Your Wellness

Strategies for Mental Health, Career, and Family Success

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Inside the Article

- Dr. Recco's Corner
- Flyer: Psychiatric Discussion
- Article: Codependency and Interdependency
- Article: Therapist's Spotlight
- Flyer: Agency Flyer
- Article: Servicing Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- How to Contact Us

Dr. Recco's Corner

Lately, I have been thinking about various people in my life that are non-family members. The individuals that crossed my mind (and that perhaps regularly cross your mind), are typical and diligent people. I am convinced that they all need a tremendous shout out right now.

I do not think we appreciate and esteem our peers and friends enough. We love them. We help them. We are always there for them. This is all well and good. However, I do not think we tell or show them the stated often enough. There is nothing wrong with showing and telling.

Today, I send a heartfelt and sincere message to everyone who holds a special place in any non-family member's life. I want you to know that you are more important than you will ever realize. You should know that you are the wind beneath the wings of those of us who soar. Please know that if it were not for you and all that you do, most of us would not be where we are.

And you should know that all your good deeds on behalf of other people that seems to have fallen on deaf ears, are still alive and working on your behalf. I also want you to know that because of you, the world is a better place. It is wonderful and beautiful people like you that make tomorrow a brighter day.

Yes, you are all of this and much more because you care and because you are you. Whatever you do, always be you. So, keep on being you. Maintain you and what you stand for. You are important and we need you.

In closing, I want you to know that it would be a mistake if you stopped being you. Not only are you necessary, but you are also the glue that holds most things and us together. It would take two life times and volumes of books to document the importance of you being who you are.

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WITH MEDICAL DOCTORS

Guest Physicians

Rani Richardson, MD, PhD

Is a resident physician in psychiatry in New York. Her interests in clinical psychiatry include caring for patients with trauma, depression, anxiety, addiction, and mood disorders





Lydia Ademuwagun, MD

Is a physician currently working as a child and adolescent psychiatry fellow in Texas. Her interests in clinical psychiatry include suicide prevention as well as caring for patients with mood disorders and trauma.



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A Hand Above: A Samantha Cole Service
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This presentation is for general informational purposes only. It does not constitute medical advice, a diagnosis, a physician-patient relationship, or treatment recommendations for any individual.

SATURDAY... DECEMBER 5, 2026 ... 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM

VIA ZOOM ONLY

"It is necessary to discuss our mental health and medication treatment."
Dr. Recco

Co-dependency and Interdependency in Relationships

By: Andrea Montgomery, Master Level Social Work Intern

As humans, we need relationships. We form relationship connections with our families, spouses, children, and people in our work environments. As an educator and aspiring mental health therapist, it is my duty to help children and adults develop safe, joyful relationships with their peers and partners while gradually separating from being dependent on them.

The Interdependence

Let us discuss how interdependence can have a positive outlook on adults but first, we must understand what interdependence is. According to Gardenswartz (2024) defined interdependence as, "The delicate dance of mutual reliance and support within relationships."



Unlike the notion of rugged independence, interdependence acknowledges the inherent interconnectedness of individuals and celebrates the strength found in collaboration.

In layman terms, interdependence can look like the following:

1). Being vulnerable in relationships.
2). Supporting one another without losing oneself.
3). Having healthy communication.

As well, collaboration in relationships can look like the following:

1). Agreeing to disagree with one another when the opinion differs from the other person.
2). Receiving feedback that will inspire growth.
3). Having healthy relationships with family, friends, and co-workers.
4). Establishing boundaries.
5). Being held accountable for one's actions.

It is held that adult relationships require separate identities within the relationships. For example: A married couple with different interest and paths. One of them enjoys chess, while the other one enjoys skiing freely.

"It is held that adult relationships require separate identities within the relationships."

For both individuals, they can proceed with what brings joy to them and their relationship. Interdependence brings positivity that can outweigh the hardships that we endure in relationships with family members and coworkers.



Andrea Montgomery
Master's Level Social Work Intern

"An understanding of interdependence is sorely needed."
Dr. Recco

Understanding Co-dependency

What is co-dependency? Co-dependency is a learned behavior that can be passed from one generation to another. It is also known as relationship addiction because it is an emotional and behavioral state that affects a person's ability to sustain a healthy, meaningful, and fulfilling relationship.

Below is wordage regarding what co-dependency looks like in relationships:

1). Needing to have control over the outcome of the choices of individuals is important.
2). Making excuses for individuals that refuse to admit their mistakes.
3). Have an intense fear of being alone, where they need to be in a relationship, even when the relationship is unhealthy.

As well, below is what co-dependency looks like in an individual:

1). Lack of self-value.
2). Have a challenging time making decisions.
3). The presence of being a people pleaser.
4). Fear expressing their thoughts and their feelings.
5). Striving for perfection in self and others.

Regarding co-dependency, the goal is for us to have healthy connections in our relationships, families, friendships, and work environments. No matter the background of co-dependency, there is always hope and endurance to establish interdependence whether we are single, living with family, married, have children and the such.

Co-dependency can hold hostage an individual's growth in. Taking part in individual counseling/therapy or group therapy can help address and tackle the learned helplessness and shackles of co-dependency.

"Quality and real relationships with others is a must."
Dr. Recco

Therapist Spotlight

Featuring: Aereonna Pool, MSW, LLMSW



Aereonna Pool
MSW, LLMSW

Aereonna Pool is the therapist spotlight for the month of October. She is a Limited Licensed Social Worker and has been working part-time contractually for Recco S. Richardson Consulting and Deborah Dewey Walker Family Services for the last 3 years. Through the last few years, she has worked hard to secure full-time employment in various settings. She has found a love for working in the school setting and recently returned to working at a local school after spending some time at another facility. Aereonna wants to make a difference in the community and has taken any opportunity given to her to reach that goal.

1. Why do some people avoid conflict and how can they fix this problem?

She stated that people tend to avoid conflict for various reasons. Common motivations include the desire to prevent dysfunction, the discomfort of difficult conversations, the potential for changes in relationship dynamics, as well as feelings of anxiety and fear. To address these issues effectively, it is important to confront matters directly and with respect. Aereonna went on to say that the more we practice this skill, the less we will shy away from conflict, as it will begin to feel less like a confrontation and more like a conversation. This approach also fosters an environment in which others respect us.

"Aereonna continues to excel and move her clients forward."
Dr. Recco

2. What are the most important things in life? Why?

Aereonna reported that what matters most in life can vary significantly based on individual values and beliefs. People often prioritize different aspects; for example, some may focus on family, love, happiness, peace, wealth, loyalty, or respect. She stated that these values are often shaped by personal upbringing and experiences. Identifying what matters most in our life is important because that awareness shapes how we live, what we pursue, and what we accept or reject. Also, it's important to understand that what matters to us may not matter to others, and that's perfectly okay.

3. What is the best way to mend a broken relationship?

With a smile on her face, she said that the best way to repair a broken relationship is through clear, open, honest, and respectful communication. If we are at fault, acknowledge our mistakes and apologize. Aereonna also stated that it is important to be empathetic while also asserting our own boundaries. She added that it is imperative that we share our feelings honestly but be mindful of our tone and our audience. Lastly, she shared that we should recognize who we can be vulnerable with. During important relationship conversations, we have to be open to hearing the other person's perspective and understanding the impact of the broken relationship.

4. What seems to trap your clients emotionally and socially? Why?

Aereonna offered that clients often feel emotionally and spiritually trapped due to a lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and poor self-awareness. We can be our own biggest cheerleader. We can also be our own worst enemy. She added that overcoming these challenges takes self-love, clear boundaries, courage, and strong self-esteem. Sometimes, taking a bold leap of faith can change our life completely.

5. Share the importance of addressing our deep hurts?

After some thought, she shared that addressing our deep-seated hurts is essential, as unresolved pain can negatively impact various aspects of our life. Not confronting this pain can damage our relationships and hinder both personal and professional growth. She went on to say that it can lead to repetitive cycles that prevents us from making progress in life. Moreover, if we don't let go of the hurt, we may struggle to recognize or accept the good things that life has to offer.

6. What is the best way to deal with the death of a loved one?

Aereonna quipped that there is no single best way to cope with the death of a loved one, as everyone processes grief differently. However, she recommends that we be kind to ourselves, allow time to heal do not rush through the grieving process. She encourages others to cherish the good memories, honor their life, and reflect on our relationship while also making room for others in our life. She also suggested that we allow friends and family to support us. It is okay to feel the emotions after death but we can't let them consume us.

"A desire to get head and be happy is within all of us."
Dr. Recco

7. What should a person do who wants to get ahead in life and stay there?

She stated that for those seeking to advance in life and maintain progress, self-belief is essential, even amid doubt. There must be the ability to believe in ourselves, regardless of who supports us. Doing the stated may require leaving some individuals behind and stepping out of our comfort zone. Aereonna went on to say that balanced ambition is important and securing a mentors is a good idea.

8. Share with us the importance of having stability in life.

With ease Aereonna stated that stability in life helps regulate the nervous system and can greatly reduce our stress level. Most stress originates from some form of instability, whether it's related to basic needs, emotional turmoil, or changes in relationship dynamics. She has found that to cultivate stability, there is a need to establish strong boundaries and practice discipline. It is also important to identify the areas of instability and develop a plan to address these challenges.

9. What do you encourage your clients to do to improve their outlook on life?

She mentioned that she encourages her clients to identify three positive things each day to enhance their outlook. She also advises them to visualize the life they want and write down the steps needed to achieve it. The written list becomes their goal list. Aereonna went on to add that when we focus on the negative, we find negativity and when we start looking for the positive, we discover positivity.

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"Sometimes all we need is support and someone that cares."
Dr. Recco

Servicing Young Adults Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder

By: Recco Santee Ricardson, Ph.D., LPC

Providing any type of services to young adults aged 19 to 30 can be challenging and rewarding. Over the last several years, I have found that young adults who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis (Autism, Asperger's, and Pervasive Developmental Delays), have need of additional help and support within the home and community.

As a review, ASD is the presence of physical, mental and social delays that can negatively impact the daily functioning, learning, relationships, and employment of people. The following chart (chart #1) reports on the symptoms and behaviors of individuals who are diagnosed with ASD.

Chart #1 ASD Symptoms/Behaviors

	Often Depressed	On-Going Anxiety	Mood Swings	Poor Communication
	Daily Irritability	Limited Concentration	Daily Forgetfulness	Regular Agitation
	Isolative Behaviors	Feel Inadequate	Loss/Grief	Compromised Actions
	Poor Social Skills	Limited Confidence	Low Tolerance	Daily Fear/Phobia
	Feeling Lonely	Intrusive Thoughts	Inadequate Esteem	Experienced Abuse
	Sense of Failure	Abandonment	Dejection	Broad Inconsistency
	Low Mindfulness	Poor Planning	Poor Boundaries	Limited Self-Efficacy
	Fixation On Things	Rigid Thinking	Repetitive Speech	Constant Fidgeting
	Motor Skills	Poor Eye Contact	Facial Gyrations	Walk On Toes
	Sensory Struggles	Picky Eater	Anger/Aggression	Strong Math Skills

"There is help available when parenting an ASD young adult." Dr. Recco

Helping ASD Young Adults

A multi-faceted and tiered approach that is innovative and effective is needed when helping ASD young adults. Program activities should provide the clients with mental health counseling, targeted socio-emotional learning and emotional intelligence interventions, social activities/outings, mentoring, job/career/post-secondary support, and levels of referrals to local services. The stated when delivered with consistency and care, can help ASD young adult clients move forward. They move forward because of gaining new skills, relief, guidance, and competency that addresses their presenting issues and symptoms.

The underlying goal of program activities should be to address and remove barriers that impede participant's successful negotiation of life. Specifically, efforts should target and provide benefits and growth to participants. The research and literature is clear on what type of programming and services best meet the needs of ASD young adults. The programming includes the following.

1). Mental Health Intake Assessment: The first step and order of business is to perform an intake assessment. This service secures client information, initiates participation in program activities, identifies goals and measurements, builds rapport, establishes rules/guides, and provides an overview of program activities.

2). Individual Mental Health Counseling: This service addresses a client's depression, anxiety, moodiness, acute stress, irritability, concentration, chronic adjustment, panic, sexual concerns, co-dependency, bipolar, forgetfulness, fatigue, agitation, suicide ideations, insomnia, phobias, isolation, and much more. The delivery of therapeutic approaches such as cognitive behavioral, person-centered, motivational interviewing and psycho-analytic are beneficial to ASD young adult clients.



3). Educational Classes: It is well documented that instructions regarding socio-emotional learning and emotional intelligence can help ASD young adult clients. The classes provide instructions and interventions regarding lingering emotional struggles such as inadequate resilience, loss/grief, low resilience, dejection, vulnerability, dependency, low trust, inadequate optimism, and insufficient self-efficacy. The classes also address personal awareness, interpersonal relationships, fear, loneliness, abuse/neglect, unforgiveness, inadequacies, poor bonding, low esteem, sense of failure, abandonment, despondence, and dread.

"Instructions regarding socio-emotional learning and emotional intelligence helps ASD clients." Dr. Recco

4). Groups Work: Treatment, support, and psycho educational groups can help ASD young adult clients. Current research reports that group-based social skills training for ASD is effective because they can reduce stressful living and offer support (autism.lovetoknow.com, 2021). I have personally found that groups can help participants improve their overall awareness and skills regarding relationships, social interactions, goal setting, life skills, independence, communication, boundaries, post-secondary planning, employment/career options, and stress tolerance. During groups, role-play, case studies, and movie vignettes can be used to promote learning and understanding.

5). Social Activities/Outings/Role Play: This service helps participants improve their public comfort, social life, personal confidence, personal views, and enjoyment of life and others. It is well documented that ASD young adult clients often fail to integrate into the larger society, have trouble securing friend groups, and miss out on enjoying all that life has to offer.

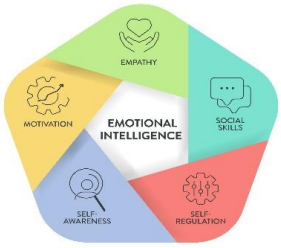
6). Parent Programming: It is critical that parents receive adequate support and guidance. Many times, they are not aware of resources, services, or what to do. As well, parents often are emotionally and financially drained by the time their child turns 18. As a result, efforts should be made to support and enhance parents' efforts. The support can take on the form of referrals to community services, offering a parent's group, helping them manage things, and having a listening ear.

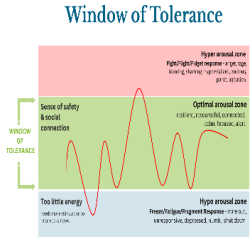
"Services and support are key when servicing ASD young adults." Dr. Recco

Jewels of Services

I will now share jewels of services that help me the most when servicing ASD young adults. The jewels are social emotional learning, emotional intelligence, and stress tolerance. They are precious and well received by the participants and their parents.







1). Social Emotional Learning (SEL): My understanding and appreciation of social emotional learning is the foundation that allows me (and other providers) to help ASD clients. The stated regarding SEL is true because:

a). If nothing else, ASD young adults need enhanced social relationships and positive interactions with others. Social emotional learning competencies provide the foundation for maintaining high-quality social relationships and for responding to the challenges of life.

b). Person-centered, self-regulation, self-awareness, and self-motivation concepts are linked to social emotional learning and personal achievement.

c). SEL in the treatment process can develop sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies that helps to improve self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

2). Emotional Intelligence (EI): I have found that my psychological education training and the addition of EI information to my tool chest, allows for a better integration of theory and practice when I service ASD clients. This too is true because:

a). For humans, emotional intelligence is the rudder for feeling, thinking, learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. It is the ability to identify, understand, and use emotions positively to manage anxiety, communicate well, overcome issues, solve problems, and manage conflicts.

b). A much-needed skill by all of us is the ability to read, understand, and respond to emotions. The stated promotes healthiness, happiness, and personal and professional success.

c). The securing of health self-esteem is important to ASD client. It is reported that emotional intelligence is likely to underline social competence and mediate the contribution of achievement to self-esteem and other critical areas of human development.

3). Stress Tolerance: I am convinced that at the root of most ASD clients' struggles is the inability to manage stress and change. As a result, stress tolerance is a necessary skill for them to learn and have available. Stress tolerance is important because:

a). Research reveals that it is one of the 12 executive functioning tasks of our brain. It is believed to be housed in the emotion control task area and is key to individuals being able to thrive in stressful situations, cope with uncertainty, and manage change.

b). Successful treatment strategies such as psychotherapy and behavior therapy can decrease stress levels. The success is due to the interventions helping clients to be more aware of internal processing and thereby gain some control over bodily reactions to stress.

"The social, emotional, and stress has to be addressed."
Dr. Recco

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"Our goal is to help you move forward."
Dr. Recco