

**A. [Meeting starts at 7:00pm. Chair reads the Welcome.]**

Welcome to the Queer Codependents Anonymous meeting (QCoDA). My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am your chairperson this evening. We ask that you please silence cell phones for the duration of the meeting. Let’s start the meeting with a moment of silence to reflect on why we are here, followed by the Serenity Prayer.

**Higher power, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can, and Wisdom to know the difference.**

**B. [Chair reads the Introduction.]**

We welcome you to Queer Co-Dependents Anonymous, a program of recovery from codependency, where each of us may share our experience, strength, and hope in our efforts to find freedom where there has been bondage and peace where there has been turmoil in our relationships with others and ourselves. *Queer* is an umbrella term for people who identify as sexual and/or gender minorities that are not exclusively heterosexual, heteronormative, cisgender or gender-binary.

Most of us have been searching for ways to overcome the dilemmas of the conflicts in our relationships and our childhoods. Many of us were raised in families where addictions existed – some of us were not. In either case, we have found in each of our lives that codependence is a most deeply rooted compulsive behavior and that it is born out of our sometimes moderately, sometimes extremely dysfunctional family systems. We have each experienced in our own ways the painful trauma of the emptiness of our childhood and relationships throughout our lives. We attempted to use others – our sexual and/or romantic partners, friends, co-parents, and even our children – as our sole source of identity, value and well-being, and as a way of trying to restore within us the emotional losses from our childhoods.

QCoDA is a fellowship of LGBTQIA+ identified people; the only requirement for membership is a desire for healthy and loving relationships. We gather together to support and share with each other in a journey of self-discovery – learning to love the self. Living the program allows each of us to become increasingly honest with ourselves about our personal histories and our own codependent behaviors.

Our histories may include other powerful addictions which at times we have used to cope with our codependence. An addiction, whether to a mind-altering chemical or to a relationship, ultimately affects every area of the addict’s life in a progressively disastrous way. We seek recovery from our codependent addiction of loving too much by relying upon the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for knowledge and wisdom. These are the principles of our program and guides to developing honest and fulfilling relationships with ourselves and others. In CoDA, we each learn to build a bridge to a Higher Power *of our own understanding*, and we allow others the same privilege. Due to the adult nature of this meeting, and for the protection of our children, please respect the adults-only boundary.

**C. MEETING PROTOCOL:** Please note that speaking is *ALWAYS* optional at any point in our meetings. If we are rotating a reading around the group and you would rather not speak, just say “pass”.

**D. The Twelve Steps** – Going around the room to my right, we will take turns reading the 12 Steps. I will start. These are the 12 Steps as adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. They are recommended as the program for our recovery.

1. We admitted that we were powerless over others and that our lives had become unmanageable.	7. Humbly asked a higher power to remove our shortcomings.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.	8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a higher power as we understood a higher power.	9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.	10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
5. Admitted to a higher power, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.	11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a higher power as we understood that higher power, praying only for the knowledge of our higher power’s will for us, and the power to carry that out.
6. Were entirely ready to have a higher power remove all these defects of character.	12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message and practice these principles in all our affairs.

**E. The Twelve Traditions** – Going around the room to my left, we will take turns reading the 12 Traditions. I will start.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity.	7. A CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.	8. Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
3. The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.	9. CoDA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
4. Each group should remain autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole.	10. CoDA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the CoDA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer.	11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
6. 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.	12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place <b><i>principles before personalities</i></b> . [the <i>italicized</i> words are spoken in unison]

**F. The Bill of Rights** – Would someone please volunteer to read The Bill of Rights. Please introduce yourselves by first name.

In our recovery, we overcome previous negative programming by owning this Bill of Rights as adapted from Adult Children of Alcoholics.

1. My life has choices beyond mere survival.
2. I have the right to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready or feel unsafe.
3. Life is not motivated by fear.
4. I have a right to all my feelings.
5. I am not always guilty.
6. I have the right to make mistakes.
7. There is no need to smile when I cry.
8. I have the right to end conversations with people when I feel put down or humiliated.
9. I can be emotionally healthier than those around me.
10. It is okay to be relaxed, playful, and frivolous.
11. I have the right to change and grow.
12. It is important to set limits and be selfish.
13. I can be angry at someone I love.
14. It is important to take care of myself.

Thank you [reader's name].

**G. The Affirmations** – Would someone please volunteer to read The Affirmations. Please introduce yourselves by first name.

1. I feel comfortable and involved with people, including authority figures.
2. I have a strong identity and give myself approval.
3. I accept and use personal criticism in a positive way.
4. I am becoming free from searching to fulfill my need to be abandoned.
5. As I face my own victim role, I am attracted by strengths and understand weaknesses in my love and work relationships.
6. I am getting well through loving and focusing on myself.
7. It feels great to stand up for myself.
8. I enjoy serenity and peace.
9. I am attracted to people who love and take care of themselves.
10. I am free to feel and express all of my feelings.
11. I have a healthy sense of self-esteem.
12. I am freed from fear in my relationships as I trust and rely on my Higher Power.
13. Through the CoDA program I examine and let go of codependent behaviors I learned while living in my dysfunctional family of origin.

Thank you [reader's name].

H. Would someone please volunteer to read from the “Patterns Handout”... **[Chair chooses one of the following]:**

- **15 Characteristics** or **The Traits of Codependent Behaviors** on Page 1 *or*
- **Denial Patterns** on Page 2 *or*
- **Low Self-Esteem Patterns** on Page 3 *or*
- **Compliance Patterns** on Page 4 *or*
- **Control Patterns** on Page 5 *or*
- **Avoidance Patterns** on Page 6

I. **INTRODUCTIONS [Chair reads statement]**

Going around the room, we will now have general introductions. If you wish, please state your preferred pronoun. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

J. **NEWCOMERS [Chair reads statement]** Are there any newcomers to the meeting for the 1st, 2nd or 3rd time?

If yes, would you please introduce yourself again so that we can become more familiar with your name? **[pause for newcomers to introduce themselves]** If you have any questions, please ask someone after the meeting.

K. **READING:**

**[If this is the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the month, read paragraph K.1]**

**[If this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the month, read paragraph K.2]**

**[If this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the month, read paragraph K.3]**

**[If this is the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the month, read paragraph K.4]**

**K.1**

Because this is the **first** meeting of the month, we will now read one of the steps from the book, Co-Dependents Anonymous (the big, blue book). I'll start reading the first paragraph for the step that corresponds to the current month which is step number \_\_\_\_ and then I'll pass so that volunteers can continue the reading. **[Chair reads the first paragraph from the book and then says “pass”. When the group is finished reading, skip to paragraph L.]**

**K.2**

Because this is the **second** meeting of the month, we will now read one of the **steps** from the green workbook, The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook. I'll start reading the first paragraph for the step that corresponds to the current month which is step number \_\_\_\_ and then I'll pass so that volunteers can continue the reading. **[Chair reads the first paragraph from the workbook and then says “pass”. When the group is finished reading, skip to paragraph L]**

**K.3**

Because this is the **third (or fifth)** meeting of the month, we will now have a volunteer speaker tell us their personal story and their experience with CoDA. Our speaker today is \_\_\_\_\_. We ask that the speaker end their share at/before 7:25 p.m. (Please set Timer.) **[If there is no speaker available, the chair has the option of directing the group to read the next story in the back of the big blue book. When the group is finished reading, skip to paragraph L.]**

**K.4**

Because this is the **fourth** meeting of the month, we will now read one of the **traditions** from the green workbook, The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook. I'll start reading the first paragraph for the tradition that corresponds to the current month which is tradition number \_\_\_\_ and then I'll pass so that volunteers can continue the reading. **[Chair reads the first paragraph from the workbook and then says “pass”. When the group is finished reading, skip to paragraph L]**

**L. SHARING [Chair reads the following]** We will now begin our sharing period. In order to learn how to respect boundaries as well as how to set them, there will be a 3 minute time limit for sharing. An alarm will sound to let you know when you have one minute left. When your time is up, an alarm will sound again to let you know to wrap up your share. Thank you for respecting this boundary. Please limit your share to one time only.

**Would someone please volunteer to be the timekeeper?**

We meet to help ourselves and others by sharing our experience, strength and hope. Each person must have a safe place to talk without comments, questions, or advice from others. We avoid crosstalk, which we define as: interrupting another person while they are sharing, commenting on another member's share, using a member's name during our share, handing tissue to an upset member unasked, or reactive behavior. Things we wish to say to others about what they have shared are best said after the meeting.

**Would a volunteer please read the next section from the CoDA Crosstalk pamphlet?**

We avoid talk about the people we are codependent with. We are here to learn to change our focus to ourselves. It is important to talk about our own lives, not another's. This meeting is for us, not the people we love too much. Don't be afraid of silent pauses, as sometimes we need time to collect our thoughts. We are now open for sharing.

**M. ANNOUNCEMENTS [at 7:50pm, Chair stops sharing for the 7th Tradition and reads the following]**

That's all the time we have for sharing this evening. Now we observe the 7th Tradition, which states "Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." The rent for this space is \$40 per month or \$10 per week. Donations pay for meeting expenses, furnishing literature and support CoDA at the community and national levels. The suggested donation is \$3. Newcomers are not expected to contribute until they understand what they are contributing to.

- **CONTACT LIST:** We will pass around a Contact List which can be used as a valuable tool in recovery. This is not a "membership" list nor is it used for tracking attendance. Placing your name on this list is purely voluntary and signifies that you are willing to have other members contact you to discuss CoDA or to share or offer support and information. If this is your first meeting, please do not feel obligated to add your name to the list and consider attending six meetings before doing so. Please feel free to take a copy of the Contact List from the bottom of the clipboard.
- **CHAIR AND SPEAKER SIGN-UP LIST:** We will pass around a Chair and Speaker Sign-up List. If you are willing to volunteer to chair a meeting, as I am today, or share your story with the group, please add your name to an open date on the list.
- **SPONSORSHIP:** A sponsor is a fellow member of CoDA who can serve as your guide, role model and a source of loving support in the program. Sponsorship usually begins on a temporary basis so that both parties have an opportunity to assess their compatibility in working with each other. For more information about sponsorship, please refer to the free pamphlet, "Sponsorship in CoDA."

Another form of sponsorship is called "co-sponsorship" where two members sponsor each other and meet or talk regularly about their experience in the program. Will those seeking a temporary co-sponsor please raise their hands?

- **BUSINESS MEETING:** Business meetings occur sporadically as needed. Does anyone have anything to add to the meeting agenda?
- **TREASURER ANNOUNCEMENTS** Do we have any Treasurer announcements?

Are there any recovery-related announcements?

**N. Would someone please volunteer to read the meditation for the day from Melody Beattie's book, The Language of Letting Go.**

**O.** Going around the room, let's rotate reading the cards containing **The Twelve Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous** as found in the big blue book. **[Chair passes around cards containing the 12 Promises]** I'll start:

**[Chair reads the following]** I can expect a miraculous change in my life by working the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous. As I make an honest effort to work the Twelve Steps and follow the Twelve Traditions... **[Chair starts reading 12 Promises cards & rotation begins]**

1. I know a new sense of belonging. The feelings of emptiness and loneliness will disappear.
2. I am no longer controlled by my fears. I overcome my fears and act with courage, integrity and dignity.
3. I know a new freedom.
4. I release myself from worry, guilt and regret about my past and present. I am aware enough not to repeat it.
5. I know a new love and acceptance of myself and others. I feel genuinely lovable, loving and loved.
6. I learn to see myself as equal to others. My new and renewed relationships are all with equal partners.
7. I am capable of developing and maintaining healthy and loving relationships. The need to control and manipulate others will disappear as I learn to trust those who are trustworthy.
8. I learn that it is possible for me to mend—to become more loving, intimate and supportive. I have the choice of communicating with my family in a way with is safe for me and respectful of them.
9. I acknowledge that I am a unique and precious creation.
10. I no longer need to rely solely on others to provide my sense of worth.
11. I trust the guidance I receive from my Higher Power and come to believe in my own capabilities.
12. I gradually experience serenity, strength and spiritual growth in my daily life.

**P. [Chairperson reads the closing statement]**

In closing, remember that what you heard here should be treated confidentially, keeping it within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind. The opinions expressed here are strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you like and leave the rest.

This renewal process is a gift of healing for us. By actively working the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous, we can each realize a new joy, acceptance and serenity in our lives.

We have all learned to survive life, but in CoDA, we are learning to live life. Through applying the Twelve Steps and principles found in CoDA to our daily life and relationships – both present and past – we can experience a new freedom from our self-defeating lifestyles. It is an individual growth process. We are all growing at our own pace and will continue to do so as we remain open to our own higher power's will for us on a daily basis. Our sharing is our way of identification and helps us to free the emotional bonds of our past and the compulsive control of our present.

No matter how traumatic your past or despairing your present may seem, there is hope for a new day in the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous. No longer do you need to rely on others as a power greater than yourself. May you instead find here a new strength within to be that which our higher powers intended – ***Precious and Free***. [words in *italics* are spoken in unison].

**Q. Serenity Prayer...** Will all who care to, please join me in the Serenity Prayer.

**Higher Power, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And Wisdom to know the difference.**

**Keep coming back; it works if you work it. So work it, 'cause you're worth it!**