

Interdependence – the BALANCE in Healthy Family Life

Let's start out with a little QUIZ

There are basically 2 ways that families can choose to live:

1. Co-Dependently

- This means that there exists in the home an excessive (too much) care taking of a partner, adult child, etc. to try and maintain BALANCE in the home.
 - So that the home is livable.
- This family situation is unbalanced and unhealthy.
- When family members don't get what they want – anger and resentment result.
- This causes:
 - Unhealthy dependency on others for basic needs – when family members should be taking care of themselves.
 - Unhealthy stress and drama in the home if the care taker doesn't comply with demands.
- Fosters abuse in the home:
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Financial
 - Psychological

2. Interdependently

- This means that there exists a healthy give and take – in caring for each other.
- Balance / Harmony in the home occurs through:
 - Respect of others needs
 - Honesty in speaking of needs, wants, feelings
 - Respect of others space (boundaries)
 - Healthy (assertive) conflict management
 - Acceptance of “tough love” rules and boundaries
- Fosters healthy and happy living in the home:
 - Each member of the home becomes stronger (resilience)
 - Inner strength and contentment
 - Safety
 - Each member can stand on their own “two feet.” – They all work together to make the home.

What are the characteristics of Co-Dependent families?

Co-Dependent or Enabling People: FEAR

1. Feel they are responsible for the choices and bad behaviors of others in the family. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- “Because of me...”- “Because of you..”- “It’s my fault...”	Passive
2. Have difficulty setting boundaries and rules.	Passive
3. Tend to do more than their fair share of the work.	Passive
4. Feel guilty when saying “no” or setting limits.	Passive

5. Have a need to control others by knowing where they are going, who they are talking to, etc.	Passive Aggressive
6. Feel frustrated and irritable most of the time.	Passive Aggressive
7. Feel afraid that if you say “no” and set limits that others will leave.	Passive
8. Tend to say nothing rather than start a conflict.	Passive
9. Think of others before your own needs.	Passive
10. Feel selfish when putting yourself first.	Passive
11. Cover up for the bad choices/decisions of loved ones.	Passive
12. Lie to keep loved ones safe from consequences.	Passive

Symptoms and Problems with Co-Dependency:

- **Low Self Esteem** – Guilt and Shame
 - Feeling like you’re not a good enough parent
 - Indulge others in order to feel “OK”
- **People Pleasing** – Anxiety
 - Saying “no” and setting boundaries causes anxiety.
 - Always going out of your way to please people – sacrifice yourself.
- **Poor Boundaries** – always feeling responsible for others
 - Personal feelings, thoughts, and needs don’t count.
 - Always feels responsibly for others well-being.
- **Reactivity** – avoids any type of conflict.
- **Caretaking** – always putting others first.
 - Other peoples feeling, needs, wants are more important than mine.
- **Control** – to feel safe and secure must be in control of the home.
 - Little conversation in the home
 - Little to no sharing of feelings other than explosive anger
 - Tends to be very “bossy” and tell others what they “should” do.
- **Dysfunctional Communication**- afraid of being truthful for fear of upsetting others

- Always pretending that others behavior is “ok.”
- Fearful of upsetting others.
- **Obsessions** – anxiety and fear over what others think of them
 - Afraid of making mistakes.
 - In denial that you don’t have a life of your own.
- **Dependency** – needs others to “need” them to feel “OK’
 - Doesn’t want to really know that there are problems in the home.
 - Just wants to keep the peace.
- **Insecure** – afraid of being judged by others
 - Feels they must always take care of other needs/wants.

How to Heal:

- Get help or guidance.
- Work on positive self esteem.
- Learn to recognize depression.
- Learn to become assertive (not aggressive)
- Learn to manage anxiety and worry
- Learn to manage anger, frustration, and excessive worry

Ticket:

Welcomed Healing Harmony – Conflict Management group this morning and opened session with the Serenity Prayer. Introduced today's topic of "Co-Dependence" Discussed how co-dependency becomes a survival tactic when a family has poor boundaries, little discipline, and unhealthy behaviors which result in chaos. In order to promote family function amidst the chaos "someone" from the family attempts to keep things going by allowing a poorly functioning family member to "get away" with bad behavior. Characteristics of co-dependent individuals and families were given. Clients then share how their family functioned. Usually the mothers in the family try and keep the peace when others are non-functional. Several clients admitted that they were the co-dependent ones in their family.

Plan:

- Start orientation and begin the group series again.
- Encourage open sharing and insight.

Individual Note:

able to identify own co-dependent behaviors and share these with peers.