



**Module 1 Handout**  
*Turbo Charge Your Recovery ... Get A Sponsor!*

**The Four Parts of our Program**

**Attending Meetings:**

Attending meetings is necessary for recovery in the CoDA program. Individual recovery does not occur in isolation. If it did, there would be no need for CoDA as a group. A codependent attends meetings for his / her personal recovery and this attendance benefits everyone. Attendance creates the group, which is then supportive of its members. Without attendance, there would be no group.

It is suggested that a person attend six meetings before they decide if CoDA is right for them. Meetings are not all the same. If a person does not feel that he/she fits in a certain meeting, they may find that the next week, if they return, there are different people there, and they may feel more comfortable. Or he/she can try attending a different CoDA meeting. There are men's meetings, women's meetings, Spanish meetings, open meetings, closed meetings, step meetings, book meetings, beginner meetings, and others. Meeting lists are usually available on the literature table, or you can check your local CoDA website.

**Sharing & Fellowship:**

Sharing is done at several levels in CoDA. The word "sharing" refers to sharing your experience, strength, and hope with others. On one level, it means telling a part of your recovery story. At regular meetings, there are usually two forms of sharing. First, a codependent may share his / her entire recovery story by being the speaker for the meeting. Second, smaller parts of personal recovery stories are shared in the small sharing groups after the main speaker. This is an excellent place to tell about a new piece of recovery, even before you know how it fits into your whole story. It is also a wonderful forum for talking about what is currently going on in your life. Every CoDA member has an opportunity to share at every meeting. The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.

There are many benefits to attending CoDA meetings. An opportunity to share is one. Everyone is given an opportunity to share, but no one is forced to. Regardless of the meeting format, if a person does not wish to share, he/she may state his/her first name and say, "I pass," or, "I'll just listen". Another benefit is fellowship. One of the basic human needs is to belong. Attending meetings and sharing fulfills this basic need. Much sharing is done in casual gatherings such as coffee shops after meetings, potluck dinners, picnics, and barbecues. Many CoDA members think of each other as "family".

## **Working The Steps:**

CoDA is a program of recovery based on working the Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous. To that end, the Fellowship of CoDA functions as a program of group support. Whatever problem a codependent is struggling with when he or she enters the program, working The Steps is the answer for many. Every person who works the program receives a therapeutic benefit, but our program is not therapy. Rather it is a program of self-help, self-discovery, and self-definition.

Applying The Steps and practicing The Traditions helps a person to realize that many of his / her problems have a solution. The promise of the program is that when a member is diligent in working the program, he/she will achieve recovery over personal problems of codependence. Recovery occurs differently for everyone. The only generality that seems to be a common denominator is that codependents who work and follow the program increase their own spirituality.

## **Sponsorship:**

Sponsorship is an important part of the CoDA program. It is the newcomers' responsibility to select a sponsor. It is recommended that a newcomer choose a sponsor with whom they would not possibly become romantically involved. A sponsor is there to hear your beginning story when you are new in the program and to guide you through the steps.

The sponsor's principal function is to help their sponsee work the steps. The sponsorship relationship is as unique as the individuals in it. It provides for the sponsee's need for guidance, safety, and trust. This relationship is a good place to learn about personal boundaries since each sponsee will experience the boundary setting behaviour of the sponsor.

Much sharing is done with a sponsor. A healthy sponsoring relationship affirms and supports the sponsee. A sponsor is there to hear your recovery story as it develops. When you are ready, he or she is there to hear your Fifth Step. Sponsorship is a tool of recovery that helps the process of healing. For more information on sponsorship see the CoDA Sponsorship Booklet.

*Source: Newcomers Handbook (pages 9 & 10)*

# Types of Sponsorship

## Traditional Sponsorship

The place to begin the search for a sponsor is often in your home group or local meetings. Some meetings offer a list of CoDA members willing to be sponsors (but many members who are eager and qualified to be sponsors are not on the list). Over a period of time we listen to these people when they share, perhaps spending some time with them after the meetings. It may take time to get to know someone well enough to consider them for a sponsor. It is important to remember that no sponsor is “perfect”, as our program teaches us that all people are “perfectly imperfect” human beings.

## Temporary Sponsorship

One way to become comfortable with a sponsor is to investigate temporary sponsorship. Often the time period for such an arrangement is left open-ended. We might want to commit to being a sponsor for a couple of months and then re-evaluate the relationship.

## Co-Sponsorship (*for more info see Module 4 handout*)

Co-sponsorship occurs when two CoDA members sponsor each other. Co-sponsors meet or call regularly to share what they are learning about the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. They share experience, strength, and hope equally, growing in their own way and at their own pace.

As in all sponsor relationships, the recovery goal in CoDA co-sponsorship is to have a mutually beneficial relationship. Working the steps, changing our behaviour, and growing spiritually frees us from advising, controlling, and rescuing.

Co-sponsors may choose to have another CoDA member guide them, especially through difficult situations or when they get stuck. Sometimes co-sponsorship is a good model for sponsorship when utilized in conjunction with a Step Study Group.

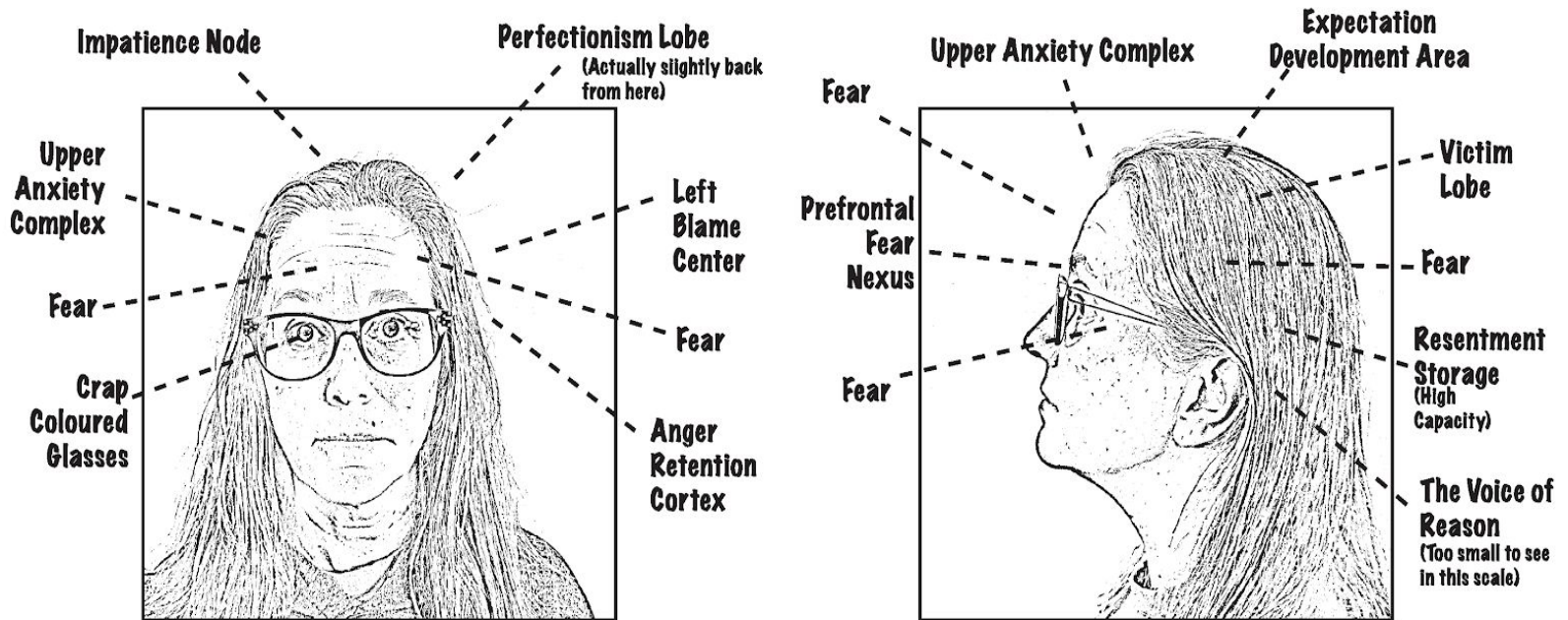
## Long Distance Sponsorship

We may find ourselves in a group in which there are no members willing or able to sponsor. In this case, we can travel to another CoDA group in the area or perhaps a regional CoDA event. Other options are to attend a phone or online meeting and try to find someone there with whom you identify.

## Where to find a Sponsor

- Home Group meeting
- Other CoDA meetings
- 12 Step Study Group
- Online meetings
- Outreach
- Workshops, Events, and Retreats
- Other 12 step fellowships

# Why I Need a Sponsor...



## HOW CAN HAVING A SPONSOR TURBO CHARGE YOUR RECOVERY?

### By helping you:

- **FOCUS** on your recovery
- **WORK** CoDA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
- Be more **OPEN-MINDED**
- Take personal **RESPONSIBILITY** for your own life
- **DEVELOP** better relationship skills

*Like a turbocharger is to an engine,  
Sponsorship is a catalyst to recovery.*

## ARE YOU READY TO BE A SPONSEE?

### Ask yourself, am I ... ?

- **WILLING** to give all I can to the recovery process
- Ready to take **RESPONSIBILITY** for myself
- **AWARE** of not becoming **DEPENDENT** on my sponsor
- Ready to **COMMIT** to this relationship
- Ready to set and respect **BOUNDARIES**
- Open to **ACCEPTING** guidance and building **TRUST** with my sponsor
- Ready to **CHANGE**

## ARE YOU READY TO BE IN A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP OF SAFETY, LOVING SUPPORT, AND EQUALITY?

### The Sponsee's Role:

- **Willingness:** before working the steps, it is important to ask yourself if you are willing to do everything it takes to recover from codependency. Are you willing to step out of your comfort zone?
- **Responsibility:** it is suggested that the sponsee takes the initiative and responsibility for their own progress through the Steps.
- **Dependency:** it is important to be aware of becoming too dependent or enmeshed with a sponsor or making them our Higher Power.

Sponsors are not our counsellors and are there to give guidance on working the program, and to pass on their experience, strength, and hope. Remember, sponsors are codependent too.

- **Commitment:** by becoming a sponsee, we are committing to calling our sponsor and/or meeting with our sponsor in person.
- **Setting/Respecting Boundaries:** it is suggested to agree to when is a suitable time to call to check-in and an amount of time per week that works for both to meet. i.e. once a week for an hour.
- **Trust:** it is suggested that the sponsee is willing to follow and to be open to the suggestions of the sponsor on how to work the program.
- **Change:** are you ready to change – to change yourself, not others?

## **As Sponsees, we have the right to:**

- Say “no”, especially when feeling unready or unsafe
- Be treated with dignity, respect, and appreciation
- End conversations when we feel the need
- Own our own feelings, thought, and opinions and to express them respectfully
- Tell our sponsors we don’t know, don’t understand, or disagree
- Change our minds
- End a sponsorship relationship respectfully

## **A Sponsor/Sponsee Relationship:**

- is a place to give and receive the benefits of recovery as changing and growing human beings
- is a place to practice sharing boundaries, loving detachment, saying no, acceptance, gratitude
- is a place to learn to help in healthy ways
- is a place to learn about the CoDA structure, service in CoDA, the language of recovery, healthy sharing

Although sponsors have more recovery than us, it is not their role to tell us how to live our lives. It is a relationship of equals. The relationship of sponsor/sponsee is a partnership that needs to meet the needs of both the sponsor and the sponsee.

We can trust our sponsor if that feels right, but we also trust **ourselves**.

**The following “I will” statements are suggestions - ways of being an active participant. They are useful guidelines.**

### **As a Sponsee:**

- I will be open to new ideas
- I will do the work
- I will call at the time I have agreed to
- I will share during my calls
- I will practice **“HOW”** – Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness
- I will leave the **“Well, but”** and **“Only if”** excuses behind
- I will be respectful of my time and my sponsor’s time
- I will use consistent baby steps; this work is not designed to take over my life
- I will allow the healing process to go as deeply as possible
- I will trust the process knowing that if more healing work needs to be done on any particular issue, it will show up again
- I will share my new tools with others
- I will remember ... **Progress, not Perfection!**

## Prayers and Affirmations for Sponsorship

If I am feeling burned out from sponsoring others, I can say:

*Higher Power, please show me what I need to change in my life and give me the courage and the willingness to have it changed. If I have taken undue responsibility for others, I now surrender and return them to your care and safekeeping.*

If I want to find someone to sponsor, I can offer:

*Higher Power, I am now willing to be of service to another CoDA member. If you think I am ready, please guide us to each other. Thank you.*

If I am having trouble finding a sponsor, I can ask:

*Higher Power, I ask for your guidance in finding a sponsor who will work in a partnership with you and me. Please show me the qualities I need to look for and remove that which hinders my search. Thank you.*

Source: *Sponsorship Booklet, 2003*

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### A Parting Thought

It is unlikely that any single human relationship will ever meet all of my wants and needs.

Accepting this idea brings some peace of mind and gratitude.

I become open to the fellowship of other recovering people – a fellowship that includes many with whom I share the ups and downs along our individual and collective spiritual paths.

A sponsorship relationship points me in the direction of emotional maturity and leads me toward the ultimate sponsor, my own Higher Power.

Source: *Sponsorship Booklet, 2003*

***KEEP LOOKING AND KEEP ASKING!***

## RESOURCES

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**For further support, contact the Outreach Representative in your Province:**

- **BC** - [bc.outreach@codacanada.ca](mailto:bc.outreach@codacanada.ca)
  - **Alberta** - [alberta.outreach@codacanada.ca](mailto:alberta.outreach@codacanada.ca)
  - **Saskatchewan** - [saskatchewan.outreach@codacanada.ca](mailto:saskatchewan.outreach@codacanada.ca)
  - **Manitoba** - [manitoba.outreach@codacanada.ca](mailto:manitoba.outreach@codacanada.ca)
  - **Ontario** - [ontario.outreach@codacanada.ca](mailto:ontario.outreach@codacanada.ca)
  - **Québec** - [quebec.outreach@codacanada.ca](mailto:quebec.outreach@codacanada.ca)
  - **Atlantic (NB, NS, PE, NL)** - [atlantic.outreach@codacanada.ca](mailto:atlantic.outreach@codacanada.ca)
  - **Territories (YT, NT, NU)** - [territories.outreach@codacanada.ca](mailto:territories.outreach@codacanada.ca)
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**Available at [cdrsestore.ca](http://cdrsestore.ca):**

- [CoDA Blue Book](#)
  - [CoDA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Workbook](#)
  - [Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter](#)
  - [Newcomers Handbook](#)
  - [Sponsorship, What's in it for Me?](#)
  - [Traditionally Speaking](#)
  - [Twelve Piece Relationship Toolkit](#)
  - [Twelve Steps Handbook](#)
  - [Sponsorship in CoDA](#)
  - [Using the Twelve Traditions](#)
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**Available at [codacanada.ca](http://codacanada.ca):**

- [2019 Introduction to 12 Step Study Group](#)
  - [The First 14 Days Questions for Sponsors \(non-CAL\)](#)
  - [The First 14 Days Workbook for Sponsees \(non-CAL\)](#)
  - [The "30 Questions"](#)
  - [Twelve Tips For Sponsors](#)
  - [September 12 & 13, 2020 - Sponsorship Bootcamp Recordings and Handouts - \*\*AND\*\* - October 24, 2020 - Sponsorship Meet 'n Greet Handout](#)
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**Websites:**

- **CoDA Canada:** [codacanada.ca](http://codacanada.ca)
- **CoDA International:** [coda.org](http://coda.org)
- **CoDA Australia:** [codependentsanonymous.org.au](http://codependentsanonymous.org.au)
- **CoDA Fellowship Forum recordings:** [codependents.org](http://codependents.org)
  - [June 15, 2019 - How To Be Sponsored - Ritchard I](#)
  - [June 16, 2019 - How To Sponsor - Ritchard I](#)