

“Boundaries & Codependence”

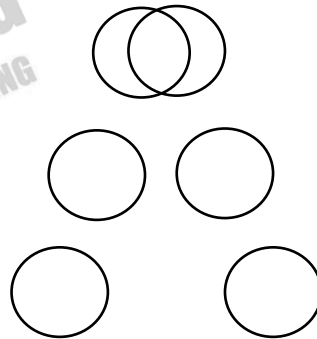
Codependence is pseudo-intimacy. People in this unhealthy form of relationship have a confused understanding of closeness and intimacy

Therapy can help! Many people report emotional stability:

- Through developing skills at decreasing codependence and increasing interdependence
- Codependence is common
- Often families, couples, friendships of all manner involve codependent and lopsided relationships.

TESTING TESTING

Which couple is the closest?



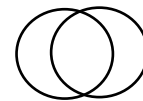
The top set of overlapping circles represent the core issue. this so-called closeness is inherently unstable. these relationships tend to be rocky, with sudden shifts to the bottom set of circles, to anger, controlling behaviors, cold distance, sulking, hurt, mistrust.

- Healthy change begins as one forges **personal** (=psychological) capacities, based in the defining of one’s source of meaning in life, peace, happiness, joyous, challenging activities, alternative friendships, and so on, *in ways not quite so dependent on one other person*

Tolerating less intense, predictable communication patterns may be important. This could mean less checking social media or messages, and tolerating delayed, aggressive or ambiguous texts, DMs and responses. This can begin to reveal how much a person has been controlled by codependence.

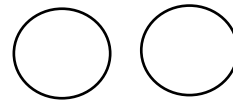
- This sort of capacity-building very naturally results in the recalibration of relationships characterized by ups/downs, manipulation and other forms of conflict, aggression or emotional abuse.

“Friends” (also girl/boyfriends) who demand pseudo-intimacy will push harder initially to maintain the status quo.



They may feel threatened, and in turn threaten to
break off

- Some people will drop out of therapy when they realize how much work it requires to achieve healthy intimacy.
- Many people begin very convinced that their friend or partner is *the* problem. Often “both” are true, and the problem is more one of each individual owning their part, and seeking self-improvement.
- Often one member of the couple is more ready, willing and/or able, and decreased co-dependency leads to a break-up.
- Some couples achieve the goal of remaining “together”, but in a more stable, inter-dependent manner. In this form, each may have their own friends, in addition to shared friends. Same for interests and passions and activities.
- Each person in a couple needs to go, meet, do, experience things, ‘have a life’, then share their ups and downs with a supportive partner. Not one who criticizes or fixes or controls, but one who listens, encourages and celebrates progress even if small and slow. With this, progress will soon increase.
- Resilience grows as one achieves more personal stability.
- Resilience deepens as people ‘own’ their own emotions and shift away from an attribution of their emotions on to another.
- There is nothing wrong with being mad, sad, glad, etc., so long as credit/blame is not overly projected on to others.



Therapists advise hot/cold, volatile couples to practice “I-statements”

These follow the form, when you _____ (insert only objective behavior, such as speak loudly), I feel _____ (insert only an emotion)

- Arguing is dramatic, intense and often unconsciously rewarding because it’s cathartic
- Arguing may become a subconsciously reinforced habit because there is some superficial relief in venting
- The role of status and power in relationships is often critical and hard to pin down.
- In codependence, there’s a core confusion regarding both power and love.
- Iconic examples of this involve couples who engage in/suffer from interpersonal violence, and who repeat these patterns after breaking up in subsequent relationships.



"Co-dependency is a possibility."

Native Americans and indigenous peoples live from an interdependent ethic, and this has bearing on codependence. they do not presume the earth belongs to them and owes them its food or beauty. they pursue a balanced existence and rejoice in these gifts and mysteries of the 'Great Spirit' that enable this.

Healing codependence comes through...

- Healing comes through a non-blaming expression of sadness, anger and fear.
- Healing comes through honoring oneself as imperfect, as OK to seek and desire love, friendship and support, but stopping short of assuming, demanding and expecting this from another.
- Of course, healing comes through learning to decrease substance abuse, improved sleep and exercise and healthy eating.
- And through communicating about difficult topics with professors, friends and parents.
- Through facing problems and working toward solutions related to finances, grades or performance.
- Resilience involves capacities not limited to recovering a present problem but will help protect against and improve capacities to weather future storms.
- Resilience may help one to be less self-focused, more interpersonally connected and empathic