

Language of Letting Go

Lesson 1

Observing and Challenging My Codependency Issues Handout

Each day, write a list of events:

1. When you wanted help and support and yet you did not need it.
2. When you sought support or acted as fragile to obtain support and keep other involved in your life.

Write your thoughts and emotions that lead you to act in a codependent way.

Link the thoughts to the emotions.

List the proof that these thoughts are based on facts.

List the evidence that these thoughts are not based on facts.

Reframe your thoughts in a more realistic and balanced way.

Outline how you can act in a more autonomous manner next time.

Use the back of the page and additional paper as needed.

Situations when I wanted help and support and yet did not need it. (Distinguish if you just thought about it or if you acted on your thoughts)	Thoughts and emotions that lead me to act in a codependent way	Evidence that the thoughts are based on facts	Evidence that the thoughts are not based on facts	Reframed and more balanced thoughts	I can act in a more autonomous manner next time by doing:

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Lesson 1

Assessing Relational Patterns in Effective Communication Handout

Prior to answering a request or asking for something from someone, explore the following:

Categorize your needs and wants. Label them as such.

Identify the impact on your life, health, well-being and current goals as a guide.

Label other people's demands as demands.

Identify the impact of others' demands on your boundaries, life, health, well-being and current goals.

Clarify the urgency of your needs, wants, and other's demands.

Reflect on the impact of stating what you need and want and refusing the other person's request on the relationship with the person.

Are the short and long term consequences the same? Is the relationship worth it?

Accept cognitive dissonance.

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Lesson 2

Interrupt the Dichotomous Relationship - In session Practice Handout

Review the patterns in your relationships.

Identify unnecessary unbalanced ones.

Is the "carer" and the "recipient" always the same?

How can you interrupt the dichotomous relationship?

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Lesson 2

Be aware of myths that can reduce your ability to obtain what you want

Myth: If I state what I want effectively, others will always comply.

Others may not always listen, understand, agree, or have the means to comply with your demand.

Myth: I can control and manipulate others with my words and actions.

Others have the right to disagree with you or refuse your request as you have the right to say no as well. You do not have full control of others and others do not (must not) have full control over you.

Myth: People who are close to me can sense what I need and how I feel.

People do not read others' mind.

Myth: My sense of others' communication is adequate and do not require clarification.

Interpretations are always subjective to the person who is interpreting. Personal processing systems adjust neutral information to fit our dominant self-beliefs.

Myth: It is OK to engage in addictive behaviour when I feel I am being ignored.

This maladaptive behaviour elicits negative attention, brings harmful consequences, and does not enhance my skills in stating what I want.

Myth: If I never try, I will never fail.

Not trying is often an automatic failure at getting what you want.

Myth:

Myth:

Myth:

Myth:

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Lesson 2

Challenging Myths in Communication - Handout

Challenge the following myths about communication:

Myth: People who are close to me can sense what I need and how I feel.

Challenge:

Myth: My sense of others' communication is adequate and does not require clarification.

Challenge:

Myth: It is OK to engage in addictive behaviour when I feel I am being ignored.

Challenge:

Myth: If I never try, I will never fail.

Challenge:

Myth:

Myth:

Myth:

Myth:

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Lesson 2

Prior to answering or making a requests and during your interaction: do your own work and consider the following:

Get the skills

- Improve on what to say and how to act in this situation.

Challenge unhelpful thoughts and reframe them into more realistic ones

- Bad consequences (they won't like me... She will think I am stupid...I will feel guilty if I get what I want...)
- Deserving what you want (I am such a bad person, I don't deserve this...)
- Not being effective (it won't work...)
- Judging yourself (I'm too stupid... I don't get anything right...)
- Dismissing your skills (I don't know how to ask for things, I don't know how to say no...)
- ...

Manage current emotions and anticipate future ones

- Be aware of guilt, fear, anger, frustration...

Resolve indecision

- Clarify your current and future priorities in life. Be aware of the habit of putting your needs aside for others.
- Reflect on your needs and desires. When in doubt, create a hierarchy.
- ...

Identify the characteristics of the environment unrelated to your skills.

- The other person is more powerful.
- Other people will be threatened or not like you if you get what you want
- Others will punish you.
- The other person wants you to sacrifice your values and self-respect.
- ...

Remember:

Get the support you need before asking or replying to others requests.

Take a break during the interaction as needed.

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Lesson 2

Goals and Priorities in Communication - Handout

Prior to answering a request or asking for something to someone, evaluate the following:

What specific goal do I want to reach?

How do I want the other person to feel about me after the interaction?

How do I want to feel about myself after the interaction?

What factors may reduce my ability to communicate effectively? How do I manage each one?

How I can manage how the other person feels about me after the interaction; over the short term?

How I can manage how the other person feels about me after the interaction; over the long term?

How can I manage how I feel about myself after the interaction over the short term?

How can I manage how I feel about myself after the interaction over the long term?

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Lesson 2

Challenging Myths in Communication – Handout

Generate at least three statements to challenge the following myths (use the back of the page as needed):

I cannot stand it if someone gets upset with me.

Challenges:

If people say no, it is because I am an inadequate and unlikable person.

Challenges:

I don't deserve to get what I want or need.

Challenges:

If I ask for help it is because I am weak and stupid

I must be really inadequate if I cannot fix it myself

I have to know whether a person is going to say yes before I make a request

The only way I can get what I want is by bullying

Making requests is pushy (bad, self-centered, selfish...)

Anger is the only thing that works in getting what I want

The most important thing is to keep everyone else happy

If I say no they will not like me

I must sacrifice my own needs for others, mine are not as important

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Lesson 2

Stating What I Want – Handout

Make one request at least every second day and say no to a request at least every second day. Complete the handout for each interaction. Use the back of the page and additional paper as needed.

Before the interaction:

1. What specific goal do I want to reach?
2. How do I want the other person to feel about me after the interaction?
3. How do I want to feel about myself after the interaction?
4. What factors may reduce my ability to communicate effectively? How do I manage each one?
5. How I can manage how the other person feels about me after the interaction over the short term?
6. How I can manage how the other person feels about me after the interaction over the long term?
7. How can I manage how I feel about myself after the interaction over the short term?
8. How can I manage how I feel about myself after the interaction over the long term?

What I did	What worked	What did not work	How I can be more effective in the future

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Lesson 3

Interrupt the Automatic Pilot Relationships Handout

- Chose your relationships based on your preferences. Not based on what you think people expect you to be or your previously ascribed role.
- Change your way of interacting with those with whom you previously engaged in relationships for fear of being alone or fear of not being useful or admired.
- Become aware of the internal chatter in your mind and notice if it is automatic.
- Stop and evaluate the thoughts in the chatter. Are they just habits? Are they based on facts? Are they useful to your betterment?
- Do the thoughts fit with who you really are? Who you are trying to truly be?
- Is the clutter in your home, your life, associated with the ascribed role?
- How can you get rid of this clutter? What would this mean to you?
- Pause 4 times each day and engage in a breathing exercise for 1 minute to recognize the automatic adopting of your prescribed role with others, clear your mind and get off the automatic pilot.
- Think about your likes, dislikes, goals, priorities and the steps that take you closer to being in touch with who you truly are.
- Make a commitment to change your behaviour and expectation to fit your true self
- Make notes of your thoughts, emotions, actions, and plans.

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Lesson 3

Skill Practice: Taking on Balanced Responsibilities (Handout)

Each day, track how many times you take on exaggerated responsibilities for others, and engage in healthy behaviours to balance your and other people's needs							
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs.	Fri	Sat	Sun
Taking exaggerated responsibilities for others							
Identify my emotional needs in this situation							
Address my emotional needs instead of giving in to them.							
Assess the situation to determine if my help is really needed. Stick to facts							

Delegate to someone else							
Coach the other person to do the task her/himself							
Towards the end of the week, write down what you learned from this skills practice.							

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Lesson 4

Assessing Important Factors in Communication Handout

Prior to asking for what you want or denying a request, consider the following factors:

Priority

How important is your goal? Is it crucial to your survival?

Gauge your priority in the situation before you assert yourself. If priority is a necessity, you may need to be more forceful. Remind yourself that the other person will survive this interaction. If your goal is not an immediate priority, you do not need to speak with such high intensity.

Resources

Can the person give you what you want?

While it can be easier to determine if you are asking for an object, it can be more difficult if you are asking for a specific emotional response from the other person. Pay attention to the other person's personality and style. You may need to rethink your relationship in terms of what you value. Put your values first.

Time

Is it an appropriate time to assert yourself? If your request is urgent and may not be as convenient for the other person, communicate your understanding of the other person's constraint.

Authority

Does the person have authority over you? What is his/her leadership role? The highest the authority the person has, the less intense you may need to be. Yet, express your opinion and be ready to negotiate.

Rights

Determine your rights in the situation. You can express yourself with intensity if the other person is required by law or moral code to give you what you need. You need to assert yourself in a very respectful and extremely non-aggressive manner if your position requires you to visually, legally or morally respect the other person (you provide a service to the client).

Reciprocity

What has the other person done for you in the past? Has he/she helped you when you needed it? Can you help him/her now? Have you helped the other person before? Who is helping who more? Is someone more dependent? Healthy relationships are

reciprocal. Convey that to the other person what he/she can gain by giving you what you ask.

Importance of relationship

How important is it for you to maintain this relationship? Is what you want appropriate in the relationship? If yes, then state your needs effectively (i.e. I want and deserve respect...). It is important to be realistic and aware of your responsibility as an adult (you do not have to give your child a \$1,000 phone because you are his/her parent). Be aware of not enabling another person into the codependency circle. Do not look for others to enable you either.

Long and short term

Do you want to keep the relationship through life? Being submissive or enabling the other person will create problems over the long term.

Do you intend to engage in this relationship for a short time? Being submissive, polite or giving into the request could be in your best interest given that it is for a short time only (as long as it does not compromise your value, safety, self-respect...).

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Lesson 4

Timely Expression Practice Handout

Use the following guide to help you decide the appropriate time to engage in communication. Describe the situation, how you felt you managed it based on the information you had.				
Circle your appraisal	Ask? (If more yes's than no's ask)	Assess for	Say no? (If more no's than yes's say no)	Circle your appraisal
Yes No	Can the person give me what I want?	Capability	Do I have what the person wants?	Yes No
Yes No	Is it a good time for me to ask?	Timeliness	Is it a bad time for me to say no?	Yes No
Yes No	Am I prepared?	Skills practice	Is the request clear?	Yes No
Yes No	Is the person in my business?	Authority	Is the person in authority over me?	Yes No
Yes No	Do I have the right to ask what I am asking for?	Rights	Does saying no violate the person's rights?	Yes No
Yes No	Is the request appropriate in the context of the relationship?	Relationship	Is the request appropriate?	Yes No
Yes No	I am asking less than I give?	Reciprocity	Does the person give me a lot? Do I owe something to the person?	Yes No
Yes No	Is asking important for my long term goals?	Goals	Does no interferes with my long-term goals?	Yes No
Yes No	Am I acting competent?	Respect	Does wise mind (emotional and rational combination) say yes	Yes No
_____ Sum of Yes responses out of 9		Sum of No responses out of 9 _____		
Brief summary of the situation:				
I decided to engage based on:				
I decided not to engage based on:				
After the interaction I felt:				

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Lesson 4

Awareness of Cues in Communication Handout

Monitor and adjust your interactions and detect the non-verbal cues of others:

- Manage your emotional reaction (blushing, sweating, tone of voice...) by doing a relaxation exercise before the interaction and breathing as deeply as needed during the interaction.
- Be kind.
- Maintain eye contact but do not stare.
- Monitor the speed of your breathing and slow down as needed.
- Ask for what you want without apologizing.
- Be truthful and straightforward with your thoughts and emotions so the other person understands what you need.
- Validate the other person's differences and difficulties.
- Be self-assured with your posture, gestures, facial expression, tone of voice, speed of talking, and eye contact.
- Avoid defensiveness and recognize your areas that need growth.
- Stay reasonable in your demand and stay away from excuses, guilt, regrets...
- Listen carefully to what the other person has to say.
- Be present by conveying your interest in the interaction.
- Stay focused on your goal.
- Use the word "no" if you refuse a request to be clear.
- You can provide a reason for a refusal but keep it brief.
- Respect the other person's turn and acknowledge your own turn to speak.
- Identify things you agree with.
- Communicate clearly what the other person has to gain if he/she gives you what you ask for.
- Negotiate and give in a bit as needed. Yet, give only what you want and can.
- Respect your boundaries.
- Resist the people-pleasing track.
- Understand that you may have different needs and wants.
- Respect the other person's ideals and honour yours.
- Acknowledge each person's responsibility for his/her own emotions.
- Communicate that collaboration can be shared (how are we going to manage this)..
- Give up on trying to change the person. Focus on asking for what you need instead.
- Respect the other person personal space (too close may convey threat, anger, and forcefulness. Too far may be interpreted as insecurity or lack of respect).

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- Pay attention to culture specific non-verbal cues.
- Show interest with a smile, a warm voice tone, direct gaze, and slightly leaning forward.
- The face is the most expressive avenue of non-verbal communication.
- Eye contact avoidance is suggestive of anxiety or deceitfulness
- Rapid speech may convey anxiety and a wish to end the conversation.
- Recognize the antagonistic person with gestures such as pointing a finger or an object, waving or crossing his/her arms.
- Recognize intimidation with a direct gaze leaning forward without the smile and the warm voice tone.
- Detect lying with a mismatch among the face, head, and body expressions.
- Spot aggression or a challenging stance with a direct stare and frowning.
- Recognize teasing and uncaring with blinking and a smile too large.
- Detect responsiveness with leaning towards the other person, shift in posture, facial expression, and spontaneous gestures.
- Identify anxiety with repetitive, rhythmic movements, hand wringing and non word sounds ("Hum...").

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Lesson 4

Effective Communication Practice Record Handout

Date/Time	With whom	What I asked or refused	My thoughts or feeling before the practice	What worked well	What did not work well	The help I need now	My thoughts or feeling after the practice

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Lesson 4

Factors Facilitating Communication Handout

Genuineness	Show your genuineness because if your audience does not perceive your genuineness and honesty, they will not listen to your message.
Compassion	Develop compassion. If you can try to view the situation from the other person's perspective, you may adjust your communication style and content.
Self-awareness	Be aware of yourself before and when you communicate so your request is realistic and you can work on what you need to work on before communicating to the other person.
Role clarity	You must be clear about your own role, its magnitude and what is expected of you and the other person so you know what, when, and to whom to direct your communication to.
Represent accurately	Ensure you represent yourself and what you say accurately. Be aware of both conscious and unconscious factors that can misrepresent what you say and who you are.
Image	Ensure that you are viewed for who you are and that you view your audience accurately so you can target your message appropriately.
Means	Provide your message with a means suitable for the situation.
Gifted communicator	Be gifted with paying attention to the emotions you convey and to the emotions your communication style and content can bring about in your audience (feeling insulted, threatened, inferior, subservient...)
Truly listen	Listen to what the other person is saying to you and modify your message as needed so the person can hear you. Communicate your enthusiasm for listening to the person you are speaking to.
Appreciative	Show your appreciation to your listener for taking the time to pay attention to what you were saying.

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Lesson 4

Skills Practice Using the Factors Facilitating Communication

Communicate meaningfully how you feel about something or make one request to someone at least every day. Complete the handout for each interaction. Use the back of the page and additional papers as needed.

What I did	What worked	What did not work	My plans to better facilitate my communication the future