

CSC 2020 (CoDA SERVICE CONFERENCE) on ZOOM – 24th, 25th & 26th August 2020

Hi Folks

Just thought I would keep you updated and relate to you the amazing experiences of being your UK Senior Voting Entity Delegate this summer at our annual CoDA Service Conference (CSC) 2020, which was totally virtual on Zoom for the very first time – and to hopefully encourage other CoDA members to give service to help their own “Recovery Through Service.”

CoDA’s CSC congregates annually and should have met face-to-face in July this summer in Ottawa, Canada, but due to COVID-19, this was rearranged to produce the whole Business Conference virtually; thanks to our Events Committee’s hard work.

This is a time when VE (Voting Entity) Delegates from around the world and CoDA boards and committees come together and hold their annual CoDA CSC, where important decisions are made with the CoDA Board of Trustees and the CoRe Board of CoDA (who do all the printing and produce all the CoDA Conference Approved Literature in the USA).

They make important decisions about financial budgets for the whole of CoDA for the previous and coming year/s and hold elections together with the Issues and Mediation Committee (IMC) and where other committees are recruited to give service – CoDA committees that help turn the wheels of CoDA worldwide including the United States & Canada.

Nancy O, Chair of CoDA Board of Trustees for 2020 and from Canada, was this year’s Chair of CSC, and the CoDA Events Committee did an amazing job of keeping our CoDA virtual world for the CSC in brilliant working order and on track.

We had two great Facilitators, who coordinated everything with a tremendous backup team and the IMC Voting Entity Liaison (IMC VEL) which observed and made sure all qualified Voting Entity Delegates, Alternate Delegates, CoDA board members and committee chairs were given voice. The VEL kept us all in check making sure we were all eligible as VE Delegates to vote – as long as we were visible on the screen for the whole of each Motion and that we met the required quota for the forum.

The IMC VEL did a brilliant job. They’re in charge of vetting each Voting Entity (VE) from around the world, including USA, to make sure Intergroups send delegates to represent the voice of their area or country.

There was representation from the USA from all the different states, and from Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Brazil, United Kingdom, Iran, Russia, Israel, Italy, Malta, and many other countries who were listening in by using YouTube – from as far afield as Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, India, Saudi Arabia, Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Germany, Kenya, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand and many more countries. There was also

representation from the Chairs of all the committees helping CoDA worldwide as follows:

- CoDA Board of Trustees,
- CoDA Resources Publishing, Inc. (CoRe),
- Communications Committee,
- Events Committee,
- Finance Committee,
- Outreach Committee (OR),
- Hospitals & Institutions Committee (H&I), Issues & Mediation Committee (IMC)
- Coda Literature Committee (CLC)
- Co-NNections Committee,
- Translation Management Committee (TCM),
- Spanish Outreach (SPO),
- Service Structure Committee (SSC)
- World Connections Committee (WCC).
- Ad Hoc Committee (now disbanded)

We had several trial-run CSC meetings in the weeks leading up to the conference and the final one was the night before on the evening of the 23rd of August 2020 – everyone was quite anxious as to how our very first full virtual CSC would stand up to our usual face-to-face CSC we have had in previous years.

However, we needn't have worried as the superb arrangements made by the CoDA Events Committee was so well practised that by the time we all gathered together on Monday, the 24th of August 2020 at Pacific time 8am, Eastern time 11am, and local UK time 4 pm, we were raring to go.

CoDA's very first CoDA completely virtual CSC 2020 was a resounding success! There has even been talk that we might think to possibly have alternate years of a virtual and the following year face-to-face CSC and then the following year virtual and so on CSCs in the future, but this will have to be put to Conference and to the CoDA Board vote and it's also up to our Higher Power and Group Conscience of the whole CoDA Fellowship.

We began the first day with a count of all the VE delegates present online and in full view being authorised by the IMC VEL vetting all who represented CoDA globally as VE delegates. As I mentioned before, we had representation from all over the world.

There were also alternate delegates, who represent the VE delegates when they're indisposed, and of course we had observers on YouTube who could dip in and out of the whole CSC 2020 but did not have a voice.

Delegates from all over the world came forward to represent their countries or their states and the VE delegates were introduced individually to conference. There were 44 counted from all over the world including various states in the USA and a quorum

of 29 was counted, who were required to be present for each motion in order for it to be passed.

Our very first voting was to agree the adoption of the “30 second rule” followed by the Serenity Prayer to be ratified by conference – to be held before each motion voted at CSC. This motion was agreed before we had our first break of the day.

This “30 second rule” had been introduced at our CSC in Atlanta, the previous year, which I was able to bring back from the USA in October 2019 and has now been adopted by our National Service Committee (NSC), where we practice this rule in our meetings. This gives our Group Conscience the opportunity and space to invite our Higher Power to be present when we vote on any issues or motions (as mentioned in our CoDA 12 Service Concepts).

On the first day, we worked diligently to cover as much ground as possible, passing some very important motions presented by the CoDA Board of Trustees, including proposed slight changes to three of the four CoDA Foundation Documents which have been referred to the CSC 2021 to be re-voted on where they will now have to be passed by a majority of 75%, and several motions which have been referred to next year’s CSC for ratification, including the New CoDA 12 Service Concepts presented by Canada and hopefully confirmed at CSC 2021. (A list of all the motions passed during the CSC 2020 can be downloaded from [coda.org](http://coda.org)).

During the breaks each day, members gave service by manning the virtual hospitality rooms, where we could meet other members virtually – kindly giving service for CoDA daily meetings or where representatives of different CoDA committees gave a talk on their particular committee and encouraged interest for members who might wish to join them in service.

The previous year when I visited Atlanta, Georgia to represent CoDA UK as you’re VE Delegate (voted in by the NSC for two years in April 2019), I had been asked to join various committees and being your NSC Literature Secretary in the UK, I had great interest in the CoDA Literature Committee (CLC) and also the Outreach Committee and Hospitals & Institutions Committee, as well as the Events Committee, but this year I was also asked to join the IMC, where I felt most privileged to be asked. It is a highly regarded committee doing lots of very important service work for CoDA and incorporating a good working knowledge of the FSM (Fellowship Service Manual) and the CoDA By-Laws and also facilitates dispute mediation for Voting Entities, Intergroups and other CoDA entities as needed worldwide. I was recommended by their committee to join, for which I thanked them. But then I was promptly told I had to then be ratified by the CSC at Conference.

I agreed to join them if I was accepted and found out that this is the only committee besides the CoDA Board of Trustees and CoRe Board that has to be officially voted in by the CSC. This vote was held on the final day of the Conference where I was voted in to serve on the IMC and for which I feel very privileged to give service. I must say I’ve already attended several committee meetings and this has proved to be an exceptional group of people. I feel very honoured to have been accepted and have so much to learn, studying the FSM (Fellowship Service Manual), which is on free download (and which every CoDA Group is recommended to possess a copy

of). I know that serving in the IMC will help with my continuing recovery in the Fellowship of Codependents Anonymous.

I was also accepted onto the CLC, another extremely talented and hard-working committee and an exceptionally gifted group of people who edit, present, write and re-write the CoDA Literature which assists CoDA recovery throughout the world.

The CLC are servicing many different projects, one of which I am now honoured to be involved in called "Story Gatherers". We are hoping this will culminate in members of CoDA coming forward from the UK, Europe, Middle East, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Southeast Asia, as well as USA, Canada and South America and many more countries.

We are hoping to get worldwide coverage and entries from all over the world, especially from ethnic minorities, immigrants' groups, LGBTQ+, members of all different race, religion and ethnicity etc. who can contribute their wonderful stories for the fellowship to communicate globally their experience, strength and hope of recovery in CoDA. (If you are interested, please contact [gilliancoda@gmail.com](mailto:gilliancoda@gmail.com) for more details).

On the second day we began with great enthusiasm. However, after a short while we were zoom bombed by a disgruntled member mistakenly given the wrong credentials and therefore removed and made an observer with no vote – not a very happy bunny – so the person continued to zoom bomb the conference and we had to immediately disband the meeting and use a completely different ID and password to login which took some time – quite a kerfuffle, but brilliantly dispatched. However, the zoom bomber again broke through, until our amazing communications people identify the loophole and resolved the situation. Undeterred, the conference soldiered on and decided to continue and make up for lost time, extending our meeting, which was, as always, democratically voted on. Progress Not Perfection.

I don't know whether I was spurred on by the enthusiasm, as a typical recovering codependent to work that bit harder, but I found my voice and courage and spoke up on several occasions for lots of different motions. I had made sure I was well versed on several issues as I had studied the files I had printed over several weeks prior to the CSC. I was able to bring both local as well as Intergroup and NSC views forward as your representative Senior Voting Entity Delegate from the UK.

After an exhausting previous day, we arrived at the final day on the 26th of August. This was our third and final day. Each morning we had the results of the previous day's votes which we downloaded and these motions were then approved by conference. On each day I had visited the Hospitality Committee virtual rooms for a Finance, Outreach, CLC and IMC and several early CoDA Meetings.

Over the three CSC days, committee annual reports & goals and committee budgets were presented. On the last day, conference voted in the new CoDA Board of Trustees and the CoRe Board and the IMC. These were all ratified by conference. Various motions were passed, including importantly the CoDA Finance Committee and CoRe Budgets (very few failed), but as mentioned before, several were referred for reviewing for next year's CSC, including the very important one presented by

Canada for the new 12 Service Concepts Booklet and download, which will be presented again at CSC 2021.

Our CoDA Service Conference (CSC) is usually held over a full period of 4 working days of business (usually at least 8-hour days) followed by a 3-day convention full of speakers, workshops and lots of fellowship. We had to squeeze 4 days' work into 3 days virtual, and 8 hours plus into 5 hours daily. No mean feat, but we managed it.

However, on the last day we voted to continue to finish important motions and work until we had finished (until almost 1am UK time/8pm EST/5pm PST). We even managed to vote not to exclude our 'zoom bomber' – ever true to our CoDA Tradition 5.

I found the whole CSC 2020 exhilarating and informative, and I was in awe of the dedication and professionalism of the way the whole conference was conducted by the two facilitators and the Events Committee, all the amazing committees giving service freely to CoDA.

There were a few people from the Board of Trustees, CoRe Board and IMC plus several other committees who were retiring, but still wished to continue giving service to CoDA, and some quite emotional farewells. What a great band of fellow CoDA members and an amazing CoDA fellowship. Some members have been there from the very beginning – 34 years ago when CoDA was first formed on 22nd October 1986.

My overall feeling after CSC 2020 was of what an amazing group of people CoDA Fellowship has amassed “carrying the messages” of experience, strength and hope and encouraging the hope of recovery through service which is the rallying call from the CoDA Board of Trustees and CSC for the coming year.

They also reiterated that [coda.org](http://coda.org) needs donations to help keep the Fellowship of CoDA, CoDA Board of Trustees and CoRe and all the committees able to continue carrying the message of recovery as many meetings are now virtual but are not at this moment in time sending contributions, which they would normally do.

One final note. I attempted to get our UK long version of the Serenity Prayer accepted first as a motion with the intention of it eventually being accepted as a VE Issue (Voting Entity Issue). The Board refused the motion but I had messages of encouragement from several saying that they loved our long Serenity Prayer. I resolved, with Higher Power's guidance, to present it to the CLC who have decided to take it under their wing and to present it under their banner at conference in 2021 to be used as an official CoDA Long Version (i.e. CoDA Long and Short version of the Preamble) and possibly include it in their CoDA Prayer Book. They love it! So here's hoping. Higher Power does work in mysterious ways.

Thank you CoDA. it has been an amazing journey which has been the saving of my sanity – to be given the privilege of serving CoDA UK as your VE Delegate at the CSC's face-to-face 2019 in Atlanta and this year's virtual CSC this summer.

Many years ago, I came into my first CoDA meeting a quite broken, exhausted human being and now thanks to CoDA, I can stand strong in my own truth and feel comfortable in my own skin for the very first time in my life. I am so grateful to the CoDA programme of recovery and the CoDA fellowship.

I hope to continue to give service in CoDA locally, nationally and internationally, and to serve on the IMC, CLC and Outreach committees to the best of my ability, hopefully doing justice to them, whilst continuing on my road to happy destiny, one day at a time.

Thank you to CoDA and thank you to my Higher Power for giving me the gift of recovery from codependence and the opportunity to give service. If I can do this, then anyone in CoDA can. "Trust the Process". I was told in my very first meeting: "Keep coming back, it works if you work it, so work it, you're worth it!" And I do. And I am.

In gratitude, love, fellowship and service.

Gillian A.  
UK Senior VE Delegate  
NSC Literature Secretary