

SEXUAL ADDICTION

The Problem

Our sexual addiction issue began as an overpowering desire for pleasurable relief. We were running from an inner pain, loneliness, emptiness, or insecurity that we could not cope with in any other way. At first, it did provide the relief we sought. For a time, lust, pornography, or sex with ourselves or with others dissolved the tension. It relieved the depression, resolved the conflict, and provided the means to deal with or escape from life's seemingly unbearable situations.

Eventually, our search for relief became an addiction, and the addiction took on a life of its own. We gradually replaced pleasure and relief with tension, depression, rage, guilt, and even physical distress. To relieve this new pain, we resorted to more sex, pornography, and lust, losing more control in the process. We were driven to spend more time thinking about and carrying out our addiction. We lived in denial to avoid recognizing just how much our addiction controlled our life.

Finally, we risked our relationships, jobs, ethics, and values, and even neglected our children. All the while, we rationalized our sexual behaviors. We asked ourselves, "What will a little fantasy hurt?" or "What they don't know, won't hurt them." As we lived a double life, we became disconnected from reality making true intimacy with another impossible. We carried this behavior from relationship to relationship and even into our marriages.

Why? We were running, running from love, running from pain — pain from shame, self-hate, and multiple forms of abuse. We lacked self-worth, feared intimacy, and were spiritually bankrupt.

A new loneliness overwhelmed us as we realized that because of our addiction, we had become increasingly separated from God and our loved ones. We began to seek sobriety. As we stayed sexually sober for some time, we discovered that even though we may not be acting out our compulsion, our obsession was still with us.

Take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. It may reveal more about your sexual addiction issues than you realize, helping you find out if your sexual addiction is reaching a destructive level in your life.

Are You Sexually Addicted?

1. Do you go from one relationship to another?
2. Do you feel the right relationship would fulfill all your needs?
3. Do you use sex as an escape?
4. Do you make excuses to leave your partner as soon as possible after the act?
5. After a sexual experience, do you feel guilty?
6. Has your pursuit of sex interfered with your relationship with your spouse?
7. Do you find you cannot resist a sexual overture?
8. Have you ever sought out help to change your sexual behavior or thinking? Have you ever wanted to?
9. Have you ever tried to limit or stop acting out, but have been unable to?
10. Do you put yourself, or others, in dangerous situations in pursuit of sex?
11. Have you found that you cannot resist sex or sexual images?
12. Do you have trouble concentrating or completing tasks at work, always thinking about sex?
13. Do you spend time on the Internet viewing pornographic websites?
14. Do you take time away from work to pursue sexual activities?
15. Do you feel you have lost control of your actions to fulfill the need for sex?
16. Were you ever arrested for a sexual offense?

If you answered YES to at least seven of these questions, you might consider exploring this area of recovery.

The Solution

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY: Recognizing and accepting responsibility for toxic patterns of behavior is the first step toward true freedom from our addiction. Walking through the recovery process with Jesus Christ as our Higher Power allows us to admit our powerlessness to control our addiction. He will help us overcome our destructive habits.

YIELD TO GOD

As we start to gain a period of sobriety over our sexual addiction, we began to recognize the many disguises the enemy uses to trick us into lusting. We learn not to rely on our failed and weakened selves, but rather, to turn to God's pure love and absolute power. With an increased reliance on God, we work on our recovery with altered attitudes, a changed heart, and growing humility. We gain a progressive victory over lust.

As we yield to God, temptation begins to lose its control over us. When we admit we are powerless and give our lives and our will over to God, He works in us, and we begin enjoying a healthy new balance in our lives. Leaning on and learning from others in the program, we continue to walk in His strength, gaining true freedom from lust and sin through obedience to Christ our Lord.

WORK THE 12 STEPS AND CONNECT WITH OTHERS:

We commit to working the 12 Steps, to attend regularly the Celebrate Recovery meetings, and to getting an Accountability Partner and Sponsor for our addiction. We identify triggers and avoid people, places, and things that tempt our addiction. We accept God's standards for sexual purity and allow God total access to our minds (thought life), and we change our belief system toward our sexuality. We avoid crossover addictions, including food, eating disorders, alcohol, and drugs, and we understand the root of each core issue we identify with and become willing to experience grief, forgiveness, and acceptance.

We choose to accept Jesus Christ!