

Codependency

Where there is addiction, there is always at least one codependent.

What is a codependent? A codependent is loosely defined as someone who exhibits too much, and often inappropriate, caring for persons who depend on him or her. The dependent may have emotional, physical, financial difficulties, or addictions they seemingly are unable to surmount. The codependent person exhibits behavior which controls, makes excuses for, pities, and takes other actions to perpetuate the obviously needy person's condition, because of their desire to be needed and fear of doing anything that would change the relationship. A codependent can feel responsible for an addict's poor choices, feel indispensable when successful at controlling the addict's life, and ashamed when unsuccessful. They often believe the addict's promises that "I won't do it again" even though that promise has been broken over and over again.

Codependent behaviors can be learned by family members in order to survive in a family which is experiencing great emotional pain and stress caused, for example by another family member's addiction such as alcoholism, sexual, physical, verbal or other abuse within the family, a family member's chronic illness, etc.

Some Signs and Symptoms of Codependence

Someone is in a significant relationship with another person who is addicted to a substance or a behavior, or someone who is depressed or abusive.

Can't say no without feeling guilty

Tries very hard to please people but seldom feels that they measure up

Terribly offended by personal criticism

To avoid feeling guilt and shame, they seldom stand up to others that disagree with them

Trusts people too much or not at all

Can't be happy unless others, especially the needy people in their lives, are happy

Is often a victim in strained and broken relationships

Tends to situations as all

Feels responsible for the addict's poor choices