

CoDA Service Items

Number: 22083

Item Type: MOTION

Date: 8/25/2022

Vote: 2/3 Vote

Committee: Board

Member Names: Katherine T

Subject: Requirements to be an officially recognized CoDA meeting. Change wording in the Fellowship Service Manual, Part 2, pg.5; What is a CoDA Meeting, and a

Description:

To add the use of the Co-Dependents Anonymous Book to the minimal meeting requirements to be considered a CoDA meeting.

AND to modify FSM Part 2 to reflect this change as underlined below.

AND to add the "Current Policy Regarding Outside Literature" to FSM Part 2.

What is a CoDA Meeting

A CoDA meeting is a group of two or more people who come together around their shared desire for healthy and loving relationships. The meeting uses the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous as the basis for working toward recovery. It is a place to find sponsorship and fellowship as well as the sharing of experience, strength, and hope. A strong sense of acceptance and community makes a meeting attractive both to the newcomer and old timer.

There are minimal requirements to be considered a CoDA meeting. These requirements include to read these four Foundational Documents, as written, at every meeting and to register the meeting with either CoDA World or their Voting Entity (VE).

- Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous
- Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous
- Preamble of Co-Dependents Anonymous (short or long version)

In addition, CoDA groups are required to use the Co-Dependents Anonymous book as a primary resource for the meeting. No other Twelve Step book can be used at a CoDA meeting. Exclusive use of Co-Dependents Anonymous book at meetings means that the CoDA message is not diluted in any way.

Meetings who choose not to read the four Foundational Documents or use a non-CoDA Twelve Step book will not be recognized as CoDA meetings and will not be listed in the CoDA Meeting Directory on the coda.org website.

CoDA groups register with Co-Dependents Anonymous World in order to stay in contact with CoDA as a whole. With respect to other questions about group organization (date, time, type of meeting), each group is autonomous except in matters affecting CoDA as a whole. Because the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery, we strongly suggest that each meeting set aside at least one meeting per month for Step Study.

As Tradition Four states, ("each group should remain autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole"), it is important that a CoDA meeting present familiar aspects that communicate, "This is CoDA." While it is rare, some meetings have chosen to adopt a format that varies significantly from CoDA guidelines. This presents confusion, particularly to the newcomer, regarding the nature of our program. If an Intergroup, Region or Voting Entity (VE) feels it necessary, a meeting may be informed specifically how it does not appear to be following the unifying principles of CoDA Tradition. If the meeting decides, by group conscience, not to change, they need to understand that they may no longer be recognized as, nor call themselves a CoDA meeting and will be removed from Intergroup, Region, Voting Entity (VE) and/or CoDA World meeting listings.

Other things for groups to consider:

CoDA groups may not use any other Twelve Step books, and it is strongly suggested that CoDA groups use only CoDA Conference Endorsed literature.

If a group by informed group conscience chooses to use other outside literature, in order to be an informed group conscience, that group must weigh their decision against the Twelve Traditions to ascertain if a responsible decision has been made.

Some points to consider are:

Tradition One: Using CoDA literature supports the growth of CoDA and offers unity and continuity of message.

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Tradition Four: Will the decision reached by the group affect neighboring groups or CoDA as a whole? What might be a newcomers first impression of CoDA based on the literature chosen? What is a groups responsibility to newcomers?

Tradition Five: Is the decision about literature, or for that matter any decision made by the group, in line with CoDA's primary purpose?

Tradition Six: Is the use of outside literature an endorsement of a particular author? By making the work of a particular author the focus of a meeting, is that a CoDA meeting or a book study session?

Tradition Eight: Use of outside literature may border on therapy. CoDA is a self-help group and uses the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as a basis for recovery.

Tradition Ten: Use of copyrighted materials not owned by CoDA may lead to problems in the future and ought to be considered in the decision making process. CoDA will not define codependency but will describe it. Does the use of outside literature support a particular definition?

If, after considering the above points, and a group still chooses to use other outside literature, an announcement must be made at the beginning and end of the reading of said literature. Updated at 2018 CSC on 10/12/18. Further updated at 2019 CSC on 9/10/19.

Intent:

- Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity.
- Tradition 4: Each group should remain autonomous except in matters affected other groups and CoDA as a whole.
- We have been experiencing frequent requests to registered CoDA meetings using the AA Big Book. We have also received feedback from the fellowship that meetings are being held using another 12 Step book
- The Trustees in their deliberations and decision-making process shall be guided in spirit by these CoDA Twelve (12) Steps, Traditions and Service Concepts and shall use their best efforts to ensure that these Steps, Traditions, and Concepts are upheld. On behalf of the Fellowship, the Trustees shall act to prevent, within their power, any modifications, alterations or extensions of these Traditions or Concepts. (From the Bylaws: page 4)
- While offering unity and continuity of our message we believe it our responsibility to offer this motion and keep us in line with our primary purpose.
- Current Policy Regarding Outside Literature at CoDA Meetings was approved by the 1990 Fourth International Service Conference of Co-Dependents Anonymous however it was never added to the Fellowship Service Manual. We believe it belongs in our manual and show that addition.
- Tradition One: Using CoDA literature supports the growth of CoDA and offers unity and continuity of message.
- Tradition Four: Will the decision reached by the group affect neighboring groups or CoDA as a whole? What might be a newcomers first impression of CoDA based on the literature chosen? What is a groups responsibility to newcomers?
- Tradition Five: Is the decision about literature, or for that matter any decision made by the group, in line with CoDA's primary purpose?
- Tradition Six: Is the use of outside literature an endorsement of a particular author? By making the work of a particular author the focus of a meeting, is that a CoDA meeting or a book study session?
- Tradition Eight: Use of outside literature may border on therapy. CoDA is a self-help group and uses the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as a basis for recovery.
- Tradition Ten: Use of copyrighted materials not owned by CoDA may lead to problems in the future and ought to be considered in the decision-making process. CoDA will not define codependency but will describe it. Does the use of outside literature support a particular definition?

Remarks:

- Over 30 years ago when CoDA began, we did not have literature. That is not the case today. We have a wealth of literature to support all meeting needs, and strongly recommend using all Conference Approved Literature.
- Below is the current language in Fellowship Service Manual, Part 2 Meeting Handbook, pg.5 for your comparison:

What is a CoDA Meeting

A CoDA meeting is a group of two or more people who come together around their shared desire for healthy and loving relationships. The meeting uses the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous as the basis for working toward recovery. It is a place to find sponsorship and fellowship as well as the sharing of experience, strength, and hope. A strong sense of acceptance and community makes a meeting attractive both to the newcomer and old timer.

There are minimal requirements to be considered a CoDA meeting. These requirements are to read the four following Foundational Documents as written at every meeting and to register the meeting with either CoDA World or their voting entity. These documents can be found later in this manual. Meetings who choose not to read these documents will not be listed in the CoDA Meeting Directory on the coda.org website since they are not considered CoDA meetings.

CoDA Service Items

- Welcome
- Preamble
- 12 Steps
- 12 Traditions

CoDA groups register with Co-Dependents Anonymous World in order to stay in contact with CoDA as a whole. With respect to other questions about group organization (date, time, type of meeting), each group is autonomous except in matters affecting CoDA as a whole. Because the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery, we strongly suggest that each meeting set aside at least one meeting per month for Step Study.

As Tradition Four states, ("each group should remain autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole"), it is important that a CoDA meeting present familiar aspects that communicate, "This is CoDA." While it is rare, some meetings have chosen to adopt a format that varies significantly from CoDA guidelines. This presents confusion, particularly to the newcomer, regarding the nature of our program. If a community service group feels it necessary, a meeting may be informed specifically how it does not appear to be following the unifying principles of CoDA Tradition. If the meeting decides, by group conscience, not to change, they need to understand that they may no longer be recognized as, nor call themselves, a CoDA meeting and will be removed from Intergroups, and CoDA listings.

This motion requires changes to: (please check any that apply)

Bylaws FSM P1 FSM P2
 FSM P3 FSM P4 FSM P5
 Change of Responsibility

QUESTIONS – (Yes) Will this finally get rid of the 1990 vote for outside literature? No, it doesn't. CoDA bluebook has the Twelve...will this count as reading out of the bluebook? Foundational docs still stand. Need to be using CoDA bluebook as their reference, cannot be a CoDA meeting and use another reference book. Does it say short and long form of preamble? It's the Welcome.

Crafting: No

PROS & CONS:

Pros:

In-Person - This is obvious, it should be CoDA meeting literature,

Virtual - This is wonderful, greatly needed motion. I was a bit confused with using other literature. The most important thing is the CoDA endorsed literature. AA big book, but it isn't our CoDA book.

Cons:

In-Person - not here in 1990 outside literature -we are the fellowship that is open, we have a few active groups that are using the AA big book - telling them they aren't a CoDA member, not making provision to helping others get the CoDA book.

Virtual - very much prohibition against other fellowships materials, I attend CoDA conference endorsed materials but not the CoDA book.

Minority opinion: Horrified by this motion, feel like we are trying too hard to control the meetings. Many meetings I have attended have affectively and appropriately used the AA book.

VOTE: Yes - #30, No - #6, Abstain - #3, Motion – Passed

Noted Results:2/3 majority