Codependency Recovery with IFS: transforming protective parts into self-led strength.

Dear AVAIYA Learners,

Here is your worksheet for your AVAIYA class with Dr. Richard Schwartz.

Are you tired of feeling trapped in your relationships, always putting others' needs before your own? Dive into the transformative world of Internal Family Systems (IFS) and discover how to heal from codependency once and for all with expert guidance from Dr. Richard Schwartz.

Join Ande Anderson and Dr. Schwartz as they explore the deepest corners of our minds to uncover the roots of codependency, transforming protective roles into empowering ones, and nurturing self-led relationships.

Worksheets & Journaling: A Special Note

After almost twenty years of creating educational content at AVAIYA, we've learned that most people still prefer to do their personal development work with a pen or pencil…and often, you write in a separate journal. Because you receive these class worksheets in digital format, we've reduced the space between questions so that in the event you print the pages, it will help you limit the amount of paper pages you need to print out at home.

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Here are five key themes discussed in this class, along with the main conceptual takeaway for each:

1. **Understanding Codependency through IFS:**
    - **Conceptual Takeaway:**
      Codependency is viewed not merely as an inherent personality flaw but as a collection of protective parts that have evolved as a response to past trauma and social roles. These parts can be addressed and transformed using the Internal Family Systems (IFS) approach.

2. **Role of Protective Parts:**
    - **Conceptual Takeaway:**
      In the IFS model, protective parts, such as caretaker parts and exile parts, play significant roles in maintaining codependent behaviors. Recognizing and understanding these parts and the fears they harbor is essential for healing and transforming unhealthy patterns.

3. **Emotional Transformation through Self-Compassion:**
    - **Conceptual Takeaway:**
      Engaging with and embracing all parts of oneself with compassion and curiosity can lead to profound emotional release and transformation. This compassionate approach helps alleviate feelings of worthlessness and fear, fostering a healthier, more integrated self.

4. **Self-Led Relationships and the "8 C's":**
    - **Conceptual Takeaway:**
      Practicing self-led relationships by embodying qualities such as compassion, calmness, confidence, and clarity (the "8 C's" of self) can enhance personal interactions and well-being. This approach encourages individuals to lead with their core self rather than reactive parts.

5. **Therapeutic Exercises and Visualization:**
    - **Conceptual Takeaway:**
      Guided therapeutic exercises, such as deep breathing and visualization, allow individuals to confront and heal past emotional wounds. By reparenting their inner child and addressing core fears, participants can release lingering negative emotions and cultivate a sense of safety and self-worth.

Each of these themes underscores the importance of viewing codependency through a nuanced, integrative approach that values inner compassion, understanding, and transformation.

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Here is Your Worksheet: Reinforcing Codependency Recovery with Internal Family Systems (IFS)

Objective: Understand and apply principles of Internal Family Systems (IFS) to address and work through codependency tendencies.

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1. Identifying Your Internal Parts

Reflect on your internal experiences and identify different parts of yourself that may be contributing to codependency. Fill in the table below:

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2. Self-Compassion Exercise

To begin healing, practice self-compassion. Follow Dr. Richard Schwartz's guided approach:

1. Find a quiet space where you can sit comfortably.
2. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.
3. Identify where in your body you feel stress or fear (e.g., chest, stomach).
4. Visualize a compassionate inner presence approaching that part of your body.
5. Offer words of kindness and understanding, such as, "I see you, and it's okay to feel this way."

Reflection:

- How did you feel before the exercise?
- What emotions or sensations arose during the exercise?
- How do you feel after completing the exercise?

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3. Revisiting and Integrating Past Experiences

Use this exercise to address core fears about abandonment and unworthiness derived from childhood experiences.

1. Visualize a younger version of yourself at an age when you felt vulnerable.
2. Imagine approaching this younger self with love and protection.
3. Offer comforting words and physical gestures (e.g., hugging).
4. Reflect on your parent's actions during significant memories and affirm that their conflicts were not your problem.
5. Imagine taking your younger self to a safe, comforting place.

Reflection:

- What childhood memory did you revisit?
- How did you comfort and protect your younger self?
- How does integrating this experience change your perception of current relationships?

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4. Transforming Protective Roles

Identify protective roles within yourself and consider healthier alternatives.

1. Select a protector part (e.g., a self-critical voice).
2. Explore what this part fears or tries to prevent.
3. Consider how this part can still protect you in a manner that encourages self-care and compassion.

Reflection:

- What protective part did you identify?
- What fears drive this part?
- What healthier role can this part take on to support your well-being?

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5. Embracing Self-Led Qualities (The 8 C's of Self)

The "8 C's" defined by Dr. Richard Schwartz include compassion, calmness, confidence, courage, creativity, curiosity, clarity, and connectedness. Reflect on these qualities:

1. Take a moment to write down one recent situation where you engaged one or more of these qualities.
2. How did these qualities influence the outcome of the situation?

Reflection:

- In what way did you display self-led qualities?
- How did it feel to embody these qualities?
- How can you consciously incorporate these qualities into your daily life?

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6. Regular Check-ins

Plan regular self-check-ins to monitor your internal parts and foster ongoing healing.

1. Set a specific time each day or week for a self-check-in.
2. During each check-in, ask yourself:
    - What parts are most active right now?
    - What do they need to feel safe and acknowledged?
    - How can I address these needs with compassion and calmness?

Reflection:

- Describe the experience of your most recent check-in.
- What insights did you gain about your internal parts?
- How can these insights guide your recovery from codependency?

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7. Resource Exploration

Dr. Schwartz offers a free chapter of his book "You Are The One". Access this resource and summarize key takeaways:

1. Obtain the free chapter from [provided link].
2. Read through the chapter attentively.
3. Write down three key takeaways that resonate with your journey to reduce codependence.

Reflection:

- How do these takeaways apply to your personal experiences?
- In what ways can they support your ongoing healing process?

By consistently engaging with these exercises, you will enhance your understanding of your internal parts, foster self-compassion, and progress towards a healthier, self-led life free from codependent tendencies.

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Here Is Your Quiz: Understanding Codependency through the Internal Family Systems (IFS) Perspective

1. Who introduced the session on codependency recovery?

a) Dr. Richard Schwartz

b) Ande Anderson

c) Ande Schwartz

d) Richard Anderson

Answer: b) Ande Anderson

Rationale: Ande Anderson is the host who introduced the session featuring Dr. Richard Schwartz.

2. What model does Dr. Richard Schwartz use to address codependency?

a) Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

b) Psychoanalysis

c) Internal Family Systems (IFS)

d) Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT

Answer: c) Internal Family Systems (IFS)

Rationale: Dr. Richard Schwartz uses the Internal Family Systems (IFS) model to understand and address codependency.

3. According to Dr. Schwartz, what does the label 'codependency' describe?

a) An intrinsic personality disorder

b) A cluster of protective parts that arise from past conditions

c) Natural social behaviors

d) A fixed psychosocial condition

Answer: b) A cluster of protective parts that arise from past conditions

Rationale: Dr. Schwartz critiques the label of codependency, suggesting it describes protective parts formed due to past experiences.

4. What are 'exile parts' in the IFS model?

a) Parts that focus on pleasing others

b) Parts that carry vulnerabilities from past negative experiences

c) Parts preoccupied with social approval

d) Parts that take on caretaking roles

Answer: b) Parts that carry vulnerabilities from past negative experiences

Rationale: 'Exile parts' are vulnerable parts that hold onto past negative experiences like feeling unworthy or fearing for survival.

5. What psychological impact is often experienced by individuals dealing with codependency according to the IFS model?

a) Anger and defiance

b) Feelings of worthlessness and fear of abandonment

c) Hyper-independence

d) Comfort and stability

Answer: b) Feelings of worthlessness and fear of abandonment

Rationale: Codependent individuals often experience feelings of worthlessness and fear of abandonment as indicated in the IFS model.

6. During the session, Dr. Schwartz guided Ande Anderson through which type of exercise?

a) Breathing for anxiety reduction

b) Visualization to address internal fears

c) Physical fitness routines

d) Communication exercises

Answer: b) Visualization to address internal fears

Rationale: Dr. Schwartz guided Ande through a visualization exercise to release internal fears, focusing on feelings held in the chest and stomach.

7. In the IFS model, what are 'protector parts'?

a) Caretaking roles taken on for survival and social approval

b) Parts that seek to avoid all external relationships

c) Fragments of one's intrinsic personality

d) Roles taken on exclusively to harm others

Answer: a) Caretaking roles taken on for survival and social approval

Rationale: Protector parts take on caretaking roles to protect oneself and seek social approval by pleasing others or denying harm from others.

8. What attributes did Ande Anderson invite into her being after the deep-breathing exercise?

a) Anxiety and fear

b) Peace and playfulness

c) Resentment and anger

d) Stress and worry

Answer: b) Peace and playfulness

Rationale: After the exercise guided by Dr. Schwartz, Ande felt "free and light" and invited peace and playfulness into her being.

9. What did Dr. Schwartz identify as essential qualities for practicing 'self-led' relationships?

a) Resilience, determination, and strength

b) Compassion, calmness, confidence, and clarity (The 8 C's)

c) Ambition, assertiveness, and control

d) Compliance, submission, and dependency

Answer: b) Compassion, calmness, confidence, and clarity (The 8 C's)

Rationale: Dr. Schwartz highlighted compassion, calmness, confidence, and clarity, among other C's, as essential for self-led relationships.

10. Why did Dr. Schwartz emphasize caution when doing deep emotional work alone?

- a) It could result in inaccurate self-diagnosis

- b) Vulnerable parts ("exiles") need careful handling

- c) It is typically ineffective without professional assistance

- d) It often leads to increased codependent behaviors

Answer: b) Vulnerable parts ("exiles") need careful handling

Rationale: Dr. Schwartz advised caution because working with deep, vulnerable parts alone ("exiles") can be challenging and requires careful handling to avoid harm.

This quiz tests understanding of the key concepts discussed in this AVAIYA class, assessing knowledge of the IFS model, the psychological impacts of codependency, and the therapeutic exercises featured.

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Key Takeaways from "Healing codependency with IFS: transforming protective parts into self-led strength"

Dear Learners,

It's iKE ALLEN, Co Founder of AVAIYA.

I trust that you found the recent class with Dr. Richard Schwartz both enlightening and transformative. This memo is intended to encapsulate the core concepts discussed during the session and provide a foundation for integrating these teachings into your personal and professional lives.

Introduction to Internal Family Systems (IFS) and Codependency

1. **Internal Family Systems (IFS) Model:**
    - **Concept:**
      IFS is a therapeutic model pioneered by Dr. Richard Schwartz that views the mind as an internal family made up of different parts with distinct characteristics and roles.
    - **Application to Codependency:**
      Dr. Schwartz's innovative approach looks beyond the traditional label of codependency to understand it as a congregation of various protective parts that emerge from past trauma and societal conditioning.

Understanding the Parts

2. **Caretaker Parts:**
    - **Role:**
      These parts focus on pleasing others and are often conditioned by societal expectations, especially prominent in women.
    - **Function:**
      Caretaker parts are protective mechanisms that strive to maintain harmony and approval despite personal costs.
3. **Exile Parts:**
    - **Characteristics:**
      These parts harbor deep-seated vulnerabilities, such as feelings of unworthiness or abandonment stemming from past negative experiences.
    - **Impact:**
      The exile parts are often hidden but profoundly influence behaviors and emotional responses.
4. **Protector Parts:**
    - **Role:**
      Protectors take on roles to shield the individual from emotional pain. They might engage in caretaking, denial of others' harmful actions, and seeking social approval.
    - **Dynamic:**
      These parts can be critical and judgmental, often maintaining familiar but unhealthy patterns to avoid deeper, painful emotions.

Psychological and Emotional Transformation

5. **Emotional Impact:**
    - **Symptoms:**
      Those dealing with codependency frequently wrestle with feelings of worthlessness and fear of abandonment.
    - **Transformation:**
      Dr. Schwartz's IFS model offers pathways to transform these protective roles into healthier, supportive ones by addressing and caring for the underlying emotional exiles.

Practical Steps in IFS

6. **Deep Breathing and Visualization:**
    - **Exercise:**
      Dr. Schwartz guided Ande Anderson through a visualization exercise, aiding in the release of physical manifestations of emotional pain and inviting positive attributes such as peace and playfulness.
    - **Outcome:**
      Ande reported a sense of freedom and lightness, exemplifying the power of IFS in emotional healing.
7. **Self-Led Relationships:**
    - **Concept:**
      Dr. Schwartz promotes the practice of self-led relationships, embodying qualities of compassion, calmness, confidence, and clarity (referred to as the "8 C's").
    - **Goal:**
      These relationships aim to foster genuine connections and self-resilience, reducing the reliance on codependent dynamics.

Practice Cautions and Honors

8. **Starting with Protectors:**
    - **Caution:**
      Dr. Schwartz advises starting with protector parts rather than immediately delving into vulnerable exiles, emphasizing curiosity and understanding.
    - **Importance:**
      This gradual approach prevents overwhelming emotional exposure and promotes sustainable healing.
9. **Non-Judgmental Approach:**
    - **Viewpoint:**
      Codependency and addiction are seen as protective mechanisms rather than negative traits. Understanding and respecting these roles within the self is crucial for long-term recovery.

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Final Thoughts

This class underscored the significance of compassionate self-interaction, recognizing each part's protective purpose while fostering holistic healing. Dr. Schwartz's invitation to regularly conduct self-check-ins helps maintain progress and prevent regression into fear-based behaviors.

Moving Forward

Ande & I encourage you to integrate these insights into your daily practice, both personally and within your professional endeavors. Understanding and working with your internal parts from a place of compassion can undoubtedly lead to profound positive changes in your emotional and relational landscape.

For further support, we encourage you to utilize the resources at AVAIYA University & IFS to strengthen your path towards becoming a confident and fulfilled creator of your life.

In conclusion, take these insights to heart, explore further, and remember to be kind to yourselves. Celebrate each step of progress and remain patient with the journey.

iKE ALLEN & Ande Anderson 🙂

Co Founders of AVAIYA University

Learn more about AVAIYA HERE

Learn more about Dr. Richard Schwartz & IFS HERE