

First, what is intergroup?

In Washington State, CoDA Intergroup of the PNW combines the functions of a regular community intergroup, a regional CoDA organization, & a state CoDA organization. In some of the larger 12 step programs (& in states like California where they have more intergroups than we have meetings in Washington) it looks something like this: large halls & individual meetings have a monthly business meeting to gauge group conscience of current issues of importance. Each of these groups elects a group rep & an alternate, who carry the group conscience to a monthly intergroup meeting. In my previous experience with other 12 step programs, it was considered a great privilege to be chosen as a group rep; there were often contested elections!

In this common model, community intergroups would generally meet on a monthly basis. Group reps would attend, & elect a board of trusted servants who would implement group conscience & represent that intergroup at the quarterly regional meeting. The quarterly regional meetings would do the same, & elect reps to attend a yearly state meeting. The state then in turn elects delegates to attend the yearly national or world conference; all the while representing the group conscience of the local fellowship. One of the concerns with the limited participation we've had in CoDA service work in Washington the past 10 years or so, is that it's hard to know what our group conscience is without your participation.

We do several things a bit differently in Washington CoDA; mostly due to our small size. Intergroup of the PNW combines all of the functions named above. We have tried several times over the years to start a state organization, but there's never been a wide spread enough interest for it to succeed. Also, we not only allow, but actively encourage any CoDA member to attend whether they are a group rep or not. Lastly, we choose to use a modified version of CoDA World Fellowship's community problem solving model rather than Robert's Rules Of Order. We've found that as long as members are respectful of each other, the community problem-solving model tends to be more effective & tends to have far less time spent on conflict. Tradition 2 states: Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.

What Does Intergroup Do?

Actually, the best way to answer that question here is more like, "what has intergroup done in the past"? What we can potentially do is almost limitless; it's limited only by the guidance of the 12 traditions & by the number of people choosing to do service & by our ideas!

Here's a partial list of functions we're currently offering & of some of the things we've done in the past:

- Act as a 2 way conduit between our Washington State meetings & CoDA, inc (the Worldwide CoDA organization). We pass along information to Washington meetings & represent Washington State meeting's interest with CoDA, inc. When

financially possible we send 2 delegates to the yearly CoDA business conference, who attempt to vote the Washington fellowship's group conscience. As an example, over the last 2 years, several statements regarding outside literature in the CoDA book, the CODA workbook & CoDA, inc newcomer's packet were changed because of motions our delegates made at conference. Washington State hosted both the 2009 conference & the 2009 convention.

- Maintain the Codawa.org website & the Washington CoDA Email List, to make current information about CoDA & also Washington State approved literature easily accessible to all Codependents.
- Compose literature specifically for Washington State. We have compiled & written a state newcomer's packet, a state crosstalk statement, a state suggested meeting outline & a state 13th stepping document.
- Help to let people know about local events; currently those are the mini conferences, our yearly Seabeck retreat, & the Vancouver, BC retreats. We sponsor the yearly Washington CoDA picnic. In the past, we have also sponsored retreats, a day long recovery event called "CoDA days" that at one time drew as many as 350 people, & more
- Offer workshops to any CoDA meeting requesting them. Some of the topics we've presented in the recent past include the 12 steps, the 12 traditions, how to work a program in CoDA, understanding the Crosstalk Statement, & sponsorship. Your meeting is always welcome to request one of these workshops.
- We're available **when requested** to come out & help facilitate individual meetings resolve conflict in a healthy way, or just to answer questions from meetings & individual members.
- We send out a yearly mailing of our schedule & a short cover letter to over 300 recovery professionals who are our biggest source of referrals of new members in Washington
- We make business decisions affecting CoDA in Washington as a whole.
- In the past, we've sent out public service announcements to various media to enable new members to find us. We're allowed to do this by the traditions as long as we make no promises & promote no cures.
- In the past, we have given away Washington State Newcomer's Packets to any meeting for free. They are now available on the Codawa.org website, & all Washington State CoDA meetings are welcome to download & reproduce them.
- We collect 7th tradition donations from both Washington CoDA meetings & intergroup members & pay bills incurred by Intergroup of the PNW.

- We maintain the Washington State CoDA schedule & when needed help meetings to interact with CoDA, inc regarding scheduling changes.
- We maintain public email contacts for CoDA in Washington
- Mail out intergroup minutes & Washington CoDA schedules to each meeting.
- We are available as a resource for new meetings &/or members wanting to start new meetings
- Visit or call individual meetings to offer support & help to encourage a sense of CoDA community

And much, much more; the possibilities are endless – but we need YOU!

But..... I Joined CoDA To Stop Myself From Doing Too Much!

I believe this issue is one of the reasons we've had so much trouble attracting new intergroup members. First, we do not encourage new comers to CoDA to join intergroup, there is much service to be done at the meeting level! But once one has 6 months-1 year (depending on the person) service on a larger scale can be a wonderful opportunity to grow in CoDA. I've personally found doing service to be a great way to learn to set boundaries & say no when I need or want to. Especially early on, I needed to learn what my limits are, & service in CoDA &/or intergroup of the PNW is a great way to practice in a safe environment. It's also an excellent way to learn about the 12 traditions, make new friends in recovery, practice the 3rd tradition by actively coming to consensus & group conscience in a healthy & respectful manner, learn how to encourage & participate in building a healthy consensus, help to insure CoDA's continued health & presence in Washington state, & to just plain enjoy some fun & fellowship - we've been known to go out for coffee & conversation many times after meetings!

We'd be really appreciative if your meeting would elect a group rep & send them, but again ANY CoDA member is welcome & encouraged to join us & many board positions are currently open & need members who are willing to fill the positions!