

The 6 Types of Sex Addicts

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It's been more than 20 years ago now since I have treated my first sex addicted client. In the early years many paradigms of understanding and treating sex addicts were the best guess at the time.

As a field we have grown considerably. As a clinician and now a psychologist, I have looked into the souls of many sex addicts and I have discovered not all sex addicts are alike. Intuitively when an addict attends a support group they also realize they are not alike as well.

Here, I want to share with you a paradigm that I, and my clients, have found very helpful. I will cover the six types of sex addicts briefly. I go into greater detail on the CD's The 6 Types of Sex Addicts and the follow up CD, Treatment for the 6 Types of Sex Addicts. This subject and application is also available on several hours of DVDs in the training offered by the AASAT (American Association for Sex Addiction Therapists).

I. The Biological Sex Addict

In chapter two we discussed the biological components to sex addiction. This biological reinforcement creating neuropathways to pleasure glues the addict to object relationship sex (porn, fantasy, or disconnected sex with people).

Almost all sex addicts have a biological component. In my experience, less than 15 percent are only biological sex addicts. This would mean the other five types do not apply to them.

In a solely biological sex addict, he or she typically grew up in relatively healthy homes and had no sexual or other type of trauma. The addict simply created the neuroconditioning cycle in a steady manner leading them to sexual addiction.

II. The Psychological Sex Addict

Generally in research related to sexual addiction the larger population of sex addicts have suffered some form of abuse or neglect. This person finds the combination of the messages in the fantasy world and the sexual chemical cock-tail to the brain to be a salve unto their hurting soul. Simply put, they medicate the past or the pain in their souls with acting out which is their form of medicine.

In my clinical experience, 80 percent or more have abandonment, abuse or neglect issues of some type in their past. These painful events will ultimately need to be addressed for the addict to fully heal.

III. The Spiritual Based Sex Addict

This addict is looking for a spiritual connection in all the wrong places. In recovery we talk about our spiritual hole. This person puts sex in this hole and finds it doesn't scratch the itch over time.

He or she may have a spiritual awakening of some type and the sexual behaviors that were addictive cease. They filled their hole and now pursue sex in a healthy manner.

Every addict wishes this was their experience. I have worked with medicine men, new agers, Muslims, Hindus, Rabbis, Pastors and Priests, all who had a spiritual experience but still maintained their sexual addiction. I understand this personally and still had to do the healing work after my spiritual awakening to heal from my own sexual addiction.

IV. The Trauma Based Sex Addict

The trauma based sex addict has experienced sexual trauma(s) as a child or adolescent. This trauma becomes the major repetitive behavior in his sexual addiction.

If the addict has experienced a particular trauma then this trauma behavior becomes the addict's predominant fantasy, porn selection and reenactment in his sex addiction. As in the case we discussed earlier, the 13 year-old boy who is sexually abused by a 30 year-old married woman which continues past high school repeats this behavior by having multiple affairs of a consistent theme. All of his affairs included women who were 15 years or more older than him.

For the trauma based sex addict the trauma determines the flavor of the sexual addiction. Here trauma work will need to be address for the addict to heal.

V. The Intimacy Anorexic Sex Addict

In earlier research we determined 29 percent of sex addicts fit into the category of intimacy anorexia. This subject is covered in great detail in the Intimacy Anorexia DVD as well as the DVD for the spouse of the sex addict called Married and Alone.

To be brief, I will list the characteristics of intimacy anorexia. Answer these the way your spouse or partner would answer them about you. If you believe that five or more criteria apply to you, then you are probably an intimacy anorexic.

1. Withhold love
2. Withhold praise or appreciation
3. Control by silence/anger
4. Criticism causing isolation
5. Withholding sex
6. Blaming partner for everything
7. Staying very busy to avoid partner time
8. Control/Shame with money issues
9. Unable to share feelings
10. Withholding spiritual connection

Many addicts who have been trying to get sober but keep having what I call "flat tire" recovery (relapsing regularly) often are unidentified as intimacy anorexics. If you have been sober from sexual addictive acting out behaviors for a year but your wife wants to leave you now because "nothing's changed" you might also be a sexual/emotional anorexic.

VI. The Sex Addict with Mood Disorders

Some sex addicts in adolescence or young adulthood have chemical imbalances. This young person finds the sexual release as a way to medicate or alter their chemical imbalance. He then uses this sexual response quite regularly and over time creates a sexual addiction. In a journal article I wrote called The Prevalence of Depression in Male Sex Addicts Residing in the United States I discovered that 28% of male sex addicts suffered from depression.

A second common chemical imbalance that I see in my practice with sex addicts is Cyclothymic Disorder. This is a slight up and down in mood usually experienced by the clients as a funky day on a weekly or so basis. This type of sex addict will need to do all of the recovery work discussed here and in the 101 Practical Exercises in addition to seeing a psychiatrist for possible medication for the mood disorder.

Can I be More Than One Type?

Absolutely! Most sex addicts come in groupings of several types. Once you know the type of sex addict you are then following a treatment plan for your type will be very beneficial for you.

If you would like an assessment and treatment plan specific to your type(s) of sex addiction, call XXX-XXX-XXXX. So many addicts are surprised at what they can learn about themselves in simply one hour.