

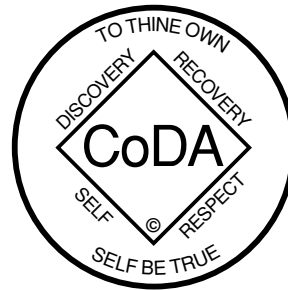
- 3) Some CoDA members have started a sponsorship group that meets weekly or bi-weekly. This group consists of one sponsor guiding several sponsees who make a commitment to work the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Discussion is focused on applying the Steps and Traditions to specific issues related to recovery from codependence.
- 4) Some CoDA groups utilize a special short-term form of sponsorship for new members. A "Temporary Newcomer Sponsor" is a person who:
- agrees to sponsor you for your first six meetings and attend one or more of those meetings with you.
 - shares their story with you in depth.
 - provides information on CoDA structure and service.
 - describes the tools, purposes, and principles of CoDA.
 - stresses the importance of finding a permanent sponsor.

A final note...

As a newcomer who wants to begin the process of recovery, you will be urged to learn how to work the Twelve Steps. Many of us who have come to Co-Dependents Anonymous before you have found there is no better way to accomplish this goal than with a sponsor.

For old-timers, sponsoring someone is a rewarding way to work Step Twelve; "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." Many of us found as we carried the message by sponsoring others, we grew spiritually. Sponsorship is a tool useful to both parties in a lifetime of gradual recovery.

GOD,
grant me the
SERENITY
to accept the things
I cannot change,
COURAGE
to change the
things I can, and
WISDOM
to know the difference.



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Sponsorship in CoDA

Co-Dependents Anonymous

Those of us in Co-Dependents Anonymous who have benefited from working the Twelve Steps with a sponsor would like to share some thoughts with you based on our experience in CoDA. Our suggestions are not intended to be rules. We urge you to try what feels right to you.

The purpose of sponsorship is to develop a one-to-one relationship with a more experienced CoDA member. A sponsor is willing to share experience, strength, and hope in support of your continuing recovery and his/her own.

What is a sponsor?

A sponsor is someone who...

- will guide you through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
- is a role model for recovery.
- is a source of loving support.
- will respect your anonymity.

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.
- who is respectful of another's way and pace in working the program.
- who is willing and able to help you identify your codependent behavior with care and support.
- who will listen and respond to you with patience and tolerance.
- with whom issues of romance or sexual attraction will not arise.

What doesn't a sponsor do?

An effective sponsor...

- does not give advice.
- does not rescue or fix you.
- does not give you harsh or shaming criticism.
- does not use the relationship for his/her own inappropriate gain (e.g., romantic, sexual, professional, or financial).
- does not act as your therapist.
- does not share your confidences with others.
- does not neglect his/her own recovery program in order to attend to you.

How do I get a CoDA sponsor?

After you attend at least six CoDA meetings, listen for people who consistently share their recovery in a way that's understandable to you. Talk with these people on the telephone or face-to-face to help you decide if you can feel safe confiding in them. Then ask one of these people if he/she would be willing to sponsor you.

If your prospective sponsor is unable to take the commitment, he/she will tell you. **Please do not consider this a personal rejection.** People with recovery place limits on the number of CoDA members they can sponsor. Others may feel unready in their own recovery to guide someone else. Keep looking and asking. The "right" sponsor will emerge.

How can I change sponsors if I feel uncomfortable with the one I've chosen?

Ask your Higher Power for guidance. Share your feelings with your current sponsor and let that person know why you feel uncomfortable. If you don't feel comfortable sharing your feelings face-to-face, you may want to send a note expressing what you can, stating your intention to end your sponsor-see relationship.

If you are having a problem finding a CoDA sponsor because there are few "old-timers," here are a few suggestions:

- 1) New CoDA groups usually have members with experience in other Twelve Step programs, both as members and sponsors. While they may not have experience with CoDA's application of these Steps, they do understand what it means to work the Steps in daily life. Such a person may be a candidate to sponsor you.
- 2) There is a form of sponsorship arising out of this kind of situation called "co-sponsorship." If you choose this method, you and another CoDA member will sponsor each other. You can meet regularly to share what you are learning about the Steps from others and from reading CoDA literature. As you discuss various aspects of the program, you may become aware that each of you has some answers within.