



## Module 5 Handout *Sponsorship in CoDA*

### What is a Sponsor?

#### A Sponsor is someone who...

- will guide the sponsee through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- is a role model for recovery.
- is a source of loving support.
- will respect the sponsee's anonymity.
- communicates clearly and directly with the sponsee.
- asks the sponsee questions for clarity, and not to control or judge.
- respects the sponsee's right to confidentiality.
- actively listens to the sponsee without interruption
- shares their own thoughts and feelings with the sponsee.
- listens to the sponsee with compassion and understanding, without rescuing and advice-giving.
- is capable of being emotionally present.
- maintains their personal boundaries in a non-aggressive manner.
- acts as an equal and treats the sponsee as an equal.
- uses the sponsor/sponsee relationship to grow spiritually, mentally and emotionally.
- accepts themselves and the sponsee, as is.

### What are some qualities to look for in a Sponsor?

#### Look for someone who...

- applies the principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in his/her own life.
- is respectful of another's way and pace in working the program.
- is willing and able to help the sponsee identify their codependent behaviour with care and support.
- will listen and respond to the sponsee with patience and tolerance.
- is committed in word and action to their own recovery and places that recovery first, even before their sponsee's recovery.
- with whom issues of romance or sexual attraction will not arise.

### What doesn't a Sponsor do?

#### An effective sponsor does not...

- give advice.
- rescue or fix the sponsee.
- give the sponsee harsh or shaming criticism.
- use the relationship for his/her own inappropriate gain (e.g., romantic, sexual, professional, or financial).
- act as the sponsee's therapist.
- share the sponsee's confidences with others.
- neglect his/her own recovery program in order to attend to the sponsee.

## What is Co-Sponsorship?

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.

### Some benefits of being a Co-Sponsor:

- No member has an inherently “one-up” or a “one-down position”.
- There seems to be a greater reliance on a Higher Power for answers.
- For those who are “people pleasers” there seems to be less “trying” to be a good sponsor or sponsee.
- For rebels, there is no authority figure against whom to rebel.
- For those who struggle with their need to control others, co-sponsorship can be a welcome relief because the opportunity to be in control is more difficult to achieve.
- For those who are “burned out” from taking care of others, co-sponsorship seems to be less burdensome than traditional sponsorship.
- Effective co-sponsorship provides knowledge of how a healthy relationship can work.

Sources: *Sponsorship in CoDA pamphlet, 1993*  
*Sponsorship Booklet, 2003*

## **The Sponsees' Role:**

### **As sponsees, we...**

- attend meetings regularly, with or without our sponsor.
- listen to our sponsor regarding group protocol, sharing at meetings, crosstalk, and avoiding pitfalls such as getting into another relationship too soon.
- contact our sponsor regularly, as well as other members, between meetings.
- use the tools of the program (i.e. reading CoDA literature, journaling/writing. etc.) as suggested by our sponsor.
- use prayer and meditation to help build and maintain a healthy relationship with a loving Higher Power.
- work the Twelve Steps with our sponsor.
- learn to apply the Twelve Traditions in our lives.
- observe our sponsor performing service work.
- learn to become willing to be a sponsor ourselves.

## **A Sponsee's Rights:**

### **As a sponsee, we have the right to...**

- say "no", especially when feeling unready or unsafe.
- be treated with dignity, respect and appreciation.
- terminate conversations when we feel the need.
- own our own feelings, thoughts and opinions, and to express them respectfully.
- change our minds, make mistakes, and take responsibility for our actions.
- make our own choices, independent of the wishes of our sponsor.
- tell our sponsor when we don't know, don't understand, or disagree.
- ask for what we want and need.
- take care of ourselves, no matter what the circumstances.
- trust, respect, and love whomever we choose.

Source:

*Sponsorship, What's in it for Me? Booklet, 2012*

## 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 & 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](#)