

Healing the Family Members of People with Narcissistic and Borderline Personality Traits

Presented by

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Learning Goals:

- To provide therapists, counselors and social workers with an understanding of:
- The effect of BPD and NPD on the co-dependent spouse and other family members.
- The common relationship dynamics in families dominated by a borderline or narcissist.
- Therapeutic approaches for working with the affected family members.
- Strategies to help family members interact more effectively with the borderline or narcissist.
- Techniques to increase the health and psychological well-being of affected family members.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify traits of BPD and NPD.
- Understand the effects of the mental illnesses of borderline (BP) and narcissism (NP) on family members.
- Differentiate between family members who become codependent (CoD) with the BP/NP compared with those who do not.
- Learn why BP/NPs and codependents are attracted to each other.
- Identify and understand the mutually reinforcing relationship patterns between the BP/NP and the codependent.
- Compare the different therapeutic needs of the BP, the NP and the codependent.
- Understand why the BP/NP and the codependent usually don't heal in couples/family therapy.
- Learn ways to reduce the codependent's anxiety and depression.
- Identify and coach family members in effective assertion concepts and skills.
- Learn to coach codependent family members to stop reinforcing the NP/BP's dysfunctional behaviors.
- Be able to use cognitive behavioral techniques (CBT) to increase the codependent's self-focus, self-encouragement, and personal rights.
- Learn techniques to help CoD family members identify, set, maintain, and defend personal and emotional boundaries with BP/NP family members.
- Learn exercises to help CoDs rebuild self-esteem, establish a wider support system, identify their own personal goals, and become more independent.

Program Outline:

Define narcissistic (NP) and borderline (BP) traits

- DSM definitions
- How NP and BP are similar and different
- Empathy deficits
- Merging
- Lack of boundaries
- Emotional reactivity
- Reality distortions

Effects of BPD/NPD on family members

- Low self-esteem
- Anxiety and depression
- Confusion
- Increasing loss of reality
- Over-compliance
- Over-responsibility
- Passivity: Helpless and hopeless

Codependent family members and non-dependents

- Traits of codependents vs. Non-Ds
- Strengths and Vulnerabilities

Ross Rosenberg Magnetic Attraction

- Rate BP/NP & CoD levels
- Levels of dysfunction I-V
- How BP/NP and CoD tend to match up

Dynamics of interactions between BP/NP and CoD

- Superior/Inferior
- Blame/Guilt
- Self-absorbed/Other focused
- Low empathy/High empathy
- No boundaries/Defenseless boundaries
- Demands/Acquiescence
- Persecutor/Victim/Rescuer
- Practice Victim/Persecutor/Rescuer
- Overall—How BP/NP and CoDs reinforce each other's behaviours.

Overview of treatment needs

Narcissist's needs summarized

- Validation
- Agree with positive intention
- Redirection
- Goals: Learning empathic sounding responses
- Their best interest served by meeting needs of others

Borderline's needs summarized

Self-soothing
Emotional self-control
DBT
Anxiety reduction
Goals: Emotional Maintenance
Ability to support self emotionally and physically

Codependent's needs

To be believed
Education about BPD and NPD
Anxiety reduction
Assertion
Self-focus/Inner locus of control
Setting and maintaining boundaries
Self-esteem building
Goal: Psychological independence

Why CoD clients need to be seen individually

Needs of BP/NP and CoD are difficult to treat while the other is present
Very different needs
Validating the BP/NP tends to invalidate the CoD and vice versa
BP/NP is more adept at focusing attention on their needs than CoDs
Need to build individual strengths and skills
CoDs need information, attention, and coaching
When the BP/NP is present, they often interrupt, resist and sabotage change

Techniques for working with CoD family members

Believing the CoD
Showing understanding
Validating the CoD
Don't get bogged down in the story

Education about Borderline and Narcissistic personality disorder

Identify traits of BP/NP
Discuss the chronic elements of this mental illness
Name and identify for family members how the behaviours fit into BPD or NPD
Teach that BP/NP behaviors are typically impulsive reactions, not premeditated
Set goal of helping CoDs control their own reactions rather than trying to control the BP/NP

Anxiety reduction

Time for self
Let go of control
Choosing when to over-function
Learning to not personalize
Coaching client to not personalize, teach or fix
Let go of trying to teach/fix the BP/NP

Assertion re BP/NP

Inner locus of control

Counter-cognitions
Self-focus
Self-encouragement

Talking self through a challenge

Reinforce personal rights

Boundaries

Teaching client boundaries

Permission to set boundaries

Verbal, physical, emotional boundary setting

Coaching client to set boundary and disengage

Enforcing boundaries/Negative reinforcement

Validating needs of the CoD

Encouraging CoD to trust their feelings

Help CoD to identify their own needs and wants

Supporting CoD's need for emotional support

Self-Esteem building

Who Am I?

Who supports me?

Personal goals

Independence skills

Other skills:

Observe Without Judgment

I am Worthy

Clarifying and Responding to a Problem

Being Present with Yourself

Personal Safe Haven

Creating a Code of Well-Being

Finding Your People

Creating Your Life Vision

Red Flags