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Codependency Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · What Is Codependency?

2 · Are You Codependent?

3 · Codependency vs. Caring

4 · Self-Enquiry

5 · Uncovering Limiting Beliefs

6 · Recognizing Your Rights

7 · Correcting Thinking Errors

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10 · Cultivating Positive Self-Talk

11 · Self-Care

12 · Assessing Your Relationships

13 · Building Your Support Team

14 · Setting Boundaries

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How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

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What Is Codependency?

Codependency is a disorder of selflessness, passivity, and personal powerlessness.

Codependency can be defined as the over-focus on others and under-focus on one's self.

Codependents suffer from a sense of helplessness over their own emotions and well-being.

They attach their happiness and worth to other people.

Because of that belief, they become on someone else, wanting them to behave in certain ways: “If they do “X”, then I can be okay/happy.”

To get someone to change, codependents use caretaking. Behind this caretaking is a belief that “If I did enough, the other person will love me and change for me.”

However, despite their best efforts, codependents end up feeling unappreciated and resentful.

They are also convinced that they will never find someone who will love them for who they are.

Their low self-esteem manifests itself into a form of learned helplessness that keeps them stuck with their emotional manipulator partner.

As a codependent, you may struggle with the following issues:

- Perfectionism,
- People-pleasing,
- Enmeshment in relationships,

- Love addiction,
- Shame,
- Emotional abuse,
- Trauma,
- Anxiety,
- Depression,
- Low self-esteem,
- Poor communication,
- Over-controlling,
- Victim mentality or external locus of control,
- Inability to tolerate being alone,
- Chronic feelings of emptiness,
- Denial and lack of self-awareness.

Note:

[illegible]

Are You Codependent?

The following are common signs of codependency. Check off the statements you relate to:

- ☐ Try to control events and how other people should behave through coercion, advice-giving, manipulation, or domination.
- ☐ Find no satisfaction or happiness in life outside of doing things for another person.
- ☐ Live too much by other people's standards.
- ☐ Feel that in order to get along and be liked, you need to be what people want you to be, even if that includes ignoring your own morals or conscience.
- ☐ Believe that it is selfish to put your own needs before the needs of others.
- ☐ Find it easier to take care of others than to take care of yourself.
- ☐ Allow feelings to build up that you do not express.
- ☐ Have been raised by a narcissist, an addict, or a non-nurturing caregiver.

Notes

Codependency vs. Caring

The following prompts will help you reflect on the difference between codependency and caring and challenge your limiting beliefs:

1. Do you feel compelled to help or fix someone?

2. Are you helping or enabling?

3. Are you helping in a way that encourages independence or dependence?

4. Do you feel empty or purposeless when you're not helping someone?

5. Do you give unsolicited advice or try to help in ways that aren't wanted or appreciated?

6. Do you end up feeling guilty when you don't exhaust every possible way to help someone?

7. Do you give or help in ways that negatively affect you?

8. Are your relationships unbalanced because you give but don't receive?

9. Are you helping because you want to or do you feel like you have to?

10. Do you sacrifice your own needs to take care of or please others? In what ways?

11. How does sacrificing your needs negatively affect you?

12. Do you live under the pressure of the expectations of others? Who specifically expects something of you and in what way?

13. What would you do if you were free of these expectations? What would your life be like without these expectations?

Self-Enquiry

Our minds and bodies are always giving us clues as to what we need or if there's something to learn.

Use the following self-enquiry questions whenever you experience unwanted emotion, tension, or urges:

Brief description of incident: _____

- Do I feel tension when I think about this incident? Is it possible that my bodily tension means that I'm trying to avoid something?

- Am I trying to deny or ignore an emotion?

- Is there something to learn here?

Uncovering Limiting Beliefs

The following are common limiting beliefs people struggling with codependency share. Check off the ones you relate to and add more to the list:

- ☐ “It is my job to rescue them.”
- ☐ “If I don’t help them, who will?”
- ☐ “If I don’t help, it means I’m a bad person.”
- ☐ “I have to put up with this because I wouldn’t get any better anyway.”
- ☐ “If I disagree, they may not love me anymore.”
- ☐ “If I stand up for myself, they might leave me.”
- ☐ “It is unacceptable if they don’t approve of me.”
- ☐ “They have to see things the way I do!”
- ☐ “They should know what I need, I shouldn’t have to tell them!”
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Recognizing Your Rights

The following is an Assertive Bill of Rights, adapted from Manuel J. Smith's "A Bill of Assertive Rights" (1975). Read aloud and notice how you feel:

- I have the right to judge my own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, independently of anyone else's judgment.
- I have the right to my own thoughts and emotions without having to justify or apologize for them.
- I have the right to decide whether I share responsibility for finding solutions to someone else's problems.
- I have the right to change my mind.
- I have the right to say "no" without feeling guilty.
- I have the right to make mistakes, and the responsibility to face the consequences and address them.
- I have the right to say "I don't know."
- I have the right to say "I don't care."
- I have the right to take up space.
- I have the right to feel compassion for someone without being responsible for fixing them.
- I have the right to decide what's the best choice for me, even if someone else doesn't agree.

- I have the right to disengage with people who are hurtful to me.
- I have the right to walk away from a toxic relationship, no matter what kind.

1. How did you feel as you read each line of the Assertive Bill of Rights?

2. Did any of the rights feel particularly hard to accept or agree with?

Correcting Thinking Errors

When you identify thinking errors you tend to make, you can increase your chances of catching yourself in the act and correcting it.

The following are common thinking errors you may have experienced:

1. Catastrophizing: This is when we take a relatively minor event and imagine the worst scenarios resulting from it.

Catastrophizing Thought: _____

Decatastrophizing Your Thought:

- Is this thought necessarily true?

- Is this thought consistent with the evidence?

- What is the evidence for and against this thought?

- Are there other ways of thinking about the situation?

- If the worst happens, what steps can I take to cope with the situation?

2. All-or-nothing thinking – also called ‘black or white’ thinking. This is when we assume that a situation is entirely good or entirely bad, no in-between.

All or nothing thought: _____

Finding a point between the extremes:

- Are you focusing on only one aspect of the overall situation and giving it too much importance?

- What would be a more accurate and fair rating to give this aspect of the situation on a scale of one to ten?

- What other aspects of the situation can you consider to view things more realistically?

3. Demands – These are rules we expect ourselves, others, and the world to follow and never break. Demands come in the form of “should” and “musts”.

Demand statement: _____

Making your thinking more flexible:

- What kind of language are you using? Are you using terms like ‘should,’ or, ‘must,’ or, ‘have to’?

- Are you accepting that other people may not follow your rules and use their own free will?

- Is it possible for you to allow yourself and others to fall short of your own standards?

- Are your demands realistic?

- How can you keep your standards and ideals but turn your demands into preferences?

4. Fortune-telling – This is when we make predictions about the future and firmly believe that our predictions are correct. The problem is that most of our predictions are likely to be negative and this can stop us from taking goal-oriented action.

For example, if you predict that your boss will say no if you ask for a pay rise, you may never ask for one.

Prediction: _____

Testing your prediction:

- What are the benefits of taking action despite your negative prediction?

- If your predictions were true, what steps can you take to handle potential problems?

5. Mind reading – This is when we assume that others are thinking in judgmental ways about us.

Mind-reading thought: _____

Testing your mind reading:

- What is the evidence that this thought is true?

- Are you confusing a thought with a fact?

- What are some alternative explanations for your assumptions?

6. Emotional reasoning – This is when we decide that our emotions are a true reflection of what is actually going on in reality.

For example, you may feel anxious and believe that you are in danger.

Emotional reasoning thought: _____

Separating fact from feeling:

- What emotion are you experiencing?

- How might your emotions be causing you to distort the facts?

- What fact might you be ignoring because of your emotions?

- How would you view the situation when you're feeling calmer?

7. Over-generalizing – This is when we make widespread judgments about ourselves, others, or the world. Over-generalization statements come in the form of 'always,' or, 'never.'

Over-generalizing thought: _____

Being more specific:

- What is the specific thing that you're basing your conclusion on?

- Are you making a total conclusion based on one specific aspect?

- What other aspects are you ignoring?

8. Labeling – this is when we call ourselves, others, and the world names.

You may call yourself a ‘loser’ every time you make a mistake or the world ‘cruel’ every time you’re faced with a challenge.

Label:_____

Giving up labeling:

- Are you being fair when you use this label?

- Are you allowing for varying degrees of goodness and badness in yourself, other people, or the world?

- How can you label the specific action or situation instead of the whole person?

9. Mental Filtering – This is when we let through information that is in line with what we already believe about ourselves, other people, or the world.

For example, if you believe that you’re unlovable, you’ll only process information that validates that belief.

Mental filtering thought: _____

Thinking without filters:

- What is your filter? What do you believe about yourself, others, or the world?

- What information are you ignoring because of your filter?

- How would you think or behave differently if you were to remove your filter?

10. Personalizing – This is when we make random events a personal issue. This may cause us to assume inappropriate responsibility for events and feel negative emotions in response to those events.

Personalizing thought: _____

Considering all contributors:

- Are you taking responsibility for things that are not under your control?

- Other than you, what or who else has contributed to the outcome of the situation?

- Was what happened really about you?

Reframing Negative Thoughts

Trigger (Event/situation)	Negative thought	Type of thinking error	More realistic, alternative thought

Becoming More Mindful

Sometimes your thoughts are best left alone.

Mindfulness emphasizes accepting your unpleasant thoughts and allowing them to pass without any intervention on your part. This can eventually lessen their emotional impact.

Task Concentration Exercise

Practice concentrating on a certain task while tuning out any distracting thoughts.

It's easier to focus on tasks when you're in a non-threatening situation.

Make a list of non-threatening situations. The following are some examples:

- ☐ Having dinner with just the family
- ☐ Going to watch a movie with my best friend
- ☐ Walking my dog in the park
- ☐ Shopping with my best friend
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

As you advance in your mindfulness practice, you can start focusing more on tasks in more threatening situations – ones that provoke some anxiety.

Cultivating Positive Self-Talk

1. What is a situation when you felt proud of yourself?

2. What characteristic do you like best about yourself?

3. What is one thing you do exceptionally well?

4. What is a positive thing you do to cope with stress?

5. What positive things do others say about you?

Self-Care

1. How is codependency impacting your ability to take care of yourself?

2. How is not taking care of yourself impacting you in relationships?

3. How can you begin to do more for yourself?

4. What self-care activities do you think will help you prioritize yourself more? Choose from the following list and add some of your own:

- ☐ Allow yourself to cry
- ☐ Empower yourself through learning and psychoeducation
- ☐ Find things that make you laugh
- ☐ Give yourself affirmations, praise yourself
- ☐ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, and places and seek them out
- ☐ Make a playlist of upbeat songs
- ☐ Make time for self-reflection
- ☐ Practice receiving from others
- ☐ Reward yourself for completing small tasks
- ☐ See a therapist regularly or during times of high stress
- ☐ Seek out peer support
- ☐ Start a gratitude journal
- ☐ Take a moment to express gratitude
- ☐ Try some adult coloring as a form of anxiety and/or stress release
- ☐ Try some mindfulness exercises to help bring you into the present moment
- ☐ Turn off electronic devices for an hour (e.g. computer, phone, TV)
- ☐ Write things you like about yourself
- ☐ Hobbies (stamp collecting, model build, etc.)
- ☐ Listen to a podcast
- ☐ Listen to an audiobook
- ☐ Listen to classical music
- ☐ Make a 'To-Do' list of tasks
- ☐ Read fiction
- ☐ Read non-fiction

- ☐ Research a topic of interest
- ☐ Soak in the bathtub
- ☐ Write in your journal
- ☐ Do some stretching exercises
- ☐ Do yoga, tai chi, or Pilates, or take classes to learn
- ☐ Get a massage
- ☐ Go borrow a friend's dog and take it to the park
- ☐ Go dancing
- ☐ Go hiking, camping, or backpacking and spend some time in nature
- ☐ Ask for help
- ☐ Call a trusted friend or family member
- ☐ Choose who you spend your time with today
- ☐ Donate old clothes or items to charity
- ☐ Give your pet a bath
- ☐ Go online to chat
- ☐ Go out and visit a friend
- ☐ Intentionally reconnect with someone you've lost touch with
- ☐ Take children places
- ☐ Talk to or introduce myself to my neighbors
- ☐ Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life Do 5 minutes of calm deep breath
- ☐ Do a 10-minute body scan technique to check in with each part of your body
- ☐ Do something nice for someone in secret
- ☐ Donate money to a charity of your choosing
- ☐ Give positive feedback about something
- ☐ Go to your church, mosque, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship
- ☐ Identify what is meaningful to you

☐ Make time for meditation in your day

☐ Volunteer at an animal shelter

☐ _____

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Assessing Your Relationships

1. With whom do you tend to feel worst about yourself?

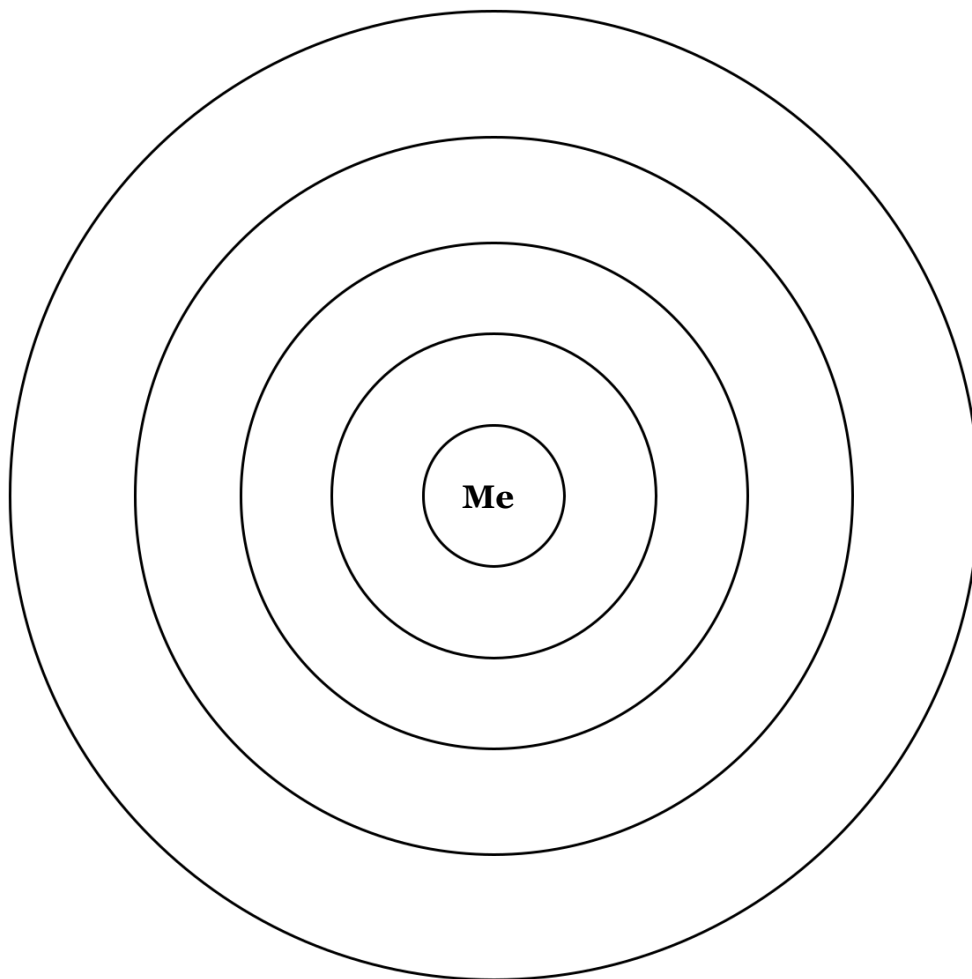
2. What common characteristics do these people share that make you feel bad about yourself?

3. What were the most hurtful or upsetting things said to you?

Building Your Support Team

1. Reflect on the relationships in your life. Use each ring of the circles below to write down the names of people in your life in a way that shows how close you consider them to be.

People in your innermost circle are people who are closest to you and whom you would trust with your personal information.



2. Considering the people closest to you, who do you think can be part of your support system?

3. Would you like to add to your circles people who currently aren't there?

4. Who do you consider a safe person? What qualities would they have?

5. What one small step can you take this week to add to your potential support team?

Setting Boundaries

Boundaries are the lines that we draw to protect ourselves. They help define what will and will not tolerate and regulate the degree of personal space within relationships.

Healthy boundaries are situationally flexible so we are constantly setting, negotiating, and renegotiating our personal boundaries.

There are five categories of boundaries:

- **Physical:** Who, when, how, and how much others may touch you?
- **Emotional:** What treatment do you consider acceptable within the relationship and what treatment you will not tolerate?
- **Spiritual:** How much of your spirituality you feel comfortable sharing and with whom?
- **Sexual:** When, with whom, and how much of your sexuality you share?
- **Intellectual:** What thoughts and ideas you share, when and with whom?

Setting boundaries might feel risky (you risk losing someone's approval and even your relationship with them) but it's a risk worth taking because they protect you from being abused and encourage healthier relationships.

1. What fears or concerns do you experience when thinking about setting boundaries with others? (e.g., fear that others won't like you)

2. What are your physical boundaries in relationships? Examples of physical boundaries may sound like:

- ☐ "I am not a big hugger. I am a handshake person."
- ☐ "No. I don't want to be touched like that."
- ☐ "I am tired. I need to sit down now."
- ☐ "I am hungry. I am going to get something to eat."
- ☐ "Don't go into my room without asking first."
- ☐ "I am allergic to [.....], so we can't have that in our home."
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

3. What emotional boundaries in relationships do you need to set to feel safe? Examples of emotional boundaries include:

- ☐ Saying No
- ☐ Refusing to Take Blame Expecting Respect
- ☐ Finding Your Identity Outside of the Relationship Accepting Help
- ☐ Asking for Space
- ☐ Communicating Discomfort Your Right to Privacy
- ☐ Your right to Change Your Mind Your Right to Your Own Time
- ☐ Remaining True to Your Principles
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

☐ _____

4. Healthy boundaries beliefs to help you find the courage to set boundaries:

- ☐ It is my responsibility to make myself happy and figure out what brings me joy
- ☐ It is not my responsibility to make sure everyone is happy It is not my job to rescue people
- ☐ I do not have to anticipate other people's needs
- ☐ It is okay to say No
- ☐ It is okay if other people get angry
- ☐ It is okay to spend time alone without having to explain myself
- ☐ It is okay if the other person didn't agree with me
- ☐ It is okay to be myself and not what others want me to be
- ☐ No one has the right to abuse me or disrespect me in any way, including my family, friends, partner, coworkers, or employer

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Asking for Help

Asking for and receiving help can be challenging for many people.

1. What does asking for help make you feel?

2. Which of the following beliefs do you relate with?

- ☐ “It’s weak to ask for help.”
- ☐ “Asking for help means I am incompetent”
- ☐ “Asking for help means I am giving someone the upper hand”
- ☐ “Asking for help means I’ll be taken advantage of.”
- ☐ “If I ask for help, I will get hurt.”
- ☐ “If I ask for help, I will get rejected.”
- ☐ “If I ask, people will feel obligated to help me.”
- ☐ “If I ask for help, I will look needy.”
- ☐ “It’s wrong to have needs.”

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

3. When was the last time you asked for help? What was their response?

4. Can you name at least three safe people in your circle you feel comfortable asking for help?

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: ·Codependency· is not a standalone DSM-5-TR diagnosis · non-diagnostic or contextual/quasi-diagnostic construct
- ICD-11 CDDR: No dedicated ICD-11 CDDR mental-disorder code under this title · non-diagnostic or contextual construct
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 2, 4, 17, 35. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- A symptom checklist or self-rating cannot establish diagnosis. Any diagnostic discussion must address clinically significant distress/impairment, required course or duration where applicable, developmental and cultural context, substance/medication and medical causes, comorbidity, exclusions, and reasonable differentials without reproducing copyrighted criteria.

Document-specific corrections

- Describe Codependency as a contextual, functional, occupational, umbrella, or proposed construct·not a confirmed diagnosis·unless a separately recognized disorder is assessed.
- Where Codependency discusses symptoms, add the missing diagnostic frame: clinically meaningful distress/impairment, relevant course or duration, exclusions, developmental and cultural context, substance/medication or medical causes, and plausible differentials.
- Supersede diagnostic-sounding scoring on pages [2, 17]: disclose whether each tool is validated or author-created, remove unsupported thresholds, and separate symptom monitoring from diagnosis.
- Replace crisis wording on pages [2] with the current U.S. 988 call/text/chat pathway, 911 or nearest emergency department for immediate danger/medical emergency, and a direction to use verified local services outside the United States.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [2, 17] contain named, implied, or author-created screening/rating content . These scores are not diagnostic unless the exact instrument, version, validation population, administration, and interpretation are established. Identify provenance for every item set and scoring rule. Obtain publisher permission/license when required; otherwise remove cutoffs and label it as a nonvalidated reflection checklist, or replace it with a properly licensed measure without altering its wording/scoring.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Use Codependency activities as psychoeducation and structured reflection, not diagnosis or a stand-alone treatment plan. Adapt or stop any exercise that worsens distress, functioning, conflict, pain, or dissociation, and escalate care according to the actual presentation.
- Screen privately for coercive control, stalking, retaliation, sexual coercion, financial abuse, and violence. Conjoint disclosure or repair work may be contraindicated when safety or free participation is compromised.

Crisis and current resources

- For Codependency, use: ·If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 or use 988lifeline.org for 24/7 crisis support. Outside the U.S., use verified local emergency and crisis services.· Verify all topic-specific agencies and links at publication.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
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2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
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