

Codependency

Many people have heard of codependence, but most still don't really understand what it means, and therefore recovery is difficult. The way we work with it at CHARTER is to describe a pattern of conditional giving that is framed as unconditional giving.

Codependency is a term coined by practitioners in 1970s working with the families of chemically dependent or alcoholic people who noticed that, as well as suffering the emotional impact of living with a person with a drinking or drug problem, some family members (particularly spouses) were deeply emotionally entangled with their partner's condition, and suffering in confusing ways which were difficult to treat.

As the codependent focusses on others to the detriment and neglect of their own needs and feelings, they are drawn to high maintenance individuals as partners and friends who demand that they maintain the role of caretaker.

Manifesting in patterns such as compulsive helping, compliance, manipulation or control, and indirectly seeking constant reassurance from others, this often leaves the codependent feeling resentful, taken for granted, exhausted and worried. But this pattern never succeeds in providing that fulfilment, rather it prompts the codependent person to 'try harder', to neglect themselves further, and a downward spiral of disappointment, injustice and rejection (often impossible to voice directly) results.

These patterns are deeply ingrained in a person's way of being in relationship and are born of childhood experience where usually the child experienced difficulty in their relationship with their parents or caregivers priming them to 'be the good child.'

Worth noting is that on the receiving end of co-dependent love and attention, you are likely to feel obliged, trapped, suffocated and annoyed. Crucially you will also feel guilty for feeling annoyed. You wonder why are you reacting so angrily to someone's expressions of care and love? You begin to believe there is something wrong with you, and if you don't learn how to behave around this emotional enmeshment, there will be.

At CHARTER we have particular success in treating codependence and helping people find alternative ways of relating where self-respect can flourish.

Frequently, there is a family history of addiction, although this need not be the case. Also codependency is often a secondary condition suffered by addicts themselves.

Download our 'Codependent checklist' for a more detailed definition of the characteristics.

If you think you suffering from co-dependency then give us a call, we can help

Call 020 7323 4970

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