



Mental Health Association of Northern Kentucky

A LEADER IN PROVIDING ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, AND SERVICES THAT PROMOTE MENTAL WELLNESS

EDUCATION AND SCREENING OUTREACH PARTNER FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND
NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS

The Characteristics We Seem to Have in Common Due to Growing up in an Alcoholic Household

1. We became isolated, afraid of people and authority figures.
2. We became approval-seekers and lost our identity in the process.
3. We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.
4. We either become alcoholics, marry them (possibly both) or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick abandonment.
5. We live life from the viewpoint of helping and seeking victims, and are attracted by that weakness in our relationships.
6. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility, and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. This allows us to avoid looking at our problems.
7. We feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves, so instead we give in.
8. We become addicted to excitement.
9. We confuse love with pity and tend to “love” people we can “pity” and “rescue”.
10. We have repressed our feelings from traumatic experiences and have lost the ability to feel or express feelings. It hurts so much so we deny that it hurts at all.
11. We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem, which is sometimes compensated for by trying to appear superior.
12. We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment. We will do anything to hold onto a relationship in order to avoid the pain of feeling abandoned. We are conditioned to these types of relationships.
13. Alcoholism is a family disease and we became para-alcoholics. We took on the characteristics of that disease even though we did not drink.
14. Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.