

Sample Meeting Format

This sample meeting format is included as a guideline. The style of program your meeting wishes to use (whether Speaker, Sharing, Topic or Step) can be a group conscience decision made by the members of your group. Bold sections are for the chair or meeting leader to read aloud; plain text sections are optional extras. You may also copy and display our "For Safety Sake" tent card during meetings.

Opening Section

1. **"Good evening (morning, afternoon) and welcome to the _____(insert meeting name) meeting of Co-Dependents Anonymous. My name is _____and I am a codependent. I am your meeting leader tonight (today). CoDA asks those with cell phones and pagers to please turn them off or silence them for the duration of the meeting, so we can keep our focus on the meeting without interruptions. Please help me open this meeting with a moment of silence followed by the**

(This is the meeting leader or group's prayer of choice: the Serenity Prayer or the CoDA Opening Prayer)

<p><u>The CoDA Opening Prayer</u> ©</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><u>The Serenity Prayer</u></p> <p>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</p>
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2. **The group meeting leader reads the CoDA "Preamble" as written.**
3. **"We welcome any newcomers who are attending their first, second or third meeting of Co-Dependents Anonymous, and ask that you raise your hand and introduce yourself by your first name only... "**
Optional - Newcomers can be welcomed by clapping after each or all have introduced themselves. If your meeting gives out welcome chips and/or newcomer packets, you may distribute those.
4. **"So that we can get to know each other better, let's take this time to introduce ourselves by first name only."** *(Meeting leader introduces self and then introductions continue around the room.)*
5. **The group meeting leader reads the CoDA "Welcome" as written** (long or short version).
6. **"CoDA's Twelve Steps are the spiritual guidelines for our individual recovery. Will the person with the Twelve Steps please read them?"** *Optional- some groups prefer to pass the Twelve Steps around and share the reading of them.*
7. **"CoDA's Twelve Traditions are the guiding spiritual principles of our meetings. Will the person with the Twelve Traditions please read them?"** *Optional- some groups prefer to pass the Twelve Traditions around and share the reading of them.*
8. **Optional** - "Will the person with the *Patterns of Codependence* or the *Recovery Patterns of Codependence* please read them?"

Announcements Section (some groups do this after the Program Section)

9. "There are meeting schedules and phone lists on the literature table."

10. a) "Our literature person is _____. Do you have any announcements?"

b) "Our treasurer is _____. Do you have any announcements?"

c) "Our Group Representative is _____. Do you have any announcements?"

Note: If you do not have trusted servants for the above positions, or elect as a group not to speak items 10. Continuing from 11 may be sufficient.

11. "Restrooms are located....."

Announce any meeting facility issues (smoking policy, etc.)

12. "Are there any CoDA announcements?"

The GSR or secretary shares community, Voting Entity, or CoDA World announcements. Any member may also share CoDA announcements. Some meetings choose to also allow CoDA related announcements.

13. **Optional-** "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: Some meetings ask the person celebrating if they would like to share a few words of recovery. In some meetings the group claps after each birthday is recognized; for birthdays of 30 days to 9 months; for 1 year or more the group sings "Happy Birthday", ending with "keep coming back".

14. **Optional- Announce:** "If you would like to celebrate your birthday, please let the secretary know at least one week ahead of time.

Program Section

Begin your meeting program here. If your meeting has a speaker or reads from CoDA literature, this usually lasts 10 to 20 minutes. To enhance the power of our recovery program, CoDA suggests considering having at least one meeting per month be devoted to studying one of the Twelve Steps.

15. **Optional, strongly suggested-** Read the *CoDA Guide to Sharing, What is Crosstalk?* or both.

Co-Dependents Anonymous does not accept harassment, bullying, 13th stepping or expressed intolerance of any kind. No person should be subject to unwanted verbal or physical conduct which intimidates or shows hostility towards that person because of their gender, class, age, appearance, national origin, skin color, disability, language, sexual orientation, pregnancy or for any other reason. If you feel you are being treated disrespectfully in this meeting, please notify the person leading the meeting.

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. 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.

What is "Crosstalk"?

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."

16. "The meeting is now open for individual sharing..."

Optional- "Would each of you please limit your sharing to 3-5 (or less if meeting has a lot of attendees) minutes to allow for everyone to share?" Group conscience can determine how to indicate when time is up, i.e. a timer, tapping on something, or a gentle reminder by chairperson.

Closing Section

17. "Our Seventh Tradition reminds us that we are self-supporting through our own contributions. We ask that you donate only as you can. Please remember that a dollar doesn't go as far as it used to. A suggested donation of \$2-5 will help to meet our obligations for rent and other meeting expenses, as well as supporting CoDA at all levels." Optional- *some meetings choose to ask for Seventh Tradition donations at the beginning of the meeting, during the announcements section.*

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." Optional- "Will the person with the *Twelve Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous* please read them?"

19. "Thanks to our speaker." (If this is a speaker meeting)

20. "Thanks to those who read and who do service at this meeting."

Optional-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.

The group leader **requests everyone to join in a circle for the closing prayer of choice.** The following are the CoDA endorsed prayers.

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

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.