



Codependents Anonymous

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Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence

These patterns and characteristics are offered as a tool to aid in self-evaluation. They may be particularly helpful to newcomers.

Denial Patterns:

I have difficulty identifying what I am feeling.

I minimize, alter, or deny how I truly feel. I perceive myself as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.

I lack empathy for the feelings and needs of others. I label others with my negative traits.

I can take care of myself without any help from others.

I mask my pain in various ways such as anger, humor, or isolation.

I express negativity or aggression in indirect and passive ways.

I do not recognize the unavailability of those people to whom I am attracted.

Low Self Esteem Patterns:

I have difficulty making decisions.

I judge what I think, say, or do harshly, as never good enough.

I am embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts.

I value others' approval of my thinking, feelings, and behavior over my own.

I do not perceive myself as a lovable or worthwhile person.

I constantly seek recognition that I think I deserve.

I have difficulty admitting that I made a mistake.

I need to appear to be right in the eyes of others and will even lie to look good.

I am unable to ask others to meet my needs or desires.

I perceive myself as superior to others.

I look to others to provide my sense of safety.

I have difficulty getting started, meeting deadlines, and completing projects.

I have trouble setting healthy priorities.

Compliance Patterns:

- I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.
- I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or anger.
- I put aside my own interests in order to do what others want.
- I am hypervigilant regarding the feelings of others and take on those feelings.
- I am afraid to express my beliefs, opinions, and feelings when they differ from those of others.
- I accept sexual attention when I want love.
- I make decisions without regard to the consequences.
- I give up my truth to gain the approval of others or to avoid change.

Control Patterns:

- I believe most people are incapable of taking care of themselves.
- I attempt to convince others what to think, do, or feel.
- I freely offer advice and direction to others without being asked.
- I become resentful when others decline my help or reject my advice.
- I lavish gifts and favors on those I want to influence.
- I use sexual attention to gain approval and acceptance.
- I have to be needed in order to have a relationship with others.
- I demand that my needs be met by others.
- I use charm and charisma to convince others of my capacity to be caring and compassionate.
- I use blame and shame to emotionally exploit others.
- I refuse to cooperate, compromise, or negotiate.
- I adopt an attitude of indifference, helplessness, authority, or rage to manipulate outcomes.
- I use terms of recovery in an attempt to control the behavior of others.
- I pretend to agree with others to get what I want.

Avoidance Patterns:

- I act in ways that invite others to reject, shame, or express anger toward me.
- I judge harshly what others think, say, or do.
- I avoid emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy as a means of maintaining distance.
- I allow my addictions to people, places, and things to distract me from achieving intimacy in relationships.
- I use indirect and evasive communication to avoid conflict or confrontation.
- I diminish my capacity to have healthy relationships by declining to use all the tools of recovery.
- I suppress my feelings or needs to avoid feeling vulnerable.
- I pull people toward me, but when they get close, I push them away.
- I refuse to give up my self-will to avoid surrendering to a power that is greater than myself.
- I believe displays of emotion are a sign of weakness. I withhold expressions of appreciation.

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