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# Codependency Worksheets: Symptoms & Behaviors

Codependency can easily develop in relationships with people struggling with addiction. In order to understand how harmful this can be, it's best to compare the behaviors and symptoms of codependency with those of addiction.

**Symptoms:** Physical or emotional symptoms of codependency and addiction include:

- **Preoccupation:** A person obsessively focuses their thinking on their substance; AND a codependent obsessively focuses on the person.
  - Addiction: I can't wait to drink tonight. I wonder if I have enough alcohol at home or if I should stop and get some more.
  - Codependent: I wonder where he is or what he's doing or who he's texting
- **Increased tolerance:** More drugs or alcohol are required to produce the same effect, AND more toxic behavior is required to produce a negative reaction from codependents compared to before.
  - Addiction: I have to drink twice as much as I used to get drunk
  - Codependent: I used to get upset when he yelled at me, but it doesn't bother me anymore.
- **Loss of Control:** A person tries and fails to control how much they drink or do drugs, AND a codependent tries and fails to control their behavior towards the person.
  - Addiction: I only intended to have 1 drink, but I drank so much I blacked out.
  - Codependent: I said I'd kick him out if he came home drunk, but I ended up apologizing instead.
- **Denial:** A person denies their problem by rationalizing their actions.
  - Addiction: Everybody drinks, I don't have a problem. Without alcohol, I can't be social.
  - Codependent: I am helping him, he needs me. Without me, he would lose his job. Things will get better.



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- **Blackouts:** (Is not an exact parallel) A person experiences amnesia from being unconscious as a result of substance abuse or drinking too much. AND a codependent cannot recall all the details of high-stress emotional encounters
  - Addiction: I don't remember what happened last night
  - Codependent: I don't remember you saying that or how the fight started. It seems blurry
- **Craving:** A person feels a deep physical and mental need to use substances; AND a codependent feels a deep mental longing for the person.
  - Addiction: My body aches if I go too long without a drink. All I can think about is going home and getting drunk.
  - Codependent: He's all I think about. When he's not around I ache for him.
- **Compulsive Behavior:** A person uses substances compulsively despite the consequences it creates in their lives; AND a codependent feels compelled to act irrationally despite consequences it might create for themselves.
  - Addiction:
  - Codependent: I went through his phone, I ate to make myself feel better, I left work early to go get him something.
- **Decreased Tolerance:** A person can no longer handle as much of a substance as they used to without experiencing negative effects more quickly. AND, a codependent loses their ability to be patient as they used to and experiences negative emotions more quickly.
  - Addiction: I blackout much quicker than I used to.
  - Codependent: Everything he does irritates me.
- **Medical Problems:** As a result of substance abuse, people experience physical issues. As a result of stress, codependents experience physical and mental issues
  - **Addiction:** Diseases of the throat, lungs, heart, brain, liver, or digestive tract. Sexually transmitted diseases or other problems as a result of injury during intoxication.
  - Codependent: Stress-related problems of the body and mind. Headaches, hives, ulcers, neck or wrist pain, back problems, anxiety, depression, digestive issues, or stomach issues.





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- **Behaviors:** Actions common for addiction and codependency are
  - **Rationalizing:** A person finds a way to justify their substance use and make their behavior “okay”. AND a codependent finds ways to justify how they are treated
    - Addiction: I only blackout on the weekends. This doesn’t affect my work or family
    - Codependent: There are other people in way worse situations than I am.
  - **Minimizing:** A person downplays the consequences of their actions; AND a codependent downplays the negative influence of this person
    - Addiction: Drinking has barely affected my job. Things are fine.
    - Codependent: I’ve lost a lot of my friends but now I have time for the people who matter. Things are fine.
  - **Blaming:** A person blames outside forces for their substance abuse. AND a codependent blames outside forces for their partner’s behavior
    - Addiction: I wouldn’t need to get drunk every night if my boss was nicer to me. I wouldn’t need to get high every night if I wasn’t trying to mourn.
    - Codependent: His boss was out to get him, that’s why he got fired. His coworkers have been out to get him since day 1, that’s why he had a bad day.
  - **Sneaking/Lying:** A person lies about the true nature of their addiction so that they can continue using drugs. AND a codependent lies to others to enable the person’s behavior and/or their own.
    - Addiction: I lied about spending the night at a friend’s house (or working late) so that I could go drinking without anyone knowing.
    - Codependent: He was too drunk to go to work so I called his boss and lied for him. I lie to my friends about how much time we spend together.
  - **Hiding and secrets:** A person hides their substance use to avoid shame or intervention. AND a codependent keeps things about the person secret to avoid shame.
    - Addiction: My mom thinks I am doing so well. I hope she doesn’t find my drugs.
    - Codependent: He was doing so well last week. I hope nobody finds out he blacked out last night.





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- **Isolating:** A person in active addiction spends less time socializing in order to abuse their drug of choice more. AND a codependent spends less time socializing in order to spend more time with the object of their codependency.
  - Addiction: I'll have more fun staying in and getting drunk/high
  - Codependent: I'll have more fun staying in with him. He needs me more than them. I can't leave him or ....
- **Sneaking/Lying:** A person lies about the true nature of their addiction so that they can continue using. AND a codependent lies to others to enable the person's behavior and/or their own.
  - Addiction: I lied about spending the night at a friend's house (or working late) so that I could go drinking without anyone knowing.
  - Codependent: He was too drunk to go to work so I called his boss and lied for him. I lie to my friends about how much time we spend together.
- **Euphoric Recall:** A person romanticizes the feeling of using drugs or alcohol. AND a codependent romanticizes the feelings back when things were better rather than focusing on how things are.
  - Addiction: I would love to feel that way again.
  - Codependent: I miss the way things used to be with us.





### Recognizing Codependent Symptoms & Behaviors:

Using the table below and the definitions above, list examples you can think of for every Symptom and Behavior:

Codependent Symptoms:	Codependent Behaviors
Preoccupation	Rationalizing
Increased Tolerance:	Minimizing
Loss of Control	Blaming
Denial	Sneaking/Lying
Blackouts	Hiding/Secrets
Craving:	Isolating:
Compulsive Behaviors:	Euphoric Recall:
Decreased Tolerance:	





Medical Problems:





## Feelings of Codependence:

**Instructions:** With a friend or family member (not the object of codependence) go through each of these feelings and assign them a number between 1 and 10 for how strongly you feel these emotions (1 is weakest). After assigning numbers to each, go through all the emotions and think of examples of times you have felt these feelings.

Feelings	1-10
Numb or Emotionally disconnected.	
Anger	
Blaming	
Loneliness	
Sadness	
Disappointment	
Guilt	
Fear	
Shame	

