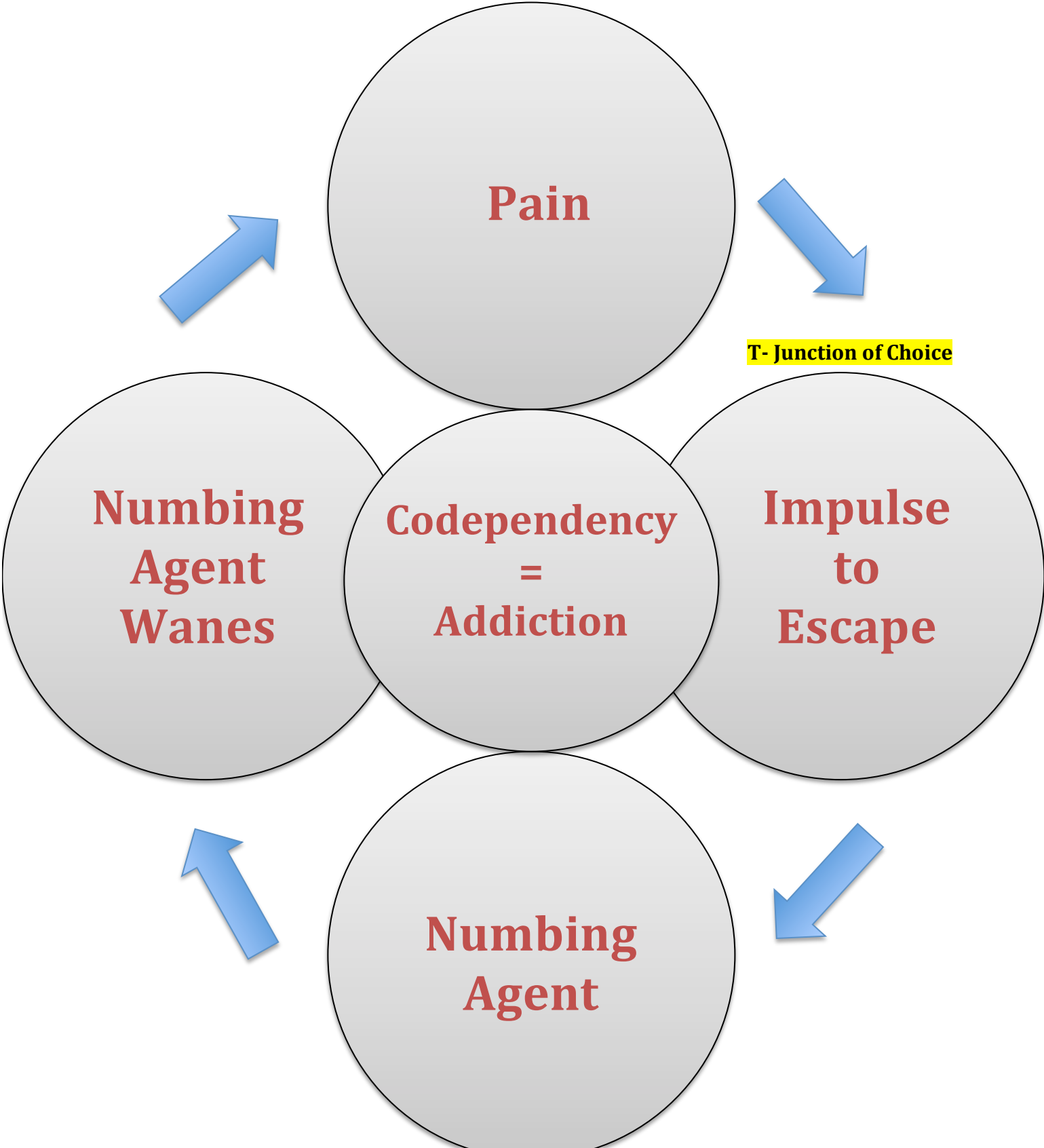


**Inherent Cycle of Codependency -
Addiction to Relational Dysfunction**



2018 Choose Willingness Workshop

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Context:

- Codependence is a **malignancy comprised of behavioral cycles** that are perpetuated by the application of *child-mind forged coping strategies* (in reaction to trauma experienced in a dysfunctional family system) that become engrained **habits** very early on and are unconsciously carried through life, coloring the lens through which we judge, react, and attempt to manipulate the world around us.

Describe a scenario when the way you viewed a situation felt real/right but was codependent in a relationship:

- Habits** are engrained reactions, forged through a continued reliance on a particular strategy to cope with difficult feelings, which **illicit familiar results** (hits; like a drug hit) in relationships, enabling a false sense of control over personal experience.

Name some habits you struggle with:

Codependency as a Cyclical Equation:

pain + impulse to escape + numbing agent + numbing agent wanes = pain

Pain (may be perceived pain/fear of pain- often an echo and/or blend of past inference/interpretation/true experience unchecked by emotional maturity):

- Physical- _____
- Mental- _____
- Emotional- _____
- Intellectual- _____
- Spiritual- _____

Impulse to Escape:

- **Natural reaction to pain**- however the coping strategies developed in a dysfunctional family system (during childhood and solidified in adolescence/early adulthood) grease the wheels of the cycle
- **Split second reaction** directly tied to unconscious coping strategies
- Remains unconscious “we don’t know what we don’t know” until denial is broken >> hitting bottom >> prepped to begin “the search”

Numbing Agent/Codependent Reaction:

- **ANY** mechanism drawn upon to ease pain, deaden intensity, escape inferred outcomes rooted in past trauma cycles, to counter feeling “bad”
- Numbing agent /codependent reaction can be abused and move onto an addiction when an over-reliance on numbing agent becomes ingrained as the sole compulsive strategy for escaping real/imagined/interpreted pain (codependents can be considered addicts, whether drug/alcohol dependent or not)
- **Codependent Numbing Agent Examples (in relationships):** manipulating/eliciting emotional caretaking from another codependent (usually the primary relationship-partner/spouse/children); outgrowths of enmeshment- raging/doormat, crazy making/emotional void, victimizing/victimhood, allegiance/isolation, obsession/indifference (as a mode of escape), control/avoidance, workaholism/sloth
- **Can produce a “high” to counterbalance an emotional/psychological low, however, often produces a “low” in place of a “high,” resulting in an unconscious mechanism of control-producing a known reality construed to be safe due to the familiarity of being rooted in a past trauma cycle dynamic (I’ve been here before so I feel safe and know what to do); in other words, numbing agents produce an emotional/psychological payoff (positive/negative).**

List top 5 codependent reactions:

Numbing Agent Wanes:

- The emotional hit/high no longer satisfies its use as a mechanism for escape from perceived/real pain
- Other strategies (distractions from difficult emotions) for coping with perceived/real pain are instituted paving denial over root issues and preserving the familiar cyclical dynamic of pursuing escape from pain (i.e. survival vs. living a life of freedom)
- Denial maintains mechanisms of outdated coping forged in the childhood dynamic, preserving the cycle as “reality,” and enabling the external pursuit for the “remedy” (any external agent) to continue

Back to Pain:

- The cycle continues from one issue to another, and ultimately, from one relationship to another. Often we attract just enough surface-level “difference” in new relationships/situations to fuel a story of denial that we are entering into an entirely unique and new circumstance. However, unchecked codependency enables a magnetized preconditioning of results that fall within a codependent spectrum of extremes, enabling the cycle to go on unimpeded until denial is broken through hitting bottom and beginning a program of recovery. Recovery can insert foreign more productive strategies into one’s personal system of behaviors, thereby tripping the cycle and enabling a departure from the “old, worn, misconception of safety” codependency brought us.

Hitting Bottom

Hitting Bottom- A Higher Power Gift that Opens the Door to a New Way of Life:

- Personal results, outcomes, or acts of God (a breakup/divorce, infidelity, spike in depression, mental breakdown, court mandated counseling, suicide attempt, loss of a friendship/family member, etc.) that pierce the veil of denial to such an extent that doing the same thing in life doesn’t work any more
- The bottom must be resounding enough to inspire a personal commitment to go to “**any lengths**” to feel less pain (i.e. destination recovery)
- **Any Lengths** refers to ANY proactive/productive recovery-rooted action that may appear to be the last thing on earth we’d want to do.

What is/was your bottom?

Exposure to Recovery in CoDA

Attending Meetings/Therapy/Books and Literature:

- Inspires identification and a sense of affiliation with others in recovery
- Exposes a person to recovery tools, concepts, language, the 12 step structure of the program, and experience, strength, and hope from the fellowship
- Builds familiarization with concepts of sponsorship and service
- Breaks denial
- Builds awareness

How has attending meetings impacted your awareness?

T- Junction of Choice - Change Potential

Willingness/Choice Making

Willingness (dictionary.com): *the quality or state of being prepared to do something; readiness.*

Synonyms (thesaurus.com): *Eagerness, readiness, compliance, disposition, consent, zeal*

Choice (dictionary.com): *an act of selecting or making a decision when faced with two or more possibilities*

Synonyms (thesaurus.com): *opportunity, alternative, decision, appraisal, determination, substitute*

What can I do to become more willing?

How does becoming more aware impact my choice making?
