

The Narcissist-Codependent Addiction

Narcissist and codependent relationships occur when two people with complementary emotional imbalances begin to depend on each other, leading to an increasing spiral of harm for both people. In many cases, drugs or other **addictive behaviors** are involved, creating a highly volatile situation in which an unhealthy relationship centers around both partners' destructive behavioral patterns.

This particular type of relationship involves two distinct personality types. Narcissists are likely to put themselves above all else, use other people to achieve their personal ends, exploit relationships without feeling guilty, blame other people when things go wrong, or even look down upon others simply to boost their self-esteem.

For their part, codependents tend to lack self-esteem, allow others to make decisions for them, put others before themselves, feel the need to be in a relationship, and are overly dependent on somebody else – their narcissistic partners, for example.

Once these relationships are formed, it can be very difficult to let go of them. Freeing yourself from codependency is necessary for a number of reasons, although it requires a great deal of insight, self-examination, and courage. Both the narcissist and the codependent have the tendency to reinforce one another in negative ways, especially in situations that involve drug or alcohol addiction. But with the right measure of guidance and support, it is indeed possible to safely end a codependent relationship, for the long-term benefit of everybody involved.

WHY SOME NARCISSISTS BECOME ADDICTS

As rule-breakers and attention-seekers, narcissists strongly believe that they are more special than other people. They have an emotional need to receive great respect, even as they ignore laws or rules that are meant to apply to them.

Narcissists are more likely to participate in antisocial behavior without worrying about health, safety or any other factors. They may feel comfortable bullying other people, or forcing those around them to take responsibility for their own negative behavior.

Because they come to believe that they are always in control, and that their behavior is largely immune from consequences, narcissists are more likely to take drugs or alcohol without worrying about becoming addicted, or experiencing adverse health effects. This overconfidence can lead to devastating outcomes, for themselves as well as those around them.

UNDERSTANDING CODEPENDENCY AND ENABLING BEHAVIOR

Sooner or later, reality catches up with narcissists. But this result can be delayed if their partners are codependents whose instinct is to bend over backwards to please their addicted loved one. By striving above all else to make their narcissistic partner happy, codependents often feed these addictions instead of taking forceful steps to try to end them.

Addictions are hard to sustain for long periods, often due to concerns over money. But with codependents taking on the role of enablers for their partners, harmful substance abuse can go on for extended amounts of time. Enabling behavior occurs when the codependent helps or encourages the narcissist to continue drinking alcohol or using drugs, either directly or indirectly. For example, a codependent may give their partner money to buy drugs or liquor, or help them hide their addiction from others.

Soon an unhealthy equilibrium begins to take shape, as the codependent is controlled by their narcissistic partner's addictive behavior. The codependent believes that acceptance and approval are of utmost importance – and that the way to achieve these goals is by taking care of the addict in the way he or she desires. The relationship soon becomes manipulative, with the narcissist addicted to a toxic substance, and the codependent addicted to their relationship with the narcissist.