



CROSSTALK

The purpose of the crosstalk guidelines is to allow us to practice our recovery skills. At some point, many of us have asked, “How can I tell when I’m being Codependent?” When we follow these guidelines, whether in meetings or in our daily life, it’s likely that we’re actively practicing our recovery. Some of us found these guidelines a bit scary when we were new. The most important thing to remember when sharing in CoDA, is that we want to hear about **YOU!** Your thoughts, feelings, experience, challenges; & what has worked for **You** in **Your** recovery.

In CoDA meetings we share with others what we have experienced and learned in our current and past relationships. We share who we are - our feelings, thoughts, and actions; and our experience, strength and hope. When our sharing focuses on others — who they are, and what **they** *may* be thinking or doing - we are then in our disease. In recovery we learn that the focus is on us — and that our job is to take care of ourselves — not to fix others! The crosstalk statement enables us to practice our recovery behaviors. It also allows us to make CoDA a safe place for every Codependent to share his or her feelings, without fear of judgment or ridicule. Over time many of us have learned to use these tools in everyday life. The crosstalk statement is there for our mutual protection, growth and recovery.

Crosstalk is any verbal or physical response to another person’s sharing. Interrupting, asking questions, and offering advice are considered to be crosstalk in CoDA. We take responsibility for ourselves by owning our statements, and not criticizing others. In CoDA we encourage the use of “I” statements as a way of focusing the speaker’s attention on their own personal experience. Using the word “you” rather than “I” can be a way to avoid owning our individual reality. Also in CoDA we do not assume that we know what is true for anyone other than ourselves. One example of crosstalk could be, “When you get a cold, you should take vitamins.” An appropriate way to express the same thing would be, “I’ve found vitamins to be helpful when I have a cold.”

Other forms of crosstalk can include: caretaking, physical touching, referring back to a person by name, commenting on what someone has said, or replying directly to what someone has said. Offering or receiving comfort during a meeting can encourage us to remove the focus from ourselves and lower the intensity of our feelings. We try to limit excessive focus on details during our sharing; this may be part of the disease, enabling us to avoid our feelings. One helpful way to share in CoDA is to take just a few sentences to explain a situation, followed by more sharing of what you learned & what came up for you. Details can be shared with a sponsor, friends, or a professional. As this is a spiritual program & not a religious program, we also ask that you refrain from using specific religious names & simply use Higher Power or God. Crosstalk involves discussing people, places or things that don’t pertain to your recovery. Our recovery requires the focus to be on ourselves!

We do not call on people to share in our meeting. Therefore, there may be periods of silence. We try to use that time to pay attention to our feelings & ourselves. We encourage newcomers to begin slowly and carefully. Nothing that is shared is unimportant or stupid. If you have any questions concerning CoDA please wait until after the end of the meeting & one of the members will be glad to answer them. If you wish to give feedback to what anyone had to say tonight, please first ask that person for their permission after the meeting. We also ask that you limit your sharing to an appropriate amount of time to allow everyone the opportunity to share. If one person begins to dominate the sharing or chooses not to follow these guidelines, it is hoped that a group member will inform the person in a safe & courteous manner. It is this form of sharing that makes our groups safe, supportive, healthy & magical.