

CoDA Service Items

Number: 24063

Item Type: MOTION

Date: 7/23/2024

Vote: Complete

Committee: Literature

Member Names: Terry D

Subject: Literature Motion #4: Changes to Fellowship Service Manual (FSM) to reflect a new definition of a CoDA meeting.

Description:

Changes to Fellowship Service Manual (FSM) to reflect a new definition of a CoDA meeting.

To adopt the following changes to the Fellowship Service Manual (FSM), adding the use of CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature to the definition of a CoDA meeting.

Remove:

FSM Part 2-Meeting Handbook, Section 1-what is a CoDA Meeting, pg 5- What is a CoDA meeting, Policy Regarding Outside Literature at CoDA Meetings, pg. 6

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.

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

Policy Regarding Outside Literature at CoDA Meetings

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.

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 group's 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.

Replace with:

What is a CoDA Meeting?

A CoDA meeting is part of the twelve-step Fellowship, Co-Dependents Anonymous. Each CoDA group is made up of two or more people who come together because of their shared desire for healthy and loving relationships, with the primary purpose of carrying the message of Co-Dependents Anonymous to those who still suffer. CoDA meetings use The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous as the basis for working the CoDA recovery program. In CoDA meetings, members share their personal experience, strength, and hope, gained by working the CoDA recovery program.

Because The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous are the basis of our recovery, it is strongly suggested that each meeting set aside at least one meeting per month for step study. Because The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous are the spiritual foundation of our meetings, our service, and our lives, it is strongly

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suggested that meetings set aside one meeting each month for tradition study.

The use of Co-Dependents Anonymous, our basic text, and other CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature at meetings builds unity, trust, and shared welfare. This maintains continuity in the CoDA recovery message across all CoDA meetings. CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature is written and endorsed by and for CoDA members. As such, it reflects the voice of the Fellowship of Co-Dependents Anonymous worldwide.

For more basic information about CoDA meetings, see the CoDA booklet, Newcomer Handbook, Second Edition.

To be a recognized CoDA meeting, whether in person, phone, or online, meetings:

1. Register on coda.org by using the online registration form. Required information includes day and time of meeting, first names of one or two contact members and their email addresses, phone number is optional. Listings are expected to be updated annually and when information changes.
2. Read as written CoDA's four foundational documents, posted on coda.org, at every meeting:
 1. The Preamble of Co-Dependents Anonymous
 2. The Welcome of Co-Dependents Anonymous (long or short version)
 3. The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous
 4. The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous
3. Use CoDA's foundational text, Co-Dependents Anonymous, "the CoDA book" as their main resource during CoDA meetings.
4. Use only CoDA Service Conference endorsed books, workbooks, booklets, and pamphlets during meetings and for sale at in-person meetings.

CoDA Traditions support the exclusive use of CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature.

We find guidance in our Traditions, particularly Traditions One, Four, Six, and Twelve:

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity."
Tradition One tells us that CoDA unity is our first spiritual principle. CoDA's shared welfare and unity are created by using a consistent format, readings, and literature across all meetings. This allows members to go to a meeting anywhere in the world and hear the same CoDA recovery message. Using outside literature can be divisive and is outside the scope of Co-Dependents Anonymous.

"Each group should remain autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole."
Tradition Four states that groups have autonomy, but not at the expense of the rest of the Fellowship. The use of outside literature creates confusion, particularly for the newcomer, regarding the nature of our program. It creates inconsistency across meetings, distracting from the CoDA message.

"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."

Tradition Six is clear. CoDA meetings must keep their focus on CoDA's primary spiritual aim, as a place where suffering codependents can find recovery in the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous. Using outside literature in our meetings endorses and financially supports its author and their message instead of Co-Dependents Anonymous. It creates inconsistency, confusion, and controversy and diverts us from our primary spiritual purpose.

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions; ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."
Tradition Twelve points us to CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature because our literature is written anonymously, by and for the CoDA Fellowship, and it places the principles found in CoDA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions first.

We recommend that members of the Fellowship read CoDA Conference endorsed publications and listen to the stories of CoDA members in recovery. These publications and recordings are available from CoRe Publications. Other books, of course, are read and used by CoDA members, but CoDA, as a Fellowship, cannot recommend or endorse specific books outside approved CoDA literature. We honor Tradition Six by not endorsing any other literature, program, individual, or institution.
Co-Dependents Anonymous, Third Edition, page 127

When a CoDA meeting uses outside literature, it is no longer adhering to the CoDA principles of unity, trust, integrity, and anonymity, even if the use of outside literature is affirmed by the meeting group conscience. When a CoDA group operates outside of the definition of a CoDA meeting, it does not adhere to the principles found in our Traditions. This affects its members, other meetings, and CoDA as a whole.

If a CoDA member believes a group is not acting in accordance with the definition of a CoDA meeting, that member is encouraged to bring the issue to their group conscience or group business meeting. The meeting may decide to make use of a group inventory, such as those included in The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook and Traditionally Speaking as part of the group conscience process.

Members may look to nearby meetings for information and support. They may also approach their intergroup, regional group, or voting entity for information, clarity, and to encourage their group to align with the definition of a CoDA meeting as stated above.

If no resolution occurs, any member or group may contact CoDA's Issues Mediation Committee (IMC) imc@coda.org

Intent:

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1. The CoDA Fellowship has grown and is now defining our program through the use of our own literature. With this motion, we no longer rely on published authors or other twelve-step programs to define our unique program of recovery.
2. Just as clear and fully respected boundaries are essential for healthy personal functioning, so also the CoDA Fellowship now establishes clear criteria and boundaries for what is and is not a CoDA meeting.
3. This motion creates a clear statement about the need for the exclusive use of CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature in our meetings and workshops.
4. At our founding in 1986, there was no CoDA literature beyond our four foundational documents. In the early 1990s, CoDA published our basic, foundational text, Co-Dependents Anonymous and the original Twelve Step pamphlets, which were written by and for the Fellowship. Since then, recovering CoDA members have created a growing catalog of literature, based on our shared experience, strength, and hope, thereby eliminating the need for outside literature.
5. The recovery program of Co-Dependents Anonymous is described by and for members of our Fellowship in our basic text and in other CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature. As our understanding of codependence and recovery has matured, we are led to rely on our own CoDA literature. CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature carries a consistent CoDA recovery message which creates unity across the Fellowship.
6. When CoDA meetings use books written by professional authors, or from other twelve step fellowships, those meetings are not following the traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous.
7. Purchasing literature from corepublications.org directly supports the CoDA Fellowship financially. Purchasing outside literature deprives CoDA of financial support.
8. The primary purpose of CoDA literature is to reach the codependent who still suffers with a consistent message and to support their recovery in CoDA. Each piece of literature has been written and edited using an extensive and on-going group conscience process. Each piece has been endorsed by the group conscience of a succession of CoDA Service Conferences. CoDA literature covers many recovery concerns in publications including The Twelve Step Handbook, The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook, In This Moment: Daily Meditation Book, Growing Up in CoDA, and many booklets and pamphlets. Outside literature is not part of the CoDA program.

Remarks:

Fellowship members, meetings, intergroups, and voting entities regularly ask the CoDA Literature Committee about the use of outside literature in their meetings and workshops. Some are confused, thinking outside literature can be "approved" by CoDA. Some are upset that a simple majority in their meeting group conscience is able to include published authors or other twelve-step Fellowship literature in its readings.

Members of CoDA World Service are frequently asked to solve the "non-conference endorsed literature" or outside literature dilemma by enforcing the use of CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature in their meetings. Many fellowship members, particularly those from voting entities outside of the United States, have voiced dismay that the current policy is left to the individual group conscience and have requested CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature be mandated for all CoDA meetings and CoDA workshops. This motion requires changes to the following: (check all that apply)

___ CoDA Bylaws: Page/Section # _____
___ FSM Part 1 – Structure and General Information: Section # _____
 X FSM Part 2 – Meeting Handbook: Section #1, pages 5 and 6
___ FSM Part 3 – Guidelines for Other Service Levels: Section # _____
___ FSM Part 4 – Service Conference Procedures: Section # _____
___ FSM Part 5 – World Level Service Details: Section # _____
___ Change of Responsibility: _____
___ Other: _____

Specific details:
Section # and title:
Copy and Paste from most current FSM on coda.org

QUESTIONS – (Yes) Several of the meetings I go to read other resources, isn't this motion exclusive and not inclusive and was it tabled last year? 23076 was tabled? What was it changed in the FSM? Some of our meeting places also utilize other organizations information...can you provide CoDa approved banners, If the group uses additional readings along with the script is that ok. If there isn't a reference in the FSM is this a valid motion?

Crafting (No)
PROS & CONS:

Pros:

In-person – Appreciate in Tradition Four, So Cal CoDA have multiple intergroups, the strongest ones are the ones that use the CoDA endorsed literature, what has come forward is the current language is noticeably shame based and the new language is not

Virtual - the reason I am here is because of CoDA literature, we went to many meetings and presented this idea, it was a love or hate proposition, I think it is strange that we are asking this, because if our authors/speakers have worked this an believe in it, why would we allow other literature

Cons:

In-person – problem with this motion because we have our own publishing in Canada (CDRS) and we have to wait

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before we can bring something to CSC, I believe this disallows for autonomy
Virtual - we do not have information/materials available in the virtual option because these are not available for share
Minority opinion: without a translation function in place, this is a hinderance to our Fellowship - meetings. I believe this will limit and negatively affect members who cannot meeting in person

VOTE: Yes - #32, No - #16,

Abstain - #0,(not included in the total vote results)

Noted Results:

Passed- 2/3rds Majority- Binding