

Untangling the Web: **Treating Sex and Porn Addiction**

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Sex Addiction is Not

- ▶ Fun
- ▶ A Moral or Religious Stance
- ▶ Necessarily a Symptom of Bi-Polar or OCD
- ▶ Same Sex Interest or Activity
- ▶ Sexual Offending
- ▶ Fetish/Paraphilia
- ▶ Sociopathy
- ▶ Crystal Meth Addiction
- ▶ The End of a Relationship

What Do These Men Have in Common?

Fmr. President Bill Clinton

Senator Larry Craig

Fmr. Governor Elloit Spitzer

They are men whose *sexual behavior*
MORTALLY WOUNDED their ability to
lead ... what if their problem had been
drinking or drugs?

A Few Facts

Sex Addiction frequently coexists or is a presenting symptom of Depression, Anxiety, OCD, Trauma, Attachment and Personality Disorders but can also appear as stand alone diagnosis like alcoholism

Sex Addiction was listed as a diagnosis in the DSM III and is not in the DSM IV-TR. It is likely to appear *in some form* in the DSM V

Current prevalence of the disorder is estimated at 3-6% of the general population with 5:1 ratio of men to women

A Typical Client

38 year-old married high functioning, working male
with 2 children under the age of 6

Wife found extensive porn or hook-ups in computer
- *says get help or you're out.*

Married 7-10 years

Private Pay

In Crisis

*Women do also enter treatment as do those with
significant additional psychopathology*

Characteristics of Any Addiction

Criteria for assessing Sex Addiction parallels standard guidelines for assessing Substance Dependency, Eating Disorders, Alcoholism, and Compulsive Gambling:

- ▶ Loss of control
- ▶ Continuation despite adverse consequences
- ▶ Obsession or preoccupation

The presence of all three criteria operationally defines addiction to any drug or behavior

Typical Sex Addict Behaviors

- ☞ **Compulsive Use of Porn (with or without masturbation)**
- ☞ **Anonymous Sex (met online or in sex clubs etc.)**
- ☞ **Adult Bookstores and Strip Clubs**
- ☞ **Sexual Exchange (i.e. Drugs or Favors for Sex)**
- ☞ **Prostitutes and “Sensual” Massage Parlors**
- ☞ **Cruising, Intriguing, Objectifying, Seduction**
- ☞ **Pushing Boundaries, Boundary Violations**
- ☞ **Multiple Affairs / Anonymous Infidelity**
- ☞ **Abusing Power Relationships for Sex - Predatory**

Signs of ???????

- ▶ Increased Heart Rate
- ▶ Shallow Breathing
- ▶ Perspiration- palms, underarms, etc.
- ▶ Reduced Intellectual Functioning
- ▶ “Rush” or “Intensity” Feeling

ADDICTS CALL IT...

- ▶ Being in a Bubble
- ▶ The Trance
- ▶ Spaced Out

- ▶ Think ...
- ▶ Dissociative State
- ▶ Mood Alteration
- ▶ Fight or Flight

Substances of Mood

- ▶ Serotonin
- ▶ Dopamine
- ▶ Adrenaline
- ▶ Endorphins

In 12-Step Language

POWERLESS

**Sex Addiction not
actually about SEX ... It's
about the search for
sex.**

Signs of Undiagnosed Sexual Addiction in Residential or Outpatient Clients

In the Client's Behavior

- Seductive Dress (especially after it is pointed out)
- Seeking out “special relationships” with other attractive clients or staff for *advice, friendship and direction*
- Giving “the stare”.
- History of CD relapse – especially females
- Encouraging Dependency as a form of seduction
- Sneaking Porn into treatment - sharing porn in treatment.
- Consistent sexual references in jokes and conversation
- Consistent sexual objectification.
- Lack of empathy about how their sexual behavior affects others.



Signs of Undiagnosed Sexual Addiction in Residential or Outpatient Clients

► *In the Client's History*

- Multiple abortions (females), multiple STDs (both sexes)
- Previous arrest or major life consequences related to sex
- Drugs/Alcohol used to help tolerate or enhance sex
- History of previous sexual acting out in treatment
- Drug use fused with sexual behavior
- Multiple past failed relationships due to affairs or infidelity
- Chronic or Compulsive Masturbation

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Untangling the Web

SEX, PORN, AND

FANTASY OBSESSION

IN THE INTERNET AGE

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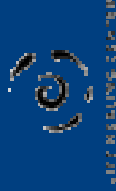


CRUISE CONTROL

understanding
sex addiction
in gay men

Robert Weiss MSW, CAS

Foreword by Patrick Carnes, Ph.D., author of *Out of the Shadows*



Pornography Statistics 2007

Porn pages online	372 million
Daily pornographic emails	2.5 billion
Illegal Child porn websites	100,000
Pornographic websites	4.2 million
ANNUAL DOLLARS SPENT	2 - 4 BILLION

Worldwide visitors to pornographic websites =
72 million annually

Average age of first Internet exposure to porn =
11 years old

Largest consumer of Internet porn =
12-17 age group



What makes online sex so popular and so exciting?

- ▶ ACCESSIBILITY
- ▶ AFFORDABILITY
- ▶ ANONYMITY

**Online sexual content,
chats and interaction has
forced us to reassess
sexuality in our culture.**

*For example, in the Internet age,
what do you consider to be...*

Infidelity?

What's the big deal
It's just a guy thing...

Consequences of Compulsive Cybersex

- ▶ Loss of time for work, family, recreation
- ▶ Family violence / relationship loss
- ▶ Loss of job because of cybersex at work
- ▶ Guilt and shame due to keeping secrets
- ▶ Decreased interest in sex with spouse
- ▶ Increased preoccupation with sex
- ▶ Increased overall sexual objectification
- ▶ Children potentially exposed to porn
- ▶ Increased interest in deviant sex
- ▶ Potential arrest for illegal online sex
- ▶ Escalation to off-line sex

Treatment is the Reclaiming of Reality

Sexual Sobriety is ...

As with eating disorders, sexual sobriety defined by a written contract of behavioral do's and don'ts, witnessed and signed by another recovering person or therapist, clergy etc. The plan is not altered unless that other person is involved. Deviation from the plan is a loss of sobriety.

Simple Sexual Boundary Plan

List of Behaviors
I Want to Stop

▶ A

▶ B

▶ C

▶ D

▶ E

▶ F

List of Behaviors
I Want to Add

▶ A

▶ B

▶ C

▶ D

▶ E

▶ F

Treatment Error

- ▶ Not addressing the sexual behavior as the primary initial treatment focus
- ▶ Not properly understanding and/or pathologizing the depth of the betrayal, grief, loss and rage of the partners and spouses
- ▶ NOT HOLDING CLIENTS ACCOUNTABLE
- ▶ Not getting supervision / consultation
- ▶ Not utilizing 12-step programs, faith based support groups, group therapy and psycho-education

Treatment Error

- ▶ Inadequate or poorly detailed history—*assessment is everything*
(Not asking about prior arrests/offending behaviors etc.)
- ▶ Normalizing problematic sexual behavior
- ▶ Initially employing Psycho-dynamic, Analytic, Jungian and other non-cognitive behavioral method
- ▶ Not identifying triggers, patterns, rituals and behavioral escape methods (relapse prevention planning)
- ▶ Focusing too early on trauma

12-step Groups for Sexual Addicts and Partners

Sex Addict Support

- ▶ SAA
- ▶ SA
- ▶ SCA
- ▶ SLAA-Women
- ▶ SRA

Partner Support

- ▶ S-Anon
- ▶ Alanon
- ▶ COSA
- ▶ CODA
- ▶ RCA - Couples

Sexual Addiction Treatment and Training

- ▶ *The Life Healing Center*
www.life-healing.com
- ▶ *The Sexual Recovery Institute*
www.sexualrecovery.com
- ▶ *IITAP* - International Institute for Trauma, and
Addiction Professionals www.iitap.com
- ▶ *SASH* - The Society for the Advancement of
Sexual Health www.sash.net

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