

Crosstalk

CoDA Sydney Saturday Focus Group Meeting, 4 July 2009

The No Crosstalk Guidelines

“Somewhere along the line, we learned to doubt our perceptions, discount our feelings, and overlook our needs. Telling people what we thought or felt often resulted in our being ignored, laughed at or punished. We learned to look to others to tell us what to think, what to feel and how to behave.”

(“Common Threads of Co-dependency”, page 4)

“As children, many of us learned that what we had to say did not matter. We were frequently interrupted and criticized ... No crosstalk creates a new environment in which we can begin to open up to others without fear of being interrupted, misinterpreted, or judged. If we don’t avoid crosstalk, a meeting with a group of codependents can easily become unhealthy.”

(“Experiences with Crosstalk” Booklet, page 19)

“The sharing session must be a time when each of us is allowed to express our feelings openly and honestly, free from fear of judgement by others. In our meetings we speak about our own experience, and we listen without comment to what others share. We give the person sharing our full, uncritical attention. We work towards taking responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others. Crosstalk guidelines help keep our meeting a safe place. This also applies after the meeting and includes giving unsolicited feedback.”

(“Australian New Meeting Starter Kit”)

“Crosstalk is any verbal or physical response to another person’s sharing. Interrupting, questioning, and offering advice are universally considered to be crosstalk in CoDA. Physical touching by patting or hugging during the sharing session is considered crosstalk by some groups. Being touched interrupts a person’s sharing and redirects his or her attention to the other person’s actions. ... [This] interrupts thought patterns and disturbs feelings that are about to be expressed.”

“The safety provided by the ‘no crosstalk’ rule allows a person to experience vulnerability and develop deep levels of trust. Others in the group benefit from this depth of sharing. They have an opportunity to learn more about themselves and to practice detachment.”

(“Newcomer’s Handbook”, page 19)

Learning to Listen

“There are several things about a CoDA meeting that foster good listening skills. The most important of these is the no crosstalk rule . . . It requires that each person be silent for the meeting, to just be present and listen without being called upon to respond. This experience is different to listening to a conversation or a workshop. Not having to formulate a verbal response or form a logical conclusion frees the mind for deep thinking.”

(“Newcomer’s Handbook”, page 23)

Boundaries

“It may help to understand crosstalk as a boundary violation . . . When a group states that no crosstalk is part of their meeting guidelines, cross-talking is a violation of that group’s boundary. It may also be a violation of a member’s boundaries . . . ”

(“Experiences with Crosstalk” Booklet, page 9)

“A good example of a healthy boundary is CoDA’s ‘no crosstalk’ rule. This essential boundary helps us to focus on ourselves at meetings, instead of trying to fix others. Learning to establish and maintain healthy boundaries is one of our greatest recovery tools.”

(Establishing Boundaries Pamphlet)

“Many of us learned that much of what we thought was true about ourselves and about living was someone else’s opinion, an opinion we hadn’t thought to question.”

(“Making Choices” Booklet)

“We have the right to our own thinking. As we recover, we begin to make our own choices about how we think. We allow others to have their own thoughts without interruption and without ridicule.”

(CoDA Boundaries Pamphlet)

“We are exercising healthy boundaries any time we allow ourselves the right

- To define our own God
- To have our own feelings
- To say how and when we are physically touched
- To have our own thoughts

We are also exercising healthy boundaries when we allow others these same rights.”

(CoDA Boundaries Pamphlet)

Sharing our own experience

In the safety offered by the “no crosstalk” guidelines, “We learn to speak our truth and we allow others the same privilege.”

(Steps & Traditions CoDA Workbook, page 44)

“Most CoDA groups encourage the use of ‘I’ statements as a way of focusing the speaker’s attention on their individual experience. The use of ‘you’ and ‘we’ is discouraged, as these relate more to other people’s experiences. There is also a tendency for codependents to avoid dealing with their own issues by globalizing their experiences, presenting them as belonging to a large and nebulous ‘codependent we’. ‘You’ and ‘we’ statements may easily get into crosstalk. For this reason, some groups prohibit them entirely by including them in their definition of crosstalk.”

“As always in CoDA, the emphasis is on learning to take responsibility for one’s self. If you feel uncomfortable with what another person is sharing, please ‘take what you need and leave the rest’. In CoDA, we learn not to give advice. We learn to allow another the dignity to make their own personal discoveries.”

(“Newcomer’s Handbook, page 20)

“Recovering co-dependents . . . purposely do not caretaker, rescue, or advise anyone . . . The answers that [we] seek are not directly obtainable from others. Answers come from within. The answer for one person is not the answer for the next person, so nobody else has our answer. The CoDA program of recovery helps each recovering codependent find his or her own answers.”

(“Newcomer’s Handbook”, page 23)

Prayers

“In this moment I can choose my own Higher Power.

I can set aside all the old beliefs about who I am not and be who I am – a child of God.

I can remind myself that a faith in a Higher Power becomes a faith in me and that my recovery lies in being true to myself and to my Higher Power.”

(Step 3 Pamphlet)

“In this moment, I live my life in a new way.

As I continue to open my heart and mind,

little by little, one day at a time,

I reveal my **true self**, mend my relationships, and touch God.”

(Step 10 Pamphlet)