

**Codependency:**

*co-prefix* with: together :joint :jointly :one that is associated in an action with another :fellow :partner

**Explained:**

**de-pend-ent** \di-'pen-dent\ relying on another for support

\ko\di\pen\den\se\ something that is dependent on something else

Codependency isn't receiving as much attention today as it did in the '80s, but it's an issue that's not going away. As long as families are touched by alcohol or other drug dependency or a host of other poor coping styles, some people will be codependent.

The first research into codependency dates back more than 30 years when researchers found many similar behaviors among spouses of alcoholics. Even as these spouses enabled their alcoholic spouses continue drinking (picking them up from bars, driving them home, calling in sick for them at work), they tried to control or prevent their drinking by threatening to leave, hiding alcohol and the like. By placing so much emphasis on the lives of their alcoholic partners, these spouses neglected their own needs. Because their lives revolved around their alcoholic spouses, many experienced depression, low self-esteem and stress-related illnesses. They reported problems in relationships outside the family, in making decisions and in enjoying life.

Eventually, researchers found these behaviors among the children of alcoholics and among families faced with other addictions, domestic violence, mental illness or rigid religious practices. Many family members facing these issues seemed to be living their lives through someone else, obscuring their own identities to please someone else, relying on their partners for their own happiness.

Yet codependency does not have to be a life-long condition. With the help of a professional counselor or self-help group, codependent people can learn to feel and express their own emotions, to identify their own needs and take the steps necessary to fulfill them, and to draw appropriate boundaries between themselves and others.

HelpNet EAP offers professional, caring, confidential assistance to help you or your family members in codependency issues. Services are available Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Emergency services are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There is no charge to you. Your company pays an annual fee directly to HelpNet. Charges by HelpNet are not paid through your insurance plan. For more information, appointments, or a referral to a community agency, call any of the HelpNet offices listed on the reverse side of this newsletter.

## **CHARACTERISTICS Of CODEPENDENCY**

Codependent persons may:

- ∪ Have trouble identifying their own needs and emotions
- ∪ Seek approval from others.
- ∪ Judge themselves too harshly.
- ∪ Fear being abandoned.
- ∪ Confuse love with pity; tend to love people they “pity” or can “rescue.”
- ∪ Take on too much responsibility.
- ∪ Give in to others as opposed to standing up for their own needs.