

Codependency – What's In A Name?

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There's an old joke in addiction recovery circles that goes:

Q: *How does a codependent know they are dying?*

A: *Someone else's life passes before their eyes.*

Ouch! Nasty... But therein lies the crux of a problem many loved ones of an addict may be facing. In essence, the challenge is how not to be consumed by a loved one's addictive habits.

I Need a GPS! aka Guided Personal Support

Loved ones of an addictive person often tell me they just don't know what to do anymore to be helpful. What they have been doing – arguing, making threats, covering up or even purchasing the drug of choice – feels like it's making things worse. At their wits end, loved ones feel worn out, fearful and inadequate. To make matters worse, they can be shamed by being labeled 'codependent' by others who presumably are trying to help them. It seems more helpful to look at codependency as a 'symptom' of caring people who have lost their way because they never had a map. What these well intentioned loved ones need is a good 'GPS' system – Guided Personal Support.

What Does A Good 'GPS' System Look Like?

An effective 'GPS' system can take many forms - an education or support group; individual or family counselling; a good friend – or sometimes even an acquaintance - who's been there. Depending on the stage of recovery, loved one's need to gather the following knowledge, assistance and coping skills: 1. Information on the addictive process; 2. Understanding of how addiction affects loved ones, and that families are in recovery too; 3. Skills to develop helpful relationship dynamics, such as assertive communication and limit setting; 4. Knowledge regarding stopping relationship interactions that hinder, including enabling, denial and minimizing 'the problem'; 5. Learning how to detach with love, and refocus on the self; 6. Dealing with relapse and other setbacks; 7. Supporting and protecting children; 8. Rediscovering personal and family strengths; 9. Pursuing individual and group activities that are a source of fulfillment and happiness.

Loved one's who are new to addiction recovery will need some structured help, particularly at the beginning. Constructive change takes knowledge, support and practice. Patience is required, as you will inevitably make mistakes while learning how to regain control of your life from addiction. Be aware that people tend to be creatures of habit, so some family members may resist this change, even though for the better. Your addicted love one may try and oppose you or sabotage the process of healthy family recovery. Recovery from addiction means being able to value yourself - and your loved one - enough to consistently stand up to addiction, regardless of the opposition. You will thank yourself later.

Glynis Sherwood - Your Addiction Recovery Expert - is a Counsellor, Therapist, Consultant and Coach residing in Vancouver, BC, Canada. To learn more about how to help you and your become more resilient when overcoming addiction, visit my website www.RecoveryCounsellingSolutions.com . While visiting my site I invite you to claim my **Free Report: "7 Addiction Recovery 'Red Flags' & What To Do About Them"**. You are also welcome to contact me for a **Free Consultation** by telephone: **778-837-0616**, or by email: Info@GlynisSherwood.com .