

Shifting Codependency Patterns

Resource

Codependency involves tendencies toward unhealthy emotions and behaviors in one's relationships with others.

Often underpinned by maladaptive patterns related to:

- Denial
- Low Self-Esteem
- Compliance
- Avoidance, and
- Control

Contrasting codependency thought and behavior patterns with healthier ones can be a practical way to take action to recover from codependency.

Contrast and Compare

Use this resource as a starting point to consider how certain codependent patterns can impact relationships, and consider how they might be changed to more adaptive behaviors and tendencies instead.

Codependent Patterns: *Denial*

| A | B |
|--|--|
| Denying, playing down, or misrepresenting one's real feelings. | Owning and accepting one's own emotions as valid and relevant. |
| Lack empathy for the feelings and needs of others. | Feeling compassion for others - their emotions and human needs. |
| Struggling to identify with/recognize one's own feelings. | Self-awareness of own emotions. Being able to distinguish between thoughts and emotions. |

Codependent Patterns: *Low Self-Esteem*

| A | B |
|---|---|
| Difficulty or inability to recognize/ask for things they want or require. | Being self-sufficient where possible, and seeking help, when appropriate, when it is needed. |
| Struggling to establish adaptive boundaries with others. | Can set and maintain healthy personal boundaries. |
| Holding other people's approval for one's thoughts, emotions, and actions more highly than one's own. | Self-confident. Respecting the opinions of trusted others without the need to 'win' approval. |

Codependent Thought Patterns: *Compliance*

| A | B |
|---|--|
| Neglecting or deprioritizing one's own wants and needs to satisfy others. | Valuing one's own wants and needs when others request something. |
| Compromising personal beliefs and standards to avoid anger, disagreement, or rejection by others. | Upholding personal values and beliefs, even when they displease others. |
| Trouble expressing own views, thoughts, and emotions when others' differ. | Respecting and suitably expressing one's own personal beliefs and emotions, even when they differ from other people's. |

Codependent Thought Patterns: *Avoidance*

| A | B |
|---|--|
| Critically judging others beliefs or actions. | Being accepting and open to others opinions and beliefs. |
| Repressing own emotions and wants so that one doesn't feel vulnerable. | Trusting and esteeming one's own emotions and needs, acknowledging and respecting one's own vulnerability. |
| Difficulty communicating when faced with potential confrontation or disagreement. Being evasive or indirect about conflict. | Expressing oneself clearly and in a straightforward way to resolve disagreements appropriately. |

Codependent Thought Patterns: *Control*

| A | B |
|--|---|
| Trying to persuade other people what to believe or do. | Being open and accepting about other people's views, decisions, and feelings, even when they differ from one's own. |
| Believing that others can't look after themselves. | Appreciating that in most cases, mature adults can navigate their own issues. |
| Insisting that other people fulfil their needs. | Seeking out resources to fulfil one's own requirements, without asking it of others. Reaching out for help when necessary and appropriate without expecting it. |

Adapted from:

- CODA.org. (2011). *Recovery Patterns of Codependence*. Co-Dependents Anonymous International. Retrieved from <https://coda.org/meeting-materials/patterns-of-recovery/>.