

MEN'S SEXUAL ADDICTION

THE PROBLEM

Our lust started as an overpowering desire for pleasurable relief from inner pain, emptiness or insecurity, with which we could not cope. At first, it worked. For a time, sex with ourselves or with others dissolved the tension, relieved the depression, resolved the conflict, and provided the means to deal with, or escape from, seemingly unbearable life situations.

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

Finally, our addiction came to take priority over everything: our ability to work, live in the real world, relate with others and be close to God. What started as the cure had become the sickness. The Answer had become the Problem. We were hopelessly addicted to lust.

THE SOLUTION

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

We began to recognize the many disguises the Enemy uses to trick us into lusting. We learned not to rely on our failed and weakened selves, but rather, to turn to God's pure love and absolute power. With increased reliance on God, we worked on recovery with altered attitudes and growing humility, and we gained progressive victory over lust.

As we yielded to God, temptation began to lose its control over us. When we admitted we were powerless and gave our lives and our will over to God, He worked in us, and we began to enjoy a 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.

WOMEN'S SEXUAL ADDICTION

THE PROBLEM

As women, sexual addiction is unique. Our behavior ranged from sex with self, phone sex, cyber sex, and pornography/ We engaged in promiscuity, illicit relationships, and adultery. Some of us participated in exotic dancing, escort services and prostitution. We used our bodies, intentionally dressed provocatively and performed for others, creating an illusion that gave us a false sense of self-worth. We were addicted to the intrigue, the tease, and the forbidden. We jeopardized our relationships, jobs, morals and values; we even neglected our children. All the while, we rationalized our sexual behaviors. 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 ran from pain; the pain of shame, self-hate, and multiple forms of abuse. We lacked self worth and feared intimacy. We tried to connect we tried to escape. We felt abandoned. We had a need to be in control and have power over others. We had a void that could not be filled with fantasy, sex, or lust. We learned to numb our feelings and to cope with our inadequacies by reaching out for a cure that would ultimately destroy us. This defined our belief system in a way that was not in line with God's plan for sexuality. Spiritually, we were bankrupt.

How did we get here? Sexual addiction is progressive. What started as a little flirtation or a "curiosity", the line we chose to cross set us into motion for the next line we chose to cross. We told ourselves that the next sexual act would be better and more lasting, but it never was. Eventually, our behaviors resulted in losing relationships, our marriages, jobs, material possessions, and, in some cases, our children. For many, the risks of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) are now a reality.

THE SOLUTION

By working through the Christ-centered 12 steps and 8 Recovery Principles with Jesus Christ as our Higher Power, we can and will change. We experience the true peace and serenity we have been seeking when we admit that we are powerless and when we give our lives and our wills over to the care of God. We begin to replace old behaviors with healthy ones. We learn to avoid triggers and crossover addictions by recognizing them and turning them over to our Higher Power. We commit to sexual sobriety one day at a time. We find true freedom as we accept God's standards for our sexuality, allow God access to our thought life, and cooperate with Him as He changes our belief system.

20 QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL ADDICTION

If you answer “yes” to at least 10 of these questions, you might consider exploring this area or recovery.

- Have you ever thought you need help for your sexual thinking or behavior?
- That you’d be better off if you didn’t keep “giving in”?
- That sex or stimuli are controlling you?
- Have you ever tried to stop or limit doing what you felt was wrong in your sexual behavior?
- Do you resort to sex to escape, relieve anxiety, or because you can’t cope?
- Do you feel guilt, remorse, or depression afterwards?
- Has your pursuit of sex become more compulsive?
- Does it interfere with relations with your spouse?
- Do you have to resort to images or memories during sex?
- Does an irresistible impulse arise when the other party makes sexual overtures or sex is offered?
- Do you keep going from one relationship or lover to another?
- Do you feel the right relationship would help you stop lusting, masturbating, or being so promiscuous?
- Do you have a destructive need – a desperate sexual or emotional need for someone?
- Does pursuit of sex make you careless for yourself or the welfare of your family or others?
- Has your effectiveness or concentration decreased as sex has become more compulsive?
- Do you lose time from work for it?
- Do you turn to a lower environment when pursuing sex?
- Do you want to get away from the sex partner as soon as possible after the act?
- Although your spouse is sexually compatible, do you still masturbate or have sex with others?
- Have you ever been arrested for a sex-related offense?