

Co-Dependency

Love is a Choice—Hemfelt, Minirth, Meier

Is dependence on and addiction to: people, behaviors or things

People – parent, friend, spouse, employer

Behaviors – eating, working, sex, rage, cleanliness, gambling

Things – money, clothing, food, house, car

Is attempted control of: personal, internal feelings and emotions

By attempted control of: relationships, experiences, events

Is actually allowing these things to *be* controlling of life and behaviors

Is negative messages playing in the mind

Becomes cycle of endless pain without boundaries to guard and honor life

Can be multi-generational

Grandparent alcoholic – dependent on substance

Parent – workaholic – dependent on performance

Child promiscuous – dependent on approval

Characteristics of codependents

Driven by compulsions and addictions

Controlled by relational dysfunction – short term relationships

Faulty self-concept – (looking glass world)

Make happiness dependent on other people and blame them if not happy

At the same time feel inappropriately responsible for them

Find personal identity in those relationships in a dependent way

Lack of understanding of dependence, interdependence and independence

Denial of reality – prefer idealized perceptions

Extremes of emotion, clingy, smothering, demanding, blaming

Live in a cycle of “love hunger”

Wrong belief becomes filter of reality – *I am not valuable*

Distorted thoughts create distorted behaviors – *self-abuse: alcohol, etc.*

Life out of control confirms wrong beliefs

Response to codependency – *Do not...*

Become supportive of other people’s problems

Allow them to distort reality to create idealized situations

Accept addicts distortion of reality

Preserve addictive behaviors based on distorted thinking

Do support and empathize without creating dependency

Give hope and homework

Require personal responsibility

Help person to see self as God sees him/her

Help person to establish boundaries in life

Show real, tough love

Most of all – do not be an enabler

Enabler – one who makes possible acts of sinfulness and irresponsibility in a person's life – Jesus was *not* an enabler