Bad Behavior
or
Sexual Addiction
(Men Who Can’t Seem to Stop)
Credentials
wyattgroup.biz/biography.html

Dr. Vicki Harris Wyatt
Ph.D. – Family Relations & Child Development, OSU
LPC, LADC, CSAT-S, CHFP, APSATS, EMDR,
DUI Certification, Neurofeedback, and others...
Intensive Recovery

6 months of counseling in just 3 days!
Objectives

• Define sex and pornography addiction
• Explain the cycle of sex addiction
• Compare healthy sexuality to sex/porn addiction
• Examine sex addiction as a brain disease
• Present treatment considerations
• Provide resources
Compulsion (Bad Behavior) or Sex Addiction

• “For a substance or a behavior to be addictive, it needs to trigger the experience of pleasure and cause anticipatory fantasy.

• Without these elements, a behavior may be compulsive, but it does not qualify as an addiction.

• The endless, fantasy-driven anticipation of pleasure drives addiction” (Weiss, 2015).
Sex Addiction is NOT

• “Fun
  – Compulsion leads to shame, depression, anxiety, and other negative consequences

• An excuse for bad behavior
  – A diagnosis is an obligation to recognize the issue and to behave differently in the future

• Related to sexual orientation or gender identity
  – Being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender does not make you a sex addict anymore than being straight makes you a sex addict (continued)
• Related to fetishes or paraphilias (kink)
  – Sexual addiction is not defined by who or what turns you on
• Just a guy thing
  – Plenty of women are sexually and romantically addicted
• Driven by drug use
  – If hypersexual behavior ends when drug use ends, then a diagnoses of sexual addiction is not appropriate
• Symptom of bipolar disorder, ADHD, OCD, or any other psychiatric condition
  – Not everyone who is impulsively or compulsively sexual has a problem driven by sexual addiction
• The same thing as sexual offending
  – Sexual offending is not indicative of sexual addiction” (Weiss, 2015).
Addiction Defined by American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)

- “Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors” (Katehakis, 2016).
What makes an Addiction an Addiction?

• “Preoccupation to the point of obsession with the substance or behavior (process) of choice;
• Loss of control over use of the substance or behavior (process), typically evidenced by failed attempts to quit or cut back;
• Directly related negative consequences (problems with relationships, school, or work; physical health problems, legal problems, etc.)”  (Weiss, 2015).
WHAT IS SEX ADDICTION?

"Like an alcoholic unable to stop drinking, sexual addicts are unable to stop their self-destructive sexual behavior. Family breakups, financial disaster, loss of jobs, and risk to life are the painful themes of their stories” (Carnes, 2001).
“Sexual addiction is defined as any sexually-related, compulsive behavior which interferes with normal living and causes severe stress on family, friends, loved ones, and one's work environment.”

Source: www.SexHelp.com

©2013 Patrick J. Carnes, PhD /
Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Addiction

• “Obsessive Sexual Fantasy and Preoccupation
  – Every decision made revolves around sex
• Loss of Control
  – Repeated failure to control thoughts about sex
• Related Adverse Consequences
  – Negative life consequences such as loss of job, relationships, etc.
  (continued)
• Tolerance and Escalation
  – They no longer feel satisfied with what they used to do, rather they must keep upping the ante
• Withdrawal
  – They withdraw emotionally and psychologically
• Denial
  – They are unwilling or unable to see the destructive effects of their sexual behavior” (Weiss, 2015)
The Cycle of Sexual Addiction

• “Stage One- Triggers (Shame/Blame/Guilt)
  – Catalysts create a need/desire to act out sexually

• Stage Two- Fantasy
  – They are obsessed with his or her sexual fantasies

• Stage Three- Ritualization
  – Real-world concerns disappear as they focus more intently on their fantasies

(continued)
• Stage Four- Sexual Acting Out
  – The point where actual sex and orgasm takes place
• Stage Five- Numbing
  – They emotionally distance themselves from what they’ve just done
• Stage Six- Despair (Shame/Anxiety/Depression)
  – They want to stop feeling their shame and remorse, which then triggers stage one all over again” (Weiss, 2015).
WHAT DEFINES A SEX ADDICT?

• No single behavior pattern defines sexual addiction.

©2013 Patrick J. Carnes, PhD /
2. Experiencing severe consequences due to sexual behavior, and an inability to stop despite these adverse consequences.
3. Persistent pursuit of self-destructive behavior.
4. Ongoing desire or effort to limit sexual behavior.
5. Sexual obsession and fantasy as a primary coping strategy.
6. Regularly increasing the amount of sexual experience because the current level of activity is no longer sufficiently satisfying.
7. Severe mood changes related to sexual activity.
8. Inordinate amounts of time spent obtaining sex, being sexual, and recovering from sexual experiences.
9. Neglect of important social, occupational, or recreational activities because of sexual behavior.

©2013 Patrick J. Carnes, PhD / wyattgroup.biz
405-232-1000
intensiverecovery.com  drwyatt@IntensiveRecovery.com
SEXUAL DEPENDENCY VS. OTHER ADDICTIONS

- Sexual addiction can be understood by comparing it to other types of addictions. Individuals addicted to alcohol or other drugs, for example, develop a relationship with their “chemical(s) of choice” – a relationship that takes precedence over any and all other aspects of their lives. Addicts find they need drugs merely to feel normal.

- In sexual addiction, a parallel situation exists. Sex – like food or drugs in other addictions—provides the "high" and addicts become dependent on this sexual high to feel normal. They substitute unhealthy relationships for healthy ones. They opt for temporary pleasure rather than the deeper qualities of "normal" intimate relationships.

- Sexual addiction follows the same progressive nature of other addictions. Sexual addicts struggle to control their behaviors, and experience despair over their constant failure to do so. Their loss of self-esteem grows, fueling the need to escape even further into their addictive behaviors. A sense of powerlessness pervades the lives of addicts.
“Sex addiction (i.e., hypersexuality, hypersexual disorder, and sexual compulsivity) is a behavioral addiction focused on sex and sexual fantasy.

Sex addiction is a dysfunctional preoccupation with sexual urges, fantasies and behaviors the obsessive pursuit of objectified non-intimate sexuality: pornography, casual/anonymous sex, prostitution, etc.” (Weiss, 2015).
Carnes (2001) Identifies Four Core Beliefs:

“Sex is my most important need.”

“It is not uncommon for a sex addict to have such an insatiable appetite for sex that they continue engaging in sex hour after hour. Sometimes this may be solo acting out where they masturbate to the point of injury. For others this may mean acting out with multiple sex partners with little or no discrimination criteria for selecting their partners” (Carnes, 2001).
“My needs are never going to be met if I have to depend on others.”

“This is a core value that often finds its roots in childhood. A person learns they cannot depend on others and must be self-sufficient. While self-sufficiency and independence can be very positive qualities, sex addicts often isolate themselves and find it difficult to depend on others” (Carnes, 2001).
“No one would love me as I am.”

“Or in other words, “If people really knew me, they would not love me.” This core belief reinforces the need to keep all “acting out” behaviors secret, creating a double life that is marked by deceit and duplicity. People who have the very highest morals and ethics in every other area of life, will engage in behaviors that may be abhorrent to their personal beliefs. They have a public self that is honest, trustworthy, and exhibits the highest standards. But their private self is the antithesis of these values. Secrets are deadly to a sex addict. As long as secrets exist, little progress can be made in eradicating these behaviors from their lives once and for all” (Carnes, 2001).
“I am basically a bad, unworthy person.”

“This belief keeps an addict locked into a cycle of shame and acting out, often because of stresses in life, not the least of which is low self-esteem. But the euphoria of acting out is soon replaced with shame, further reinforcing this core belief” (Carnes, 2001).
Carnes (2001) states 3 levels of behaviors:
Level One Behaviors are generally accepted or at least tolerated by society (though they may not be discussed) and include:
- Compulsive masturbation, sometimes to the point of injury
- Compulsive use of porn (magazines, video and DVD, Internet, and pornographic video games)
- Compulsive relationships and codependency; love addiction
- Sexual boundary violations at work
- Prostitution and Anonymous sex
- Frequenting adult-oriented businesses (for example, strip clubs, adult book stores, and massage parlors)
Level Two Behaviors are intrusive enough to carry significant legal penalties. A key distinction to this level is that there are legal sanctions and there are victims. Level Two Behaviors include:

- Exhibitionism
- Voyeurism
- Professional boundary violations (applies to professions such as physicians, attorneys, therapists, and clergy)
- Indecent phone calls
- Other lewd conduct like fritherism—touching someone in a sexual manner without their permission
Level Three Behaviors violate our most significant boundaries and include:
• Child molestation
• Possessing (downloading) child pornography
• Incest
• Rape
• Other sexual behaviors involving violence

(From research conducted by Dr. Patrick Carnes, 2001)
One widely accepted Healthy Sexuality Model:

“We believe that healthy sexuality requires that these five basic conditions be met:

Consent, Equality, Respect, Trust, and Safety (CERTS)” (Maltz, 2012).
“CONSENT means you can freely and comfortably choose whether or not to engage in sexual activity. This means you are conscious, informed, and able to stop the activity at any time during the sexual contact.”
“EQUALITY means your sense of personal power is on an equal level with your partner. Neither of you dominates or intimidates the other.”
“RESPECT means you have positive regard for yourself and for your partner. You also feel respected by your partner based on how your partner is treating you.”
“TRUST means you trust your partner on physical and emotional levels. You accept each other’s needs and vulnerabilities and are able to respond to concerns with sensitivity.”
“SAFETY means you feel secure and safe within the sexual setting. You are comfortable with and assertive about where, when and how the sexual activity takes place. You feel safe from the possibility of negative consequences, such as unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection, and physical injury.”
PORN-RELATED SEX VS. HEALTHY SEX

1. Sex is using someone vs. Sex is caring for someone
2. Sex is “doing to” someone vs. Sex is sharing with a partner
3. Sex is a performance for others vs. Sex is a private experience
4. Sex is compulsive vs. Sex is a natural drive
5. Sex can be hurtful vs. Sex is nurturing
6. Sex is a public commodity vs. Sex is a personal treasure
7. Sex is watching others vs. Sex is about genuine connection
8. Sex is separate from love vs. Sex is an expression of love
9. Sex can be hurtful vs. Sex is nurturing
10. Sex is emotionally distant vs. Sex is emotionally close
11. Sex can happen anytime vs. Sex requires certain conditions
12. Sex is unsafe vs. Sex is safe
13. Sex can be degrading vs. Sex is always respectful
14. Sex can be irresponsible vs. Sex is approached responsibly
15. Sex is devoid of morality vs. Sex requires morals and values
16. Sex lacks healthy communication vs. Sex requires healthy communication
17. Sex involves deception vs. Sex requires honesty
18. Sex is based on visual imagery vs. Sex involves all the senses
19. Sex has no ethical limits vs. Sex has ethical boundaries
20. Sex requires a double life vs. Sex enhances who you really are
21. Sex compromises your values vs. Sex reflects your values
22. Sex feels shameful vs. Sex enhances self-esteem
23. Sex is impulse gratification vs. Sex is lasting satisfaction” (Maltz, W. & Maltz, L., 2008).
Growth from Pornography Addiction

• “Your brain must be able to cooperate with your recovery.” (Dr. Daniel Amen; Lasser, M. & Lasser, D., 2016)
Effects of Pornography on the Brain

• “Viewing pornography results in the continued release of dopamine into the reward system stimulating neuroplastic changes that then reinforce the experience.”

• “Changes result in brain maps for sexual excitement” (Doidge, 2007).
“Addictive substances and behaviors (processes) trigger the same neurochemical response:

• Release of dopamine (pleasure)
• Along with adrenaline (excitement)
• Oxytocin (love & connection)
• Serotonin (emotional well-being)
• Endorphins (euphoria)
• Resulting in feelings of:
  • Pleasure
  • Excitement
  • Control
  • Distraction
  • Emotional escape
• Eventually an individual uses the substance or behavior to feel less (i.e., to control what they feel)” (Weiss, 2015).
Key Elements of Recovery

• The male addict must establish an accountability network of more than one person
• Attend support groups, (SA, SAA, SLAA, Celebrate Recovery)
• Ongoing therapy
• Treatment for any mental health issues (i.e., OCD, ADHD, etc.)
Treatment Options

• Alexandra Katehakis (2016), the founder and clinical director of the Center for Healthy Sex in Los Angeles, CA,

• “Reports that overall treatment goals require a holistic healing model.”
Weiss (2015) concludes that “only by recognizing the full nature of an addict’s impulsive, compulsive, and addictive behaviors – including sex, relationship, and intimacy elements – can clinicians construct and implement treatment regimens” to meet the needs of men and women.
CONCLUSION

Healthy sexuality involves integrity and grace not shame, guilt, or negative consequences (Ferree, 2010).
“Sex addiction is not about sex! I guess the more appropriate way to say this is to say that it is not primarily about sex” (Magness, 2017).
“Sex addiction is not about orgasm. After an orgasm, men have a much lower interest in sex” (Magness, 2017).
“Sex addiction is about generating one’s own neurochemistry” (Magness, 2017).
“Sex addiction therapy is sex positive! Sex therapy is not meant to be demoralizing or demeaning, rather it should be a positive experience” (Weiss, 2015).
SexHelp

For additional information about Dr. Patrick Carnes, links to other resources, current topics in research, and popular literature, go to:

www.SexHelp.com
Resources

- https://www.sexhelp.com/
  - Online Assessment Tools
    - Sexual Addiction Screening Test (SAST)
    - Partner Sexuality Survey (PSS)
- https://www.recoveryzone.com/
  - Sexual Addiction Risk Assessment (SARA)
- https://apsats.org/
  - Dr. Barbara Steffens
  - The Association of Partners of Sex Addicts Trauma Specialists
- https://www.iitap.com/resources/
  - Dr. Patrick Carnes
  - International Institute for Trauma & Addiction Professionals
Resources Continued

- https://www.hopeandfreedom.com/
  - Dr. Milton Magness
  - Three-Day Intensives for Recovery from Sex Addiction
- http:www.covenanteyes.com/
  - Internet Accountability and Filtering
- https://www.accountable2you.com/
  - Accountability across all your devices
- Wyattgroup.biz/biography.html
  - Dr. Vicki Harris Wyatt
  - Ph.D., LPC, LADC, CSAT-S, CHFP, APSATS, EMDR
References


