

15. *[Optional- Read The Twelve Promises]*

16. Closing Prayer

FOR MEETING FORMAT

FEELINGS CHECK & Optional ID

"Each of us is now invited to state our first name, identify as a codependent or newcomer and then to share briefly in one or two words how we are now feeling."

CoDA Guide to Sharing

"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. Everything that is shared is of value. The sharing of our experiences is best done with "I" statements. We tell only of our own experience, avoiding the words "you" and "we" and do not refer to another person by name during our shares. In keeping with Traditions 6 and 10 we avoid naming specific self-help books, programmes or religions."

CoDA Crosstalk Guideline

The sharing session must be a time when each of us is allowed to express our feelings openly and honestly, free from fear of judgment by others. In our meetings we speak about our own experience, and we listen without comment to what others share. We give the person sharing our full, uncritical attention. We work towards taking responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others. This also applies after the meeting. Crosstalk guidelines help keep our meeting a safe place.

***Note to Meeting leader:** If further explanation of crosstalk is requested – read the following:*

Crosstalk can be: giving unsolicited feedback, advice-giving, answering, making 'you' and 'we' statements, interrogating, debating, criticising, controlling or dominating. It may also include: minimising 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."

***For more information** the group can read the CoDA booklet "Experiences With Crosstalk"*

THE PROMISES

Of Co-Dependents Anonymous

I can expect a miraculous change in my life by working the program of CoDependents 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 feelings 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 for me 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.

FULL STARTER KIT CONTENTS

WELCOME LETTER

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

- Starting A New Meeting
- Types of Meetings
- Commonly Asked Questions – Starting A New Meeting
- Commonly Asked Questions - CoDA Literature

SECTION 2: FOUNDATIONAL & MEETING DOCUMENTS

- Basic Meeting Format – Summary and Detailed Example
- Preamble & Welcome
- Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions
- Twelve Promises
- Patterns of Codependence
- Prayers

SECTION 3: ATTRACTING MEMBERS

- Community Outreach – Providing Public Information
- Flyer for Notice Boards
- Welcoming Newcomers
- Group Phone List Template
- Current National Meetings List

SECTION 4: SERVICE

- Service in CoDA
- Guidelines for Group Service Positions
- Group Conscience Meetings & Format
- (National Service Office & Intergroup) *not included- to follow*

SECTION 5: FORMS

- Group Registration & Change of Details Form
- Seventh Tradition Contribution Forms
- Literature Order Form
- Public Liability Insurance Certificate
- Income Tax exempt Charitable Status Certificate (Non Profit)

APPENDICES – **Included in separate plastic wallet**

- New Meeting Support Group Phonenumber
- Additional Meeting Literature – Patterns of Recovery, Long Serenity prayer
- Service – Traditions Literature & World Fellowship Structure
- Attracting New Members – Welcome Sheet, Info for Professionals and Flyers



CoDA *Australia*

GROUP REGISTRATION & CHANGE OF DETAILS

CoDA National Service Office
41/1 Regent St, REDFERN NSW 2016
Phone: 0417 995 111
Email: ozcoda@yahoo.com.au
www.codependentsanonymous.org.au

Please use this form to register the details of a new meeting or changes to an existing one. Complete one form per meeting (not just one per location). Your meeting will then be added to the Australian CoDA National meetings list and website.

Date:..... **NEW REGISTRATION** **CHANGE OF DETAILS***

*Please indicate which details are being changed

Date of First Meeting: _____ (Don't forget to celebrate your Group's Birthday each year!)

Group Name: _____ (Usually the name of the town where the group meets)

Venue Name: _____ Venue Ph: _____

Street Address: _____

Town /City: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

If in a country area : Closest large town/city: _____ Distance from this town ____ km

Meeting Day : _____ Frequency: Weekly/ Monthly/ Other: _____

Start Time/Finish Time: _____ / _____ (1 hour or 1.5 hours is standard)

Meeting Type: Open / Closed/ Step / Topic / Other: _____

Meetings can be a combination of types - See information about types of meeting in Section Two of Meeting Starter Kit

Does this group use only CoDA Literature? YES NO Notify office if this changes.

Directions to venue: (Nearest cross street, location of room, parking etc): _____

VENUE ACCESSIBILITY – Level Access Nearby parking Disabled Toilet

If public holidays are likely to fall on the meeting day:

- Will the meeting still run on public holidays? YES NO Phone to check

KEEP IN CONTACT WITH NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE AND THE REST OF THE CODA FELLOWSHIP

Please provide two contacts.

Group Mail Contact (usually the Group Rep)
A member who attends meetings regularly who will pass on news from intergroup reports.
If reliable - use the meeting venue address (check with venue).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Second Contact /Phone Contact

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Permission to use phone number on:

- Printed meetings list YES NO

- CoDA website meeting slist: YES

NO

UPDATES: Contact the CoDA service office promptly if there are any changes – even if these are temporary, by phone (02) 8230 3959 **AND** by mailing an updated copy of this form. Please also report meeting closures immediately.

CoDA Australia National Office: Date Received.....Address list Updated.....