

Although CMA members differ in their approach to sponsorship work and in the time they can give, nearly all see it as an opportunity to enrich their own spiritual growth and experience the satisfaction that comes from working with others.

What a sponsor is not It is not a sponsor's job to be a landlord, loan company, lawyer, doctor, accountant, psychiatrist, financial broker, marriage counselor or therapist. Sponsors who are in those professions leave that role at the door of CMA. Here they are like us: one addict trying to help another.

Sponsors do not keep up the pretense of being right all the time. If they do not know the answer, they may quickly admit this, and help us find other sources of information including professional guidance when needed.

What does a sponsee do? It is suggested that sponsees contact their sponsors regularly. Many of us called our sponsors every day, even if it was just to check in. We also met in-person with our sponsors. Most sponsors told us how often they expected us to call and meet with them. However we communicated with our sponsor, we found it was important to be honest and keep an open mind. We were willing to take suggestions and did the work our sponsors recommended. Our sponsors guided us, but it was made clear that we were responsible for our own recovery. We could not expect our sponsors to work harder on our recovery than we did ourselves.

Sometimes we worried about being a burden, and our sponsors always told us that we were helping them a lot more than they were helping us. We came to understand that by using our sponsors, we helped them recover. Our sponsors often told us that they could only keep what they had by giving it away. ■



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WHAT ABOUT SPONSORSHIP?

HOW DO I CHOOSE A SPONSOR? WHO CAN BE A SPONSOR? WHAT IS A SPONSEE?

Crystal Meth Anonymous

SPONSORSHIP One of the first suggestions offered in CMA is to get a sponsor. Just what is a sponsor? How do we get a sponsor, use a sponsor and be a sponsor?

What is a sponsor? An addict who has made some progress in 12-Step recovery and shares that experience on a continuous, individual basis, with another addict who is attempting to attain or maintain sobriety. Sponsorship responsibility is a basic part of the CMA approach to recovery from addiction through the 12 Steps.

What does a sponsor do? There is no single best way to sponsor. All members are free to approach sponsorship as their own personalities may suggest, using their own individual experiences. A sponsor is a person who:

- Can often relate to the situation and care
- Leads by example, focusing on humility, responsibility, anonymity, honesty, and building trust.
- Provides a guide through the 12 steps,
- Encourages the sponsee to attend meetings, find a home group, get a service commitment, and attend service events.
- Encourages work with other addicts.
- Makes suggestions to help the sponsee live by the principles of the program
- Introduces recovery literature
- Notes progress that the sponsee may not be able to see
- Helps the sponsee identify character defects

How to get a sponsor All we had to do was ask. Some of us asked CMA members whose recovery we admired. Some of us asked our friends in CMA to recommend someone. Others asked for help getting a sponsor when we shared at meetings. Some meetings have Sponsorship Coordinators or Matchmakers who could help us.

When we got the courage to ask for help, we usually got a positive response. Many of us were told “yes, I’d be happy to” right away. Some of us were invited to meet and discuss it to see if it seemed like a good match. Sometimes someone agreed to be an “Interim Sponsor,” sponsoring us for the short-term or to try it out.

How to choose a sponsor When we were at meetings, we listened to what people said. We looked for people who had something we wanted. We looked for people whose recovery we respected, who demonstrated the principles of the program in their day-to-day lives. A potential sponsor’s continuing ability to live a sober, happy, productive life was self-evident.

Many of us picked sponsors whose experience was similar to our own. It helped us relate to them. Some of us picked people with experiences that differed from our own. Both ways worked.

A sponsor is like a “safari guide” that we choose to lead us through territory that is new for us but familiar to them. We will inescapably be exposed to the personality of our guide, as part of the process. Agreement with personalities and opinions is not essential to recovery, but acceptance of the principles of the program is indispensable.

It was suggested to us that we not pick anyone to whom we had a strong sexual attraction. Such attractions can get in the way of recovery, complicating the honest sharing between sponsor and sponsee.

Who can be a sponsor? We suggest that sponsors have a working knowledge of the 12 Steps and personal experiences dealing with life in recovery. We discussed this matter with our sponsors.

When to get a sponsor It is never too soon or too late to get a sponsor. Many of us got sponsors right away. Some of us needed to take time to decide who we wanted to ask. Some of

us resisted getting a sponsor. Looking back on it, that made our early recovery more difficult. It has been proven through our experience that working with a sponsor makes recovery easier.

While we looked for sponsors, we were sometimes approached by people offering to sponsor us. Sometimes we said yes, but didn’t have to accept an offer that didn’t feel right.

Sponsorship does not have to be a life-long relationship. Many of us began with an interim sponsor until we found someone available for a more permanent relationship. Some of us changed sponsors if it wasn’t working.

How sponsorship works CMA is based on the value of people who share a common problem helping each other. With our sponsors, we began to believe that we could do together what we could not do alone.

Our sponsors were our hotlines. We called them when something triggered us to think about using, or when unpleasant memories came up that used to send us to dealers, bars, or the Internet. Our sponsors identified with our feelings and gave us hope that, in spite of how we felt, we did not have to use.

Our sponsors acted as sounding boards when we had to make decisions. We found it a good idea to discuss major decisions with our sponsors, not so they could make the decision for us, but so they could share their own similar experiences. Sponsors unfamiliar with a particular dilemma often directed us to someone else in the fellowship who has had related experiences.

Our sponsors made suggestions based on their own experience. Our sponsors sometimes gave us advice. We tried to be willing to accept the help being offered.

Sponsors help not only when times are confusing or tough but also when things are going well. Success and hope are also shared with a sponsor. By simply sharing we find unconditional love, selfless giving, patience, tolerance, honesty and trust in this crucial relationship. ►