Sponsorship:
When A Sponsee May Need More Help

—I Am the Dream and
I Must Come True

—Nancy B.
Norfolk, VA

2019 Face Everything and Recover Retreat
Who Am I?

• I came into 12 Step Recovery in 1987

• I have been a sponsor to many, and have not always done it well

• Outside of CoDA, I am also a mental health professional...
Why Talking About Counseling in CoDA?

✓ 12 of the 40 personal stories in the CODA big book discuss therapy.

✓ “In This Moment” has four pages on asking for help. These pages emphasize that we should not be afraid to ask for help from others.

✓ CoDA is clear about the depth of our difficulties with past traumas and our codependence.

✓ The CoDA materials, including the CoDA Big Book that we may need more help and are encouraged to seek it. (CoDA BB Step 10 and Chapter 5 FAQ)
Solving Our Problems

✓ “In recovery, we learn to focus on solving our problems.

✓ ...Then we seek the best solution.

✓ This may mean setting a goal, asking for help, gathering more information, taking an action, or letting go.”

—from Language of Letting Go Feb. 22
My Experience, Strength and Hope

✓ Before the program: I Couldn’t name it and I couldn’t describe it.

✓ At rock bottom: I couldn’t ask again.

✓ Further along: I was challenged by my victim thoughts.

✓ Dealing with loss: I had to function.

✓ Expecting too much: I gained insight into myself and my “pusher.”
What Should I Expect from a Sponsor?

✓ She establishes and maintains appropriate boundaries
✓ Realistic appraisal of *her own abilities*
✓ Knowledge of the Steps and CoDA Program
✓ Acceptance of her sponsee
✓ She shares her own experience, strength and hope with me

—from CoDA Booklet *Sponsorship, What’s in it for me*
What should I Expect from a Counselor?

- Establishes and maintains appropriate boundaries and ethics
- Is required to refer me if my needs are beyond his/her abilities
- Knowledge of mental health, counseling process
- Demonstrates unconditional positive regard for me
- Objectively shares information and interprets my statements
What Should I NOT Expect from a Sponsor?

✓ Knowledge of mental health or counseling
✓ Ability to assess safety risks
✓ Ability to suggest coping strategies other than those in the program
✓ Ability to assist with severe trauma in a therapeutic manner
✓ Ability to work with couples or families
Crisis Intervention

✓ Danger/Opportunity
✓ Keeping someone safe
✓ It’s ok to ask The Question
✓ Domestic or relationship violence
✓ Safety Planning
✓ Don’t try to handle the person’s problems yourself

Crisis = Danger + Opportunity
Behaviors

- Self harm
- Unexplainable mood swings
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Panic or anxiety attacks
- Unusual anger or aggression
More Behaviors

✓ Restricted eating
✓ Binging/purging
✓ Flashbacks
✓ Hyper-vigilance
✓ Seeing/hearing/feeling things that are not explainable
How to Talk with Someone About Counseling

With humility and acceptance I may say...
✓ “I am concerned about you”
✓ “I noticed that you _________”
✓ “I want you to receive the best help for this”
✓ “I am willing to help you find some more help.”
✓ (and go with you the first time, if you would like)
Some Resources
(where to refer someone to)

✔ Community Mental Health Centers
✔ Emergency rooms
✔ Addiction treatment centers
✔ National suicide Hotline 1-800-273-8255 (talk)
✔ Crisis text line 741741, text “help” to start
Resources cont’d

✓ www.psychologytoday.com
✓ Domestic Violence Shelter/Women’s Shelters
✓ Domestic Violence Hotline
✓ Department of Child and Family Services
Get These Recovery Resources from CoDA

Books:

• Codependents Anonymous, The basic text or “Big Book” of Codependence Anonymous
• CoDA Twelve Step and Twelve Tradition Workbook
• NEWCOMERS HANDBOOK,
• TOOLS OF RECOVERY,
• Sponsorship: What’s in it for Me?,
• Peeling the Onion,
• Communication in Recovery,
• Making Choices,
• Twelve Steps Handbook,
• BUILDING CODA COMMUNITY: HEALTHY MEETINGS MATTER,
• Common Threads of Codependency,
• EXPERIENCES WITH CROSSTALK,
• Establishing Boundaries in Recovery,
• CARRYING THE MESSAGE: LIVING THE TWELFTH STEP.

Audio CDs:

• Personal Sharing on the Twelve Steps,
• Codependency and Shame,
• Newcomers and Sponsorship

CoDA Convention CDs: VWTapes.com
Retreat Presentation CDs: WhiteSoundStudios.com

Find Them At WWW.CODA.ORG

2019 Face Everything and Recover Retreat