

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How often are meetings held?

COS Meetings are held twice a month - on the 2nd Saturday and 4th Wednesday. We also hold special dinners and special events irregularly through-out the year. Finally, individual members go out to dinner, theater, clubs, etc. on a frequent basis.

During the summer months (July and August) the heat, lack of A/C at our meeting place, and daylight savings time conspire to drive our attendance down, so we usually take these months off. See you in the fall however!

### How much does all this cost, and what do I get?

COS membership is \$35 per year. That gets you our monthly newsletter, shopping guide, and membership directory. We charge \$5 per meeting to cover rent on our meeting place and refreshments.

### I am terrified of being discovered.

#### What should I do?

COS values its security and that of its members above all. All of our literature and mailing is discreet; we have chosen our group name to be discreet as well. While some of our members are "out" and active in the local GLBT community, many others must protect their careers, families, etc. We respect both points of view!

### Can I dress at the meetings?

Many of our members dress at home and travel to the meetings en femme. However, there are many reasons why this may not be possible:

- Spouse disapproval
- Nosy neighbors
- Not quite passable yet
- Daylight Savings Time

Please do not let this discourage you from coming! We have several changing rooms at the meeting place. Come a bit early and there will be plenty of time to put yourself together!

### Where are the meetings held?

We hold the meetings in West Hartford. For reasons of security, the meeting place is confidential. Please call the COS phone line at (860) 604-6343 for details.

### What should I wear?

The dress code is fairly loose - mostly women's business attire, dresses, skirt and blouse, etc. Some members like to dress up a bit, some members are more casual. We do however, discourage fetish wear or dress that would be inappropriate for the everyday public. Save it for Halloween or a night to a club!

### My spouse wants to come to a meeting

COS understands fully the sensitive issues faced by the married cross-dresser. We welcome spouses to any of our meetings or events. If your spouse has questions or issues about the transgendered community or COS, let us know. We can connect her with some of the spouses who are active in COS and accept this part of their husbands' lives.

### I am not a cross-dresser but I would like to meet one. Can I come to a meeting?

No. We are not a dating service. We are a support group. There are other groups in the state that may be more open to your needs, and we can help you to locate these if you wish.

### I am Transsexual - can I join COS?

Of course! We welcome all of our transgendered sisters and brothers. Please note that we are a bit more focused towards the cross-dressing community (wigs, makeup, sizing, and presentation). Some of the issues important to a TS person in transition may be better addressed at a TS support group such as the Twenty (XX) Club. However, there is quite a bit of overlap between the membership of COS and the XX Club. Please join us!

### I am gay. Can I come to a meeting?

Of course! COS does not discriminate. We are a non-sexual group, however, and discourage all sexual behavior (regardless of orientation) within the group or at group events. While COS is an alternative to the local drag community, we have a lot of friendships, and even some members who are active in that community as well

### Whenever I call I get a machine. Don't you answer the phone?

Members of the COS board staff the phone line when they can. However, sometimes work, travel, and other complications get in the way of full-time phone support. Keep trying! Daytime hours are usually the best, and if you are able to leave a message, be assured we will be discrete when we call back.

### I have never dressed before. Will you do a "make-over" on me?

Unfortunately, we do not have the resources or time during a meeting to give you that makeover you've always wanted - in fact, most of us have all we can do to get ourselves ready! However, there are several local establishments that can assist you with makeup, nails, hair, etc. We will be happy to help you contact these places.

COS meetings regularly host businesses catering to our community. We've had wig shops, Mary Kay, Avon, Merle Norman, dressmakers, and several beauty salons. These can help you to fine tune your presentation and image. We also publish a shopping guide that lists local T-friendly establishments.

Please do not let your skill level hold you back - if you would like to join and don't feel up to coming en femme, we welcome you to come en drab. Most of the lovely ladies of COS started out exactly where you are today, and we understand how you are feeling. We're confident that after a meeting or two you will feel comfortable stepping out en femme, and beginning the journey to self acceptance and comfort.

### What's all this Outreach stuff? Will I need to go on the lecture circuit?

Only if you want to! COS is devoted to educating the general public about transgenderism. COS members have spoken at most of the colleges in the state, as well as some high schools, public service groups, etc. If your son or daughter comes home from college talking about the nice cross-dressers who spoke in Sociology class, odds are good they have met members of COS.

In addition to lectures and presentations, COS reaches out to the local GLBT community through GLBT Pride Day, the annual Children from the Shadows conference, and participation in Gender Lobbying Day.

The Outreach programs are quite extensive and ambitious, and many members find being under the public spotlight a bit too daunting! But your input and energy are always appreciated! By being part of COS, you are helping to spread the word that we are normal, loving, and wonderful people - perhaps helping the next generation to avoid the shame and hiding that many of us grew up with.

## Why Join COS ?

If you are a Crossdresser or Transgendered, you are welcome to stop by a COS meeting to see what we are all about.

We love to see new faces - and we'd like you to consider joining COS. For \$35 / year, we think we offer some great benefits:

- Monthly newsletter "The Outreach News"
- The COS Resource Guide
- The annual Membership Directory
- The CT Outreach internet mailing list
- Twice monthly meetings
- Annual Banquet

Your \$35 annual dues also helps to support the COS outreach activities:

- Staffed phone line
- Connection to the GLBT Community
- Outreach speakers bureau
- Children from the Shadows conference

COS is run by a volunteer board of directors, elected by the membership. Our annual budget is used to run the group, and to support the groups dual missions of outreach and support.

COS is a safe and affirming community - whether you are seeking to balance your TG self with your "regular life" or as a place to relax, socialize, and gather strength along your transgendered journey.



## COS Meetings

COS meetings can be as varied as we are! But there are a number of things you can count on...

### Programs

*We host TG friendly shops and business people - from wigs to make-up, from clothing to electrolysis. We also invite helping professionals - social workers, psychologists, transgender activists to speak about their area of expertise. In 1999, over 75% of COS meetings had a formal program or presentation.*

### Attendance

*COS has about 80 active members; we see anywhere from 10-30 of these on a given meeting night.*

### Safety

*We value our privacy and security, so we do not publish our meeting location.*

### A Place to Change

*It's not the Ritz, but COS has several bathrooms available for changing.*

### Refreshments

*We always supply coffee, tea, soft drinks, and a little something to eat. (veggies, snacks, deserts) No smoking inside the meeting place, however.*

### Connection

*When we speak to a new member - we often hear the same theme "I thought I was the only one....I have felt so alone...." COS meetings give you a chance to meet other transgendered individuals. Compare notes, childhoods, technical tips - you name it!*

### The Latest News

*A COS meeting is the ideal place to catch up on the latest dance club, a TG themed film or television show, community news, and old friends.*

## Connecticut Outreach Society



The CT Outreach Society, or COS, is a support and social group for Transgendered persons.

Founded in 1989, COS has been active in the greater Hartford GLBT community. Our goals are simple:

1. Provide a safe social and supportive environment for transgendered persons and spouses; especially those just discovering, accepting, and embracing their TG natures.
2. Provide information and outreach to the greater community so that TG individuals are better understood and accepted.
3. Encourage and support the personal growth and life journey of each COS member.

COS is not for everyone. But we do try to meet the needs of the majority of TG persons.

### **Connecticut Outreach Society**

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