

## **What is Sex Addiction?**

**An addiction which uses sex in all its forms to escape reality.**

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ADDICTION?**

- 1) A brain disease**
- 2) An illness of escape from reality**
- 3) Compulsive and progressive**
- 4) Causes changes in personality**
- 5) Medicating**
- 6) Cunning and baffling**
- 7) Destructive**

## **HOW DOES SEX ADDICTION DEVELOP?**

- 1) A genetic predisposition to addictions in general.**
- 2) Often addicts come from families in which other members suffer from addictions.**
- 3) The family system is rigid and disengaged.**
- 4) Sexual abuse in childhood**
- 5) Other forms of abuse in childhood**
- 6) Depression frequently accompanies both sex addiction and sexual anorexia. Feelings of despair often intensify both addictive and anorexic obsessions.**
- 7) High stress situations, even when there are no other predisposing factors**
- 8) Other addictions**

## **CORE BELIEFS OF INDIVIDUALS SUFFERING FROM SEXUAL ADDICTION:**

- 1) I am basically a bad, unworthy person.**
- 2) No one would love me as I am.**
- 3) My needs are never going to be met if I have to depend on others**
- 4) Sex is my most important need.**

**How is the diagnosis of Sexual Addiction made?**

**Research has shown that if at least 3 of the following criteria are met, addiction is present.**

- 1. Recurrent failure (pattern) to resist impulses to engage in specific sexual behavior.**
- 2. Frequent engaging in those behaviors to a greater extent or over a longer period of time than intended.**
- 3. Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to stop, reduce, or control those behaviors.**
- 4. Inordinate amount of time spent in obtaining sex, being sexual, or recovering from sexual experience.**
- 5. Preoccupation with the behavior or preparatory activities.**
- 6. Frequent engaging in the behavior when expected to fulfill occupational, academic, domestic, or social obligations.**
- 7. Continuation of the behavior despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent social, financial, psychological or physical problem that is caused or exacerbated by the behavior.**

8. Need to increase the intensity, frequency, number or risk of behaviors to achieve the desired effect, or diminished effect with continued behaviors at the same level of intensity, frequency, number or risk.
9. Giving up or limiting social, occupational, or recreational activities because of the behavior.
10. Distress, anxiety, restlessness, or irritability if unable to engage in the behavior.

## **ACTING OUT BEHAVIORS**

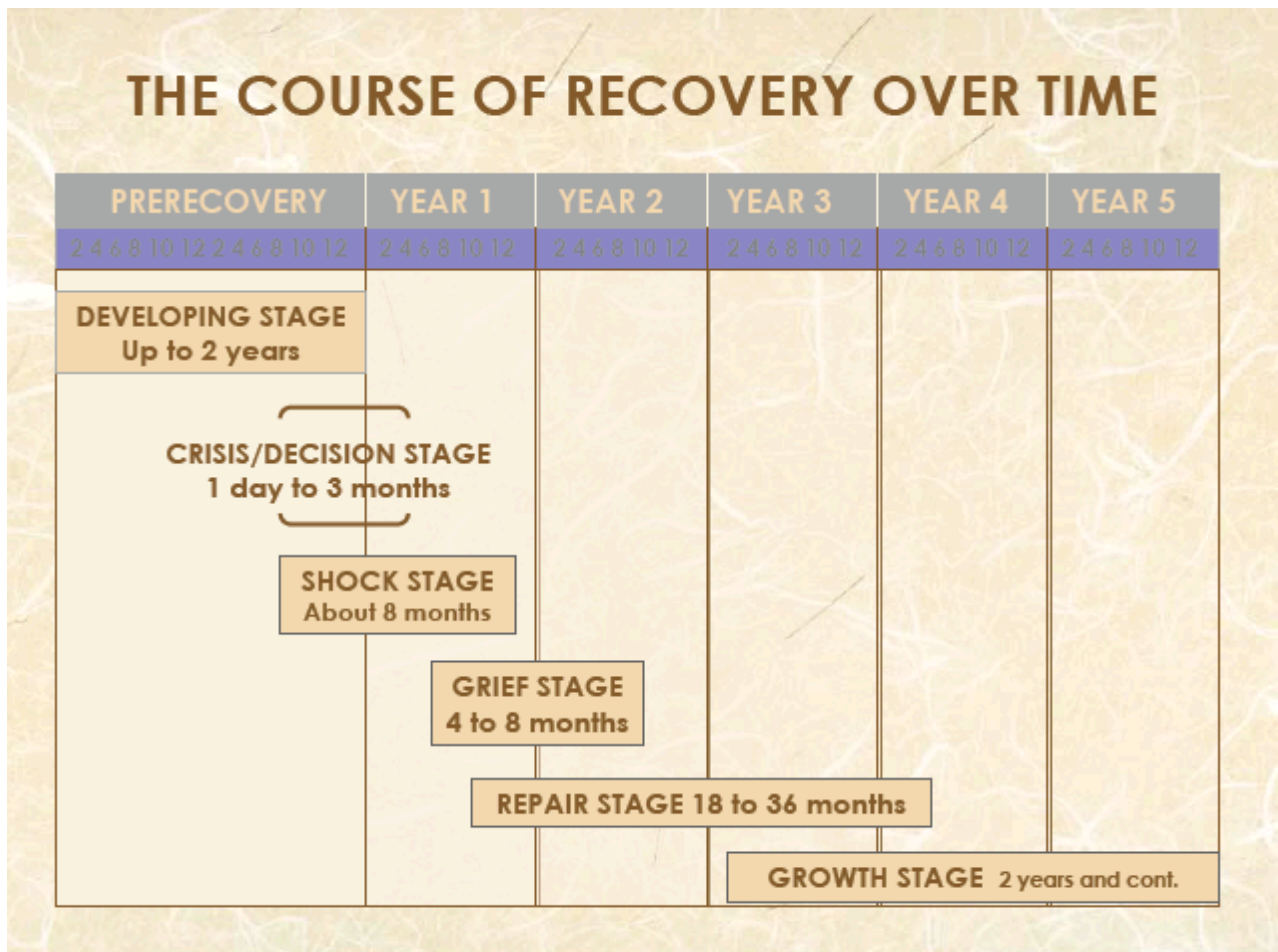
1. Fantasy Sex – becoming lost in sexual obsession and intrigue including behaviors which support preoccupation like stalking, compulsive masturbation, or being a “romance junkie.” (18%)
2. Voyeurism – visually oriented behaviors including pornography, strip shows, and peeping. (18% or more)
3. Exhibitionism – exposing oneself inappropriately or in self-destructive ways. (15%)
4. Seductive Role Sex – serial or concurrent exploitation of relationships usually in pursuit of power and conquest. (21%)
5. Intrusive Sex – violating boundaries as a high arousal experience such as obscene phone call. (17%)
6. Anonymous Sex – compulsive sex often in high-risk circumstances with people one does not know. (18%)
7. Trading Sex – using sex as part of a business transaction. This is addictive because of the risk, cost, or repetition of early trauma. (12%)
8. Paying for sex – purchasing sex as in compulsive prostitution or 900 number sex services. (15%)
9. Pain Exchange – sex which is most pleasurable when one is hurt physically or diminished personally. (16%)

**10. Exploitive Sex – serious sexual misconduct at the expense of vulnerable persons. (13%)**

**\* Addicts usually participate in more than one acting out, but have a clear hierarchy of preferences and alternate patterns. To further complicate a diagnosis, sex addiction is seldom isolated. Over eighty-five percent of addicts reported multiple addictions.**

**\*From material written and taught by Dr. Patrick Carnes.**

# Recovery Stages from Don't Call It Love by Dr. Patrick Carnes.



## **WHAT ABOUT THE SPOUSE OR PARTNER OF THE PERSON WHO SUFFERS FROM SEXUAL ADDICTION?**

- 1. They're not with him/her by accident.**
- 2. They try to "fix it", much like the partners of any other addict.**
- 3. They often exhibit their own addictions, chiefly eating disorders, alcoholism, substance abuse, love addiction and/or sex addiction themselves.**
- 4. Seen as angry and controlling. The addict often blames partner for much of his/her behavior, as well as denying the reality of their partner.**
- 5. They spend an inordinate amount of time obsessing, searching, shaming, checking, etc., to find out what their partners are doing.**
- 6. They are in great pain; they have lost themselves; they are addicted to the addict.**
- 7. Although it is difficult for some to see it, they need help themselves.**

## **Resources on the subject of Sex/Love Addiction:**

- Carnes, Patrick, Ph.D.: *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*, 3rd ed., 2001.**
- Carnes, Patrick, Ph.D.: *Don't Call It Love, Recovery from Sexual Addiction*, 1991.**
- Carnes, Patrick, Ph.D.: *The Betrayal Bond: Breaking Free from Exploitive Relationships*, 1998.**
- Carnes, Patrick, Ph.D., Delmonico, David L., Ph.D., & Griffin, Elizabeth, M.A.: *In the Shadows of the Net*, 2001.**
- Mellody, Pia: *Facing Codependence*, 1989.**
- Mellody, Pia: *Facing Love Addiction*, 2003.**
- Beattie, Melody: *Codependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself*, 1989.**
- Evans, Patricia: *The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognize It and How to Respond*, 1996.**
- Schaef, Anne Wilson: *Escape from Intimacy*, 1990.**
- Schneider, Jennifer, M.D.: *Back from Betrayal: Recovering from His Affairs*, 1990.**
- Kasl, Charlotte, PH.D.: *Women, Sex, and Addiction*, 1989.**
- Weiss, Robert, MSW, CAS: *Cruise Control: Understanding Sex Addiction in Gay Men*, 2005.**

**\*Please note that this is not meant to be an exhaustive list of books on the subject of sex addiction and codependency.**

## **RESOURCE GUIDE:**

**Adult Children of Alcoholics**

**310-534-1815**

**[www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)**

**Co-Dependents Anonymous**

**602-277-7991**

**[www.codependents.org](http://www.codependents.org)**

**Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH)**

**770-989-9765**

**[www.sash.net](http://www.sash.net)**

**Recovering Couples Anonymous**

**314-830-2600**

**[www.recovering-couples.org](http://www.recovering-couples.org)**

**Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous**

**781-255-8825**

**[www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org)**

**Sex Addicts Anonymous**

**713-869-4902**

**[www.sexaa.org](http://www.sexaa.org)**

**Co-Dependents of Sex Addicts (COSA)**

**612-537-6904**

**[www.cosa-recovery.org](http://www.cosa-recovery.org)**

**Sexual Addiction Resources; Dr. Patrick Carnes**

**[www.sexhelp.com](http://www.sexhelp.com)**