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Subject: CoDA Announcements: SPONSORSHIP IN CoDA

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SPONSORSHIP IN CoDA

Sponsorship in CoDA is essentially different from sponsorship in other 12 step groups because of the nature of the disease of codependence. To be effective, CoDA sponsorship depends on the development of healthy boundaries on control issues such as advice-giving, care-taking, and rescuing. Giving feedback as sponsors, we can develop skills to be honest without advising, lecturing, or being verbally abusive.

Sponsorship is a tool of recovery that helps the process of healing. It is not a requirement. It is a 3 way relationship between the sponsee, sponsor, and God. The relationship affirms and supports the sponsee. It provides for the sponsee's needs for guidance, safety, and trust. This relationship is a good place to learn about personal boundaries. It is the newcomer's responsibility to choose a sponsor. The sponsor listens to the sponsee's story and guides the sponsee through the 12 steps. It is important to have someone who will point out codependent behavior -when asked - and who can share their own experience, strength, and hope in recovery.

The requirements of sponsorship are determined by the 2 people based on personal preference. It is OK to choose a different sponsor. We do this directly, honestly, and gently. (For characteristics of a CoDA sponsor, see pg 8 in the Sponsorship Booklet, and pgs 8 & 9 in the Sponsorship: What's in It for Me? booklet which is CoDA's newest piece of literature.) Meeting to discuss how we will work together - stating our boundaries, limitations, expectations, wants and needs - is the best method for us to begin this relationship. Flexibility is important and talking through conflict (examining my part) allows for change in recovery.

The sponsorship relationship can provide only temporary peace of mind. For most, true progress in recovery depends upon working the 12 steps. Giving specific direction is something not covered by our sponsorship commitment. How can any of us know - let alone choose - what's best for another? We understand this to be God's job. Connecting first with our Higher Power is most important. We become willing to put aside the belief that we are responsible for another's well being, or that someone else is responsible for ours. In the process we can learn to be accepting, forgiving, and patient. Most of us find new ways to give and receive love.

Sponsors are not therapists, but can suggest seeking professional help. Sponsors listen without offering solutions for sponsees' problems. To be a sponsor, it is recommended we be attending meetings and working the Steps ourselves for at least 6 months. It is strongly recommended we have sponsors of our own. Sponsoring deepens understanding of the Steps and Traditions. "It teaches me about myself, my triggers, and my insecurities. It helps me see my own spiritual growth and keeps me honest about my shortcomings."

Sponsorship is a two-way street of commitment, hard work, sharing, vulnerability, integrity, flexibility, and boundary setting. It is also about humility and the willingness to learn from another person's experience.

(This document is compiled from the following CoDA approved literature: Sponsorship Booklet, Newcomers Handbook, Sponsorship: What's in It for Me? booklet, and Sponsorship pamphlet.)

If you have a general question about CoDA (as opposed to the specific content of this email), please email outreach@codas.org