

NYC CoDA Meeting Format

1. “Good evening and welcome to the (weekday and time) meeting of Co-Dependents Anonymous. My name is (first name) and I am a co-dependent.”

(PREAMBLE)

“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 in a journey of self-discovery and learning to love the self. Living the program allows each of us to become increasingly honest with ourselves and others about our own 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 with 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.”

2. “CoDA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. The CoDA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions have been adapted for our purpose from Alcoholics Anonymous. Although separate entities, we should always cooperate with all Twelve Step recovery programs.”

3. “I’ve asked (first name) to read **THE 12 STEPS.**”

4. “I’ve asked (first name) to read **THE 12 TRADITIONS.**”

5. “It’s our custom, and is optional, to introduce ourselves by first name only. As we go around the room, if anyone is attending their first, second, or third CoDA meeting, or is at this meeting for the first time, or is from out of town, would you please say so at this time so we can welcome you. Also, if anyone is celebrating an anniversary in CoDA this month, please let us know and we will congratulate you.”

“I’ll start the introductions. Hi! My name is first name (and I’m codependent).”

(INTRODUCTIONS)

“We welcome those new to CoDA. For Beginners we suggest that you attend six or seven different CoDA meetings from our Meeting List before deciding whether or not this program is for you. Each meeting feels different depending on the location, room size, the people that attend, etc. By attending six or seven meetings you also get the opportunity to hear the Preamble, the Welcome and the Patterns and Characteristics of Codependency at least six times.”

6. Reading of the WELCOME as it is written.

6a. Because the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery, CoDA.org strongly suggests that each meeting reads the step corresponding to the month from the CoDA 12 Step Handbook.

7. “We will now pass around the Patterns and Characteristics of Codependency from the CoDA brochure. This is a list of characteristics with which many codependents identify. Please read 1,2,3, or 4 and pass it on. If you do not want to read just pass the paper to your neighbor.”

8. “Please note: Participation in any part of this meeting is optional. We request your cooperation in respecting our ground rules. They are:

CoDA is an anonymous program. We ask that you respect the anonymity and confidentiality of each person here. Who you see here, What is said here, When you leave here, Let it stay here.

8A. Non-alcoholic beverages are allowed, but food is not. Please dispose of your garbage at the end of the meeting. Please pour liquids down the sink first before putting your container in the trash can.

8B. Please turn off or set to silent or vibrate all cell phones, beepers, and electronic devices that might interrupt the meeting at this time.

8C. We respect each speaker at a CoDA meeting. If you want to leave we ask that you wait until any share in progress is completed. Also please refrain from any activities that may be distracting to the meeting. This includes texting, writing and drawing.

8D. Children, and pets, other than licensed service animals are not allowed at this meeting.

8E. (If available:) Literature and Meeting Lists can be obtained after the meeting from (first name). Additional information can be obtained from our website, nyccoda.org.

8F. In the interest of keeping an atmosphere of recovery, no disturbances will be tolerated. In case of a prolonged disturbance, the chair may ask someone to leave. Please support the chair in taking these actions.”

(TIME KEEPER)

9. “Would someone please volunteer to be our timekeeper? Please alert the speaker either by verbal or visual signal when there is one minute left to their share, and again when time is up. We suggest you keep your eye on our timekeeper (name) for your warning signals.”

10. (MEETING TYPE-A,B,C or D)

A. Qualification/Speaker Meeting

B. Reading Meeting

C. Other Format Meeting

D. Business Meeting

A. “Qualification” in CoDA is when someone is invited to speak for 15 or 20 minutes about their experiences with codependency, and how recovery in CoDA has helped them lead healthier lives. This is not an extended share; it is about recovery. The speaker should have at least three months in CoDA so that they can share their experience, strength and hope. The speaker also should not have qualified at this meeting within the past three months. (if there is no scheduled speaker the chair can ask for a volunteer)

The chair says:

We have a speaker. Our qualification will be for ____ minutes. What time warnings would you like?

I would now like to introduce ____ who will share his/her experience, strength and hope.

(SPEAKER)

B. A “Reading” meeting in CoDA is when the group reads for a specified period of time from a piece of CoDA approved literature chosen by group conscience or group format.

The chair says:

At tonight’s meeting we will be reading from _____. Please read one or two paragraphs and pass it on. If you prefer not to read, simply pass the reading on to the next person. We will read for ____ minutes. Timekeeper (name) please give the group a warning when there are ____ minutes remaining and again when time is up.

(READING)

C. An “Other Format” meeting in CoDA is when the group has voted to use some other group format such as a step-writing exercise, etc. Remember to set a time limit.

(OTHER FORMAT)

D. *PLEASE NOTE: A Business Meeting in CoDA is held on the first day of the month following the Intergroup Meeting which meets on the 4th Thursday of every month at 6:00pm at 35th street. (There is a separate business meeting format page.)

(BUSINESS MEETING)

11. “At this time I’d like to introduce our Treasurer _____. Our Seventh Tradition reminds us that we are self supporting through our own contributions. CoDA has no dues or fees, but we ask that you give what you can out of gratitude for your recovery. Donations are necessary to cover our expenses such as rent for this room. We also make donations to New York City Intergroup, and to other CoDA organizations for the resources they provide to us.”

11a. Introduce literature person, etc., as appropriate.

(The Chair reads during donations)—“New York City CoDA Intergroup meets the 4th Thursday of every month at 6:00pm at 35th street between Park Avenue and Madison Avenue at the Community Church. Are there any concerns from this meeting that should be taken to Intergroup?”

“Are there any other CoDA related announcements?”

(Open Sharing)

12. It is now time for open sharing. But before we begin there are some guidelines that need to be read. By sharing with each other in CoDA meetings we can experience both identification and hope. Identification occurs through listening to others and relating their experiences to our own. During sharing we can talk about how codependency developed in our childhood, how it carried through in our lives, and how it affected our relationships. We can also talk about any

other issues relating to our recovery. Hope occurs through sharing what we're now doing in CoDA to support a process of recovery, what we're learning in recovery, and how we're using the 12 steps to improve our lives.

Please note: In every CoDA sharing session, there is only one paramount rule: "No crosstalk.", reference from The Newcomers Handbook, p.16.

During CoDA meetings, we do not allow feedback or crosstalk. Feedback is judging, offering advice, or commenting on what other people say, even if the comment is positive. Please note that auditory and visual responses also may or may not be considered feedback. Crosstalk is interrupting someone or engaging in discussion. A reminder, please check that cell phones are turned off or to silent at this time.

It is important for our recovery to know that we can share without fear of interruption, comment, contradiction, or criticism. We are here to talk about our own lives and experiences only. When sharing we use the word "I" and avoid using the words "you" or "we" or addressing someone by name, or referring to a particular share- including the qualification. A good way of identifying without giving feedback or crosstalking is to say "I identify with what I heard in the room today/tonight about a particular topic". This keeps the focus on ourselves and keeps the room safe.

If feedback or crosstalk occurs, I may interrupt a share to read these guidelines again, or I may read them again immediately following a particular share. Please do not take this personally. It is only to maintain the safety of the room and the safety of the program. If you want to talk to someone about something that person shared, you can do so after the meeting, but please remember to ask their permission first.

It is now time for us to vote on the time limit for each share. Please note, you do not need to use all of the time, it is a time limit. Our choices are ___ or ___ minutes. All those in favor of ___ minutes please raise your hand. All those in favor of ___ minutes please raise your hand.

Please remember and respect our ___ minute time limit. Our timekeeper _____ will let you know when there is one minute left and again when time is up. Our first share will be selected from a show of hands; then each person who speaks chooses the next person to speak. Who would like to go first?

OPEN SHARING ENDS

13. (10-15 minutes prior to the end of the meeting depending on the group size the chair says:) "Our time for sharing is at an end. Since getting in touch with our Feelings is so important to our recovery everyone is invited to identify their Feelings: to tell the rest of the group in a few words how they are Feeling right now.

This is NOT a time for sharing or for explaining why you feel the way you do. Simply name the Feeling. For example, "I feel happy, sad, angry, hopeful, lonely, or scared. I'll go first. I feel _____."

14. And now we read Affirmations. Affirmations are offered as a tool to aid in replacing the negative messages of the past with positive messages of recovery. Please read any one or two from the list, please do not read all 25, or make up one or two of your own and pass the sheet on to your neighbor.

15. I have asked first name to read the **12 Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous**.

16. “In closing I need to say that the opinions and feelings expressed here were strictly those of the people who gave them; take what you like and leave the rest. The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential; please keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind. Let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.”

17. “Please join me in thanking everyone who did service at this meeting: (our speaker _____, our timekeeper _____, and anyone else who did service).”

If you didn’t get a chance to share and now want to, please feel free to speak to someone after the meeting. If you want to speak with someone about something that person shared, please remember to ask their permission first. I will be staying a little while and will be happy to answer questions. Additional information about CoDA can also be found in our literature and on our website, nyccoda.org.”

OPTIONAL: “Some of us go out for coffee or something to eat after the meeting. If you have the time and want to do so, please join us.”

18. “Will all who care to please join me in the Serenity Prayer.”