

# Starting A New CoDA Meeting

**Tradition Five** reminds us that: *“Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer”.*

## 1. Where Can We Hold A Meeting?

- When choosing a place to have your meeting, consider the cost. Tradition Seven states that we are “self-supporting”.
- New meetings may not get enough Seventh Tradition donations to support the rent. You may need to begin in an inexpensive venue and move to a bigger one later. Some venues are churches or other religious places, libraries, clinics, and other community rooms.
- Some venues may give support to self-help groups so the rent may be low. Check where other twelve-step groups meet.
- If you find a community room or another venue that will provide you a room for free, do provide a donation to the organization.
- The [Accessibility of Meetings](#) section of the [CoDA Outreach Resource Guide - Supporting Members](#) will provide you with ideas on how to make your meeting more accessible. Please also read [Creating Accessible CoDA Meetings](#).
- If you plan to start a meeting in a hospital, prison, or other institution, please refer to the [Hospital & Institution \(H&I\) Service Handbook](#).
- Someone’s residence is not a good venue. Members will think it’s the home owner’s meeting.

## 2. Where Can We Get Help?

A CoDA group is composed of two or more individuals whose purpose in meeting is a desire for healthy and loving relationships. People willing to start a new meeting may have varying levels of experience in CoDA or other Twelve Step fellowships and need different levels of support.

Support and direction come from CoDA members and groups sharing their “experience, strength and hope”.

- Contact your area’s [Outreach Representative](#) to share experience and suggest resources.

- Ask for support from established CoDA meetings in your area. Are there people in other groups who will help you start a meeting or can give you tips and support?
- It's important to attend a well-established meeting while starting a new meeting because it will provide you with support and continued spiritual growth.
- It's helpful to find a CoDA member who has experience with meeting setup and/or being a Group Service Representative (GSR).

### 3. How Do We Register The New Meeting?

- Once you have found a venue and have a date for your first meeting, register the meeting with CoDA Canada [HERE](#).
- When your meeting is registered with CoDA Canada contact your [Outreach Representative](#) for a free **New Meeting Starter Package**. This package will include the helpful booklet [Building CoDA Community; Healthy Meetings Matter](#), and other documents that you can use for your meeting.

### 4. How Do We Let People Know That The Meeting Exists?

- **Flyers:** Consider making and distributing [flyers](#). Give professionals such as doctors, counselors, women's shelters, and victim's services a copy of our [Information for Professionals](#) pamphlet and the contact information for your group. The flyer can also be put in local libraries, community centers, and church bulletin boards.
- **Use Regional Support:** If you have an Intergroup or other CoDA groups in your area ask them to announce your new meeting and ask for volunteers to attend and support your new group. If there are **no meetings** in your area to support you, your Outreach Volunteer may be able to suggest an established group in another area that could mentor your group.

### 5. Other Things To Consider

- Choose and modify a **Meeting Format** to fit your needs. Here are some examples:
  - [Basic Meeting Format](#)
  - [Cut and Paste Format](#)
  - [Potluck Meeting Format](#)

- Please keep in mind that the following **four Foundation Documents are required to be read at every meeting:**
  - **Preamble**
  - **Welcome (long version) \* OR \* Welcome (short version)**
  - **Twelve Steps**
  - **Twelve Traditions**
- Read **CoDA Conference Approved Literature** and use it for discussions so that new members understand the basics of CoDA, some of which can be found in the **New Meeting Starter Package**.
- Eventually set up a **Step Study Group** during your meeting.
- Contact other well-established CoDA groups to see if there are members willing to act as **Sponsors** for the members of your new group. Please refer to the following links for more help with Sponsorship:
  - **Sponsorship in CoDA**
  - **Resources for Sponsors**
  - **Sponsorship in CoDA pamphlet**
  - **Sponsorship, What's In It For Me? booklet**
  - **Sponsorship Registry**
- Choose which **CoDA Service Conference Approved Literature** you will use from our **Literature eStore**. You can also find free downloadable publications **HERE** as well as in the section below titled **Helpful Publications**.

## 6. Helpful Publications

**Note: CoDA Service Conference Approved Literature is strongly suggested**

### a. New Meeting Starter Package

- Please contact your **Outreach Representative** after you have found a venue and have registered your meeting. This package includes CoDA materials for new meetings.

### b. **Building CoDA Community; Healthy Meetings Matter booklet**

- This will be included in the **New Meeting Starter Package**.
- This provides practical and helpful information for organizing your meeting so that it is healthy and safe.

**c. CoDA Meeting Handbook - part 2 of the Fellowship Service Manual (FSM)**

- This provides suggestions on how to start and organize a meeting.
- It contains a **Basic Meeting Format** that can be edited by each meeting according to their needs.
- The Basic Meeting Format contains copies of the **required four Foundation Documents - Preamble, Welcome (long or short version), Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions**, and other helpful readings for your meeting.
- Parts of it include some topics such as taxes that are specific to the United States only.

**d. CoDA Outreach Resource Guide (World site)**

- This contains many useful topics, links, and format templates.

**e. CoDA Pamphlets - These are included in the New Meeting Starter Package and on the Resources tab of our website for use in meetings (not to sell).**

- **Am I Co-Dependent?**
- **Communication and Recovery**
- **Establishing Boundaries in Recovery**
- **Recovery from Codependence: A Brief Introduction**
- **Starting a New Meeting**
- **Your First Meeting**

**f. CoDA Fellowship Service Manual (FSM)**

- **FSM Part 1 – Structure and General Information**
- **FSM Part 2 – Meeting Handbook (a guide for new meetings)**
- **FSM Part 3 – Guidelines for Other Service Levels**
- **FSM Part 4 – Service Conference Procedures**
- **FSM Part 5 – World Level Service Details**
- **FSM Combined File**

## 7. The Following Is Experience, Strength, And Hope From Our Members

### a. Literature

- Have enough literature available.
- Tradition One states: *"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on CoDA unity"*. Conference-approved literature at your meeting supports CoDA unity.
- CoDA Literature can be purchased through our [Literature eStore](#).
- Individuals can download and print free materials from our [Meeting Materials](#) section.
- The **Recovery Patterns, Establishing Boundaries, Communications in Recovery, Your First Meeting, What is CoDA?**, and other CoDA literature can be used in meetings and are often given to newcomers free of charge (if the group's funds allow for this).
- The **CoDA World** website also has many service documents for free download [HERE](#).

### b. Have Regular Business Meetings

- At the first Business Meeting, ideally, elect some officers for the group such as Literature Person, Treasurer, Groups Contact(s), and Group Service Representative (GSR). The **CoDA Meeting Handbook (part 2 of FSM)** lists some common positions.
- The GSR can attend the monthly **CoDA Canada Steering Committee (CCSC)** meetings. For more information about this please contact [chair@codacanada.ca](mailto:chair@codacanada.ca).
- Choose a name for your group. In the meantime, you can just give it a generic name like your city.
- The [Sample Business Meeting Format](#) can be adapted by each group within their Group Conscience based on our Tradition Four.

### c. Join Another Meeting Or Online Meeting Where You Will Be Just One Of The Members

- New members to your meeting may consider you to be the "leader". It's important that you have a meeting and a sponsor for your own support.

## 8. Resources

- If you have further questions please contact the **Outreach Representative** for your area.
- Please be sure to visit our **Literature eStore** for all your literature needs. If you have questions our **Literature Store Representative** can be reached at **1-604-200-0457**.

