

ADDICTION AND CODEPENDENCY DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA

ADDICTION

There is a difference between substance abuse and substance dependence. The following diagnostic criteria are listed in the DSM-IV for substance dependence (aka Alcohol and other drug addiction):

A maladaptive pattern of substance use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by three (or more) of the following occurring at anytime in the same twelve month period:

1. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following:
 - (a) a need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or desired effect
 - (b) markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance
2. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:
 - (a) the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance
 - (b) the same (or closely related) substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms
3. The substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended
4. There was a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use
5. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance (e.g., visiting multiple doctors or driving long distances), use the substance (e.g., chain smoking), or recover from its effects
6. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use
7. The substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to be caused or exacerbated by the substance (e.g., current cocaine use despite recognition of cocaine-induced depression, or continued drinking despite recognition that an ulcer was made worse by alcohol consumption)
8. Specify if:
 - (a) *With Physiological Dependence*: Evidence of tolerance or withdrawal (i.e., either item 1 or 2 is present)
 - (b) *Without Physiological Dependence*: No evidence of tolerance or withdrawal (i.e., neither item 1 nor 2 is present).

There are other forms of addiction in addition to alcohol and other drugs. Addictions classified as Impulse Control Disorders (e.g. sex addiction, gambling addiction, work-a-holism) in addition to alcohol and other drug use will use the following set of diagnostic criteria:

- 1) A pattern to resist impulses to engage in specific alcohol and other drug use behavior, or other impulse control behavior.
- 2) Frequent engaging in that behavior to a greater and greater extent **or** over a longer period of time than intended.
- 3) Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to stop, reduce, or control those behaviors.
- 4) Inordinate amount of time spent in obtaining alcohol or other drugs **or** other impulsive behaviors.
- 5) Preoccupation with the behaviors **or** preparatory activities.
- 6) Frequent engaging in the behaviors when expected to fulfill occupational, academic, domestic, or social obligations.
- 7) Continuation of the behavior despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent social, financial, psychological, or physical problem that is caused or worsened by the behavior.
- 8) Need to increase the intensity, frequency, number, or risk of behaviors to achieve the desired effect, **or** diminished effect with continued behaviors at the same level of intensity, frequency, number, or risk.
- 9) Giving up or limiting social, occupational, or recreational activities because of the behavior.
- 10) Distress, anxiety, restlessness, or irritability if unable to engage in the behavior.

CODEPENDENCY

Codependency is an addictive process, a disorder just like any other addiction. Codependency can be described as a dysfunctional pattern of living in which one overreacts to things going on outside of oneself and under reacts to what is going on inside of oneself. Codependency may involve compulsive behaviors and dependence upon approval from others in order to achieve a sense of safety, identity, and self-esteem. Codependents may put all their efforts into those around them, neglecting to fully take care of themselves, especially emotionally. Codependency is a disorder that, if left untreated, can lead to other addictions such as eating disorders, substance dependence, work-a-holism and compulsive spending.

As a general rule of thumb, those who are substance dependent (addicts) are usually codependent, and those who are in the family system of the addict (close relations and family members) are usually codependent.

Timmen Cermak, M.D., suggests that co-dependency is a personality disorder. His reason is that when specific personality traits become excessive and maladaptive and cause significant impairment in functioning or cause significant distress, this warrants a personality disorder diagnosis. Dr. Cermak, T.L. "Diagnosing and Treating Co-Dependence." Minneapolis, MN: Johnson Institute, (1986). proposes the following diagnostic criteria for this disorder:

- 1) Continued investment of self-esteem in the ability to control both oneself and others in the face of serious adverse consequences.
- 2) Assumption of responsibility for meeting others' needs to the exclusion of acknowledging one's own.
- 3) Anxiety and boundary distortions around intimacy and separation.
- 4) Enmeshment in relationships with personality disordered, chemically dependent, other co-dependent, and/or impulse-disordered individuals.
- 5) Three or more of the following:
 - a) Excessive reliance on denial
 - b) Constriction of emotions (with or without dramatic outbursts)
 - c) Depression
 - d) Hyper vigilance
 - e) Compulsions
 - f) Anxiety
 - g) Substance Abuse
 - h) Has been (or is) the victim of recurrent physical or sexual abuse
 - i) Stress-related medical illnesses
 - j) Has remained in a primary relationship with an active substance abuser for at least two years without seeking outside help¹

Codependency is more easily identified by looking at typical codependent traits.

Concealing behavior of the addict	Feeling superior to the addict
Efforts to confront the addict with his or her problem	Creating alibis, excuses and justifications to others
Intense mood swings from high to low	Denial of the obvious
Overlooking the addict's behavior	Rationalizing the addict's behavior
Protecting the addict from consequences of their behavior	Self-righteous criticism and judgment of the addict
Distrust of those outside the family because of the addict	Belief that if the addict changed, all problems would disappear
Attempts to catch or trap the addict	Threatening the addict
Efforts to exact promises from the addict	Strategies to control sexual activity of the addict
Feelings of responsibility for the addict's behavior	Being sexual with the addict to prevent the addict from being sexual with others
Fantasizing and obsessing about the addict's problem	Neglect of spiritual pursuits including prayer and meditation
Feelings of depression and remorse	Suicidal attempts or thoughts
Loss of friendships	Deterioration of family pride
Secret pacts with other family members	Feeling distant from other family members
Distrust of each other within the family	Loss of self-esteem or self-respect
Growing self-doubt and fear	Feeling unique and/or alone
Accidents, illness, or injury due to the stress of addiction in their life	Efforts to control family expenditures with increasing failure to do so
Changes in eating or sleeping patterns	Unusual dreams
Loss of time on the job	Decreased ability to work or function
Growing resentments and disappointments	Increasing financial problems
Engaging in self-defeating or degrading behaviors	Overextension and over-involvement in work or outside activities
Taking over of duties and responsibilities of the addict in an effort to keep family life "normal"	